



COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING

August 17, 2021

The Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting of the City of Mesa met at Eagles Community Center, 828 E. Broadway Road, Mesa, Arizona on August 17, 2021, at 6:07 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo, Chairperson Elaine Miner, Vice Chair Catherine Jiang Greg Marek Jo Martin	None	Jen Duff	Dee Ann Mickelsen Holly Moseley Jeffrey Robbins Jessica Potter

1. Welcome announcements.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the other Redistricting Commission members in attendance.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo explained the City Charter requires that an independent commission be named every 10 years based on census information for the purpose of rebalancing the district boundaries to equitably distribute population. She indicated the purpose of the outreach meetings is to listen to public input and learn how each resident views their community. She invited everyone to spread the word about upcoming meetings to encourage participation.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo pointed out some districts are oddly shaped due to the requirement of keeping each incumbent City Council member in their same district, as well as the desire to keep Communities of Interest (COI) together.

2. Hear a presentation on redistricting principles, communities of interest, and redistricting mapping tools.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo presented a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)** She provided a brief overview of the redistricting process and noted the focus was only nonpartisan City of Mesa Council districts and not the State process. She indicated that the census data was released later than expected and requires further processing to achieve full functionality.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo highlighted a few key factors to keep in mind through the process, such as not removing an incumbent Councilmember from their elected district. She said the Commission has until November 15, 2021, to provide recommendations to Council. She explained Council may accept the recommendation or send it back for revision or comments. She added the Commission can then decide to revise or keep the recommendation as is, and the second recommendation submitted to Council becomes final. She indicated the compressed timeline is necessary to provide City maps in time for the election. (See Pages 8 and 9 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo listed the standard redistricting principles used across the nation and noted the focus would be on COI. She said the Commission is providing public outreach to gain input on mapping communities via public meetings and online. She mentioned that defining a COI is subjective and all ideas are welcome but discouraged using race as the predominant factor in determination. She displayed a list of examples of COI that bring like people together for representation. (See Pages 10 through 14 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo shared three critical questions in defining COI for redistricting and proposed various scenarios to the public asking for input on whether they would be considered a COI. (See Pages 15 through 21 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo described an online tool called DistrictR that will be available soon that allows the public to draw lines to map a COI using actual census data. She said staff would send the link to attendees once it is available. She pointed out placemat maps on the table that attendees could use to mark their own COI as well. (See Pages 22 through 24)

3. Receive public comment, questions and answers with the public.

Citizens present were Kyle and Amy Jones.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo responded to questions with the following facts:

- The initial estimates show an area of huge growth in District 6.
- New boundary lines need to shift 20,000 people; the raw numbers prove the ideal size for each district is approximately 84,000 people.
- Updated maps will be provided online soon that will display more detailed numbers by census block, as well as the residence block of each incumbent councilmember.
- Consideration of COI and councilmember residences will result in odd-shaped boundary lines.
- Staff would email the link to DistrictR to the residents attending the public outreach meetings and they may submit multiple COI maps.

Commission member Jo Martin commented that turnout at the public outreach meetings has been less than expected and asked if Mesa Neighborhood offices could assist with attracting more feedback.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo indicated a social media push would be made to request people to provide feedback with the map drawings.

Economic Development Project Manager Jeff Robbins said census blocks vary in size and may be as little as 300 persons. He added that a block may not be divided so some shapes cannot be cut as acutely as preferred.

In responding to a question from Vice Chair Elaine Miner asking if surveys have been sent to residents of county islands to seek interest in being annexed into the City of Mesa, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo said annexing areas is a costly undertaking due to connecting city utilities and is something the residents would initiate if desired.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo thanked residents for their attendance and participation.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Council Redistricting Commission of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 17th day of August 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

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(Attachments – 1)



**REDISTRICTING
PARTNERS**



City of Mesa
2021 Redistricting
Community Outreach Hearing

m e s a
REDISTRICTING | **2021**



Welcome



Agenda

Things we will cover:

- Redistricting Basics
- Redistricting Commission
- Traditional Redistricting Principles
- Communities of Interest
- Map Tool Demonstration
- Public Testimony on Communities of Interest
- Public Hearing Schedule

What is Redistricting

Definition

Redistricting is the process of adjusting district lines every 10 years after the release of the U.S. Census. The well-known examples are Congressional and State Legislative Districts, but local governments also must do redistricting.

- The City of Mesa also must go through this process, as it did in 2011, to ensure the city council districts are rebalanced after the decennial census.
- Beyond creating districts of equal population, redistricting also serves to empower local communities.

Redistricting Commission

Structure

As required by the City Charter, the City Council appointed a 5-member nonpartisan redistricting commission to conduct community outreach and present maps for the Council's approval. The goals of commission are:

- Conduct community outreach hearings
- Identify communities of interest from public input
- Rebalance city council districts using qualitative and quantitative data
- Present maps to the Council



Redistricting Commission

Structure

Charter Language:

The initial district boundaries and all subsequent redistricting shall be established by a five-person nonpartisan Commission appointed by the City Council.

Amd. Charter Election 5-19-98

Appointment. The Mayor shall appoint all board and commission members with the approval of the Council. Appointees shall be residents of the City. (Amd. Charter Election 3-29-94)

Commissioners

The five-member Commission is appointed by City Council

- Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo (*Chair*)
- Elaine Miner (*Vice Chair*)
- Catherine Jiang
- Greg Marek
- Jo Martin

Board Final Decision/Map Approval

Definition

Charter Language:

The redrawing of district boundaries shall not remove the residence of an incumbent Councilmember from the district he was elected to represent during his term in that office.

The City Council shall approve the Commission's recommendations or if disapproved, send recommendations back to the Commission for reconsideration: the second recommendation from the Commission shall then be deemed final.

Amd. Charter Election 5-19-98



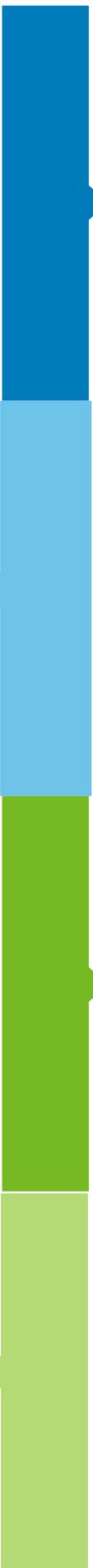
Timeline

April 29, 2021
Redistricting Commission
appointed by City Council

August 2021
Federal Government
delivers U.S. Census Data

August 2021
Redistricting Commission
begins hosting public
hearings

November 15, 2021
Deadline for City
Council to pass final
district plan



Traditional Redistricting Principles

Preventing a Districting from becoming a Gerrymander

There are a number of criteria that have been used nationally and upheld by courts.

- Relatively equal size - people,
- Contiguous – districts should not hop/jump
- Maintain “*communities of interest*”
- Follow city/county/local government lines
- Keep districts compact – appearance/function

Traditional Redistricting Principles

Drawing New City Council Lines for Fair Representation

There are a number of criteria that have been used nationally and upheld by courts.

- Relatively equal size - people
- Contiguous – districts should not hop/jump
- **Maintain “communities of interest”**
- Follow city/county/local government lines
- Keep districts compact – appearance/function

Communities of Interest

Bringing like people together for representation

Communities of interest are the building blocks of districts.

A community of interest includes ethnic and language minorities and other groups.

- Subjective
- Open-ended to be as inclusive as possible

Communities covered by the Voting Rights Act

- Latinos
- Asians
- African Americans
- Native Americans

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While race is a community of interest, it cannot be the *predominant factor* in drawing district boundaries.

Communities of Interest

Bringing like people together for representation

- Historical communities
- Economic interests
- Racial composition
- Ethnic Areas
- Cultural amenities
- Religious facilities
- Immigrant communities
- Languages spoken
- Geographic features
- Neighborhoods
- Economic opportunity zones
- Tourism Areas
- School districts
- Outdoor recreation areas
- Communities defined by natural resource features
- Downtown / Urban
- Rural or Agricultural
- Homeowner or Renters
- Creative arts communities
- Media markets
- *Many, many more*

Communities of Interest

Three Critical Questions in Defining for Redistricting

- Does the community have a shared culture, characteristics or bond?
- Is the community geographic in nature? Is the community able to be mapped?
- How would you describe the community's relationship with the City of Mesa and how it is affected by the policy decisions made by the elected officials?

Is this a Community of Interest?

A group of renters who live downtown testifies to the city's redistricting commission.

Would this be considered a *Community of Interest*?

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A group of renters who live downtown testifies to the city's redistricting commission.

Would this be considered a Community of Interest?

YES! This group of residents can easily to be mapped in a distinct area AND they share a common policy interest, which can be addressed through legislation or public services.

Is this a Community of Interest?

A historically-recognized town dating back to the late 1800s but now has a minimal population is within the lines of a county.

Should the city's redistricting commission prioritize this historical town when drawing their maps?

Is this a Community of Interest?

A historically-recognized town dating back to the late 1800s but now has a minimal population is within the lines of the city.

Should the city's redistricting commission prioritize this historical town when drawing their maps?

YES! Historical communities are recognized as a community of interest and should be considered when drawing maps.



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A statewide group for people who are fans of the Arizona Diamondbacks testifies to the local city redistricting commission.

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A statewide group for people who are fans of the Arizona Diamondbacks testifies to the local city redistricting commission.

Is this a Community of Interest?

NO! It is important that a community of interest is distinct enough to draw on a map. This group overlaps throughout the entire state, and it is unlikely that a governing agency has any say over these issues.



Community of Interest Forms

Submitting Your COI Form

- Input can be provided in public hearings or using our “Community of Interest Worksheet.”



Communities of Interest

Drawing YOUR Communities of Interest

The City of Mesa will be using DistrictR as a public mapping tool to allow residents to draw their own Communities of Interest.



You draw the lines.

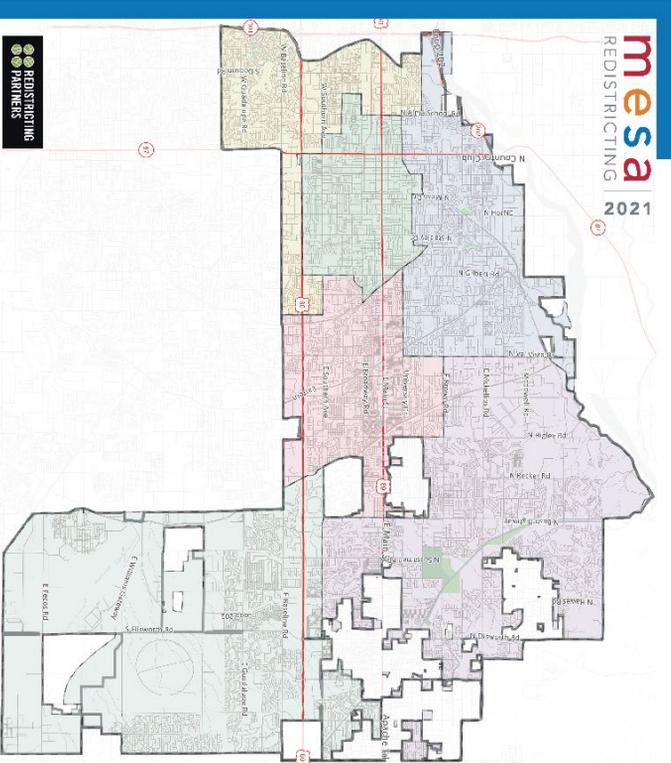
<https://districtr.org/tag/mesaaz>



Communities of Interest

Drawing YOUR Communities of Interest

The City of Mesa has created placemats for the public to use to draw their own community of interest.



The placemat features a map of Mesa, Arizona, with various colored overlays representing different communities of interest. The map is titled "mesa 2021 REDISTRICTING" in the top left corner. The map shows major roads like I-19, SR 101, and SR 103, and various neighborhoods. A legend in the bottom right corner provides instructions for drawing communities of interest.

CITY OF MESA REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
COMMUNITY OF INTEREST MAPPING ACTIVITY

INSTRUCTIONS
Please use this map as a way to draw your community of interest. It is important to know about communities so that the district lines can amplify the voices of residents.
Examples of communities can include neighborhoods or planning zones, areas where many residents speak the same language, or even areas where the residents use the same city facilities.
To start, please include a name for your community, your name and email address, and a description of your community. Then draw your community on the map.

COMMUNITY NAME _____
NAME _____
EMAIL _____
DESCRIPTION _____





City of Mesa Redistricting Advisory Commission

Timeline for Upcoming Outreach Meetings

- August 12th Community Outreach Meeting
6 PM at Webster Recreation Center (202 N. Sycamore)
- August 14th Community Outreach Meeting
10 AM at Fire Station 218 Community Room (845 N. Alma School Rd.)
- August 17th Community Outreach Meeting
6 PM at Eagles Community Center (828 E. Broadway Rd.)
- August 18th Community Outreach Meeting
12 PM at Red Mountain Library (635 N. Power Rd.)
- August 25th Community Outreach Meeting
6 PM at Virtual Zoom Meeting
- August 26th Community Outreach Meeting
6 PM at Cadence Community Room (9760 E. Cadence Pkwy.)
- August 28th Community Outreach Meeting
10 AM at Madison Elementary (849 S. Sunnysvale)



City of Mesa Redistricting Website

<https://www.mesaaz.gov/government/redistricting>



REDISRICTING PARTNERS