

Understanding Redistricting in Minneapolis

2012 brings a once-in-a-decade opportunity for people in Minneapolis to participate in redistricting the City, creating new ward and park district boundaries for elections in 2012 and beyond. The boundaries from 2002 must be adjusted to reflect changes in the distribution and number of Minneapolis residents.

It's an important process, because having districts with near equal populations helps ensure there is fair representation no matter where you live.

Who Draws the Maps?

In 2010, Minneapolis voters approved a charter amendment giving authority for redistricting the City's thirteen wards and six Park and Recreation districts to the Charter Commission.

Boundaries for the six Minneapolis School districts will be set by the Minneapolis Board of Education, which may decide to use the new Minneapolis Park and Recreation district boundaries or create its own boundaries.

The Redistricting Group (the Charter Commission and an Advisory Group of nine members appointed by the Charter Commission) will work with staff to prepare maps. However, approval of the final boundaries rests with the Charter Commission.

How Does the Process Work?

The Redistricting Group will work with nonpartisan staff skilled in using computer programs to crunch census data. That census data will be used to create maps which will be revised based on feedback from the Redistricting Group and the public. As a part of this process, the Redistricting Group must hold at least four public hearings on the Minneapolis City ward and Park and Recreation district maps. Notices for all meetings of the Redistricting Group and all public hearings will be posted on the City's website Redistricting 2012 at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/redistricting2012/index.htm>.

The Minneapolis City Council and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board have limited roles in redistricting. After the Charter Commission approves a Minneapolis City ward plan, it is forwarded to the City Council. The Council has no power to change proposed Minneapolis City ward boundaries, but it is required to pass an ordinance or resolution defining new precinct boundaries and designating polling places.

The role of the Park and Recreation Board is somewhat different. Under the Charter, the Redistricting Group must submit the proposed (near final) Park and Recreation district map to the Park and Recreation Board for review and comment. However, the Park and Recreation Board has no power to change the proposed Park and Recreation district boundaries and must implement them once they have been adopted by the Charter Commission.

What Standards Must Be Followed?

Minnesota statutes and rules, the Minneapolis Charter, Charter Commission redistricting principles adopted in 2011 and redistricting rules adopted in 2011 provide information about the process the Redistricting Group will follow to redistrict Minneapolis City wards and Park and Recreation districts.

Federal law, including the Voting Rights Act and court cases, also apply. Federal law requires districts to have near equal populations. In addition, the federal Voting Rights Act requires that racial and language minorities have a fair opportunity to elect representatives of their choice. Providing this opportunity requires mapmakers to avoid “packing” (putting minorities into as few districts as possible so they have voting power in less districts) and “cracking” (spreading minorities among so many districts that their voting power is diluted). Note that under the Voting Rights Act, it is the effect, not the intent, of the plan that is important.

Maps for Minneapolis City wards and Park and Recreation districts mostly follow the same standards.

(1) The Charter requires the 13 Minneapolis City wards to have populations that are within five percent of the City population divided by 13, to keep them as close in population as possible. For 2012, the acceptable range is 27,958 to 30,900. Similarly, the six Park and Recreation districts must have populations that are within five percent of the City population divided by 6. For 2012, the acceptable range is 60,575 to 66,951.

(2) Minneapolis City wards and Park and Recreation districts should be contiguous (include an area with an unbroken boundary) and compact (closer to round than to long and narrow) and not more than twice as long as wide, allowing for lakes.

(3) Wherever possible, Minneapolis City ward and Park and Recreation district boundary lines should follow the centerline of streets, avenues, alleys and boulevards and run due East and West or North and South.

(4) Minneapolis City wards and Park and Recreation districts can cross congressional and legislative district lines. For example, there are currently 11 state house districts and 13 wards. Similarly, Minneapolis City wards and Park and Recreation districts need not be congruent.

(5) The Charter states that the Park and Recreation district boundaries in place during the 1970's shall be retained as nearly as practicable in readjusting the boundaries. A special law also has some specific language about racial and language minority groups specific to the Park and Recreation districts, but this is similar to requirements under the Voting Rights Act discussed above.

In addition, the Charter Commission will follow laws and its established principles to guide redistricting as follows:

(1) Keep communities of interest (a group that shares common interests such as ethnic heritage or specific economic concerns) in one Minneapolis City ward where possible.

(2) Change current boundaries as little as possible.

When Will Maps Be Drawn?

In Minnesota, boundary lines are drawn in the following order:

- U.S. Congressional district lines and Minnesota Legislative (House and Senate) district lines
- City ward lines
- City precinct lines
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation district lines

Generally, the goal is to finish redistricting to allow time for candidates to establish a residence and file for office in advance of the August 2012 primary and November 2012 general election.

Minneapolis must complete its work to redistrict the wards and establish precincts within 60 days after the Minnesota Legislature completes its task or by April 3, 2012, whichever comes first. Park districts must be established a few weeks later.

In May 2011, the Governor vetoed bills passed by the Minnesota Legislature to redistrict U.S. Congressional and Minnesota Legislative districts. The Minnesota Supreme Court appointed a special redistricting panel to draw these maps if necessary, but there is still an opportunity for the Minnesota Legislature and Governor to reach an agreement early in the 2012 legislative session.

For details about the State's work and redistricting in general, see resources on the State's website at <http://www.gis.leg.mn/>

How Can I Participate or Get More Information?

(1) Attend or follow Redistricting Group meetings.

(a) All meetings of the Charter Commission and Redistricting Group will be publicized on the **Redistricting 2012 website** at

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/redistricting2012/index.htm>

(b) Subscribe to meeting notices from

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MPLS/subscriber/new?>

(2) Submit ideas at public meetings. The first two meetings are scheduled for February 29 and March 1. Locations and times will be posted a week in advance on the Redistricting 2012 website.

(3) Email questions, ideas or documents to the Redistricting Group at

Redistricting2012@minneapolismn.gov

You must include your name and address, and attachment size is limited to 10 MB.

(4) Mail should be directed to: Peggy Menshek, 304 City Hall, 350 S 5th St. Minneapolis, MN 55415.

See the City's Redistricting 2012 website for more information on timelines, rules and other background information.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at (612) 673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may use a relay service to call 311 agents at (612) 673-3000. TTY users may call (612) 673-2157 or (612) 673-2626. Attention: If you have any questions regarding this material please call (612) 673-2287. Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu (612) 673-2800; Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama (612) 673-2700; Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac (612) 673-3500.

Prepared and distributed by the Redistricting Group of the Minneapolis Charter Commission.