



City of Cleveland  
Office of the Council  
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*Councilman, Ward 15*

*Committee: Community & Economic Development • Public Parks, Recreation & Properties •  
Public Safety • Public Service • Public Utilities*

July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008

## **Restructuring Cleveland City Council Opportunities and Impacts Cleveland City Council Charter Review Proposal**

### **Summary of Proposals:**

1. **A restructuring of Cleveland city Council with the addition of a mixed system of representation of 14-ward and 3-at-large Council Members. Rational:**
  - A. Concentrate more authority in Council positions and drive stronger more focused discourse of policy within Council and in Council's oversight role.
  - B. Provide competitive training ground for potential future mayoral candidates.
  - C. Provide competitive position for Ward Council members to aspire to and to use the experienced gained as Ward representatives to the benefit of the City at-large.
  - D. Provide more opportunity for divergent ideas and broad public discourse with regards to city-wide issues due to the addition of three city-wide elections.
  - E. Opportunity for a stronger voice for Cleveland in role as leading municipality in region with the addition of three Council members elected at-large.
  - F. Maintain 4-year terms but stagger elections every 2-years e.g., for half the council; or, holding the Mayoral election two years apart from council elections. Effect of the electorate having an opportunity to discuss City issues every two years as opposed to four.
  - G. Alignment of 3-Wards per 5-districts, i.e., following the police redistricting plans that account for natural geography and neighborhoods. Strengthen collaboration within districts among Ward representatives and Community Development Corporations.
  - H. Cleveland City Council approved this year funding for the Jackson Administrations 311-Call Center. A 311-Call Center is anticipated to reduce the number of calls to Council Ward offices regarding core City services by requiring City Departments to provide analysis and communications regarding their services and deliverable times for services.
  - I. Monetary Savings = \$500,000 and a representation rate: 1/30,000 to 1/32,000.
2. **A restructuring of Cleveland city Council with the addition of a mixed system of representation of 14-ward and 1-at-large Council Members. Rational:** Same as above but primary benefit would be structural change of competing of the Council presidency in an at-large election without creating additional at-large positions. The change would not be as significant but would conform more to the City's historical form of governance having a larger than average Ward-based system.
3. **A reduction of Cleveland City Council of 6-seats, from 21-members to 15. Rational:** Would maintain the City's historical form of governance having a larger than average Ward-based system. Would adjust the number of positions to reflect the loss of population over the past two and a half decades and anticipated reduction over the foreseeable future to rates of 425,000 to 400,000. Would provide monetary Savings = \$750,000 and a representation rate: 1/28,000 to 1/30,000.

## **Narrative**

The City's Charter Review this year brings the opportunity to consider a restructuring of Cleveland City Council. Council President Martin J. Sweeney has proposed a modest reform, reducing the size of the 21-member body by 4, which would result in a 17-member council.

A lot has changed since the 1930's and indeed over the 27-year period from 1981 to today. Over the past two decades the exponential development of globalization and relative increase in the role of regional economies has had enormous impacts on the ability of local governments to be effective. These deep structural changes in commerce and more broadly the world economy demand a serious response and review of our system of governance; laws, regulations, incentives, development policies and the way local governments operate.

Although the proposal to reduce council by 4-members respects the historical representation rate that Clevelanders are accustomed to, the modest reduction will likely have minimal impact on how the Council operates.

For these reasons, a more serious restructuring of Cleveland City Council should be considered with a review and corresponding restructuring of Cuyahoga County government. More serious restructuring of the City of Cleveland and County government would properly respond to the expressed desires of the region – as indicated by the work of the regional foundation initiatives of Voices and Choices, The Fund for Our Economic Future and Advance Northeast Ohio.

**Several Proposals** - Rather than just reducing council by 4, from 21 to 17 Ward Council we should seriously consider:

1. A further reduction to a smaller 15-member body or,
2. An even more structural change of adding at-large seats with a mixed-system of 14-ward and 1 or 3 at-large seats, (one seat would be established for the Council Presidency.)

These proposals are based on a comprehensive review of our City's history, the changes that have occurred over the last two decades and how we may be able to respond appropriately to the urgent needs of our region.

**Why 17?** - The rationale for this proposal has been stated to be to set the number of seats in Council to a representation rate of 25,000 residents. The ratio of one ward council member per 25,000 people somewhat reflects the historical rate (1/27,000) set back in 1931 when the City's population was more than double what it is today at just over 900,000 and the 33-member ward based council was re-established. In 1981, when Council was last reformed, the elimination of 12-seats from the 33-member body (establishing the current 21 wards) brought the representation ratio back to the same rate of 1/27,000.

The following is a comparison of population figures and representation rates for the 1981 reduction and the proposed cut to 17 today:

### **1981 Council Reduction**

Population loss for the 50-year period 1930 – 1980: -326,607 (-36%)  
(1930 population = 900,429; 1980 population = 573,822)

The reduction of the 33-member council in 1981 of 12-ward seats equaled the percentage drop in population, i.e. 33 seats x 36% = 11.88 or 12 seats. The resulting representation rate was 1/27,000.

### **2008 Council President Proposed Reduction**

Population loss for the 26-year period 1980 – 2006: -129,509 (-23%)  
(1980 population = 573,822; 2006 population = \*444,313)

The proposed reduction of today's 21-member council of 4 ward seats somewhat equates to the percentage drop in population from 1980, i.e. 21 seats x 23% = 4.8 seats or 4 seats. The resulting representation rate would be 26,000. The rounding down to 4 seats is a reflection of the conservative nature of the proposal.

\* 2006 - Most recent available census estimate.

**Consider 15** – A more aggressive proposed reduction of 6 seats could be justified considering well established population trends for the past 46-years. A conservative estimate of the population for 2010 of 425,000 is estimated based on an 11.1% average decrease for the past four decades and half from 1960. Using this 2010 (the year the next elected council is seated) population estimate, the decrease for the decade ending 2009 would be 26% with a corresponding decrease in the size of council of 5.46 seats or 6 seats, rounding up would still maintain a historical respective representation rate of 1/28,000. Note that a reduction of 4-seats utilizing the 2010 census estimate described herein would produce a representation rate of 1/25,000.

**So why are we doing this?** – So far this appears to be an exercise in simple math with a nod to our history and culture - an expectation of the populace to have a certain size council where citizens can hold their elected Ward Councilmember accountable and maintain a personal relationship if they choose.

But, why not try to respect this consideration of historical expectations while also making a more structural change in the way Council and the City operate? A deeper structural change based on an analysis of how other cities are meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how Cleveland can move to be more competitive and better play the role of a leader for the region.

**A different 15 or 17: 14 Ward and 1 or 3 At-large members** – A proposal for a mixed ward/at-large council is based in part, due to a review of 30 major U.S. cities, their population, size and form of council. It is also based on an attempt to consider how reforming Cleveland City Council could relate and compliment a Cuyahoga County government reform and changes being explored for better regional cooperation.

In a peer review of 30 cities (see attached table – page 8) ranging in average population from 400,000 to 600,000, 61% had at-large representation and 45% utilized a mixed council system, i.e., both at-large and ward seats. The average representation rates range from 1/45,000 to 1/55,000. Cleveland's current rate of approximately 1/21,000 and the Council President's proposed rate of 1/25,000 are the highest rates compared to all other 30 cities with the exception of St. Louis Missouri (1/13,000) and Nashville-Davidson (1/16,000).

Like Cleveland, there has been public debate in St. Louis regarding a reduction in the number of Alderman (28-Ward and 1-at-large), and it should be noted that Nashville-Davidson is a City/County form of government created back in 1963 with a mixed system of 35-district and 5-at-large representatives.

Rather than a just a mathematical exercise, Council reduction's aim should be to try to impact the effectiveness and responsiveness of City government. On responsiveness, currently council members are readily available to the public with one of the highest representation rates in the county for City's our size. As for effectiveness Council is being taken to task.

**Concerning Representation and City-wide interests** - There a trade-offs for any system of governance. Although the pros for higher representation include better representation of diverse groups, opportunity for closer interaction with voters and lower cost elections as well as lower costs for groups of people to influence government; the cons include less efficiency for dealing with city-wide issues, parochial interests receiving undue attention and higher government spending (ref: supplemental materials page 9).

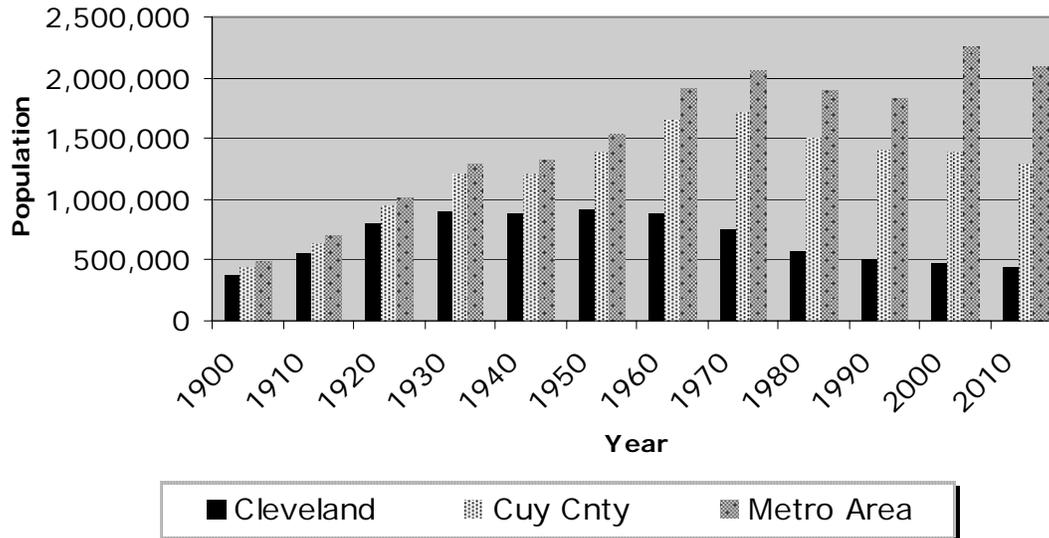
With increasing complexities of the challenges we face in this new century, we need to look at how other Cities our size our adapting. Over the past two decades there has been a clear trend of moving to mixed governance systems that include a combination of district, super-district or at-large positions. To a lesser extent there have also been movements to city-county governments and other forms of regional government structural initiatives.

In comparison to the pros and cons of all-district systems, the potential advantages of adding one or three at-large seats seem tempting. A mixed-system of district and at-large representation is a common sense answer to avoiding the pitfalls of either system. The pros for at-large systems include a more impartial view of city-wide issue, more and closer attention to issues that have a larger impact on the entire city and in the case of using the at-large form for deciding the Council Presidency, a more competitive and democratic method of choosing this position.

But, the blending of both district and at-large systems seems to hold out the best opportunity to make a more significant structural change and in turn hopefully a more pronounced change in the Council's effectiveness and responsiveness – responsiveness to not only the individual constituent's, or specific neighborhood's concerns, but to the overarching concerns and unique challenges that this new century brings to medium and large American cities.

### Cleveland/Cuy Cnty/Metro Area Population 1900 - 2010

[2010 population figures are from the July 2006 Census (City);  
and, July 2007 Census estimates (Cnty & MSA)]



Census Year	Cleveland Population	National Rank	% ±	Cuyahoga Cnty	*CMSA
1820	606				
1830	1,076		77.6%		
1840	6,071	67	464.2%		
1850	17,034	41	180.6%		
1860	43,417	21	154.9%		
1870	92,829	15	113.8%		
1880	160,146	11	72.5%		
1890	261,353	10	63.2%		
1900	381,768	7	46.1%	439,120	497,502
1910	560,663	9	46.9%	637,425	698,620
1920	796,841	5	42.1%	943,495	1,013,265
1930	900,429	6	13.0%	1,201,455	1,283,220
1940	878,336	6	-2.5%	1,217,250	1,319,734
1950	914,808	7	4.2%	1,389,532	1,532,579
1960	876,050	8	-4.2%	1,647,895	1,909,483
1970	750,903	10	-14.3%	1,721,300	2,063,729
1980	573,822	18	-23.6%	1,498,400	1,898,720
1990	505,616	23	-11.9%	1,412,140	1,831,122
2000	478,403	33	-5.4%	1,393,845	2,250,869
2010	444,313		-7.1%	1,295,958	2,096,471

\*Cleveland--Akron, OH CMSA

REF: [www.cose.org/pdf/regionaleconomy/Cleveland\\_facts.pdf](http://www.cose.org/pdf/regionaleconomy/Cleveland_facts.pdf)

MSA includes counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake and Medina.

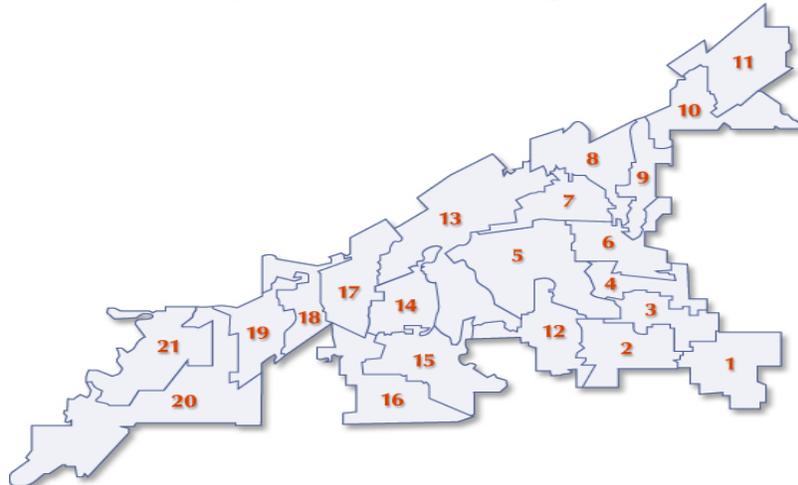
In 1993, Ashtabula and Lorain counties were added to the Cleveland PMSA.

2010 population is from the July 2006 Census (City); and, July 2007 Census estimates (Cnty & MSA)

### 1990 – 2000 Population Changes per Ward & Areas

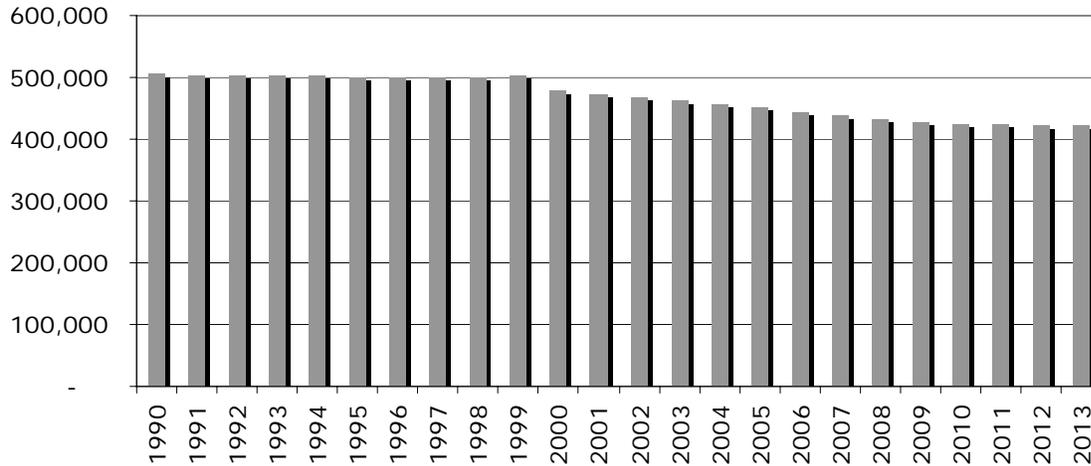
2008 Reps	Ward	1990	2000	Pop Change	% Change
<b>East Side Wards</b>					
Turner	1	24,213	21,926	-2,287	-10.4%
White	2	24,832	22,821	-2,011	-8.8%
Reed	3	25,460	23,463	-1,997	-8.5%
Johnson	4	23,147	21,878	-1,269	-5.8%
Cleveland	5	26,638	23,059	-3,579	-15.5%
Mitchell	6	24,044	22,129	-1,915	-8.7%
Lewis	7	25,492	21,919	-3,573	-16.3%
Scott	8	23,957	21,855	-2,102	-9.6%
Conwell	9	22,156	21,955	-201	-0.9%
Coats	10	24,658	21,870	-2,788	-12.7%
Polensek	11	21,788	22,567	779	3.5%
Brancatelli	12	23,056	23,620	564	2.4%
		<b>289,441</b>	<b>269,062</b>	<b>-20,379</b>	<b>-7.6%</b>
	<b>% of City's population reduction</b>			<b>75%</b>	
<b>Downtown/East/West</b>					
Cimperman	13	<b>23,305</b>	<b>23,689</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
	<b>% of City's population reduction</b>			<b>-1%</b>	
<b>West Side Wards</b>					
Santiago	14	23,722	22,690	-1,032	-4.5%
Cummins	15	23,870	22,683	-1,187	-5.2%
Kelley	16	23,873	23,367	-506	-2.2%
Zone	17	23,343	22,481	-862	-3.8%
Westbrook	18	24,462	23,700	-762	-3.2%
Brady	19	23,356	23,671	315	1.3%
Sweeney	20	25,784	23,515	-2,269	-9.6%
Keane	21	24,491	23,545	-946	-4.0%
		<b>192,901</b>	<b>185,652</b>	<b>-7,249</b>	<b>-3.9%</b>
	<b>% of City's population reduction</b>			<b>27%</b>	
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>505,647</b>	<b>478,403</b>	<b>-27,244</b>	<b>-5.7%</b>
				<b>100%</b>	

City of Cleveland Ward Map 2008



### City of Cleveland Population 1990 - 2013

Average annual decline for period 1990 - 2006 = 3,835 or -.08%  
 With simple forecast of lowering decline rate of  
 -1.4% to 0.2% per year from 2007 - 2013



Year	Population	# Change	% Change	*Rep Rate
1990	505,672			
1991	503,981	-1,691	-0.3%	23,999
1992	502,914	-1,067	-0.2%	23,948
1993	502,409	-505	-0.1%	23,924
1994	502,931	522	0.1%	23,949
1995	501,228	-1,703	-0.3%	23,868
1996	500,429	-799	-0.2%	23,830
1997	500,602	173	0.0%	23,838
1998	501,170	568	0.1%	23,865
1999	501,662	492	0.1%	23,889
2000	478,403	-23,259	-4.9%	22,781
2001	472,246	-6,157	-1.3%	22,488
2002	467,727	-4,519	-1.0%	22,273
2003	462,604	-5,123	-1.1%	22,029
2004	457,117	-5,487	-1.2%	21,767
2005	450,560	-6,557	-1.5%	21,455
2006	444,313	-6,247	-1.4%	21,158

Population numbers listed below are forecasts for analysis purpose only

2007	438,313	-6000	-1.4%	20,872			
2008	433,313	-5000	-1.2%	20,634	<b>Estimated Representation Rates:</b>		
2009	428,313	-5000	-1.2%	20,396	<b>17 wards</b>	<b>15 wards</b>	<b>14 wards</b>
2010	425,313	-3000	-0.7%	20,253	25,018	28,354	30,380
2011	423,313	-2000	-0.5%	20,158	24,901	28,221	30,237
2012	421,313	-2000	-0.5%	20,063	24,783	28,088	30,094
2013	420,313	-1000	-0.2%	20,015	24,724	28,021	30,022

\* Representation Rate calculated for 21 members with other rates listed at right

### Peer City Review of Legislative Governments

	City	District	At-large	Total	Population	Representation	Notes
1	St. Louis	28	1	29	353,837	12,637	Board of Aldermen
<b>2</b>	<b>Nashville-Davidson</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>552,120</b>	<b>15,775</b>	"Metro Nashville" -- City of Nashville and Davidson County merged in 1963
<b>3</b>	<b>Cleveland</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>444,323</b>	<b>21,158</b>	Reduced from 33 Wards to 21 in 1981
4	Richmond	9	0	9	192,913	21,435	2 Year terms, Council elects Vice Mayor and Asst. Vice Mayor
5	Minneapolis	13	0	13	372,833	28,679	Assumed current size council in 1950
6	Buffalo	9	0	9	276,059	30,673	4 year terms; Council leadership positions are for 2 years
<b>7</b>	<b>Indianapolis</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>785,597</b>	<b>31,424</b>	
8	Pittsburgh	9	0	9	312,819	34,758	Switched from an all at-large system in 1989
9	Cincinnati	0	9	9	332,888	36,988	
<b>10</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>602,782</b>	<b>40,185</b>	Common Council, changed from 17 to 15 from 2000 census
11	Atlanta	12	3	15	486,411	40,534	
<b>12</b>	<b>Baltimore</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>640,961</b>	<b>45,783</b>	2004-05 switching from a 3/rep - 6 district to 1-14 rep council
13	Toledo	6	6	12	298,446	49,741	All serve 4 year terms
14	Denver	11	2	13	566,974	51,543	Consolidated city-county with a mayor elected on a nonpartisan ballot, a 13-member city council and an auditor
15	Albuquerque	9	0	9	504,949	56,105	Elected on staggered terms, with four or five districted Councilors elected every two years.
16	Chicago	50	0	50	2,833,321	56,666	
17	Oakland	7	1	8	397,067	56,724	staggered 4-year terms
18	Jacksonville	14	5	19	794,555	56,754	
19	Seattle	0	9	9	582,454	64,717	All at-large utilize staggered terms/elections
<b>20</b>	<b>Boston</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>590,763</b>	<b>65,640</b>	
21	Fresno	7	0	7	466,714	66,673	
22	San Francisco	11	0	11	744,041	67,640	City/County government has switched from at-large to district representation since 1975
23	Washington D.C.	8	5	13	581,530	72,691	There are also 37 Advisory Neighborhood Commissions elected by small neighborhood districts
24	Kansas City	6	6	12	447,541	74,590	Ward and at-large per each of 6 districts
25	Miami			5	404,048	80,810	5 - member Commission
26	Portland			6	537,081	89,514	Commission form of government; Mayor, 4 Commissioners and Auditor comprise City's six elected officials
<b>27</b>	<b>Memphis</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>670,902</b>	<b>95,843</b>	The 6 members that serve 2 "super districts", reform took place in 1995
28	Austin	0	7	7	709,893	101,413	
29	Detroit	0	9	9	918,849	102,094	
<b>30</b>	<b>Columbus</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>733,203</b>	<b>104,743</b>	Council elected in two classes every two years to four-year terms
31	Philadelphia	10	7	17	1,448,394	144,839	
	<b>8 Peer City AVERAGES</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>627,581</b>	<b>52,569</b>	Represents cities that are often used for comparison purposes for economic and social studies and reports
	19 Peer City AVERAGES	11.2	2.8	13.1	426,895	47,671	
	31 Peer City AVERAGES	11.9	3.3	14.6	631,751	58,670	

2006 Census Estimates

NOTE: **19 of 31 (61%)** Peer Cities have at-large seats & **14 of 31 (45%)** Peer Cities have a mixed system, i.e., Ward and At-large combined

## Supplemental Information

### Recommendation from the District Representation Committee (Excerpts)

Atlanta Beach, Florida, July 2007. Emphasis added.

[http://www.ci.atlantic-](http://www.ci.atlantic-beach.fl.us/archives/60/DRSC%20Report%20to%20Commission%20on%20July%209%202007%20Final%20add%20Appendices%20and%20Table%20of%20Contents.doc)

[beach.fl.us/archives/60/DRSC%20Report%20to%20Commission%20on%20July%209%202007%20Final%20add%20Appendices%20and%20Table%20of%20Contents.doc](http://www.ci.atlantic-beach.fl.us/archives/60/DRSC%20Report%20to%20Commission%20on%20July%209%202007%20Final%20add%20Appendices%20and%20Table%20of%20Contents.doc)

Historically, the district method of election was the usual form of election used in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, at-large elections were introduced in many cities as a part of the Progressive reform movement. The at-large elections were designed to reduce corruption and the influence of party bosses in city government. The assumption was that those elected at-large would be more likely to consider the interests of the community as a whole as opposed to the interests of particular neighborhoods or groups.

**In the 1970s and 1980s a return to a district system of electing council members occurred in some communities driven in part by the issue of the discriminatory impact of at-large elections and the dilution of minority votes in an at-large system. More recently, the trend appears to be to the mixed election system.**

**The reasons cited<sup>1</sup> for the increased popularity of the mixed system are increasing minority representation and influence while combining some of the advantages of both the district and at-large systems.**

**The advantages cited in the literature and by our speakers for district elections include:**

- Giving all legitimate groups, especially those with a geographic base, a better chance of being represented on the council.<sup>2</sup>
- One set of researchers found that although there were no dramatic shifts in the overall distribution of goods and services when district elections were adopted, the new systems of representation did appear to be important factors in decisions concerning the geographic location of new city facilities.<sup>2</sup>
- Council members elected by district are likely to be more sensitive to the small but frequently important problems people have (i.e., stop signs, trash pick up).<sup>3</sup> One study found that although the effect was modest, those elected from districts were consistently more service oriented than those elected at-large. (Welch and Bledsoe)
- District elections may reduce voter alienation by bringing city government closer to the people.
- Since it is less expensive to run in a district, a wider range of candidates may be encouraged to seek office. However, one study found only a marginal increase in lower status candidacies.<sup>2</sup>

**The disadvantages attributed to district elections include:**

- Councils elected by district may have more conflict. The fact that in district systems each member represents a distinct geographic unit encourages a kind of natural opposition of interests that is less distinct in at-large systems.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MacManus, Susan A., "Mixed Election Systems: The Newest Reform Structure," in Local Government Election Practices, Edited by Roger L. Kemp (McFarland, 1999), pp. 39-47.

<sup>2</sup> Heilig, Peggy and Robert J. Mundt, Your Voice at City Hall (State University of New York Press, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> National League of Cities

<sup>4</sup> Welch, Susan and Timothy Bledsoe, Urban Reform and Its Consequences, (University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 104-120.

<sup>5</sup> Southwick, L. Jr., "Local District Spending and At-Large Versus District Representation; Do Wards Result in More 'Pork'?" Economics and Politics, Volume 9, July 1997, pp.173-203.

- Councils elected by district may be less efficient because of district specific versus a broader constituency perspective.<sup>3</sup> Lynn Tipton, Florida League of Cities, cited a study by an Askew senior fellow that found a real loss of statesmanship after the Florida legislature shifted to single member districts.
- One 1997 study found district elections encouraged higher spending and consequently also higher debt and taxes. The assumption was that with district representation a coalition can be put together to meet the demands of the coalition.<sup>5</sup>
- One study found that public employee groups wielded more influence over municipal decision makers in systems in which the council members are chosen by district. They found that it was less expensive for groups to affect the outcome of city elections in a district system.<sup>6</sup> This same concern was voiced to the District Representation Committee by one of the speakers, Joe Yarborough, City Manager of South Daytona Beach.

## **The At-Large System of Election**

### **Advantages:**

- Members elected at-large can be more impartial, rise above the limited perspective of the district and concern themselves with the problems of the entire community. Several studies found that councils elected at-large were more concerned with the impartial and professional conduct of city business and with the welfare of the city as a whole.<sup>7 8</sup>
- Vote trading and log rolling are minimized.<sup>9</sup>
- Better qualified individuals are more likely to be elected to the council because there is a broader base of candidates.<sup>9</sup>

### **Disadvantages**

- At-large elections may weaken the representation of particular groups if the groups do not have a citywide base of operation or are concentrated in specific areas.<sup>9</sup> One study found that black representation levels on city councils with at-large elections were strikingly low.<sup>10</sup>
- Citizens may feel isolated and disconnected from city government without a geographic basis of representation. Ref: Model City Charter.

**A Hybrid or Modified At-Large System** in which council members are elected at-large, but the city is divided into districts and a councilman must reside in a particular district.

- This system is designed to ensure that not all commissioners come from one area.
- The system may help ensure an equitable distribution of services among districts.
- The system is designed to increase participation at the polls and at council meetings by all citizens as compared to the at-large system.
- The system is designed to avoid the conflict and parochialism that might come with district elections.

**The National League of Cities as well as some students of local government structure point out that there is no one best form of government; it depends on the values and characteristics of the city.**

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<sup>6</sup> Mehay and Gonzalez.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, James Q. and Edward Banfield, "Public Regardiness as a Value Premise in Voting Behavior," American Political Science Review, December 1964.

<sup>8</sup> Lineberry, Robert and Edmund Fowler, "Reformism and Public Policies in American Cities," in American Political Science Review, September 1967.

<sup>9</sup> National League of Cities

<sup>10</sup> Walawender, Richard, "At-Large Elections and Vote Dilution," in Local Government Election Practices, Edited by Roger L. Kemp, McFarland, 1999, pp. 103-123.

## **Two Decades of Continuity and Change in American City Councils (Excerpts)**

National League of Cities, Svara, James H. Two Decades of Continuity and Change in American City Councils. Commissioned by the National League of Cities, September, 2003.  
<http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/AED3E653151A49D6BF0B975C581EFD30/rmpcitycouncilrpt.pdf>

### ***RACE AND ETHNICITY***

As in examining trends in gender representation, the best indication of the change in the representation of racial and ethnic minorities is to examine change within each city size category. Whereas the overall percentages of minority representation appear to be stable between over time when referring to the summary percentages for all cities, making comparisons within each city size category presents a different picture. As indicated in Table II.2, the proportion of African-American council members increased in small cities after no change between 1979 and 1989, and continued to increase in medium-sized cities. African-American representation remained essentially the same in large cities maintaining the gains from 1979 to 1989. The representation of minority groups other than African-Americans increased slightly in all sizes of cities. Hispanic representation increased substantially in medium and large cities, although the proportion of Asian-Americans on councils declined somewhat. Still, overall the percentage of minorities has increased in all three size categories in each study...

As reported in previous studies, more minority council members are elected from districts than at-large—18% versus 11%. The difference is particularly great for African-Americans. Eleven percent of the council members elected from districts are African-American compared to 5% elected from at-large constituencies.

These differences in large cities can also be attributed to the greater use of district elections in mayor-council cities and the greater success that African-American candidates have in at-large elections in mayor-council cities. Overall, more African-Americans and other minorities are elected from districts than at-large. Eighteen percent of the council members elected from districts are minorities, including 13% who are African-American. Among council members elected at-large, 11% are minorities and 7% are African-American.

This difference holds up in council-manager and mayor-council cities, although the differences are obscured by divergence in the approach to defining constituencies in the two forms of government. Two thirds of the respondents from council-manager cities are elected at-large, whereas three fifths of the mayor-council respondents are elected from districts. Still, the effects of the two constituency types are nearly identical regardless of the form of government. In fact, when district elections are used in council-manager cities, 21% of the council members are from minority groups compared to 15% minorities elected from districts in the mayor-council cities. Council members elected at-large in both forms of government are equally likely to be from minority groups. African-Americans are more successful in at-large elections in mayor-council cities, but larger proportions of other minorities are elected in council-manger cities.