



Commerce City

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Council Communication

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Status: Agenda Ready

In Control: City Council

File Type: Ordinance

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING NEW BOUNDARIES FOR EACH OF THE FOUR WARDS OF THE CITY OF COMMERCE CITY, COLORADO

Summary and Background Information:

During tonight's public hearing, staff will present Council and the public with an overview of the redistricting criteria and details on the five plans. A draft ordinance is included in the record for tonight's meeting, but the ordinance is not finalized and will not be adopted at the public hearing. Council and the public will then have the opportunity to provide feedback on the five plans. Staff will host the five plans on the City's redistricting page (www.c3gov.com/redistricting <<http://www.c3gov.com/redistricting>>) for further public input. Staff will then take all the feedback gathered at the public hearing and through online comments and come back on March 6, 2023 with a final map for adoption. Second and final reading of the ordinance will be on April 3, 2023, which will meet the City's Charter timeline requirement. The new Ward maps will be in effect for the 2023 municipal election and beyond until Council decides it would like to redistrict again or following the 2030 census.

Every 10 years, Congress conducts the census, which is the act of counting every person living in the United States for the purpose of determining representation in Congress (US Constitution Article I, Section 2). Once the federal government has conducted the census, states use the data collected to add or remove U.S. Congressional districts and redraw their district boundaries to satisfy certain constitutional doctrines such as equal populations among districts and racial equality as to not dilute the voting power between districts or of minority groups.

Once states have reapportioned and/or redrawn their U.S. Congressional districts then states, counties, and local governments will then redraw their respective districts or wards to meet the same constitutional doctrines, state statutes, and/or municipal charter requirements.

Commerce City began its redistricting process in early 2022. Per the Commerce City Charter, new ward boundaries must be approved by city council no later than 180 days before the regular municipal election (Charter Sec. 4.2). The last day city council may approve new ward boundaries is Thursday, May 11, 2023.

Historically, the city clerk's office has managed the redistricting process. The redistricting

process for 2022-2023 included input and involvement from the city council, Commerce City residents, organizations, and business, the city clerk's office, city manager's office, city attorney's office, GIS division, planning & zoning division, economic development, and more.

When redistricting, governmental bodies must meet two constitutional requirements. Those two requirements are equal population among the districts or Wards and that the boundaries cannot be drawn in a manner that would dilute the voting power of minority groups.

Equal Populations

The first requirement of redistricting is that district and ward boundaries have as equal population as possible to ensure that one person's vote in one district is worth as much as another's vote in a different district. The general standard for deviation between the smallest and largest ward is no more than 10% deviation between the two, but municipalities should strive to be draw their wards with as equal population as possible.

Racial Equality

The second requirement of redistricting is that district and ward boundaries cannot be drawn in such a manner as to dilute the voting power of minority groups.

There are additional criteria governmental bodies should consider in addition to the constitutional requirements. Those additional criteria are the compactness of new boundaries, contiguity of boundaries, preservation of existing boundaries, and preserving communities of interest.

Compactness

One criteria for redistricting is compactness. While not a constitutional requirement, districts or ward should be drawn in such a manner as to be as compact geographically as possible to prevent districts from encompassing large geographic areas but having a small voting population.

Contiguity

An additional criteria for redistricting is contiguity. Districts should be contiguous and no part of a district should be entirely separated geographically from any other part of the district.

Preservation of Boundaries

One more criteria for redistricting is the preservation of boundaries. This is a requirement that impacts the state and county governments redistricting process more so than municipalities.

Communities of Interest

The final criteria for redistricting is the preservation of communities of interest. Communities of interest are geographic areas comprised of a group of people who share similar policy concerns and should be kept whole within a single district or ward. Policy interest could include racial, social, economic, demographic, environmental,

transportation, agricultural, industrial, or other similar features. A community of interest should be able to tell its own unique story that is distinguishable from another surrounding community. Most importantly, communities of interest should be defined by the local community members.

After almost a year of public outreach and education (more detailed information can be found in the presentation attached in the packet), staff have prepared 5 plans for Council and the public's input at this public hearing. These maps satisfy the two constitutional requirements of equal populations and preservation of minority groups, and most satisfy the additional criteria. As a note, no map is perfect and Council isn't expected or required to come up with a perfect map. Council is only required to approve a map that satisfies the two constitutional requirements and the additional criteria when practical.

Staff Responsible (Department Head): Dylan A. Gibson, City Clerk

Staff Member Presenting: Dylan A. Gibson, City Clerk

Financial Impact: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Adopt the ordinance re-establishing the Ward boundaries of the City

Suggested Motion: I move to introduce by Council as seated and approve on first reading Ordinance 2461