



Special Issues: Redistricting Committee Summary Minutes

Monday, September 12, 2011 3:30 PM City & County Building, Room 391

Members Present: Brooks, Herndon, Lopez, Shepherd, Susman
Members Absent: None
Other Council Present: Ortega, Montero, Nevitt, Robb, Faatz, Lehmann

Committee Staff: Gretchen Williams

Presentations

- 1 Reprecincting: Process, Policies, and Schedule**
Debra Johnson, Clerk & Recorder; Amber McReynolds, Elections Director

The City Charter assigns to the Clerk the duty of dividing the County into election precincts. The Elections Division (ED) of the Clerk's Office has developed a set of policies and procedures and a methodology for executing the task this year.

Complicating the process is that the re-precincting process cannot begin at the county level in earnest until the State completes its reapportionment (redrawing the State Senate district boundaries) and updating the statewide registered voter system. Various versions of reapportionment maps will have to be settled in Court, and the Court has until Dec. 15 to make a final decision.

County precinct lines must be finalized by January 6, 2012, in time for the political parties to organize their caucuses in early February.

The Clerk's presentation is attached to the meeting summary for review. The discussion included the following points:

- State statute limits precincts to 1500 active voters, which was historically necessary to

maintain manageable elections.

- Denver currently has 429 precincts; several are at the maximum of 1500 voters and some contain only a hundred or so voters.
- All-mail elections and early voting have reduced the need to limit the number of voters in each precinct.
- Consolidating precincts will reduce election costs and increases efficiencies.
- Precincts in Denver do not cross Statistical Neighborhood boundaries (78; see attached map) but do not relate to registered neighborhood boundaries.
- Precinct lines will consider total population (not just active voters) and potential growth.
- The Statistical Neighborhoods were divided into three categories: Growth (19); Stable (44); and Flexible (15).
- Flexible neighborhoods are clustered in north-central Denver; they are the most likely to be divided during redistricting.
- Green Valley Ranch, Stapleton, Lowry and Downtown are the high growth areas.
- Rebalancing population will impact districts across the northern half of the City due to population growth and shifts of racial and ethnic composition.
- Challenges for ED include dealing with areas where the US Census lines do not match City boundaries and the manual process used at the State voter registration update, which is too slow and impacts Denver's time line. Denver may have to start manual updates if the State takes too long.

The Clerk's office has developed a Public Process and Communication Plan for reprecincting. The draft maps, showing a couple of alternative plans, will be published on the ED website as soon as possible, and presentations will be scheduled in at least the following forums prior to the official public hearing:

- Council Redistricting Committee
- Council General Government & Finance Committee
- One of the televised Clerk & Recorder Forums
- Elections Model Advisory Board

- ACCESO

Councilmembers requested current precinct maps of their Districts.

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Communications Plan

Lauri Dannemiller, City Council Legislative Services Director

The Communications Plan (attached) for the redistricting process attempts to provide as much information to as many people as possible. The stated Objective of the Plan is:

To communicate the process that City council completes to redistrict the eleven Council districts based upon the 2010 Census; to engage the community in the discussion to ensure an outcome which is fair and legally defensible; and to uphold the terms of the resolution adopted by Council outlining the principles and procedures for redistricting.

The Council's press list is extensive, and it will be circulated to Councilmembers for any additions. Interested stakeholders include the various Chambers of Commerce, League of Women Voters, and the City's diverse list of commissions (Latino, African-American, Asian-Pacific, Aging, GLBT, etc.). The Downtown Denver Partnership is included on the list because it indicated an interest. If there are other business groups interested, they can be added.

Council Lopez and staff will be available to speak at public meetings on the process. Large neighborhood meetings, for example, might want a briefing. At least five public meetings will be held: one in each quadrant plus a central one at a meeting of this Committee. The Charter requires that Council hold a public hearing prior to adoption of new boundaries.

Councilman Lopez asked his colleagues if they saw any missing communities of interest and if the Plan provides for complete transparency. Additional contacts can be added at any time through the process.

Councilwoman Faatz asked that all elected officials covering any territory within Denver, such as RTD and the school board, be notified of the process and any meetings or hearings.

Councilwoman Ortega added the Colorado Latino Forum.

Councilman Herndon said the Councilmembers have a responsibility to be sure people know about the process.

Ms. Dannemiller said Council has no budget for this, but staff will make all materials as professional as possible. A separate page linked from Council's webpage will be created. Staff will prepare news articles for Councilmembers' newsletters.

Key materials, such as the resolution and the final ordinance, will be translated into Spanish, but most of the materials will be maps. Councilwoman Montero said that ACCESO may have financial resources to help with translations, and we should coordinate with that group.

Bill Requests

RR11-0661 A resolution establishing principles and procedures for developing a plan for redrawing the boundaries of Council Districts within the City and County of Denver.

Lauri Dannemiller, City Council Legislative Services Director

The proposed Resolution lays out the policies and procedures to be used for the redistricting process. The draft is a modification of the resolution adopted by Council in 2002 for the last redistricting process.

The Committee discussed some provisions of the proposed language and made the following decisions:

- **Floor amendments:** Committee should do its work in Committee meetings with the goal of having no amendments to the map offered on the floor, but the Resolution does not to address the issue with added language
- **Split neighborhoods:** Historically, as stated in the Resolution, Council has tried to avoid it. Committee discussed having more than three representatives (district and two at-large) is negative or positive and decided to leave the language.
- **Incumbents:** The language expresses the intent “to the extent possible” to avoid drawing lines that create a district in which two incumbents eligible to run in 2015. This is standard in any legislative redistricting exercise.

Councilman Nevitt said the proposed Resolution lays out all the things Council wants to consider during the process although we recognizes that we may not be able to maximize all of our stated goals. In this process we have to be flexible.

A motion offered by Councilmember Herndon, duly seconded by Councilmember Susman to file the resolution carried by the following vote:

AYES: Nevitt, Ortega, Brooks, Herndon, Lopez, Shepherd, Susman(7)
NAYS: (None)
ABSENT: (None)
ABSTAIN: (None)

