

King County 2018-2019 Charter Review Commission:
Thematic Summary of Recommendations to Future Commissions
Draft v. 1/2/19

In the winter of 2019, Triangle Associates conducted phone interviews with King County Charter Review Commissioners to collect their recommendations to future Charter Review Commissions, as well as the future King County Council. Triangle Associates interviewed 12 of the 21 Commissioners. Below is a summary of the recommendations gathered.

Convening Process Recommendations

- **Appointment Process:** Be transparent about how Commissioners were appointed. Allow people to apply to serve on the Commission in order to broaden the pool of potential Commissioners.
- **Onboarding and Training:** Onboarding topics may include:
 - History and demographics of the County
 - The scope of the Charter
 - A shared vocabulary and procedures (ie. Robert's Rules of Order)
 - Equity and inclusion
 - An overview of the decisions that take place once the Commission Report is complete
 - Proposals or topics of ~~interests~~interest from Councilmembers as guest speakers
 - Advice from a previous Commissioner as a guest speaker
 - A review of this document, along with information on the processes used by previous Commissions
- **Resources:** Understand resources available to the Commission and determine which resources are required to succeed.
- **Composition and Size of the Commission:**
 - Appoint Commissioners who reflect the demographics (income, race, gender, Council District) of the County to encourage a broad range of expertise and interests.
 - Include people who are not typically engaged with policy to have a diversity of perspectives, ways of processing information, and coming to decisions.
 - Appoint someone who has previously served on the Commission to provide institutional knowledge.
 - Have a Commission of an odd number that is less than 20 Commissioners to increase productivity and break tie votes.
- **Level of Commitment:** Be clear about the role of the Commission and the level of commitment, including the role of the Commission in the public engagement process. Consider a process or consequences if Commissioner attendance is not adequate.
- **Get to Know Each Other:** Hold an in-depth retreat to allow a dialogue around each other's expertise and interests, and to establish the culture of the Commission.

Overall Process Recommendations

- **Timeframe:** Set a timeframe to complete the report and stick to it as best as possible. An ambiguous timeframe opens the risk of unfocused discussions. Lengthy processes can result in fatigue.

- **Facilitator:** Bring in a facilitator, ideally with public engagement experience, at the beginning of the process to help develop structure, improve efficiency, and hold an inclusive process. Their scope should include supporting subcommittee work.
- **Subcommittees:** Break into topic-based subcommittees early in the process. Have subcommittees meet with relevant stakeholders to gather specific input for charter amendments. Develop proposed charter amendments within those subcommittees so that Commission feedback can be provided on a written draft, rather than a verbal proposal. Check in with the full Commission regularly throughout the subcommittee process to ensure broad support.
- **Amendment Topics and Decisions:** Establish a clear brainstorming, winnowing, and decision-making process. Refrain from revisiting topics once the Commission has made a decision.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Distinguish the roles and relationship between the Chairs, Commissioner, County staff, and the facilitator early on.
- **Compensation of Commissioners:** Reimburse Commissioners for travel mileage and for their time in order to be more inclusive of people who might otherwise not be able to participate- for financial reasons. This also shows a commitment to equitable participation.
- **Remote Participation:** Make meetings accessible, by using the latest technology tools, for example.

Public Engagement Recommendations

- **Administrative Resources to Support Outreach:**
 - Have a consultant and/or staff resources dedicated to supporting the engagement process.
 - Have a spreadsheet or way to track input received from the public, when it was discussed by the Commission and what decision was reachesreached, as well as what follow up was conducted to the person/organization that submitted the comment.
- **Outreach Methods:**
 - Engage communities and organizations early in the process. Work with an intermediaries such as community-based organizations to help communicate with constituents. Provide compensation to these organizations for their time and expertise.
 - Frame engagement around issues of concern to the general public and identify key stakeholder groups to reach out to on specific topics.
 - Provide a variety of mechanisms for the public to provide feedback. Consider trends in public engagement and develop a plan around those trends. Have a comprehensive media campaign. Utilize online tools that allowsallow people to engage with each other on topics.
- **Outreach Locations:**
 - Don't rely on written invitations for public feedback. Physically go to existing community meetings and events.
 - Hold Town Hall meetings at locations that are accessible to the public and at different times of the day. Have Town Hall dates available months in advance.
- **Outreach to Organizations:**

- Be a liaison/mentor to help organizations develop feedback. Provide them with information, materials, and the tools to engage.

Drafting the Report Recommendations

- **Report Content:** Have Commissioners, rather than County staff, write as much of the report as possible to enhance ownership and provide opportunities for peer review. County staff can support the writing process as needed.
- **Editing the Report:** Use collaborative online tools to review and edit drafts of proposals and the report. Provide many opportunities for the Commission to collaboratively edit the report or have a copy of the report that is always available to the Commission for editing.

Commissioners Interviewed for this Report (alphabetical by last name)

- Tim Ceis
- Elizabeth Ford
- David Heller
- Michael Hershensohn
- Clayton Lewis
- Marcos Martinez
- Louise Miller
- Toby Nixon
- Nikkita Oliver
- Rob Saka
- Beth Sigall
- Kinnon Williams

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King County 2018-2019 Charter Review Commission:
Thematic Summary of Process Recommendations to Future the 2028 Charter Review Commission

The Commission has prepared this list of recommendations to the next Charter Review Commission to help inform your work. We present this to support your work and in the hopes that you can learn from our experience.

Draft v. 1/2/19

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In the winter of 2019

To generate these recommendations, the Commission directed its consultant, Triangle Associates conducted phone, to conduct interviews with King County Charter Review Commissioners to collect their recommendations to future Charter Review Commissions, as well as the future King County Council. Triangle Associates interviewed 12 of the 21 Commissioners. Below is a summary. After those interviews were complete, a subcommittee met to review the results of those interviews and developed this guide.

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Serving on the Commission is an honor and an important responsibility. We hope that you find it as gratifying as we have, and we hope that these recommendations help you get started.

Recommendations.

Convening Process.

The Commission recognizes that the convening process is conducted by the Executive and Council, not the Commission. However, we provide these recommendations for the consideration of the recommendations gathered those bodies given our unique perspective on how convening affects overall outcome.

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Convening Process Recommendations

- **Appointment Process:** Be transparent about how Commissioners were appointed. Allow people to apply. We recommend that the appointment process begin with an application by interested individuals. We recommend making clear on the application the level of commitment required. This accomplishes several important goals. First, it allows for transparency in the process. Second, it requires commissioner to expend the effort to describe why they want to serve on the Commission in order to broaden commission. Third, it potentially broadens the pool of potential Commissioners.
- **Onboarding and Training:** Onboarding topics may include:
 - History and demographics of the County
 - The scope of the Charter
 - A shared vocabulary and procedures (ie. Robert's Rules of Order)
 - Equity and inclusion

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~~o An overview of the decisions that take place once the Commission Report is complete~~

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~~o **Composition and Size of the Commission:** Proposals or topics of interests from Councilmembers as guest speakers~~

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~~o Advice from a previous Commissioner as a guest speaker~~

~~o A review of this document, along with information on the processes used by previous Commissions. We recommend the following as to the composition of the commission, recognizing that the Charter currently mandates that the Commission be comprised on not less than 15 members and that those members include at least one from each Council district.~~

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~~o **Resources:** Understand resources available to the Commission and determine which resources are required to succeed.~~

~~o **Composition and Size of the Commission:**~~

~~o Appoint Commissioners who reflect the demographics (income, race, gender, Council District) of the County to encourage a broad range of expertise and interests.~~

~~o Include people who are not typically engaged with policy to have a diversity of perspectives, ways of processing information, and coming to decisions.~~

~~o Appoint someone at least one Commissioner who has previously served on the Commission to provide institutional knowledge.~~

~~o Have a Commission of an odd number that is less than 20 Commissioners to increase productivity and break tie votes.~~

~~o **Level of Commitment:** Be clear about the role of the Commission and the level of commitment, including the role of the Commission in the public engagement process. Consider a process or consequences if Commissioner attendance is not adequate.~~

~~o **Get to Know Each Other:** Hold an in-depth retreat to allow a dialogue around each other's expertise and interests, and to establish the culture of the Commission.~~

~~o Overall Appoint only fifteen members. This smaller number will allow for more efficient decision-making. Twenty-one members was too many.~~

Process Recommendations

o **Role of Chairs.** We recommend that the role of chair be clearly described in a job description before the appointment is made.

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o **Resources: Timeframe:** Set a timeframe to complete the report and stick to it as best as possible. An ambiguous timeframe opens the risk of unfocused discussions. Lengthy processes can result in fatigue.

o We recommend that the Commission understand the resources available to it, including its budget allocation and make active decisions, through its Chair(s), about how to expend those resources in order to be most effective.

o **Facilitator:** ~~Bring~~ We recommend that the Commission bring in a facilitator, ideally with public engagement experience, at the beginning of the process to help develop structure, ~~improve~~

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efficiency, and hold an inclusive process. Their scope should include supporting subcommittee work—(see below).

- **Initial Retreat:** We recommend that the Commission hold an initial, at least half-day, retreat to allow the commissioners to get to know one another and understand each other’s expertise and interests. This will help the Commission to be intentional about its own culture. We recommend that the retreat be facilitated by the Chairs and the facilitator (see below) and that the Commission use this as a way to “onboard” the Commissioners. We urge that the following topics be covered at the retreat.
 - The scope of the Charter
 - The Role of the Commission as a whole and of each commissioner
 - History and demographics of the County
 - Equity and inclusion Basics
 - Decision-making procedures
 - If the Commission is planning to use Robert’s Rules of Order, we recommend a training in that vocabulary and process.
 - Consider introducing a racial equity decision-making toolkit
 - An overview of the process for developing the report (the Chairs and consultant should prepare a recommendation, including firm timelines, for the Commission’s review)
 - An overview of the decisions that take place once the Commission Report is complete
 - A review of this document, along with Advice from a previous Commissioner as a guest speaker

- **Subcommittees:** ~~Break~~We recommend that the Commission break into topic-based subcommittees early in the process. ~~Have~~Those subcommittees should meet with relevant stakeholders to gather specific input for charter amendments. ~~Develop~~Committee members can serve as liaison/mentor to provide those stakeholders with information, materials, and the tools to engage. The subcommittees would then be responsible to develop proposed charter amendments within those subcommittees so that Commission feedback can be provided on a along with written draft, rather than a verbal proposal. Check in with the full Commission regularly throughout the subcommittee process to ensure broad supportrationale, which would then become the pieces of the report. Those proposals would be brought to the Commission for its approval or rejection.

- **Amendment Topics and Decisions:** Establish a clear brainstorming, winnowing, and decision-making process. Refrain from revisiting topics once the Commission has made a decision.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Distinguish the roles and relationship between the We recommend that the Commission Chairs, Commissioner, County staff, and the facilitator develop job descriptions for the Chairs, the Commissioners, and the consultant early on. In addition, we recommend that a written description of the role of Executive and Council staff be developed by those staff members and provided to the commission early on as well.

- **Compensation of Commissioners:** ReimburseWe recommendation that the Commission reimburse Commissioners for travel mileage and consider a stipend to compensate

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Commissioners for their time in order to be more inclusive of people who might otherwise not be able to participate. ~~This shows a commitment to equitable participation.~~

- **Remote Participation:** ~~Make meetings accessible, by using~~ We strongly recommend that the latest Commission engage KCIT or other technology tools, for example staff to support the technology that allows remote participation.

Public Engagement Recommendations

- **Administrative Resources to Support Outreach:**
 - ~~Have~~ We recommend that the Commission engage a separate consultant and/or dedicate staff resources dedicated to supporting the engagement process.
 - ~~Have a spreadsheet or way to track input received from the public, when it was discussed by the Commission and what decision was reaches, as well as what follow up was conducted to the person/organization that submitted the comment.~~
- **Outreach Methods:**
 - ~~Engage~~ We recommend that the Commission engage communities and organizations early in the process. Work by working with an intermediaries such as community based organizations to help communicate with constituents. Provide. We recommend providing compensation to these organizations for their time and expertise.
 - ~~Frame engagement around issues of concern to the general public and identify key stakeholder groups to reach out to on specific topics.~~
 - Provide a variety of mechanisms for the public to provide feedback. Consider trends in public engagement and develop a plan around those trends. Have a comprehensive media campaign. Utilize online tools that allows allow people to engage with each other on topics.
- **Outreach Locations:**
 - ~~Don't rely on written invitations for public feedback. Physically~~ We recommend that Commissioners, probably from the relevant subcommittee, go to existing community meetings and events. in addition to its own townhall meetings.
 - ~~Hold~~ We recommend that the Commission hold Town Hall meetings at locations that are accessible to the public and at different times of the day. Have and have Town Hall dates available months in advance.
- **Outreach to Organizations:**
 - ~~Be a liaison/mentor to help organizations develop feedback. Provide them with information, materials, and the tools to engage.~~

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