



EL CAJON  
CITY COUNCIL

Renette Recreation Center  
935 Emerald Avenue  
El Cajon, CA 92020

**Special Meeting  
Agenda  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2021 - 6:30 p.m.**

Bill Wells, Mayor  
Gary Kendrick, Mayor Pro Tem  
Michelle Metschel, Councilmember  
Steve Goble, Councilmember  
Phil Ortiz, Councilmember

**CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Bill Wells**

**ROLL CALL: City Clerk Angela Cortez**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

1. Public Hearing to Receive Input from the Community Regarding Redistricting

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council:

1. Receives the report from staff about the redistricting process;
2. Receives an overview about mapping tools;
3. Opens the Public Hearing and receives testimony; and
4. Closes the Public Hearing.

**ADJOURNMENT: The Meeting of the El Cajon City Council held this 8th day of September 2021, is adjourned.**



## City Council Agenda Report

Agenda Item 1.

**DATE:** 09/08/2021  
**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**FROM:** Dave Richards, Assistant to the City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing to Receive Input from the Community Regarding Redistricting

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### RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council:

1. Receives the report from staff about the redistricting process;
2. Receives an overview about mapping tools;
3. Opens the Public Hearing and receives testimony; and
4. Closes the Public Hearing.

### BACKGROUND:

This agenda report provides an overview of the redistricting process, laws and principles, and an update on the City's efforts in the redistricting process. This report also opens the second, of at least four, public hearing to gather public input about communities of interest, which are necessary for the preparation of the updated map identifying the four districts (District Election Map).

### ***Redistricting Overview***

Redistricting is the process of adjusting City Council voting districts so that each district has substantially the same number of voting-aged residents. Cities with voting districts are required to update the District Election Map following the release of the centennial U.S. Census data. Cities that experience little or no change in district populations have the option to maintain existing district boundaries.

El Cajon transitioned from an at-large to a by-district election process for Councilmembers with the passage of Measure S in November 2016. The Mayor remains elected at-large.

Following the passage of Measure S, the City retained the National Demographic Corporation (NDC) to develop the voting district maps and facilitate public hearings. In June 2017, the City Council approved the current District Election Map. It is important to note that the map was developed using the 2010 U.S. Census data with 2017 demographic estimates.

The transition to City Council districts means that the City must evaluate and potentially adjust its voting districts based on the 2020 U.S. Census. The U.S. Census Bureau plans to release the 2020 Census data on or around **September 30, 2021**. To comply with the Voting Rights Act, the City must approve a District Election Map no later than 205 days ahead of the November 8, 2022, General Election, or by **April 17, 2022**.

### ***Redistricting Laws and Principles***

There are numerous federal, state, and local redistricting laws with which cities must comply.

The Federal Voting Rights Act (Federal Act) prohibits “gerrymandering” based on race. “Gerrymandering” is the process of manipulating district boundaries in order to favor one party or class. The Federal Act also allows district maps to be legally challenged by a protected class if the district racially dilutes voters. Federal law also requires districts to have substantially equal populations, which courts have defined as 10 percent or less deviation between the lowest and highest voting populations.

The courts have also upheld several redistricting principles. For instance, election district maps must keep districts compact, contiguous, defined by visible (natural and manmade) boundaries, and include communities of interests—or groups with similarities other than race.

Most recently, the California legislature passed AB 849 known as the “Fair And Inclusive Redistrict for Municipalities And Political Subdivision (FAIR MAPS) Act” in 2019, and AB 1276 in 2020. AB 1276 provided cleanup language and clarification of the FAIR MAPS Act. The FAIR MAPS Act requires cities to take additional steps to increase public engagement in the redistricting process. It increases the number of required public hearings to four; provides for translated website materials and live translation services when requested in advance; mandates a dedicated redistricting webpage; and establishes noticing requirements. The FAIR MAPS Act also requires cities to make an asserted effort to alert media outlets and community groups about the process.

### ***Redistricting Update and Public Hearing***

In February, the City began an extensive search for a consultant who could provide demographic, meeting facilitation, and online mapping services. Of the responsive bids, NDC submitted the lowest bid. On June 23, 2021, the City executed an agreement with NDC to assist the City with the redistricting process.

To gather community input in the redistricting process, and as required by the FAIR MAPS Act, four public hearings were scheduled. These hearings were located in a different City Council District to ensure the City receives a wide variety of community input. The hearings were scheduled on:

- Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 6:30 p.m. at the Hillside Recreation Center;
- Wednesday, September 8, 2021, 6:30 p.m. at the Renette Recreation Center;
- Thursday, November 4, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kennedy Recreation Center; and
- Saturday, January 22, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. at El Cajon Valley High School.

During the first public hearing on July 14, 2021, participants provided feedback about communities of interest. In all, twenty-nine people attended the hearing, seven of whom were El Cajon residents. In general, speakers advocated for more public hearings, the ability to provide testimony by phone and online, streaming meetings, and additional translated materials.

During tonight's hearing, city and NDC staff will provide an overview of the redistricting process and introduce mapping tools. One of the mapping tools, RedistrictR, allows users to draw district boundaries on maps and identify communities of interest. The software also provides estimated population demographic—based on population projections from the American Community Survey—for each of the drawn districts.

The City Council will have two additional public hearings, in November 2021 and January 2022, to continue gathering public input. These last two meetings, called Post-Draft Map Hearings, will also provide the City Council with an opportunity to review and discuss draft maps and ultimately select the final district map.

Staff has developed and begun executing a community outreach and marketing plan that meets and exceeds the FAIR MAPS Act requirements. The FAIR MAPS Act requires cities to post information on its website in multiple languages specified by the California Secretary of State. For El Cajon, these languages are Spanish, Arabic, and Somali. In addition to the required website materials, the City has translated and distributed press releases, social media posts, and flyers to school districts, media outlets, and to non-English speaking community groups. Presentations, staff reports, and marketing materials have been posted on the City's redistricting webpage at [www.elcajon.gov/redistricting](http://www.elcajon.gov/redistricting).

The City's outreach has also included identifying and contacting various community, civic, ethnic, and cultural groups in El Cajon. The City provided translated marketing materials to these groups and offered presentations about the redistricting process. As the redistricting process continues, the City will continue to engage with these community groups, media outlets and other community partners.

Prepared By: David Richards, Assistant to the City Manager

Reviewed By:

Approved By: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

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