

METRO COUNCIL REDISTRICTING PROCESS

Date: September 30, 2021
Department: Council Office
Meeting Date: October 5, 2021

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Length: 15 minutes (+30 mins discussion)

ISSUE STATEMENT

Every 10 years, following the completion of the U.S. Census, the Metro Council is required to evaluate whether each of its six districts are of relatively equal population, and to make adjustments to district boundaries as necessary to guarantee equitable citizen representation. The redrawn maps shift the boundaries of the six Metro Council districts to account for any uneven growth in the metropolitan region.

The Metro Council has a legal requirement of three months from receipt of U.S. Census data (September 16, 2021) to complete the redistricting process, necessitating a December 16, 2021 deadline.

The U.S. Census data delivered this September indicated some districts present a significant difference from the average population; District 4 has grown in population at a greater rate than other districts in the last ten years, whereas District 1 grew in population at a slower rate.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council Office staff seeks Council review and confirmation of proposed values and criteria for the redistricting process. Additionally, staff seeks feedback on engaging community partners and the public in the redistricting process.

Council feedback will be used to implement a robust engagement plan that solicits meaningful feedback in time to be incorporated into a final ordinance coming before Council in December 2021. Feedback from the community will also inform scenarios, or proposed maps, for redistricting as well as Council's final scenario selection.

Proposed timeline and next steps

September-October

- Staff prepares, and Council approves, an ordinance designating values and criteria for the 2021 redistricting process (October 14, 2021)
- Council President creates a Redistricting Subcommittee
- The Subcommittee consults with community partners about redistricting in a series of meetings

Late October-November

- Staff drafts multiple possible redistricting scenarios with input from the Subcommittee and community partners
- Public hearings provide opportunity for community members to comment on specific maps and react to scenarios
- The Subcommittee continues to consult with community partners about scenario impacts

December

- Council considers scenarios and public feedback
- First reading on ordinance designating new districts: December 9, 2021
- Adoption of reapportioned districts: December 16, 2021

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMESValues

At the September 23, 2021 work session, Council provided direction to staff to incorporate existing Council values with the Secretary of State Values for Redistricting. For criteria, Council also recommended specific considerations for community types and transportation-related planning elements. See Attachment A for these values and criteria.

Process and public engagement

At the same work session, Council indicated approval for the process that was used to guide redistricting decisions in the past and recommended using a similar process in the current redistricting effort. They also indicated a desire to do somewhat more engagement than was conducted in 2011 but less than the full redistricting process of 2001, which followed a charter change that modified the number of districts.

Past processes included a Council Subcommittee on Redistricting made up of three council members and two or more public hearings. This council also indicated a desire to ensure at least one stand-alone public hearing, i.e. not part of the required public hearings during a first or second reading of an ordinance.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Shall Council Office staff, in coordination with Metro Council President, begin developing and implementing a redistricting process that includes:

- A Subcommittee on Redistricting, including but not limited to, three Metro councilors
- Ongoing consultation between community partners and the Subcommittee
- Consultation with cities, counties, other partners and stakeholders, and MPAC
- Two public hearings, with ample public notice, that present scenarios for community members to react to and comment on
- A page on Metro's website with redistricting information

- Additional opportunity for public comments for those unable to attend public hearings; e.g., written public comments

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

1. Council directs staff to move forward with the above approach.
2. Council directs staff to move forward with the above approach but provides additional direction on the elements described above.
3. Council directs staff to return to Council with a different approach.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends Option 1 or Option 2, with slight modifications. Staff believes these options are responsive to Council's previous direction and meet the criteria and values proposed by Council. Additionally, staff is cognizant of the short timeline to complete this work, which amounts to nine weeks before the first reading of an ordinance designating newly apportioned districts.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Legal Antecedents: US Constitution, federal Voting Rights Act, Oregon Secretary of State 2021 Redistricting Directive, Metro Charter Section 31(1), Metro Ordinance 11-1258, Metro Ordinance 01-895.

Anticipated Effects: Metro Council may choose to adopt an ordinance defining the values, outcomes, and process for redistricting prior to adopting new boundaries by ordinance on or before December 16, 2021.

BACKGROUND

Metro Charter, section 31(1), establishes the minimum criteria for redistricting, requiring that districts be of equal population and be continuous and geographically compact. That same charter section requires that within three months of receiving U.S. Census data, the Metro Council shall change district boundaries and assign councilors to the new districts. The Council may add additional considerations by ordinance.

Both the U.S. Constitution and the Metro Charter require that the districts be of equal population. The Voting Rights Act prohibits Metro from drawing districts that result in dilution of power of racial and language minorities. Race may be considered in meeting the requirements of federal law but it is not constitutionally permissible for it to be a predominant factor when drawing district lines.

Previous Redistricting Processes

In 2001 and 2011, Metro Council passed ordinances that established criteria related to the redistricting of Metro Council districts. The ordinances stated values and outcomes for

redistricting, and they outlined processes for engaging the Metro Council, community organizations, and the public.

In both 2001 and 2011, the processes included a subcommittee of three Metro Councilors dedicated to redistricting, two or more public hearings, and a public comment period. In 2011, staff prepared three scenarios with US Census data. In addition to two public hearings, Metro consulted with school districts, cities, counties, and MPAC regarding these three scenarios, before ultimately choosing one of the prepared options.

Resources

The resources available for this project include existing FTE and materials and services budgets. Staff from the Council Office will collaborate with staff from other departments on an as-needed basis, which may include Planning and Development, Communications, DEI, and Government Affairs.

For technology, if resources beyond existing capacity are needed, existing materials and services budgets will be used to cover the costs.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Values and Criteria

- Is legislation required for Council action? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- What other materials are you presenting today?
 - 2021 Redistricting Process and Engagement Presentation