



# **PROPOSED REDISTRICTING CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES**

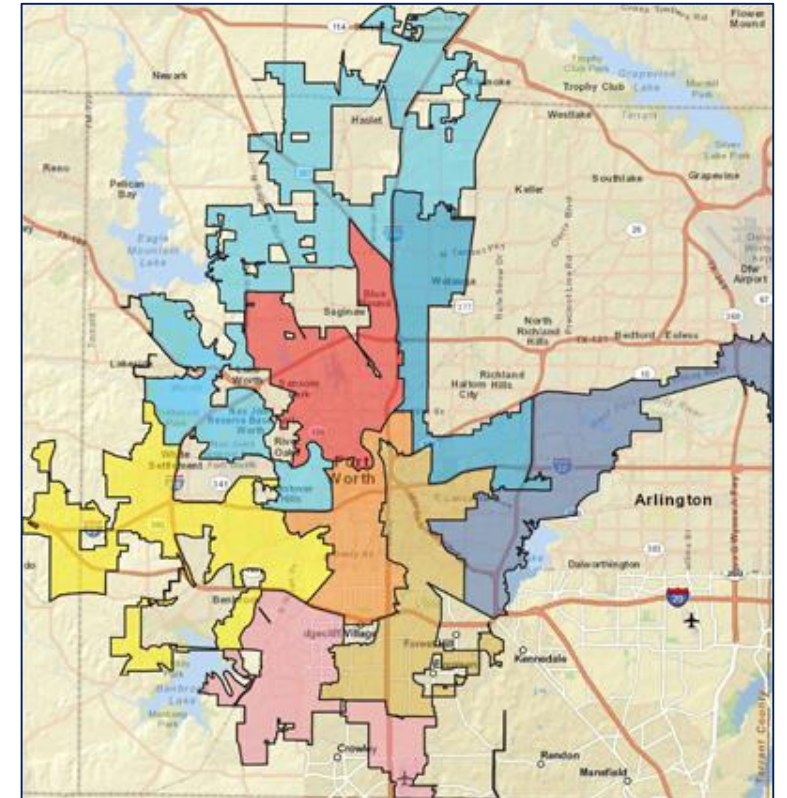
Presented to the City Council

By Fernando Costa, Assistant City Manager  
and  
Leann Guzman, Deputy City Attorney

March 23, 2021

# Topics

1. Review of criteria and procedures recommended by **Redistricting Task Force**
2. Comments from **Law Department**
3. **Staff** evaluation of criteria and procedures
4. Request for **City Council** direction



# Task Force's Proposed Redistricting Criteria

High Priority: <u>Not</u> in any order of priority	
1.	Approximately <b>equal size</b> : 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 <b>applicable laws</b> , with <b>no packing</b> of minority voters, <b>no fragmentation</b> of minority communities, and <b>no retrogression</b> in ability of minorities to participate in electoral process
3.	Create <b>minority opportunity districts</b> , 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 <b>create opportunities for fair representation</b> 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 <b>communities of interest</b> 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.	<b>Contiguous</b> territory

## Task Force's Proposed Redistricting Criteria (continued)

<b>Lower Priority:</b> <u>Not</u> in any order of priority	
6.	<b>Compact</b> districts, with goal of Polsby-Popper ratio $\geq 0.050$ . If any proposed district yields a compactness score that is less than 0.050, then a detailed justification must be stated.
7.	<b>Identifiable</b> 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 <b>voting precincts</b>
9.	Contain whole census <b>blocks or block groups</b>
10.	Do not consider <b>place of residence</b> of incumbents or potential candidates

# Law Department's Recommended Revisions to Proposed Redistricting Criteria

High Priority: <u>Not</u> in any order of priority	
1.	Approximately <b>equal size</b> : 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 <b>applicable laws</b> , <del>with no packing of minority voters, no fragmentation of minority communities, and no retrogression</del> <u>to avoid impermissible packing, fragmentation, or retrogression</u> in ability of minorities to participate in electoral process
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# Task Force's Proposed Redistricting Procedures

1. Registration for **communities of interest**
2. **Resident-produced** redistricting plans
3. Plans to be produced by **consultant**
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

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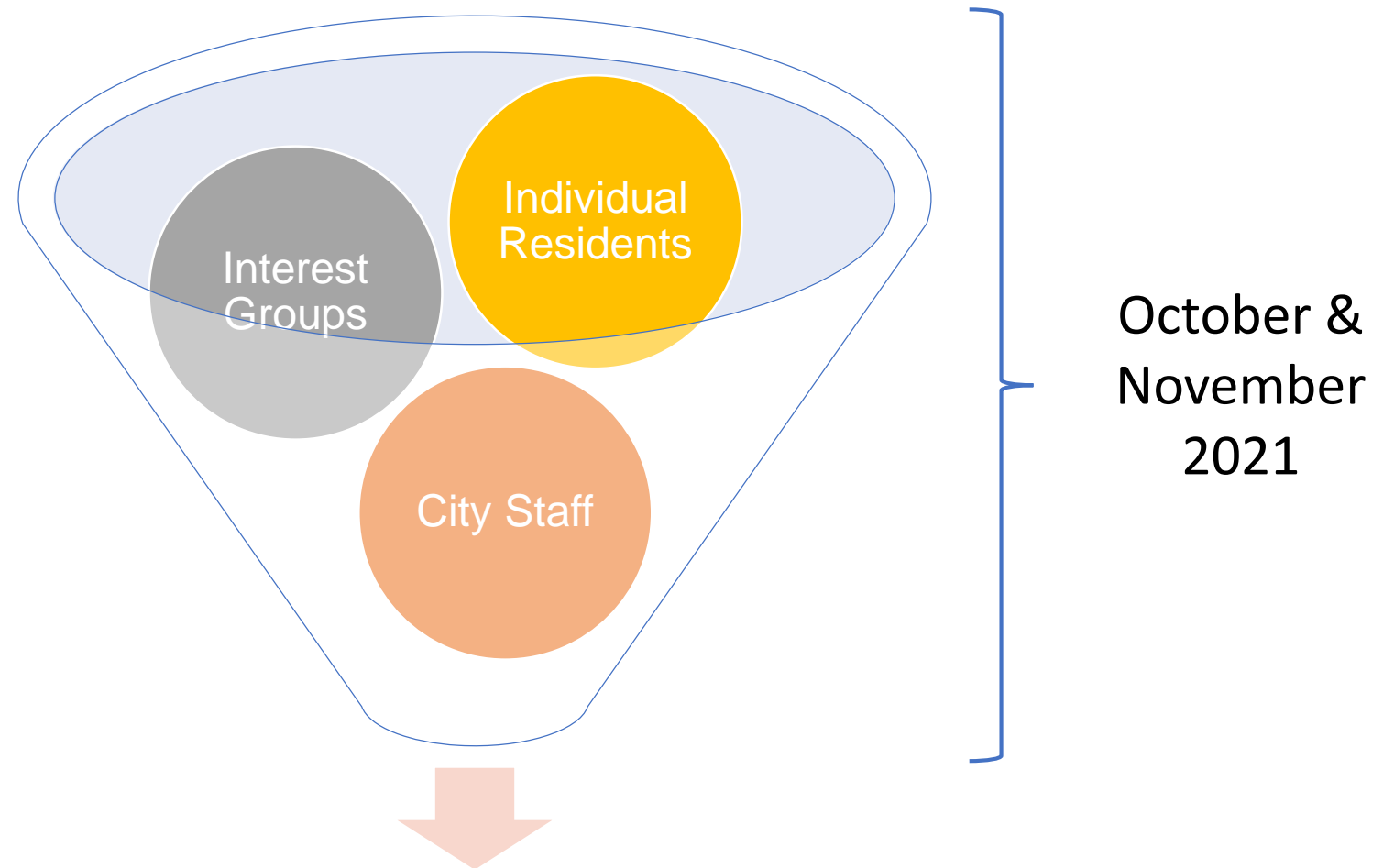


# Staff Observations about Procedural Issues



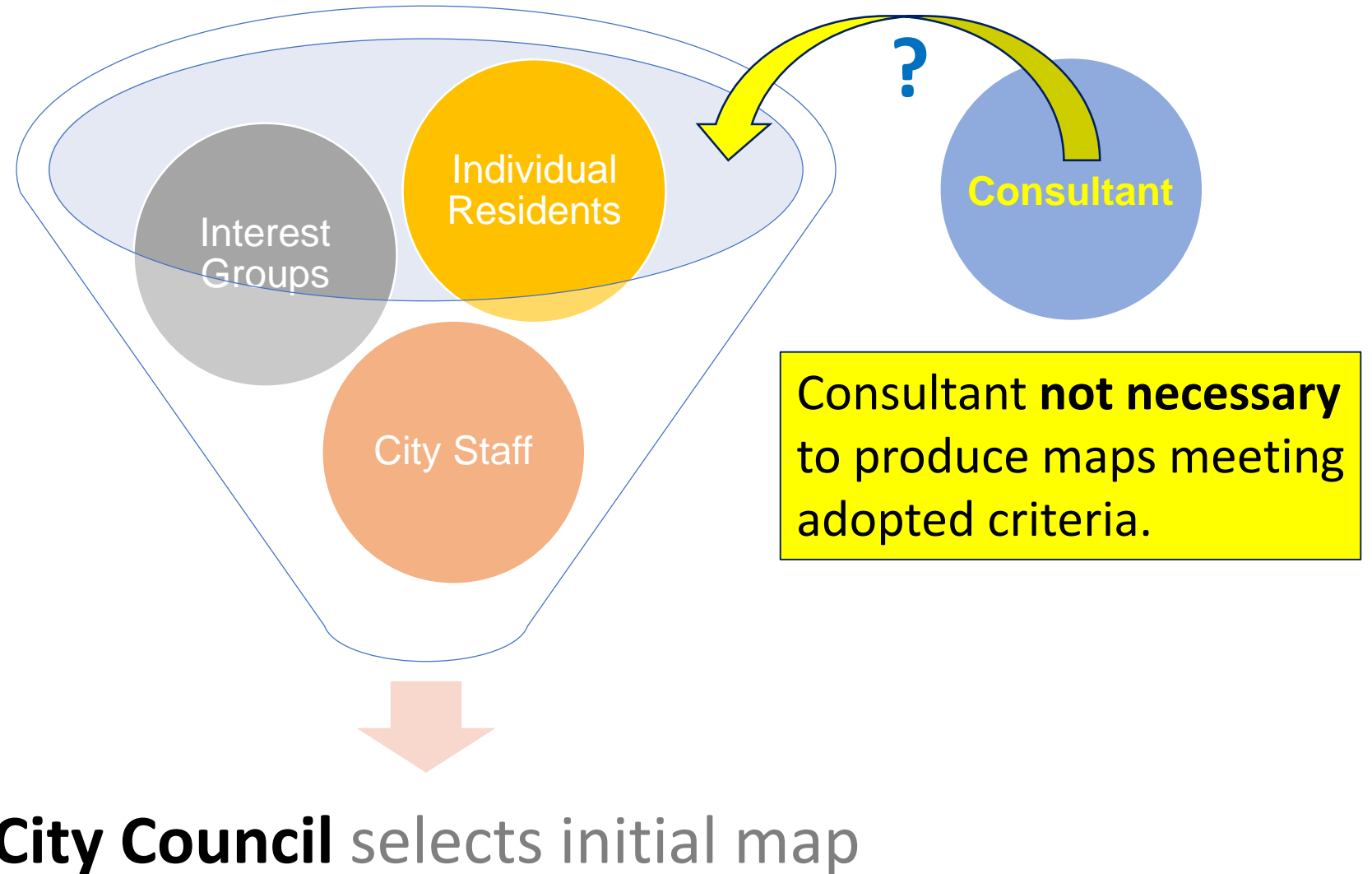
- Sources of Proposed Council District **Maps**
- Ways to Achieve Goal of **Fair Representation**

# Sources of Proposed Council District Maps



**City Council** selects initial map

# Sources of Proposed Council District Maps



# 2018 Findings from Task Force on Race and Culture: Governance Disparities Attributable to Race and Culture

- **Inequitable voter representation on the City Council:**  
History of drawing political lines...
  - ✓ To favor one group/party/class of voters over another or
  - ✓ To protect incumbents.
- **Low voter participation** in majority minority areas, i.e. voter precincts in which persons of color represent 50 percent or more of the registered voters.



# 2018 Recommendation from Task Force on Race and Culture

Appoint a **Charter Review Task Force (CRTF)** to specifically study and make recommendation(s) concerning an **independent redistricting commission**. The CRTF would...

- Analyze the role of independent redistricting commissions,
- Review the different commission models utilized throughout the United States,
- Solicit community feedback on the redistricting process, and
- Make a recommendation(s) to City Council regarding **amending the City Charter to include the formation of an independent redistricting commission**.



## 2019 Staff Advice on Redistricting: Focus on the Goal

The goal is to create districts that, when drawn, provide the **best opportunities** to elect City Council members who reflect the diverse population of the City.



# 2019 Staff Advice on Redistricting: Appoint Redistricting Task Force

## Charge

- **Develop criteria and procedures** to be used to create City Council districts for the 2023 election.
- **Present** recommended criteria and procedures to the City Council.



Charter review task force **not necessary** to achieve goal of fair representation.

# Staff Evaluation of Task Force Recommendations

## Criteria

- ✓ Equal size
- ✓ Applicable laws
- ✓ Minority opportunity districts
- ✓ Communities of interest
- ✓ Contiguous territory
- ✓ Compact districts
- ✓ Identifiable geographic boundaries
- ✓ Voting precincts
- ✓ Census blocks
- ✓ Place of residence of incumbents

## Procedures

- ✓ Registration for communities of interest
- ✓ Resident-produced redistricting plans
- ? Plans to be produced by consultant**
- ✓ Selection of initial map as starting point for further mapping
- ✓ Rationale for proposed changes to initial map
- ✓ Redistricting as a single agenda item
- ✓ Public hearings
- ✓ Transparency
- ? Charter review task force**



# How should the City Council treat these recommendations...

- \* To hire a map-drawing consultant and
- \* To appoint a charter review task force?

- ☐ **Adopt** these recommendations in the resolution accepting the task force report; or
- ☐ Respectfully **decline** these recommendations per staff advice; or
- ☐ **Acknowledge** these recommendations, but **defer action** pending further consideration after the 2021 municipal elections.

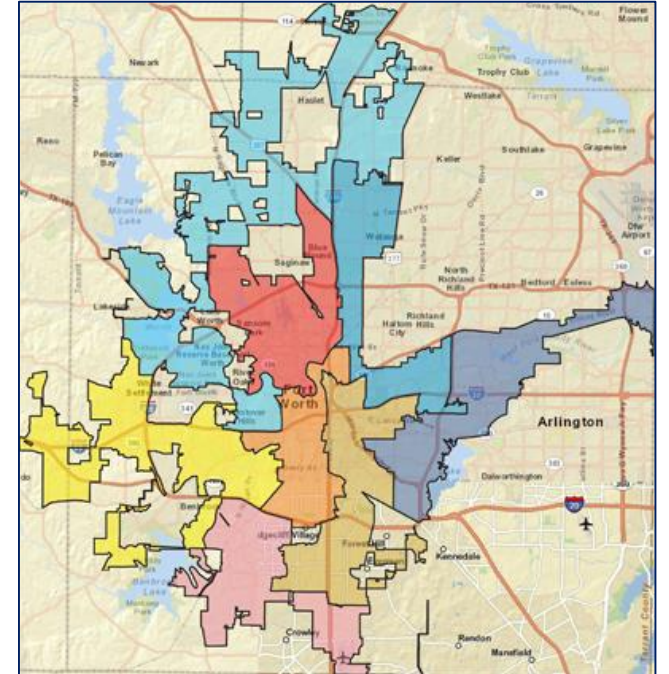


# Next Steps

**Tuesday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.:** City Council adopts **resolution** accepting final report and establishing criteria and procedures.

**Week of April 12:** Staff begins to assist residents with **pre-redistricting activities** in anticipation of September 30 census data release.

- Planning and Data Analytics Department conducts first in series of **redistricting software training sessions** for interested residents.
- Communications and Public Engagement Department opens portal for registering **communities of interest**.



**Questions?**



# 2021 Staff Advice on Redistricting: Recommendations Not Necessary to Achieve Goal

- **Plans to be produced by consultant(s)**: The City should retain one or more independent contractors (i.e. consultants) to propose an **initial map or maps** applying the criteria adopted by the Council, such map or maps to be considered, along with initial maps proposed by City staff and residents or resident groups, as a starting point for further map drawing deliberations.
- **Charter review task force**: The City Council should appoint a charter review task force that would study and make recommendations concerning the advisability of establishing an **independent redistricting commission**. Upon formation, the charter review task force should, after providing for full and meaningful public participation, submit its recommendations to the City Council in time for redistricting to proceed on an orderly basis promptly after the 2030 federal census.

