



Governmental Processes Committee

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: GOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES COMMITTEE DATE: AUGUST 7, 2024

FROM: CITY CLERK WARDS: ALL

**SUBJECT: RESHAPE RIVERSIDE REDISTRICTING – ACCELERATED AND DEFERRED
CONSTITUENTS**

ISSUE:

Discuss options for managing/addressing constituents who were impacted by the Reshape Riverside Redistricting boundaries.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Governmental Processes Committee provide a recommendation to the City Council for establishing guidelines for managing constituents who were impacted by Redistricting.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside City Charter Section 402 mandates the City Council to redraw the City Council ward boundaries by ordinance. Following an extensive Reshape Riverside community outreach campaign, the City Council adopted the new ordinance in August 2023. However, the impact of the new boundary lines is contingent upon the elections. This means the new boundaries for the odd-numbered wards took effect after March 2024, while the ward boundaries for even-numbered wards will become effective in June 2026.

The adoption of the new boundaries had an impact on the representation and voting eligibility of certain populations. The redrawing of electoral wards led to 'Accelerated Voting' and 'Deferred Voting'. Accelerated Voting happens when residents who had voted in the election prior to redistricting are assigned new wards after redistricting, which is scheduled to vote in the first election after redistricting, speeding up their opportunity to vote. In other words, they will vote twice in a four-year period.

Deferred voting occurs when residents who voted two elections prior to redistricting are redrawn into a ward which is scheduled to vote two elections after redistricting, so their votes are “deferred” by two years, creating a lack of coverage by a city council representative.

For example, residents who previously lived within an even-numbered ward and now live within an odd-numbered ward due to redistricting are considered accelerated voters. On the other hand, residents who lived within an odd-numbered ward before but after redistricting are within an even-numbered ward are classified as deferred voters.

In the 2024 municipal election, the City Clerk sent postcards to both groups of voters to inform them about their voting eligibility. The accelerated population of approximately 23,278, which typically elects its representatives every four years, had to vote for their councilmanic representation twice within four years due to redistricting.

On the other hand, the deferred population of approximately 22,463 will have a delayed opportunity to choose their councilmanic representative until June 2026. This means they will be eligible to vote for their local official six years after they last voted for a councilmember.

This report proposes potential solutions for accelerated and deferred voters, aiming to ensure adequate representation for all constituents.

DISCUSSION:

In the March 2024 election, the voters determined who would represent the accelerated population. However, the local official who previously represented that area was elected to a four-year term prior to redistricting. Consequently, two officials could potentially represent the accelerated population until the current official's term concludes. To address this issue, a clear policy needs to be established to determine the representation process.

Due to the challenge of deferred voters and the potential disruption in communication between constituents and their representatives, the city should address the lack of coverage for deferred residents. Therefore, staff propose several possible remedies for consideration. These remedies aim to maintain effective representation and communication between the accelerated and deferred population and their elected officials.

The following are options for potential remedies for consideration:

1. **Transitional Representation:** This would offer deferred voters the option of continuing to be represented by their previous council member for a transitional period until July 2026.
2. **Temporary At-Large Representation:** This would temporarily assign the mayor to represent the deferred areas until the next election.
3. **New Established Representation:** This would allow the current Councilmember representing the ward to manage their constituency including the deferred population.
4. **Constituent Outreach and Education:** In addition to representation, the city should implement robust outreach and education campaigns to inform deferred voters of the changes and transitional arrangements. This outreach and education will help maintain engagement and ensure constituents know the local officials representing them.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The City's Redistricting Plan contributes to the City Council's Envision 2025 Strategic Plan Priority and Goals:

Community Well-Being – Ensuring safe and inclusive neighborhoods where everyone can thrive with the following goal:

Goal 2.4 - Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust; and,

High Performing Government – Providing world-class public service that is efficient, accessible, and responsible to all, with the following goals:

Goal 5.2 - Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiency, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City.

Goal 5.3 - Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Donesia Gause, City Clerk

Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Accelerated Residents Atlas
2. Deferred Residents Atlas
3. Presentation