

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****September 14, 2021**

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SUBJECT: REDISTRICTING PROCEDURES

On April 6, 2021, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 5375-04-2021, accepting the final report of the Redistricting Task Force and establishing criteria and procedures for redrawing district boundaries. This Informal Report briefly discusses how City staff has been following the prescribed redistricting procedures and outlines next steps toward the Council's adoption of a new district map in advance of the May 2023 municipal elections.

In accordance with the adopted resolution, staff from our Communications and Public Engagement Department has been assisting interested residents in registering "communities of interest" that desire to be contained within a single Council district. This registration process will continue until September 15, after which staff will be able to incorporate communities-of-interest geography into the City's redistricting software. As of September 8, a total of 49 communities of interest had registered with the City.

Staff from Planning and Data Analytics and from IT Solutions has also been conducting a series of redistricting software training sessions, by which interested residents have been learning to draw proposed district maps that comply with the City Council's redistricting criteria. Staff will continue to train interested residents on use of the City's redistricting software through the fall months as residents produce proposed district maps for the Council's consideration. As of September 8, a total of 57 residents had completed this training, 123 individuals had viewed a YouTube training video that appears on the City's website, and many others had learned how to use the redistricting software by attending one of the City's recent town hall meetings. As of September 8, a total of 127 individuals -- including Council members, staff, and residents -- had created accounts to use the software.

By September 20, staff will have loaded the redistricting software with all relevant data by which interested residents will be able to draw proposed district maps. Staff will be accepting these maps through the month of November. Thereafter, staff will be evaluating the maps with respect to the Council's prescribed criteria and will be discussing its findings directly with the residents who produced each map.

The following is a schedule of subsequent redistricting activities.

December 2021: Staff prepares its own proposed district map, drawing upon features of the resident-produced maps. Staff briefs the City Council about all proposed district maps.

January 2022: The Council conducts at least one public hearing on proposed district maps, selects an initial map, and conducts at least one public hearing before considering any changes to the initial map.

February and March: The Council produces its own proposed district map, conducting all deliberations in official meetings and ensuring that any communications about map drawing among Council members occurs in such meetings. All map drawing meetings of the Council are to be conducted as separate meetings, with no other items on the meeting agenda, and at least ten-days public notice is to be given in advance of each such meeting.

April: The Council conducts four or more public hearings, including one for each pair of existing adjacent districts, and adopts a final map.

At least 180 days before qualifying begins in mid-January 2023 for the May 2023 municipal elections, candidates must legally establish residency within the Council districts that they wish to represent. In fairness to candidates, therefore, staff recommends that the Council adopt a final map no later than May 2022, a few weeks ahead of the mid-July deadline to establish residency.

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The City Council is scheduled to hold a joint work session with the former Redistricting Task Force on Tuesday, October 5, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 202 of the Fort Worth Convention Center. The purpose of this work session is to discuss the adopted redistricting criteria and procedures as well as the Task Force's rationale for recommending them. If you have any questions about the City's redistricting procedures in the meantime, please contact Assistant City Manager Fernando Costa at 817-392-6122 or fernando.costa@fortworthtexas.gov.

David Cooke
City Manager