



COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING

August 18, 2021

The Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting of the City of Mesa met at Red Mountain Library, 635 N. Power Road, Mesa, Arizona on August 18, 2021, at 12:01 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo, Chairperson Elaine Miner Catherine Jiang Greg Marek Jo Martin	None	David Luna	Lisa Anderson Scott Butler Antonia Mejia Dee Ann Mickelsen Jeff Robbins

1. Welcome announcements.

Chairperson Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo welcomed the public to the meeting and introduced the Commission members and District 5 Councilmember David Luna.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo explained the Mesa City Charter calls for the creation of a non-partisan five-member independent redistricting commission to lead the redistricting process, which occurs every 10 years and is based on the most recent census data to balance the council districts and ensure equitable distribution. She mentioned the Commission members are present to simply gain public input that will be considered when creating the map for Council. She noted that the Mesa City Charter prevents a sitting councilmember from being removed from their district when realigning the boundaries.

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

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo displayed a PowerPoint presentation and highlighted the items that will be covered. **(See Attachment 1)**

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated the redistricting process pertains to adjusting district lines regarding City of Mesa councilmembers and is entirely separate from the State legislative or congressional district boundaries. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated the City Charter is the guide for the process. She outlined the Commission goals as follows: (See Pages 5 through 7 of Attachment 1)

- Conduct community outreach hearings
- Identify Communities of Interest (COI) from public input
- Rebalance City Council districts using qualitative and quantitative data
- Present maps to City Council

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo reported the City Charter also states that once the Commission has submitted the maps for consideration to Council, Council has the option to either adopt or provide feedback to the Commission. She stated if the Council provides suggested changes, the Commission has the choice to make the suggested changes or not, and the second submittal to Council is deemed final. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo shared the aggressive timeline due to the census information being delayed. She added November 15, 2021, is the target date for Council to approve the district map to allow enough time for the next election cycle. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo advised the Commission will be adhering to best practices to avoid gerrymandering and ensure the districts are equal in size in terms of people, are contiguous, that COI are maintained, and are compact. (See Pages 10 and 11 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo pointed out some COI that are covered by the federal Voting Rights Act based on language and ethnicity; however, race cannot be the predominant factor. She presented examples of COI. (See Pages 12 through 14 of Attachment 1)

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

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo encouraged attendees to share copies of the COI worksheet, which describes the redistricting process. She described DistrictR, which is an online tool that will soon be available and will allow citizens to draw maps to submit to the Commission. She added paper maps are available as well. (See Pages 22 and 23 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Myrtle Humphreys asking where further information regarding redistricting within her community can be located, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo advised the City's website has an entire page devoted to redistricting. She said the current map with the district boundaries is the best place to begin since the map was drawn 10 years ago by the previous redistricting commission based on census data and the same process was used then to balance each district by population.

Responding to a question from Kimberly Robinson regarding whether the redistribution is based mainly on population, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo confirmed the lines are based solely on population, taking into account COI when drawing district lines.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo encouraged the attendees to provide their email addresses and staff will forward the link to DistrictR when available. She noted the paper maps are another easy way to provide input on COI. (See Page 24 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo presented the schedule of outreach meetings, which can also be found on the City's webpage. (See Page 25 of Attachment 1)

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

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Luna regarding county islands, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo explained county islands are excluded from the redistricting process as they fall under the jurisdiction of the county. She described the county islands as the white areas on the map. She reminded the attendees one of the criteria is the districts need to be contiguous and county islands can make that difficult. She shared the latest numbers per district. She stated due to the growth in District 6, approximately 20,000 people will have to be redistributed, which will impact the boundaries like a set of dominos.

In response to a question from Frank Mizner regarding the estimated population of Mesa, Economic Development Project Manager Jeffrey Robbins stated from the census data received, Mesa's official population is 504,300.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo elaborated that the population for each district needs to be 84,050 for equal distribution.

Discussion ensued relative to District 6 decreasing which will increase the other districts.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo reminded the attendees that another complicating factor is that the current councilmembers cannot be drawn out of their district when redrawing the district lines.

In response to a question from Verl Farnworth, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo commented a general idea of where the councilmembers live will be provided.

In response to a series of questions posed by Ms. Robinson, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo indicated councilmembers are elected for a term of four years, with a two-term maximum. She commented future growth is not taken into consideration and the lines are drawn based on a snapshot in time from the census numbers and are in effect for 10 years.

Responding to an inquiry from Charles Humphreys, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo clarified that by taking COI into account, skewed lines may have to be drawn to keep them together. She said the reason to consider COI is because there are some interest groups that prefer to stay whole to have a better relationship with their councilmember. She gave the example of having an established neighborhood that was split and the residents would then have multiple councilmembers that represent the neighborhood, which could get confusing.

Mr. Mizner provided examples of COI that have a strong sense of community such as Lehi, an agricultural neighborhood; Dobson Ranch; the Desert Uplands, adding residents would be very upset with splitting into multiple districts and said this is a factor to consider.

In response to a question from Ms. Robinson, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo confirmed that the Commission is seeking input from the public as to how they envision the redistricting. She explained even though all the final detailed numbers are not available yet, the Commission

members want to know where the public sees the COI so if a decision needs to be made regarding a line, the public input will be taken into account.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo elaborated that not everyone will be happy with the final map and that there will need to be some sacrifices made because there are so many lines to move; however, to the greatest degree possible the Commission will respect the COI.

In response to a series of questions from Mr. Farnsworth, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo agreed that the goal is balancing the population and that keeping a COI together does not mean that district would increase in size. She reported there was no numeric order of the COI that were considered in the previous redistricting and is only to inform the process.

Responding to a question posed by Mr. Humphreys, regarding how the Commission will make decisions based on data that is two years old, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo reported this is the best data that is available and the data that is required to be used by the City Charter.

Commission Member Martin commented she has citizens asking whether voting precincts need to be considered when drawing lines.

Sophia Garcia, Redistricting Partners GIS & Outreach Director, indicated voting precincts are not used because they frequently change; and per state law and the City Charter, census geography by census block, block group, or census tract is used. She added census geography must be used based on that equal population criteria.

City Clerk Dee Ann Mickelsen continued by saying Maricopa County will redraw precinct lines after the statewide redistricting data is available.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo summarized the multiple ways for the public to provide input. She encouraged attendees to spread the word about the information presented regarding the redistricting process.

Mr. Robbins offered to provide maps and speak to any neighborhood groups, if requested.

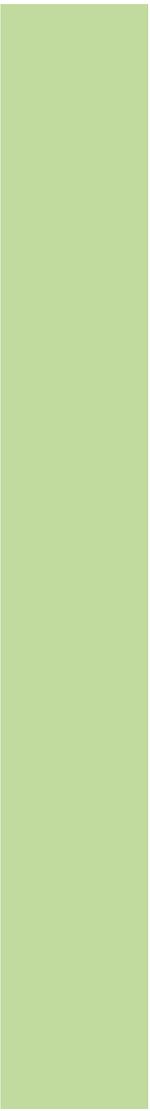
Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo thanked the public for attending.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18th 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



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



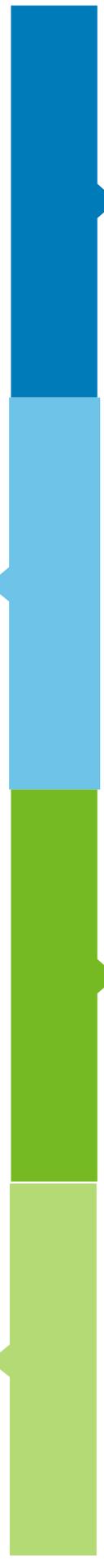
Timeline

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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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.



Is this a Community of Interest?

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.

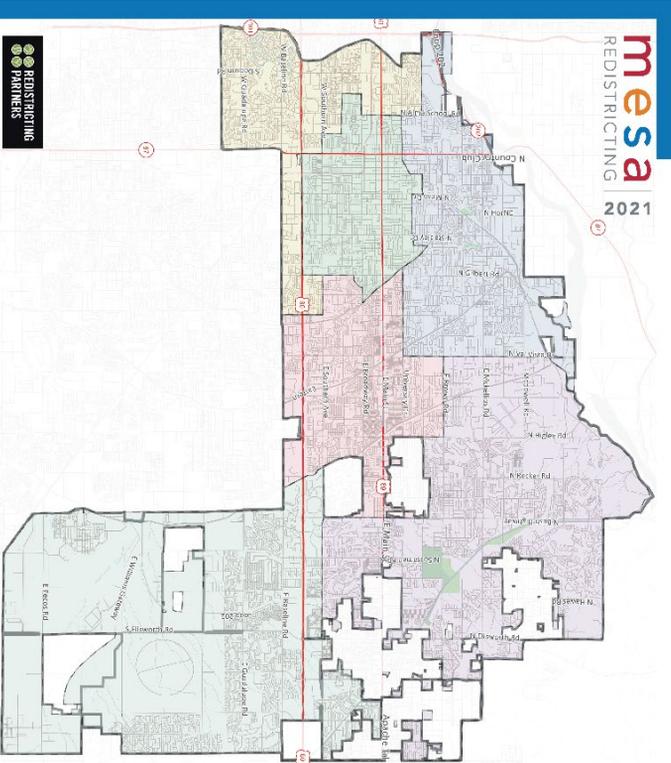
<https://districtr.org/tag/mesaaz>



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 map shows the city of Mesa divided into various colored districts: purple, green, red, blue, and yellow. Major roads like I-19, SR 101, and SR 103 are visible. The map is titled "mesa 2021 REDISTRICTING" in the top right corner.

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