

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

NO. 2017 -- 357

<i>CLEARANCES</i>	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date Received in Council Office</i>	<i>Agenda Date</i>	<i>Assigned to:</i>
<i>Originator:</i>	Browne	11/20/2017		11/21/2017	Introduction
<i>Division Head:</i>					
<i>Dept. Head:</i>		11.20.17			
<i>Prosecutor:</i>					
<i>Purchasing/Budget:</i>					
<i>Executive:</i>					

TITLE OF DOCUMENT:

Ordinance Re Charter Amend #2 for 2018 General Election - Countywide Voting

ATTACHMENTS:

<i>SEPA review required?</i>	() Yes	() NO	<i>Should Clerk schedule a hearing?</i>	(X) Yes	() NO
<i>SEPA review completed?</i>	() Yes	() NO	<i>Requested Date:</i>	12/5/2017	

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: (If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)

Ordinance forwarding Charter Amendment #2 to the County Auditor for inclusion on the 2018 General Election Ballot, to provide the each member of the Whatcom County Council be elected by majority vote of the registered voters of Whatcom County at General Elections

COMMITTEE ACTION:

COUNCIL ACTION:

Related County Contract #:

Related File Numbers:

Ordinance or Resolution Number:

Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**FORWARDING CHARTER AMENDMENT 2 TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR, FOR
INCLUSION ON THE 2018 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT, TO PROVIDE THAT EACH
MEMBER OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL BE ELECTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF
THE REGISTERED VOTERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY AT GENERAL ELECTIONS**

WHEREAS, Whatcom County is the most local form of government for over half the population of our county; and

WHEREAS, many of the Whatcom County issues determined by the County Council affect all of Whatcom County's population; and

WHEREAS, each Whatcom County district ensures candidates for county council in the general election have already met district standards by residing in the district and being forwarded from the district as the top two candidates after the primary election; and

WHEREAS, the most recent election cycle has passed in which Whatcom County voters had the experience of district only voting under the new five district system in the general election for county council members; and

WHEREAS, during the 2017 election cycle many candidates either were not invited or did not attend many of the candidate forums because the citizens in those districts have lost the right to vote for them; and

WHEREAS, that council members elected on a district only basis will only be accountable to the approximately 20% of the County voters that reside within their district; and

WHEREAS, the County Government is required to provide services and allocate resources on a fair and equal basis as needed across the entire County but council members elected on a district only basis may feel less obligation to listen to or consider the needs of the approximately 80% of voters that reside outside their districts; and

WHEREAS, a council member elected on a district-only basis is now only accountable to approximately 20% of the County voters that reside within their district but retains the ability to vote to impose taxes on 100% of the County residents, which has created a form of "taxation without representation" that did not exist in prior elections when council members were elected on a Countywide basis; and

WHEREAS, district-only general election voting limits individual Whatcom County voters to only being able to elect a minority of council members who make decisions that may directly affect their lives; and

WHEREAS, many Whatcom County voters were upset by their inability to vote for all councilmembers who directly affect their lives and were in the last general election; and

WHEREAS, the ballot title of the measure that changed Whatcom County's voting process last year may have been confusing to some voters because there was a Proposition No. 2015-1 related to the jail facilities and use tax and also Proposition No. 1 which related to the Method of Electing Council Members; and

WHEREAS, Section 8.23 of the County Charter states the County Council may propose amendments to the Charter by enacting an ordinance to submit a proposed amendment to the voters at the next November general election occurring at least ninety (90) days after enactment; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, that the Whatcom County Council approves that the County Auditor shall place on the November 2018 general election ballot Charter Amendment 2 as specified in Exhibit A to this ordinance.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2017.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

() Approved () Denied

Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Jack Louws, County Executive

Date: _____

EXHIBIT A

WHATCOM COUNTY CHARTER AMENDMENT NO. 2

BALLOT TITLE

SHALL SECTION 2.13 OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY CHARTER BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE THAT, FOLLOWING THE PRIMARY ELECTION, THE TOP TWO CANDIDATES FROM EACH COUNCIL DISTRICT SHALL BE FORWARDED TO THE GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT TO BE ELECTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY.

Proposition No. 2
ELECTING COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Whatcom County Council has proposed an amendment to the Whatcom County Charter concerning the method of electing County Council members. This measure would amend Charter Section 2.13 to provide for election of County Council members by voters from the entire county.

Should this proposal be:

APPROVED _____
REJECTED _____

AMENDED CHARTER LANGUAGE

~~Section 2.13 Election by Council District:~~

~~The registered voters of each Council District shall vote upon each Council member position to be filled from their district at the November general election. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each position shall be elected.~~

Section 2.13 - Election Countywide

The registered voters of Whatcom County shall vote upon each Council member position at the November general election. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each position shall be elected.