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City of Dallas hosts Town Hall/Listening Sessions to get public feedback on Redistricting

DALLAS – The City of Dallas invites the public to attend a series of town hall meetings to offer input on the City’s redistricting process, which happens every 10 years after the U.S. Census releases its data. The redistricting process is the redrawing of City Council districts from which Council Members are elected.

“Community involvement and participation is critical to the success of the redistricting process, and we’ve made it very easy for everyone to offer public input at one of our public town halls,” said Jesse Oliver, 2021 Redistricting Commission Chair. “Ultimately, we want to make a redistricting map that represents our residents and their communities.”

Earlier this year, the City Council appointed a 15-member Redistricting Commission to develop the districting plan based on the latest decennial counts in compliance with the Dallas City Charter and federal law. The Commission will host a series of eight meetings throughout the City to allow residents the option for in-person attendance. Two of those town halls, the first and last, will be held at City Hall, allowing for virtual or in-person attendance. A complete schedule of town halls and regular Redistricting Commission meetings, contact information for all redistricting commissioners, and a tool allowing Dallas residents to draw and submit their own maps is at DallasRedistricting.com. Residents may also provide feedback for redistricting commissioners any time by calling the Dallas Redistricting hotline at 214-671-5197.

The first meeting will be at 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11 at Dallas City Hall in Council Chambers (6EN) and will be accessible virtually [via Cisco webex](#). Individuals who wish to speak during a Redistricting Town Hall should register at bit.ly/2021RDCTH by 10 a.m. the day of the meeting. All speakers will have three minutes to speak about the redistricting process. Virtual speakers are required to show their video when addressing the commission.

“We are committed to making this process as fair and equitable as possible, so we’re allowing for both virtual and in-person town hall formats,” said Oliver. “Residents will have opportunity to join

us from the comfort of their own homes or in person at city-wide meetings; town halls at City Hall will also provide American Sign Language interpreters to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Oral interpretation for other languages is available upon request.”

The Redistricting Commission plans to file its recommended districting plan for City Council consideration in May 2022. The Council has 45 days after the districting plan is submitted to adopt, or modify and adopt, a new districting plan. Any modification requires approval by three-fourths of the City Council. If final action is not taken by the City Council within 45 days, the Redistricting Commission’s recommended plan becomes final.

The new districting plan will be implemented at the next general election of Dallas City Council members conducted at least 90 days following the date the final districting plan becomes effective for the City, currently projected for May 6, 2023.

The 2021 redistricting process will mark the first time since 1972 that Texas cities undertake the redistricting process without the preclearance requirements of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). Historically, Section 5 of the VRA required Texas cities to obtain approval of voting changes, including redistricting plans, from the Department of Justice prior to using them in an election. As a result of a 2014 ruling by the United States Supreme Court, Section 5 preclearance is no longer applicable. However, cities remain subject to the nondiscrimination requirements of Section 2 of the VRA.

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