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SUBJECT: 2022 City Redistricting Scenarios
DATE: July 19, 2022

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:
The Government Relations Office (GRO) will provide analysis on direction provided by Council on the preferred redistricting scenario presented at the February 22, 2022 study session.

BACKGROUND:
According to state and federal law, cities are required to reassess voting districts to account for populations shifts every 10 years, following completion of the U.S. Census. The goal of redistricting is to ensure equitable and effective representation across Council districts with minimal disruption to community centers.

Following February 22, 2022 study session presentation on three draft maps, Council stated a preference for Scenario 1, which favored following arterials/natural boundaries and presented the least amount of change from the current district map. Council also requested analysis of a district map that does not split any of the City’s 15 business districts between Council districts. Currently, three business districts fall into 2 Council districts.

ISSUE:
Redistricting requires four objectives:

- To adjust boundary lines in order to maintain an equal number of residents across Tacoma’s five Council districts;
- To maintain continuity of communities wherever possible;
- To utilize existing boundaries (such as arterials, waterways, and parks) as well as community center and other hubs;
- To prohibit favoritism to any entity or group.

Preferred Map: Scenario #1 - Following Arterials

- Least amount of change from 2012 map.
- Prioritizes arterials and highways – natural and straightforward boundary lines.
- Minor changes to the boundary between District 1 and 3 to adjust for growth in District 3.



- The northeast boundary of District 1 changes from South Pearl Street to follow Hwy 16 from 6th Avenue to South 19th Street
- Everything between Highway 16 and the City of Fircrest moves into District 1 from District 3.
- District 5 gains Manitou annexation.
- No other districts need modifying.
- Fairly even populations across the district.

Business Districts

The 6th Avenue Business District is split horizontally. This arterial is widely seen and used as the dividing line between North and Central Tacoma and is therefore used currently in both the Council Districts as well as the Neighborhood Council Districts as a dividing line. The current Council District map and Scenario 1 both split the 6th Avenue Business District, which extends from the South Alder Street to South Sprague Avenue. The South Tacoma Business District is split at the very bottom of the district. The current Council District map and Scenario 1 feature this business district primarily in District 3 but running 12 blocks into District 5. Similarly, the Pacific Business District which is primarily in District 4 but runs into District 5.

Challenges

Maintaining Clean Dividing Lines

South 56th Street is one of two arterials running East/West that runs uninterrupted across the southern half of Tacoma. The other is South 72 Street, which is too far south to be a dividing line for District 5. Most other arterials stop when they run into either the Tacoma Mall area or the South Tacoma Way, leaving no straightforward lines that can run through these areas East/West along arterials.

Balancing Equal Population Numbers

It was challenging to maintain equal populations within districts while maintaining clean dividing lines along arterials. Recall that in Scenario 1, the population deviation from goal was within +/- 500 people. Even minimal changes to boundary lines disproportionately change the district populations.

Conclusion

Redrawing district boundaries to avoid splitting business districts would result in deviations from the proposed redistricting goals of minimal change, simple dividing lines along arterials, and balancing residents to ensure equal and fair representation.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.



RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.