



City of Seattle
Seattle Redistricting Commission

Commission Chair Patience Malaba

SEATTLE REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Purpose: The Seattle Redistricting Commission is responsible for overseeing the development of new City Council District lines in response to the completed 2020 Census.

Commission Members:

Eliseo Juárez
Patience Malaba: Chair
Greg Nickels
Rory O'Sullivan
Neelima Shah

Commission staff:

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City Of Seattle
600 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98104

December 30th, 2022

Dear City of Seattle Mayor and Members of the Council,

The Seattle Redistricting Commission is proud to have concluded the process of adopting the new Council boundary plan.

With support of City staff, on November 8, 2022, we submitted [all necessary documentation to file the plan with the City Clerk](#), that was then filed with King County Elections on November 14, 2022.

The Commissioners represented diverse interests, we were dedicated to working together in balancing different and often conflicting factors to reach consensus and do the best job possible to deliver a successful plan. While the process was challenging, it was also a great opportunity to get to know and serve our city better. We learned many lessons that we believe are important to share with all of you and with the next Redistricting Commission.

Our recommended changes below were proposed by at least one member of the commission. These changes include those that require a charter amendment as well as operational suggestions. We also wanted to highlight our successes and what went well.

Recommendations that, we consider, require a Charter Amendment:

- Though, we recognize, the value of the shared leadership model that we created, a **non-voting sixth member** who is the permanent chair to help run meetings and keep tasks and agendas with staff would be a valuable addition. At times the rotating chair role was a distracting task that took away valuable input and participation of voting commissioners.
- We suggest removing the District Master term, and instead use **GIS consultant**, as it better reflects the job and responsibilities of this key component of the process.
- A possible amendment clause that offers **steps that can be taken in the event of a delay in commissioner's appointments**, both by Council and Mayor.
- Clearly state that **Seattle residency** is a requirement to qualify as a commission candidate.

Operational process recommendations:

- **Early Commissioners Recruitment.** Ensure the complete recruitment for a full Redistricting Commission as soon as possible to allow the success of the workplan, technical team and community engagement assemble earlier in the process.
- **Extended and Robust Outreach and Engagement** ahead of, during and after the districting process. We recommend that the redistricting process itself have more attention drawn to it by the city. The process, while only occurring once every ten years, is very important. Begin to activate residents being aware of the process, what the Redistricting process entails, and what the possible tools could be without being prescriptive. We believe that an early outreach and engagement process should start, perhaps after the decennial Census outreach work concludes.
- Commissioners recognize, both City staff and the GIS team as outstanding support. The public outreach was truly exceptional, and we would like to see this to be continued and enhanced.
- **Ensure demands of the process are clear to appointees.** The process required a significant amount of time and responsibility, the compensation for commissioners should be increased for the next process.
- **Accessible Mapping tools.** While the commission chose to work with nationally recognized GIS mapping tool, (Dave's Redistricting App,) the next commission should have its own accessible tool to ensure more public submits their own maps. We encourage the next Commission to include creating an interactive mapping tool in the GIS contracting contract.
- **City software/technology access to commissioners.** Ensuring easier tools/platform, that will allow regular members of the public, to perform commission's work by accessing the information in a more seamless manner, including for instance, allocating a City owned- device

Successful highlights to consider including:

- We are proud of the legacy of the first Seattle Redistricting Commission, having conducted more than 53 regular and special commission meetings, 10 public forums regular and special Redistricting Commission meetings, more than 40 community public education events that reached more than 500 community and neighborhood leaders and general public.

- We have greatly appreciated the active engagement and participation of the public. We received more than 3100 public comments and map submissions from the different neighborhoods, communities, coalitions, and general public of the City of Seattle.

Through negotiation and compromise, Commissioners were able to produce the [new Council boundary plan](#).

We have entrusted Department of Neighborhoods' staff to work with all necessary collaborators on a public post-Redistricting education plan, that will include accessible visuals and an expanded report of the process.

We'd like to thank the City of Seattle, Council, Mayor and staff for the trust and support given to us as a Commission to serve the City of Seattle

Sincerely,

2021- 2022 Seattle Redistricting Commission

Patience Malaba, Commission Chair,

Eliseo Juarez, Commissioner

Greg Nickles, Commissioner

Rory O'Sullivan Commissioner

Neelima Shah, Commissioner