

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

WORK SESSION MEETING DATE: January 23, 2018

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Update on Funding for 2020 Census

STAFF RESPONSIBLE: Ellen Sassano, Long Range Planning Administrator
Cindy Houben, Community Development Director

ISSUE STATEMENT Staff is requesting direction from the Board of County Commissioners regarding their position on whether or not to take action to influence the issue of inadequate Federal funding for the upcoming 2020 Census.

BACKGROUND: The City of Aspen Community Development Department Staff has contacted County Staff in an effort to organize support for local/regional/statewide action regarding the issue of inadequate funding for the preparation and execution of the 2020 Census. City Staff is working with Aspen City Council to formulate the City's position on this issue. A fact sheet with information from (linked) news sources, compiled by City Staff, is attached to this memorandum as Attachment A. It is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of the issue or relevant statistics, but rather to provide background for discussion and planning purposes only. Among other things, it provides an overview of data that is dependent upon a robust and accurate census, including:

- “Data (that) is essential to local, state and federal governmental decision making (for)
 - Essential service levels, public health funding and policy, education funding and policy, social service funding and policy, housing funding and policy, immigration policy, tax policy, transportation planning and funding, etc.
- Data (that) is essential to private sector decision making (such as)
 - Data on income, age, race, population size, and migration as the basis for business decision making;
- Data (that) is used for the decennial reapportionment of political district boundaries...”

There are a range of potential actions that could be taken to influence the issue of Federal funding, including but not limited to:

- Development of a joint City/County letter to our congressional delegation to support adequate funding,
- Facilitating outreach and support at a broader level through communication with regional and statewide organizations of which Pitkin County is a member.
- Etc.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: This item relates to all aspects of the Strategic Plan, including the Core Focuses of *A Flourishing Natural & Built Environment*, a *Livable & Supportive Community* and a *Prosperous Economy*.

KEY DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Does the Board wish to take action to respond to the current Federal direction regarding funding of the 2020 Census?
2. If yes, what action should be taken, and what are the Board's specific concerns regarding the potential outcome(s) of inadequate funding; and recommendations moving forward?

BUDGETARY IMPACT:N/A

RECOMMENDED BOCC ACTION:

1. Direct Staff to work with City Staff to prepare a joint letter to our congressional delegation regarding the need to adequately fund the preparation and execution of the 2020 Census; and
2. Determine appropriate outreach to regional and State organizations with whom we are affiliated.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A 2020 Census Organizing Fact Sheet

2020 Census Organizing Fact Sheet

This fact sheet was compiled from news sources (including those linked below) and is meant to provide high-level topical data for discussion and planning purposes only. This fact sheet should not be used for press releases, as a primary source document, or taken as a comprehensive statement of the issue or relevant statistics.

What are the issues?

- Lack of funding for preparation 2018 and 2019, and execution in 2020
- Technological problems may lead to compromised data
- Lack of funding is already leading to cutbacks in field tests, training, and technology
- New Director is inexperienced and does not support the mission of the census
- Census treated as political, not administrative, issue

Why does the Census matter?

- Data is essential to local, state and federal governmental decision making
 - Essential service levels, public health funding and policy, education funding and policy, social service funding and policy, housing funding and policy, immigration policy, tax policy, transportation planning and funding, etc.
- Data is essential to private sector decision making
 - Data on income, age, race, population size, and migration is the basis for business decision making
- Data is used for the decennial reapportionment of political district boundaries

Related Articles:

<http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2017/05/12/Census-Bureau-Crisis-Here-s-Why-It-Matters-You>

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2015/06/us-house-takes-its-whacks-planning-2020-census-and-monthly-survey>

Funding Issue

- Congress typically increases funding for the Census in the three years prior to a census
- The increases cover staffing, training, equipment and other hard and soft costs associated with execution of the census
- Congress hasn't covered the budget requests of the census Bureau in recent years

	2017	2018	2019 (projected)
Request	\$1.63 billion	\$1.8 billion	\$2.0 billion
Budgeted	\$1.47 billion	\$1.5 billion	\$1.5 billion

- The \$3.3 billion cumulative (2011 – 2020) budget shortfall for the 2020 census is driving reductions in the scope and deployment of the census that will undermine its quality and accuracy

Related Articles:

<https://www.rollcall.com/news/policy/2020-census-congress-funding>

Technology Issue

- Budget cuts lead Bureau to develop more web-based approach to 2020 census
- Budget cuts have prevented complete development of web-based technology
- New web-based technology is untested and requires funds and time to assure its effectiveness

Related Articles:

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2017/08/31/the-2020-census-may-be-wildly-inaccurate-and-it-matters-more-than-you-think/>

Politics Issue

- Congress capped the over-all cost of the 2020 census at \$12.5 billion
 - This promoted the Census Bureau to cut advertising and communication, testing, training, technology development, and hiring
- Corrupt or incomplete 2020 census data will interfere with
 - Congressional district reapportionment
 - Federal funds allocation

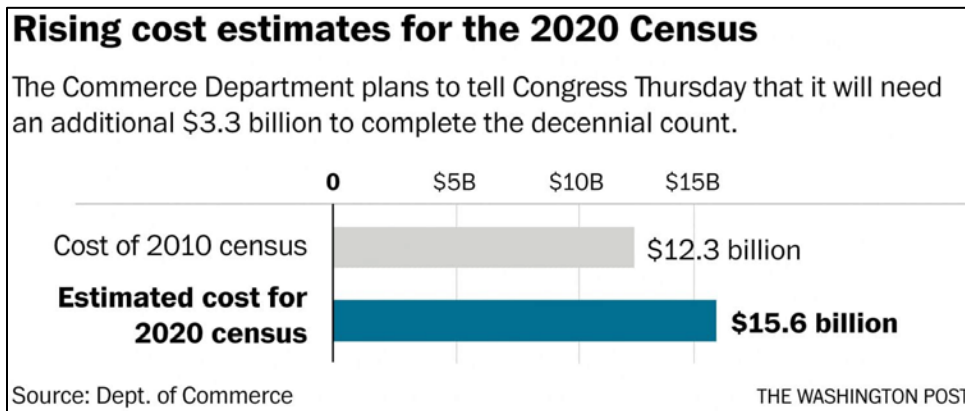
- Federal, state and local policy making
- Academic research
- Private sector planning and expenditures
- Former Bureau director resigned last summer, to be replaced by political, not technocratic, appointee
- “Not being counted means not being heard;” corrupt or incomplete census has large social justice/equity consequences for underrepresented and underserved groups

Related Articles:

<https://www.politico.com/story/2017/11/21/trump-census-pick-causes-alarm-252571>

Salient facts statistics

- Congress capped 2020 funding at the 2010 level with no supporting data or rationale
- Data is used to allocated \$600 billion in annual government funding at all levels of government
- 2018 budget shortfall of \$300 million
- Cumulative (2011 – 2020) budget shortfall of \$3.3 billion



Suggested Talking Points

- Our organization/community/company depends on good census data for policy development and program funding
- Census is a non-partisan exercise and Census Bureau budget allocations should reflect that
- Census provides essential data to all levels of government
- Census provides essential data to the private sector
- A corrupted 2020 census will have impacts on the public and private sectors for 10 years