



A HOME RULE CHARTER
gives voters more choices about the
structure of county government.



With a home rule charter, some
changes could take place right now.
More changes could take place in
the future.

On November 5
THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

For more information about home rule:

- Visit the home rule web site at www.clark.wa.gov/freeholders/. It includes a copy of the proposed charter and additional information.
 - Call (360)687-4738 and ask that materials be mailed to you.
 - Call (360)687-4738 to request a presentation about home rule to your organization.
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**Clark County mailed one of these
to each county household in 2002.**

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This brochure was developed by the Clark County Board of Freeholders. For questions about information contained in this brochure, please contact Don Gardner, Chair, Board of Freeholders, at (360)687-4738.

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HOME RULE CHARTER

It's about the power
to change things.
It's about choices.

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Five county commissioners or three?

YOUR CHOICE.

Commissioners elected by geographic districts or countywide?

YOUR CHOICE.

Initiative and referendum at the county level?

YOUR CHOICE.

These are examples of some of the choices you would have if a home rule charter for Clark County is approved by voters.



An elected board of freeholders—21 of your neighbors from throughout the county—has been working for almost two years to write a home rule charter for Clark County. The charter that they propose will appear on the ballot on November 5, 2002.

What is a home rule charter?

A charter is a local constitution. Allowed by state law, it gives voters more local control of the structure of county government.

What does a home rule charter do?

Five Washington counties have adopted home rule charters. Each one is slightly different. And that's the point. A charter gives local voters the opportunity to make it fit the needs of their particular community.

What about the home rule charter proposed for Clark County?

From the very beginning, voters will have choices. The November ballot will ask whether Clark County should adopt a home rule charter. Then it will offer voters a menu of individual options that would be included if the charter is adopted:

- whether there should be three county commissioners or five,
- whether the commissioners should be elected by geographic districts or countywide, and
- whether there should be initiative and referendum available at the county level.

Each of these will be a separate question. Their outcome will help frame the initial basic changes to county government if voters approve a home rule charter.

What would the initiative and referendum do?

Initiative allows the public to pass their own laws at the county level. Referendum allows the public to repeal some actions

taken by the county. Both the initiative and referendum have limitations on the types of topics they could deal with.

Can the charter be changed?

Yes. If voters approve a home rule charter for Clark County, other changes could take place in the future.

How would future changes be made?

A charter review commission, which would review the charter at set periods of time, could propose amendments. County commissioners could propose changes, too. In addition, if the charter includes the initiative option, citizens could propose charter amendments through the initiative process. Any proposed amendments would be submitted to the voters at the next general election.

What else should people know about the charter?

Most county functions are set by state law and cannot be changed, regardless of home rule. For example, a county provides courts and law enforcement, builds roads, assesses property, collects taxes, and conducts elections. With home rule, the structure of county government could change, but the county would continue to carry out those functions. In addition, any county laws enacted through home rule would still have to be legal under the state and federal constitutions; county laws cannot override state or federal laws.

What's the bottom line?

The home rule charter could make government more accountable and give the public a greater role in county decisions. Beyond the changes it could make immediately, it allows for further changes over time and more choices for county citizens.