

FINAL REPORT OF THE REDISTRICTING TASK FORCE

Lorraine Miller, Chair
Linda Kennedy
Sal Espino

March 2, 2021



Lorraine Miller

Redistricting Task Force

Members

- Place 1: Lorraine Miller (Chair)
- Place 2: Salvador Espino
- Place 3: Graham Norris
- Place 4: Craig Allen
- Place 5: Bert Williams
- Place 6: Linda Kennedy
- Place 7: Tony DeVito
- Place 8: Tracy Scott
- Place 9: Kent Bradshaw
- Place 10: Bill Schur
- Place 11: Teresa Ayala

Staff

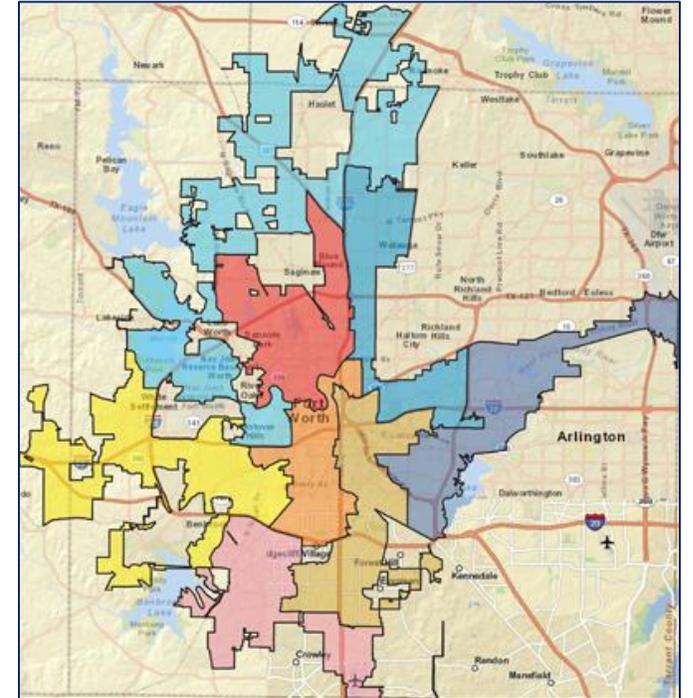
- City Manager's Office
- City Secretary's Office
- Law
- Planning and Data Analytics
- Information Technology Solutions
- Communications and Public Engagement
- Diversity and Inclusion



Resolution No. 5259-08-2020, Appointing a Redistricting Task Force

Adopted August 4, 2020

“The Redistricting Task Force is charged with evaluating the criteria and procedures by which the City Council has redrawn Council district boundaries in the past and, accordingly, **advising the City Council about redistricting criteria and procedures** that the City Council should use in the future.”

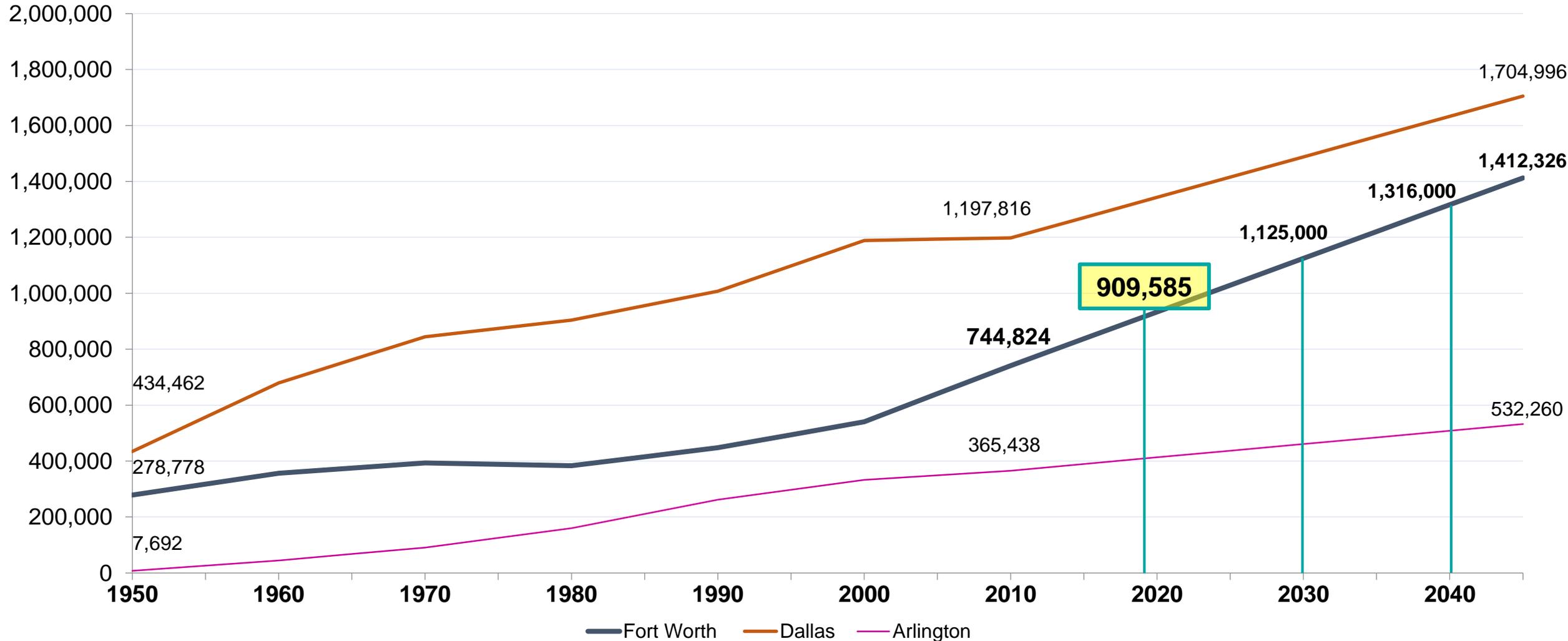


Why are we redistricting?

- To ensure that districts contain roughly **equal populations** as required by federal law.
- To create **two new districts**, as required by the City Charter, in view of Fort Worth's rapid growth.



Population Growth, 1950-2045: Fort Worth, Dallas, and Arlington



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau estimate for July 1, 2019; NCTCOG

Population by Council District, 2019

Citywide Total = 909,585

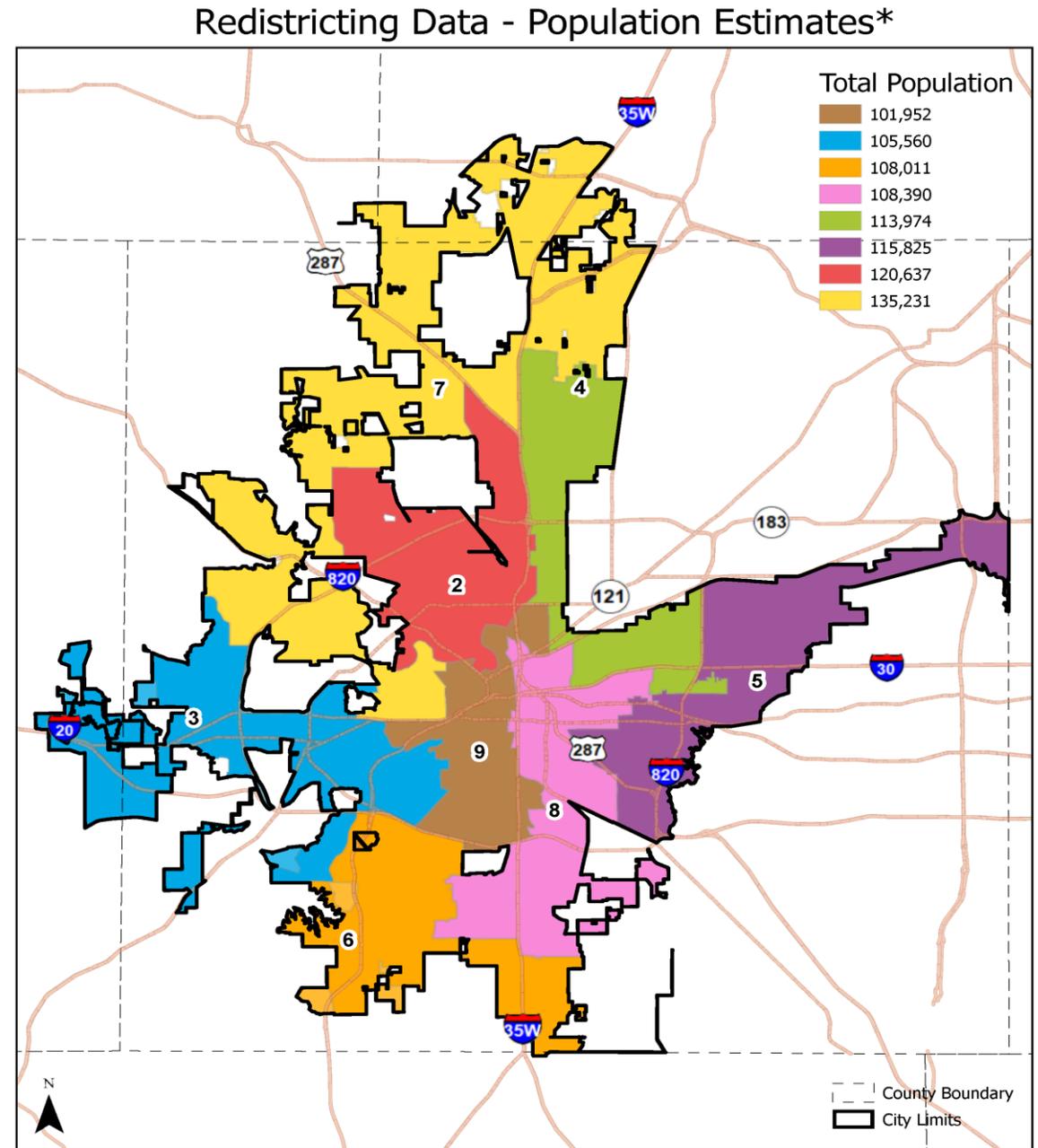
District Average = 113,698†

District 7 = 135,231 (16% **above** average)

District 9 = 101,952 (12% **below** average)

*Based on U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates (2015-2019)

†Adjusted Values per Annual 2019 1-Year Estimates

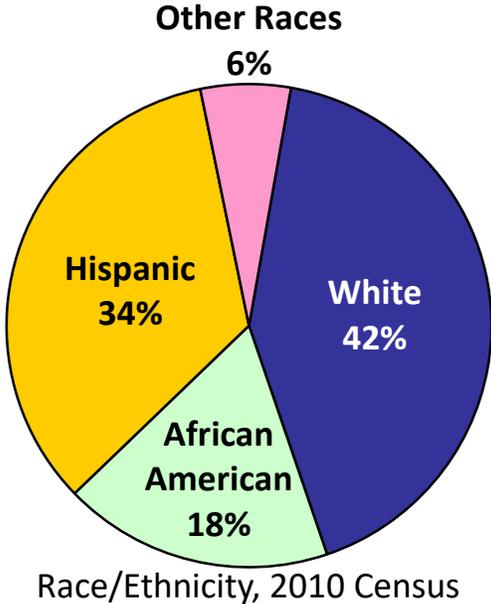


Three Broad Goals

1. Prevent **gerrymandering**



2. Provide best opportunities to elect Council members who reflect **Fort Worth’s diverse population**



3. Promote **education and public participation**



Task Force Schedule, August – December 2020

Month	Activity
August	City Council adopts resolution appointing Redistricting Task Force.
September	Staff presents informational briefings . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Task force charge ○ Open Meetings Act training ○ Redistricting history and schedule ○ Legal basis for redistricting ○ Demonstration of redistricting software
October	Task force interviews representatives from Austin and San Antonio . Staff presents additional informational briefings . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voting Rights Act ○ Local demographic trends
November	Staff provides task force with additional demographic data . Task force discusses preliminary findings . Task force discusses arrangements for Redistricting 101 seminar and public hearings .
December	Task force presents interim report to City Council.

Task Force Schedule, January – April 2021

Month	Activity
January	<p>Task force chair and staff present virtual Redistricting 101 seminar.</p> <p>Task force conducts series of three virtual public hearings.</p>
February	<p>Task force discusses comments from public hearings, agrees on final recommendations.</p> <p>Task force members review and comment on draft final report.</p> <p>Interested task force members submit minority report.</p>
March	<p>Tuesday, March 2, 3:00 p.m.: Task force presents final report to City Council.</p> <p>Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 p.m.: City Council authorizes contract with outside counsel.</p> <p>Outside counsel reviews and comments on proposed criteria and procedures.</p>
April	<p>Tuesday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.: City Council adopts resolution accepting final report and establishing criteria and procedures.</p>

Public Participation in Task Force Activities

Event	Facebook Views	Webex Participants	Speakers	Written Statements
September 17 meeting	--	--	2	--
October 22 meeting	--	--	9	1
November 19 meeting	--	--	10	4
January 4 seminar	2,550	--	--	17
January 11 hearing	2,971	65	11	5
January 19 hearing	1,983	19	3	1
January 21 hearing	2,530	58	20	11

Most Common Themes Expressed in Public Comments

1. Desirability of creating an **independent redistricting commission**
2. Need for greater **public participation**
3. Need for greater **transparency**





Linda Kennedy

Proposed Redistricting Criteria

High Priority: Not in any order of priority

1. Approximately **equal size**: Population of largest district \leq 10 percent more than population of smallest district
2. Compliance with U.S. Constitution, Voting Rights Act, Texas Constitution, and other **applicable laws**, with **no packing** of minority voters, **no fragmentation** of minority communities, and **no retrogression** in ability of minorities to participate in electoral process
3. Create **minority opportunity districts**, in compliance with federal law, to reflect growing diversity of City. Such districts -- in which African Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities collectively represent fifty percent or more of the voting-age population -- are intended to **create opportunities for fair representation** rather than to promote electoral outcomes. Electability is a function of many factors, including candidate qualifications, appeal to voters, voting-age population, voter registration, and voter participation as well as demographic characteristics.
4. Contain **communities of interest** in single districts, with community of interest defined as “a local population with shared socio-economic characteristics and political institutions that would benefit from unified representation.” Communities of interest may include neighborhoods, groups of neighborhoods, school attendance zones, and similar geographic areas.
5. **Contiguous** territory

Proposed Redistricting Criteria (continued)

Lower Priority: Not in any order of priority

6. **Compact** districts, with goal of Polsby-Popper ratio ≥ 0.050 . If any proposed district yields a compactness score that is less than 0.050, then a detailed justification must be stated.
7. **Identifiable** geographic boundaries, such as streams, railroad tracks, and highways. To the extent possible, dwelling units that are located on opposite sides of the same residential street shall be assigned to the same district.
8. Contain whole **voting precincts**
9. Contain whole census **blocks or block groups**
10. Do not consider **place of residence** of incumbents or potential candidates

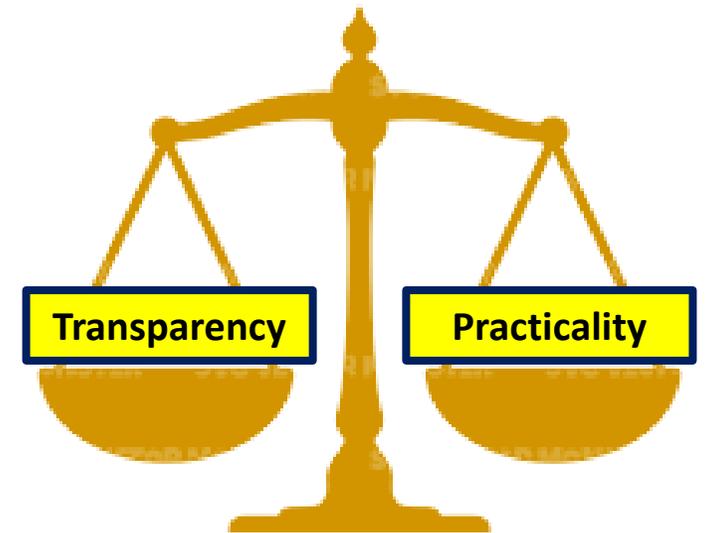
Why does a majority of the task force at this time favor the current procedure whereby elected officials draw the Council districts map?

- The City Council has already addressed the issue of an **independent redistricting commission** and has been clear about its intent **not** to create such a commission.
- The task force has **not analyzed** the pros and cons of an independent redistricting commission in any depth.
- This issue is too important to make a **hasty decision**.
- A **charter review task force** should study this issue carefully and make recommendations in advance of the 2030 census.



Why does a majority of the task force not support certain proposed restrictions on communications among City Council members?

- The majority of the task force recommends that the redistricting process be as **transparent** as possible, without being so restrictive that productive communications will become impractical.
- Certain proposed restrictions on written, electronic, and oral communications among City Council members would be **overly burdensome** and would not provide commensurate public benefits.





Sal Espino

Proposed Redistricting Procedures

1. Registration for **communities of interest**
2. **Resident-produced** redistricting plans
3. Plans to be produced by **independent contractor**
4. Selection of **initial map** as starting point for further mapping
5. Rationale for **proposed changes** to initial map
6. Redistricting as a **single agenda item**
7. **Public hearings**
 - At least **one** hearing after City Council has received plans from residents, independent contractor, and staff, but **before** Council selects **initial map** as starting point for map drawing deliberations
 - At least **one** hearing **after** City Council has selected **initial map**, but before Council considers any changes to that map
 - At least **four** hearings **after** the City Council has produced a **proposed map**
8. **Transparency**: Any communications to occur in official meetings.
9. **Charter review** task force

Proposed Redistricting Schedule, April – September 2021

Month	Activity
April through September 2021	Staff provides software training for interested residents, using unofficial population estimates pending release of official population counts.
	Residents register communities of interest for redistricting purposes.
	City hires independent contractor to propose initial map in compliance with criteria.
May	City conducts 2021 election .
August	City Council and Redistricting Task Force members hold joint work session .
September 30	Census Bureau releases block-level census data for state and local redistricting.

Proposed Redistricting Schedule, October 2021 – May 2023

Month	Activity
October and November 2021	Residents and independent contractor prepare and submit redistricting plans to City staff. Staff assesses extent to which each plan meets adopted criteria and discusses its findings with pertinent residents. Staff prepares its own plan, drawing upon features of resident and contractor plans.
December	Staff briefs City Council about redistricting plans prepared by residents, contractor, and staff.
January 2022	City Council conducts at least one public hearing on redistricting plans.
	City Council selects initial map .
	City Council conducts at least one public hearing before considering any changes to initial map.
February and March	City Council produces proposed map .
April 2022	City Council conducts four or more public hearings , including one for each pair of existing adjacent districts, and adopts proposed map.
Mid-July 2022: 180 days before qualifying begins for May 2023 municipal election	Deadline for candidates to establish residency within Council districts that they wish to represent.
Mid-January to mid-February 2023	Candidates file for places on 2023 municipal election ballot.
May 2023	City conducts 2023 election .

Minority Report

- Independent Redistricting Commission
- Transparency
- Criteria Adjustments



Independent Redistricting Commission

(Ayala, Bradshaw, Espino, Schur, and Scott)

After the May 2021 election and the June 2021 runoff, by ordinance or resolution, create an **Independent Redistricting Commission** to manage the process of remapping Fort Worth City Council districts before the May 2023 City Council election, with the final redistricting map subject to City Council approval by ordinance.

According to Texas redistricting expert **Steve Bickerstaff** (1946-2019), an independent redistricting commission is more likely to:

- Choose **unbiased staff** based on merit,
- Make **decisions** based on redistricting criteria alone,
- React responsibly and openly to **public comment**,
- Be **transparent** in its decision-making, and
- Hear **witness testimony** and legal advice.



“Therefore, it is not surprising that **independent city commissions** have generally won public plaudits.”

Transparency

(Ayala, Bradshaw, Espino, and Schur)

- All **written and electronic communications** between the Mayor and Council members with City staff and any contractor(s) retained by the City to propose initial redistricting maps or map changes shall be recorded and preserved as **public records** and made available to the members of the public on request.
- All **oral communications** between the Mayor and Council members with City staff and any contractor(s) retained by the City relating to proposed initial redistricting maps or map changes shall be **documented**, and such documented communications shall be recorded and preserved as **public records** and made available to the public on request.
- All communications between two or more Council Members relating to the choice of the **initial redistricting map** that will serve as a starting point for map drawing deliberations, and all communications between two or more Council Members relating to proposed **changes** to the initial map, shall occur at **public map drawing meetings** with computer screens visible to all parties.

Criteria Adjustments

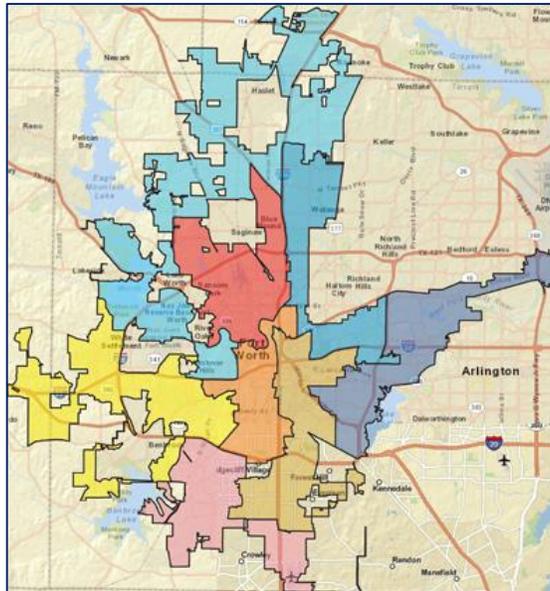
- **Reclassify Criteria** (Espino and Schur)
 - ✓ **Highest-priority criteria:** Approximately equal size and legal compliance.
 - ✓ **Additional high-priority criteria:** Minority opportunity districts, communities of interest, and contiguous territory.
 - ✓ **Lower-priority criteria:** Compactness, identifiable geographic boundaries, census blocks and block groups, and places of residence.
- **Minority Opportunity Districts** (Espino and Schur)
 - ✓ Make expressly **subject to highest-priority requirements** of approximately equal size and legal compliance.
 - ✓ Add the word "**meaningful**" to state the purpose as being "...intended to create meaningful opportunities for fair representation rather than to promote electoral outcomes."
- **Compactness Measures** (Bradshaw): Do **not** use Polsby-Popper ratio as the only measure of compactness.
- **Voting precincts** (Espino and Schur): **Delete** this criterion.



Lorraine Miller

Next Steps

- Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 p.m.: City Council authorizes contract with **outside counsel**, which shall review and comment on proposed criteria and procedures.
- Tuesday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.: City Council adopts **resolution** accepting final report and establishing criteria and procedures.



Questions?

