

City of Minneapolis Redistricting Process Summary of Principles and Rationale

2022

In accordance with State law and the Minneapolis City Charter, the City's wards and park districts are redistricted every 10 years after each Federal census. The Charter provides that the Charter Commission, assisted by an advisory group (together the "Redistricting Group") is responsible for redistricting. In this process, the Redistricting Group is subject to Federal, State and local laws, as well as principles approved by the Charter Commission.

This summary outlines these statutory requirements and principles and briefly describes the proposed adjustments to each ward and park district adopted by the Redistricting Group on January 26, 2022. The Redistricting Group will hold public hearings on February 9 and February 24. The maps adopted on January 26 are subject to modification after the public hearings. The Charter Commission will consider the final proposed maps at its meeting on March 2. Once approved by the Charter Commission, the redistricting plan is final.

First, the Redistricting Group is bound by and relied upon a variety of legal principles derived from state and federal law and the Minneapolis Charter.

State Statutory Requirements

The wards and park districts must be as equal in population as possible.

The area within a ward or park district must be contiguous, with no breaks and not touching at just one point.

The wards and park districts must be compact.

Federal Statutory Requirements

The Voting Rights Act prohibits racial discrimination in voting and requires that racial and language minorities have a fair opportunity to elect representatives of their choice. It prohibits packing: concentrating a minority group in one district so that it has more voting power than may be needed to elect a preferred candidate but have little voting power in other districts. Cracking is dividing minority groups into more than one district to lessen the voting power of the group – also prohibited.

Minneapolis Charter Provisions

The Minneapolis Charter, including the amendment in 2011 to create the present redistricting process, contains additional requirements for the Minneapolis redistricting process, as follows:

The city comprises thirteen wards and six park districts. “If possible, a redistricted ward keeps the same number of the former ward from which its population mostly came.” The same requirement applies to the park districts.

The wards and park districts must be as equal in population as possible, but in any event not more than a five percent deviation from the mean ward or park district population (total population of the city in accord with the 2020 census divided by 13 for the wards and 6 for the park districts).¹

Each ward or park district must not be longer than twice its width.

Boundaries must lie, whenever possible, along the centerline of public ways and, as far as possible, run due north-south or east-west.

Minimize changes in existing boundaries (to the extent possible). When there have been significant population changes in an area since the last census the boundaries will most likely have to change.

The City Council and not the Redistricting Group or Charter Commission determines the election precincts and polling places.

Redistricting Principles

With the legal principles as starting points, the Charter Commission fashioned some additional redistricting principles, both as an amendment to the Minneapolis Charter and in the Redistricting Group Rules and Principles:

The redistricting shall follow the City Charter’s requirements.

The Redistricting Group will keep communities of interest (first recognized in federal redistricting cases) in one ward whenever possible. A community of interest is a neighborhood, community or group of people who have common policy concerns and could benefit from being maintained in a single district, when possible. Such communities of interest may include, for instance, social, geographic, political, cultural, ethnic, race and economic factors. Racial and language minorities, in particular and in accord with the Voting Rights Act and equitable principles, must have a fair opportunity to elect representatives of their choice

¹ The ideal number for each ward is 33,073. The ideal number for each park district is 71,659. The acceptable range, at five percent above or below those numbers is 31,420 to 34,727 per ward and 68,077 to 75,241 per park district.

The Charter Commission shall hold public hearings, review testimony and written comments and suggested maps, and consider changes based on this input.

Interpretive Guidelines

Finally, during the course of the redistricting process, we agreed upon additional guidelines both to enhance the fairness and equity of the process and to respond to comments and suggestions we received from members of the public.

Consideration of communities of interest may focus on neighborhood groups. Consideration of locations in a ward where people tend to gather as for public meetings may be helpful in determining a community of interest.

As much as practicable, neighborhoods should be kept intact and not split across wards or park districts.

The fifth and sixth wards are minority majority districts and should remain so if possible. The Redistricting Group should take care not to dilute the multiple minority populations in the fourth and ninth wards and park districts two and three.

The areas around parks should not be split into different park districts, if it is possible to keep them intact.

Use major roadways such as Interstate 35W and natural barriers, such as the Mississippi River, whenever possible as borders.

Public comments and alternative maps are welcome and to be carefully considered. Wards and park districts, however, may not be drawn in isolation but, instead, must be drawn in relation to surrounding wards and park districts and to the map as a whole, to comply with all legal and equitable requirements.

All work on redistricting will be done in open meetings with the time, date and location of the meetings/or video conferencing information listed in advance on the City's website.

Resolution of legal or policy questions

Research suggested that even though the length of the wards and park districts must not exceed more than twice their width, the opposite need not be true: the width of the wards and park districts could be, if necessary, more than twice their length, provided the principle of compactness is satisfied. (In particular, such a shape might be necessary to preserve a minority majority ward or to keep a neighborhood intact.)

Under the state statute governing redistricting, incumbents must live in the ward they represent, provided that a change in ward boundaries does not disqualify a council member from serving for the remainder of a term. The statute and Charter provide for the election

process when redistricting adversely affects an incumbent. For purposes of the redistricting process, however, the prohibition against gerrymandering means that the Redistricting Group is not permitted to take the address of an incumbent into account when initially drawing the ward and park district lines. On the other hand, case law provides that the Redistricting Group *may* take the address into account once the draft map has been completed, if a slight modification will avoid excluding an incumbent from his or her district.

Third, during discussions, it was clear that members of the Redistricting Group take the view that the five percent deviation rule offers leeway in allowing, if possible, a lower deviation in wards or park districts that historically have been underrepresented and a higher one in those wards or park districts that have not had such historic disadvantage. The Redistricting Group determined that such deviations might enhance racial equity or social justice as well as to keep neighborhoods intact, or otherwise preserve a community of interest. On the other hand, the goal of minimal deviation is still an important factor in redistricting to ensure equal voice in voting, so that value must also enter into the equation.

Several commenters urged the Redistricting Group to consider areas of expected future growth, such as downtown Minneapolis. The Redistricting Group was advised, however, that its responsibility was to draw the maps based on the actual census data, as a snapshot in time, rather than on speculation, however reasonable, as to future growth.

Summary of Proposed Adjustments

The Redistricting Group adopted its proposed ward and park district maps on January 26, 2022. The adjustments to current wards and park districts are summarized below.

Ward 1 – This ward needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this, the Bottineau neighborhood was moved from ward 3 into ward 1. A small portion of the Como neighborhood was also moved into ward 1 to make SE Como Ave. the boundary between wards 1 and 2.

Ward 2 – This ward needed to shrink to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this, the southernmost neighborhoods of Cooper and Longfellow were removed from ward 2 and placed in wards 12 and 9 respectively. A portion of Marcy Holmes was also moved into ward 2, the rationale for which is detailed in the ward 3 summary below.

Ward 3 – This ward needed to shrink substantially to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this with minimal change and in the interest of preserving communities of interest (in this case, university students), the portion of Marcy Holmes east of I-35W was moved into ward 2. To further balance the population, a few blocks of Downtown West were also removed and placed into ward 7.

Ward 4 – This ward was already within 5% of the target population. No changes were made to its boundaries.

Ward 5 – This ward was already within 5% of the target population. No changes were made to its boundaries.

Ward 6 – This ward needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this, and in response to community feedback, the portion of the Elliot Park neighborhood in ward 7 was moved such that the entirety of that neighborhood now resides in ward 6. No further changes were made from a desire to maintain the ward’s status as a minority majority ward.

Ward 7 – This ward was already within 5% of the target population. However, in response to public feedback and in the interest of putting communities of interest together, Elliot Park was moved into ward 6, thus making ward 7 too small. In order to grow, the West Maka Ska neighborhood was moved into ward 7. Additionally, a few blocks of Downtown West were moved into ward 7, as detailed above.

Ward 8 – This ward needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this, a portion of the Central neighborhood was removed from ward 9 and added to ward 8.

Ward 9 – This ward needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. With a portion of Central moved to ward 8, ward 9 extended east to include all of Longfellow. With some growth still necessary, a small portion of Howe was also added to ward 9 in order not to drastically impact its status as a multiple minority-majority ward.

Ward 10 – This ward was already within 5% of the target population. However, in response to public feedback and in the interest of putting communities of interest together, the portion of the East Harriet neighborhood in ward 10 was moved such that the entirety of that neighborhood now resides in ward 13.

Ward 11 – This ward needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this, portions of Keewaydin and Ericsson were moved from ward 12 into ward 11. This was done because ward 12 needed to shrink after the addition of Cooper, a move that’s detailed below.

Ward 12 – This ward was already within 5% of the target population. However, given the need to shrink ward 2, and out of a desire not to drastically change the demographics of ward 9, the Cooper neighborhood was removed from ward 2 and placed in ward 12. This resulted in ward 12 needing to shrink, which was accomplished by moving portions of Keewaydin and Ericsson into ward 11.

Ward 13 – This ward was already within 5% of the target population. However, in response to public feedback and to help ward 7 grow after losing Elliot Park, the West Maka Ska neighborhood was removed from this ward. Having lost this neighborhood, the ward 10 portion of the East Harriet neighborhood was moved into this ward.

Park District 1 – This district needed to shrink to be within 5% of the target population. This meant that at least one of the park districts west of the river would have to take some population from the east side. Accordingly, the Nicollet Island/East Bank neighborhood and a

portion of the Marcy Holmes neighborhood (west of 35W) were moved out of park district 1 and into park district 4.

Park District 2 – District 2 was already within 5% of the target population and was largely unchanged, except for moving a portion of the North Loop neighborhood into district 4 for population balance.

Park District 3 – District 3 was already within 5% of the target population. However, the changes to district 4 and 5 resulted in part of the Whittier neighborhood being moved into district 3 and the Longfellow and Cooper neighborhoods being moved into district 5.

Park District 4 – This district needed to shrink to be within 5% of the target population. To balance district 1, the Nicollet Island/East Bank neighborhood and part of the Marcy Holmes neighborhood were moved into district 4. To balance population, part of the Whittier neighborhood was moved into district 3 and East Bde Maka Ska and the Cedar Isles Dean neighborhoods were moved to district 6.

Park District 5 – This district needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. The Cooper and Longfellow neighborhoods were moved into this district (and the Central and Powderhorn neighborhoods were reunited in district 3).

Park District 6 – This district needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. The East Bde Maka Ska and Cedar Isles Dean neighborhoods were added to this district.

Conclusion

The proposed ward and district maps remain subject to change and public comment. Residents may comment online at the [City's redistricting website](#) and may comment at public hearings to be held virtually on February 9 and 24. After completion of the public hearings, the Redistricting Group will finalize the proposed maps and forward them to the Charter Commission, which will consider them at its March 2 meeting.