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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** June 5, 2018  
**To:** Jim Iles, City Attorney, City of Everett  
**Re:** Description of Ballot Title Ordinance

This memo discusses several provisions—and choices—included in the attached draft of an ordinance that would place amendments to five City Charter provisions before Everett’s voters.

If enacted, the Charter amendments would provide that a specific number of City Council positions would be elected by voters in districts. The other Council positions and the Mayor would continue to be elected at large. The district boundaries would be determined by an independent commission, which would be assisted by a professional “districting master.”

You will see several instances of alternate provisions in brackets. Obviously, the ordinance will read much more smoothly when the Council’s decisions have enabled us to choose which bracketed options to use. For example, the Council’s choice of whether to propose the initial implementation of the district system in 2021 or 2023 will reduce the possible versions of an amended Charter Section 2.3 from four to two (the remaining two options would be decided upon by the voters in choosing whether to have four districts or five districts). In developing the draft amendments, I have endeavored to write the Charter amendments as concisely as possible, to retain overlapping Council terms, including during the election year that the district system commences, and to reduce the incidence of shortened (two-year) terms during the transition. Below are some provisions I wanted to point out as well as the key choices for Council to consider.

### Ordinance Section 1 A//Charter Section 2.1

#### **Question 1: How many districts, and how many at-large positions?**

Discussion: Should there be, for example, four Council members elected from districts, and three at large, city-wide? Or should there be five districts, with two city-wide Council positions?

**Question 2: What should the timing be for appointment of a Districting Commission and the completion of the Commission’s work?**

The attached draft Charter amendments provide for a Districting Commission to be appointed by January 31 of the year before the year in which the new districts would be used for elections. For example, a Districting Commission would be appointed by January 31, 2022, in anticipation of the new 2020 census data that would become available in April of 2022. The Districting Master would be appointed within 90 days, begin work, and the Commission would be required to provide the new district boundaries on or before December 1, 2022, eleven months before the 2023 elections. This would provide ample time for candidates to determine in which district they reside if they wish to file for a district Council seat in the city 2023 election. Other proposals in circulation would provide for very short timelines, giving potential candidates notice of which re-drawn districts they live in just weeks prior to the filing week.

It should be noted that in the attached draft ordinance, the Districting Commission’s districting plan would be final, without Council action. As with other City boards and commissions, members of the Districting Commission would not be compensated. Also, in the event of an annexation, the draft provides that the annexed area would be assigned to one or more existing districts by the City Council, without shifting any territory from one existing district to another. If the Council determines that the allocation of the new area of the City would result in any existing district’s population deviating by more than .5% from the mean, then an interim Districting Commission would be required. That interim Districting Commission could be the same Districting Commission that carried out the most recent districting plan.

**Question 3: If approved, should the district system go into effect for the 2021 election, or the 2023 election?**

Discussion: If it goes into effect in 2021, the process of converting to a district system will begin as quickly as feasible. A Districting Commission and districting master would be appointed in January, 2020, and develop districts that year based on 2010 census data plus available updates. Districts would be in place by December 1, 2020, for use in the 2021 election. However, because of state law requirements, the Districting Commission would need to be re-appointed and repeat the boundary-drawing process in 2022, based on new 2020 census data that will be available in April of 2022. If redistricting starts in 2023, the quick repetition of the Commission districting process will be avoided. In addition, and as described below, there would be no two-year transition terms.

The interaction between the choice of the start-date for transition to districting and the number of districts is depicted in the following summary chart of the choices in how Charter Section 2.3 would be rewritten:

**Number of Districts/Implementation Year**

**Option A**     **4 Districts, 3 at-large – 2021 implementation**

Nov. 2021:     3 district Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms (Mayor also elected in 2021)

Nov. 2023:     1 district Councilmember elected, 4-year term  
                     2 at-large Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms  
                     1 at-large Councilmember elected, 2-year term

**Option A**     **4 Districts, 3 at-large – 2023 implementation**

Nov. 2023:     2 district Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms  
                     2 at-large Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms

Nov. 2025:     2 at-large Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms  
                     1 at-large Councilmember elected, 4-year term (Mayor also elected in 2025)

**Option B**     **5 Districts, 2 at-large – 2021 implementation**

Nov. 2021:     3 district Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms (Mayor also elected in 2021)

Nov. 2023:     1 district Councilmember elected, 4-year term  
                     2 at-large Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms  
                     1 at-large Councilmember elected, 2-year term

**Option B**     **5 Districts, 2 at-large – 2023 implementation**

Nov. 2023:     3 district Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms  
                     1 at-large Councilmember elected, 4-year term

Nov. 2025:     2 at-large Councilmembers elected, 4-year terms  
                     1 at-large Councilmember elected, 4-year term (Mayor also elected in 2025)

**Question 4: How many members should the independent Districting Commission have?**

Discussion: Should the Districting Commission have, for example, five members? Seven? Nine?

**Question 5: How should the independent districting commission be appointed?**

- By City Council?
- By Council and the Mayor?

**Ordinance Section 1 B//Charter Section 2.2**

**Question 6: Should the required in-district residency period be one year, or six months?**

Discussion: The existing Charter requires a one-year residency requirement within the City. The draft addresses the situation where district boundaries change because of a new federal decennial census (e.g., 2030 census data driving a boundary change effective December 1, 2032), and a sitting council member whose term overlaps the redistricting date gets redistricted out of the councilmember's own district. (For example, a councilmember's term ends two years later, e.g., until the end of 2035.) In that instance, the councilmember would be permitted to continue, until the end of the term, to represent the district from which the councilmember was elected. Further, a six month residency requirement for a district may be more practical than a year since there will be times when there will be less than one year from the date of the redistricting to the filing date.