

Metro charter hearing slated

There will be a public hearing in Hillsboro next Monday to discuss the proposed charter for the Metropolitan Service District.

The hearing begins at 6 p.m. in the Public Services Center, 155 N. First Ave. Similar hearings will be held in Multnomah and Clackamas counties.

The charter, the rough equivalent of a constitution, would specify Metro's powers and responsibilities. It probably will be presented to voters in the tri-county area at the November general election.

The idea of a "home rule" charter for Metro was approved by voters statewide in the November 1990 election.

Metro exists because the Legislature authorized its creation to address "issues of regional significance." But those issues were never defined and each time Metro wanted to take up a different issue it had to seek approval from the Legislature.

The new charter would create a process where Metro and local governments could choose jointly what planning issues have "regional significance."

Metro currently coordinates regional planning for transportation facilities and solid waste disposal facilities.

It also runs the Washington Park Zoo and recently took over responsi-

bility for managing such facilities as the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, Civic Auditorium and so forth.

The committee which has been working for about a year on the charter includes four Washington County residents. In addition, local governments have been closely monitoring the charter-drafting process.

Those governments have only two major objections to the proposed charter, said Dennis Mulvihill, Washington County's intergovernmental relations specialist.

They don't think the Metro president, who would be elected area-wide, should have the ability to fire the agency's administrator, and they don't think the president should have the ability to set the agenda for the full Metro Council.

The charter proposes dropping the agency's long name—the Metropolitan Service District—in favor of the simpler METRO.

It calls for replacing the current Metro executive officer—who is

elected regionwide but is not a voting member of the Metro Council—with a president who would have a vote on the council.

The current Metro Council has 12 members and is scheduled to increase to 13 members next January even if the charter fails. The charter calls for 14 members, 13 elected from districts and the president.

Argue

6/23/92