



mesa·az

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING

August 14, 2021

The Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting of the City of Mesa met at Fire Station 218, 845 N. Alma School Road, Mesa, Arizona on August 14, 2021, at 10:05 a.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo, Chairperson Elaine Miner, Vice Chair Catherine Jiang Greg Marek	Jo Martin	Mark Freeman	Katie Brown Dee Ann Mickelsen Jeffrey Robbins

1. Welcome announcements.

Chairperson Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized District 1 Councilmember Freeman. She expressed her appreciation to staff and the consultants for their work throughout the redistricting process. She explained this is a non-partisan process that happens every ten years based on the decennial census. She pointed out the City is working with an accelerated timeline to obtain feedback from the public.

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

Paul Mitchell, Redistricting Partners Owner, presented a PowerPoint presentation. (**See Attachment 1**) He briefly outlined some of the proposed topics to be covered at the outreach meetings.

Mr. Mitchell highlighted the redistricting process and noted the district lines are adjusted every 10 years after the release of the U.S. Decennial Census to ensure the City Council Districts are rebalanced. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Mitchell provided a brief overview of the structure, goals, and charter language of a redistricting commission. (See Pages 5 and 6 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Mitchell explained the City Charter does not allow for redistricting lines to be drawn that will remove an incumbent Councilmember from the district they were elected to serve. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Mitchell reviewed the timeline for the redistricting process. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Mitchell shared the traditional redistricting principles that have been created through a combination of state laws, ordinances, Supreme Court cases, and other avenues to ensure a fair redistricting process. (See Pages 10 and 11 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Mitchell highlighted Communities of Interest (COI), which are the building blocks of districts and is the high-ranking criteria that brings people together for representation. He noted that COI includes ethnic and language minorities and other groups covered by the Voting Rights Act. He said that while minorities are a COI, that cannot be the predominant factor in drawing district boundaries and highlighted examples of COI. (See Pages 12 through 21 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Mitchell invited residents to create district maps using the copies at each table or by using the online mapping tool, which will be analyzed by Redistricting Partners.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo thanked Mr. Mitchell for the presentation.

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

In response to multiple questions from Erika Barry, a Mesa resident, regarding gerrymandering and county islands, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo provided an example and stated in other parts of the country there are cities and towns that have unstable lines, clearly showing intent to disenfranchise particular communities. She then explained once the City of Mesa receives the census data, the goal is to adjust the boundaries, not a complete redrawing of district lines. She explained the blank areas on the map are county islands which are not incorporated into the City of Mesa.

In response to a question from a Mesa resident regarding the role of zip codes in redistricting, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo explained the boundary would not necessarily be drawn around an entire zip code, but that is one of the ways the data presents itself.

In response to additional questions posed by Ms. Barry, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo identified a county island as an area that is not incorporated within the City of Mesa; and while those residents receive water services, the City Council does not control what happens in those communities.

In response to a question from Stephanie Wright, a Mesa resident, Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo explained the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors represents residents in county islands and public safety is provided by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO).

Mr. Robbins continued by stating MCSO and the City have reciprocal agreements with other cities and towns for public safety services. He noted the City also provides solid waste services for a fee.

Chairperson Villanueva-Saucedo encouraged Mesa residents to provide input in the redistricting process.

Mr. Mitchell stated the DistrictR website is currently unavailable until the new census data is entered. He added members of the public will be informed when the website goes live.

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

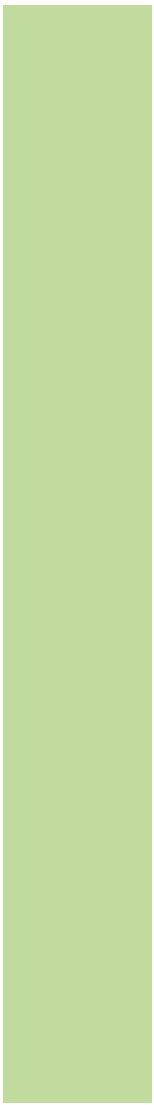
4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission Public Outreach Meeting adjourned at 10:46 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 14th 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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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.



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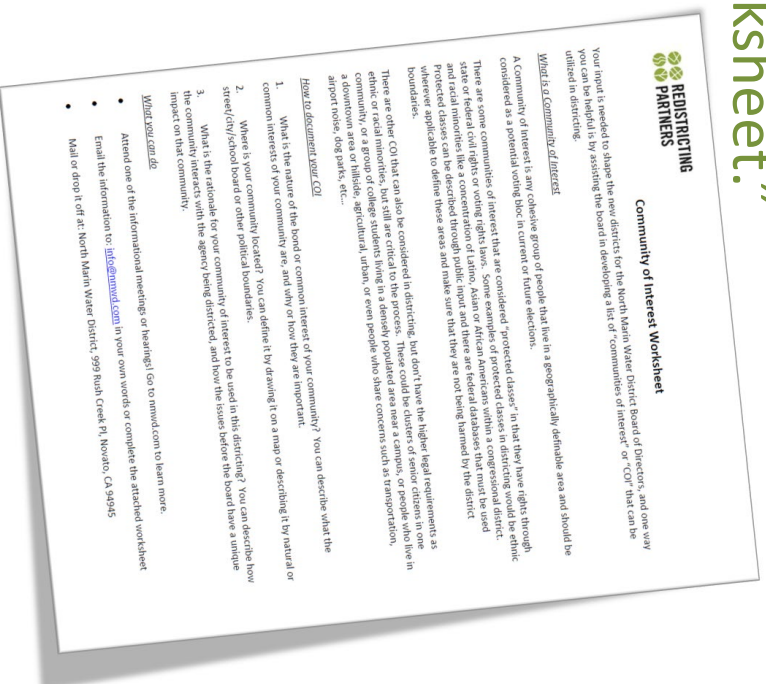
NO! It is important that a community of interest is distinct enough to draw on a map. This group overlaps throughout the entire state, and it is unlikely that a governing agency has any say over these issues.



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.

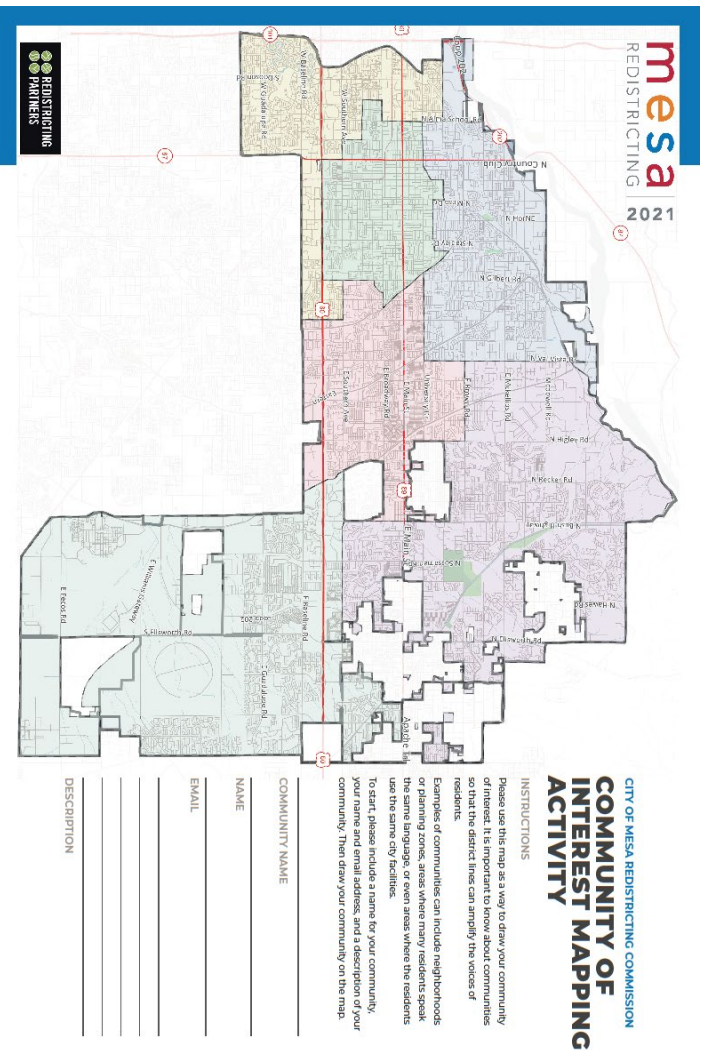
<https://districtr.org/tag/mesaaz>



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