



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2002-0603, **Version:** 2

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AN ORDINANCE proposing an amendment to Article 4 of the King County Charter; authorizing the council to adopt ordinances providing for biennial budgeting, and submitting the same to the voters of the county for their ratification or rejection at the November 2003 general election.

### PREAMBLE:

King County's total 2003 budget is proposed at \$3.1 billion.

The county's proposed 2003 current expense (CX) fund budget is \$495 million.

The CX fund is experiencing a fiscal shortfall that is the result of declining revenue growth and increasing governmental expenses.

King County is aggressively reviewing CX expenditures for reductions.

King County reduced the CX fund budget by \$41 million in 2002 and faces continuing general fund deficits of \$52 million for 2003 and additional reductions of \$24 million in 2004 and another \$24 million in 2005, for a total of \$141 million over four years.

The citizens of King County have requested the council and the executive to improve county processes and programs so that there are efficiencies and economies realized in the funding and provision of county services.

Solutions to the fiscal crisis and the general fund structural deficit require consistent planning and effort over more than one calendar year.

The citizens of King County have requested the council and the executive to improve county processes and programs so efficiencies and economies are realized in the funding and provision

of county services.

In response to the budget crisis, the council has formed the King County commission on governance and the executive formed the King County general government budget advisory task force advisory bodies to review the budget crisis and make recommendations to address the county's general fund revenues and efficiency and accountability of services and programs funded by the general fund.

The council and executive desire to respond quickly to the recommendations of both advisory groups and have identified the potential use of biennial budgets as a tool to respond to these recommendations which currently can not be used based upon wording in the King County Charter.

The King County Charter specifies preparation and administration of an annual county budget, and to authorize enactment of biennial budget procedures in King County requires amendment of the charter.

The state legislature authorized the use of biennial budgets for counties in 1995 and in 1997 for individual funds. Biennial budgeting can provide significant benefits to the public, and government policy makers, managers, and employees, including promoting longer-term strategic planning, increasing the time available for detailed review of funds presenting significant fiscal and policy issues, and reducing the routine tasks associated with annual budget preparation and adoption.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. There shall be submitted to the qualified voters of King County for their approval and ratification or rejection, at the next general election to be held in this county occurring more than forty-five days after the enactment of this ordinance, an amendment to Article 4 of the King County Charter as set forth herein.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 2. There is hereby added to the King County Charter a new section to read as follows:

**Section 405. Biennial budgets.**

The county council may, subject to the provisions of section 230 of this charter, adopt an ordinance providing for a biennial budget cycle for any or all county funds, with a midbiennium review and modification for the second year of the biennium, including specifying the process and timeline for major tasks in the biennial budget process. References in this charter to the fiscal year or to specific dates shall apply to the corresponding annual or biennial period or date for any such fund or funds. Any references to a "quarter of a fiscal year" mean three months. The county council may adopt additional and emergency appropriations ordinances for such fund or funds in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as otherwise provided in this charter. The county council may repeal such an ordinance and revert to adopting annual budgets for any fund or funds, commencing after the end of any biennial budget cycle.

SECTION 3. The clerk of the council shall certify the proposition to the manager of the records, elections, and licensing services division, in substantially the following form, with such additions, deletions or modifications as may be required for the proposition listed below by the prosecuting attorney:

Shall the King County Charter be amended to authorize the King County Council to adopt an ordinance to provide for a biennial budget cycle for any or all county funds with a midbiennium review and modification for the second year of the biennium, and to authorize the King County Council to repeal such a biennial budget ordinance and revert to an annual

budget cycle, all as provided in Ordinance No. 14758?