



Snohomish County Council

## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **County Council begins implementation of Charter Review changes**

In November of 2006, voters approved a proposition giving the County Council the discretion to adopt either annual or biennial budgets. On Tuesday the Council introduced an ordinance that updates the County Code to reflect that change.

The Code currently provides only for the preparation and adoption of one-year budgets. Although the new ordinance gives the Council the authority to move forward with a two-year budget, members expressed their intent to proceed with caution.

“The annual budget process is the primary opportunity for both the Council and the public to examine and ask questions about how the Executive proposes to spend the public’s money” said Council Chair Dave Gossett. “We want to be certain that the level of oversight is not diminished if budgets are adopted every two years instead of annually.”

Council members also expressed concerns regarding the accuracy of predicting revenues and expenses for a two-year budget cycle. Even in a one-year cycle revenues must be forecast 18 months into the future and are very dependent upon state and federal appropriations, noted Council member Gary Nelson. “Forecasting is not an exact science, and financial situations can change quickly. I am hesitant to make critical budget decisions that rely on predictions of what might happen more than two years into the future.”

A public hearing on the ordinance will be held March 21, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers.

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