



2018-2019 Charter Review Commission

Early Action Items Recommended to the King County Council

Committee of the Whole – June 3, 2019



Charter Review Commission Process

- The Charter Review Commission began meeting in 2018 and to date has:
 - Hosted 3 town hall style meetings to gather input from the public
 - Held 12 meetings of the full commission
 - Divided into 4 subcommittees which have met a combined 13 times
 - Made three Early Action Recommendations to the Full Council



Recommendation #1

Changes to the Inquest Process

- The Charter Review Commission recommends making two changes to the charter as it pertains to Inquests:
 - Elevate – to the charter - the County Code Provisions providing a county-funded attorney to families of decedents during the inquest process
 - Require inquests to be undertaken in the event of an in-custody death
- The CRC, in making this recommendation, did highlight some areas for further study – both concerns relate to potential impacts to the budget:
 - There need to be clear guidelines on what is meant by “family” for purposes of a county-funded attorney
 - Requiring in-custody inquests will lead to more inquests being conducted and therefor higher costs.



Recommendation #2

Affordable Housing

- The CRC recommends removing a prohibition in the Charter that prohibits the County from selling properties owned by the former Metro funds for less than full value if the property is being used for affordable housing
- State law was changed in the 2018 session that provides opportunities for public agencies to sell land for less than full value if it is being used for affordable housing. However, the Charter currently restricts King County's ability to utilize the new law as it pertains to the former Metro funds.
- The CRC also believes that, should this amendment pass, the County should look at its process for disposing of surplus land to make sure that this new provision in state law is not abused and still respects the taxpayers and ratepayers.
- Those concerns have been outlined in our transmittal to Council.



Recommendation #3

Subpoena Power for OLEO

- The Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO) is a critical tool in assuring that the public has transparency and accountability into the actions undertaken by the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO). The county code already lists this as one of the powers that OLEO should have.
- One tool that the CRC believes should be at the Office's disposal is a subpoena power. The CRC does not believe that it would be used very often, but that it is important for OLEO to have should it be necessary.
- The CRC is also aware that this item may need to be collectively bargained to come into full force, but does not believe that is a reason to not include it in the Charter.



What's Next for the CRC

- The Commission is still reviewing about 14 more items. Some of these will likely be included in our final report, others may not make it through the full CRC.
- We intend to have our work completely by the end of 2019 and hope to issue a report at that time.
- We thank you for all of your support through the process.