

## VOTER DISTRICT SUBCOMMITTEE

### **Adams**

Tiffany Vail

### **Bridger**

Sherilyn Wilson

### **Ellis**

Craig Christensen

### **Hillcrest**

Kent Field

### **Wilson**

Gail Yost

### **Woodruff**

Keegan Garrity

# **Voter District Committee - Final Report**

## **Background**

Beginning in 1987 Logan used a declared seat voting system for electing its 5 council members. In 2008, this system was changed to a different type of at large system: an open contest. Rather than running for a specific seat, all candidates campaigned for a position on council and those who received the most votes were elected to office.

In October 2019, a presentation was given by one of the council members on how the current system may be improved to facilitate broader representation. Following the presentation, the council passed a motion to form a citizen committee to evaluate the current open-seat voting system as well as explore other potential alternatives, such as a district-based system.

In March 2020, under the direction of the council chair, a committee of 6 citizen volunteers, each representing a geographic area (as defined by elementary school boundaries), was appointed to review the impact of the open seat voting system and examine whether or not a change would be warranted.

## **Summary of Findings**

Since the at-large, open seat system was implemented in 2009:

- The total number of candidates willing to run has decreased, despite an overall increase in population
- Although the majority of Logan residents live on the west side of Logan, the council has never had more than one elected official at a time residing in this geographic area
- Just 2 of the 6 neighborhoods (Hillcrest/Wilson) have produced double the number of candidates than the other 4 neighborhoods combined. These 2 neighborhoods are the wealthiest, least ethnically diverse, and have the highest percentage of owner-occupied housing.
- Major disparities exist between certain neighborhoods. For example:
  - Hillcrest median income is \$80k; Adams is \$26k
  - Hillcrest has a 1% Latino population; Woodruff has a 28% Latino population
  - Hillcrest is 90% owner occupied; Bridger is 27% owner-occupied

## **Consensus Opinion**

Of the 6 neighborhood representatives, Wilson, Woodruff, Ellis, Adams, and Bridger recommend the city move away from the current at-large system toward a district-based system, similar to the systems used by the local school boards, county council, Cache water district, state house of representatives, and so forth.

The supermajority (5-1) of the committee is of the opinion that implementing this change would facilitate broader representation. Doing so would come at no additional cost to the city and will increase the likelihood that the composition of the council more accurately reflects the city's population, a population that is expected to grow and become more diverse as time goes on.

## **Dissenting Opinion**

The representative from Hillcrest felt a district-based system has the potential to produce a smaller candidate pool which could translate to a candidate running unopposed in their district. With a typical voter turnout of ~24% in municipal elections, a district candidate could get elected with votes measured in the hundreds rather than the thousands and all candidates should have to garner support from a substantial number of voters in order to earn a spot on the council. Finally, a district-based system would result in residents being deprived of the opportunity to elect all 5 city council members.

## *Implementation*

The committee did not come to a consensus on whether the council should implement a mixed system or all-district system, but generally agree there should be a minimum of 3 district seats. Whether the system is 3 districts, 2 at-large or 4 districts and 1 at-large seat, having at least one at-large seat could ensure at least one council member is not parochial to a particular neighborhood and should be taken into consideration.

## *Timing*

The committee recommends no further delay in voting to change the system, with implementation no later than the 2023 municipal election. While there may be sufficient time to implement voter districts for the 2021 election, as only 2 council members seats will be up for re-election, the committee is empathetic to the potential redundancy of work that may be created from re-drawing boundaries based on updated population data provided by the 2020 census, expected to be released in the fall of 2021.

## *Management*

As gerrymandering is a potential concern when mapping out districts, the committee recommends district boundaries be drawn (or re-drawn) by a governing body similar to this committee, composed of a representative from each neighborhood, independent of sitting council members.

## **Conclusion**

The complete list of pros and cons are outlined in the report. The majority concluded the pros of districting outweigh the cons. All members agreed greater efforts should be made to increase civic participation and voter turnout.

## **Methodology**

The committee had the opportunity to review the following information:

- 20 years of historical voting data
- Costs associated with making a change
- Legal requirements
- Census demographic data including income, ethnicity, housing dynamic (owner-occupied vs renter occupied)
- Informal interviews with neighborhood residents
- A comparison to other cities in Utah with similar population sizes
- A presentation from North Logan mayor and political science professor Damon Cann

## **The Framework of the Committee's report as articulated by Chair Anderson**

- **Current condition and historical view**
  - Logan operates elections at large. In November of 2008 ordinance 08-83 was passed which numbered the seats on city council, but kept the election at large. "The available seats shall be filled in order of candidate with highest vote total filling the lowest numbered available seat." Prior to that the council had numbered seats and election filings were for a particular seat number and candidates campaigned against one other person
  - What statistics are relevant to the current condition and historical view
    - What demographic data should be included in this report
    - What are we saying with the data?
- **Comparison of Logan to selected peer cities (see chart)**
- **Necessity of value to changes in the election process**
  - What are the problems in our city that can be solved by geographic diversity on the council?
  - What are the areas of community interest that would require geographic representation?
  - What are the positive impacts of our current system?
  - What community values do we want to represent?
- **Future impact of population growth or shifts**
  - Creation of a districting commission
  - Challenges created when boundaries are changed to sitting council representatives
  - Is there a tipping point at which districting becomes either more important or mandatory?
- **Community benefits or detriments that might be expected by implementing any changes**
  - Community benefits with a change
  - Community benefits without a change
  - Community detriments with a change
  - Community detriments without a change
- **Legal requirements which must be met in order to effectuate any change**
  - This is a local legislative decision
- **Expenses associated with any changes**
  - Mapping changes
  - Districting commission expenses
  - Potential additional costs for primary elections
- **Consensus comments**
- **Comments of concern and minority opinions**

## Community benefits/value to changes or detriments that might be expected by implementing any changes

It is the opinion of this committee that the community may benefit from a change in the following ways.

- Residents may become more involved
- May experience greater voter turnout
- Different people may run for office who will be equally effective
- Geographically diverse council with better representation of varying geographic areas
- Smaller campaigns
- More resident may know their representative
- More investment in the welfare of an area
- Zoning may become more even
- Increased minority participation
- May change perception
- Candidates elected less upon association among voters and more on platform positions
- Greater diversity in those running
- An increase of perspectives among the council
- Candidates will be elected less upon association and more upon platform-based campaigns

It is the opinion of this committee that the community may benefit from no change in the following ways.

- A large pool of qualified candidates will continue to run for each seat
- All resident continue to vote for every council member
- All council members are tasked with looking out for the welfare of the city as a whole

It is the opinion of this committee that a change may be detrimental to the community in the following ways.

- Geographic areas may have less representation as the entire council may not consider the welfare of the entire city in favor of their geographic area
- 

It is the opinion of this committee that no change may be detrimental to the community in the following ways.

- Residents in geographic areas may feel that they have no representation within the council when decisions are made regarding their geographic area that directly affects their neighborhoods, property values, and ???
- Voters feeling disenfranchised which can affect future voting

Other possible realities to consider:

The over representation of apartments on the west side of Logan is a possible problem created by a lack of geographic representation within the city council. Furthermore, since voters in apartments tend to vote less regularly than voters who reside in a less-transient dwelling, creating more apartments in one geographic area further ensures a smaller representation of voters from that area.

While allowing anyone to run does open the race to all who want to enter, this reality may limit the representation in council seats of economically and racially diverse citizens who can bring first-hand points of view that can help to unify the city.

As the committee was unable to poll residents of Logan in order to understand their feelings regarding representation in their area, the Council itself may want to investigate this.

## Concerns about creating voter districts for the Logan City council seats

- Logan's population is around 50,000. In the 2019 election there were around 22,500 registered voters and the voter turnout was 5,380 (~24%). With a city of this size and with this level of voter turnout, if you further divide that vote into five districts there is the potential to have someone elected to city council with a relatively small number of votes. If a candidate is interested in serving on the city council, they should have to gain the support of more than a few hundred voters in the city.
- An example to look at would be the current makeup of the Logan City school board, which is divided into 5 districts. This system has not created widespread voter turnout or an abundance of candidates. Four of the five current board members ran unopposed in their last election. Some council members have had extended runs of unopposed incumbency.
- Some voters would want to have the ability to vote for all city council members and let their voices be heard instead of being limited to voting only for the member of their district. Also, if a candidate or a group of citizens were concerned about the performance and/or agenda of a certain council member and wanted to run against them in an effort to challenge the representation they are receiving, they may be unable to run against that candidate because they do not live in the right district to oppose that particular candidate.
- A candidate who does not have the concerns of a particular district in mind, but their own personal/political career, could target a district with very low voter turnout to accomplish their goal of being elected to the city council. Whereas with the current system that is much harder to accomplish because they must gain the support of a larger voting block throughout the city.
- There is no guarantee that creating voter districts will increase voter turnout or motivate more people to run for city council. If we are looking for more participation from a wider variety of citizens throughout the city could we create some initiatives to encourage those people to serve on other committees within the city organization. This would give them experiences that might lead to more interest in city government and future interest in an elected position.
- Changing from the current at large system to a five-district system seems to be an abrupt change. If there is substantial public support for a change in the current voting system, perhaps a hybrid model which includes some aspects of voter districts and some aspects of at-large voting may be a better option to incorporate the pros and cons of the voting systems being discussed

# Historical Report

## Executive Summary

A study of voter history in Logan shows an imbalance in both candidates and elected officials beginning after an at-large voting system was put in place.

Dividing Logan into 6 neighborhoods using elementary school boundaries reveals a disparity. Since the at-large system was implemented in 2009, 2 neighborhoods (Hillcrest and Wilson) have produced double the number of elected officials when compared to the other 4 neighborhoods combined. There hasn't been a mayor who lives outside of Hillcrest or Wilson in the last 20 years.

Also in the last 20 years, 2 of these 4 neighborhoods (Bridger and Adams) have each only had one rep, including the mayor, and in both instances the rep was brought onto the council by appointment, rather than a successful election.

The residents of these 4 neighborhoods have lower household incomes in comparison to the other 2. They have a higher percentage of renter-occupied housing units, and they are more ethnically diverse—more specifically, they have a higher concentration of Latino residents.

Three of these 4 historically underrepresented neighborhoods are on the west side of Logan, using Main St. as a border. In the 6-year period prior to the implementation of the at-large system (2001-2007), there were a total 14 candidates from the west neighborhoods and 19 from the east neighborhoods. After the at-large system was implemented in 2009, the total number of overall candidates from across the city has declined steadily. Geographic diversity has also decreased with 31 from the east neighborhoods compared to only 13 candidates running from the west neighborhoods over the last 10 years. We find voter turnout increases in the precincts in close geographic proximity to a candidate's home residence. The opposite is also true which leads us to our final point.

The at-large system has perpetuated a concentrated voting block. In reviewing voter turnout since the implementation of the at-large system, we discover just 8 of the 39 precincts have determined election outcomes. These 8 precincts represent less than 30% of the total population. Residents in these precincts tend to be wealthier, less ethnically diverse, and live in owner-occupied units. Candidates understand they can be successful if they spend the bulk of their campaign resources in these areas. Proponents of the at-large system argue that each council member is beholden to the entire city, rather than being parochial to a particular neighborhood. However, under the current model, candidates can be elected (and incumbents can be re-elected) by succeeding in these precincts alone; the geographic equivalent of less than 2 districts in a 5-seat council. This trajectory is likely to continue under the current system.

## Demographics

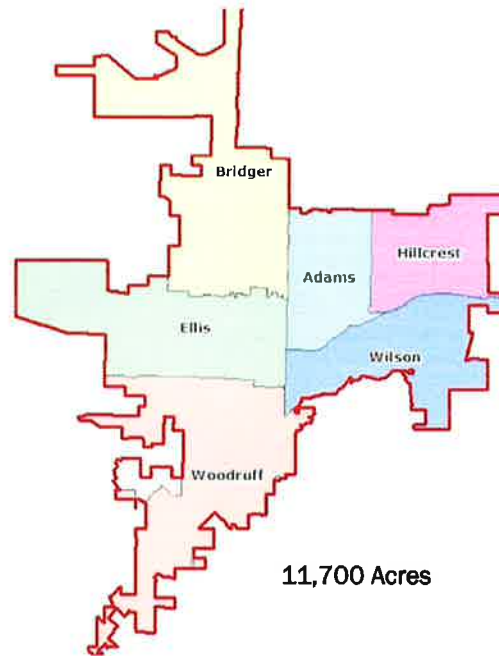
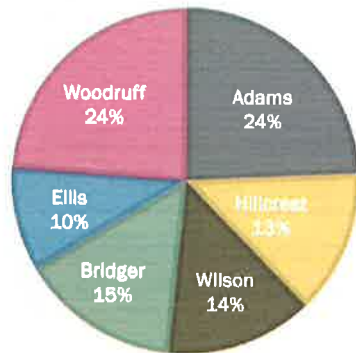
### City Summary

Area median income (AMI) in Logan in 2016 is \$36,256. The median age is 23.9. The geographic population split is 49/51 using Main St as the border. Our hispanic population is >15%.

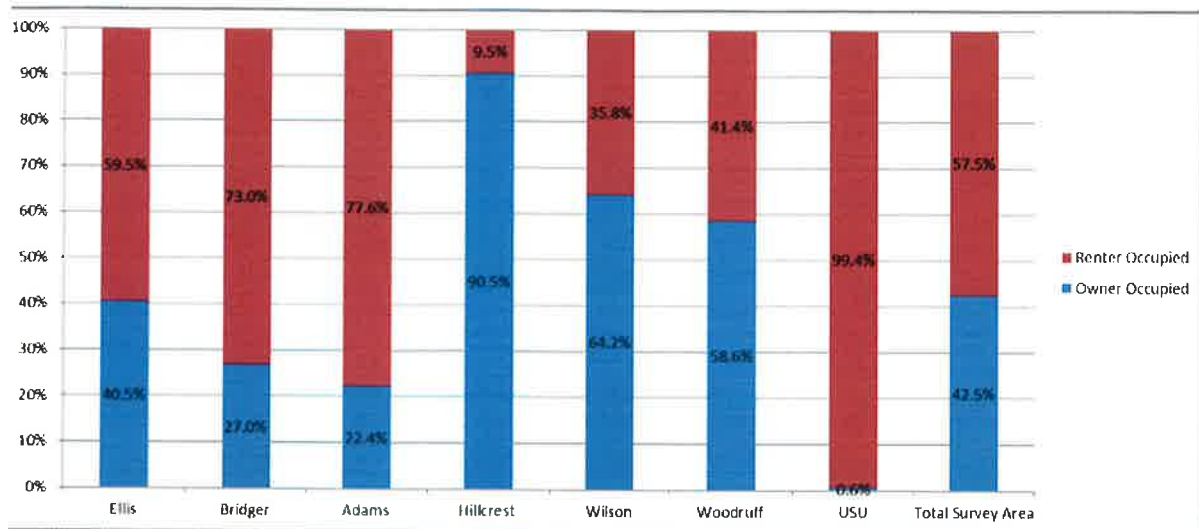
### Population

#### Logan Population

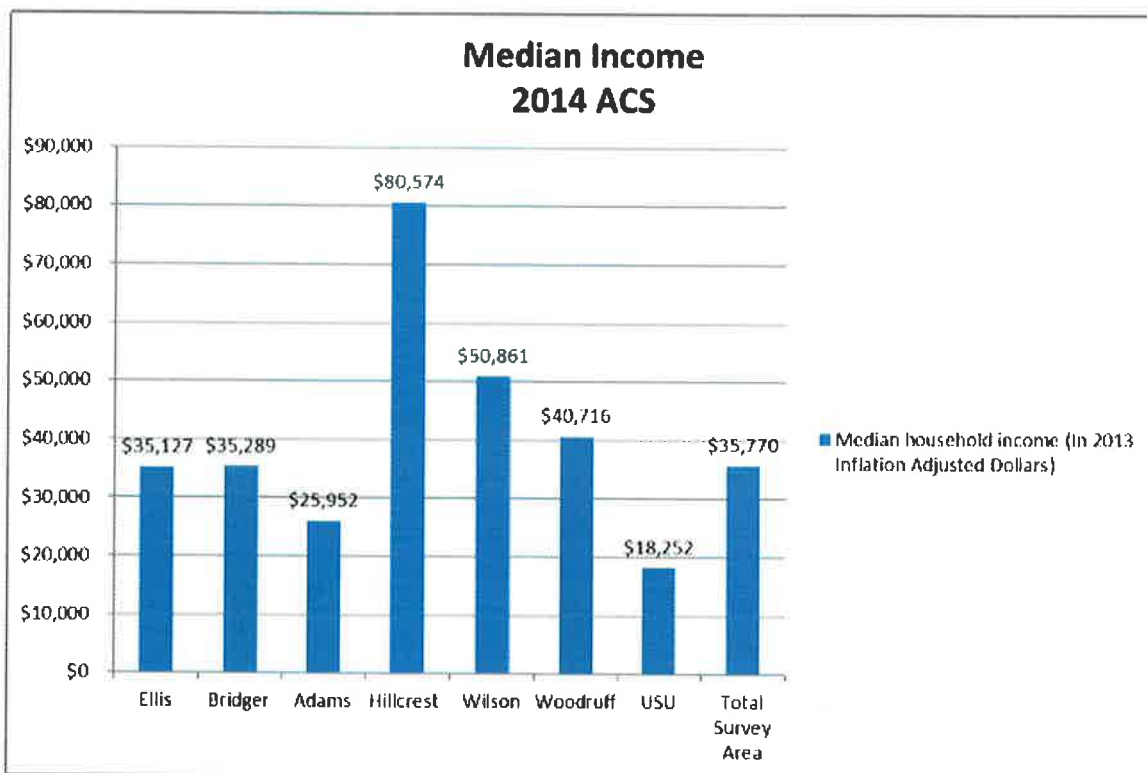
|           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| Ellis     | 4,655  |
| Hillcrest | 6,460  |
| Wilson    | 6,642  |
| Bridger   | 7,160  |
| Woodruff  | 11,454 |
| Adams     | 11,669 |



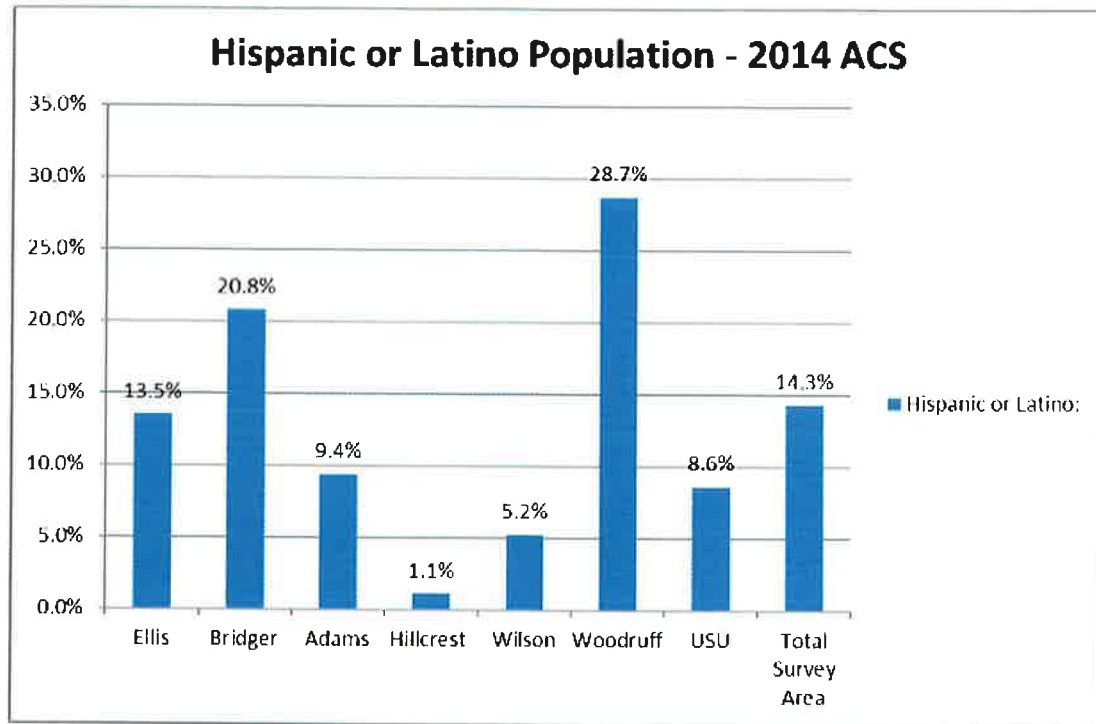
### Housing



## Income



## Ethnicity

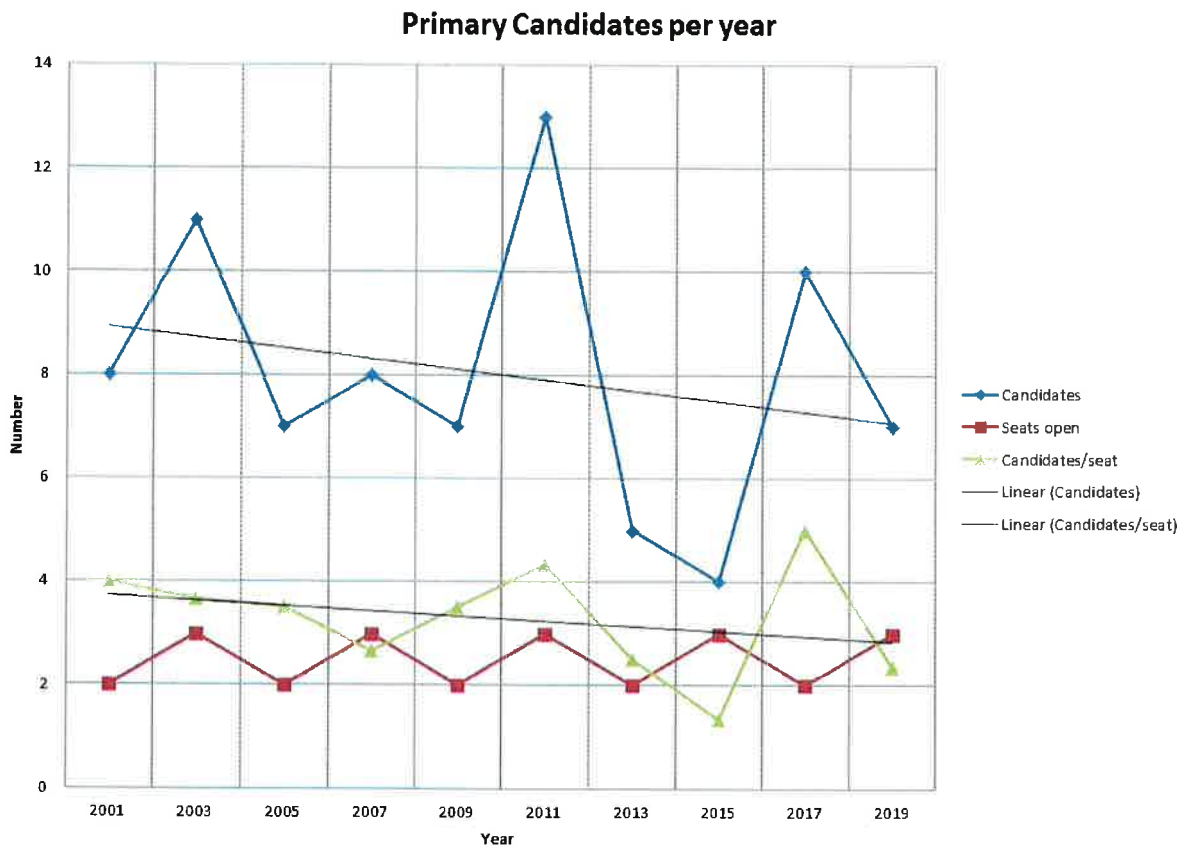


## Election Outcomes

|            | West    |         |       |         |          |         | East  |         |           |         |        |         |
|------------|---------|---------|-------|---------|----------|---------|-------|---------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|
|            | Bridger |         | Ellis |         | Woodruff |         | Adams |         | Hillcrest |         | Wilson |         |
|            | Cand    | Elected | Cand  | Elected | Cand     | Elected | Cand  | Elected | Cand      | Elected | Cand   | Elected |
| 2001       | 0       | 0       | 3     | 1       | 2        | 1       | 1     | 0       | 0         | 0       | 2      | 0       |
| 2003       | 0       | 0       | 3     | 1       | 0        | 0       | 0     | 0       | 3         | 0       | 6      | 2       |
| 2005       | 0       | 0       | 2     | 1       | 3        | 1       | 0     | 0       | 1         | 0       | 1      | 0       |
| 2007       | 0       | 0       | 1     | 0       | 0        | 0       | 0     | 0       | 2         | 2       | 3      | 1       |
| Subtotal 0 | 0       | 0       | 9     | 3       | 5        | 2       | 1     | 0       | 6         | 2       | 12     | 3       |
| 2009       | 1*      | 1*      | 1     | 0       | 1        | 0       | 2     | 0       | 1         | 0       | 1      | 1       |
| 2011       | 1       | 0       | 2     | 0       | 2        | 0       | 1     | 0       | 3         | 1       | 4      | 2       |
| 2013       | 0       | 0       | 1     | 1       | 1        | 0       | 0     | 0       | 0         | 0       | 1      | 1       |
| 2015       | 0       | 0       | 0     | 0       | 0        | 0       | 1*    | 1*      | 1         | 1       | 2      | 1       |

|          |   |   |    |   |    |   |    |   |    |   |    |    |
|----------|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|
| 2017     | 0 | 0 | 1  | 0 | 1  | 1 | 2  | 0 | 2  | 1 | 4  | 0  |
| 2019     | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0 | 1  | 0 | 3  | 1 | 0  | 0 | 3  | 2  |
| Subtotal | 2 | 1 | 5  | 1 | 6  | 1 | 9  | 2 | 7  | 3 | 15 | 7  |
| TOTAL    | 2 | 1 | 14 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 13 | 5 | 27 | 10 |

*\*Previously appointed incumbent*



## Sources

Ethnicity: <https://www.socialexplorer.com/3ec2a2bd74/view>

Household type: <https://www.socialexplorer.com/7e42e42d0d/view>

Income: <https://www.socialexplorer.com/9c4895bf6b/view>

### **Logan City Election History**

July 1, 1975 (population 24,800) Logan residents approved a council-mayor form of municipal government in a special election.

Aug. 26, 1975 An ordinance was approved designating three council offices to be filled for four-year terms and two council offices to be filled for two-year terms and lasting four years thereafter. Any eligible person could file for one of the designated offices. Councilmembers were elected by an at-large system.

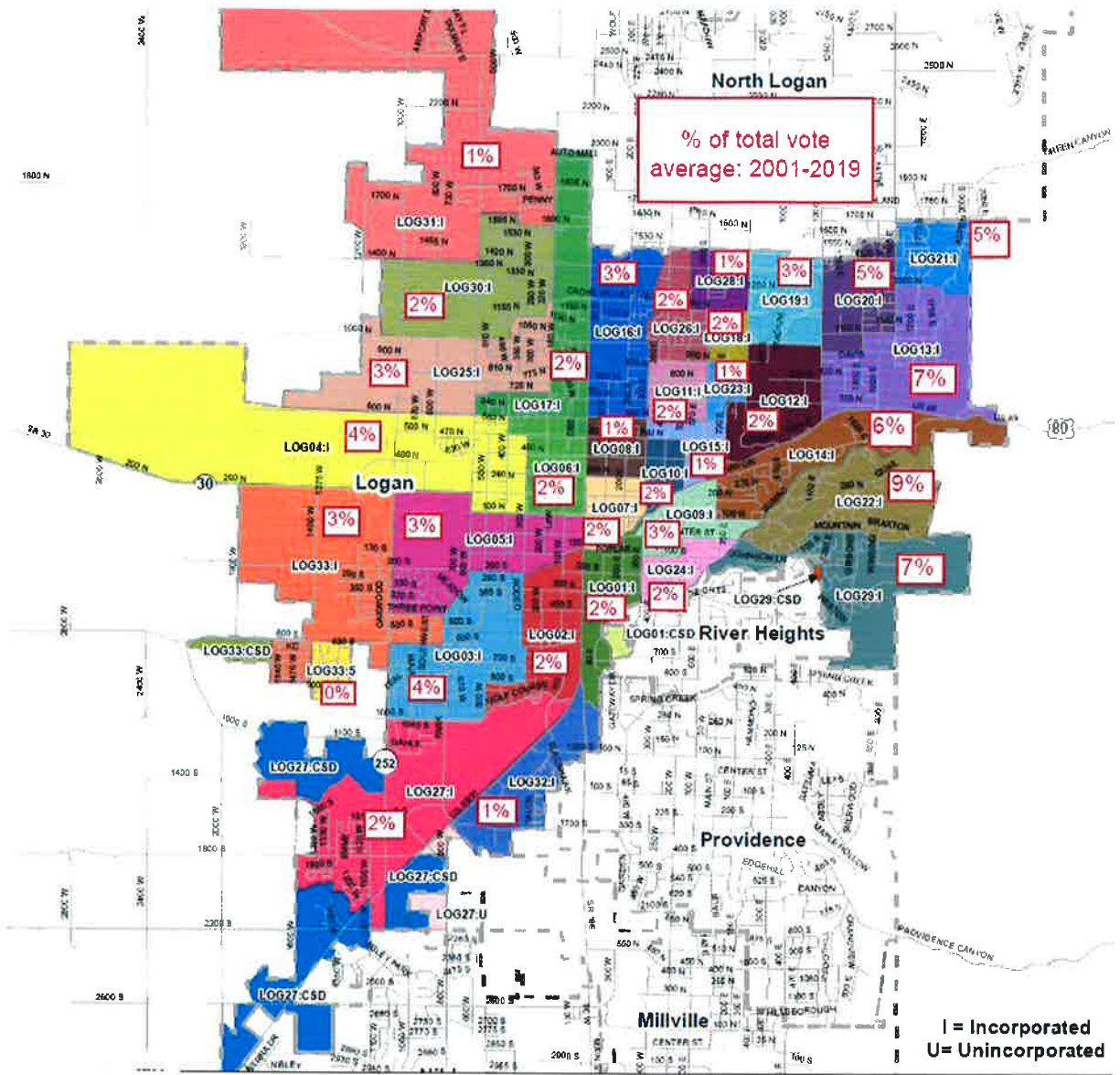
March 19, 1987 (population 31,000) A new ordinance still allowed candidates to run for office in an at-large election but numbered specific seats. This ordinance required candidates to file under a specific seat number. The change meant candidates did not have to run against all incumbents. The at-large system was modified to require numbered seats, but numbered seats didn't translate to geographical area.

Nov. 2008 (population 48,000) Logan continues to use an at-large system, candidates do not run for a specific seat.

Source: Logan City Council

([https://www.hjnews.com/news/change-in-council-election-debated/article\\_494009f5-0c55-5279-a4ce-653ad207152f.html](https://www.hjnews.com/news/change-in-council-election-debated/article_494009f5-0c55-5279-a4ce-653ad207152f.html) Karen Lambert Aug 21, 2008)

# Precinct Voting - who determines the vote outcome in Logan?



### **Questions to Consider**

- Is geographic diversity important for the city? We are not all the same (views, socioeconomic, ...), so it is probably important. Good examples are Cache county and school board elections.
- It is easier to campaign to, and know 10,000 constituents vs 53,000 constituents
- Do the citizens of Logan feel the council members represent them? We have heard from the current council members that they feel they represent everyone.
- Kudos to the East bench of Logan to be engaged in voting
- Suggest that Logan city council conduct a poll to see for themselves if the citizens feel adequately represented. If they do, then no change should be made, if they don't, please consider ways to change this.

### **Outcome of 2008 change**

- Candidates applications for city council trends down
- Winning council members are from east of main

### **Why Consider a Change**

- Geographic diversity (brings different views from different parts of the city). The council members would live in and know the concerns of their areas
- Could encourage more voter participation (sometimes more people become involved, other times they don't, this is not a given)
- Some citizens will feel better represented
- Campaigns could be more smaller, less costly, and the candidates could know their constituents better

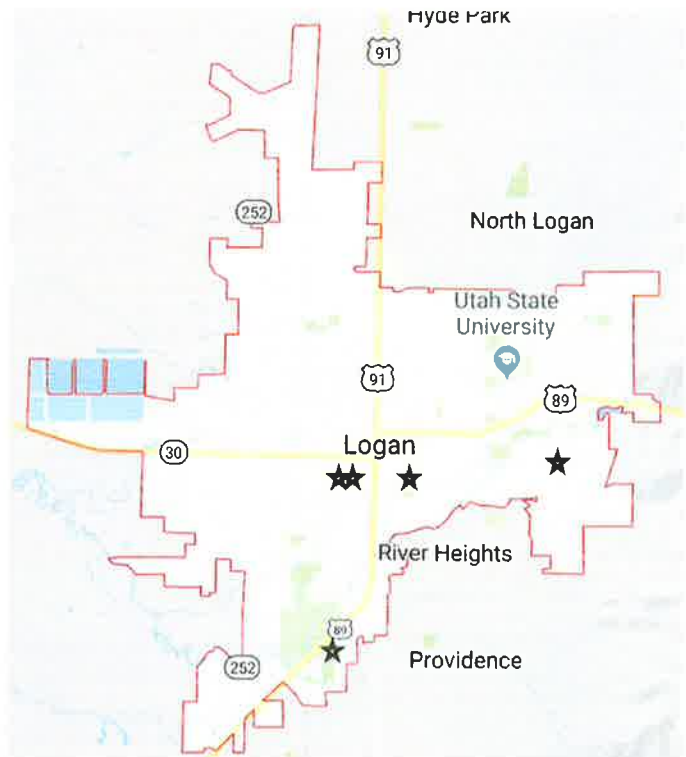
### **Why Stay the Same?**

- Easy
- Gerrymandering worries
- Possibly no problem to solv

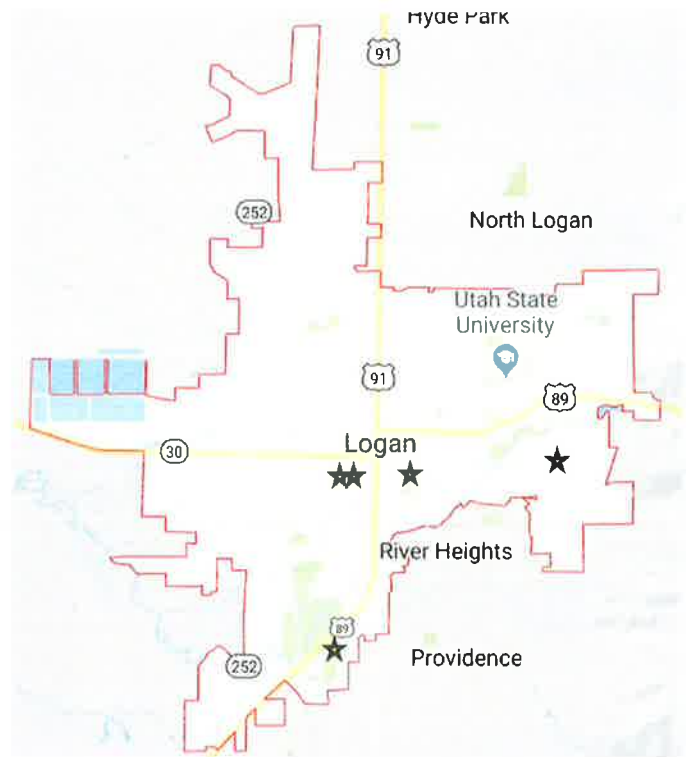
## Council 2002 - 2004



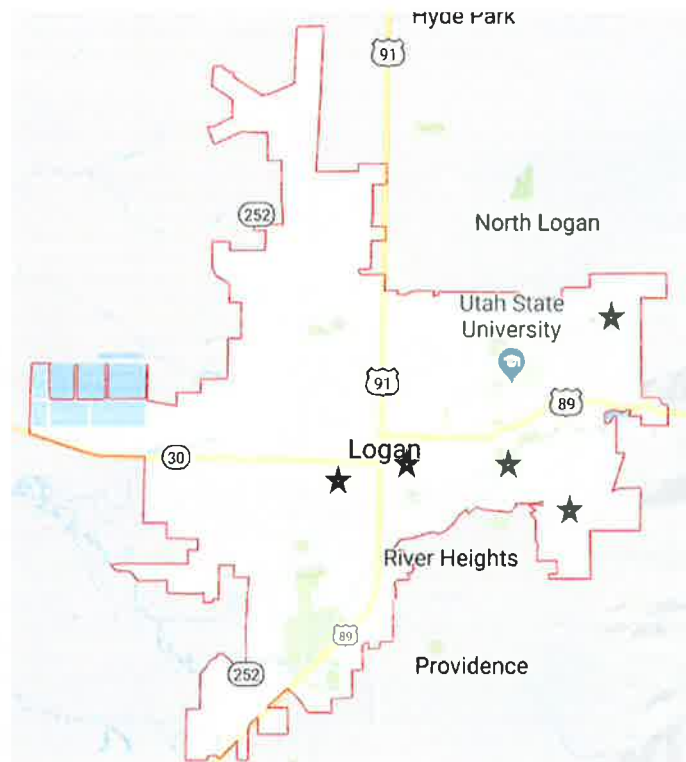
## Council 2004 - 2006



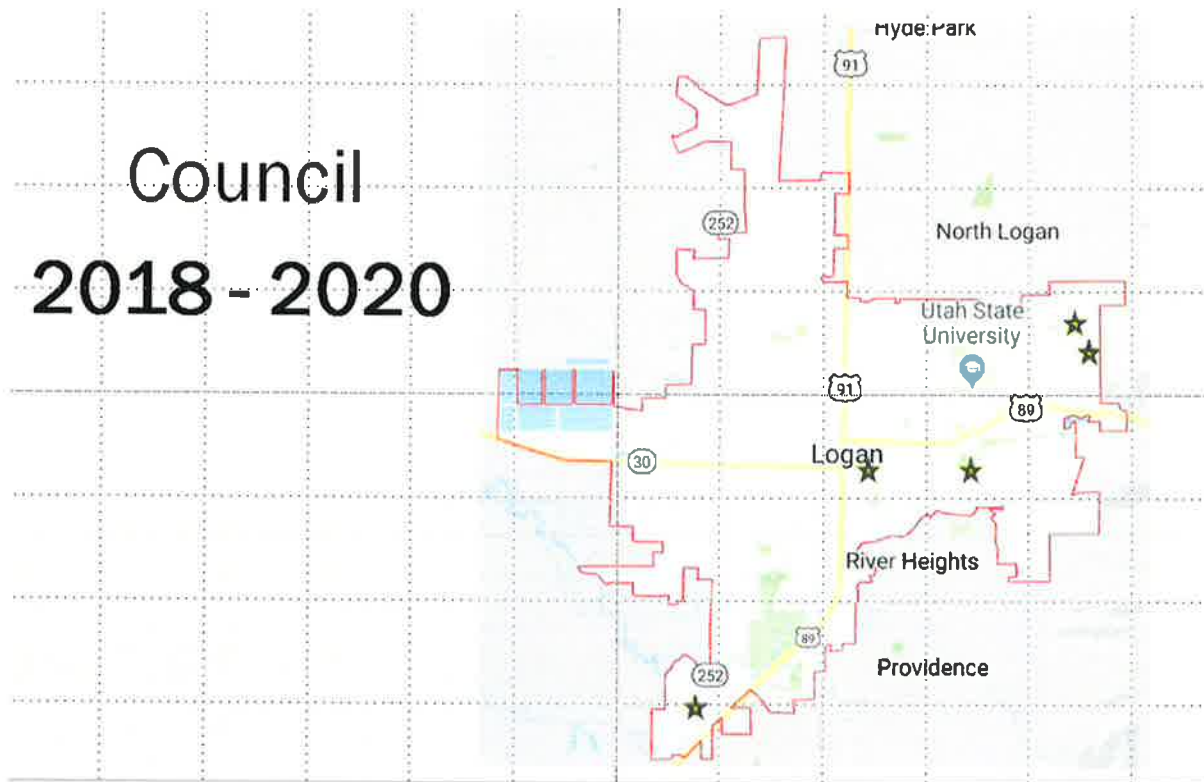
# Council 2006 - 2008



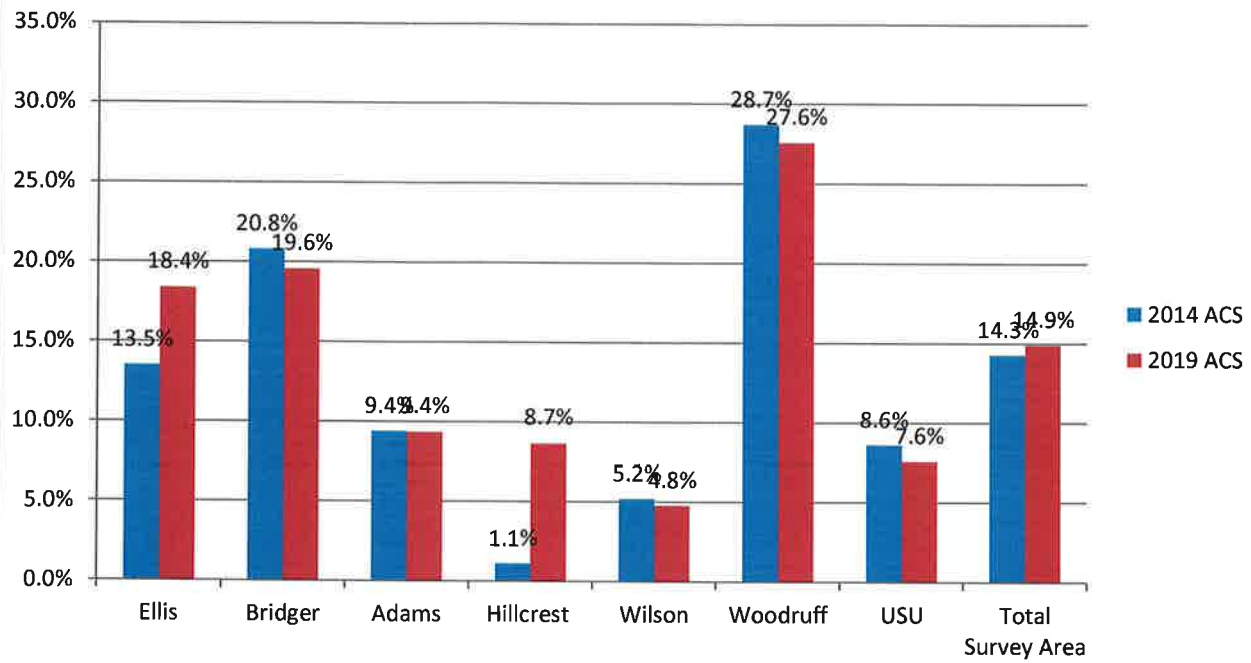
# Council 2016 - 2018



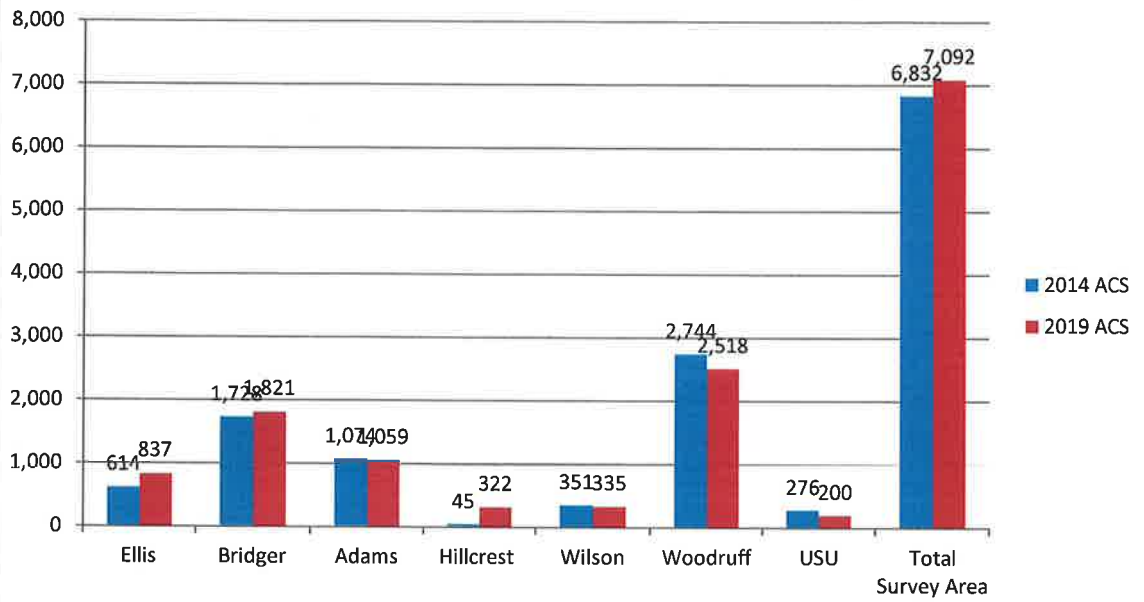
# Council 2018 - 2020



## Hispanic or Latino % of Neighborhood Population



## Hispanic or Latino Neighborhood Total Population



## Logan compared to other Utah Cities

### WHO USES WHICH SYSTEM?

- The at-large system is the most common across all Utah cities
- Among Utah's 20 largest cities, 8 use single member districts, 4 use a mixed system, and 8 use the at large system
- In terms of geographic and population size, it is appropriate for Logan City to consider which system is best for the city.

| City                             | 2020 Pop. | System   |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| <a href="#">Salt Lake City</a>   | 213,367   | District |
| <a href="#">West Valley City</a> | 135,715   | Mixed    |
| <a href="#">Provo</a>            | 118,592   | District |
| <a href="#">West Jordan</a>      | 117,426   | Mixed    |
| <a href="#">Orem</a>             | 99,045    | At Large |
| <a href="#">Sandy</a>            | 96,943    | Mixed    |
| <a href="#">St. George</a>       | 92,828    | At Large |
| <a href="#">Ogden</a>            | 88,061    | Mixed    |
| <a href="#">Layton</a>           | 79,293    | At Large |
| <a href="#">South Jordan</a>     | 79,013    | District |
| <a href="#">Lehi</a>             | 69,995    | At Large |
| <a href="#">Millcreek</a>        | 62,072    | District |
| <a href="#">Taylorsville</a>     | 59,560    | District |
| <a href="#">Herriman</a>         | 53,187    | District |
| <a href="#">Logan</a>            | 52,539    | At Large |
| <a href="#">Murray</a>           | 49,728    | District |
| <a href="#">Draper</a>           | 49,673    | At Large |
| <a href="#">Riverton</a>         | 45,949    | District |
| <a href="#">Bountiful</a>        | 44,304    | At Large |
| <a href="#">Eagle Mountain</a>   | 42,088    | At Large |

# **The Future of Logan Voting**

Submitted by Gail B. Yost, Ph.D.

## **ABSTRACT**

Every eligible adult, every eligible citizen, has the right to vote in the U.S. Yet in the 2016 national elections, 110 million people disregarded this franchise. In the State of Utah, adult citizens registering for either a driver's license or a state I.D. card automatically are registered to vote. Citizens have great opportunities to voice their concerns and preferences.

Many renters, many low-income citizens, many residents living on the west side of Logan's Main Street, make a passive choice to not exercise this most basic Constitutional right of the American Dream. The why of this phenomenon may be answered in numerous ways, often explained within innumerable research studies. Basically, the citizens have accepted that this is Logan, Utah's normal. This pattern does not have to continue.

Logan City is now at a crossroads to determine the future of how the elected city officials are chosen. Does the city keep all council-member seats elected by at-large contests? Will the city consider moving to districted seats to make it easier for voters to identify who will represent them? Will a hybrid of these two options be used to ease into a measured future change? Will the council members consider increasing their own numbers?

## **CURRENT STATE OF LOGAN CITY ELECTIONS**

In the State of Utah, non-partisan municipal elections are held in years ending in odd numbers, while partisan or political elections are held in years ending in even numbers. Theoretically, that difference keeps the two-party system from intervening in municipal policy. The lack of partisanship, however, does not keep campaigns for mayor or city council from higher budgets in each cycle. For a mayoral campaign, campaigning city-wide is a given as the position of mayor oversees the whole of legal limits of the city with a population of over 50,000.

The Logan City Council currently has five members, all elected at large. That translates into two council seats and the mayor's seat open for election in one year, then three council seats open for election in the next cycle two years later. This alternating pattern basically is set to keep half of the officials in office so as to keep seasoned officials seated at the helm, while there is a possibility of having three untried members coming aboard, thus giving stability to running the city.

Logan City officials for years have wanted the city council seats to stay at-large under the assumption that elected members will feel responsible to consider all Logan residents in decision-making. There is implied in this hypothesis that all officials elected at-large will automatically vote considering the whole of Logan while also considering neighborhood issues, even their own neighborhoods at a subordinate level. Is this "noble" idea truly occurring when searching through the voting history? Can council members dismiss or ignore their own life experiences enough to make objective decisions? With abounding changes in owner status of housing, cultures and subcultures springing up mostly west of Main St., can council members personally have enough understanding of the changing city dynamics?

Campaigning for a seat on the Logan City Council has become both economically and physically burdensome to many would-be candidates. To raise money for an ever-widening city population contained within its boundary means having to campaign in new housing developments arising within city limits. Logan City is now planning for decades ahead due to the predictions of the population doubling by year 2050. Many of these newer developments are scattered throughout the southern, western and northern parts of Logan that still have some open space, with the eastern limits set by the mountains. The city is seeing a great deal of horizontal urban sprawl over earlier pristine green space. The issues surrounding this planar sprawl are meant for other professional scrutiny. The issues around campaigning and voting need to be seen through lenses of human impact, as well as inclusiveness, economics, and the cultures of who lives in Logan's neighborhoods.

**HUMAN IMPACT.** Every eligible adult citizen has the right to vote. Yet in the 2016 national election approximately 110 million citizens disregarded this right of citizenship. Adults living in Utah with either a driver's license or a state identification card are automatically registered to vote when they register with the Department of Motor Vehicles. Still, Logan often sees a dearth of people coming to the poles or sending in their mail-in ballots. The mail-in ballots have helped to encourage more residents to vote, yet many citizens choose to remain passive during election cycles. What makes citizens choose this path?

From the charts, maps and statistics which have been gathered by the Voter Districting Committee, it is an obvious fact that many of the citizens on the west side of Logan's Main St. do not engage in the municipal elections. For various reasons, the inference is that these residents are not interested in who is elected to city offices. When looking at the history of elections, most of the candidates for Logan elected offices have lived within a certain few neighborhoods, mostly on the east side of Main. Also looking at the charts, there are mainly eight election precincts, as determined by Cache County for election purposes, which

determine whom of the candidates win the prized seats. Merely *eight* of Logan's thirty-three precincts determine the winners!

With an understanding of this city history, two other inferences can be made. First, as the people elected only come from a few of Logan's areas, the rest of Logan's population rarely have opportunity to interact economically, socially, or even casually with local elected officials. Second, if the voters of only *eight* of the precincts determine by ballot numbers who wins city elections, why should candidates campaign anywhere beside those precincts? Targeting the campaigns to be localized and small in geography reduces campaign expenses while also reducing time and energy making door-to-door glad-handing for votes. This has become self-imposed districting by the candidates themselves while allegedly running within all of Logan.

This means many potential voters outside of this candidate-imposed districting become excluded from campaign strategies, which then turns exclusion into estrangement. Estranged and marginalized citizens feel no allegiance to working with standard societal systems. Often disenfranchisement leads to disengagement at best, contempt at worst. Over time our city has come to accept this as a normal division. It does not have to be, should neither be accepted nor acceptable. All voters should feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in their right to vote. The mail-in voting increases the participation. Still the numbers are often below 50% of the registered population.

**INCLUSIVENESS and ECONOMICS.** Looking at the statistics of how many votes usually come from each of the thirty-three voting precincts plus where the candidates are housed, it becomes apparent to any observer that a few voting precincts have extremely high participation in city elections while a great majority have moderate to low participation. Overlaying maps of home-ownership versus rental housing and the respective housing costs shows a disparate difference in assumed income levels between those who vote routinely and those who participate sporadically, or not at all.

It appears to be another of many of life's comparisons between the *haves* and the *have-nots*. Do the wealthier citizens assume a greater role due to their Socioeconomic Status (SES), or does their SES inform the idea that they can leverage more influence due to greater wealth? Or perhaps the question needs to be asked from the other direction. Does lower SES give citizens a feeling of less responsibility to how local government is run, or do they see themselves as too economically impotent to bother?

The other unknown is if a lower-income household has too many barriers connected to daily living and survival to worry about elections or to have time to vote. Again there has been a

change with mail-in ballots. People do not have to take time out of a work day to stop at the poles to vote within the legal timelines. If the voter cannot afford the stamp to mail the ballot, the ballot can be placed in an outdoor drop box at any time within the early voting weeks. It seems that convenience has made voting more democratic across SES.

**CULTURE.** Socioeconomic status may deal with voting more democratically as balloting becomes easier. Looking across cultures is a different puzzle to disentangle. One of the difficulties is trying to list all the many cultures which have settled in Logan City over the past decades. The 2020 Census will enable those inquiries, but not in a timely manner for this segment of the Voter Districting Report to include. The 2020 Census report can be used to enhance decision-making about the future of voting in Logan City.

Culture includes ethnic heritage and political background, language and dialect, religious beliefs, family dynamics, food preferences and diet, as well as reasons for emigrating, especially to this part of the United States. Often older generations of immigrants ensure their progeny learn English, as many of the next generation have been born in the U.S. The older generation members receiving citizenship doesn't guarantee their participation in using the vote to voice preferences; their understanding of English may be truncated only to address survival needs, thus limiting understanding of political nuances and ramifications. Census workers often do their canvassing with immigrant families by talking with a younger person of the family to get complete history of family names, with gender and age included.

If those with limited English won't speak officially to represent the household, can they be expected to understand enough English to comfortably cast a ballot? Thankfully, citizens hampered by any language barriers (in speaking, listening, writing and/or reading) are allowed to bring a legally approved interpreter to the polls. The only barrier left, now, is if there's enough desire to vote.

**FUTURE GENERATIONS.** When there is a perception of having barriers or being disenfranchised throughout adulthood, what will change that belief enough to lure disengaged citizens to step into voting? Sometimes it could be a specific salient issue, or somebody well-known is running for office, or a charismatic candidate or leader comes along to persuade those who see themselves as outsiders to join in a movement. There are many other factors informing the choice to vote or to abstain from this most fundamental aspect of citizenship

Most likely the hardest barrier to solve is an attitude of “why bother.” After seeing the history of how so many eligible Logan voters choose to never go to polls or use a mail-in ballot, even how much of the country’s population choose to abstain at each voting cycle, the “why bother” attitude appears nationally prevalent. There are other countries which make voting legally mandatory, with results of 80% or higher turnout. American rebellious behavior probably would not tolerate such a mandate, the paradox being that a mandate to behave the American way would be Un-American.

There is also a minority of citizens who don’t trust that the Secret Ballot is truly kept secret. There have been complaints that the machines keep track of who is using the machines with the numbers of the vote. The complainants only have to learn how the machines work independently from the ballot numbers to know that ballots are near impossible to track once the stubs with the ballot numbers are torn off. This last action is done before ballots can be placed into the ballot box.

Hand in hand with the “why bother” attitude of adults, is the “it must not be too important” attitude of the younger generation watching those adults. Just like intergenerational poverty or intergenerational negative attitudes toward authority figures, there is an intergenerational attitude connected to a responsibility to vote. There are parents emphasizing and modeling to their children the intrinsic value of citizenship with its right to vote. Those parents who don’t care to exercise their right to vote also model their value for voting, all without saying a word. Children repeat what they see at home, positive and negative.

The questions here are: What can be done to break the negative chain of parent to child attitude regarding voting in local or small elections? Is it possible to entice current eligible voters to begin an annual or biennial voting routine? How does the community motivate the next generation to participate in elections when they don’t appreciate any reasons to vote? In order to appeal to humans to be involved in the community value, there must be some issue or reward that is meaningful to the individuals or the small group. Enfranchising people into social values has to offer rewards in exchange for participation, rewards meaningful to non-voters. It is up to the Logan City officials to search for rewards of value to increase voter involvement.

**UTAH’S CURRENT LAW.** Currently within metropolitan area of Salt Lake City, designated as a Class 1 city, many cities smaller than Logan City’s 50,000+ population but larger than 10,000 residents, must have voter districts in place for selecting city council members. Class 2 and 3 cities, of which Logan is one, however large they may otherwise be, do not fall under this law. This law appears to prioritize regulating small cities near the Salt

Lake City area to cement use of districts regardless of how that city may otherwise decide to elect their city officials.

Why require only cities with populations of over 10,000, within a Class 1 city jurisdiction, to have elections by voter districts? Why would the Utah State legislators not require across the state to enforce districting in all cities over 10,000 population? Theoretically, these cities are more urban than cities in other classifications. How are those smaller cities any better or worse than areas of Utah with larger cities? As the State of Utah population doubles up to the year 2050, won't these other areas with Class 2 and 3 become large enough to be classified as the Salt Lake area is now? So why not prepare now for that assumed future of twice as much population, to at least begin to practice for the difficulty of handling elections for many more voters? Perhaps the only answer is the expectation that most of those extra voters will become too inured in not seeing their votes count if no action is taken to change their area status. Lack of encouraging citizens to vote, it seems, is just one step behind actively discouraging or suppressing the have-nots to use their vote.

**CHOOSING THE FUTURE.** With all these factors to consider, with all the tables to study, the Voter Districting Committee has had the responsibility to bring forth the pertinent data. This work is to allow the 2021 Logan City Council to view the past in order to attempt to see into the future for the benefit of the Logan Voters. There are three basic pathways from which to choose.

**SCENARIO 1.** No major change in the foreseeable future. As long as the active voters continue to participate, why change what works for the current needs of Logan City elected officials? The city council members, being caring, honest people with better than average education, will be able to anticipate the needs of taxpayers with respect to diverse cultural and economic needs. They have all they need to make appropriate decisions.

**SCENARIO 2.** Complete change immediately to five voter districts. For the current census requirements, Logan City is already seen as having eight districts. Having five districts will enable the city to have better control over how the census data is used, ensuring relative equality between districts in terms of size of population. The districts may even see a better equality of diversity within them as they are divided by population, not by neighborhood.

**SCENARIO 3.** A hybrid of the first two choices, graduating over time to eventually fully separate the council into voting districts. Also, every decade after the census numbers are published, the council will oversee if other changes are needed, such as adding to the number of council seats or adding any other elected positions, for example city attorney, police chief, or financial executive. (These latter examples may never need to be elected.)

However, with a predicted doubling of population within the next thirty years, city future needs may not be currently foreseeable. To educate the city's officials about the current reality of the residential culture, checking on the city's changing demographics every decade is neither too often nor too infrequent.

## CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS.

Any city, no matter how ideally it meets the needs of its residents, can always find ways to improve service and responsiveness. Logan City is not paradise, yet it is a good place to lay down roots, to raise a family, to get a quality education. In order for Logan to stay on this path of a truly good city, as the city grows, its understanding of how groups of people generally behave and why they do must be part of the equation.

With the prospect of an ever enlarging population, Logan must plan for more housing, more employment opportunities that pay households a living wage, and finding ways to draw more citizens into the mainstream of voting. This is every adult citizen's basic part of being an American. To ignore those citizens who do not participate in voting is to existentially make a passive choice to disenfranchise them from the process. Whatever type of employment, housing, SES, culture, citizens must be actively encouraged to vote. All tax payers have the right for redress whether citizen or not. All citizens have the right to voice their preferences for their representatives, whether or not elected officials want them to vote.

The residents, tax payers and citizens all make up the fabric of Logan City. They are the city. Logan's employees and elected officials have made themselves public servants by virtue of their choices of working for Logan. These public servants need to find more methods of serving all Logan's population.

In the professional opinion of the author of this short discourse, Logan City needs to divide the seats of the city council into voting districts. This could occur using Scenario 2 or Scenario 3. Substantially, the active voters and the council candidates already have one or two small districts, certainly inadequate for determining how the city should be run to represent all who live in Logan. Logan City needs to step into the reality of giving more citizens an avenue to run for municipal office while giving voters increased opportunities to know their candidates. No system is perfect, but the more people who participate, the more representative the system truly becomes.