

## **Preliminary Report Redistricting Process Advisory Committee**

### **Introduction**

City Charter requires the City Clerk to redraw the six City Council district boundaries every four years. In the most recent redistricting process in 2012, the City went from 4 Council districts to 6 Council districts. After the 2012 redistricting process, City Code §5.1.402 was approved in order to create a Districting Process Advisory Committee. The City Clerk maintains direct responsibility and authority over the districting map. In keeping with Council's interest in promoting public awareness and discussion, per City Code §5.1.402, the Committee is to seek out public comment regarding suggested changes and ensure robust and transparent community input.

### **Legal Requirements**

#### ***City Charter and Code require:***

- o § 5.1.403A – Contiguous districts – Substantially equal populations – Do not divide election precincts
- o § 5.1.403B – Comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and to the extent possible:
  - Follow obvious geographic boundaries
  - Do not divide recognized neighborhoods
  - Do not divide identified communities of interest

#### ***Timeline Requirements:***

1. The City Clerk will release a preliminary district report by October 1, 2016 and a public hearing will be held in October.
2. The final district report, setting the district boundaries, will be released by the City Clerk between November 5<sup>th</sup> and December 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Process of the Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee oversees the public process, educates the public, assists the City Clerk and advises City Council on the redistricting process.

- City Council appointed the seven committee members on May 24, 2016 from a total applicant pool of 15.
- The Committee consists of one member from each of the six council districts and one member at-large.

District 1 - Mary Washington

District 2 - Paul Seeling

District 3 - Sarah Brittain Jack

District 4 - Mike Ham

District 5 - Dave Munger

District 6 - Randall Kouba

At-Large - Courtney Stone

- The Committee conducted eleven public meetings, seven of which were specifically focused on describing the districting process and encouraging public comment--one in each of the six council districts and one at-large meeting, and four of which were work sessions to consider and finalize recommendations to the City Clerk.
- With support from City Communications and the City Clerk, the committee released a PSA on Springs TV, created an electronic flyer giving meeting locations and process, and had a specific discussion page on the City's SpeakUp! tool regarding the districting process. Reference materials, presentations, maps and information provided to the Committee were made available to the public on the City's website at [coloradosprings.gov/elections](http://coloradosprings.gov/elections). Committee members reached out to those in their particular district and will continue to do so in regards to specific recommendations.
- The Committee has prepared a Preliminary Report and is submitting it to the City Clerk and City Council at the August 8, 2016 City Council Work Session.
- The Committee will prepare a final Advisory Committee report and submit it to City Council at the City Council Work Session on December 12<sup>th</sup>

### **Summary of Public Comments**

Attendance at our public meetings was small, but the organizations represented included Citizen's Project, Sierra Club, the League of Women Voters, Colorado Common Cause, the Black/Latino Coalition, the NAACP, the Urbanites, Colorado Springs Forward, the Republican Party, the Regional Business Alliance and several City Councilmembers. Additional comments were received via email.

Public comments surrounding the districting process have provided broad recommendations for consideration for the Advisory Committee to make preliminary recommendations, though there were fewer comments regarding specific precincts to be moved. One of the most frequent comments made was that the public would prefer being able to review a proposed map in order to respond to potential changes. We intend to seek out comments on the recommendations below in order for the public to provide specific input for the Clerk's consideration. While we suggest preliminary recommendations within this report, we will continue to work as a Committee to reach out to the specific communities which would be affected by our proposed changes and other interested bodies and seek their input.

The Committee acknowledges the need to meet the legal requirements of federal and state law, city charter and code: maintain contiguous districts, substantially equal populations and

current precinct boundaries, while complying with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and to the extent possible, follow obvious geographic boundaries, not divide recognized neighborhoods and not divide identified communities of interest. While neither City Charter nor Code specify a definition of communities of interest, as a guideline, we have used Article 5 Section 46 of the State Constitution, which identifies ethnic, cultural, economic, trade area, geographic, and demographic factors as communities of interest. The communities of interest which have been most significantly identified via public comments in this process are those areas with low-to-moderate income status and areas with significant populations of ethnic minorities. For recognized neighborhoods, we used the map of neighborhoods maintained by the City at [https://coloradosprings.gov/sites/default/files/planning/hoa\\_2015map1.pdf](https://coloradosprings.gov/sites/default/files/planning/hoa_2015map1.pdf). For ethnic and economic communities of interest, we relied on Census data provided by the City Clerk.

There was discussion concerning whether communities of interest are better served if they are consolidated or dispersed; in general, public comments indicated that communities of interest are best served when they have one representative protecting their interests and a consolidated voice.

There were comments regarding whether any changes needed to be made to current districts at all; as is, the population deviation is legally defensible. The Advisory Committee came to the conclusion that small changes should be suggested in order to consolidate communities of interest to the extent possible. Some public comments mentioned that making changes to representation often discourages the electorate from voting, as that leads to uncertainty regarding who their representative is, as well as presenting potential candidates with uncertainty regarding campaigning.

The committee also focused on trying to make sure that the Clerk has input and comments from the public to better inform her decision. We were not as successful at this as we would have liked, but we will continue to outreach to those who may be affected by our recommendations in order to maximize their opportunity for input.

### **Colorado Springs Population Data**

To ensure the most recent population figures are used in the redistricting process, additional population growth is calculated by the City Clerk's office 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, to develop estimates 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.

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.

### Recommendations

The Committee has recommended changes to the current district map that meet the legal requirements of creating “substantially equal populations” while consolidating representation for communities of interest identified via census data and public comments. The following recommendations were made on a 4-2 vote of the Committee after extensive discussion.

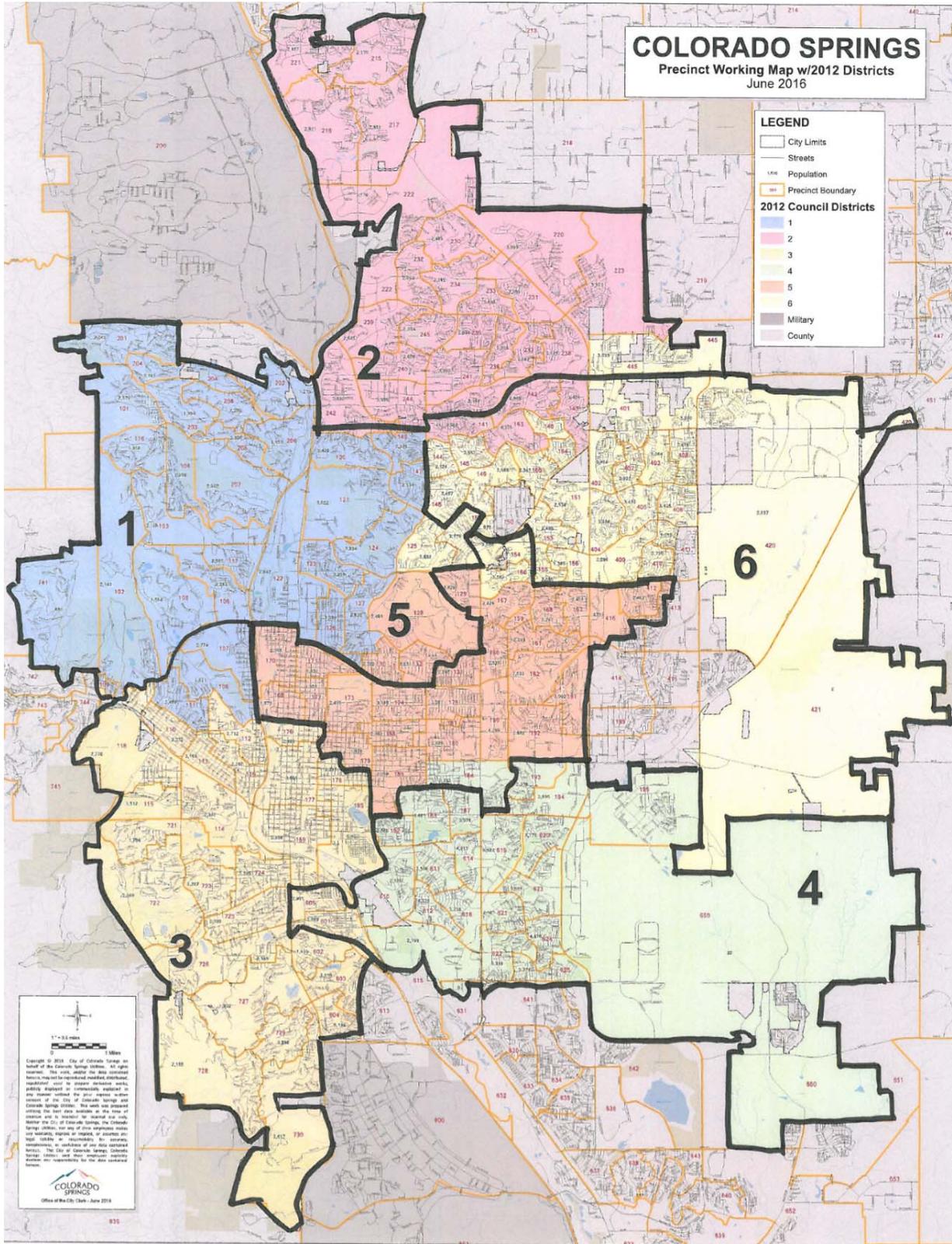
- 1) Include precincts 125, 128, 130, 132, and 152 in District 1; this consolidates neighborhoods, and income and ethnic communities of interest while equalizing population representation.
- 2) Include precinct 445 in District 2; this consolidates neighborhoods that are currently split by a district boundary.
- 3) Include precincts 107, 108, and 111 in District 3, which consolidates the Organization of Westside Neighborhoods and Mesa Neighborhood; public comments indicated these neighborhoods have many common interests with the rest of District 3 and would prefer consolidated representation.
- 4) Include precincts 601 and 605 in District 4, as their income and minority statuses have more in common with District 4. We received multiple public comments encouraging relocating those precincts specifically.
- 5) Include precincts 154, 166, and 184 in District 5; this consolidates neighborhoods, and income and ethnic communities of interest while equalizing population.
- 6) Include precincts 141, 142, 143, and 163 in District 6; this consolidates neighborhoods.

With the estimated population calculated in accordance with our recommendation, the following population numbers are assigned to each district.

District	Estimated Population	Deviation from estimated average	% Deviation
1	76,045	2,761	3.77%
2	71,412	-1,872	-2.55%

3	73,229	-55	.08%
4	71,374	-1,910	-2.61%
5	77,316	4,032	5.5%
6	70,330	-2,945	-4.02%
TOTAL:	439,706		
Estimated district size if all districts were to have equal populations	73,284		

# Recommended City Council Districts for April 2017 City Election



We note that the data used in developing city and precinct population is from the American Community Survey and building permit data for Colorado Springs and, while it is the best available data, is nonetheless subject to error.