## Escondido Redistricting 2021:

##  Frequently Asked Questions

**Why is the City of Escondido enacting the redistricting process now?**

 All cities with city council districts must engage in “redistricting” every 10 years following the decennial federal census in order to ensure that all districts continue to have equal populations and follow all state and federal laws. In 2013, the Escondido City Council transitioned to a district-based voting system to elect its 4 City Council Members, replacing its at-large election system. The City of Escondido must now ensure that no changes are needed in light of the new 2020 federal census data and must go through the regular decennial redistricting process.

**How can I get involved in the redistricting process?**

The redistricting process was designed to be as transparent and accessible as possible. You are invited to attend one or more of the Independent Redistricting Commission meetings or the City Council meetings to provide input in person. Please see below for the schedule. You can also provide input by mail or email or by dropping off materials to the Commission. Please see below for contact information.

**What is the timeline and process for redistricting in Escondido?**

The redistricting process timeline is prescribed by the **2013 Consent Decree.** This requires that the City conduct an open and transparent process that ensures the full and meaningful public consideration of and comment on the drawing of district lines. Thus, the Commission shall provide public notice of and hold a minimum of six (6) public hearings at which all Escondido citizens will have equal opportunity to comment on the drawing of district lines. The public hearings shall be held at six geographically diverse locations throughout Escondido. Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino translation services shall be provided at each of these six public hearings.

After a Preliminary Redistricting Plan has been finalized by the Commission, the Commission shall hold at least three (3) public hearings in various geographic areas of the City before it makes any modifications. These three public hearings shall be conducted in both English and Spanish.

After having heard comments from the public on the preliminary plan, the Commission shall, in consultation with the expert consultant, approve a Recommended Districting Plan by majority vote. The approved Recommended Redistricting Plan will be submitted to the City Council for its up or down approval.

The City Council shall hold at least one (1) public hearing on the Recommended Redistricting Plan of the Commission before any adoption of a Final Redistricting Plan.

**When and where are these public hearings?**

| Date | Time  | Event | Location |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| January 5, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Public Input Hearing | District 1Mission Middle School |
| January 8, 2022 | 9:00 a.m. | Public Input Hearing | District 2Reidy Creek Elementary School |
| January 10, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Public Input Hearing | District 3East ValleyCommunity Center |
| January 13, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Public Input Hearing | District 4San Pasqual High School |
| January 18, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Public Input Hearing | District 1Washington ParkRecreation Center |
| January 20, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Public Input Hearing | District 2Park Ave. Community Center |
| January 24, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Independent Redistricting Commission Meeting: Approval of Preliminary Redistricting Plan | Council Chambers |
| January 27, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Independent Redistricting Commission Meeting: Approval of Preliminary Redistricting Plan | Council Chambers |
| January 31, 2022 | Publish Preliminary Redistricting Plan Online for Public Comment |
| February 3, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Public Feedback Hearing | District 3Orange Glen High School |
| February 10, 2022 | 5:00 p.m. | Public Feedback Hearing | District 4Del Lago Academy |
| February 17, 2022 | 5:00 p.m. | Public Feedback Hearing | Escondido Library |
| February 23, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Independent Redistricting Commission Meeting: Approve Recommended Redistricting Plan | Council Chambers |
| March 9, 2022 | 5:00 p.m. | Public Council Hearing on Recommended Redistricting Plan | Council Chambers |
| March 16, 2022 | 5:00 p.m. | Public Council Hearing on Recommended Redistricting Plan | Council Chambers |
| March 23, 2022 | 5:00 p.m. | Council Votes on Final Map | Council Chambers |

**How are the districts drawn?**

The Commission's decisions will be governed by federal and state legal requirements as well as criteria specific to Escondido. The US Constitution requires districts contain roughly equal populations and it and the federal Voting Rights Act (FVRA) prohibit racial discrimination. The federal Voting Rights Act also prohibits discrimination because of language minority status[[1]](#footnote-0) in addition to practices that have a discriminatory effect, such as at-large elections or districts that make it harder for a racial or language minority group to elect a representative of choice.

Escondido's decisions will also be governed by federal and state law, and the 2013 Consent Decree. In ranked order, the Commission must address the following criteria:

1. Districts shall comply with the US Constitution, including reasonably equal population.
2. Districts shall comply with the federal Voting Rights Act.
3. Districts shall be contiguous and drawn to encourage compactness.
4. Districts shall respect the geographic integrity of neighborhoods and communities of interest.
5. Districts shall not be drawn to favor or discriminate against a political party, incumbent or candidate.

**What is a Community of Interest (COI)?**

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A Community of Interest or COI is a group of people in a defined geographic location that share a common bond or interest. A Community of Interest is a “a contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of fair and effective representation.” It is important to keep communities and neighborhoods together in new council districts because it may help ensure fair representation for that community.

**What information do you need from me?**

The Independent Redistricting Commission is seeking public input and testimony throughout this process. Because there are no datasets available for Communities of Interest, we appreciate your help to define them for the City of Escondido. Please tell us what defines your Community of Interest, where it is located (including physical boundaries) and why it should stay together.

Resources for Submitting COIs:

* Understanding the term “Communities of Interest”
* Escondido Written COI Form
* How to Submit Your Escondido COI Online

**How many people should be in each district?**

As counted by the 2020 Census, the City of Escondido had a total population of 151,516. The decennial census is the only survey that counts everyone, so we have to use those data to draw districts. There are 4 council districts. To figure out the ‘ideal population’ for each council district, take the total population (151,516) and divide it by the number of districts (4) which equals 37,879 persons.

**Do we use the number of voters to draw districts?**

Districts are drawn using the total population as counted by the last census. Everyone who was counted, irrespective of age, residency status, or other demographics has to be assigned to a district. Districts are not equalized using voters, registered voters, or citizenship.

**Who is on the Commission?**

The Commission is made up of seven Escondido voters who were interested in serving in the effort to draw district lines. They applied to serve on the Independent Districting Commission and were selected by a Selection Panel of three retired judges who live in San Diego County.

The Commission is made up of the following individuals:

* Commissioner: Robert Case
* Commissioner: Carolyn Clemens
* Commissioner: Amy Dao Doan
* Commissioner: Kristy Jurgensen
* Commissioner: Xochitl Reyes
* Commissioner: Juan Reynoso
* Commissioner: Mariela Saldana

**What are the requirements to be a Commissioner?**

Each of the Commissioners had to comply with certain criteria. They have to be Escondido voters. In addition, they had to certify that they had not been involved in certain political behaviors in the last 10 years. They were not allowed to: (1) have been a candidate for local, state or federal elected office, (2) been a paid employee or consultant for a California political candidate or political committee, (3) been an official or paid employee of a California political party, (4) made donations greater than $5,000 in any 2-year period, and (5) cannot be a current candidate for any local, state, or federal elected office. In addition, Commission members must agree not to run for Escondido City Council for five years after their service on the Commission.

**Why should I get involved in the redistricting process?**

We would like to hear from you so we can make informed decisions about how to redraw the Council district lines. Specifically, we need information from you about your neighborhoods and communities of interest. You are the expert who knows your community and neighborhood! If we know the geographic locations of the Communities of Interest in Escondido, we can consider them when drawing lines and we won’t inadvertently split them! Keeping communities together in the same district can help to get more responsive representation.

**How do I get answers to additional questions?**

If you have more questions, we are available to answer them!

* You can attend the community meeting or any of the City council hearings
* Or email your question to: redistricting@escondido.org
* Or mail your question to: Escondido Independent Redistricting Commission, c/o Escondido City Clerk's office, 201 N. Broadway, Escondido, CA 92025
* Or call us: 760-839-4617
1. The VRA defines "language minority" as Asian, Native American, Alaska Native or Spanish heritage languages [↑](#footnote-ref-0)