

# I. Letter to Citizens of Glacier County

To the Citizens of Glacier County:

The Glacier County Study Commission elected by the voters on November 6, 1984, or thereafter appointed, present this tentative report to you, the citizens of Glacier County.

The purpose of the study commission, as defined in state law, is "to study the existing form and powers of a local government and procedures for delivery of local government services and to compare them with other forms available under the laws of the state." After completing these two phases of the study it is the responsibility of the study commission to submit a tentative report recommending no change, or propose an amendment to the existing form of government or offer an alternative form of government to the qualified electors.

In every phase of this review this study commission sought advice and information from as many people in the county as possible. Opinions and recommendations were solicited from local government officials, and citizens. All meetings of the study commission were open to the public. Public hearings were held in Cut Bank and Browning and a survey of citizen attitudes was made.

Our recommendations reflect the thoughts and opinions of those who participated in public hearings, those who attended our regular meetings, and those who responded to a survey, in addition to the independent efforts of this study commission.

In this tentative report we present our recommendations for an alternative form of government that we feel will provide the governmental services expected by the people both today and in the future. Our concern has been to provide a form of government that will be responsive to local problems. We feel the citizens of Glacier County can achieve these goals by adopting the Commission form of government.

The question of adopting this alternative form of government will be placed on the ballot November 4, 1986.

We solicit your opinions and input for consideration in our final report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Haemig

Carol Juneau

Billie Wallace

Darryl Omsberg

Attest: secretary

## II. Summary of Recommendations

The Glacier County Local Government Study Commission having thoroughly studied our present form of county government and the alternative forms of government available to counties under state law, and having studied the future governmental needs of this county, recommends the following:

1. Glacier County should adopt, effective June 5, 1987, the commission form of government. A commission, or elected legislative body, of five (5) members shall be elected for four (4) year terms of office. All members shall be elected from districts in which they reside and which are apportioned by population. Due to a recent decision by the Attorney General, in order to make any changes in our present form of government the study commission must recommend adoption of an alternative form of government. The alternative form recommended is in essence the same form we have now, with some very subtle changes.

2. The question on the form of government shall be submitted to the voters of Glacier County on November 4, 1986.

### A. Findings of the Study Commission

After an intensive study of almost two years, it is the decision of the study commission to recommend changes in the structure and power of county government that will provide a governmental framework to meet the changing needs of this county. Problem areas were identified during the course of the study by research, discussion, public hearings, testimony of public officials, and citizen surveys. One of these areas is unequal representation. If county government is to enjoy support of its citizens it must be more representative.

The "traditional" form of county government has existed in Glacier County since the creation of the county, and is basically the same government as was originally described in the 1889 Constitution.

The needs of the county, however, have changed since then. Population patterns are shifting, and citizen demands for services are rising.

Other areas of concern also emerged during the course of the study which affected the study commission's choice of an alternative form. Citizen response to the survey which was conducted, and testimony at the public hearings, indicated that citizens are concerned about local decisions not being made at the local level, about the quality of services (especially roads), about the level of taxes, and about the lack of leadership and citizen participation in county government. These frustrations and expectations of citizens and local officials alike, in addition to the changing role of county government, and growing needs of the county, led the study commission to identify the following goals:

1. Government that is responsive to citizens
2. Government that is efficient
3. A government structure that allows equal participation by all citizens

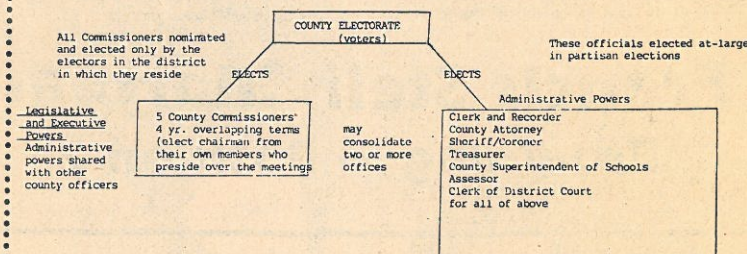
In an attempt to achieve these goals, the study commission has recommended a larger board of county commissioners.

## B. Key Provisions of the Proposed Form

1. The commission form consists of an elected commission and other elected officers as provided in this part. All legislative, executive, and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officers shall reside in the commission. The commission shall appoint the heads of departments and other employees, except those appointed by other elected officials.
2. Local governments that adopt this form shall have general government powers.
3. The chairman of the commission, shall be the presiding officer of the commission. The chairman shall be recognized as the head of the local government unit and may vote as other members of the commission.
4. The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.
5. Local government elections shall be conducted on a partisan basis.
6. The chairman of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.
7. Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.
8. Community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.
9. The term of office of elected officials may not exceed four (4) years.
10. All other county officers shall be elected.
11. The offices of surveyor, administrator, and auditor shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

Creating a commission of five (5) members will provide a legislative body large enough to insure adequate representation and small enough to be efficient. The method of election--by districts--will allow the interests of each district to be represented, but at the same time will provide a county-wide perspective.

### Proposed Form of Government



### Existing Form of Government

