

Editorial

Argus

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Important Metro decisions deserve close monitoring

One of the weaknesses in our democratic system is the current tendency toward too much government.

The changes now under formulation in the process of establishing a new charter for the Metropolitan Service District will have far reaching importance to residents in western Washington County as well as others throughout the suburbs.

The recommendation of Washington County Board Chairman Bonnie Hays is to have the chief executive officer of Metro be appointed by the Metro council instead of the present election process. Hays' recommendation was supported by Hillsboro Mayor Shirley Huffman in a hearing held by the Metro charter revision committee.

Members of the Metro Council are often at odds with the executive officer. All are elected and thus, as WashCo Chair Hays pointed out, each feels they have mandates from the voters. Drawing on her experience in Oregon's second largest county, Hays believes a council directing a professional staff would lead to a more efficient and less costly structure of government. Under such a system, Metro would operate with the council-manager system of government that has been so successful for both Washington County

and the city of Hillsboro.

The charter committee was formed after voters endorsed an amendment to the Oregon Constitution authorizing home rule for Metro. The 16-member committee must put together a charter to go before voters next year. Three members of the committee are representatives of Washington County, former WashCo chairman Wes Myllenbeck of Cedar Hills, former Sherwood mayor Mary Tobias and a Raleigh Hills resident, Larry Derr.

The committee has been hearing opinion in a series of public meetings preparatory to putting on paper the charter, which is similar to a state constitution, as the format of Metro in the future.

One of the problems the committee must wrestle with was touched on by Hillsboro's mayor when she pointed out most local governments would like the powers of Metro to be limited. Other advocates want more power for the regional governmental body.

The ultimate choice of the scope of Metro will rest with the voters in their approval or disapproval of the charter the committee will place before them in either May or November next year. It will have great impact on living in western Washington County in the years ahead.