

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE June 18, 2021

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **2021 City Council Redistricting Update**

Following is an update on the City's redistricting process which was initially presented to the City Council on January 6, 2021. The update includes the adjustments to the original timeline due to delays in the delivery of Census data from the federal government, which is discussed below:

## **Census Update**

According to the latest information from the U.S. Census Bureau, PL 94-171 data files, which are used by state and local governments for redistricting purposes, are expected to be delivered by September 30, 2021. As previously communicated to the City Council, the COVID-19 pandemic and prioritizing the delivery of state apportionment data, delayed the Census Bureau's original plan to deliver the redistricting data to cities by April 2021.

In addition to the Bureau's commitment to delivering PL 94-171 data files by September 30, 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau has also announced that it will provide a legacy format summary with redistricting data files to all states by August 16, 2021. Further, the data contained in this file will be sufficient for the City to begin its redistricting efforts.

## **Redistricting Commission**

Chapter IV, Section 5 of the Dallas City Charter requires the appointment of a Redistricting Commission to redraw the City's council districts. Below is the language from the City Charter that governs the redistricting process:

### **SEC. 5. DISTRICTS AND REDISTRICTING.**

(a) The city shall be divided into 14 districts, known as Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.

(b) Redistricting commission.

(1) Not later than 30 days after the city council is briefed on the federal decennial census taken in the prior year, each member of the city council shall appoint one member of the redistricting commission. The mayor shall designate the chair of the redistricting commission, subject to confirmation by a majority of the city council. In making such appointments, the city council and the mayor shall, as nearly as may be practicable, provide fair and balanced representation of all geographical areas of the city in the redistricting process and provide a total membership that reflects the racial and ethnic makeup of the city's population. Members of the redistricting

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commission shall be appointed to serve a term that will end upon completion of the redistricting commission's work.

(2) Persons appointed to the redistricting commission must be registered to vote and meet the qualifications for service on a city commission. A member of the city council is not eligible for appointment to the redistricting commission. A member of the redistricting commission is not eligible to be a candidate for a place on the city council in the next succeeding general election of the city, and may not be appointed or elected to the city council or to any other official board or commission of the city for a period of one year after service on the redistricting commission.

(3) The redistricting commission shall draw the districts in compliance with the following guidelines:

(A) The districts shall be substantially equal in population according to the total population count as presented in the census data, except where deviation is required to comply with federal law or is allowable by law.

(B) In addition to the requirements of federal law, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, and the voting strength of racial, ethnic, and language minorities in the districts shall not be diluted to deprive minority voters of an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice.

(C) The districts shall be geographically compact, to the extent possible, and composed of contiguous territory.

(D) The reconfiguration of districts shall be neutral as to incumbents or potential candidates.

(E) Communities of interest shall be placed in a single district and attempts should be made to avoid splitting neighborhoods, where possible without violating the other requirements.

(F) The redistricting commission may adopt any other requirements of federal or state law.

(4) The redistricting commission shall promptly convene in such sessions as are necessary, including public hearings, to develop, prepare, and recommend a districting plan that proposes the respective boundaries of the various districts comprising the city council under this Charter.

(5) City council members may not have contact, directly or indirectly, with a redistricting commission member, or with redistricting commission staff, with respect to redistricting, except by testimony in an open meeting. Redistricting commission members may not engage in any discussions, directly or indirectly, regarding redistricting or the work of the redistricting commission with city council members, except during an open meeting or by written communication given to the entire redistricting commission. If a redistricting commission member engages in a prohibited discussion or violates the Texas Open Meetings Act, the redistricting commission may, by majority vote, remove the commissioner from the redistricting commission.

(6) Upon completion of its work, the redistricting commission shall file its recommended districting plan with the mayor. The mayor shall present

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the recommended plan to the city council at its next meeting. The city council shall adopt the plan as submitted or shall modify and adopt the plan, in either case within 45 days of receipt by the mayor. Any modification or change to the plan must be made in open session at a city council meeting, with a written explanation of the need for the modification or change and a copy of the proposed map with the modification or change made available to the public 72 hours before a vote, and the proposed plan must be approved by a vote of three-fourths of the members of the city council. If final action is not taken by the city council within 45 days after the plan was presented to the mayor, then the recommended plan of the redistricting commission will become the final districting plan for the city.

(7) The districting plan developed in accordance with this section must be implemented at the next general election of the city council conducted at least 90 days following the date the final districting plan becomes effective for the city. (Amend. of 8-12-89, Prop. Nos. 1 and 4; Amend. of 5-1-93, Prop. No. 1; Amend. of 11-8-05, Prop. No. 7; Amend. of 11-4-14, Prop. No. 6)

As noted in the Charter language above, the Redistricting Commission is required to be appointed not later than 30 days after the City Council is briefed on the Decennial Census. Initially, the City expected the Census data to be delivered in April 2021, and we had planned to present the Census briefing in May 2021. However, because of the delayed Census data, we are now planning to present the briefing on September 14, 2021.

**Please note that the Charter language does not prevent the City Council from appointing the Redistricting Commission prior to receipt of the Census data or the Census briefing.** Therefore, as soon as the Commission is fully appointed, it can begin meeting and developing a proposed work plan and schedule.

Below is the current list of appointees and vacancies for the Redistricting Commission:

District	Redistricting Commission Appointee	Nominated by	Appointment Date
District 1	Robert Stimson	Chad West	01/27/2021
District 2	Roy Carlos Lopez	Adam Medrano	05/19/2021
District 3	VACANT	Casey Thomas	
District 4	Kebran Ware Alexander	Carolyn King Arnold	03/03/2021
District 5	Domingo Alberto Garcia	Jaime Resendez	05/20/2021
District 6	VACANT	Omar Narvaez	
District 7	Diane Ragsdale	Adam Bazaldua	02/24/2021
District 8	Randall Bryant	Tennell Atkins	02/24/2021
District 9	Alexandra Guio	Paula Blackmon	03/03/2021
District 10	VACANT	Adam McGough	
District 11	Matthew R Garcia	Lee Kleinman	06/02/2021
District 12	VACANT	Cara Mendelsohn	
District 13	Barbara Brown Larkin	Jennifer Gates	04/28/2021
District 14	Kristin Scholer	David Blewett	04/28/2021
District 15	VACANT	Eric Johnson	

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Additional information will be sent to you shortly regarding Redistricting Commission appointments.

### **Third Party Redistricting Consultant**

As presented in the January 6, 2021 Redistricting briefing, staff recommended hiring a third-party professional firm to manage the City's 2021 redistricting efforts. This recommendation was based on the following:

- Redistricting expertise and capacity
- Fiscally responsible
- Avoids the City having to hire staff
- Avoids the City having to secure office space, equipment and supplies
- Allows for utilization of latest technology

The proposed scope of work for the redistricting consultant includes:

- Assessment of Census data – determine if districts are out of balance
- Implement criteria for redistricting (based on charter requirements)
- Work with the City's Redistricting Commission and other stakeholders to develop new districting plans
- Schedule public meetings/presentations of proposed redistricting plans
- Assist with City Council adoption of the final plan

At the June 23, 2021 City Council meeting, staff is seeking approval of a two-year service contract for the development of a new districting plan for the City of Dallas with ARCBridge Consulting, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$158,265. ARCBridge has been in business for over 25 years and is a woman-owned business primarily working on demographic analysis and redistricting projects. ARCBridge has provided similar redistricting services to local governments across the nation. They have been successful in gathering public input, communicating with client project managers and redistricting commissions, and have been able to create plans that meet standard redistricting guidelines.

ARCBridge has a fully trained staff of demographers, GIS analysts, redistricting data analysts and IT/web specialists available to provide all the required services in a timely fashion. ARCBridge's project lead also has over 5 years of experience working at the Department of Justice Civil rights divisions supporting the legal staff in evaluating redistricting plans submitted for review.

ARCBridge has its own in-house ArcGIS-based platform for Redistricting – DISTRICTSolv - and will work with the City's Redistricting Commission to get all data required for the project, including processing the Census data as it becomes available.

Please note that the redistricting consultant will assist in all technical aspects of the development of a new districting plan. The consultant will rely on the Redistricting

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Commission's knowledge of Dallas and individual City Council districts/neighborhoods for drawing proposed maps. Additionally, the City Attorney's Office will provide all legal advice and analysis throughout the redistricting process.

### **Proposed New Redistricting Timeline**

Below is the proposed new timeline for redistricting. Please note that this timeline is based on the need to have a new districting plan approved and in place in advance of the May 6, 2023 City Council election. While there is no City Charter limitation on how long the Redistricting Commission can take to complete its work, the districting plan must be approved by the Dallas City Council at least 90 days prior to the May 6, 2023 election. **Ideally, it would be good to have the redistricting process complete and a new districting plan approved and in place by late summer/early fall of 2022.** During 2010 redistricting, the entire process from appointment of the Commission to City Council approval of the districting plan took roughly six months to complete, so the timeline below should allow sufficient time for the redistricting process.

**August 16, 2021** – Delivery of Census Legacy file to states and locals

**September 30, 2021** – Delivery of Census PL 94-171 Census data to states and locals

**September 14, 2021** – Final Census results briefing to the City Council

**October 14, 2021 (or 30 days after Census results briefing)** – Redistricting Commission must be appointed (per City Charter)

**September 2021 thru Completion of Work (ideally late summer/early fall 2022)** – Redistricting Commission works with third party consultant to develop a new districting plan

**Upon Redistricting Commission completion of work and submittal of a new districting plan to the Mayor (per City Charter)** – City Council consideration of new districting plan (the City Council has 45 days after the districting plan is submitted to the Mayor to adopt, or modify and adopt, a new districting plan)

**January/February 2023** – Filing period for May 2023 election

**May 6, 2023** – first City Council election under new districting plan

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Should you have any questions or need additional information, please reach out to me or Brett Wilkinson, Director, Office of Government Affairs at 469/271-0399 or [brett.wilkinson@dallascityhall.com](mailto:brett.wilkinson@dallascityhall.com).



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