

Coded Responses by Common Themes

LIME = No expansion of BOC

PINK = Expand size of BOC

GREEN = Leave as is

AQUA = At-large seats help east/NE

PURPLE = Time with Presidential Election

OLIVE = Divisiveness concerns about district voting

RED = Complaints about survey itself

BLUE = Racial minority concerns

YELLOW = rural/west under-represented

Provides for best representation and flexibility given the massive growth that the county is facing.

Very much in favor of this option

I think the commissioners should be elected by those they represent. I do believe it would be great to have two commissioners voted on at-large to provide some balance to the board

(A) is ridiculous. It's hard to believe this method has been in place so long. No wonder the folks in the **lesser populated areas feel under-represented**.

There is no need to expand the boc to five. Look at the county's that have more than five. They are mostly larger county's with urban areas. The reasoning behind the idea makes no sense. Try being a more productive commission by meeting more than once a month. More board members is unnecessary. My choice is b

I think the current Board size of five commissioners is adequate, and I do not think the size of the Board needs to be increased given the county's current population.

I think the timing of Board elections should be changed so that the majority of commissioner seats are up for election in a **presidential election** year when voter turnout is typically higher.

Avoid the feeling of not being represented or heard on the Board that must reach all voters and resolve differing views.

Keep it simple ... B is very clear We don't need at large members. They can't cover the whole county .

We are not a highly populated county. **5 commissioners is plenty.** We have enough trouble finding 5 decent people to run for office (many BOC elections are uncontested at the primary and even general election). Expanding to 7 commissioners will make that pool even weaker

The current system works, commissioners are elected by all county residents, the current number of commissioners is plenty. I like that we have forced geographic diversity amongst commissioners, everyone feels represented.

I do feel the current model is outdated. A combination would solve this issue.

I think that Option C would result in the most fair representation for the unrepresented parts of the county.

Seems to be the most fair.

I'm against adding more commissioners to the Chatham BOC. It seems likely that the additional two commissioners would mostly speak for north/northeast Chatham residents rather than for all residents, allowing for even more influence from this location than it already has. As the system currently operates, if commissioners gain the financial support of the north/northeast, they are more likely to win than if they do not have that support-- they do not need the majority support of their own districts to win. This dynamic seems to put a disproportionate amount of influence in a small portion of residents of particular socio-economic status who do not reflect Chatham County as a whole. That is not to state that the current commissioners are not performing their functions well, but rather to articulate that they do not accurately reflect or represent their electorate. The last election would have had different results if only the districts voted for their commissioners.

We are already too polarized. I would like our commissioners to feel they must represent all residents. Let's not divide our county and fight over regional differences any more than we do.

B is the only option that avoids the problems that we have been having with most of the commissioners being from the eastern part of the county and the interest of the west ignored. Drain the swamp

I feel that the only fair way for proper representation is for Commissioners to reside in the district they represent and be elected by ONLY the voters of the district.

The need for "Commissioners at Large" would have to be convincing for me to agree with having two of them. What would be their purpose since there would be equal representation by the commissioner elected by the people in their district. It seems redundant and unnecessary. The idea of at large commissioners defeats the purpose of the districts in the first place. The members at large could sway the vote depending on where they live which would not be in the interest of equal vote for each district or commissioner.

We don't need more commissioners. 5 is plenty.

Keep the current Residency District format. There is no need for more Commissioners or more localized elections.

County commissioners make decisions that affect everyone in Chatham, therefore it makes sense to me that all county residents should have the opportunity to participate in each Commissioner's election.

Right now, the districts seem very evenly balanced in total population. How often are district boundaries adjusted/redrawn to maintain that balance? As eastern/northeastern Chatham County continues to grow more rapidly (apparently) than the rest of the county, I personally would oppose any commissioner method that ends up, over time, having commissioners from less-populated districts having equal weight/vote to the more populated areas. Our Federal-level absurdity of having two Senators from Vermont and (only) two from California (which has ~70x the population) should never be repeated here in Chatham County.

Option B above would probably cause greater overall candidate expense in each candidate campaigning only in one 12,000-person district and a greater chance for corporate/"dark" money to have an impact in electing developer-friendly Commissioners (as we had not that long ago with Bunky Whatshisname and cohorts).

Option C might work if the "no residency requirement" means they still need to live in Chatham County! :)

We live in Chatham County at the line with orange County - Carolina Meadows. My husband, Joe, and I favor the Voting Districts option for electing the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. That way, voters will be more familiar with the candidates. Please record our input and announce it, at least in summery form, at the meeting scheduled to discuss this topic. Thank you, Barbara Danos

Why change something that I've never heard anybody complain about? The current system is just fine.

Since they did such a good job allowing PSV to be built to butt up to an industrial park, I would say they can't do any worse. It's the reason I never got into politics, couldn't handle all the corruption.

Without being elected by voters in the district they live in, they don't necessarily have to work towards the best interest of their home district. When things go bad, there is no one to specifically speak with or hold accountable..

The combined option preserves the plurality of the district while guaranteeing full representation of each district.

I have thought about this since I first read the options and concluded that the only one that actually changes the way we elect our commissioners is Voting Districts. Residency Districts means no change and the Combination really does not solve the problem I believe this whole thing is about. It does give the County 2 more commissioners for the taxpayers to pay. But being at large the majority will still tip to the most populated northeast part of the county. The objective is to have more balanced representation across the County then Voting Districts is the way to go. There really is no reason to add 2 commissioners.

Sorry but I forgot to mention in my previous comments that not only have I thought about the issue but I went through the research as well. Very interesting. 36 of N.C.'s 100 counties have more than 5 commissioners. 14 of those are in counties with a population over 100,000. Your county growth chart says it will be some time before Chatham hits the 100,000 mark. But Chatham has a unique problem that I think you are trying to solve with a significant part of the population living in the northeast and it is growing. Unfortunately to give the western part of the County a stronger voice we will have to elect by district. As I said before adding 2 commissioners at large while moving to district voting will not change the current situation.

I selected "C," although...i'm on the fence re: upping our # of commissioners fr 5 to 7. 7 is too many for Chatham, I believe. that would mean revisiting our districts to see if they could be reconfigured into 3.

I know who our commissioners are, but don't actually know who goes w/which district. & actually, why would I, since they're all elected at large.

Leave well enough alone. The smells of some sort of gerrymandering

Thank you for the opportunity. Please take time to read the entire response. I believe I have a few important points for consideration during your deliberations.

With in-district voting, we will have better participation of candidates, and better representation of the electorate.

- First of all, in-district voting will not require as much funding (or campaign time) cruising throughout the entire County doing fundraisers and voter meetings. They could instead focus on their own district's issues and concerns, in addition to issues facing the entire County. As a result, we may have greater and more diverse candidate participation, and a better idea of what the entire County needs with shared voices.

- The same is true with voter turnout. **Particularly in the west, voters do not currently show up to the polls, because they do not feel their vote will matter.** Voting is dominated by the more populous NE.

- Also, the current process permits the usurping of representation from within voting districts. Even within parties, voters lose their representation. As an example, in this this past election primary, Mike Cross, while winning his own district, lost his democratic primary election to Mike Dasher. County wide, it's the same issue in the general election. This is similar to the nation's Electoral College, where the popular vote is not always reflected in the final tally.

***** YOU'VE LEFT OUT AN IMPORTANT OPTIONS/QUESTIONS!!! *****

The size of the board is a separate issue. Do we need to increase the number of commissioners???

If so, why - and **why not offer options for a seven commissioner board** (if determined to be necessary), e.g. in combination, all with in-district, or all under the current residency voting???

I am unconvinced at this time that it is necessary to increase the numbers, from the perspective of workload (if managed appropriately). However, I would lean toward it, if it would help moderate the current fish-tailing of our commissioners from one election cycle to another. This doesn't bode well for economic growth and stability. Too often, with either party in the minimalist three-commissioner majority, I've seen three commissioners own the agenda, while ignoring other points of view.

At-large representation is simply not required, nor desirable, in that it will almost always guarantee (demographics wise) additional representation from the NE. This county progresses, when all voices are heard.

If the option were provided, I'd support seven in-district voted commissioners - that's seven, with no at large ... add it to the consideration, or explain why it was omitted.

IF IT WERE A COMBINATION of in-district and at large... I suggest providing two super-districts: one east, one west. There are two distinct Chatham County economies; in the east, white collar, research, biomedical, etc. related to the Triangle, and in the west, blue collar, agrarian, manufacturing related to the Triad - both need fair representation.

Thank you for your efforts!

We do not need more commissioners, just five commissioners who are more dedicated to their particular district. Obviously, candidates should live within the district which they wish to represent.

Voting Districts is the optimum representation model requiring each commissioner to represent and show total loyalty to her/his constituents.

The current election method ensures representation from each district, and allows all county residents to vote for the best person; many residents know candidates from other districts who would serve the county best.

Voting districts method is very restrictive and fragments the county. At large method provides the possibility of having a number of commissioners from one area of the county; thereby not providing representation throughout the county.

We need to stay with the 5 Commissioners and allow the districts to elect their own commissioners. If you go to 7 and then elect 2 at-large it will give North Chatham control of the board for a long, long time.

Voting Districts is the best way to go! We do not elect our US Congressman from the whole state of NC. We elect them from their district and this is the way we should do our commissioners.

I feel that we only need five commissioners. Other counties with larger population have no more than five commissioners. Voting districts, where one votes for the commissioner who lives in his district, is the fairest way. Otherwise the western part of the county with lower population loses a voice in Chatham County government.

I feel that we should stay with 5 commissioners and feel that we should vote for the commissioner who lives in the district where we live.

Voting districts is the best way to go! WE do not elect our US Congressman from the whole state of NC. We elect them from their district and this is the way we should do our commissioners.

5 commissioners voted on by the district where they live would be best for the government of Chatham County.

I choose option B Voting Districts. I spoke at the County Commissioner's recent public input session on this issue. I also applied to serve on the citizen task force because it is important to have all parts of the county properly represented on the Board of Commissioners. I recently moved from Orange County to Chatham, and have seen the discontent among voters who do not feel represented due to at large voting methods. Orange County is similar to Chatham County because of the higher population areas in certain parts of the county (the southern part of Orange county). The same situation occurs here in Chatham County in the Northeast sections. I do not believe the number of commissioners needs to be increased when comparing the number of commissioners and populations of nearby counties. All county commissioners should have to reside in a district and be elected by only the voters of that district. No seats would be elected by voters at-large. We should let the task force complete their work and wait before rushing to place this item on a referendum ballot. Thank you for your consideration.

I support Commissioners living in the districts they represent. I believe that this requirement should be made stronger and verified. Candidates should not be allowed to “game” the system (as has been done in the past) by saying they “reside” in a district when they really do not live there.

I support voting by districts. As a campaign manager for four seated County Commissioners and a candidate myself, I have come to believe that our process of electing all commissioners at large is now a flawed system. It is flawed because a small group of people in the leadership of the Chatham Coalition now select and then effectively elect four (not district 5) of the five Chatham Commissioners. I believe moving to district voting will be difficult for Chatham to implement given that our polling precincts do not match our Commissioner districts. The task force committee should offer suggestions as to how to implement voting by districts if they chose to recommend it.

I do not support the “Combined” plan of having 5 by-district and 2-at large Commissioners. This would only perpetuate the continued dominance of north-east Chatham and groups like the Chatham Coalition. I also do not want us to spend more money to expand to 7 commissioners.

My name is Pam Cash-Roper.

I grew up in Chatham County, went to school in Chatham County, graduated in the first integrated class at Northwood High School in 1972, I raised my family in Chatham and I intend to die in Chatham County. My family has been in Chatham County for multiple generations and a good slice of the farm that my father worked is under Jordan Lake. Direct democracy matters to me and my family, which is why I am weighing in on this important issue.

I support expanding representation at the BOC level, because it is generally good for democracy especially in Chatham County where we will experience a long term upward trend of population growth. Additionally, it seems to me that the BOC should align the election of its majority with the Presidential cycle when a majority of voters actually vote. This can be accomplished either by a) moving one of the seats (district 3, 4, or 5) from the current cycle to the Presidential cycle or by simply expanding the BOC to seven members.

To that end, I have gone on the record multiple times in front of the Board of Commissioners (BOC) stating that the best input we can receive regarding the issue of reorganizing/expanding our BOC is to simply place the question before the voters of Chatham County and receive direct public input in the form of a referendum vote. This method worked to eventually pass "Liquor by the Drink" in Chatham County and will work to decide this issue as well.

And although I am not a fan of "district voting", below is some language for you to consider on the matter that includes district voting combined with at-large seats as well as language for an expansion using our current system of residency and county wide voting.

I vote YES to expand the County Board of Commissioners from its current five (5) members to seven (7) members. The current five (5) members will become district only representatives and will be nominated and elected by only the eligible voters in their respective district. The additional two new members will be elected at-large by all eligible voters of Chatham County.

I vote NO to expand the County Board of Commissioners from its current five (5) members to seven (7) members. The current five (5) members will become district only representatives and will be nominated and elected by only the eligible voters in their respective district. The additional two new members will be elected at-large by all eligible voters of Chatham County.

I vote YES to expand the County Board of Commissioners from its current five (5) members to seven (7) members. All seven (7) members will reside in a specifically numbered district and be elected countywide by all eligible voters of Chatham County.

I vote NO to expand the County Board of Commissioners from its current five (5) members to seven (7) members. All seven (7) members will reside in a specifically numbered district and be elected countywide by all eligible voters of Chatham County.

Voting districts provide the best option for all residents of Chatham to have equal representation that fits them and the area where they live.

Let Chatham have representation via districts. Let the voices be heard from each district through the commissioner that resides and has been voted on by the residents.

People from the highly populated eastern districts shouldn't be able to override the votes of the people in the less populated western districts.

I like the current process for electing commissioners. If we do it any other way, I think the North Chatham area may have a bigger influence.

Commented [DH1]: They contradict themselves on both points.

allow districts to elect their own commissioners

Our Federal and State governments have district representation. It makes representatives responsible to their district constituents without the pressures of "outside" voters. Voting Districts are preferable to any other representation. We do not need "at large" representation which would likely weigh towards the eastern part of the county.

Keep the Commissioner number at five.

In order to have the opportunity for fair representation, just as with voting for Congressional representatives, we should vote for our County Commissioners by district.

I do not agree that someone from Fearington or Governors Club vote on who is representing me nor do I think I should vote on who is representing them. I also think we should stay with 5 commissioners and no at large that would bring the total to seven. This still gives population the swing votes. With the possibility of the Cam site, the swing could go to the west just as easily as it is in the East now. Let's leave it alone.

"All Commissioners would reside in a district and be elected by only the voters of the district."

This is the only logical choice. Voters need to be represented by the commissioners that reside in the voters' districts.

I really don't want to see the expense of two more commissioners!!

I support Residency districts. Voting districts at the state and national level often result in the implied - or even stated - message that "if you can't vote for me, I don't listen to you." I don't think that is the situation in Chatham County now - county residents feel they can approach and lobby all Commissioners about their concerns, which is the way I think it should be. So that is one reason I support residency districts. The other reason is that as an advocate of racial equity I am concerned that voters of color whose relatively small population is geographically dispersed have limited ability to elect the person of their choice under a geographically-based voting district system - but with county-wide voting, voters - white and black - with similar political views can work together to have influence and input into county government. Again, that is how I think it should be.

I don't support the Combination method because it has almost all the disadvantages of the Voting districts plan already described. In addition, I don't understand what problem adding two members is designed to address. The idea does not appear to have come from the Commissioners' saying that they cannot handle their current workload. If that were the case I would not object to seven residency districts with county-wide voting - otherwise, the combination method seems flawed and unnecessary.

I believe combined gives all areas a voice

I moved to Chatham County from Virginia where we experienced representation like the proposed combination method. That system worked well. The representative for my district looked out for the unique issues of each district, while at large representatives looked at what was best for the entire county.

County commissioners should be required to live in the districts they represents. As a resident of district 4, I do not believe that our county commissioner is representing our district after reviewing the committees outside the county that he works on. **These people should be tied into the community that they represent** and have their best interests at heart. It is difficulty to do so if you do not live in the community that you serve. Also, there is limited accountability if you never have to personally see the people that you represent every day.

However, I am in favor of 2, maximum, at large seats in order for good candidates to serve on the board regardless of residence. This allows for people who are good representatives to serve on the board and represent the county at large, not just a particular district.

Voting for commissioners needs to be by voting districts so that each district has equal representation, state and federal officials are elected that way.

While commissioners work for the county as a whole, commissioners should still live in their district and be voted on only by those in that district. It's unfortunate that, under the current structure, a candidate could win their district and yet lose the election. People living in that district should be able to elect the person they feel best able to represent them. This is how we do it for federal and state districts...why is it not good enough for Chatham County?

I think each district should have their own representative voted on by the members of that district. Currently the **eastern end of the county gets to pick all 5 commissinoers.**

Speaking for the majority of the **African-American community**, we prefer residency districts or keeping the current election method as is. That is because as we discovered in 2006 when this same issue of changing election methods surfaced, that unless the total population contained at least 30% of people of color, that sub-group would be disenfranchised under a "voting districts" system. In 2006, there were only approximately 8,700 African Americans in Chatham County; in 2018, there are only 6,000 +. Moreover, all persons of color still only comprise approximately 13% of the population and are numerically outnumbered by Caucasians in every section of Chatham County. We request that you maintain an all-inclusive election method rather than change to an exclusive one.

We also request that you not tie the expansion of the Commissioner Board to aa change in the election method and treat them separately simply because one has nothing to do with the other. We could find no statutes that required an expansion of the board to be put on the ballot; it is a discretionary decision of the Board only, a courtesy that has no legal basis. We realize the options of the Election Task Force will carry much weight with the Commissioners however, **we offer a 4th option in the event the Election Task Force presses the "voting districts"option. Please consider adding the option of 4 voting districts and 3 at-large seats. We feel that option at least may allow people of color a better** opportunity of being elected under a voting by district method. We trust you will make a decision that reflects the honorable, empathetic governance you have shown thus far. Thank you for your consideration.

This option is the fairest one. Any county commissioner must be voted in by ALL county voters and should reside in the district they represent. The other options appear to be a form of gerrymandering.

We need to keep things the way they are, unless it's going to help people of color. We always get the blunt of the effect.

I am in favor of keeping the current election method for our County Commissioners going forward. Residency Districts.

Seem to me to be the only fair way to maintain the interest of the separate districts But give the whole county the ability to elect the best person for the whole county.

The current method has served the county well and there is no compelling reason to make a change. What problem is the changed method designed to solve? The commissioners are to represent the county as a whole and not be beholden to any one district's needs or political persuasion.

Options B and C are subterfuge cloaked in a wrapper, which pretends to yield fair outcomes. There is no logical reason to change the election method for Chatham County Commissioners. My suggestion is to move to anything that does not seek to undermine specific segments of the Chatham County population. Disenfranchisement is destructive and unfair.

What we have (residency districts) is currently working fine. There is no need for change. Each Commissioner works for the ENTIRE county. By living where they do they bring their unique knowledge to the needs of the entire county. Leave it as is.

County commissioners should represent the interests of the county as a whole, not broken into silos of special interest.

The election method simply has to be changed. As things stand now, with county wide voting, the southeast, central and western portions of the county are not being represented fairly. Chatham County will always be dominated by the Democrat Party. however, with that being fact, county wide voting completely removes the ability for the aforementioned sections fair representation. The east and northeast population centers are allowed to dominate the pick of candidates and there is frankly nothing the "other side" can do to affect any outcomes. And, unfortunately those picking the candidates are dominated by the likes of those who are founders etc of groups like the chatham coalition, chatham together etc. In other words any group Jeffrey Starkweather has had a hand in. And I assure you any candidates chosen by that ilk are not representatives of the overall mindset of those portions of the county. I am in fact the best example of what I am writing; I ran for a Board of Education seat several years ago and lost by 600+ votes to Kathy Russell. Not a bad showing, particularly when I spent less than \$1000.00 and she had Coalition folks driving folks to the polls with voting lists. I won portions of the west side of the county by nearly 75%. But more importantly I won the district Kathy and I live in 66-33. In other words, the people who knew us best voted for me 2 to 1 yet I lost due to county wide voting. So, who was represented? Certainly not the wishes of the district we lived in.

This is best method of electing commissioners as used by state and federal laws.

At the county level we are already focused on "local issues" and every commissioner should be thinking about the needs of the entire county - not just the district in which they reside. Electing commissioners who live in each district already assures that we have good representation of any unique district-level needs or issues within the Commission.

It has worked well and allowed minority representation since it was begun. Why change what's working.

We don't need more commissioners, we need to elect commissioners in the districts that they live in.

Good luck, should have been changed before last election.

This would seem to be best method for insuring all areas are represented.

The diverse voices of Chatham County must be heard. Governors Club, Briar Chapel, and Fearrington/ Galloway should not overwhelm the entire county.

The current system is working well.

It represents the diversity of the county without creating deep divisions on the board.

District voting would likely reduce the unity of the board and the county.

For representation to be fair, it must reflect the assorted communities in which we live. Otherwise, virtually all the commissioners could come from one of two communities. What sort of representation is that.

No comment.

Option B, Voting Districts, is by far the best option. It makes sense, and is Fair.

Common sense

Commissioners must be voted on only by districts that they live in.

Seems to be most representative of the people living in a district.

This is the only way to ensure fair representation of the people living in our area.

To have the commissioners come from districts within the county voted on by citizens throughout the county makes the most sense to me. I see no reason to change from the Residency Districts. that we currently have at this time The discussion will begin again after the new maps are drawn after the census taking.

Why would you allow people of another district to elect a representative for a district they have no interest in.
Only district residents should pick their representatives!

Each commissioner represents all of the county and should be elected by all of the county.

District voting or the combination method listed would finally give the less populated western and southern sections a voice, with the combination method would still offer a slight edge to the more heavily populated areas as they might rightfully expect under majority rule.

I want to decide who represents me. Other districts not me should decide their fate also.

Citizens need control, not a click

We need representation on the basic local level. Only by voting districts will we get representation.

As James Otis once said no taxation without representation. Every commissioner should have to reside in their respective district if they want to represent it. What is best for one district is not the best for another. The people of district five have vastly different wants and needs than the people of districts one and two. Having someone from the more developed north or west Chatham speaking for someone of the much more rural south-west of Chatham does not mean they will have the best interest of our community here in district five. Without a fair and accurate representation of each district, it could be a populous mob rule of the county by areas of the county that are much more heavily populated that do not necessarily share the same values of the people they were allegedly elected to represent.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Proper representation is best obtained by commissioners elected within the district they represent. A vote for a district 1 commissioner from a district 5 resident will never properly motivate a commissioner or a voter. Its an unfair expectation on both parties.

With the variation in population density in Chatham County, the only way to get true representation for constituents being allowed to elect Commissioners that represent their views is to have voting by district.

All districts are given equal opportunity to be represented, but the commissioners serve the entire county and should be elected by all. Send representatives by district.

Our Commissioners need to focus on ALL of Chatham County, not just their own districts.

We need commissioners voted by their constituents and responsible to their constituents.

There are far more people in this county than are currently being represented by the transplants that have no interest in or knowledge of "the other side" of the county.

I always thought that Democrat, used in that situation, began with a capital D.

I oppose adding 2 additional commissioners.

God bless President Trump

This appears to be the same old "fix what isn't broke". What benefit accrues to the general public by increasing the number of commissioners? This mirrors the political polarization currently seen at the national level. Sad.

So sick of all the people coming from Wake and Orange trying to make Chatham be just like the area's they just left. Go back to the areas you ruined with your liberal politics and let Chatham be.

It's pathetic that someone is trying to stack the deck against us!

I believe that commissioners should live in and be elected by the voters of their respective districts, without voting at large.

The present system has more positive aspects than the other options. While attractive the others each have more problematic elements. I see no gain from increasing the board at this time.

While it may be that a majority of Chatham county residents live in the NE area of the county we must remember that we are not a democracy. We are a republic. Our constitution was created with the rights of the minority most decidedly protected. We must not allow mob rule by residents of any area of the county regardless of their majority status. All must be represented.

I believe the combination would work best. The district commissioner would work for the district while the at large commissioner work for the whole country. Each individually elected person would have a specific priority toward a specific group of people in a sprcific area of the county, something missing under the present methods.

Relatively new to Chatham County and no sure of my district.

Please continue with the current Residency districts option. This option allows everyone to be represented across the county. Chatham County is a very diverse county and we want to elect commissioners who represent that diversity.

The Residency option allows commissioners to vote in the best interests of the whole county.

This is the fairest of the options.

Nothing is broken...expansion of the Board may be important in the future but not now.

The current districts are based on 2010 census so very likely to change with 2020 census. The northern part of our county is more heavily populated than the southern and western areas. If districts were realigned, the southern residents(such as me) would not be properly represented with at large voting. Further more, it is important that any commissioner who runs for election should reside in the area they are representing, to do other wise is unfair to that district. If one lives in a district, the district citizens should decide by vote who represents them.

There are many questions unanswered by any change such as voting district realignment, board of education election methods, and possibly fire districts. In my investigation, these departments were unable to answer my questions but all agreed, any change in the election methods would require many county departments to make changes. The cost of such changes must be considered in the decision. All that said, I strongly feel my county commissioner must live in my district and only residents of this district should elect the commissioner. thanks, Linda Briggs

We don't need additional commissioners. This B.S. way to keep power

It seems unnatural for a citizen to be unable to hold an office he/she can vote for simply because of where that person lives. It also would be wrong to allow a person to vote for a candidate that was running for an office that was in another jurisdiction. A citizen of Chatham County should not be allowed to vote for a Wake County Commissioner, nor should a Chatham County qualified voter be banned from seeking an office because of where he/she resides. All Chatham voters elect all the commissioners without regard to where the commissioner candidates live within Chatham County, or Commissioners are elected only by voters who live within certain districts.

When we were new to the county in the 1990s Margaret Pollard asked me to help in her first run for Commissioner. In the process I handed out voter lists, instructed volunteers, etc. in areas of the county that I have not seen since. Margaret was not from there and I wondered how she could possibly represent their interests. Nonetheless - she won. I spoke on this topic to the Board when Bunkey Morgan was Chair, indicating that the commissioner should be accountable to and representative of a specific sector of the county. This will be doubly important in the future as Chatham Park builds - the population and wealth will be disproportionately in the Eastern half of the county and **countywide representation will be unfair to less populated/less wealthy areas of our county.**

Let's keep it local.

This seems to me to be the most representative for all county residents.

With the population shift in Chatham County, the only fair option is to elect commissioners by districts. Otherwise, **one section of the county could control the entire county.** To make sure the entire county has a fair chance of electing commissioners, the only fair and equitable method is to elect by districts.

Voting by district with only voters in a district able to vote for that district's race is the only fair approach to broad representation. This county is geographically large and has many different economic characteristics. The current voting scheme allows commissioners to be elected to districts where they don't carry the district they represent. This is just plain wrong.

The **country people will have a commissioner to carry problems to if the commissioner lives in each district** and not all from one section of the county. I have lived in Chatham County for 73 years and feel like there is **no one to talk to about problems in my area of the county.** Set up districts and let those people elect someone that can represent them. We pay our taxes that are spent without any input on where it is spent. Reminds me of the Philippines or some third world country.

lets clean up the swamp...

I chose the Residency Districts option so that the commissioners elected will represent all of the citizens of Chatham County.

All major topics affect every resident of the Count. Specific District needs, unique to a given district, can be addressed on an independent basis at the committee level.

Our county commissioners are just that... Chatham county commissioners. They vote on things that affect the entire county, not just their district. They need to be held accountable across the whole county for their votes.

Having a commissioner from each district means that each resident of chatham county will have someone who speaks for him/her about issues in their district. Also, there will be commissioners who will focus on what is good for the entire county.

I strongly support residency districts because so many issues dealt with by the commissioners affect the entire county. Another reason is to encourage countywide diversity on the commission.

The voting districts option would, it seems to me, tend to parochialize opinions and more likely lead to partisan conflict.

Adding commissioners doesn't make sense unless the workload warrants it.

Under Options B and C, some commissioners would represent more voters, and some less. This in my view is against the democratic principle of equal representation. Only Option A has equal voter representation.

Also, I worry that under B and C, some commissioners would naturally favor their own voters, rather than Chatham County as a whole. This would not be good for the future of Chatham County. Option A ensures that all of the commissioners work for all of the people.

Chatham County is a very diverse county, with each district's needs varying from other districts. The Board of Commissioners are in these positions to represent the people. I believe the most efficient way to accomplish this and in order for All of the people to be represented equally and fairly, the commissioner must reside in that district and be elected by only the voters in that district. This way each Commissioner representing the needs and voicing the concerns of their own district. I do not believe the Board of Commissioners should be expanded, it is completely unnecessary and would do little more than add expense to us the tax payers. For these reasons I support Option B so that all districts are represented and treated equally. I attended a Board of Commissioners meeting this past March where this exact subject was on the agenda. Numerous citizens signed up to give their thoughts to the Board that evening. The overwhelming majority who spoke that evening (all except one) were not in favor of the Board of Commissioners

expanding and also believed the Commissioner should reside in the district and be elected by the voters of that district only. There were numerous others that did not speak that evening but were in support of this viewpoint by a show of hands. I ask you to please listen and side with the the voters in your decision.

I would like to thank each person on the Election Method Task Force for devoting your time and energy to this issue. I believe it is a very important for our county's future. Thank you very much.

I believe that "Residency Districts" will best serve the residents of Chatham County.

Residency districts hold all commissioners accountable to the county as a whole. The state and nation have become greatly polarized, but at-large voting helps Chatham stay focused on the common good. At least one county should stand as an exemplar.

All Chatham County residents should be allowed to vote for all County Commissioner candidates. That way they are held accountable across the entire county for their votes.

Our county commissioners are just that... Chatham county commissioners. They vote on things that affect the entire county, not just their district.

To ask all five to cover our approx 750 sq mi County is so taxing. Seems those closest to the candidate should know whose is best to serve them. Also it seems to breed ability of unknown to ride coattails of a well known into leadership for the party and not for their experience and knowledgeable

August 8, 2018

Dear Task Force,

Thank you for soliciting input from Chatham citizens. You certainly have a very important task before you - greatly affecting the future of Chatham.

I am strongly in favor of Option A, Residency Districts with at-large voting, so Commissioners will take all of Chatham into consideration for schools, environmental protection, water and sewers, public health and safety, economic development, etc.

In looking for a system where many representatives are in relatively homogeneous Districts, one only has to look at the U.S. House as a prime example - and how is that working out? States are too large to have everyone vote for all representatives, but with the current crazy gerrymandering and non-diverse populations, many U.S. House candidates only really think about what their District wants - to the detriment of the rest of the state and country. There should be non-partisan redistricting for states for diversity, but Chatham will continue to have similar regions - densely populated areas, farming land, larger/smaller towns, etc. We should continue to promote what is best for all of Chatham, so that a Commissioner candidate from the more populated areas (like the Northeast) has to reflect what citizens in less populated regions need, and vice versa.

I'm not sure what prompted this study but if it was:

1. Because of unequal population in each district, and therefore some folks would have more votes in the county to elect "their" Commissioner, I understand. In 2017, as you know, the Districts ranged from 7,584 to 13,330 people. However, before "fixing something that will already be fixed" with a problematic option, this imbalance will be taken care of after the 2020 census!
2. Because of Commissioner and staff workload. I have not heard that Commissioners were complaining about this. However, if that is the case, we could certainly create 7 Districts with Residency Districts and at-large voting.

Best Regards, Bert Bowe 919-548-2262, Pittsboro, NC

I am located in voting district N W M 117

I believe many issues are county-wide issues, such as budget...schools, emergency services, public safety, public health and environmental protections, social services, and planning. How these issues are decided affects every resident of the county and go beyond any one district.

A commissioner must vote on county-wide issues, not just on their own district.

This ethos encourages commissioners to take a countywide perspective.

This appears to me to be the most equitable arrangement.

Residency Districts will lead to more diversity in the array of County Commissioners. This will lead to more fairness in funding important services such as schools.

I don't see how I am represented fairly when the entire county can have a say in the district I live in. Makes no sense!

The current method is better oversight by the voters. The Commissioners' perspective should be for the whole county and accountable for the whole county's business. The other two options (voting and combination) are political --- not professional and would create the atmosphere we have now in our state and national elections and business.

All Chatham residents of voting age should be able to vote for all commissioners.

Must be a US citizen to vote, ID required.

Residency seems most fair and reasonable.

I am fully committed to the dictum, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." I have seen nor heard any justification for a change, especially not a return to district-based voting.

Steve Kemp 102 Stones Throw, Polk's Landing

It's important to me that commissioners think with their "entire county hat" on. I lived in a community that thought that moving to a district method would enhance voting, but instead it led to "balkanization" that pitted districts against one another. We in Chatham County need to think about what is good for the entire county.

I am in the Mann's Chapel voting precinct. I do not know what number is assigned to this area. I feel strongly that the current election method is the best and should not be replaced by option B or C.

Chatham County is a large county with a diverse population. Currently a small geographic area with a dense population sets the overall vision for Chatham County. Meanwhile, many large landowners who pay equal or larger amounts in county taxes have little representation and their vision for the county is not represented.

We should encourage every Commissioner to act on behalf of ALL Chatham County residents, not just those who live in their District! Therefore, I believe Option A is the best by far.

By keeping the residency district form of voting the resident feel that he/she has a representative they can go to, while at the same time that Commissioner has the interest of the whole county at heart. If we were to change to voting districts that representative would be more focused on his/her district rather than the good of the whole county. They are called "County Commissioners" for a reason, let's keep it that way.

I think that others outside our district should not have a say in who represents us unless they live in our district.

I think I would be better represented by having my commissioner reside in the same district that I live in. They would have more knowledge of the various problems that might be in my area and how the residents feel about different issues.

In my opinion election by voting districts would be fair to all residents of the county and permit prospective commissioners to focus on their districts, district residents, and issues of that specific district.

Jennie,
I feel quite strongly that the most democratic form of voting for county commissioners is the one I believe is called the Residency Districts form. It seems to me that those elected to lead the county and ALL its citizens should be selected and elected by the entire county. That's a very straight-forward method that gives all citizens the right to elect all commissioners for the whole county. Quite honestly, that's a form of democratic government that fills the need of all citizens to have the right to vote for the commissioner(s) of their choice. Other more convoluted methods of vote get away from the simple way to select the candidates who, to the best of our understanding, would best represent the most honest and honorable leadership of the county.

There is a quote taken from an old essay, Desiderata. dated 1692 from Saint Paul's Church -

Go placidly amid the noise and haste. And remember what peace there may be in simple silence. As far as possible without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly.. . .

I think there is value for today from words penned in 1692.

Kathleen Hundley

Since commissioners vote on matters affecting the whole of Chatham county it would be a mistake to limit their votes to their district alone.

Residency Districts is the only model that makes sense the work of the commissioners is county wide.

I don't think we need additional commissioners. We should elect our commissioners the same way we elect our congressmen and congresswomen. They MUST reside in their district and be elected ONLY by voters in that district.

It seems only a short time ago we had a county-wide election which chose Option A, Residency Districts. Here we go again.

Residency Districts make more sense for county government because it is important for each Commissioner to work for all the people of Chatham. Letting only those in the district vote for their Commissioner, while on the face of it seems to make sense, **ultimately results in parochial district interests competing with county-wide interests.** Each Commissioner should live in and represent their district but be willing to work for the common good of all Chatham residents. Having to answer to all citizens in countywide elections gives each Commissioner an incentive to work for all of Chatham.

Adding **two more Commissioners would add administrative costs to the already challenged county budget. This is not necessary** and would only drain much needed funds away from schools, public health, environmental, and social services.

I live at Carolina Meadows, have voted every single election since I was 21. Current method makes a commissioner responsible to her/his district, but makes them responsible to ALL the citizens.

Also, we don't need or want additional commissioners!

My opinion is that commissioners that are elected at large by all voters will be more likely to represent all voters and listen to all voices from around the county rather than to one district. We are so polarized politically on the national scale that I do not want to see this brought to the local level by choosing either option B or C. Also I feel like the business of the county can be managed by added staff during this time of tremendous growth--not by adding more commissioners. A 5 member board will be more efficient than a 7 member board.

Thank you for your work on this issue.

County Commissioners should be accountable to all residents of the county, not just those of their district. Being elected at large by all voters is the best way to make this happen.

This is the ONLY fair way.

Each district would be and should be elected by the voters and reside in their district. Years ago this was the way our commissioners were elected and it worked very well.

Need to go back to voting by districts and the commissioners would be selected by the voters in their districts which would be the most fair way. Then the selection of commissioners would not be controlled by the most popular sections of the county. Also we don't need additional commissioners.

This option is the best way to assure that the Commissioners consistently support what is best for the ENTIRE county.

We do not need more commissioners.

Fairest

Commissioners should be representing a specific district in which they live and be only elected by the people that live in that district. Chatham County is a large and diverse County. The best representing is when a respective commissioner is representing and accountable to his/her following neighbors in that district **not a name or face of an individual 30 miles away** that does not truly have appreciation or full information of that district.

Verification via your little test is a problem for those with reduced vision -- like myself.

It is common sense ... a simple solution that is more democratic

This is the only way to be fair to all districts in the county, as it has been in the past is not fair for the entire county.

B would be a disaster.

At large voting is by its very nature a way to suppress minority representation.

B seems like the best way to elect commissioners!!

I believe that the people of a district should be represented by a person of that district.

I think it is only fair for the people in a given district to vote on their local Commissioner.

A person living in district 1 should not be permitted to decide how or who in district 2 is represented.

I am highly concerned that Choice B and Choice C **will lead to creating a silo effect** where the County Commissioners will be focused primarily on the needs of their district and not on the health of the county as a whole. Choice A provides such a great balance which is that the Commissioner must live in the district so they understand and represent their district in that way, but because they are voted on by all, they need to be first and foremost focused on the health of the county as a whole. I do not wish anything that could create siloing. In addition, our current County Commission is chosen by the Residency District system, and they "rock", they have just won a national award for their zoning plan, why do we want to change something that is working so amazingly well?

Then there is the issue of real representation of people of color. While I and my husband are caucasian, we have Karen Howard as our representative and she is amazing. Would she have won if she was just voted on within the district, I would like to think "yes" but not clear on that at all. Having county wide voting reduces the barrier to people of color standing up and becoming amazing public servants. I want to have the system that most encourages this.

Commented [DH2]: In this case they are referring to rural/GOP as minority

I would not be happy with either Choice B or C, Choice A is the only viable method and as it is working, why change something that is clearly not broken, but is also thriving?

I believe this is the fairest way to allocate commissioners who serve the entire county, far past their specific district.

The only reason for having "at large" commissioners would be for the NE to out-vote the West. Let the people in the district vote for representatives that reside in their districts.
It is the fairest way to represent Chatham County.

The "at large by all voters" is more representative of the county.

I want every commissioner to see her/his responsibility to be acting and voting to benefit the entire county, not a specific area, group, or political party.

We don't need to expand the board until the current commissioners ask for it, which they have not. Commissioners should live in districts. But all voters should be able to vote for everyone.

I want a county wide vote. Commissioners should live in one of the districts but we should elect over the entire county.

It seems to us that this is the only way that all residents will be equally represented by the commissioners as they are elected at large by ALL voters.

Current method works well!

I believe the current method provides a good balance between local district representation and the county as a whole. Our commissioners need to focus on countywide issues over more narrow district issues as exemplified by their award winning plans for the county's future development.

The other proposals, while reasonable, increase the focus on local district representation and not on the county as a whole and can easily lead to the creation of gerrymandered districts that could unfairly favor one party over another.

Since many issues the Board deals with are county-wide issues, I believe the current election method is the most appropriate one.

I am hoping we will stick with the current Residency districts option where we have 5 county commissioner districts and everyone votes for each one. Our county commissioners are just that... Chatham county commissioners. They vote on things that affect the entire county, not just their district. They need to be held accountable across the whole county for their votes. This is the only option of the three that allows folks to vote for the commissioners in all 5 districts, whether or not the voter lives in the commissioner's district. That is a distinction that is very important given what I consider to be a bad outcome of only being able to vote for the commissioner who lives in your district.

Comparing the Chatham County Board representation against our neighboring counties, only three of the eight – Wake, Lee, and Orange – have more than five commissioners. Perhaps that makes sense for Wake, a county with almost 15 times the population of Chatham County. Across the state of North Carolina, the average number of commissioners is five. Some have six, some have seven, but mostly five.

Comparing how many citizens are represented by each commissioner in neighboring counties with Chatham County, one finds that:

- Chatham's five commissioners each represent about 12,800 persons in the county
- Orange County's seven commissioners each represent about 19,800 persons
- Wake's seven commissioners each represent about 133,000 persons
- The average representation per commissioner across the state is about 15,572 persons, which means that Chatham commissioners currently have 18 percent fewer persons per commissioner than North Carolina averages.

So, the argument that more commissioners are needed to represent our county's population is wrong based on numbers. These numbers do not justify an expansion of the Board of Commissioners.

Second, let's look at how this proposal would support the county's long-range plan, as recently adopted by you, the current Commissioners. Over the last two years, Chatham County undertook a large effort to understand what the county should look like for the next few decades. Preserving rural character was identified as the most important goal during the planning process. Expanding the number of commissioners as is currently under discussion does nothing to assist in preserving rural character; in fact, it contributes to its decline. Here is why....

County commissioners, while required to reside in one of five geographic districts, are voted on by the entire county. That means the larger urban population in the northeast elects commissioners who reside in more rural areas. Votes of those in the rural south and west are not worth as much as those in the northeast when voting for Commissioners.

Instead of adding Commissioners, a better approach for organizing our County Commission would be to have Commissioners voted on only by those in their district. That would bring increased representation to the southern and western portions of the county, prevent their voices from being overwhelmed by the more populous areas of the northeast County, and would support the Long-Range Plan which this Commission approved.

Voters should have Commissioners of their choice from their District that are accessible and know their district they are representing.

I see no reason to change. In particular, changing to the Combination would cost more. Commissioners do not vote only on issues affecting their district but rather on issues that affect all voters. Therefore, they should be elected at large by all voters.

Comments sent under separate attachment to Lindsay Ray.

I want to be able to vote for local officials who decide local issues. I may live in District 4, but District 3 is a hop, skip, and a jump from my house, I used to work in District 1, my dentist is in District 5, and many of my friends reside in District 2. Being able to vote for all commissioners is part of what brings us together as a county, and makes Chatham the community that it is.

I believe that countywide voting on all our districts' commissioners invokes a unifying educational process during campaign season, on issues important to citizens across the county. I hope we preserve this process as it is.

i LIVE IN DISTRICT 1 AND I VOTE FOR OPTION A RESIDENCY DISTRICTS .
--MJG

County-wide elections keep us together and allow us to communicate and plan together in a way that is informed by everyone's input. We are much better able to balance everyone's needs if the commissioners remain county wide. There are serious issues that need to be addressed by a broader view. We should be dedicated to preserving our rural nature while planning for population growth.

Global warming is already have real consequences we are experiencing right now. We need creative thinkers to create local responses to ameliorate consequences (flooding, power outages, tree and green protection, decreasing heat generation, solar energy and more).

Minority representation is important. Preserving our present systems of county wide commissioners provides more opportunities for minorities to be elected.

It is necessary for all Commissioners to be accountable to all the voters of Chatham to ensure that county interests come ahead of local district issues.

Adding more commissioners adds to administrative costs and takes away money needed for county services.

I think things work well now and there is no good reason to change the method to elect the board of commissioners.

DO NOT WANT TO SEE GEREMENDING BY EITHER PARTY!

The system of at large voting has worked fine. Why change it?

County Commissioners make decisions for the entire county. Residency districts give the voter the best participation in democracy.

I have already given my comments - - I selected #A, Residency Districts. My primary point in this selection is that I feel strongly that the BOC is to provide leadership for the entire county, and as such, I feel that all citizens should vote so that all commissioners selected and voted for should be "all for all" across the county. That's the best, if not only, way that all citizens will be under the same guidelines for law-abiding.

County commissioners decide on matters that effect the ENTIRE county. But they need to be aware of differences across the various needs of different districts. Option A takes all that into consideration. thank you.

I think things are working well and should not be changed in any way.

I favor the current system, whereby all citizens can vote for all commissioners. I believe that that countywide races tend to inform and update voters on important policy questions in a unifying way. In contrast, "district only" voting tends to promote the strategies of divisiveness. We need to come together and find common ground to solve our problems.

The current election method is a good one. Let's keep it the way it is.

Option B. Voting Districts appears to be the most representative option available to all of the constituents across the county. This could also reduce the cost to candidates as they would only have to campaign in their district. Candidates should be more attuned to the needs and wishes of the people of their respective districts. Adding more commissioners would increase the cost of government to the citizens and could skew the balance, e.g., what if three were elected from District 5? Would that not shift the balance of power/representation to one particular district? While Chatham is a large county geographically, there is balance in number of voters per district with the largest difference being only 403 voters between District 2 and District 3. Unfortunately, that does not truly represent the number of people who will exercise their privilege to vote in any election. Thank you for the opportunity to voice an opinion on this important issue.

There is a concern for the people who do not have access to a computer to voice their opinion on a very important issue.

If it ain't broke don't fix it

Option B appears to me to be divisive and to pit one district against another, and there is too much divisiveness going around these days. The Combination in Option C might be workable but I feel that the county is changing rapidly, and as it will need to redistrict after the 2020 census, we should wait until that information is received to make any changes after due consideration

I think this is the fairest method to make sure we have the best representation for all people who live in the county.

I think what we have works just fine.

The current system works just fine. There is no reason to change it.

We would need strong laws to prevent district gerrymandering to even consider B or C.

Considering this issue before the 2020 census and the 2021 redistricting is premature.

Chatham county needs to go back to voting in districts. The people who live in their respective districts should only vote for their own individual candidate for that district not county wide. It worked before with great success and can again.

I would like an option that is the most inclusive for inpur

A is the fairest option.

I believe option A - **the way we currently elect commissioners- is the best choice** for the county as a whole. I want our commissioners to look at and work to solve the concerns of the whole county. I believe this is best done with our current election method. The other methods encourage a more narrow focus where needs of a district could be placed above county needs. Moreover the other methods could encourage gerrymandering and **affect representation by minorities,**

I really like being able to support candidates I actually care about. Sometimes there's no one in your district you actually feel passionate about supporting. More importantly counties are too small to break down into competing interests. Commissioners should have to appeal to (and care about) the entire county, not just their part of the county!

I believe that the **current voting option is still the best for Chatham,** it ensures accountability from all commissioners to all Chatham residents and not just the special interests of voters in their district. More importantly, **it ensures that minority candidates in any district** have a chance to win an election. If we change to district voting, it's highly unlikely that minority candidates will be able to garner the support they need to win. I don't believe that option C would address either of my concerns effectively. We have done well by having all commissioners be accountable to all voters in all areas of the county, it **helps to keep our county unified.**

I believe this option will insure a more unified county and has worked well in the past

We believe in a strong community and we are retired and on a fixed income. I also have many health problems at our age, 68. We are conservatives and believe in freedom and liberty for choice of our representatives.
John and Karen Hartsell, Siler City

Balkanizing Chatham County by dividing up election so that only a small portion of country residents vote for each commissioner is entirely too likely to lead to the proliferation of special interests that don't work together for the benefit of the county.

I'm in favor of a diverse and wholly represented Chatham County. Cutting us up into little voting islands would do nothing but move us toward the stagnancy and domineering inflexibility that our Representatives and Senators practice in Congress. I'm in favor of continuing to vote using the residency district model.

I prefer the current system - Residency Districts - until we have a new census in 2020.

We need to stay with the 5 Commissioners and allow the districts to elect their own commissioners. If you go to 7 and then elect 2 at-large it will give the district(s), ex. North Chatham, an unfair advantage and control of the board for a long, long time. Think of places like New York City and Southern California controlling those states policies.

Using Voting Districts is the best way to elect our representatives to give an equal voice to all! We do not elect our US Congressman from the whole state of NC. We elect them from their district and this is the way Chatham County should elect our commissioners.

This is the best method to insure proper representation

Please model our system after the way our Congressional leaders are elected so that everyone has a voice in our government and not just a certain segment.

It ain't broke, so don't mess with it.

Keep it the way it is.

Choice B makes it fair for the whole county and truly is more democratic! The way it is now is that the eastern, liberal Pittsboro area dominates all decisions.

All of the commissioners represent the citizens of the entire county, so it makes sense that they be elected at large by all voters.

At large election helps to keep the County more unified. Election by district could cause voters to only be exposed to issues concerning their particular residence locations and not to policies for other parts of the County that may also affect them.

Most of us now living in Chatham are dedicated to preserving the rural character of the county. My opinion is that countywide races tend to inform and update voters on key policy decisions in a unifying way, while "district only" voting inherently promotes strategies of division.

It is very important that we have Residency Districts here in Chatham County. My husband and I are very sure about this that it is the best thing for all of us.

The election of a Board of Commissioner majority of the most important policy making board in the County should align with elections that historically produce the highest voter turnout: the same years as the Presidential election.

This aligns with the principle of good governance and citizen participation. We could accomplish this goal by either a) making Diana, Walter or Jim's district into a two year term and then changing it into a four year term beginning in 2020 OR simply expanding the BOC to seven (7) members in 2020 by adding two additional members to the roster to be elected in 2020 and align them with the Presidential cycle.

Having more commissioners on the Board of Commissioners provides more representatives for the people and has the potential for a greater diversity of thought and membership. In addition, commissioners have a large number of committee and advisory board assignments. Some of these boards can be quite influential, influencing transportation planning, water and other resource planning at the regional and state level, and have short and long term financial impact on the County as well. Having more members to serve as liaisons and/or ad hoc members to these boards and committees should provide the opportunity for more focused engagement and the potential to accomplish good public policy benefitting Chatham County. It doesn't hurt to educate the Board members themselves, either.

Given the real question of minority representation being a problem, I favor the 4 district residency, +3 totally at large residency, at large election makeup of the new board.

Above all, the most important input is from the people themselves. This needs to be put on the ballot, so the people can decide.

County Commissioners should be focused on the good of the county as a whole, not just the good of their district.

County Commissioners should work together for everyone in the county, not just for the smaller district they represent. As a citizen, I would have more power as a voter to elect the full board and then to communicate with all commissioners about issues.

The other options are unfair!

Best reflect need of entire community but will assure that someone is knowledgeable about each district

Just as a general statement, it seems odd that two of the three options has district only voting for 5 districts. It also seems odd that the only option for adding commissioners is to vote for district only voting.... i.e. the combination method has us increasing the number of commissioners to 7 and having district only voting for all 5 districts.

Several of the folks I've spoken to think we should increase the number of commissioners, but want at large voting for the 5 commissioner districts not district only voting.

Thanks for giving folks a chance to weigh in on this issue.

Using the entire population. Is best served by this model.

County wide all at once best representation

County wide, one vote per person entire county

As a concerned Chatham County resident I would like to see the things remain as they are (option A) because of the diversity in commissioners that resulted and the accountability it puts on the commissioners.

I am concerned because prior to voting districts, there were no African-American county commissioners. I also believe in negotiation and building bridges to the "other." If we vote in residency districts, it is more likely that County commissioners will not have much incentive to hear each other out. More than anything else, I believe it's important to build bridges to each other even when we disagree. Voting districts make the building of bridges much more possible.

I like it the way it is. Too limiting to only be able to vote for one commissioner. Option C is too confusing.

I think the current system where the commissioners represent all of us works well. I also think at this time that the number of commissioners is appropriate for our population.

Stay with the current residency option. County commissioners vote on things that affect the whole county, not just their district.

I know it is complex, but this seems to give the best opportunity for fair and equitable representation of all in the community, especially people of color. Thank you!

Our county commissioners are just that... Chatham county commissioners. They vote on things that affect the entire county, not just their district. They need to be held accountable across the whole county for their votes.

I feel it's important to be able to vote for those who represent the entire County, not just the interests of their own districts. County Commissioners represent all of us who live in the County.

Commissioners need to represent the entire county.

I prefer to keep the current system.

Chatham county commissioners vote on things that affect the entire county, not just their district. They need to be held accountable across the whole county for their votes.

Commented [DH3]: I think the person filling this out got confused, based on the fact that they picked residency districts in the first question. Also this answer does not really make sense.

I believe county commissioners should live in the district they represent so that they understand the regional concerns of their district. But because commissioners vote on issues that affect the entire county, I also believe that all citizens should have an opportunity to vote for each commissioner.

Therefore, Residency Districts make the most sense for Chatham County, in my opinion. **have not seen any data to support the idea that we need more commissioners.**

I see no reason to change from our current election approach (Option A). It strikes a good balance to assure that we have countywide geographic representation across the Board of Commissioners, but with the entire county being given the opportunity to elect commissioners who make decisions that affect the entire county.

The current system, residency districts, works well. Why is there even a question about changing it? NC voters, including me, are tired of seeing proposals for changes where there are no problems with current systems. Is this another way that one party is attempting to exert greater control by changing the rules in place? I'm suspicious. There are many issues to address in Chatham County. Do your work and address them, please! Don't create new work, don't drain energy away from needed projects through needless changes, and don't increase the number of tax dollars needed to perform functions. Thank you.

The residents of each district should be able to choose who represents them. Chatham County's population is too heavy on one side to continue with county wide elections. **The thinly populated areas have no voice.**

We need a way for all citizens to have equal say. **Right now, the part of the county that is heavily populated controls the entire county.** This is also the area that is richer, with newer residents to the county and totally out of touch with everybody else. They fit in better with Orange County and that point-of-view. The families in **rural areas that settled the county and have been here for generations have no power at all** and are looked down on as being insignificant.

I believe this option represents all voters in Chatham County.

I believe this approach has served the people of Chatham County well over the 23 years I have lived here. It causes all the Commissioners to be familiar with issues across the whole county and, as a group, to vote on issues with a more holistic view.

Best way to ensure electing people to represent county as a whole.

Dear Task Force:

There is a major flaw in this method of providing comments. **You are allowing anonymous voting as a "Comment" with no way to know if a person votes more than once. Any information you collect will be completely invalid.** I am surprised you did not realize this.

Best regards, Judy Lessler

I believe that each Commissioner should act in behalf of the needs of county residents as a whole, and that the Residency District method of election will continue to produce a board that is the most broadly responsive to the strategic needs of the county as a whole. Thank you.

Voting by districts would give each sector of the county a voice in the county process.

County Commissioners must serve ALL county residents not simply those in their district.

Would like to preserve the rural quality of Chatham county.

The 'Residency Districts' system has been proved to work just fine, so there is no need to 'fix' it.

The commissioners work collectively for the entire county, not just for their own districts. Keep the Residency method in place.

Given the current growth trend and the anticipation of even more significant future growth in and around Pittsboro, the Residency Districts would seem to work best for now.

If we continue the current method of residency districts our Chatham County commissioners are just that, whole county commissioners that have to consider the entire county, not just their district. This, in my opinion, is more unifying. If they have to consider everyone in the county voting for them they will keep the entire counties needs in mind.

Most of us now living in Chatham are dedicated to preserving the rural character of the county. My opinion is that countywide races tend to inform and update voters on key policy decisions in a unifying way, while "district only" voting inherently promotes the strategies of division.

No matter how you elect our county commissioners north chatham gets all of the benefits. I want my commissioner that represents my district to live here and this district vote in them only!

I think this is a good way to elect the commissioners and would like to see this process continue.

I believe the current Residency District method (Method A) is ideal. Having an opportunity for all of the commissioners to be decided by all voters across the county is an excellent method, which ensures that those serving on the commission address the needs of the county as a whole. This is important for big picture planning and leadership moving forward, especially as we move toward addressing the county's future.

Please keep the Residency District Method.

Thank you!

-Krista Rowe

The residency districts method keeps commissioners thinking of Chatham County as a whole and not their own special interest. I think that is very important. We have a very diverse County with many different needs and constituencies and everyone needs to be served and not have warring factions.

Ensures fair representation of the whole county, not just one side

I think this is the fairest option since all residents are affected by the county budget. Voting districts could be biased in their decision-making based on being beholden only to the voters of their district.

The current method works well. NO need to change

Please retain the current residency districts method of selecting county commissioners. It has worked well for all the people in the county.

more information for all residents

If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

I favor residency districts which has worked well in in tha past.

This is the fairest form of election that guarantees knowledge and concern about local districts but also demands a broader perspective about the needs of the state.

So many votes are for county wide or multiple district initiatives. It seems right to have commissioners oriented beyond their districts and to have voters And interest groups able to approach and lobby any or all commissioners.

County Commissioners should continue to be elected by Residency Districts. They should NOT be chosen by voting districts or by a combination which would be the worst of both worlds.

I believe that county Commissioners should represent the whole county, not just the District they live in. Commissioners vote on the total county budget, this includes the schools, emergency services, public safety, public health and environmental protections, social services, and planning. This is an incredibly important responsibility and must not be compromised by pressure from residents in a district if the Commissioner was elected only by them.

I worry that Commissioners elected by Voting districts might be focused on their district needs, not all of Chatham. The proposed Combination option would still mean that 5 commissioners would be elected by individual districts which might have very different agendas. This could make it very difficult to reach consensus.

The plan we have now works. We get commissioners from each district, but since the county as a whole is affected by board decisions, we get to vote on who they are.

We have an effective working system with no need to change. Voting by districts would make gerrymandering a temptation. We have a sufficiency of that anti-democracy strategy at the state level. Let's not introduce it in our county.

Current system works well - there's no guarantee that a change will be good.

Ian Dunn 35 Caswell St Farrington

I strongly favor the current Residency Districts Option where Chatham County voters can vote for commissioners in ALL 5 districts, NOT just the district the Commissioner lives in!!

This type of system has been used before and I think represents the voting public the best.