



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL** **DATE: JANUARY 4, 2022**  
**FROM: CITY CLERK** **WARDS: ALL**  
**SUBJECT: REVIEW THE REDISTRICTING PLAN AND APPROVE REDISTRICTING CRITERIA AND TIMELINE**

## **ISSUE:**

Riverside City Charter, Section 402 requires a review of Ward boundaries at least every ten years upon completing the federal decennial census data. City Council shall determine the proposed steps, timing, criteria, and public outreach for the City's 2022/2023 redistricting process. The City must adopt its ward boundaries no later than August 2023.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Determine whether the City Council will oversee the redistricting process; defer the process to a Standing Committee; or establish a Resident-led Advisory Redistricting Commission, as set forth in Elections Code sections 23002.
2. Approve the proposed redistricting timeline for the City's Redistricting plan.
3. Provide further direction as the City Council deems appropriate for the establishment of the City's Redistricting Plan.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On October 12 and November 16, 2021, the City Council met and conferred on the procedural requirements for the Redistricting process. During the presentation, the City Council was advised on the City's proposed plan for community engagement, a tentative timeline for establishing the ward boundaries, a comprehensive report on the California Voting Rights Act and the three redistricting commission methods.

Riverside City Charter Section 402 requires City Council, by an ordinance, to divide the city boundaries into seven wards, review the boundaries of those wards every ten years, and adjust, by ordinance, those boundaries to provide for a substantially equal number of residents in each ward. The resulting redistricting ordinance becomes effective thirty days after it is adopted, and the existing ward boundaries are to be used until that redistricting ordinance establishes new ward

boundaries. Under California Election Code Division 21, Chapter 7, Article 2, new wards established generally may not be changed until after the next decennial census in 2031. However, Riverside City Charter states that ward boundary adjustments may occur more frequently as determined necessary upon receipt of official census data. As discussed below, the City must adopt its ward boundaries no later than August 2023.

The substantive requirements of the Fair Maps Act for drawing ward boundaries are outlined in the California Elections Code §21621. To the greatest extent practicable, the City is required to adopt district boundaries using the criteria in the following order of priority:

1. Equal population of residents (+/- 10%) in each ward based on census data.
2. Comply with the United States and California Constitutions, including the Federal and California Voting Rights Acts (FVRA and CVRA).
3. Council wards shall be geographically contiguous.
4. The geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest should be respected and included within a single ward for its effective and fair representation in a manner that minimizes its division.
5. Council wards should be easily identifiable and understandable by residents.
6. Council wards shall be drawn to encourage geographical compactness in a manner that nearby areas of population are not bypassed in favor of more distant populations.
7. Council ward boundaries shall not be established for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against a political party.

Riverside City Charter Section 402 sets forth an additional criterion that Council ward boundary adjustments during a Councilmember's term shall not result in disqualification for membership on the Council during such term.

## **DISCUSSION:**

On November 16, 2021, City Council continued this item to consider selecting the redistricting format of a City Council-led advisory committee or a Resident-led Advisory Commission for developing the new city ward boundaries.

### **Redistricting Format Options:**

#### **Method 1: City Council-Led**

The City Council has complete discretion in leading the redistricting process without any format of a redistricting commission. Proceeding with this method, City Council may direct staff (with the assistance of an expert demographer) to lead community outreach efforts and workshops. City Council conducts all the required public hearings, receives public input, receives draft maps, instructs the demographer to make revisions (if necessary), and approves the final map.

#### **Method 2: Standing/Advisory Committee – City Council Partially Led**

Alternatively, like the City's 2012 redistricting efforts, the City Council may refer the redistricting process to one of its standing committees (such as the Inclusiveness, Community Engagement, and Governmental Processes Committee), which comprise three City Council members.

The Standing Committee functions as a City Council Advisory Committee (CCARC), overseeing community outreach efforts and workshops. The Committee shall host at least one public hearing

before draft maps are drawn, receives public input, receive draft maps, instructs the demographer to make revisions (if necessary), and refer alternative maps to the City Council for consideration.

At which time, City Council would conduct the remaining three public hearings, receive public input, receive the referred maps by CCARC, instructs the demographer to make revisions (if necessary), and approve the final map.

### **Method 3: Advisory Redistricting Commission – Resident Led**

City Council has the option of establishing a resident-led Redistricting Commission. Contrasting the other two methods above, the California Election Code section 23002 sets forth the statutory authority for an Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC). However, the City Council maintains control over the establishment and process for selecting and appointing its members.

The ARC functions like other local boards and commissions, overseeing the community outreach efforts and workshops. The ARC must have at least one public hearing before draft maps are drawn, receives public input, receives draft maps, instructs the demographer to make revisions (if necessary), and refers alternative maps to the City Council for consideration.

Any other meetings and workshops held by the ARC will be in addition to the three public hearings City Council is required to oversee, reminiscent of the CCARC process.

The ARC will recommend one or more district boundary maps to the City Council; however, the Council retains the discretion to approve the final map.

#### **ARC Appointment Process:**

City Council may prescribe how members are appointed to the Commission, the number of members and grant them powers and duties consistent with provisions of state law and the city charter. A person who is an elected official, or family member, staff member, or paid campaign staff of elected officials of the city is not eligible to serve on the Commission.

City Council may impose additional requirements and restrictions on members of the Commission other than those prescribed by law.

City Council Rules of Procedure and Order of Business Resolution 23618 prescribes that City Council shall select one of the following options for appointments to resident ad-hoc committees (commissions):

1. The Mayor's Nominating Screening Committee shall review the applications submitted and identify applicants for an interview with the Mayor and City Council. If desired, the Mayor and City Council may add additional applicants for interviews. The Mayor and City Council shall interview, make appointments, and select a Chair.
2. By formal motion, the City Council can authorize each member of the City Council to select a member from their Ward and the Mayor select two at-large members. The Commission shall elect a Chair from among its members; or
3. By formal motion, any other method of appointment as desired by the City Council.

### Redistricting Timeline

California Election code section 21622(a)(3) states, “*redistricting occurring before 2031 and where a city does not have a regular election occurring after January 1, 2022, and before July 1, 2022, the boundaries of the Council wards shall be adopted by the Council not later than 205 days before the city’s next regular election occurring on or after July 1, 2022.*”

The City's next regular election to elect the odd-numbered wards is in March 2024. Therefore, the City must adopt its ward boundaries no later than August 2023.

Staff recommends City Council approve the tentative timeline set forth below for the City’s Redistricting Plan:

#### January 2022 - May 2022

- City Council adopts the redistricting format (i.e., the establishment of Redistricting Commission)
- Staff prepares and issues the RFP to identify and acquire Demography Services
- Staff prepare a community outreach strategy
- A Redistricting website will go live containing the City’s initial timelines and plans

#### June 2022 – September 2022

- Orientation meetings for the ARC members will be held (Tentative)
- City Council/CCARC/ARC conducts at least one public hearing to review overall redistricting criteria, receive public input, and instruct demographers on draft maps.
- Host a series of workshops throughout the City (at least seven, one in every ward) providing overall redistricting criteria, receive public input, begin instructing the demographer on draft maps, and training for the City’s online interactive tools.

#### October 2022 – December 2022

- City Council/CCARC/ARC host several workshops/public hearings to receive public input, receive draft maps, instruct the demographer to make revisions (if necessary),
- The CCARC/ARC approves the final draft map recommendations to City Council and concludes their work/service (if applicable).

#### January 2023 – March 2023

- During this period, City Council conducts at least three public hearings to receive public input, draw and refine maps, and adopt the final redistricting ordinance (plan):
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing: Receive public input; receive and review the draft maps recommended by the CCARC/ARC and public members; and instruct the demographer on possible revisions.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing: Receive public input; review revised plans; approve a plan or propose further modifications; and
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Public Hearing (if necessary): receive public input, review revised plans, and adopt the final plan/ordinance.

**Redistricting Deadline:** The City must adopt its Redistricting Ordinance 205 days before its next regular municipal election, March 2024. The City’s deadline to adopt the ordinance is August 2023.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The City's Redistricting Plan contributes to the City Council's Envision 2025 Strategic Plan Priority and Goals:

**Community Well-Being** – Ensuring safe and inclusive neighborhoods where everyone can thrive with the following goal:

Goal 2.4 Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust: and,

**High Performing Government** – Providing world-class public service that is efficient, accessible, and responsible to all, with the following goals:

**Goal 5.2** - Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City.

**Goal 5.3** - Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

The proposed Redistricting format, public outreach, and marketing strategy align with the Envision 2025 Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The establishment of a redistricting format and the outreach strategy that includes workshops in every ward to draft new ward boundaries are resident-led participation and public input, creating sound policy, inclusive of community engagement in the decision-making process.
2. **Equity** – Community members will utilize interactive tools. Some may participate in a redistricting commission to ensure that newly established ward boundaries comply with federal and state laws that encourage equity for all stakeholders.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Riverside is a prudent steward of public funds and ensures responsible management of the City's financial resources while providing quality public services to all. The City Clerk's Office is committed to exploring services provided internally instead of consultants and looking for creative ways to reduce the redistricting program's fiscal impact and outreach efforts.
4. **Innovation** –. Riverside's Redistricting Framework includes a marketing strategy that will consist of non-English languages, including American Sign Language. The redistricting website will host interactive tools promoting collaborative public partnerships with redrawing ward boundaries.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Riverside is committed to meeting the present needs without compromising the needs of the future and ensuring the City's capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during fluctuating times alike. Reviewing the ward boundaries every ten years is essential to maintain sustainable and resilient representation for a more sustainable future.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The fiscal impact is not yet determined.

Prepared by: Donesia Gause, City Clerk

Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. City of Riverside Redistricting Framework Presentation