

NUMBER OF COUNCIL MEMBERS? 5 VS. 7

**SHOULD THE NUMBER ON COUNCIL
BE PUT TO A VOTE OF THE PEOPLE?**

The purpose of this Agenda Report is to bring the issue up for discussion and input. The issue at hand is NOT to change the number, but to decide whether or not to bring the issue to the vote in November.

- Pacific Grove's Charter sets the number on Council at 7. To change this requires a vote of the people
- Almost every municipality in Monterey County has a council + mayor of 5
- Pacific Grove is by far the smallest city in California with 7 on Council
- Decision research shows that optimal decision-making group size is; 4.6, 5-6, 5-7

- Any change should support good government practices:
 - Transparency
 - Communication and discussion
 - Fact-based decisions
 - Thorough understanding of issues
 - And more.....

In one hour:

60 minutes = 20 3-minute speaking opportunities.

7 members can each have 3 3-minute turns

5 members can each have 4 3-minute turns

5 members can have an increased opportunity for interactive communication, supporting better decisions

Or, the discussion can be completed in 45 minutes

Communication

- Members of the public can reach 5 members individually more readily than 7
- Group emails or public comments would be as effective
- 5 members can be informed 28% faster than 7; saving public, staff time.

Diversity of Opinion

- Depends on the composition of Council
- Look at votes as a proxy for differences of opinion
 - Majority of 5 = 3, Majority of 7 = 4
 - How many votes are now 4/3? Rare
- Fewer “voices” vs more interactive discussion

Quorum

- How many times have > 1 member been absent?

Council coverage of committees, boards

- Every other municipality in Monterey County is represented on the same number of committees/boards as Pacific Grove while sharing the assignments among 5 members
- We seem to have fewer standing subcommittees with 7 than other communities have with 5
 - ex: Finance or HR subcommittees

Question:

Are the potential gains in communication and efficiencies sufficiently promising to bring this issue to the voters in November?

If so, how might this be managed?