



COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING

August 26, 2021

The Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting of the City of Mesa met at Cadence Community Center, 9760 E. Cadence Parkway, Mesa, Arizona on August 26, 2021, at 6:03 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	Dee Ann Mickelsen Holly Moseley Jeffrey Robbins Christopher Brady

1. Welcome Announcements.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the other Redistricting Commission members in attendance. She announced the redistricting process only happens every 10 years and is important for providing equitable representation in each district. She identified the goal is to use the current census data to adjust the boundaries on the map and the Commission is most interested in public feedback to help make those decisions. She said the residents know their community best and will assist by defining their Communities of Interest (COI).

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo announced this is a public hearing and requested those in attendance to state their name for the record if they make a comment or ask a question.

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 reiterated the goal of even representation for each district. She noted the focus is Mesa Council representation only and has nothing to do with the state or federal elections. She indicated the City Charter is a governing document that requires a five-member nonpartisan commission be appointed to conduct public outreach. She said the public will define their community and the Commission will use that information to present a recommended map to City Council. (See Pages 1 through 5 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo outlined that the language of the City Charter mandates that no City Council member may be removed from their district, and it does not matter if they are in their final term. She noted that this rule often causes the boundary lines to be drawn in odd shapes to keep incumbents within the boundaries while leveling the population. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo displayed the timeline of the redistricting process. She indicated the pandemic delayed the delivery of data, which has condensed the timeline to a few months, giving them until November 15, 2021, to present the recommended map to City Council. She explained City Council may reject the map but must accept the second and final recommendation from the Redistricting Commission. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo reviewed the traditional redistricting principles and said although they anticipate more growth in District 6, they are required to work with the census data as a snapshot in time. The Redistricting Commission appointed 10 years from now will have another challenge in considering that growth. She said each district should be contiguous and connected without pockets, must remain inside of the Mesa boundary lines, and kept as compact as possible. (See Pages 10 and 11 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo pointed out that COI are subjective and open-ended, defined by each person as to how their community is bonded together (i.e., a development, an area around a church, a school, a community center, etc.). She referred to minority communities covered by the Voting Rights Act and said they may be considered but could not be the predominant factor of what draws them together. (See Pages 12 through 14 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo shared three critical questions in defining COI for redistricting and offered an example of a relationship the City may have with an economic development area that may be affected by City policy. (See Pages 15 through 21 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo emphasized the importance of public input and/or the COI worksheet for the Commission to review. She acknowledged that not everyone will be pleased with the outcome, and they will need to make some tough decisions. She added the Commission would make every effort to honor the requests of the public in their boundary adjustments and will strive to keep identified communities together.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo discussed the tools available for submitting maps and described DistrictR as an online intuitive map that allows users to paint COI on the map. She said the detailed census data should be available soon in a more usable format online and staff will send that link to the attendees once it is released. (See Pages 22 through 24 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo reported the census data shows the City of Mesa population is 504,300 and divided by six districts determines the ideal goal to be 84,000 people in each district, allowing a small percentage of wiggle room between the smallest and the largest district. She described the challenge is the massive growth in District 6 that will require moving 20,000 people out of the district, hence shifting all other districts. She reiterated the rule that the incumbent councilmember's address acts as an anchor and must remain within the boundaries of the district, and she used District 6 to illustrate how that may affect the shape of the boundaries.

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

Citizens present were Kimberly Crowther-Miller, Matthew Law, and Robert Mason.

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

- One reason districts are oddly shaped is due to the address of the councilmembers at the time of the last redistricting.
- The updated map online will identify the general area of each councilmember's home address.
- The updated map will show newly developed areas such as Eastmark and Cadence, whereas the printed copies do not.
- The updated map will have a feature to zoom into areas to see layers of populations.
- County islands are not to be considered during the remapping process.
- Political reasons for keeping an address in a specific district is irrelevant, only resident input is considered.
- The public can weigh in on any and all areas in the City of Mesa, not only their district.
- The more maps and communities of interest presented by the public the better.
- Maps may be submitted in person using the placemats provided or online.
- The more people spread the word to friends, neighbors and their circles, the more people will understand the process.

Responding to an inquiry from Matthew Law about the only police precinct in District 6 and how drawing that into another district may affect the community, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated police districts are considered citywide, not by council district, and Mesa has six council districts and four police districts.

City Manager Christopher Brady explained Police, Fire and Public Works serve the city as a whole and are not defined by Council districts. He said Mesa is getting a new substation on Power Road and Brown Road which will free up more services to the south.

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

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach meeting adjourned at 6:30 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 26th 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)



City of Mesa
2021 Redistricting
Community Outreach Hearing





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.



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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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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.

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.

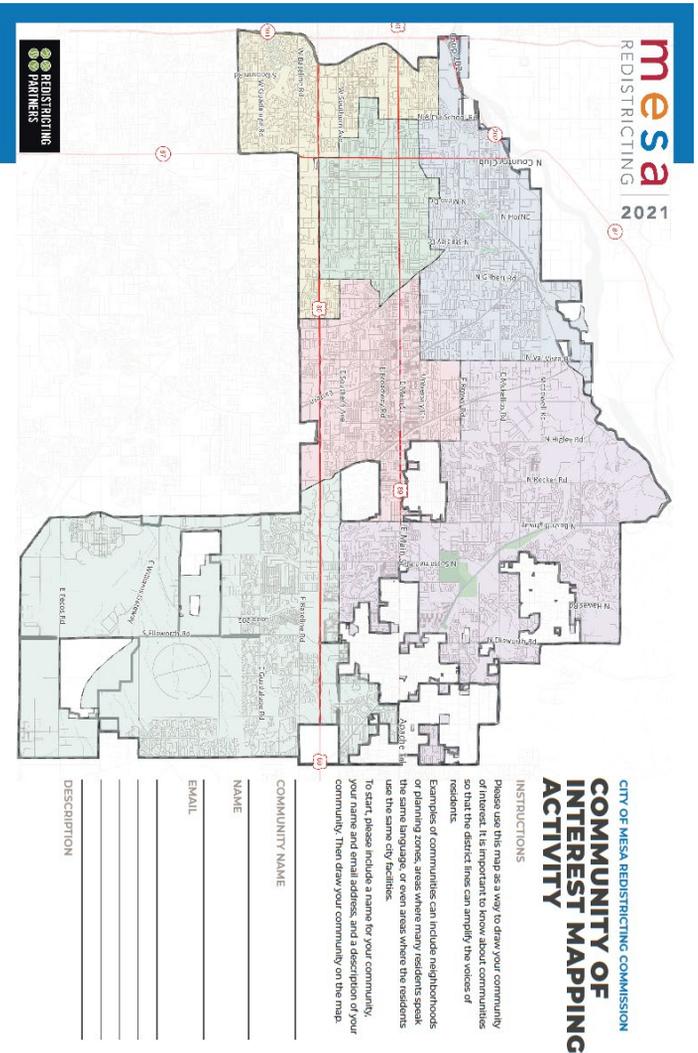
<https://districtr.org/tag/mesaaz>



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