

**2006 CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
BRIEFING PAPER
TRANSPERENCY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT/ACCESS
TO MEETINGS
JUNE 14, 2006**

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The Issue

Transparency in County Government/Access to Meetings

Issue Support

Councilmember Dave Somers spoke in favor of the motion. The current survey shows:

Shall the county council be required to develop rules of procedure that include the use and publication of evening meetings, dissemination of voting records, and access to public information?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		93.8%	75
No		6.2%	5
Other (please specify)		0%	0
Total Respondents			80
(skipped this question)			1

Other Counties

County	Meeting
King	Day time as set in ordinance
Snohomish	Day time as set in ordinance
Whatcom (Part time council)	7:00 PM
Pierce	1 evening meeting per year in each district per ordinance

Options

Within the home rule counties, Charter language does not deal with the specificity of time and place. Each county has an ordinance that specifies as shown above.

No Change which leaves the system as is with some citizens feeling marginalized.

The following was crafted by the chair for consideration:

“The county council shall enact by ordinance rules of procedure governing the time, place and conduct of its meetings, including varying time of day to best accommodate the public; hearings and the introduction, publication, consideration and adoption of ordinances. In order to provide the best possible open government, the rules of procedure shall include a method of providing timely and transparent information to the public. All meetings shall be open to the public except to the extent executive sessions are authorized by state law.”¹

¹ Email from Chair Mike Cooper