



Basics of Municipal Redistricting


June 23, 2017
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What is Redistricting?


- The process by which the boundaries of elective districts are periodically redrawn to maintain equal representation on the basis of population.
- In our case, redrawing City Council District seat boundaries in the City of Colorado Springs.






Reapportionment is different

- Reapportionment is the process of re-distributing the number of seats in a legislative body (usually at the state level) based on population. (e.g. U.S. House of Representatives)
- Redistricting is the boundary line re-draw that often happens as a result.
- Reprecincting is the process of redrawing precinct lines. This is completed by the County Clerk and Recorder.
- Reprecincting can make municipalities' redistricting efforts more or less complicated.




Why Redistrict?

- To maintain the fundamental principles of equal representation and “one person-one vote”.
Reynolds v. Sims, 377 U.S. 533 (1964)
- Home Rule cities usually have a City Charter provision that requires periodic redistricting.
- Statutory cities follow Colorado Revised Statute § 31-4-104 and Constitutional requirements.




Municipal Redistricting-Applicable Law Colorado Springs

- Colorado Springs City Charter § 2-10(b)
- At least one hundred twenty (120) and not more than one hundred fifty (150) days before any City election at which district members of Council are to be elected, the City Clerk shall divide the City into six election districts having substantially equal populations commencing with the April 2013 general municipal election. All of the area in each district shall be contiguous. The Council shall provide by ordinance the method of creating said districts and establishing their boundaries, the giving of notice of such proceedings, the manner of protesting such proceedings, and division of the City into said districts and for hearing on such protest. (1969; 1975; 1977; 1980; 2011)



City Code of Colorado Springs

- City Code 5.1.301
- A significant step toward increasing public awareness and participation in municipal elections is to provide meaningful opportunities for citizens to learn about and have input into the districting process. While the City Charter requires that all election districts be contiguous and substantially equal in population, City Council recognizes and supports the consideration of additional factors as a necessary implementation of the Voting Rights Act, 42 USC 1973, as amended. City Council supports and encourages the preservation of racial and ethnic diversity, traditional neighborhoods and communities of interest.
- To that end, City Council now exercises the authority granted by City Charter sections 2-10(b) and 11-10 and promulgates procedures for the creation and establishment of election districts for the City. (Ord. 13-23; Ord. 16-102)



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Advisory Committee

- The Advisory Committee shall be composed of seven (7) regular members. City Council may appoint alternate members
- Selection shall begin at least three hundred sixty (360) days prior to a general municipal election at which district Council Members are to be elected.
 - One Advisory Committee member shall be appointed from each of the six (6) election districts, and one member shall be appointed at large.

Appointed members shall be electors of the City and generally representative of the population of the City. City Council shall strive for gender, racial, ethnic, age and geographic diversity when appointing Advisory Committee members.


To avoid the appearance of impropriety, persons interested in being candidates for a district Council Member seat at the next regular municipal election shall not serve on the Advisory Committee.


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
5.1.303: ELECTION DISTRICT CONSIDERATIONS:


A. In accord with the provisions of City Charter subsection 2-10(b), at least one hundred twenty (120), and not more than one hundred fifty (150) days before a City election at which district Council Members are to be elected, **the City Clerk shall divide the City into contiguous election districts having substantially equal populations and, to the extent possible, election districts shall not divide election precincts.**

Population data shall include official federal census data and census estimates, building permit issuance data, and any other official government data or information that would assist the City Clerk in determining the number and distribution of persons within the City.


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Other applicable legal principles

- Voting Rights Act of 1965- No Discrimination 
- Small deviations across districts in population preferred.
- Mathematical precision is not required. (Reynolds, 377 U.S. at 577)


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Other applicable legal principles

- Avoid artificial voter dilution.
 - Generally minority voting strength is impermissibly diluted when large concentrations of minority population are unnecessarily fragmented and dispersed. *Carstens v. Lamm*, 543 F. Supp. 68, 85-86 (D. Colo. 1982).
- Avoid artificial voter concentration. The flipside of dilution is now emerging in legal challenges to redistricting plans.
- Colorado Springs specific requirements
 - Follow obvious geographic boundaries;
 - Do not divide recognized neighborhoods;
 - Do not divide identified communities of interest.


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Practical Considerations of Municipal Redistricting

- Quality of data, obtaining the data, how often it is gathered and updated and how it is validated are important considerations.
- “Midcensus” redistricting, supplementation with other data sets.
- Review by state demographer or other population data experts will be helpful.



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Lessons Learned

- The process can tend to introduce pressure to stray from the fundamental purpose of redistricting.




- Remember that redistricting is about equalizing population across the districts.
 - It is not about party affiliation.
 - It is not about voter turnout percentages.
 - It is not about increasing or decreasing neighborhood political power.




Lessons Learned

- Be proactive and work with your County Clerk and Recorder on establishing voting precinct boundaries.
- Precinct boundaries matter! Those are the building blocks for a councilmember district.
- Life will be better if the redistricting official has smaller precincts in the places where lines need to fall to equalize population.
- Be as open and transparent as possible in the process.
- Don't avoid interacting with interested parties.




Lessons Learned

- Vital to have accurate population data to conduct the redistricting.
- Always provide a thorough background on your population data in presentations on the proposed plan(s).
- Expect questions/challenges over the data.




Population Data Explanation


- Estimated population data was purchased from ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute). The data shows population at the census block level as of July 1, 2015. Redistricting requires City population to be reported for each county precinct. A process to reapportion population, based on County Assessor housing units, distributes the population identified at the census block level to a county precinct level while also accounting for areas of unincorporated El Paso County.


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More on Population Data

To ensure the most recent population figures are used in the redistricting process, additional population growth is calculated based on building permits issued by the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department. Both processes use metrics, gathered by the State Demography Office of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, concerning average number of people per housing unit, local vacancy rate and typical lag time from building permit issuance to the creation of units ready for occupancy. This allows estimation of City population to October 1, 2016.


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A cartoon showing two men looking at a framed abstract map. The man on the left says, "HOW EXQUISITE... PICASSO!". The man on the right says, "NO IT'S THE LATEST REDISTRICTING MAP." The cartoon is signed "© 2015 by Dave Coverly" and "© 2015 by The New Yorker".


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Questions

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