



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

February 8, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager
Submitted by: Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Subject: Update on Berkeley's Redistricting Process for City Council Districts

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

This report is an update on Berkeley's redistricting activities for the January-March 2022 timeframe.

BACKGROUND

Berkeley's Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) convened for the first time in 2020. The 13-member Commission is fully responsible for developing and adopting revisions to Berkeley's City Council districts. Since the districts must be balanced with approximately the same number of people in each one, redistricting is required every ten years to account for population shifts. The Commission must use the U.S. Census as the population data source, along with input from the public and other criteria established in the City Charter and other redistricting laws.

Public Submission of Redistricting Maps

The period for public submission of redistricting maps ended on Monday, November 15, 2021. A total of 29 maps were submitted for consideration by the Commission. The plans from the public provide valuable input to the Commission in the form of common themes and specific interests expressed, but they are not required to be the template from which the Commission determines the final boundaries.

In addition to redistricting maps, the Commission has received community input in a variety of ways. A "Community of Interest" or "COI" form is available in English and Spanish, allowing people to describe their community and why it should be represented in one City Council district. To date, 62 forms have been received from across the eight existing districts. Written comments have also been provided throughout the process, and the community continues to attend the Commission's public meetings and hearings to give verbal testimony.

Map Development Process

The discussion of Communities of Interest and maps submitted by the public continued into January of 2022. The Commission has now transitioned into the map drafting phase, with the final map to be adopted in March 2022. All maps and COI forms are available online through the City's redistricting web page at cityofberkeley.info/redistricting. Key redistricting milestones are presented below:

- January 10 – IRC meeting (regular)
Discussion regarding public map submissions. Direction to staff on the number of draft maps and significant elements desired in the draft maps.
- January 27 – IRC public hearing
First review of draft maps. Discussion and direction regarding revisions. May narrow number of draft maps under consideration.
- February 17 – IRC public hearing
Second review of draft maps. Discussion and direction regarding revisions. May narrow number of draft maps under consideration.
- Date TBD – IRC meeting (special)
Special meeting to receive additional feedback from the public on draft maps, if needed.
- February 28 – IRC public hearing
Third review of draft maps. Direction to staff on final map for adoption.
- March 16 – IRC meeting (regular)
Commission adopts final map and accompanying redistricting report.
- March 22 – City Council meeting (special)
City Council adopts first reading of the final map ordinance without alteration in accordance with the City Charter.
- April 12 – City Council meeting (regular)
City Council adopts second reading of the final map ordinance without alteration in accordance with the City Charter.

On January 10, the Commission established the following themes to be used in the development of the first set of five draft maps:

Themes to be prioritized in all draft maps:

- a. 10% Maximum Population Variance
- b. Contiguity
- c. Communities of Interest/Neighborhoods
- d. Use major arterial streets as boundaries where possible
- e. Correct the features of the 2010 map for Councilmember residences
- f. Include at least one compact student district in every map

Themes to be included in one or more draft map variation:

- a. Single, north-south West Berkeley district
- b. Topography/Transit Access/Wildfire Risk
- c. Two different maps with different configurations for two student majority districts
- d. A map that has a high level of continuity with the existing boundaries that includes changes only as required by the six mandatory criteria above.

Maps are being drafted by three-member ad-hoc subcommittee pursuant to the direction of the Commission, with assistance from commission staff.

Community Messaging and Outreach

Staff and the commission have coordinated to develop a robust outreach program throughout the redistricting process. The plan's objectives are to reach diverse communities, provide information, and encourage participation in the redistricting process.

The City's initial method of communicating with the public is through community news releases, which are sent to approximately 9,000 subscribers and posted on the City's website. Each release is followed by a cascade of related messaging across the following channels:

- Social media posts on Twitter (16,000+ followers) and Nextdoor (53 neighborhood groups)
- Emails sent to 400+ community groups and interested parties
- Targeted outreach to ~40 high-interest community groups
- Calls to contacts at local media outlets
- Paid advertisements in local media outlets
- Utilization of pass-through messaging by City Councilmembers
- Continuation of the collaborative relationship with the Associated Students of the University of California and other campus partners

When possible, IRC messages will also be re-published through the e-newsletters managed by the Berkeley Public Library and Berkeley Unified School District.

In-person outreach continues to be limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of public events also decreases during the winter months due to inclement weather. Nonetheless, Staff has coordinated four in-person outreach dates in 2022. Open house events are scheduled at Northbrae Community Church on January 22 from 1:00-3:00 p.m., and at the South Berkeley Senior Center on January 24 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. On February 1st and 3rd, staff will have an informational table at the intersection of Bancroft Way and Telegraph Avenue from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Additional in-person outreach events will be attended as they become available.

Printed Draft Maps and Final Maps

Printed maps will be available in two sizes. Large-scale maps provide a detailed view of district boundaries; however, the large size limits where they can be placed in public facilities. Smaller, ledger-sized 11"x17" map books will be provided at locations where placement of larger maps is not feasible. Map books include an overview of each proposed map, an individual page dedicated to each of the proposed districts, and related population data.

- Large-scale paper maps will be available at two locations – the Central Library at 2090 Kittredge Street, and the South Berkeley Senior Center at 2939 Ellis Street. Ledger-sized map books will also be provided at those locations.
- Ledger-sized map books will be available at each of the City's four library branches, two pools, and five community centers, the Central Administrative Offices at 2180 Milvia Street, and at the 1947 Center Street facility.

The first draft maps will be distributed to these locations within a day after they are made available to the public and published online on January 20. Maps will be redistributed as they are revised by the Commission, up to and including the final map. All maps and materials will be available online at cityofberkeley.info/redistricting/. Community of Interest forms are also already available at all of the locations described above.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

CONTACT PERSON

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