

Understanding Redistricting in Minneapolis

2021 brings a once-in-a-decade opportunity for people in Minneapolis to participate in redistricting the City, creating new City ward and park district boundaries for elections in 2022 and beyond. The boundaries that were created in 2012 from the census in 2010 must be adjusted to reflect changes in the distribution and number of Minneapolis residents.

The City has 13 wards. One council member is elected to represent each ward and these 13 council members comprise the City Council, which governs the City. The City has six Park and Recreation districts. One park district representative is elected to represent each of the park districts and three representatives are elected at large. Redistricting is 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 13 wards and six Park and Recreation districts to the Charter Commission. The Charter Commission is a body of 15 commissioners appointed by the Chief Judge of Hennepin County to maintain the home rule charter for the people of the City of Minneapolis.

The Minneapolis Special School District #1, which provides public education for the entire City of Minneapolis, is divided into six election districts. The boundaries of these six election 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.

To ensure that redistricting reflects the diverse community voices of the City, the Charter Commission must appoint an Advisory Group of up to 9 eligible Minneapolis voters. This Advisory Group, with the Commission, comprise the 24-member Redistricting Group. All members work equally with staff to prepare maps. However, approval of the final boundaries rests with the Charter Commission.

How does the process work?

The Redistricting Group creates maps of boundary lines using computer software programs, with the assistance of staff skilled in use of such software. Maps may be revised based on feedback from the Redistricting Group and from 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 Legislative Information Management System website](#).

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, before the last two public hearings, the Redistricting Group must submit the proposed 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 and rules adopted in 2021 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 fewer 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's 2020 census population divided by 13, to keep them as close in population as possible. Ten years ago, the acceptable range was 27,958 to 30,900. Similarly, the six Park and Recreation districts must have populations that are within five percent of the 2020 census City population divided by 6. Ten years ago, the acceptable range was 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. Similarly, Minneapolis City wards can cross Park and Recreation district lines.
- (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, including:

- (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. (Principle I.M)
- (2) Change current boundaries as little as possible. (Principle I.N)

[View the complete list of the redistricting principles and rules adopted May 5, 2021](#) (LIMS file CH2021-00021)

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 2022 primary and November 2022 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 March 29, 2022, whichever comes first. Park districts must be established a few weeks later, but no later than April 26, 2022.

For details about the State's work, please check out the [MN Legislature's Geographic Information Services for Redistricting 2020](#).

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 and information about drawing maps will be publicized on the City's Legislative Information Management System website.

(b) Subscribe to meeting notices from <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MPLS/subscriber/new>

(2) Submit ideas at public meetings. The first two "listening session" meetings (likely before mapping data is available) are anticipated for September and October 2021, with two public hearings in November 2021-December 2021 and two additional public hearings in February-March 2022. Locations and times will be posted in advance on the City's Legislative Information Management System website.

(3) Email questions, ideas, or documents to the Redistricting Group care of the City Clerk at Redistricting@minneapolismn.gov.

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

(4) Mail should be directed to:

Office of the City Clerk
Attn: Redistricting Project Manager
304 City Hall, 350 S 5th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55415

See the City's **Redistricting** web presence for more information on timelines, rules, and other background information:

<https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/redistricting/>

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department at 612-673-3737. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850.

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