



Published on *School of Government* (<http://www.sog.unc.edu>)

Summary of proposed consolidation plan

Governing board

The Drafting Committee's proposed charter would have established an 18-member Metro Council: there were to be six districts, each electing two members, and six members elected at large. The Charter Commission revised this proposal, proposing a Council with eleven members, six from districts and five at large. Under both proposals, terms were to be two years, and elections, held in the odd-numbered years, were to be partisan.

The mayor was to preside at Council meetings, but could vote only to break ties. The mayor would have been given the same power to veto Council actions that the Charlotte mayor had.

Form of administration

The Drafting Committee's proposed charter would have given the Metro manager the power to appoint a number of department heads who had been appointed by the board of county commissioners: the finance director, area authority director, health director, social services director, tax collector, tax assessor, and extension director; and the Charter Commission made no changes to these provisions. (The board of county commissioners, however, when they approved the charter, insisted on regaining the authority to appoint the area authority director, health director, and social services director.)

Law enforcement

At the time the Drafting Commission began its work, the city and county were in the midst of merging the county and city police departments into a single department – called the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department – under the authority of the city. Both the city and county departments operated within a civil service system, and those systems were to be combined into the city's. Therefore, law enforcement was already merged, and the proposed charters said nothing about it.

Suburban service district

Both the Drafting Committee's and the Charter Commission's charters – together with appropriate statewide enabling legislation – contemplated creation of a "suburban service district," which would encompass that part of the county not within either an urban service district or a separate city or town. In addition, the two charters would have permitted the Metro Government to enter into agreements with the Board of Transportation, under which the Metro Government could assume control of and responsibility for streets outside the urban service district. Thus enhanced street maintenance was likely to have been one of the services provided in the suburban service district.

Fair representation

The two charters encouraged the Council and Mayor to "attempt to secure reasonable representation on each [board, commission, authority, etc.] of every sex, race, geographic section of the Metro-Government and political party." But they specified that such an outcome was not required and that no appointment could be challenged on that ground.

Zoning authority

The two charters provided that the protest petition requirements of the municipal zoning enabling act were to apply to rezoning within any urban service district. In addition, the extraterritorial land-use jurisdiction (ETJ) of a city was available to an urban service district, up to a mile beyond the boundaries of the service district. Therefore, if the general law gave to cities an authority within the ETJ that it did not give to counties, the Metro Government would have been able to exercise that power only in the ETJ, not countywide.

Annexation

The City of Charlotte had entered into annexation agreements with each of the smaller towns of Mecklenburg county, with the Cabarrus county municipalities of Concord and Harrisburg, and with the Union county towns of Marvin and Weddington. The two charters specifically provided that these agreements were to remain in effect, with the urban service district substituted for the city. In addition, no smaller municipality was to be permitted to annex into an urban service district without the approval of the Metro Council.

Knapp-Sanders Building

Campus Box 3330

UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3330

T: 919.966.5381 | F: 919.962.0654

Source URL: <http://www.sog.unc.edu/node/1752>