



COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING

August 28, 2021

The Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting of the City of Mesa met at Madison Elementary, 849 S. Sunnyvale, Mesa, Arizona, on August 28, 2021, at 10:10 a.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo, Chairperson Elaine Miner Greg Marek	Catherine Jiang Jo Martin	Mayor Giles Councilmember Spilsbury	Lisa Anderson Dee Ann Mickelsen Jeff Robbins Melissa Hollenbeck

1. Welcome Announcements.

Chairperson Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo welcomed the public to the meeting.

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

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

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated redistricting is a process that takes place every 10 years when new census data is available for the purpose of balancing district boundaries. She mentioned there is a state and federal process for redistricting; however, the City of Mesa (COM) process is strictly for Mesa's Council districts. She said the process is to ensure there is equitable distribution so that all the councilmembers are representing an equal number of citizens. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo explained the City Charter is the governing document for the COM and requires a five-member non-partisan Redistricting Commission be created to conduct the process. She indicated the Commission is tasked with conducting community outreach to gather public input to identify Communities of Interest (COI). (See Page 5 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo advised the Redistricting Commission is appointed by City Council. She commented that according to the City Charter, a current councilmember cannot be removed from their district; and once the initial map is provided to Council, the Council has one chance to provide feedback to the Commission because the second map submitted to Council is deemed final. (See Pages 6 through 8 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo presented the timeline that will be followed, adding that November 15, 2021, is the cutoff to ensure there is adequate time for the next election. She noted due to the pandemic the census data has been delayed, leading to the time crunch. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo stated there are best practices that the Commission will be adhering to which include equal size based on a snapshot in time, contiguous, COI, following COM boundaries, and keeping the districts compact. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo commented that COI is where the public feedback will assist the Commission because once the numbers are available, if a boundary needs to be moved, the COI will help define those boundaries. (See Page 11 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo introduced Councilmember Spilsbury who arrived at the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo described COI. She noted minority groups are COI, are covered by the Voting Rights Act (VRA), but that cannot be the predominant factor in drawing district lines. She presented COI examples. (See Pages 12 through 14 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo highlighted three questions that should be asked when defining COI and presented examples of COI to the attendees asking whether the scenario would be considered a COI. (See Pages 15 through 21 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo identified the COI worksheet that explains COI and details how the public can provide input. She informed the attendees about the online DistrictR tool that allows residents to draw their COI and submit online. (See Pages 22 through 26 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo noted more information regarding the process can be found on the website at <https://www.mesaaz.gov/government/redistricting>. (See Page 26 of Attachment 1)

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo acknowledged Sophia Garcia, Redistricting Partners GIS & Outreach Director, the consultant assisting the Commission through the process.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo reported, based on the census numbers, Mesa's population is 504,300, which is the number the Commission will be working with. She said the goal is to have each district represent approximately 84,000 residents. She pointed out that District 6 had the majority of the growth and currently has over 100,000 residents. She mentioned that approximately 20,000 will have to be distributed to the other five districts, which means all the district boundaries will need to change, keeping in mind the challenge of not removing a current councilmember from their district. She commented on the factors that need to be taken into consideration to develop the final map.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Spilsbury, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo noted the public will know the general area of where the councilmembers reside. She advised the boundaries will be based on the information that is available at this point in time, even though some councilmembers will not be running in the next election.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo introduced Mayor Giles who arrived at the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo spoke about COI and the reasons why it is important to keep them together. She encouraged the attendees to spread the word regarding redistricting so the Commission can obtain as much information as possible from the community to help inform the creation of the district maps to present to Council.

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

Responding to a question from Councilmember Spilsbury regarding how much public feedback has been obtained, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo remarked in-person attendance at the outreach meetings has been sparse but approximately 500 online submittals have been received.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo encouraged attendees to continue to check the website for the DistrictR online tool and to distribute the redistricting packets and maps to help spread the word.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.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 28th 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

la
(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



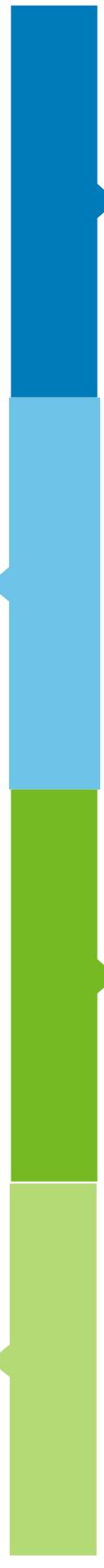
Timeline

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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- Asians
- African Americans
- Native Americans

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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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.

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.

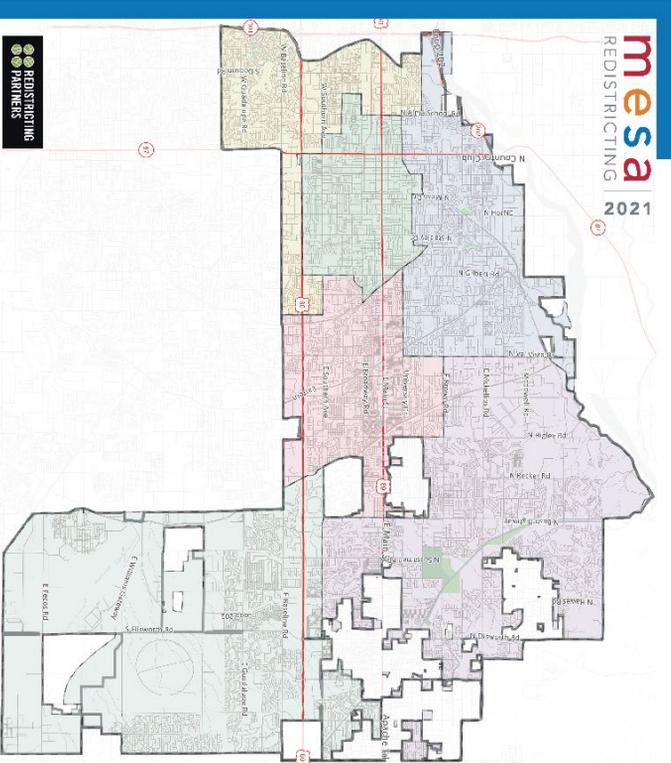
<https://districtr.org/tag/mesaaz>



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