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1987 KING COUNTY
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
REGIONAL ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
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REGIONAL ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

I. Purpose of Regional Committee Report

The 1987 Charter Review Commission's Regional Issues Committee was established to conduct an assessment of King County's role as a regional government and to make recommendations to improve the County's ability to deliver regional services. This report is the result of the Regional Committee's work in fulfilling that charge.

It should be noted that the scope of the Regional Committee's work did not include the city/county fiscal equity issues. Are citizens doubly taxed when the city to which they pay taxes is required to make payments for contracted services to the County to which the citizen also pays taxes? Which services are regional and should be funded by the County? Do the allocation formulas for the sales tax, liquor tax and profits, gas tax and other State shared revenues equitably distribute these revenues among cities and counties? The city/county fiscal equity issues are of a long-standing nature and exist between cities and counties throughout this country. In Washington State, the issue is exacerbated by the patchwork revenue system which has developed on an ad hoc basis over time. King County and the cities in King County have jointly studied this problem over the past five years without resolution. This extremely complicated issue is most clearly articulated in the 1984 Cost of Countywide Services conducted by the King Subregional Council of the Puget Sound Council of Governments. The Commission did not address fiscal equity issues because it seemed unlikely that the Commission could contribute to a resolution of the issue. The Commission's work touched on this issue indirectly to the extent that its recommendations would resolve the problem for some specific services.

II. Local and Regional Services and King County's Roles

A. Defining Terms.

Defining the terms regional services, regional governments, and other terms used in the discussion of regional service delivery and governance is difficult because the terms have different meaning for different people and in different contexts. For the Charter Review Commission's discussion of regional issues, region or regional means the area encompassed by King County's boundaries. The Commission recognizes that in some cases the term can or should be applied to a multi-county area, but the focus of the Commission's work is on King County.

A regional agency is considered to be one which serves most or all of the county. The Commission considers a truly regional agency as one which has the full responsibility and authority (including regulation, enforcement, planning, operations and revenue sources) for a service without regard to jurisdictional boundaries and without requiring contracts or agreements with local jurisdictions to obtain that authority or responsibility.

In general, the concept regional, as applied to services, problems, or issues, is one that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. It is important, however, to consider the use of the term in the context of the specific service being discussed. There may be, for example, a regional problem for which services are provided by individual jurisdictions, such surface water, which runs

across jurisdictional boundaries, but which is the responsibility of individual cities and the County. Some services, such as law enforcement, have both a local (city only or County only) aspect and a regional aspect. The King County Department of Public Safety currently provides law enforcement services to all residents of unincorporated King County. In addition, the Department of Public Safety provides regional services such as civil process functions and criminal warrant service (mandated by State law); Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) services (mandated by county ordinance); Enhanced-911 emergency telephone and dispatch services; and search and rescue functions to all of the cities within the County. The Department of Public Safety also provides general law enforcement services to some of the smaller cities on a contractual basis. There are other services which have only a regional aspect and are provided by a regional agency, such as property assessments and tax collections, elections, and the Superior Court.

B. General Description of Local and Regional Services Organization

In King County, there is a complicated division of responsibilities and authority for both local and regional services among the County, 29 cities, Metro, the Port of Seattle, the King County Library District, 30 water districts, 17 sewer districts, 10 combined water/sewer districts, 34 fire districts and State and other agencies as well. Municipal services--the basic support services a government is expected to provide--may be divided only among the County and the cities, such as for law enforcement, or may be divided among many entities, such as the 28 cities and 22 special purpose sewer and water and sewer districts for sewage collection, Metro for sewage treatment and the County for planning. For some regional functions, one agency has overall responsibility, such as the Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Agency has for air quality and the Port of Seattle has for commercial development of the harbor. For other regional functions, regional management of a service or problem is brought about through interlocal agreements between one agency covering a large geographic area (often the County) and other smaller entities such as the 28 suburban cities in King County. Chart 4 illustrates the complexity of the present organization of local and regional services in King County.

C. Description of King County's Roles in Local and Regional Services

Counties have multiple roles including: Acting as an arm-of-the-State to implement at the County level services which are a State responsibility; as a regional government providing services on a countywide basis either directly through its own authority or through cooperative arrangements with other jurisdictions which result in functional regional services; and as a local, municipal government functioning as cities do for incorporated areas. The County's services can be divided into three categories as listed in Table 1.

1. Direct regional services. These services are those for which the County is directly responsible for providing on a countywide basis (all or most) without regard to jurisdictions. These services include many of the arm-of-the-State responsibilities of the County. These are services, usually mandated by State law and provided countywide without distinction made for jurisdictional boundaries on behalf of the State. This type of direct regional service includes many of the County's human service programs such as mental health, developmental disabilities, and alcoholism and substance abuse; the system of courts (district and superior); the prosecutor; juvenile detention; and administrative

functions such as assessment, records and elections. Direct regional services also include the regional services which the County provides at its own discretion, such as emergency medical services, King County Airport, the Kingdome, E-911 emergency telephone service and dispatch, and Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

2. Unincorporated Area Municipal Services. In addition to being a regional government, the County provides most of the local, municipal services to unincorporated areas. Counties can, by law, provide almost every service that cities are usually expected to provide, such as police, parks, roads and land use controls.

In unincorporated King County, water and sewer services and fire protection—all provided by cities within incorporated areas—are provided by special districts. Unincorporated area municipal services constitute a relatively small portion of the total services provided by the County.

Counties and cities also have responsibilities for other municipal services such as public health, adult detention, and solid waste disposal. In many cases, the largest city in a county or the county government will provide these services on a regional basis through interlocal agreements or contracts with the other jurisdictions.

3. Functionally Regional Services. Functionally regional services are responsibilities that are assigned individually to cities and the County—municipal responsibilities—but which are delivered on a regional basis, usually by the County, through intergovernmental agreements. In many cases, cities have the option to provide the services themselves, but often, usually for economic reasons, cities contract with the County, which results in provision of the service on a countywide basis by the county. In King County, this category of service has generated the greatest conflict between the County and the cities.

Public health is an example of a functionally regional service. Both the cities and the County have, by State law, public health responsibilities. Cities in King County satisfy their public health responsibilities through contractual arrangements with the County health department. Adult detention is another example of a functionally regional service. Cities have responsibility for pretrial detention of persons arrested on city charges. Some cities, like Des Moines, have their own jail, but most contract with the County for pretrial detention.

III. Summary of Regional Services Problems

The Regional Issues Committee heard from representatives of several of the many groups which have been involved in recent discussions of regional governance and received reports issued by others including the State's Local Governance Study Commission and King County 2000. There appears to be a great deal of consensus among these groups on what the regional issues and problems are. In reviewing summaries of local government problems, the Charter Review Commission concluded that all the lists are essentially variations on the findings of the 1975 Metropolitan Study Commission which are listed below:

1. There are too many different and conflicting governments and ad hoc devices, and they are making public decision and long-range planning difficult and ineffective in the King County area.
2. The hundreds of thousands of citizens in the unincorporated areas of King County must receive direct governmental services from a primary level of government elected by and responsible to them.
3. There is a need for an areawide policy planning, goal setting and land use planning function, which will serve both incorporated and unincorporated areas on areawide matters.
4. There are some functions that can be wholesaled or broadly delivered at the areawide level more effectively and yet be consistent with the primary need and public desire that general government be retained at the local level.
5. There is a need for the development of a more rational tax and fiscal system, including such innovations as tax base sharing, such as has been developed in Minnesota. Any tax system must assure a continuation of present service.

The Charter Review Commission, rather than repeat the efforts of others, simply notes that among the discussions, studies, and reports addressing local and regional governance and service delivery problems, there is considerable consensus about what these problems are. Together, they add up to a system of multiple units and layers of government which does not serve the public as well as it should be served. The fact that local and regional governments in King County do as well as they do and that we are not faced with a crisis in government is a credit to the elected officials who govern and the government staff who plan and deliver services.

The Charter Review Commission recognizes that some people argue that multiple units of government provide a check-and-balance within the overall governmental structure. Other people, however, maintain that such a system results in inaccessibility and lack of accountability to those who must pay for the services as well as inefficient, ineffective, and costly service delivery. With no fixed or clear authority for services, citizens are confused about who to turn to for solutions to their problems. The power to solve problems is too widely shared, causing some problems to fall through the cracks because it is "some other government's responsibility". The governments themselves find it difficult to reach agreement on how to solve regional problems. There is no means to resolve conflicts and move forward.

IV. Criteria For Guiding Future Government Reorganization and Assignment of Responsibilities

It is not enough to identify and develop a consensus on our regional service delivery and regional governance problems--although this is a very important first step. Effectively, this step has been accomplished. The next step is the development of criteria to guide change to address those problems. The Charter Review Commission offers the following criteria with the hope that they will move discussions of regional problems from problem identification to problem solving--how should we organize ourselves to address those problems, and then to how can we achieve this organization.

Change Principles

- Change will not occur overnight. Both interim and longer term solutions are needed.
- Change should result in services being provided more economically and effectively than they are being provided under existing arrangements.
- Change should not result in the loss or decrease of accountability of elected officials to citizens.
- There is a finite amount of authority among local governments and that finite amount of authority is already fully allocated. In order for an existing governmental unit to gain new authority or a new governmental unit to be established, existing units of government will have to give up some of their authority.

Governance Principles

- The decision-making body of any governmental unit must be identifiable, accountable, and accessible to its citizens.
- Directly elected decision-making bodies are most appropriate when (1) that body has the authority to impose taxes, rates or other service charges directly on the public, and (2) other jurisdictions are not directly involved in the implementation of the service.
- A regional agency should have the directly assigned authority (planning, implementation, enforcement, revenues) to carry out its responsibilities and there should be provisions to enable that authority to expand as the responsibilities expand both in scope and in subject.

Organizational Principles

- Government services and responsibilities should be organized and assigned according to functionally logical groupings. Similar services should be grouped within one agency. Problems requiring solutions which cross jurisdictional boundaries should be assigned to a regional agency.
- Planning, operations and funding activities should be located within one agency provided that the governing body can be held accountable for its decisions.
- Cities should be the major providers of urban level municipal services. Unincorporated areas which require an urban level of service should be encouraged to incorporate or annex to a city.
- Counties should provide or ensure the provision of a basic level of municipal services for unincorporated areas. The County should direct growth to urban or urbanizing areas in order that cities may expand (or it may be cost effective for the area to incorporate) to serve those areas when an urban level of services is needed.
- Cities should be assigned responsibility for local municipal service which primarily affect the citizens of cities and which should be locally designed, delivered and paid for.

- Existing special districts should be encouraged to consolidate/merge, and new small special districts should not be allowed to form.

Process Principles

- When all taxpayers/ratepayers of the County are asked to pay for a project or program, a regional (county-wide) decision-making body should be responsible for setting the level of taxes or rates and held accountable for the expenditure of those taxes or rates.
- Counties, cities, special districts, and other governmental units should have a role in the development of regional plans and services which will impact them.
- There should be a process for developing a regional consensus on regional (countywide, multi-county) issues.
- There should be a process for reviewing capital spending priorities and service priorities on a regional basis (countywide).

The Charter Review Commission recognizes that the list of criteria omits criteria for the circumstances under which a federated governing body would be appropriate and that there is currently some interest, primarily by cities, in maintaining a federated governing body for Metro. Some of the arguments supporting a federated governing body (especially for Metro) including:

- A federated body allows local governments which have given up their responsibilities to the regional government to retain a degree of local influence over regional service decisions and delivery as they affect the citizens of those local governments.
- A federated governing body is appropriate when the decisions made by that body must be implemented or otherwise affect the operations of local governments.
- A federated body provides a forum for individual local governments to meet and discuss issues of common concern.
- Local government representatives on federated bodies are better able to lobby for local concerns than an individual citizen.

The basic issue for the Charter Review Commission is the question of to whom are persons sitting on federated bodies accountable--the institutions they represent or the people who elected them to those institutions? The Regional Committee decided not to include criteria for a federated governing body for the following reasons:

- A federated body (at least as has been proposed in King County to date) violates the one person/one vote rule.
- Citizens should have the right to hold directly accountable members of a governing body which has the power to levy charges and taxes on citizen and has such powers as eminent domain or authority to override local land use controls.

- Federated bodies cannot be held directly accountable for the expenditures of funds, issuance of debt, delivery of services or other actions affecting the public.
- A government does not have the same rights of representation as does an individual citizen. Government elected officials are elected to represent citizens, not the government institution.
- Local governments are not disenfranchised by directly elected governing bodies. They have the right to approach the directly elected officials of a regional government or to approach that governing body just as any citizen does.

V. Models for Organization of Regional Government Responsibilities

In considering models of how local and regional government in King County might be organized, there are two aspects to consider. One is the way in which the governments are structured in terms of the services they provide and their relationship to one another. A second aspect is the manner in which the structure is governed—who makes the decisions and how they become a part of that decision-making body.

A. Organizational Alternatives for Regional Government

There are many ways to organize regional government. Charts 1-A and 1-B, 2, 3, and 4 illustrate three basic alternative relationships of regional services: (1-A) Extreme Two-tier, (1-B) Modified Two Tier, (2) Two-Way Regional Split, (3) Three-Way Regional Split, and (4) Multiple Layers.

1. Two-Tier--(A) Extreme and (B) Modified. The Two-Tier model consists of one countywide regional government which would handle all the regional services. In the Extreme Two-Tier model (Chart 1-A), municipal services for cities and counties would be provided by cities in incorporated areas and by a separate county-type government in unincorporated areas. In a Modified Two-Tier model, cities would provide municipal services in incorporated areas and the regional government, also being the county government, would provide municipal services in unincorporated areas.

Under either the Extreme Two-Tier or Modified Two-Tier, the eventual development of some municipal services into regional services might occur. Law enforcement, which is presently a municipal function with some regional specialized programs, might develop into a regional law enforcement agency under which the regional agency would provide specialized services and basic patrol services throughout the county and cities could purchase more than the basic level of patrol service, depending on what that local community wanted. Fire protection, which is presently provided by individual cities and special districts, might also eventually be regionalized in the same manner.

2. Two-Way Regional Split. The Two-Way regional split model divides regional services among two regional agencies. One regional agency would essentially be the County government and the other would be a utilities and planning agency (combining the present Metro and PSCOG functions). This regional agency would be able to impose its plans on

the County and the cities and charge citizens for services. Municipal services to cities and unincorporated areas might be provided in a number of different ways as noted above.

3. Three-Way Regional Split. The Three-Way Regional Split model groups regional functions into three groups--utilities, planning, and services. The Three-Way Regional Split would expand the utilities function in a Metro-type agency, and expand and strengthen regional planning in a PSCOG-type agency which would have the power to impose land use plans on the regional utility agency, the County, and the cities. Again, there are a number of different ways in which municipal services would be provided to cities and unincorporated areas.

4. Multi-Layer Model. This is a description of the present organization of local and regional governments in King County and the allocation of responsibilities among them. As the name implies, there are multiple units of governments providing regional and municipal services. This model represents the "no change" alternative.

Examples of these models as they have been applied to local governments exist. Dade County, Florida and Toronto, Canada are examples of the extreme two-tier model with regional (county) and city (local) governmental units. The Multnomah County, Oregon area is organized along a two-way regional split with the county providing some regional services and the Multnomah County Metro providing transportation, planning, zoo operations and other regional services. These communities, and others, have taken basic models for organizing regional and local government and modified them to fit the values and needs of their own community. When we look to these communities for models of what we might do here, we observe "that model is fine, but not right for our area." What we in King County need to do is decide which of the basic models is best for us and tailor it to meet our needs.

B. Governance Options

Just as there are alternatives for organizing local and regional services, there are alternative ways in which a regional governmental unit can be governed. There are two aspects of governance to consider: (1) the manner in which people become part of the governing body, and (2) the type of governing body.

1. Membership. There are basically three ways in which a person becomes part of a governing body.

- Directly Elected--Citizens choose those who govern them through an election process. This is the most directly accountable form of governance. An example is County and city government.
- Appointed--Members of a governing body are appointed by another entity, usually comprised of directly elected officials. Appointed officials can only be held accountable through the appointing officials. An example of an appointed governing body is the King County Rural Library District Board which is appointed by the King County Council.
- Representative--Members of the governing body are selected by a group to represent them on the governing body. For example, in many cases the Suburban Cities Association is asked to designate one of its members to

represent them on a governing body such as the Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Board.

2. Type of Governing Body. There are basically three types of governing bodies.

- Directly Elected--The governing body is comprised exclusively of persons who have been directly elected to their positions. These person are directly accountable to those who elected them. There are a variety of methods by which direct elections may be held: by district; at-large; and by district in a primary and at-large in the general election.
- Federated--The governing body is comprised of representatives of other persons who are there by virtue of their position and/or selected by others to be members of the governing body. Members of a federated body may or not be directly accountable to the public, depending on their situation. Clearly, those who were selected to represent other entities are not directly accountability to the public. An example of a federated governing body is the Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Board which is comprised of elected officials by virtue of their position (such as the County Executive) or selected to represent other entities such as the suburban cities in King County.
- Combinations: There can be, of course, combinations of the basic governing bodies which mix appointed, directly elected and representative methods of membership. The degree of accountability depends on the degree to which officials are directly elected. The Metro Council is a federated governing body with a combination of appointed citizens and representative officials, although the County Executive could be considered directly elected.

A community's choice of governing body--structure and method of governance--ultimately depends on the values held by those in the community and how those values are balanced. These values and how they are balanced can change over time.

Reorganization of local government is an evolutionary process. The Twin Cities (St. Paul/Minneapolis) and Multnomah County communities continue to change to resolve outstanding service delivery issues and to respond to changing circumstances. In our area, development of the Puget Sound Council of Governments in the 1957 and Metro in 1958 marked early steps in the evolutionary development of regional government in this region. King County's expanding role in providing regional services through interlocal agreements is another step in this evolution.

VI. Specific Recommendations and Proposals for Reorganization

In order for change to occur, members of the community must share a vision for the future. Recent discussion of regional governance and service delivery problems has not produced a consensus, in part, because there is no consensus on what we want from our government. The Charter Review Commission has offered some criteria to help guide change. Consensus may also be difficult to reach because the time frame for any change under discussion is usually too close and too threatening to those affected by the proposed changes. The Charter

Review Commission chose to look at a much longer time frame—what government in this area should be fifty years from now—during which we can start making the incremental changes leading to that future vision.

The Charter Review Commission considered many things likely to happen during this period. Many of these considerations are contained in a separate appendix to this report entitled Trends in King County--The Next Fifty Years. The Trends report is a general assessment of some of the possible socio-political and demographic changes and their possible consequences over the next fifty years.

The most recent population projections by the Puget Sound Council of Governments indicates that the population in King County is expected to increase from about 1.4 million in 1988 to 2.1 million by 2020 (a 50 percent increase) in the next 30 years. What is more significant is the extreme variation in age groups which will occur--specific age groups will show increases as high as 40 to 50 percent or decreases as low as a negative 20 percent. What this suggests is that local and regional governments are going to be faced with significant challenges in responding to changing demands for children's services, the retirement of the baby boom population, the need for low cost housing, and labor shortages.

Growth, by itself, will compound the transportation problems which we are now experiencing in this region. Combined changes in population characteristics, economic conditions, and land development patterns could create or add to regional problems. It is anticipated that there will be a reduced labor pool for low wage service jobs, expected growth of these jobs outside Seattle, but lack of growth of low cost housing outside Seattle. This may create a mismatch between the labor force and job sites unless both regional low-cost housing and transportation needs are effectively addressed.

Growth will also result in problems which, once found primarily in Seattle because of its high density population, will occur throughout King County as more areas develop higher population densities. We have been experiencing this phenomenon with the spread of emergency food and shelter needs throughout many of King County's cities and unincorporated areas. It is also reflected in the growing need to locate services for low-income persons outside Seattle. Clearly, many of the problems which have been isolated within a few communities will become problems shared by most or all communities in the region and may require a regional approach for effective management.

Institutional changes will occur during this time period. The key question will be whether or not large portions of presently unincorporated King County are either annexed to one of the existing 29 cities or incorporated to form a mosaic of wall-to-wall cities in the western portion of King County. If the currently unincorporated areas remain so in the future, King County's municipal government role will increase since most of the region's growth is expected to occur in this area. If many unincorporated areas annex or incorporate, King County's municipal role will be considerably diminished. King County's regional role will continue to grow regardless of the rate at which unincorporated areas become incorporated. Population growth assures the evolution of what have been localized problems into regional ones. The extent to which regional management is focused on the County or shared among existing regional agencies, taken on by a multiplicity of new special purpose agencies, or assigned to a new agency as a result of reorganization of local and regional government remains to be seen.

A. Vision for Regional Government in the 21st Century

The Charter Review Commission recommends that all change in the organization of local government in King County should move toward a countywide regional government in which most, if not all, regional functions are located. The decision-making body for this regional government should be directly elected. All change in government reorganization and assignment of new regional responsibilities should be consistent with this vision.

During the review of this draft report and the Charter Review Commission's preliminary recommendations, one common thread in many of the comments was the distinction between regional and local unincorporated area services and whether a regional entity can or should provide both. This issue also underlies many of the concerns expressed by citizens during public comment concerning the perceived lack of representation of unincorporated areas on the King County Council. These citizens believe unincorporated area services and issues compete, unsuccessfully, against regional services and issues and that decisions affecting unincorporated areas are made by those who come from and are biased towards cities. Support for the King County/Metro reorganization proposal with an expanded County Council appears to be at least partly due to the belief that unincorporated areas will gain increased representation on the Council.

The terms regional and local have been defined and discussed earlier in this report. The problem with trying to clearly draw lines between regional and local services and issues is that they exist on a continuum with any distinction blurring in the middle. Often, the division is largely dependent on subjective agreement as to what is regional and local among the parties concerned. Several challenges to drawing a line along the regional to local continuum exist, especially under the organization of local government in Washington State and the complexity of governmental units in King County.

- Most services and issues have or can have both local and regional elements, depending on how they are structured. In King County, both law enforcement patrol and dispatch were local services. With the implementation of E-911, we now have local police patrols and a regional emergency communication and dispatch system. The same change has occurred for fire protection services.
- How the terms local and regional may be defined or redefined is often strongly influenced by existing responsibilities. Organizations tend to perpetuate their existence. Special districts have been strong and effective advocates of their roles as local service providers. A corollary is the reluctance of any local entity to give up existing local control over services or decision-making.
- We have some services which are, by general consensus, regional services, but which by State law are local responsibilities. Other State laws governing local government's revenue structure make it difficult to transform the service from local to regional. Public health services is an example of this problem.

Proposals for regionalizing a service are often subject to the misconception that the services must be all regional--that is, every element of the service under regional control. This is not necessarily true. A division of

responsibilities and authorities can recognize that certain services or decisions are most effectively managed at the regional level and that other services or decisions are more effectively carried out at the local level. This allows those elements which require uniform, countywide application to be placed at the regional level and those elements which respond to local needs for service levels or other unique local requirements to be placed at the local level.

The ultimate regional approach for the King County region was proposed in the 1975 Seattle Metropolitan Study Commission report and provided for in Amendment 58 to the Washington State Constitution--a county-city government. Under the 1975 Commission's model, there would be three types of local governments: (1) cities and towns, (2) unincorporated urban service areas and (3) unincorporated rural service areas. Each type of government would have its own directly elected governing body and would provide general purpose local government services. A regional government would be assigned countywide functions. It would be governed by a 35 to 45-member body comprised of elected officials from each of the three types of local governments based on their population and officials directly elected from districts. The chairperson of this regional government would be directly elected countywide. In Appendix A, the chart from the 1975 study illustrates what the proposed county-city government would look like.

A less comprehensive approach involving only King County government was proposed during the public review of the Charter Review Commission's preliminary recommendations. This approach was to expand the County's regional functions which would be governed by a 5-9 member regional governing body and a 9-member directly elected governing body for the unincorporated areas. The cities would continue to function as separate entities. Suggested Charter revisions to implement this approach are included in Appendix A to ensure that this suggestion is not lost to future discussions of how best to structure regional government.

The Charter Review Commission believes that the concern about the separation of regional and local governance and service delivery is one of growing importance. As a strategic matter, however, it is too early to advance a specific proposal. This is, however, a matter which should be kept in mind as more services come under some form of regional management, as more local problems become regional ones, and as the population of the unincorporated portions of the County either increases or decreases, depending on the future rate of incorporations and annexations.

The Charter Review Commission believes that the vision of regional government toward which all change should move will be implemented through incremental changes such as have been recommended in this report. Whether this regional government should be in the form of the Extreme Two-Tier model as proposed by the 1975 Metropolitan Study Commission or modification of the Two-Tier model should not be an issue at this time. This is a detail which can be addressed as we move closer to this vision and can see more clearly the changed circumstances to which this regional government (and the local governments) must respond. However, having this vision in common provides a basis upon which to begin discussing questions already before us. These include how best to manage a multi-county light rail transit system, how best to manage the port functions in the Central Puget Sound region, how best to manage public transit and water quality functions now vested in Metro, and how best to manage issues vested in multiple entities such as surface water and solid

waste. It also gives us a basis upon which to address emerging issues such as how best to address health and human services needs in this region, and to address problems not yet conceived of.

The 1987 Charter Review Commission was established, as was its predecessor 1977 Charter Review Committee, during a period of critical self-examination of the organization and effectiveness of local government in the delivery of local and regional services, and the capability of County government to respond to regional problems. During the period of the 1987 Charter Review Commission's work, there have been several substantive proposals for reorganization of regional government. The first was a proposal in a 1987 speech by Seattle Mayor Charles Royer that the Chair of Metro's 40-member Council be directly elected at large rather than hired by the Metro Council.

Also in 1987, King County 2000, a 35-member citizen group initiated by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, proposed restructuring the Metro Council to retain the federated structure, directly elect the citizen representatives and reduce the total size of the Metro Council.

The 1988 Legislative Session considered a number of Metro reorganization bills including Substitute House Bill 1726 which proposed to reduce the size of Metro Council to 21 members, nine of whom would be directly elected and 12 of whom would be county and city officials acting in an ex officio and independent capacity.

In early 1988, there was a proposal by County Councilmember Paul Barden to simply merge King County and Metro, which is permitted by statute (Chapter 36.56 RCW). After the Legislative Session ended with all the various Metro bills having failed passage, Councilmember Barden proposed that King County and Metro be reorganized under a new County structure.

8. King County/Metro Reorganization Proposal.

This proposal requires voter approval of several amendments to the County Charter and approval of the consolidation of the County and Metro as provided in Metro's enabling legislation. These actions would result in the formation of a new regional government by consolidating the regional functions of Metro and King County under a reorganized King County government. The new King County government would be governed by a nonpartisan executive and a nonpartisan, seventeen-member council which would be advised on each regional function by an appointed committee of 9 to 15 elected representatives (mayors/council) of King County cities. King County would establish a transit department and a water quality department to handle those specific regional functions. The proposal and the required implementing actions are described in more detail in the appendix.

The Charter Review Commission found that the King County/Metro reorganization proposal is consistent with the Committee's recommended vision of regional government in the future. The proposal is also consistent with the Commission's recommended governance criteria including, but not limited to:

- Provides an identifiable, accountable and accessible decision-making body.
- Provides a directly elected body for the imposition of sewage treatment and transit charges.

- o Merges a unit of special purpose government with another government to reduce the total number of governmental units.

The Charter Review Commission recommends that there be a single directly elected governing body for King County and Metro. Further:

- The County Council should be expanded to 13 members.
 - The Council should organize itself so that it has a committee of councilmembers from unincorporated areas to make recommendations to the Council regarding local government issues for unincorporated areas.
- There should be advisory committees on regional functions organized on the following principles:
 - Counties, cities, special districts, and other governmental units should have a role in the development of regional plans and services which will impact them.
 - The advisory committees should include representation for unincorporated areas which is proportionate to that of the cities.
 - The entire membership of the advisory committees be geographically balanced.
- It is recommended that the issue of partisan/nonpartisan County government not be addressed at this time.

C. Recommendations for Action

Regardless of whether or not the functions of Metro and King County are consolidated, now or in the future, there are some problems and services which are clearly regional in terms of their cross-jurisdictional nature and which could be better managed if placed under a regional agency with full authority and responsibility.

1. There are other services and problems to be put on the regional issue agenda. The proposals presented here are certainly not the only such problems and services which need to be placed under a regional management, but they are ones which were most often raised to the Charter Review Commission and which have been the subject of considerable discussion as critical regional issues. There are other issues such as regional funding for the arts, library services, subsidized housing and a variety of social service needs which may benefit from some degree of regional management for planning, policy-setting and other decision-making, funding and implementation. These problems need to be put on the regional issue agenda and the Regional Committee encourages appropriate groups to do so.

2. Regional is not always better, but sometimes it is. This report does not assume that regionalizing a service will always result in more efficient, higher quality service at a lower cost than could be provided at the local level. There are, however, regional problems which require one or more of the following to be effectively managed: countywide policy setting and other

decision-making, regional planning and enforcement of those plans, regional revenue base for equitable funding of regional projects, and regional implementation or management of service delivery. Concomitantly, there are unique local needs for service levels, projects and programs which are best met through local policy setting, planning, funding and implementation. The challenge to solving regional problems is to develop a solution which combines the regional and local elements most effectively for both needs.

3. Start with concepts, then agree to implementing details. It should be noted that the Regional Committee has deliberately not developed descriptive or implementing details. The Commission has observed that the presence of detail tends to prematurely focus regional governance discussions on the merits of the details instead of the merits of the overall objective. For example, in an early Commission discussion of the recommendation to regionalize the solid waste function under the County, instead of first addressing whether regionalizing the solid waste function was good idea, a concern was raised that the County would take over the physical collection of garbage from the private haulers (which was not contemplated by the Regional Committee). The Commission's position is that if there is a will there is a way--if people can agree on an overall objective, they can also negotiate and implement the details to best accomplish that objective.

While the proposals presented here are certainly not the only alternative for true regional management, they are put on the table as a challenge to King County, Seattle, and the suburban cities as well as interested public service organizations and citizens to consider and improve upon and ultimately to implement. The problems are well known; there are many possible solutions.

There are six recommendations.

The first and second recommendations--(1) create a countywide surface water utility under a single regional agency and (2) create a countywide solid waste management agency--were addressed because these problems require immediate resolution to avoid unnecessary costs to the public and unnecessary environmental damage.

The third recommendation--create a countywide parks district under a regional agency to fund regional parks and recreation facilities--addresses the need to better plan for and more equitably fund our regional parks and recreation facilities in order to provide them for future generations.

The fourth recommendation--to regionalize public health services--addresses a funding problem which has historically been the source of discord between the County and the cities in King County and which results in unnecessary contract and administrative costs both to cities and the County.

The fifth recommendation--creating a regional airport agency and transferring the King County Airport to that regional agency--while not a regional issue of great magnitude, needs to be considered. Recent discussion over the development of a regional air transportation system plan by the Puget Sound Council of Governments has made it clear that this is a regional problem and that the number of entities involved is confusing and makes problem solving difficult.

The sixth and final recommendation—creating a regional comprehensive land use, transportation and economic development agency—is the most challenging, will require the greatest degree of vision among local government elected officials, and is the key to the economic well being and quality of life of the King County region in the 21st century.

1. Regionalize Surface Water Management.

Finding: Surface Water Management (SWM) is a problem which crosses jurisdiction lines and for which the solutions require cross-jurisdictional action. At present, the responsibility for nonpoint source pollution plans is assigned by the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority (PSWQA) to counties, which must carry out this responsibility through interlocal agreements with cities. However, the implementation responsibility and authority rests with the individual county and cities. This includes the development of land use controls to control surface water runoff, capital projects such as roads or specific surface water control projects, and the generation of funds.

The County established in 1987 a SWM utility covering the developed portion of unincorporated King County. There were criticisms that the unincorporated area residents would be paying for regional facilities which city residents would benefit from, but not pay for. Cities have complained that they have had to fund projects to solve SWM problems caused by unincorporated areas development. Bellevue implemented one of the first SWM utilities in the country and has SWM development standards which are higher than many jurisdictions, including the County. This causes some problems when Bellevue and the County try to work out cost sharing and other arrangements for basin planning and regional projects. On the horizon is the possibility that surface water runoff will have to be treated or otherwise controlled more extensively and specifically than it is presently in most cases. There is also a need to research and develop new methods of managing runoff—ways which will not require costly structural solutions and yet will not damage our wetlands, streams and lakes.

Conclusions and Recommendations: It is recommended that a regional surface water management utility be created with the responsibility for the development of regional SWM policies and capital improvement plans to be implemented by local governments (County, cities, special districts). The utility would also levy a countywide service charge to fund SWM planning and capital improvements and to allocate those funds to local governments for implementation. The utility should have the authority to establish minimum standards such as those for road design and development and should have the ability to assume responsibility for the implementation of regional surface water management programs or requirements for such treatment facilities or the implementation of other technology not effectively implemented at the local level. Cities with existing utilities could continue them or might find that city charges could be reduced with the availability of funding for regional projects. Cities contemplating creating SWM utilities may find there is no need to do so with the availability of funding from the regional utility.

Currently, there are three alternatives for assigning a regional SWM utility responsibility: (1) Create a new entity, (2) Metro, and (3) King County. The first alternative is contrary to the recommended criteria in this report, and also to a general consensus to reduce the number of units of government. Metro, although it has broad water quality authority, does not have the

responsibility for land use controls which are integral to surface water management solutions and has limited its water quality role to sewage treatment and water quality monitoring. Metro's current federated Council is not consistent with the Charter Review Commission's criterion that governing bodies which levy service charges on citizens should be directly elected by those citizens.

It is recommended that the regional SWM utility be created by the County and that this utility provide a role for cities in the utility program decisions. The County already has a SWM utility serving the developed portions of King County which surround most cities. Through that utility, the county generates funds to plan for and construct SWM capital improvements in unincorporated areas. The County also works cooperatively in the development of basin plans and capital improvements which cross city/county boundaries. Additionally, the County's drainage standards are used by most of the suburban cities. As a local government with land use and planning responsibilities, the County is knowledgeable about the ability of local government to meet minimum standards.

It is further recommended that the County consider the establishment of a countywide SWM utility as described when the County's unincorporated area utility is reviewed in 1991.

2. Regionalize Solid Waste Management:

Finding: Solid waste management is problem which crosses jurisdictional boundaries and which clearly requires management on a regional basis. Yet, it is the municipal responsibility of individual cities and the County. Cities have responsibility for collection (they usually franchise private haulers to collect within the city) and disposal (which they have chosen not to provide within city boundaries and so are dependent on the County's solid waste disposal facilities). The County has responsibility only for disposal and no control over collection within the unincorporated areas (this is franchised by the State Utilities and Transportation Commission). The County, however, operates the major (and, virtually only) solid waste disposal facility in the County. Solid waste is managed by the County on a regional basis through interlocal agreements with 29 cities. For a long time, the County was the regional solid waste disposal agency without the interlocal agreements. However, as this region moves closer to the the development of waste incineration facilities and into resource recovery/recycling in a major way, solid waste becomes a valuable commodity for purposes of ensuring that the amount of waste to be disposed of is guaranteed in order to economically run a waste incineration facility--commonly referred to as waste stream control. It is extremely cumbersome and costly to develop and maintain waste stream control agreements with 29 cities.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

It is recommended that solid waste responsibilities be consolidated under the County rather than being divided between the County (which only has disposal authority) and cities (which control collection, but have no disposal sites). Since the County is already operating the regional waste disposal facility and since the County has already negotiated regional management responsibilities through interlocal agreements, the County is the logical regional solid waste management entity. It is recommended that regional policy setting and planning should be assigned to a regional solid waste management agency. The agency operating the regional solid waste disposal facilities (currently King County)

should also have the necessary authority through franchise or other powers to control the disposal of solid waste collected within the region—commonly referred to as waste stream management—for both incorporated and unincorporated areas. While it appears that the greatest efficiencies would be gained by consolidating all solid waste management responsibilities and authorities now fragmented among the State, the County and 29 cities in a single regional solid waste agency, it is recognized that local management of collection and development of local recycling and other programs may be required to effectively respond to unique local needs for service levels and programs.

Although Metro could take on solid waste responsibilities, it is not involved in solid waste services at this time. There has been some discussion of Metro assuming this role in a move towards becoming a regional utilities agency, but no action has been taken in this direction. If it is determined in the future that this is an appropriate direction for regional governance, Metro has the authority, with voter approval, to take over this responsibility.

3. Create A Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities Planning and Funding Agency

Finding: The City of Seattle and King County both maintain and operate parks and recreation facilities which are widely used by people throughout King County, but which are supported (funded) by the County and Seattle under their individual municipal responsibilities. Some suburban cities also have parks and recreation facilities which could be characterized as regional.

Major capital funding for these facilities often comes from regional bond issues. However, there is often considerable intergovernmental conflict and negotiation before the regional bond issues are agreed to. Additionally, there is no regional plan for the development and maintenance of these facilities. They are developed on a first-come, first-served basis and not on the basis of regional priorities. It is not equitable to have some regional parks and facilities funded on a countywide basis because they have stronger lobbying groups or greater voter appeal, while others must be supported by an individual jurisdiction's revenues even though they also serve the entire county.

Conclusions and Recommendations: A countywide approach to the development and maintenance of regional parks and recreation facilities is needed. It is recommended that there be established a regional agency for the purposes of generating funds from a regional revenue base to be allocated to local jurisdictions for the development and maintenance of regional parks and recreation facilities in accordance with a comprehensive plan. It is further recommended that this agency be the County. Implementation of the development of new facilities, and rehabilitation and maintenance of existing facilities would remain the responsibility of local governments. Local governments would have a role in the development of the regional plans, prioritization of projects and in decisions to put regional parks and recreation ballot issues before the voters.

The County covers the entire county region and has the capability of administering a countywide revenue source such as a voter approved six year levy for regional parks and recreation facilities like that for Emergency Medical Services. Also, the County is presently responsible for the development and maintenance of regional parks and recreation facilities.

While Metro's enabling legislation provides Metro with the option of becoming a regional comprehensive parks planning agency, there has been no movement in that direction. The recently formed Regional Capital Review Commission's limited mission of reviewing and prioritizing regional capital bond proposals will not obviate the need to implement this recommendation.

4. Regionalize Public Health

Finding: State law assigns counties and cities the responsibility for providing public health services within their jurisdiction. In most cases, this is done by a county health department with which cities contract or a county-wide health district which includes the county and all cities.

In King County, there is already a countywide public health program administered through the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health. Seattle, by State law, is able to operate its own health department outside that operated by King County. Seattle and King County have negotiated an agreement by which King County administers a regional public health program with Seattle funding and administering personal public health services for Seattle residents through the Seattle Health Division. Suburban cities contract with King County to meet their public health responsibilities. The Seattle-King County Public Health Department provides personal and environmental health services on a countywide basis without regard to jurisdiction.

The public health contracts between the County and Seattle and, in particular, the suburban cities are the source of much discord. To state the issue simply, the suburban cities find the cost of the public health services difficult to accommodate in their budgets and difficult to justify as a municipal expense. They would like to find a way of eliminating this expense. Cities do have a revenue earmarked for public health services--the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET)--but it is also earmarked for police and fire protection and is inadequate to support all three needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations: It is recommended that public health services funding sources and responsibilities be assigned to the County--excluding Seattle if it so chooses as provided by statute. Public health services would be cost effectively and efficiently provided if placed entirely under the authority of King County (except those of Seattle as provided by State law but which are administered by the regional Seattle-King County Health Department). Public health services are clearly provided on a regional basis and, if a funding source could be identified to replace the cities contract funds, the County would be able to eliminate costly administrative procedures related to negotiating contracts with 28 suburban cities and maintaining cost accounting information for billing purposes--all of which do nothing to improve the public's health.

5. Create a Regional Airport Agency

Finding: Because of their proximity and high utilization levels, the King County and Sea-Tac Airport operations are closely coordinated even though they generally serve different purposes--passenger traffic at Sea-Tac and commercial traffic at King County's airfield. In general, this has been a problem free relationship. The King County Airport is considered to be well managed. However, recent discussions about the development of a regional air

transportation system plan by the Puget Sound Council of Governments has made it clear that management of aviation facility resources is a growing regional problem and that the number of entities involved makes problem solving difficult. Increasing development in the King County and Central Puget Sound Region has led, on the one hand, to the loss of aviation facilities to development as industrial parks or other uses, and, on the other hand, increasing passenger, commercial and small private aircraft traffic. Recent discussion of the Puget Sound Council of Governments' regional air transportation system planning has highlighted the emergence of air transportation as a regional issue at both at the county and multi-county levels.

Conclusions and Recommendations: It is recommended that King County seek the development of a regional airport agency which might be assigned to the Port of Seattle or might require the creation of a new entity, and that the King County Airport should be transferred to this regional airport authority. The transfer of the County's airport to the regional airport authority is consistent with the Charter Review Commission's criterion of putting similar functions under the same regional agency. The transfer would reduce the number of governments involved in regional air transportation systems management. (The County would, of course, retain land use and other general purpose government roles as they might apply to air transportation.) The transfer would also provide for more efficient management of the airspace for the King County and Sea-Tac Airports by placing them under a single authority.

A key to this recommendation is the development of a charter for the authority which would clearly delineate the goals and responsibilities of the regional airport authority. This charter should ensure that recreation aviation as well as commercial and passenger aviation are part of that agency's responsibilities since they all are important elements of the economic vitality of this region. Commitment to these responsibilities should be required as part of the transfer of the County's airport to a regional airport authority.

6. Create a Regional Comprehensive Planning Agency for Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development.

Finding: Currently, the Puget Sound Council of Governments (PSCOG) is the only entity which conducts regional comprehensive land use and transportation planning. This agency is frequently criticized for not having the powers to enforce its plans and for having plans which essentially stitch together the existing plans of local jurisdictions. In fairness to the PSCOG, it should be noted that it was created by an interlocal agreement among its member jurisdiction who chose not to delegate such authority to the PSCOG. Currently, King County, since it surrounds a portion or all of most of the cities in the county, is, for all practical purposes, a comprehensive land use and transportation planning agency. The County's plans have a major impact on the each of the cities in the county both directly and indirectly.

Regardless of whether more or less of the County incorporates, a regional agency with responsibility and authority to develop and implement countywide land use, transportation and economic development plans will become more important. Without such an agency, King County could develop into a mosaic of cities and unincorporated areas with conflicting land use policies. This would be costly to the public both by increasing the cost of providing

services and by creating personal costs associated with the inconvenience in moving about the county and degradation in the quality of life in this county. There will also be the problem of ensuring that there are sites for: Industry; unwanted but necessary regional facilities such as sewage treatment plants, bus bases, and small aviation facilities; low cost housing and housing for special needs; open spaces and other environmental or cultural amenities; and rights of way for transportation corridors.

Conclusions and Recommendations: While there seems to be general consensus that a regional comprehensive land use and transportation planning agency is needed, this is also a very political issue because it requires that local governments give up some of their local control over these matters. The Regional Committee originally considered this matter under its longer-term recommendations, recognizing that development of such an agency will be very difficult and require extensive, lengthy negotiations among the local governments involved. However, the rapid pace of growth and change in this area and the severity of the problems confronting this region right now lead the Regional Committee to place this issue under its near-term changes.

It is recommended that King County take an assertive leadership role in the development of a regional comprehensive land use, transportation and economic development agency with the power to impose and enforce its plans on local governments.

As this concept has been discussed recently, it would probably involve the development of general policy plans addressing land use, transportation, and economic development matters with local jurisdictions being required to have their own detailed plans consistent with the regional comprehensive plans. There is no recommendation for which agency this function should be vested in since there are too many unanswered questions and possible options. Clearly, King County, Metro or the Puget Sound Council of Governments as they might evolve could become the regional comprehensive planning, transportation and economic development agency. Consistent with the Regional Committee's vision of the 21st century, this function would eventually become part of the single, general purpose regional agency. However, this is a regional function which may be most effective if implemented on a multi-county basis.

C. Recommendations for Long-Term Changes _____

There are other services for which regional management could result in more economical and effective service delivery. Recommendations for some of these services are given here, although it is recognized that these are very much long term objectives given the long history of controversy and the sensitive nature of these services.

As with the other recommendations, there are no implementing details provided for long-term recommendations. With the long-range time frame and the rapid and unpredictable change we can expect in this region, it makes little sense to propose detail at this time. However, it is important to identify long-range issues and consider their evolution in terms of a long range vision and criteria for governing change such as are proposed by the Charter Review Commission.

1. Reorganize the Port Functions: There are a number of issues about the Port's role and accountability as a regional agency which need to be addressed. Should the Port District remain a separate, countywide unit of

government; should it be combined with a larger regional government as described in the vision for the 21st Century; or should a multi-county port authority be created? How accountable is the Port Commission to the public? Should the Port Commissioners continue to be elected at large or by district? Should the size of the Port Commission be increased? If the Port remains a separate unit of government, how should the Port's land use and other actions be related to land use controls and other responsibilities of County and city governments?

2. Regionalize Management of Public Safety, District Court and Jail

Functions: Law enforcement and related prosecution and incarceration services are needed countywide regardless of jurisdiction. There are some areas where jurisdictional boundaries have resulted in city/county differences. Some small cities are able to provide only a very basic level of law enforcement and rely on the County or neighboring city law enforcement officers for additional assistance when necessary. Cities, which often have higher levels of general law enforcement services than the County, such as patrols, often complain about responding to public safety problems in nearby unincorporated areas. Jurisdictional boundaries also create problems because most of the cities rely on the County for incarceration, district court and public defense services for which the cities are billed. As long as the cities and the County each have individual law enforcement agencies under their separate jurisdiction, these city/county conflicts will continue.

Specialized police services such as AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) and E-911, are already increasingly being provided on a regional basis. The County's and cities' law enforcement agencies already provide a great many cross-jurisdictional services through mutual aid agreements. Rather than have a patchwork of varying levels of law enforcement and municipal codes, it might be more cost effective and result in a better overall law enforcement if such functions were placed under a single regional authority. It is recommended that the County and cities explore possibilities for increasing the regionalization (enforcement, funding and delivery) of law enforcement and related prosecution and incarceration services. It is recognized that this will probably occur through incremental changes over time. It is also recognized that this will probably require flexibility to allow individual jurisdictions to obtain higher levels of service than may be provided elsewhere in the region.

With a regional law enforcement agency and common laws, it may also be possible to make the district court and jail functions truly regional instead of the contract-based functionally regional services which they are today. As long as law enforcement services are city-only and county-only municipal services, it is likely that district court and jail services will also remain municipal services provided on a functionally regional basis by the County (and remain a source of discord between the County and cities). It is most likely that the regional law enforcement agency would be King County as it might evolve over time, or the general purpose regional agency envisioned by the Regional Committee for the 21st Century.

3. Place Sewage Collection with the Regional Agency Providing Sewage

Treatment: Management of sewage collection and treatment, at least for the purposes of policy development and planning, should be placed under a single regional agency, that agency being Metro or the agency it evolves into. In King County, sewer service is provided by more than 20 sewer or sewer and water districts and the cities resulting in a patchwork of service providers

with varying levels of service and rates. To some extent, Metro already serves as the regional management agency. There are sewage collection and treatment systems outside Metro including the Federal Way, Des Moines and Southwest Suburban Sewer Districts and outlying cities such as North Bend, Black Diamond and Enumclaw. The separation of sewage collection and sewage treatment responsibilities between cities and special districts and Metro was a political compromise at the time Metro's enabling legislation was drafted and not the result of compelling engineering or other objective factors. As the cost of capital facilities and competition for the ratepayer's dollar to pay for those facilities increases, as development increases and placing greater demands on the sewage collection and treatment system, and as concerns for environmental protection increase regulatory requirements, it is appropriate to re-examine how sewage collection and treatment are managed both on the local (city and special district) and regional levels.

An important factor in how sewer service can best be managed in the future will be the rate of annexations and incorporations. Increased annexations and incorporations will probably reduce the total number of special sewer districts and reduce the size (and customer base) of some existing districts to the extent that they might not be very cost effective to operate. Small cities which do not expand through annexations may find that their small systems are not as cost effective to operate as nearby larger city or special district systems. Even without increased annexations and incorporations, small city systems and special district systems might find it difficult to remain economically viable.

There is a general perception that special districts are not cost effective and fragment regional service delivery, policy development and planning. There is also a perception that special districts should be abolished or reduced in number. Indeed, this is one of the Charter Review Commission's criteria for future governance. While sewer districts make a good case for their continuance both in terms of cost and level of services and responsiveness to local needs--this is not true for all special districts. City sewer systems also make the same claims and also might not be able to live up to their claims. This needs to be addressed on a case by case basis. For example, King County found that sewer districts adjacent to the County's own five, small systems could provide the same or higher level service for a lower cost to ratepayers than could the County. The County, faced with the need to compete with cities and special districts to expand the rate base of these five systems, instead chose to transfer its sewer responsibilities to adjacent agencies.

There will also be the issue of how best to meet sewage service needs in lower density unincorporated areas. Should they be served by on-site systems (usually individual septic tank and drainfield systems)? Should there be an agency assigned to monitor and manage areas served by septic tanks? At what point should sewage collection systems be installed? Is it best (environmentally and economically) to have small outlying treatment facilities or should they be connected to part of a regional treatment facility? Should the County be directly involved in sewage collection and, perhaps, in treatment in outlying areas; should the County seek cities to extend their service to these areas; or should special districts provide this service?

In order to ensure that this costly and important service is provided most effectively and most efficiently at the local level and consistent with regional needs and priorities, the manner in which sewer collection and

treatment service is provided throughout the region needs to be re-examined. It might be appropriate to place some or all sewer service functions under a single regional agency or to reorganize the regional/local structure for these services. For example, instead of city and special districts systems resulting from historic patterns of development and annexations, subregional systems organized around drainage or other service delivery factors should be developed, each with rates supporting the level of services within the subregion. Perhaps collection should remain wholly a local function, but treatment should be the responsibility of a regional agency.

4. Place Water Supply and Distribution under a Regional Agency: Water supply and distribution should eventually be placed under a single regional agency. Water supply resources, both surface and underground, are regional resources—not resources belonging to individual cities and special districts which is sought and fought over at unnecessary expense to the public. As with sewer services, there are no compelling engineering or other objective reasons exist which require that the water supply function be separated from the distribution function.

There is no recommendation for which agency should be the regional agency or the extent to which local service provision is necessary to respond to unique local needs. Consistent with the Charter Review Commission's vision for the 21st Century, regional management of water supply and distribution should eventually evolve to the single, general purpose regional agency in the County. There has been movement towards regional management of water supply, at least to the extent of coordinated planning and information sharing. These efforts should be encouraged. As for sewer collection and treatment, the effectiveness and economic viability of individual city and water district systems should be examined and, if necessary, a new organizational structure for these services be developed. This might include creating larger, subregional water districts by combining existing city and special water districts. This might mean shifting some responsibilities between local (city and special district) water distribution agencies and a regional water supply agency.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Any person and any group addressing the issue of how to best manage and deliver regional services in King County faces a formidable task. Even addressing a part of that task—conducting an assessment of King County's role as a regional government and making recommendations to improve the County's ability to deliver regional services—has proven to be a major challenge.

As this report discusses, it is tempting to begin this process with a listing of problems. Unfortunately, most efforts have not gone much farther than this and few new problems are discovered. Those concerned about and studying regional issues should certainly consider the lists of problems and the conclusions drawn by past groups. In order for change to occur, members of our community must share a vision for the future. Recent discussions of regional governance and service delivery problems has not produced a consensus on that vision, in part because there is no consensus about what we want from our government. It is time to move forward and, having decided how we do not want to manage and deliver regional services, decide what we do want. The Charter Review Commission has offered criteria for guiding future decisions on governance and the assignment of new regional responsibilities. The

Commission challenges those concerned about regional issues to discuss those criteria and accept, modify or completely replace them, all the while working towards a common consensus of what we want change to achieve.

The Charter Review Commission's vision for the 21st century is that the governance of regional functions in King County should move towards a countywide regional government in which most, if not all, such functions are located; that the decision-making body for this regional government should be directly elected; and that all change in government reorganization and assignment of new regional responsibilities should be consistent with this vision. The Charter Review Commission challenges those concerned about regional issues management to consider their own vision of governance in the 21st century and join together in the development of a community consensus.

Finally, the Charter Review Commission suggests that consensus on the general concepts be reached first with concept details addressed second. If we can reach agreement on and commit to common goals, we can also negotiate and implement the details to best accomplish those goals.