



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Study Session

Item -2

Discussion Concerning Redistricting of City Council Wards

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

Council Agenda Memo

From: Chad Nabity, AICP

Meeting: October 18, 2011

Subject: Redistricting City Council Wards

Item #'s: 2

Presenter(s): Chad Nabity, AICP

Background

At the August 23, 2011 meeting the Grand Island City Council approved Mayor Jay Vavricek's appointments by to serve on a redistricting committee. The charge of this committee is to examine the existing City Council ward boundaries and to make a recommendation to the City Council about redrawing these boundaries to best equalize the population in each ward based on data provided by the 2010 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. In a representative democracy each member of the legislative body (City Council) should represent approximately the same number of people in the community to preserve the concept of equality (one person, one vote.) Generally, the equal-population requirement for state legislative and other districts is satisfied as long as the population of the smallest district and the population of the largest district do not vary by more than 10 percent.

Discussion

Every 10 years, following the U.S. Census of Population and Housing, governments at all levels have the responsibility to examine their voting districts to ensure that our representative form of government is equally representing the citizens.

Based on the 2010 Census each ward would ideally represent 9,704 people. The Census counts people, not voters, so districts need to be split based on the number of people in each district. Another reason to count people instead of voters is to insure that children are equally represented. They are a constituency that is entitled to representation but without the ability to vote.

The population of the wards as currently drawn is as follows:

Ward 1	10743
Ward 2	9432
Ward 3	8949
Ward 4	10012
Ward 5	9374

The City of Grand Island Redistricting Committee included the following members:

Hall County Republican Designee	Jerry Piccollo
Hall County Democrat Designee	Glen Murray
Hall County Independent Designee	Gary Rosacker
Community Youth Council Member	Alex Wirth
Community Youth Council Member	Ashley Bykerk
City Council Representative	Bob Nieman
City Council Representative	Linna Dee Donaldson
At Large Community Representative	Anita Lewandowski Brown
Staff Member (Chairman)	Chad Nabity

The members of this committee along with Pat Larson, the Grand Island GIS Coordinator and Dale Baker, the Hall County Election Commissioner met and used the GIS system to try a variety of different options for Council wards that would achieve the population goals and minimize the number of ballot faces that need to be printed at election time.

Attached you will find several maps. The first map shows the existing Council wards and the population of each ward as identified above.

The second map shows the committee recommendation for new ward boundaries and the population of each ward. The dark lines on the map represent the current ward boundaries. No sitting Council members will be moved from their district with the new boundaries as proposed.

The third map shows the ward boundaries and populations as they would be if the areas under consideration for annexation are approved by the City Council.

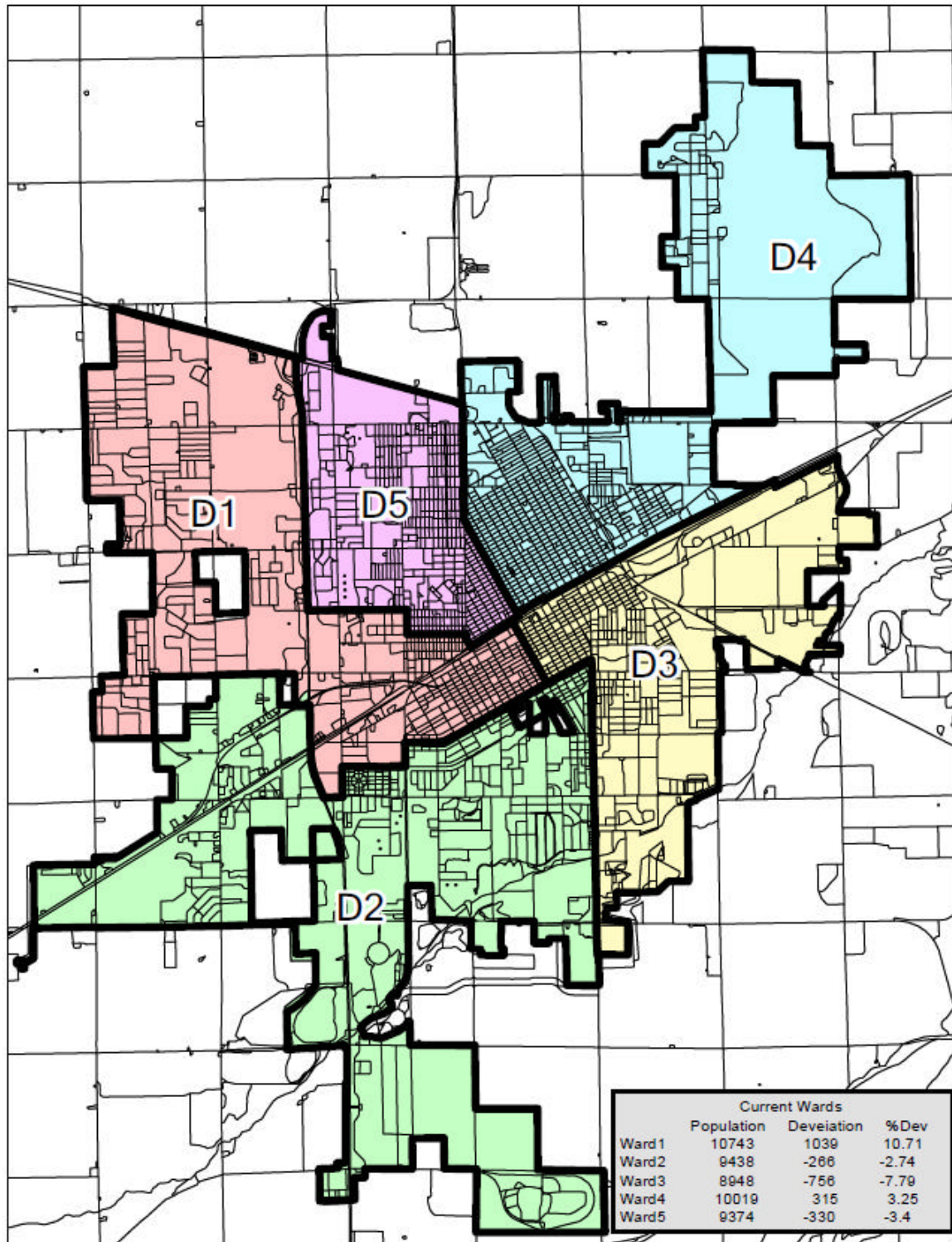
Even if the annexations do not proceed the new ward boundaries will comply with both the intent and letter of the law regarding redistricting. The Committee is recommending that Council approve the new wards as proposed.

City Staff including GIS Coordinator Pat Larson and Planning Director Chad Nabity will be available at the Study Session to demonstrate the methods used to create the new wards and Council will, if they wish, be able to make or suggest modifications to the ward boundaries.

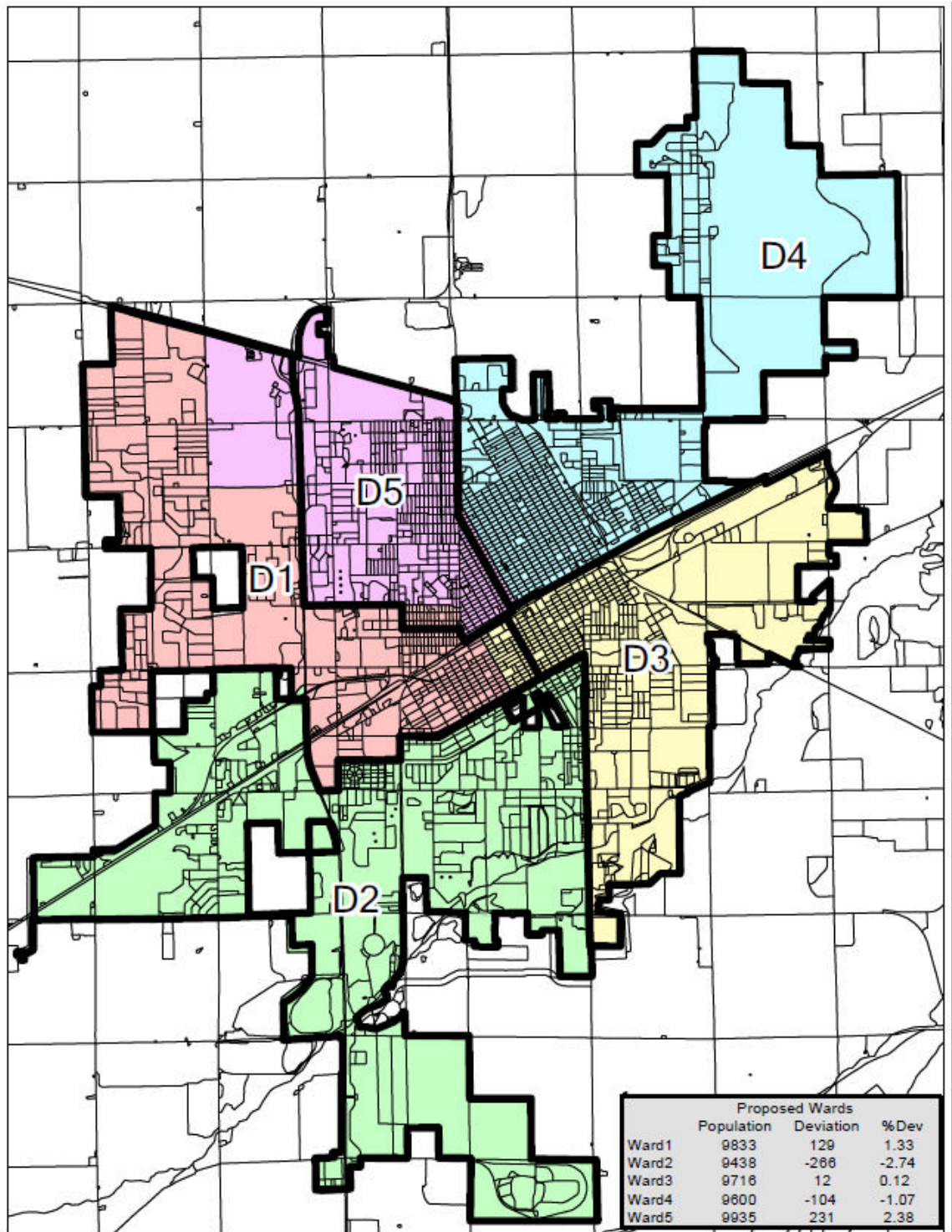
Conclusion

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

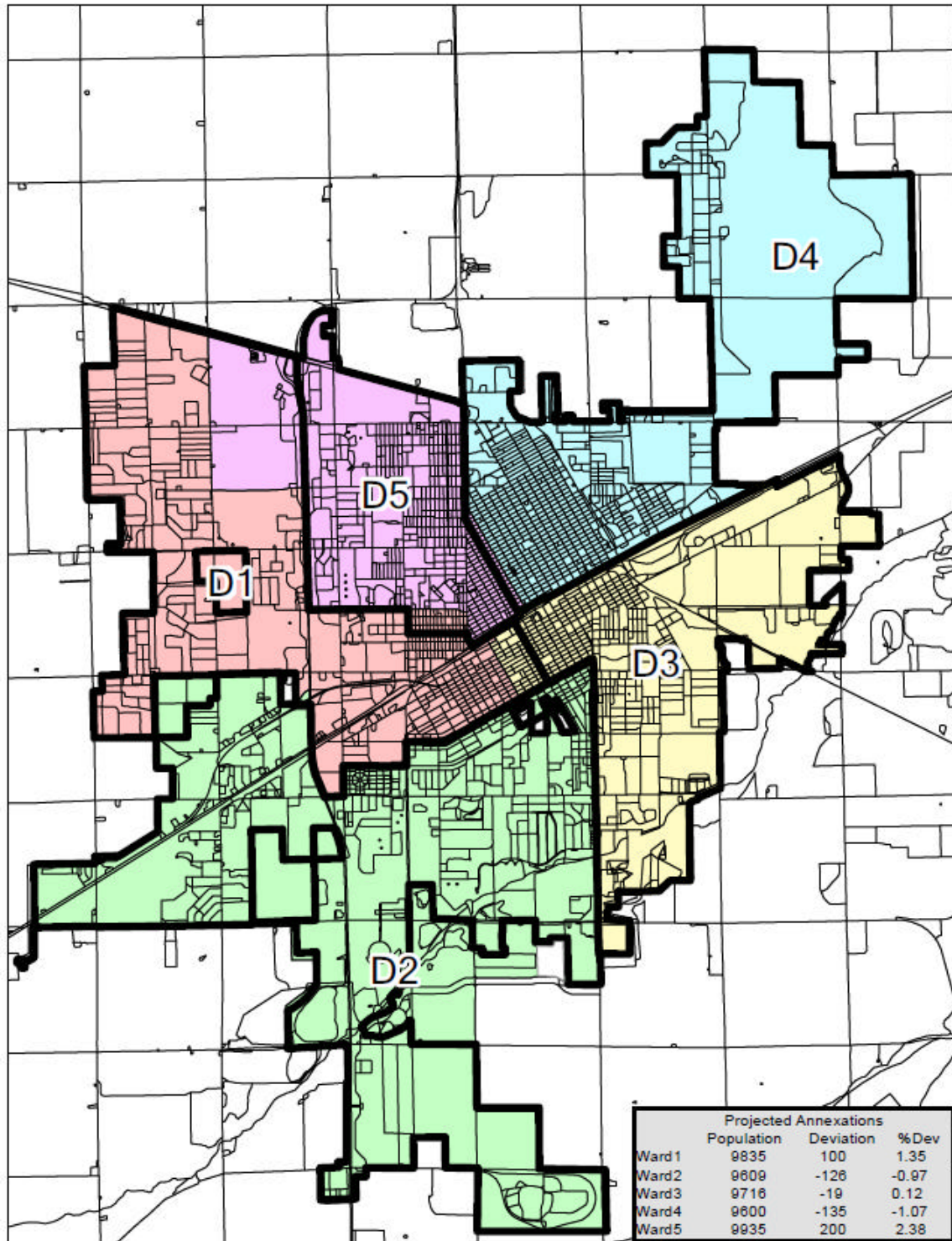
It is the intent of City Administration to bring this issue to a future council meeting for the purpose of passing an ordinance to define the City Council wards in accordance with state statutes and good public policy.



Current City Council Wards and Population based on 2010 Census



Proposed Changes to the Grand Island City Council Wards without areas considered for Annexation



Proposed City Council Wards and Population with Potential Annexation Areas