

# PRESS RELEASE



## County Council

27 March 2008

Mike Cooper  
Dave Gossett  
John Koster  
Dave Somers  
Brian Sullivan

## County Will Give Biennial Budgeting a Try

Taking its cue from a recent voter-endorsed Charter Review Commission recommendation, the county council today approved changing Snohomish County's budgeting cycle from annual to biennial – once every two years – with the opportunity to make changes at the halfway point. The county's first biennial budget technically goes into effect next year, although preparing the 2009-2010 budget begins almost immediately.

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"Biennial budgeting has the potential to be good process for us and I think we should give it a try," said Council Chair Dave Somers.

"The goal," said Councilmember Brian Sullivan, "is to save money."

State government is on a biennial budgeting cycle, meeting for a long session at the beginning of each two-year budget and for a shorter "supplemental budget" session in between. A number of cities, including Lynnwood, also prepare two-year budgets, but only two of the state's 39 counties use the biennial system.

Snohomish County will be the third county on that list, but it is not a permanent decision. The county council amended the original legislation to automatically "sunset" or terminate the biennial system by the end of 2010, unless the council specifically re-enacts it.

Councilmember Mike Cooper opposed the sunset amendments but ultimately supported the ordinance. Cooper said, "We have to respect the intentions of the voters who approved the charter amendment that allows us to make this change."

Councilmember Dave Gossett voted against the ordinance because, he said, the county executive and council had not yet completed negotiating a memorandum of understanding that would improve the council's access to budget information from executive staff.

Sullivan, who chairs the council's finance committee and is leading those negotiations, said discussions with the executive were continuing and the "rules of engagement" would be forthcoming.

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