



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

City Council Agenda Item

Subject: City of Forest Park Redistricting – Executive Office

Submitted By: Ricky L. Clark, Jr., City Manager

Date Submitted: July 6, 2023

Special Meeting Date: July 10, 2023

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Background/History:

After each decennial US Census, the City must review and make and necessary adjustments to Ward boundaries to ensure they have substantially equal populations. It involves making difficult decisions constricted by extremely complicated federal and state jurisprudence in the context of a political process. In an effort to get a jumpstart, the City Manager has reached out to the Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office to begin the process which occurs only every ten years. The Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office is a joint office of the Georgia General Assembly responsible for providing the General Assembly with redistricting services. The office uses data provided to the State of Georgia by the U.S. Census Bureau for the purpose of redistricting. In addition to providing the technical assistance to redistrict, the office provides an array of maps and up-to-date data reports which include information on demographics, precincts, and local redistricting. Because the state code does not mandate that cities automatically reapportion after every census, it is important for local governments to understand the Constitutional law factors that may require it. Municipal redistricting can be accomplished either through a Local Act of the General Assembly or directly by cities through their Home Rule powers.

The overriding legal principle that triggers the necessity for reapportionment is referred to as “one person, one vote” as stated in Baker v. Carr. The principle dictates that in order for every citizen to enjoy his or her Equal Protection rights under the 14th Amendment, every citizen’s vote should be of generally equal mathematical weight. In other words, the voting strength of citizens living in one district should not be greater than the voting strength of the citizens in another simply because a great deal fewer people in one district enjoy the same amount of representation compared to another more populated district.

Based upon census information, the population range of each ward in Forest Park ranges from 3,676 to 4,273 which leaves the deviation percentage at about 7.20% for Ward One and a -7.78% for Ward 4. “Deviation” is the technical term utilized to describe the degree to which a plan fails to apportion population evenly among districts. Although districts should ideally be as even as possible, other constraints often make this impossible. From a historical abstract, according to the 2010 census, the population estimate was 18,468; however, recent population estimates for the 2020 census are at 19,932 – a 7.927% increase.

With the revised lines, as provided by the Reapportionment Offices, our deviation average is now .033%. The population range of the wards is between 3,957 to 4,008. The City Manager is recommending that Council closely

review the maps as the revisions were done with no political intent in mind. Further the City Manager believes that the Council's final choice should be based on balancing the population within the respective wards vs. waiting until 2030.

While we recognize that this process is happening fast, with the new City Manager coming on board and no work being done, we reached out to the State as fast as we could. We will do our best to make this a public process so that all citizens are notified as soon as possible if adopted by the governing body.

Cost: \$

Budgeted for: _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

Financial Impact:

Action Requested from Council: