



mesa·az

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION VIRTUAL PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING

August 25, 2021

The Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting of the City of Mesa met via a virtual format on August 25, 2021, at 6:01 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo, Chairperson Catherine Jiang Jo Martin	Elaine Miner Greg Marek	None	Chris Brady Dee Ann Mickelsen Jeff Robbins

1. Welcome Announcements.

Chairperson Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo welcomed the participants to the virtual City of Mesa redistricting public outreach meeting and acknowledged Commission Members Catherine Jiang and Jo Martin who were present.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo announced redistricting is an important process that takes place every 10 years. She remarked the Mesa City Charter requires a Redistricting Commission, composed of five Mesa residents, be created to redraw the City Council boundaries based on census data. She pointed out that redistricting is a nonpartisan process and only applies to City of Mesa Council district boundaries. She noted that current Councilmembers cannot be removed from their districts which creates a challenge when drawing districts.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated this process is to inform residents and provide ways for the community share their input as to how they see their community.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo acknowledged Redistricting Partners, the consultant that will assist with the presentation.

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

Sophia Garcia, Redistricting Partners GIS & Outreach Director, displayed a PowerPoint presentation and reminded the attendees to utilize the Q&A function for questions throughout the presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Ms. Garcia outlined the topics that will be covered as follows: (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

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

Ms. Garcia summarized the definition of redistricting. She noted due to delays caused by the pandemic, the City has only recently received the census data which compresses the timeline to complete the process. She said redistricting serves to ensure the City Council districts are rebalanced into equal population after the census. She reported the process includes public outreach to enlighten the public on what redistricting is and provide tools to receive input from the community. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Garcia outlined the objective of the Redistricting Commission is to conduct community outreach to identify Communities of Interest (COI) and present a rebalanced map to Council. She highlighted language contained in the City Charter that must be followed. She provided the names of the five-member Redistricting Commission. (See Pages 5 through 8 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Garcia presented the timeline for redistricting, adding the Commission is at the end of community outreach with the next step of creating the first draft maps. She pointed out that November 15, 2021, is the date Council would like to approve the final map. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Garcia indicated the redistricting principles used nationally include keeping the districts relatively equal in size based on population; being contiguous; maintaining COI; following the city, county or local government boundaries, and compactness. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Garcia defined COI as the building blocks of districts, adding that the residents are the experts on how they view COI based on their experiences. She stated some COI are covered by the Voting Rights Act; however, race cannot be the predominant factor in drawing district boundaries. She discussed three critical questions that will help when determining COI. She presented examples of COI, asking the attendees to share whether the scenario would be considered a COI. (See Pages 11 through 21 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Garcia commented the public can provide their input utilizing the COI forms, which are accessible in English and Spanish online or in-person; DistrictR, the public online mapping tool where the community can draw their COI; or placemats. She encouraged the attendees to reach out to Economic Development Project Manager Jeffrey Robbins to obtain forms and maps or by visiting the City of Mesa Redistricting website for more information. (See Pages 22 through 26)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated the end goal of the Commission is to balance the number of residents in each of the six districts. She advised the data received puts the population of Mesa at 504,300, which means each district needs approximately 84,050 residents. She mentioned District 6 has had a lot of development; and according to the

numbers, about 20,000 residents will need to be shifted out of District 6, creating a domino effect with the other five districts.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo requested the attendees place their questions in the chat or question-and-answer feature. She asked them to spread the word in their communities regarding the redistricting process.

Ms. Garcia gave a tutorial of the DistrictR online tool, which can be located at DistrictR.org, where community members are able to submit their own COI maps.

Mr. Robbins informed the public they can contact redistricting@mesaaz.gov to request maps or pose questions.

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

Responding to a question in the chat, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo indicated redistricting for the City is purely for City Council boundaries and has nothing to do with state or county elections.

In response to a question posed by Ryan Winkle regarding how population density fits into the process, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo noted in terms of population density even though geographically the district might look larger, the number is based on the total population divided by the districts to hopefully end up with close to 84,000 residents within each district.

Responding to a question from Beverly, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo confirmed that the current councilmembers will remain in their district. She displayed the current district map and pointed out the difficulty with moving the lines, keeping in mind that the councilmembers must stay within their districts.

In response to a question from Retail, Arts, Innovation & Livability (RAIL) Community Development Corporation (CDC) pertaining to how interest concerns are used to create the map, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo informed the public the Commission must utilize the current census data as a snapshot in time and cannot take into consideration projected growth to balance the numbers. She mentioned the characteristics or common ties such as ethnicity, language, or affiliation helps inform the process so the Commission can attempt to keep COI intact to the greatest degree possible.

In response to a question from Mr. Winkle regarding racial groups, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated the groups listed on Slide 12 are COI protected by the VRA, but ethnicity cannot be the sole determining factor.

Kimi Shigetani, Redistricting Partners Chief Administrative Officer, explained the group identified as "other" in this case is probably referring to white.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo asked Ms. Shigetani to research and provide more information to Rail CDC on why other and white are lumped together in the census data.

Responding to a question from Mr. Winkle, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo shared that during the last redistricting process the Commission was required to send information to the

Department of Justice (DOJ) because there was a particular district that needed to retain a certain percentage of Latinos. She remarked the requirement to send maps to the DOJ for approval is no longer required, but Latinos are a group that the Commission will consider when looking at the mapping process.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo thanked the attendees for their participation.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach meeting adjourned at 6:53 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 25th 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

abg/la
(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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- Latinos
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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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Is this a Community of Interest?

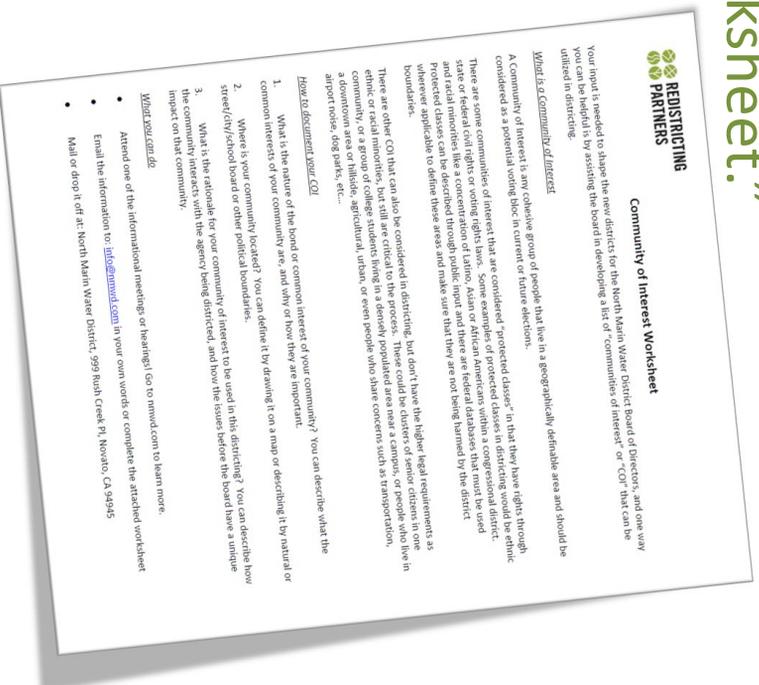
NO! It is important that a community of interest is distinct enough to draw on a map. This group overlaps throughout the entire state, and it is unlikely that a governing agency has any say over these issues.



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.

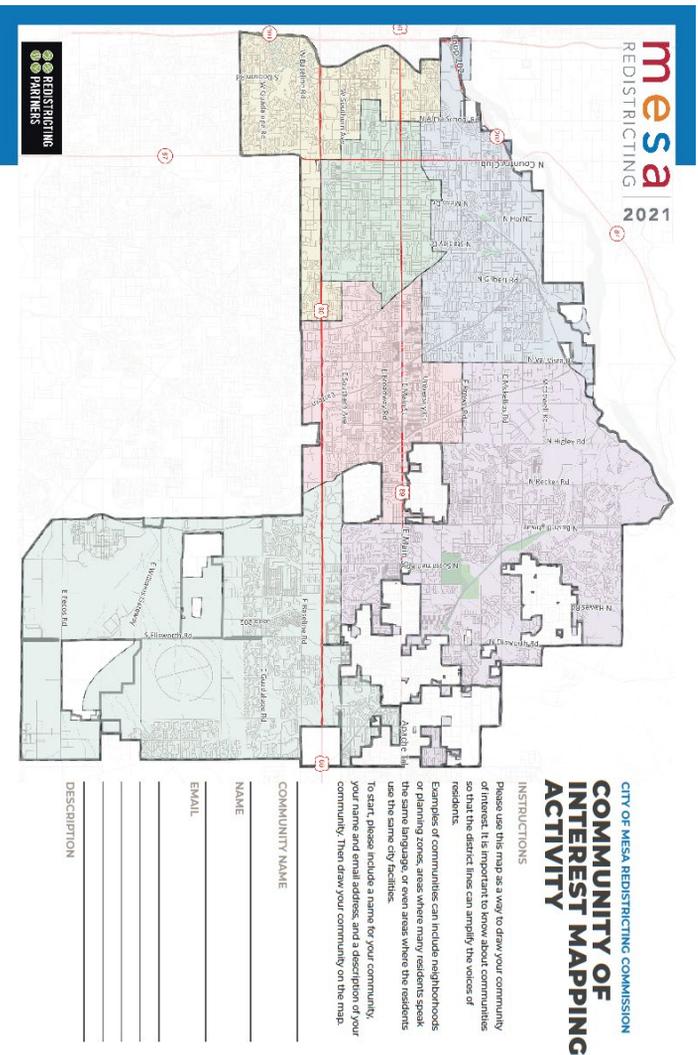
<https://districtr.org/tag/mesaaz>



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. Below the map, there are instructions and a form for drawing a community 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