

Bill OK'd authorizing Metro to draft charter

The Legislature has approved a bill that will enable area residents to decide what powers the Metropolitan Service District should have.

Voters statewide approved Ballot Measure 1 in November. That authorized the Legislature to create a process so that a Metro charter could be devised.

A 16-member charter commission will be appointed and will start meeting in April to write a proposed charter that would be presented to the area's voters, probably during the November 1992 general election.

Like a constitution, a charter sets the rules for how a government will operate, what it can and can't do and how it will raise money. Before a charter can be changed, voters must

approve it.

Metro has no charter. Its duties and revenue-generating authority were assigned by the Legislature.

Under the bill passed Tuesday, Metro councilors will appoint 15 of the charter commission members, and Metro Executive Officer Rena Cusma will appoint the 16th.

The bill specifies that none of those appointed can be government officials, not even members of advisory committees.

A minimum of four have to be Washington County residents. Four will come from Clackamas County and five from Multnomah County. The remaining three can come from any of the counties.

Washington County elected of-

ficials generally are skeptical about the process. They don't want Metro taking on new duties that would take decision-making, and revenues, away from local governments.

Each local government within Metro's jurisdiction pays an annual fee to compensate the regional government for services it renders on their behalf.

Other income comes from garbage disposal fees and admission fees.

Metro is responsible for planning and operating regional solid waste facilities and coordinates transportation planning.

It also manages many facilities in Portland used by people from throughout the region.