



ALL-DISTRICT CITY COUNCIL COMPOSITION

City Council Composition Charter Change

Finance and Governance Committee
August 10, 2021

- Councilmember Kevin Flynn, District 2
- Councilmember Jolon Clark, District 7
- Councilmember Candi CdeBaca, District 9



OVERVIEW

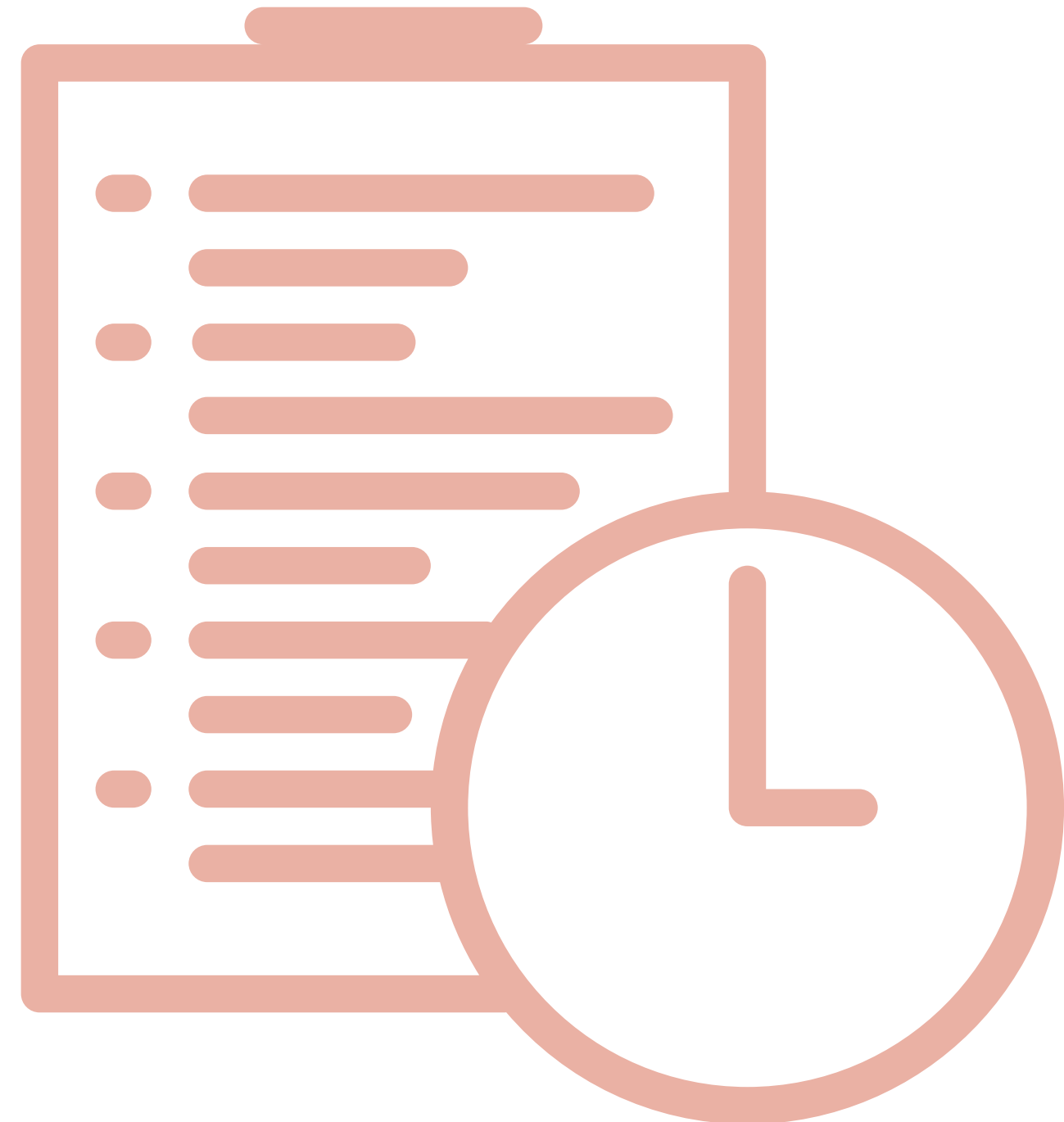
Background & Problem Statement

Other Considerations: At-Large vs District Seats

Stakeholder Engagement Process

Proposed Solution

Implementation Timeline



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REPRESENTATION MATTERS

"One of the most persistent findings by scholars of urban politics is that single-member district elections increase descriptive representation of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups on city councils."

Trounstine and Valdini, 2008. "The Context Matters: The Effects of Single-Member versus At-Large Districts on City Council Diversity," *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 52(3), 554-569.



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BACKGROUND

- Denver City Council Composition
 - Pre-1968: Nine single-district seats
 - 1968: Charter change, 11 single-district seats and 2 at-large seats
- Denver's Population Growth
 - +130K residents since 2010
- Redistricting Denver 2022
 - Convergence of redistricting with both at-large council seats being open in the next election



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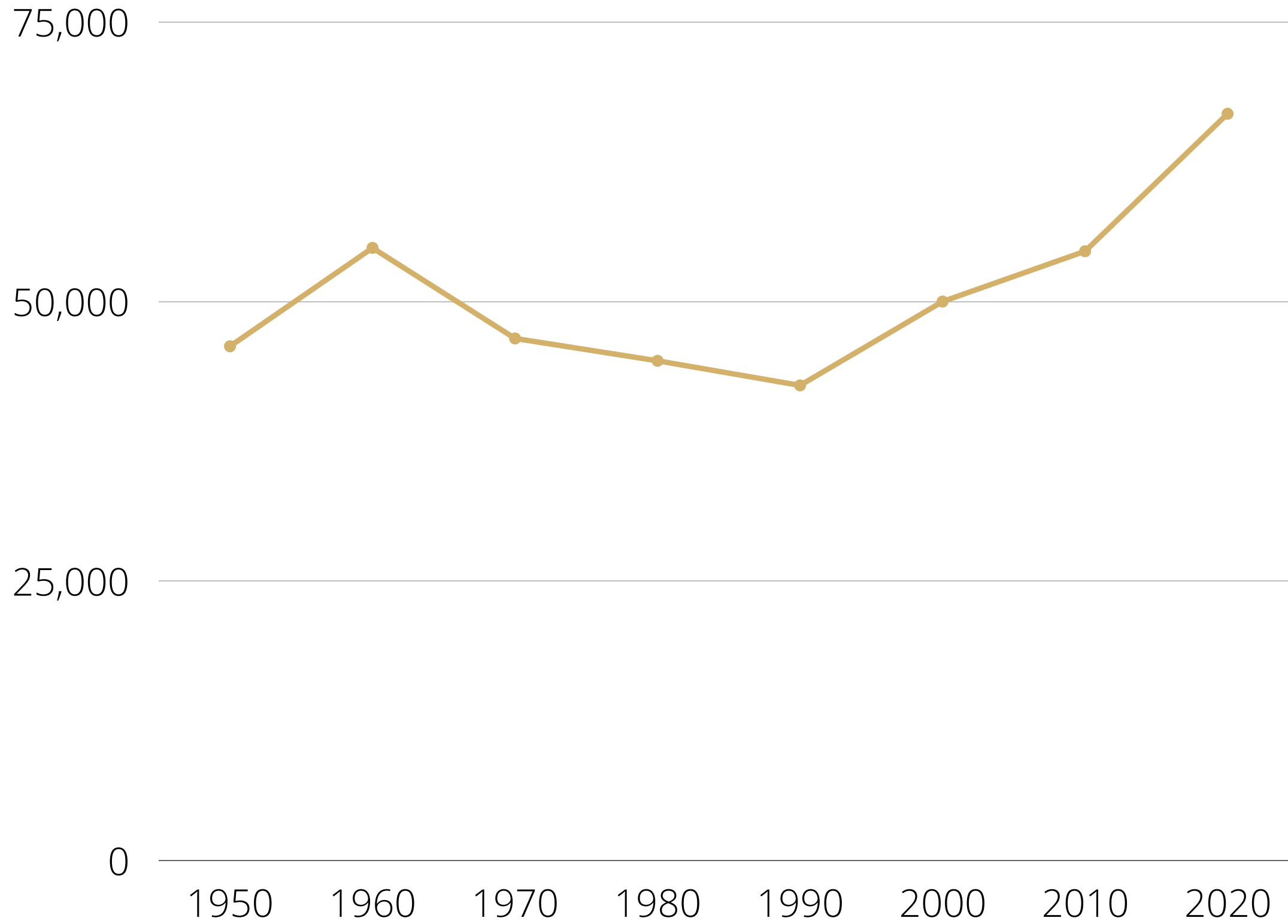


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RESIDENTS PER DISTRICT



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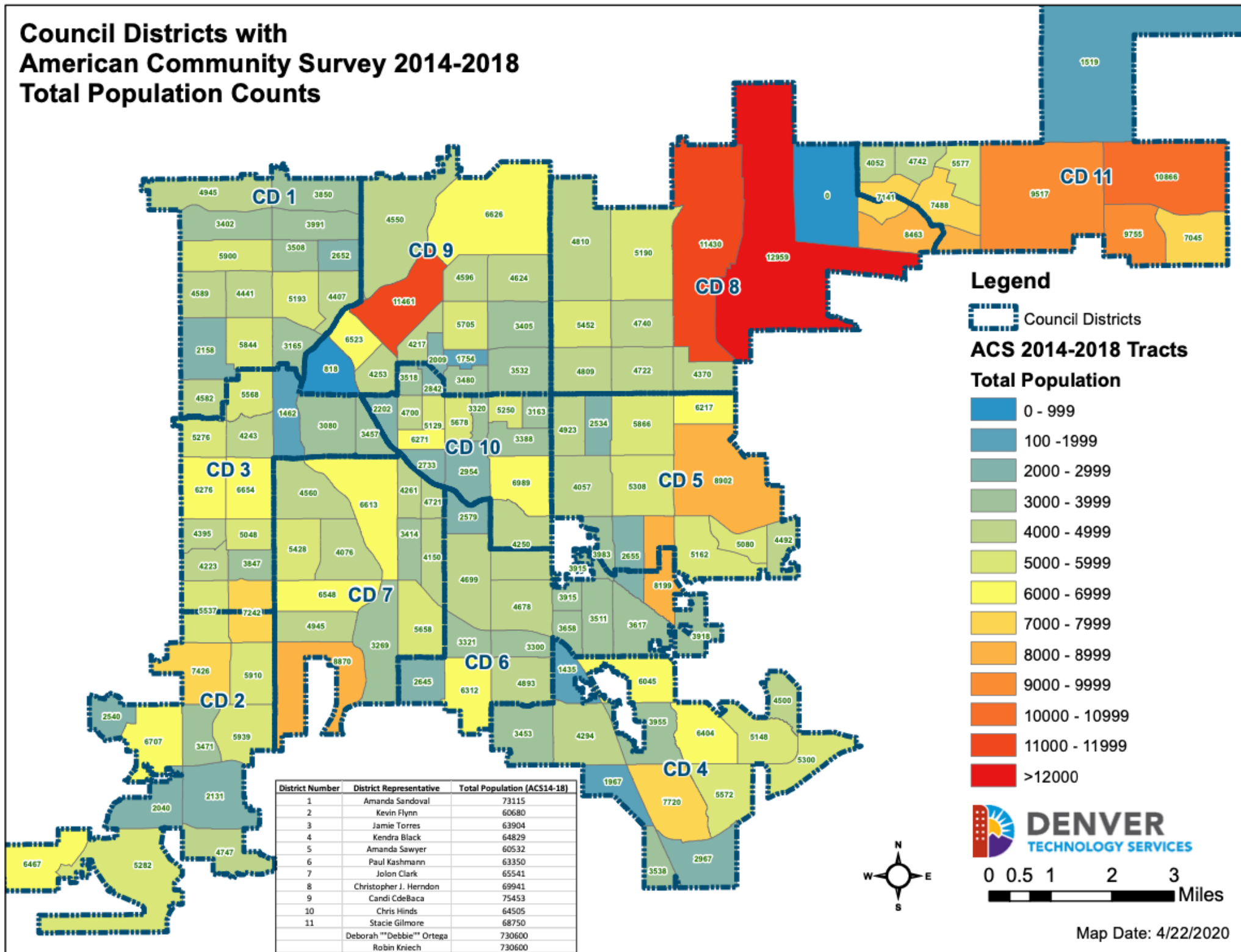


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RESIDENTS PER DISTRICT

Decade (Single-district seats)	Avg. Constituents per District	# Change	% Change
1950s (9)	46,197		
1960s (9)	54,876	+8,679	+19%
1970s (11)	46,788	-8,088	-15%
1980s (11)	44,790	-1,998	-4%
1990s (11)	42,510	-2,280	-5%
2000s (11)	50,421	+7,911	+19%
2010s (11)	54,560	+4,139	+8%
2020s (11)	66,868	+12,308	+23%
2020s (13)	56,580	+2,020	+4%



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PROBLEM STATEMENT

If additional Council districts are not added, our existing 11 Council districts will be serving an all-time high of 66,868 constituents per district, making it harder for constituents to access their district representative.

Largest District- 75,463
Smallest District- 60,532
(2018 data)



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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

RNO & Constituent Accessibility

- Single-district members have fewer RNO and neighborhood meetings to attend to keep a pulse on the needs and desires of neighborhoods. At-large members would be stretched to effectively attend all RNO meetings and serve their needs.

Accountability to Localized Decisions

- If a single low-population neighborhood is unhappy with a decision made by the body, the district representative is much more accountable, whereas that voting bloc may not be enough to determine an at-large election. At-large members being untethered to any specific community can isolate them from the impacts of their high-level policy initiatives.



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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Competing Interests with District Members

- At-large members, while representing the entire city, have a vastly different constituency than a district member, especially a member representing a less-dense population. Campaigns tend to reflect the will of more densely populated areas & stakeholder groups, and with two at-large members, the local representative is outnumbered in votes.

Strained Budget & Resources

- At-large member budgets are spread throughout the entire city vs single-member districts, which more directly infuse budgets into a smaller geographic district.



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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Diluting Minority Votes & Representation

- Research shows that at-large systems dilute the votes of people of color and other minorities. There have been numerous cases in which the Department of Justice and the federal courts have found at-large voting districts to be racially discriminatory under the Voting Rights Act.
- In Denver's 50 year history of at-large seats, 15 individuals have served. None has ever been credibly challenged for re-election, and notably, only 2 of 15 at-large members have ever been persons of color.



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BENEFITS OF SINGLE-DISTRICT MEMBERS

- Localized Democracy
- Tailored & Accessible Representation
- Accountability to Constituents
- Minimizing Special Interests
- More Effective Use of Limited Resources



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THEORY VS PRACTICE

In theory...

At-large members focus on "citywide" policy issues. →

At-large members serve as "back-up" for district members for constituent services and provide additional representation to constituents. →

At-large members serve as a balance to the Mayor's power. →

In reality...

District members have bandwidth to champion citywide policy initiatives—i.e., Torres on OIM, Clark on Climate Action, Black on single-use plastics, Gilmore on Rental Registry

In practice, constituents will go to their district member first. There is no guarantee the at-large members will prioritize constituents' issues in one district vs another

Because it is very costly to run a citywide race, at-large members are susceptible to the same special interests that the executive branch is, and often vote in line with the Mayor's agenda.



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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

General Timeline of Events

Sept 2020- Feb 2021

- Community-initiated proposal to convert at-large seats to single-district seats.

Mar-Apr 2021

- Constituents outreach 1:1 to council members
- CM Flynn sends council district maps
- CM CdeBaca requests proposal discussion in Committee

May-Jul 2021

- Peer city research
- CM Herndon present Council District History at FINGOV Committee
- Bill draft created

Aug 2021

- Council member 1:1s
- Clerk & Recorder outreach
- Introduction at FINGOV Committee



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PROPOSED SOLUTION

CO-SPONSORS: CDEBACA, CLARK, FLYNN

Let voters decide if they want to:

Convert the two existing at-large Council seats to single-district seats, expanding from 11 to 13

Broadens & deepens representation

by creating smaller communities of interest

Gives residents **a stronger voice & better access** to their representatives on Council



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PROPOSED BALLOT LANGUAGE

CO-SPONSORS: CDEBACA, CLARK, FLYNN

CB 21-0908

Shall the Charter of the City and County of Denver be amended to convert the two at-large City Council seats to district council seats, forming a City Council composed of 13 district members?



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PEER CITIES

Of the 100 largest cities in America, 63 have governing bodies that have no at-large members. Bodies with all-district representation is the most common arrangement. Most of these cities have laws similar to Denver's. Some, such as Austin, have converted from at-large to all-district members.

Cities with no at-large members: Austin, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Madison, Minneapolis, New York, San Francisco. Examples of cities with at-large members: Cincinnati, Colorado Springs, Columbus, Kansas City, Lincoln, Philadelphia, San Diego, Washington

Eight of those 100 cities have all-at-large representation; 29 including Denver have a mix of district and at-large. There is no "best" practice that results in significantly different results policy-wise. But there is a most common practice.



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IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

AUGUST 10	Finance & Governance Committee
AUGUST 17	Mayor-Council
AUGUST 23	First Reading
AUGUST 30	Second Reading + Approval
NOVEMBER 2	Voters pass or reject ballot measure
March 2022	Maps redrawn with 13 single-district seats + approval by City Council

*If passed by voters



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QUESTIONS



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APPENDIX - REDISTRICTING TIMELINE

2022 Redistricting			21-Mar	21-Apr	21-May	21-Jun	21-Jul	21-Aug	21-Sep	21-Oct	21-Nov	21-Dec	22-Jan	22-Feb	22-Mar	22-Apr
Event/Task/Action	Start Date	Complete Date														
Council President assigns Redistricting Working Group	1-Mar-21	1-Mar-21	█													
Working Group convenes with Council Staff - design draft redistricting process	1-Mar-21	1-Jul-21	█	█	█	█	█									
Staff design Meeting in a Box and initial community engagement methods for data collection	1-Apr-21	30-Jun-21		█	█	█										
Staff create media plan, web infrastructure, online outreach tools	1-Apr-21	30-Jun-21		█	█	█										
Staff recruit community partners for engagement data collection methodology and analysis	1-May-21	30-Jun-21		█	█											
Council elects new leadership	19-Jul-21	19-Jul-21					█									
Redistricting Committee receives briefings on redistricting process, voting rights act, etc.	1-Jul-21	30-Aug-21					█	█								
Community Outreach - Define Your Denver	1-Jul-21	30-Sep-21					█	█	█							
Referred ballot measure deadline - clerk and recorder elections reform	4-Aug-21	4-Aug-21					█									
Maptitude Software Purchase	30-Aug-21	3-Sep-21					█									
Committee works on resolution of principles and procedure	30-Aug-21	30-Sep-21					█	█								
Committee files resolution of principles and procedure	30-Sep-21	30-Sep-21						█								
Data received from Census Bureau	30-Sep-21	30-Sep-21						█								
Staff analyze Defining Your Denver data	1-Sep-21	31-Oct-21						█	█							
Resolutions of principles and procedures adopted by Council	11-Oct-21	11-Oct-21							█							
Internal meetings with GIS and Council staff	1-Oct-21	1-Dec-21							█	█	█					
Staff work with CU Students to draw community of interest maps	1-Nov-21	1-Dec-21								█	█					
GIS Staff generate preliminary maps based upon known criteria	1-Dec-21	31-Jan-22									█	█				
Train City Council and Staff on Redistricting Software	1-Dec-21	31-Dec-21									█					
Public engagement on census data release and maptitude demos	1-Dec-21	31-Dec-21									█					
Elections Division Re-Precincting*	30-Sep-21	30-Dec-21						█	█	█	█	█				
Committee, Council, and Staff work on maps	1-Dec-21	28-Mar-22							█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
State Redistricting Final Plan Submitted*	30-Sep-21	1-Jan-22							█	█	█	█	█			
Final Elections Precincts Deadline*	??	3-Jan-22										█	█			
Public Vetting of proposed maps	14-Feb-22	14-Mar-22												█	█	
Committee approves map(s) for filing	17-Mar-22	17-Mar-22													█	
First reading of Ordinance (Public Hearing)	21-Mar-22	21-Mar-22													█	
Adopt Ordinance effective for May 2023 election (Public Hearing) When is Cesar Chavez Day?	26-Mar-22	26-Mar-22													█	

*Source: CW Sandoval's Redistricting Presentation



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APPENDIX - PEER CITY COMPARISON

City	Population (a)	Population per District	Type	Council Makeup	Term Limit	Council Budget	Staff Per C	Staff:Cons
Nashville, Tennessee	670,820	19,166	Mayor-Council	35 Districts + 5 At-Large	Yes, 2 x 4	\$2,678,400		
Minneapolis, Minnesota	429,606	33,047	Mayor-Council	13 Districts	No	\$5,127,000	2	1:16,524
Indianapolis, Indiana	876,384	35,055	Mayor-Council	25 Districts	No	\$2,334,356		
Jacksonville, Florida	911,507	65,108	Mayor-Council	14 Districts + 5 At-Large	Yes, 2 x 4	\$11,959,402	1(d)	1:65,108
Denver, Colorado	727,211	66,110	Mayor-Council	11 Districts + 2 At-Large	Yes, 3 x 4	\$6,310,601	3(e)	1:22,037
Memphis, Tennessee	651,073	72,341	Mayor-Council	7 Single Districts + 2 Super Districts (3 members each)	Yes, 2 x 4	\$2,668,418	2	1:36,216
Boston, Massachusetts	692,600	76,956	Mayor-Council	9 Districts + 4 At-Large	No	\$5,420,000	5 (e)	1:15,391
Colorado Springs	478,221	79,704	Mayor-Council	6 Districts + 3 At-large	Yes, 2 x 4	\$827,946.00	8 (g)	
San Francisco, California	881,549	80,141	Mayor-Council	11 Districts	Yes, 2 x 4	\$18,764,809	4	1:20,035
Washington, District of Columbia	705,749	88,219	Mayor-Council	8 Districts + 5 At-Large	No	\$28,657,000	8	1:11,027
Detroit, Michigan	670,031	95,719	Mayor-Council	7 Districts + 2 At-Large	No	\$11,080,300	7(e)	1:13,674
Seattle, Washington	753,675	107,668	Mayor-Council	7 Districts + 2 At-Large	No	\$13,335,550	4	1:26,917
San Diego, California	1,423,851	158,206	Mayor-Council	9 Districts	Yes, 2 x 4	\$14,659,732	10	1:15,821
Columbus, Ohio	898,553	N/A	Mayor-Council	7 At-Large (b)	No	\$4,983,081	2	N/A

(a) 2019 US Census Bureau Estimate

(b) Transitioning to 9 districts in 2024

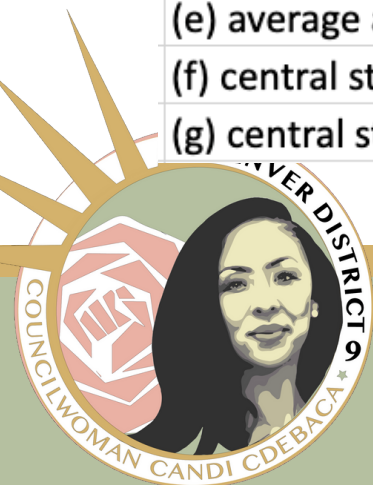
(c) Resets after 4 years out of office

(d) District staff are administrative only, research and policy staff fall under legislative services

(e) average across offices

(f) central staff only

(g) central staff only - awaiting confirmation



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