



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Election Code Committee

STAFF

Anissa Hollingshead, City Clerk
Rita Knoll, Chief Deputy City Clerk
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SUBJECT

Consideration of shifts to requirements in Municipal Code for redistricting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to allow the Committee to consider what shifts might be helpful to the requirements currently contained in City Code relating to redistricting. Since the current redistricting process has just concluded, this is an excellent time to consider what has worked well in the existing process, and where improvements might be appropriate.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What are the Committee's thoughts on how the recent redistricting process went generally and what concerns might exist?
2. Are there thoughts around the timing for required redistricting and/or what triggers might be appropriate?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The Fort Collins Municipal Code includes provisions relating to election districts and requirements for redistricting that build upon the requirements in the City Charter. Those provisions are attached, as are some examples of provisions in some other sample cities regarding the timing or triggers for reevaluating council district boundaries.

There is not very much variety in what was found through the review completed so far. A common frequency is once every ten years after new U.S. census data becomes available. This also matches the State's pattern for reapportionment, now called redistricting. Some cities have elections every four years and reevaluate district boundaries before each election. Interestingly, all Council seats for the Colorado Springs City Council are up for election at the same time once every four years – in that model a redistricting is completed before each election.

The Committee has expressed interest in considering whether certain events should trigger a redistricting in addition to reevaluation each time a new decennial U.S. census is released. One concept noted was to have an annexation of a particular population size (likely based on the most recent census data for the census tracts in the area annexed) trigger a review of the population balance in the districts so that a redistricting could be completed if the largest and smallest districts would at that time be more than 10%

different in population. This approach could be workable, with additional consideration of how close in time the annexation might be to an election or to a general redistricting based on new census data.

Another idea that has been mentioned is the idea of using development activity as a trigger. This approach would rely on a specified method for estimating population related to completed development throughout the City in voting precincts. Under the current Code provisions, estimating population has been somewhat labor-intensive and has involved a lot of extrapolation on the Colorado State University campus, where increases in residential dwellings and related population changes have been very difficult to reliably measure given the lack of certificate of occupancy data. In order to use development-related population as a trigger, staff would need to continuously track and estimate population increases resulting from new development. If this option is of interest staff will need to complete additional evaluation of the process and resources needed for it.

It would be helpful for the Committee to discuss this and any other concepts of interest in order to provide staff direction for preparation of options for Code amendments related to the redistricting process.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Fort Collins City Charter and Municipal Code provisions relating to Redistricting and Precincting
2. Comparison of Council Districting Process in Other Communities