

# Proposed Clark County Home Rule Charter

May 2014

## Frequently asked questions

### **What in the charter is different from the present form of county government?**

The charter proposes five areas of change. They are:

- Creating a County Council/County Manager form of government. The charter clearly delineates roles and responsibilities of the elected County Council and appointed County Manager. The County Council will deal with budget, legislative and policy issues, and will hire and fire the manager. The County Manager will focus on implementation of those policies and administrative duties.
- Expanding the base of elected representation with five County Council members instead of three County Commissioners.
- Electing four County Council members by district in both the primary and general election and one council member at large to serve as chair.
- Increasing the voice of voters through Initiative and Referendum powers. Each will be limited as required by state law.
- Providing periodic review and potential amendment of the charter, which will allow the document to meet the county's future needs. The first review will be five years after the charter is approved, and then at least every 10 years thereafter. Members of future Charter Review Commissions will be elected. All charter amendments must be approved by a vote of the people.

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In November 2013, voters elected five county residents from each of the three Clark County Commissioner districts to serve as the Board of Freeholders. Its only purpose was to draft a home rule charter to put before voters. The 15-member board met from November 2013 through May 2014, and disbanded when the charter was completed.

The proposed home rule charter will appear on the general election ballot Nov. 4, 2014.

Allowed by state law, a home rule charter gives local voters the opportunity to make the structure of county government fit the community's needs.

The Board of Freeholders represented a wide array of positions on various topics, but members' common goal was to create a better, more effective government for Clark County. Despite varying ideas about how to achieve that goal, members were nearly unanimous about what issues should be addressed in the charter. Still, the document is one of compromise; no freeholder got all he or she wanted in the final product.

This proposed charter contains checks and balances freeholders think will help maximize good governance. Still, a document cannot prevent bad governance. Voters must remain vigilant about electing people who will make wise, fair and far-sighted decisions for the good of the entire county, freeholders said.

Enclosed is a summary of the proposed charter in a question and answer form. For the full text of the charter, please go to [www.clark.wa.gov/freeholders/index.html](http://www.clark.wa.gov/freeholders/index.html)

**Will the charter affect other aspects of county governance?**

No. The roles and responsibilities of the Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff and Treasurer and all county departments will remain unchanged.

**Why did the Board of Freeholders decide to expand to a council of five members?**

Having five council members strengthens citizen representation, and allows the council's workload to be shared more broadly.

**Why did the Freeholders agree on electing four council members by district and one at large?**

The Board of Freeholders agreed this model would preserve close ties between voters and their elected representative while ensuring the chair will take a communitywide view on issues impacting the entire county.

**Will the charter cost taxpayers more than the current form of county government?**

The charter was designed to keep the five-member County Council's operational costs comparable to those of the current three-member Board of County Commissioners. By 2017, after a transition period, all five council members will be paid the same salary, which will be essentially half of what commissioners are now paid.

**Why did Freeholders select a council-manager form of government?**

Freeholders decided an appointed county manager and elected County Council would minimize potential conflicts between the branches, ensure the necessary skills and qualifications in a manager, and be cost effective.

**What are initiative and referendum powers?**

An initiative is a procedure by which county residents can, with a petition, propose a new law and submit it to voters. A referendum is a procedure by which county residents can, with a petition, repeal some council actions by a vote of the people. Both initiative and referendum powers are limited. Freeholders established thresholds for signature gathering and validation that will discourage frivolous petitions but allow practical use of these powers.

**Will voters cast ballots on all or parts of the charter?**

Voters will cast ballots on the charter as a whole.

**What percent of voted ballots will be required to approve or reject the charter?**

The proposed charter will pass or fail with a simple majority.

**How were the new council districts created?**

State law tells counties how to define election districts using apolitical criteria. This process was followed to create four new council districts.

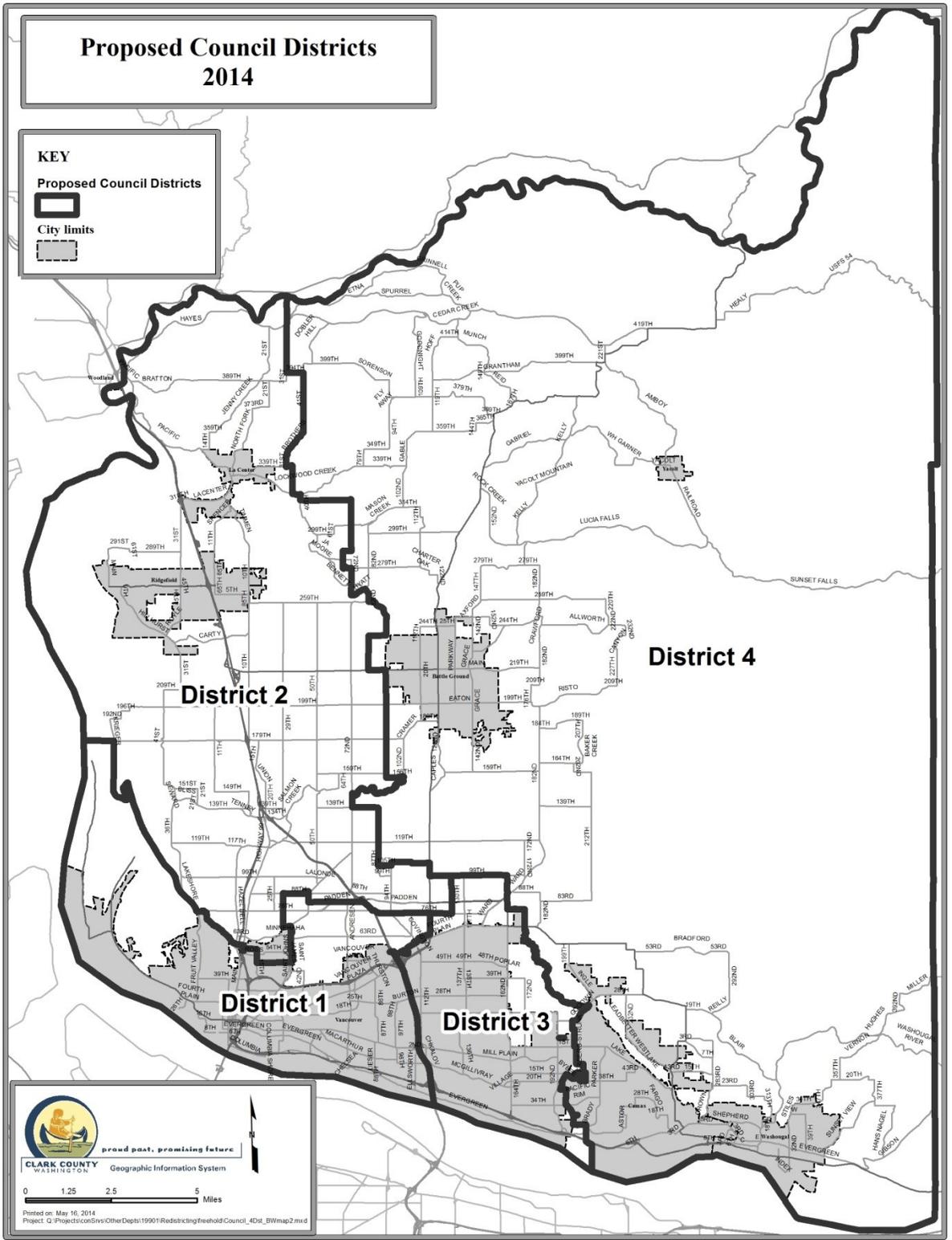
# Proposed Council Districts 2014

## KEY

Proposed Council Districts



City limits



**CLARK COUNTY**  
WASHINGTON

Geographic Information System

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Printed on: May 16, 2014  
Project: G:\Projects\GIS\Other Depts\1990\1\Redistricting\freehold\Council\_4Dsl\_BWmap2.mxd

## Clark County Board of Freeholders



(Left to right)

Front row: Dan Ogden, Nan Henriksen

Middle row: Jim Mains, Liz Pike, Garry Lucas, Marc Boldt, Pat Jollota

Back row: Temple Lentz, Tracy Wilson, Jim Moeller, Paul Dennis, Randy Mueller, Peter Silliman, Joe Zarelli

## District No. 1



**Position 1**  
**Garry Lucas**  
Clark County Sheriff,  
1991-present



**Position 2**  
**Ann Rivers,**  
state Senator,  
18th Legislative  
District,  
June 2012-present



**Position 3**  
**Joseph Zarelli,**  
state Senator,  
18th Legislative  
District,  
1995-2012



**Position 4**  
**Peter Silliman,**  
senior engineer,  
CenturyLink



**Position 5**  
**Randy Mueller,**  
Port of Ridgefield  
business  
development  
director, 2007-2014;  
Port of Chehalis  
executive director,  
June 2014-present

## District No. 2



**Position 1**  
**Nan Henriksen,**  
Board of Freeholders  
chair; Camas mayor,  
1983-1992;  
Washington State  
Growth Management  
Hearings Board  
member, 1992-2004



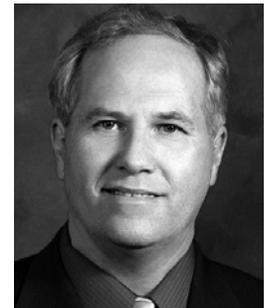
**Position 2**  
**Tracy Wilson,**  
co-owner, CEO,  
DeWils Industries;  
Association of  
Washington Business  
board member;  
National Federation  
of Independent  
Business leadership  
council



**Position 3**  
**Liz Pike,**  
state Representative,  
18th Legislative  
District; Shangri-La  
Farm, operator;  
Camas City Council  
member, 2003-2007



**Position 4**  
**Paul Dennis,**  
owner, Cascade  
Planning Group;  
Camas mayor, 2003-  
2011; Camas City  
Council member,  
1997-2003



**Position 5**  
**Marc Boldt,**  
Velvet Acres Gardens  
driver; Board of Clark  
County Commissioners,  
2005-2012; state  
Representative 17th  
Legislative District,  
1994-2004

## District No. 3



**Position 1**

**Pat Jollota,**  
local historian; Elder Justice Center, board member; Justice for Children, chair; Vancouver City Council member, 1990-2010



**Position 2**

**Val Ogden,**  
state Representative 49th Legislative District, 1991-2003; former nonprofit director, died April 9, 2014



**Position 2**

**Dan Ogden,**  
retired political science professor, appointed, sworn in May 13, 2014



**Position 3**

**Jim Moeller,**  
state Representative 49th Legislative District, 2003-present; Vancouver City Council member, 1995-2003; chemical dependency counselor, Kaiser Permanente, 1985-present



**Position 4**

**Temple Lentz,**  
partner, High Five Media; Hello Vancouver host; *The Daily 'Couve* blogger



**Position 5**

**Jim Mains,**  
partner, High Five Media; owner, Main Distinction; executive assistant, Ed Lynch Company