

# Information Packet for Consensus Meeting

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# Consensus Question

**How should members of the Naperville City Council be elected: at large, by district, or a mix of at large and district?**

## Definition of Options

**At Large:** All members voted for by the entire community

-(65 ILCS 5/5-2-12) (b) "... In cities of at least 100,000 but not more than 500,000 population, the council shall consist of the mayor and 8 councilmen."

**Districts:** Each member voted on by residents of that candidates' district

-(65 ILCS 5/5-2-2) "...In all cities of less than 500,000, 20 aldermen shall be the maximum number permitted except as otherwise provided in the case of aldermen-at-large."

-(65 ILCS Sec. 5-2-18) "...After the adoption of such proposition the provisions of Article 3 shall be applicable to the division of the city into wards and to the election of the mayor and aldermen of such city, except that only one alderman shall be elected from each ward."

**Mixed:** At large candidates voted for by the entire community and district candidates by the residents of that candidates' district.

-(65 ILCS 5/5-2-18.7) "...In cities of 50,000 and not more than 500,000 population, the council shall consist of the mayor and 8 councilmen, 3 councilmen being elected at large and 5 councilmen being elected from districts...The city council shall divide the city, whenever necessary thereafter, into districts which shall be of as compact and contiguous territory as practicable and of approximately equal population. The number of such districts shall be the same as the number of councilmen to be elected from districts.

One councilman who is an actual resident of the district, shall be elected from each district. Only the electors of a district shall elect a councilman from that district. The rest of the number of councilmen authorized shall be elected at large."

**Note: 65 ILCS 5 references the Illinois Municipal Code section of the Illinois Compiled Statutes**

# Procedure for moving from AT LARGE TO MIXED

According to the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/5-2-18.7) the following steps are required:

1. A petition signed by electors of the city numbering not less than 10% of the total vote cast for mayor at the last preceding election, is filed with the city clerk,

**OR**

2. The city council may by ordinance without a petition cause to be submitted, to a vote of the electors of that city the proposition whether part of the city council shall be elected at large and part from districts with staggered four year terms and biennial elections for councilmen.
3. Such a proposition shall not be submitted at the general primary election for the municipality
4. If a majority of those voting on the proposition vote "yes", then at the next general municipal election at which a mayor is to be elected, a mayor and councilmen shall be elected as hereinafter provided.

...In cities of 50,000 and not more than 500,000 population, the council shall consist of the mayor and 8 councilmen, 3 councilmen being elected at large and 5 councilmen being elected from districts.

The city council shall divide the city, whenever necessary thereafter, into districts which shall be of as compact and contiguous territory as practicable and of approximately equal population. The number of such districts shall be the same as the number of councilmen to be elected from districts.

# Procedure for moving from AT LARGE TO WARDS

According to the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/5-2-18) the following steps are required:

1. A proposition to elect alderman from wards as provided in Article 3 of this code, except that only one alderman may be elected from each ward shall be certified by the city clerk to the proper election authority who shall submit such proposition at the general municipal election in accordance with the general election law if a petition signed by electors of the city numbering not less than 10% of the total vote cast for mayor at the last preceding election, is filed with the city clerk.
2. If a majority of those voting on the proposition vote "yes", then the sitting city council shall proceed to divide the city into wards in the manner provided in Article 3 and one alderman shall be elected from each ward at the next general municipal election of any city officer. Upon the election and qualification of such aldermen the terms of office of all sitting councilmen shall expire. After the adoption of such proposition the provisions of Article 3 shall be applicable to the division of the city into wards and to the election of the mayor and aldermen of such city, except that only one alderman shall be elected from each ward.

# Research Data

## U.S. Cities Election Systems

### 1998 Data

Population	At-Large	District	Mixed
All Cities	60.9%	16.8%	22.3%
100,000-249,999	40.2%	22.0%	37.8%

Source: Municipal Handbook, 1998

### 2000 Data

Population	At-Large	District	Mixed
All Cities (n=3100)	56.5%	17.3%	26.2%
Council Manager Cities (n=1639)	64.2%	13.3%	22.6%

Source: Dr. Kimberly Nelson, Northern Illinois University

## Illinois Cities Election Systems

### 2000 Data

Population	At-Large	District	Mixed
All Cities(n=203)	61.6%	5.4%	33.0%
Council Manager Cities(n=74)	71.8%	8.1%	20.3%

Source: Dr. Kimberly Nelson, Northern Illinois University

Category	Dupage	Naperville	Aurora	Joliet	Rockford	Springfield	Peoria	Schaumburg	Downers Grove	Wheaton
Pop (2007)	930,528	144,500	170,855	144,316	156,596	117,090	113,546	72,417	48,995	54,552
Form of Gov		c/m	mc	cm	mc	mc	cm	cm	cm	cm
Election type		al	mix	mix	dist	mix	al	al	al	mix
Councilmembers (AL,D)		al	2,10	4,5	0,14	0,10	5,5	6,0	7,0	3,4
Council Size		9	12	9	14	10	10	6	7	7
%M/%F	49.7/50.3	48.9/51.1	50.4/49.6	49.5/50.5	48.7/51.3	47/53	47.3/52.7	48.7/51.3	48/52	48.7/51.3
#Households	325,601	43,751	46,489	36,182	59,158	49	45,199	31,799	18,979	19,377
Persons per household	2.73	2.89	3.04	2.81	2.46	2.24	2.38	2.36	2.53	2.64
%Pop<, 18	24.7	31.8	31.7	29.5	26.7	24	25.7	21.9	24.8	26.2
%Pop>65	10.8	6.2	6.3	11	14.1	14.4	14.2	9.5	14.3	11.2
Median household income, 1999	73,818	88,771	54,861	47,761	37,667	39,388	36,397	60,941	65,539	73,385
Per capita income, 1999	31,315	35,551	22,131	19,390	19,731	23,324	20,512	30,587	31,580	34,147
% White	83.8	85.2	68.1	69.3	72.3	81	69.3	78.8	90.1	89.8
% Black	4.7	3	11.1	18.2	17.4	15.3	24.8	3.4	1.9	2.8
% Asian	9.9	9.6	3.1	1.1	2.2	1.5	2.3	14.2	5.7	4.8
% 2+ races	1.3	1.2	2.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.8	n/a	1.3
% Hispanic	12.6	3.2	32.6	18.4	10.2	1.2	2.5	5.3	3.6	3.7
High School (25+)	90	96.3	75.6	78.8	77.8	87.4	82.8	91.8	93	94.4
Bachelors (25+)	41.7	60.6	29.9	18.6	19.8	30.6	28	38.9	46.4	57.3
Median housing value (2000)	196,000	254,200	135,500	119,900	79,900	88,600	85,400	173,200	205,900	222,100
% below poverty level	4.8	2.2	8.5	10.8	14	11.7	18.8	3	2.3	3.6
Source: U.S. Census Bureau State & County Quick Facts										
Dr. Kimberly Nelson, Northern Illinois University										

# Summary of Council Elections 1989 - 2009

NAPERVILLE choose			DUPAGE CO _____		WILL CO _____		TOTAL _____	
YEAR	MAYOR	AT- LARGE COUNCIL	REG VOTER. BALLOTS	%	REG VOTER. BALLOTS	%	REG VOTER. BALLOTS	%
2009 - Apr 7	NA	4yr: choose 4 of 13 2yr: choose 1 of 3	59,096	11,105 19%	27,849	3,987 14%	86,945	15,092 17%
2007- Apr 17	1 of 2 G. Pradcl* v D. Krause	4 yr: 4 of 6 cand	58,792	14,771 25%	25,641	4,436 17%	84,433	19,207 23%
2005- Apr 5	NA	4 yr: 4 of 6 cand	58,171	8,706 15%	24,401	5,977 24%	82,572	14,683 18%
2003 -Apr 1	1 of 1 G. Pradcl*	4yr: 4 of 7 cand 2 yr unexp: 1 of 2 cand	54,780	8,228 15%	22,014	2,195 10%	76,794	10,423 14%
2001- Apr 3	NA	4 yr: 4 of 8 cand	54,263	9,159 17%	20,497	2,510 12%	74,760	11,669 16%
1999- Apr 13	1 of 2 G. Pradcl* v R. Romano	4 yr: 4 of 8 cand	49,581	16,082 32%	16,477	4,309 26%	66,058	20,391 31%
1997- Apr 1	NA	4 yr: 4 of 8 cand	45,972	5,910 13%	12,855	1,200 9%	58,827	7,110 12%
1995- Apr 4	1 of 2 G. Pradcl* v J. Tenison	4yr: 4 of 7 cand 2 yr: 2 of 4 cand	37,962	13,425 35%	9,293	2,550 27%	47,255	15,975 34%
<i>1995: Population reaches 100,000; by law the City Council is expanded to 8 members, elected at-large</i>								
1993- Apr 20	NA	4 yr: 3 of 6 cand	42,919	5,958 14%	8,194	945 12%	51,113	6,903 14%
1991- Apr 2	1 of 2 S. Macranc* v D. Krause	4 yr: 3 of 6 cand	33,393	12,602 38%	5,818	1,633 28%	39,211	14,235 36%
1989 APR 4	NA	4 yr: 3 of 6 cand	37,057	13,187 36%	4,800	1,512 32%	41,857	14,699 35%

\* winner

\*\* Sources: DuPage Co Election Commission; Will Co Election Department; Naperville Office of City Clerk

## Precinct Data on Registered Voters and Voter Turnout 2009 Naperville Municipal Election

In the course of the study, the committee decided to look at voter turnout patterns under the at-large system, examining voting data by precinct clusters in the April 2009 Naperville municipal election. We wanted to ask: What are the implications of these observed details for the form of council representation, as held anecdotally by proponents of district or at-large representation? The precinct-by-precinct numbers of registered voters and voter turnout highlighted 3 relevant groups of questions for the consensus discussion.

There is no research material we found that addresses these questions. They are a matter of individual opinion and anecdotal perception. It will be up to the membership at the consensus meeting to determine the significance of this data in relation to the question of preferred representation. The committee will provide some direction for further analysis, but in preparation for the meeting, please think about how you view these common arguments for district representation.

Maps will be available at the consensus meeting to help identify all precinct locations and clusters and to show more comprehensive tallies. [ Information is based on tallies in city and county records for the 2009 municipal election. See the bottom for sample details.]

**1. One reason that has been given for supporting district representation is the positive effect it might have on voter participation.** Some people believe that district representation would encourage higher voter turnout because voters would feel they had more connection to a candidate and more investment in

the outcome of an election.

Certain precincts and clusters of precincts reflecting the four major townships in Naperville's boundaries do have higher percentages of ballots cast. Is there a correlation between voter turnout and voter involvement with government? Would/do certain areas within the city boundaries have more political power and more investment than others as a result of their higher voter turnout?

**2. Another reason cited in favor of district representation has to do with the cost of campaigning.** In at-large races, would/do candidates concentrate their efforts on high voter turnout areas, choosing to reduce expenses by downplaying low turnout areas? Would such a circumstance serve to reinforce any marginalization of certain areas of the city? Would district representation actually reduce the cost of campaigning, thus encouraging more candidates and increasing communication within a created district based on population? Facts about the reported costs of campaigning in the 2009 election for successful and unsuccessful candidates are also relevant to this aspect of the issue.

**3. Sometimes it is suggested that, ideally, council members' places of residence should be spread evenly across the city, that any clustering is detrimental to knowledge and even-handed representation of the entire community.** Where do current council members live? Is there a correlation between residences of sitting council and voter turnout in their areas? Does geographical residence in high turnout precincts give an advantage to candidates, resulting in a clustering of council members?

### SAMPLE OF PRECINCT DATA

#### **Total number of registered voters by township**

Naperville Township	28,234
Lisle Township	30,849
Milton Township	13
DuPage Township	5,696
Wheatland Township	22,153

#### **Total percentage of turnout by township**

Naperville Township	22%
Lisle Township	19%
Milton	23%
DuPage Township	14%
Wheatland Township	14%

#### **Top 5 precincts in terms of registered voters**

Naperville 25	1506	(turnout 5%)
Wheatland 10	1300	(turnout 13%)
Naperville 37	1292	(turnout 13%)
Naperville 17	1217	(turnout 13%)
Lisle 39	1187	(turnout 23%)

#### **Top 5 precincts in terms of turnout**

Wheatland 33	41%
Naperville 26	32%
Naperville 33	31%
Lisle 23	30%
Lisle 3	30%

# At Large Pros and Cons

## Pros

- Council members in an at-large system can be more impartial, rise above the limited perspective of the ward and concern themselves with the problems of the whole community.
- Homogeneous population fits well with this method
- Better qualified individuals are elected to the council (broader base of candidates)
- Every voter decides and votes on every councilman
- All council members are equally accessible to all citizens
- Vote trading and logrolling are minimized
- No re-districting is necessary

## Cons

- Can weaken representation of particular groups especially if the group does not have a citywide base of operation or is an ethnic/racial group represented in a specific ward.
- Simultaneous campaign coverage of whole community by all candidates is expensive and may favor candidates with greater financial backing
- Candidates may rely more on media advertising and less on neighborhood and “grassroots” work
- Several councilmen may live close together and some areas of the city may be “unrepresented”
- Less direct link between voter and council members

# District Pros and Cons

## Pros

- District elections give all legitimate groups, especially those with a geographic base, a better chance of being represented on the city council (namely minority groups)
- Makes council reps more accountable, as they represent geographical constituencies
- Ward council members are more sensitive to the small but frequently important problems that people have (i.e. needed stop signs, trash pick up)
- District elections reduce voter alienation and apathy by bringing city government closer to the people and encouraging more citizen participation
- Running for office may be less expensive since a smaller area is to be covered
- Ensures geographical dispersion of councilmen.

## Cons

- Fails to provide effective minority representation unless minorities are consolidated within one or two districts.
- Council members concerns may be confined to district concern, less willing to deal with large, complex citywide issues
- The council tends to require more city staff involvement in district issues vs. broader constituency perspective
- Tends to pit one district against another increasing voter alienation
- District reps are interested in providing public services whose benefits are concentrated but whose costs are spread city-wide.
- Lack of competition for seats could lead to poor quality candidates or need for appointment
- District council members answer directly only to a small group of citizens
- Confusion at election time because voters not familiar with district boundaries don't know who represents them.
- Redistricting may be required frequently due to city growth
- \$ cost for "district administration/expenses" for individual aldermen
- Within districts, conflicts may arise due to district size
- Encourages vote trading and logrolling

# Mixed System Pros and Cons

## Pros

- Candidates could control costs of campaign by choosing to run for either office
- Big picture (citywide) and special interests (district) both represented on the council although by different people.
- District rep will be the voice of his/her district's concerns
- Alienation and apathy of voters theoretically decreased
- Ensures geographical dispersion of councilmen
- Overall less campaign costs than wholly at large

## Cons

- May experience transition problems and one-time costs
- Redistricting may be required due to city growth
- Some evidence exists that tax rates may be higher than for at large
- Within districts, conflicts may arise due to district size
- Encourages vote trading and logrolling

TIMELINE SUMMARY OF LWV STUDIES AND POSITIONS REGARDING

**Naperville City Council Representation**

**1969**

Naperville adopts council-manager form of government, with a mayor and 4-member city council elected at-large. A city manager is chosen by the council. **The Naperville LWV studies the issue, adopts a position in favor of the change to council-manager government, and works prominently to support the change.** Naperville's population is 22,000, its size less than 6 square miles.

**1976**

Citizens group mounts challenge to council-manager government; the effort is defeated in special October election. **LWV prominently reaffirms support of council-manager government.**

**1984**

The city's population approaches 50,000 and state statute will soon require that the council be increased to 6 members. These developments focus public attention on the size and electoral structure of the council. The council sponsors a study of alternate electoral forms; the study recommends retention of at-large elections. In the November election, voters support a 6-member council, elected at-large. **LWV reaffirms its support for at-large elections.**

**1990**

**Responding to Naperville's continuing rapid growth, public discussion again asks whether a change in the form of election to the council is best for the expanding city.** LWV begins a study of the issue and focuses on four council options: at-large, district, mixed (i.e., both district and at-large), and modified at-large.

**1991**

In March, responding to public advocacy, the council votes to allow an advisory referendum on changing the council structure from at-large to mixed at the election in March 1992.

At May Annual Meeting, LWV concludes its study; it moves away from support of the at-large council, adopting instead a position in favor of the mixed representation form:

Support for a change in the system of electing council members from an at-large to a hybrid mix with equal representation from the district and the at-large council members.

**1992**

In the March advisory referendum, voters support change to a mixed system of council representation, 60% to 40%.

In response, the city council votes to place a binding referendum on the ballot at the November election.

**LWV prominently supports the change to a mixed system.**

In November, on the binding referendum, voters reverse the advisory result and reject a mixed system of representation, 51% to 49%. Many believe that a change in the wording of the referendum caused the reversal.

**1995**

With the population approaching 100,000, the council anticipates the statutory requirement and authorizes an expansion to 8 members, all still elected at-large. This expanded council is implemented at the April 1995 election.

**2009**

Naperville's population approaches 150,000, and the city covers over 35 square miles. This continued, unremitting expansion of the city again calls forth the question of what kind of council elections will best serve its people.

**In May, LWV votes at Annual Meeting to restudy the current position.**

In June, a public meeting is called by council member James Boyajian, acting as a private citizen. Having failed to persuade the council to put the question to the voters in a referendum, he urges a public discussion of the issue of some form of district representation. He also raises the topic of term limits. Subsequently, an ad hoc committee of private citizens organizes to investigate the issues and to pursue placement of a referendum on the November 2010 ballot.

**On November 11, LWV meets to adopt a consensus on the question:**

How should members of Naperville city council be elected: at-large, by district, or a mix of at-large and district?

## FAQ's

**Q. Does changing the method of electing the council imply a change in Naperville's "form of government"?**

**A.** *No. Naperville's "form of government" is council-manager and this would not change if the method of electing council members were to change.*

**Q. Does changing the method of electing councilmen change the "non-partisan" status of elections?**

**A.** *No. Naperville City elections will still remain "non-partisan".*

**Q. Does Naperville, as a home rule community, have available to it options for the alteration of the method of electing council members other than those statutorily established alternatives available to non-home rule communities?**

**A.** *The City of Naperville, as a home rule municipality, has available to it a wide range of alternatives to elect city council members beyond those already established by statute. The exercise of this home rule power "...to provide for its officers, their manner of selection and terms of office" (Article 7 Section 6 of the Illinois Constitution 1970) would be effective only upon approval of the proposal of such a change by referendum.*

**Q. If a petition is put together to change the method of election, when does it have to be turned in?**

**A.** *Pursuant to 10 ILCS 5/28-2(a), the petition must be filed with the clerk not less than 78 days prior to a regular election. Pursuant to 10 ILCS 5/28-2(d), it should not be turned in more than one year before the election. In addition, only 3 are allowed on each ballot and it's the first 3.*

**Q. If Districts or a mix would pass, would the terms become effective with the next election or immediately?**

**A.** *For Districts: Pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/5-2-18, "if a majority of those voting on the proposition vote "yes" then the sitting city council shall proceed to divide the city into wards in the manner provided in Article 3 and one alderman shall be elected from each ward at the next general election of any city officer. Upon the election and qualification of such aldermen the terms of all sitting councilmen shall expire."*

*For a mix: Pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/5-2-18.7, “if a majority of those voting on the proposition vote “yes”, then the next general municipal election at which a mayor is to be elected, a mayor and councilmen shall be elected herinafter provided...In cities of 50,000 and not more than 500,000 in population, the council shall consist of the mayor and 8 councilmen, 3 councilmen being elected at large and 5 councilmen being elected from districts.”*

**Q. Can a referendum question be put on any ballot or does it have to be a city election?**

**A.** *It can be put on any ballot.*

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