

A Citizen's Guide

PREPARING FOR THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE'S REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARINGS



January 20, 2022

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REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

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**A Citizen Guide to Prepare for the 2022 COJ Redistricting Public Hearings
was developed by the following Organizations:**

Democratic Women's Information Network (DWIN)

Beaches Activists Movement (BAM)

Jacksonville Young Democrats (JYD)

Duval County Black Caucus (DCBC)

Duval County Senior Caucus

For Our Future Fund

The Tributary

Duval County Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida (DCHC)

Duval County Democratic Executive Committee (DCDEC)

January 20, 2022

Questions for the 2022 City of Jacksonville

Redistricting Public Hearings

DIRECTIONS: Review the questions below and use the one(s) that address your concerns about redistricting during the Public Hearings. Feel free to state the questions in your own words. Questions 2, 8, 10, 11 & 12 are **priority** issues we hope will be raised by as many individuals and groups as possible.

I. General Questions About the 2021-2022 Redistricting Process

1. **Why did the COJ Council members** decide to make as few changes as possible to the current maps – in other words to preserve the status quo – rather than start from scratch?
2. **What criteria were used by** the Special Committee on Redistricting to draw the redistricting maps in Duval County? How were these criteria determined?
3. **The legal guidance provided to the Special Committee** on Redistricting by the COJ Office of General Council highlighted two ways to count population. Why did the City Council decide to use total population rather than citizen voting age population? [The “citizen voting age population is favored by the Supreme Court and 11th circuit Court of Appeals” – COJ Office of General Counsel, Memorandum- “Redistricting Process, Legal Analysis for Council & School Board Districts, February 23, 2021, p.1].
4. **Which of the districts are most** and least impacted by the proposed maps?
5. **Since one of the criteria used to draw the maps was to equalize the populations** between districts, why are Council Districts 7, 8, 9 & 10 (districts with the highest Black voters) and district 12 limited to 67,000 - 68,000 total population vs. 72,000-74,000 people in each of the other 9 council districts?
6. **What steps were taken to** prepare City Council members for their role in the redistricting process?

II. Impact and Outcomes Related to the Redistricting Process

7. **What changes can be made to the redistricting maps as currently drawn** to improve the voting effectiveness of Black and Hispanic voters throughout Duval County vs. just in council districts 7, 8, 9 & 10 (in support of the one person, one vote principle)?

8. **Have the proposed maps** shifted the numerical representation, thus, voting advantage of either major political party, significantly in any District or At-Large Group?
9. **Why has the City of Jacksonville not adopted the intentions** of Florida Constitutional Amendments 5 and 6 as guiding standards for our local redistricting process? In 2010, 63% of Florida voters approved the Fair Districts amendments to the Florida Constitution to express their desire for a fair and balanced redistricting process for Florida’s House, Senate and Congressional districts. These amendments called for districts to be compact, contiguous, equal in population and to protect the voting rights of racial and language minorities. They also explicitly prohibit drawing lines “to favor an incumbent or political party”.
10. **The Supervisor of Elections runs a District Demographic Profile** report monthly. It would help all of us understand the impact of the draft maps if we could see the latest District Demographic Report run against a Demographic Report based on the currently proposed map. This will show any lessening/strengthening of voting advantage by Party and race. *Can this be completed by February 10, 2022 and shared with the public?*
11. **Isn’t the proposed redistricting map** subject to legal challenge based on racial “packing’ in districts 7, 8, 9 & 10?
12. **How will information about** the 2021-2022 COJ Redistricting process, from inception, map drawing methodology, public hearing citizen questions/comments and final redistricting mapping outcomes, be communicated to the public?

III. **COJ Citizen Input and Involvement in the Redistricting Process**

13. **What strategies were used to educate COJ residents** about redistricting at the start of the redistricting process and their role in it?
14. **How were COJ residents included in the decisions** that went into redrawing district maps? For example, did council members hold informational meetings in their districts to explain the process and invite comments?
15. **What resources/support were offered** to help COJ residents draw their own maps if they wanted to?
16. **Would an Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC)** be a feasible option for future COJ redistricting efforts?

17. **How could the City of Jacksonville have created** a more welcoming or “user friendly” environment for COJ residents to attend Special Redistricting meetings and feel comfortable asking questions or making public comments during the redistricting process? You should know that COJ residents tried to take an active part in redistricting activities but did not find a very friendly process (despite a May 2021 COJ Memo that specified how the redistricting meetings should be held to promote citizen involvement):

- Special Redistricting meetings were held during weekdays at 12, 1, 2 or 3pm in the afternoon – which made it hard for working voters to attend
- Public comment opportunities were inconsistently offered or not at all. Being allowed to provide comments at the beginning of the redistricting meetings prevented COJ residents from being able to respond to topics discussed IN the meeting.
- During several meetings, maps, draft ordinance, and other materials were not made available for public view as City Council members discussed them.

PRIORITY CONCERNS OF CITIZENS DURING THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS

1	Lack of citizen engagement/involvement during the redistricting process
2	Poor communication between Councilmembers and citizens. COJ citizens complained of difficulty reaching Councilmembers to answer questions about redistricting or were referred to the COJ website where information is often difficult to find.
3	Limited public access to working maps during some of the redistricting meetings
4	The inclusion of “protecting the incumbent” as a key guiding principle in drawing maps – a priority which directly conflicts with the statewide redistricting standards approved by a strong majority of Florida voters in 2010. While these Fair District Amendments legally apply only to statewide redistricting, <i>local jurisdictions can adopt them.</i>
5	Failure to use Florida State Constitutional Amendments 5&6 as publicly endorsed standards to ensure equity and fairness in the redistricting mapping process
6	The decision to use <i>total population vs. voting age population</i> as criteria to promote population parity between districts.
7	City of Jacksonville failure to use the federal government (Office of Management and Budget and U.S Census Bureau) definition of race. By federal definition, 49% of Jacksonville is non-Hispanic white, while COJ indicates that 52% of Jacksonville is white which “overstates the white population and undercounts Black and Asian residents” (Andrew Pantazi, Tributary, 12-16-2021).
8	The high percentage (aka “packing”) of Black voters in Council Districts 7, 8, 9 & 10 in the draft maps undermines Black voters’ ability to impact citywide politics. According to Andrew Pantazi, “the Black residents range from 61% to 70% of the total population in 4 city council districts, which means 55% of Duval County residents live in 4 out of 14 districts.” (Tributary, 1-11-2022).
9	Lack of racial and voting pattern analysis of COJ Council Districts. As the Jacksonville’s General Counsel’s February 23, 2021, memorandum makes clear, it is a complicated matter to navigate the assortment of state and federal laws intended to protect the vote of minorities without engaging in racial gerrymandering. Page 6 of the COJ memorandum lists data collection that will assist in redistricting decision-making. If this analysis was done, it was not shared publicly. If it was not done, how were decisions made?

CITIZEN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES IN THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS

- 1 The City of Jacksonville should request that the Supervisor of Elections run two comparative District Demographic Reports - one based on current districts, the other on the recently drafted maps.** This comparison should be shared with City Council members and the public as a useful snapshot of how the proposed maps alter demographics like race, age, and party designation in each voting district.
- 2 The City of Jacksonville needs to analyze racial and voting patterns of COJ residents based on the Office of General Council (OGC) guidelines before the conclusion of the 2021-2022 City Council redistricting process.** If implemented, this recommendation would ensure fairness and deflect the likelihood of legal challenges.
- 3 The City of Jacksonville should apply the Federal Government’s (Office of Management & Budget and U.S Census Bureau) definition of race to the current redistricting maps** and adjust those maps as necessary to accurately reflect and protect the racial diversity of Duval County before the conclusion of the 2022 City Council redistricting process.
- 4 The City of Jacksonville Special Committee on Redistricting should create an “Executive Summary” that describes the 2021-2022 redistricting process** - to include map drawing methodology, data collected/reviewed, outcomes, and the impact of citizen questions/comments from the redistricting public hearings. This report should be broadly disseminated to the public before the end of the 2022 City Council session.
- 5 The City of Jacksonville should create an Ad Hoc Task Force** (comprised of COJ residents who are actively involved and respected members of the community - such as CPAC members - and Council members who represent their districts) to develop a plan to promote resident involvement in redistricting. This process should begin during the 2022 City Council session.
- 6 The City of Jacksonville should adopt the basic redistricting standards of Florida Constitutional Amendments 5 & 6 to guide future redistricting.** Efforts to include this in the COJ Charter should begin during the 2023 City Council session. If created, the Ad Hoc Task Force (Recommendation # 5) could provide the citizen leadership and infrastructure support for this to occur. The Fair Districts Now Coalition could be a helpful resource to use (www.fairdistrictsnow.org)
- 7 The City of Jacksonville should explore the merits of using an *Independent Redistricting Commission* (IRC) for future redistricting efforts.** Many states and cities have created such commissions and there is much to be learned from their experiences. This effort should begin during the 2023 City Council session so that necessary changes can be incorporated in the City Charter for implementation during the 2030 COJ redistricting process.

PREPARING FOR THE REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARINGS – Part I

The Redistricting Process in Jacksonville/Duval County occurs every 10 years in response to population changes from the U.S. Census data – changes that will impact our lives for the next decade and beyond. How the maps are drawn in the districts where we live will affect our voting decisions – most importantly, our ability to vote for the candidates that we choose.

The Redistricting Public Hearings provide an opportunity for Jacksonville residents to ask QUESTIONS, express CONCERNS and make RECOMMENDATIONS for immediate or long-term changes to the overall redistricting process and how the City Council District maps are drawn.

PARTICIPATE IN THE PUBLIC HEARINGS AND HAVE YOUR VOICES HEARD!

2022 REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULE	
Thursday, January 27, 2022, 6:00-7:30pm	Ed White High School Auditorium 1700 Old Middleburg Road N, Jacksonville, FL. 32210
Thursday, February 3, 2022, 6:00-7:30pm	Atlantic Coast High School Auditorium 9735 R.G. Skinner Pkwy, Jacksonville, FL. 32256
Thursday, February 10, 2022, 6:00-7:30pm	First Coast High School Auditorium 590 Duval Station Road, Jacksonville, FL. 32218
Thursday, February 17, 2022, 6:00-7:30pm	William M. Raines High School Auditorium 3663 Raines Avenue, Jacksonville, FL. 32209

MAKE A PLAN IN ADVANCE FOR HOW YOU WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE PUBLIC HEARINGS - WHAT YOU WILL SAY - Your Voice Matters!

- 1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK! If you are not sure about how the maps drawn impacts your district – a) Call your City Council District Member and b) Go to the COJ website, www.coj.net, and click on the Special Redistricting Committee section – the archived meeting of October 28, 2021, has the most current maps that you can review.**
- 2. ORGANIZE neighbors, friends, members of your church family, civic and social groups to attend one or more of the Public Hearings.**
- 3. ARRIVE EARLY! Complete the “Speakers Card” that will be available at the Public Hearings until 6:30pm. You must complete the “Speakers Card” to be able to speak (be sure to submit it to a COJ staff so your name can be called when it’s your turn).**
- 4. You will have 3 minutes to speak!** The Public Hearings will be live streamed on the COJ website. A COJ staff member will also take notes to document your comments.
- 5. COVID PRECAUTIONS: WEAR YOUR MASKS! Practice Social Distancing**
- 6. Use the QUESTIONS, CONCERNS and RECOMMENDATIONS that address the needs of your community from the redistricting resources** developed by community organizations concerned about citizen involvement in the redistricting process - the Democratic Women’s Information Network (DWIN), Beaches Activists Movement (BAM), Jacksonville Young Democrats (JYD), Duval County Black Caucus (DCBC), Duval County Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida (DCHC), Duval County Senior Caucus, Duval County Democratic Executive Committee (DCDEC), The Tributary and the For Our Future Fund.

PREPARING FOR THE REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARINGS – Part II

DIRECTIONS: Use the template below to organize your thoughts and words to address the redistricting public hearings. This document is for your use only. Be sure to complete the “Speakers Card” by 6:30pm and give to the COJ staff. **You will have 3 minutes to speak.**

MY NAME IS: _____

I LIVE AT: _____

(Include address, neighborhood name, City Council District and how long you’ve lived in the district)

REDISTRICTING MAPS: *I would like to see the redistricting map for my district be redrawn/changed to address:* (cite specific problems that you see in your neighborhood that are impacted by the district boundary changes made. Name the specific boundary designation if possible).

REDISTRICTING QUESTIONS: *Questions that I have about redistricting are?* (Use any of the redistricting questions on the list of questions provided, especially questions 2, 8, 10, 11, 12).

REDISTRICTING CONCERNS: *My concerns about redistricting are?* (Use any of the prioritized redistricting concerns on the list made available to you).

REDISTRICTING RECOMMENDATIONS: *Recommendations that I have for changes to be made in the redistricting process are?* (Select from the list of recommendations provided or develop your own. We’ve prioritized the list of recommendations to emphasize what we feel is most important).

REDISTRICTING RESOURCES

[Why You Should Care About Redistricting](https://news.wjct.org/first-coast/2021-11-02/why-you-should-care-about-redistricting). (Go to: <https://news.wjct.org/first-coast/2021-11-02/why-you-should-care-about-redistricting>)

[Gerrymandering in Duval?](https://jaxtrib.org/2022/01/18/see-jacksonvilles-gerrymandered-city-council-districts-for-yourself-with-the-tributarys-new-tool/) - Use the Jax Tributary's online tool to explore racial & party distribution in the draft maps. (Go to: <https://jaxtrib.org/2022/01/18/see-jacksonvilles-gerrymandered-city-council-districts-for-yourself-with-the-tributarys-new-tool/>)

Main Resource Page for the [Duval County Special Redistricting Committee](https://www.coj.net/city-council/standing-committees/redistricting-special-committee) (Go to: <https://www.coj.net/city-council/standing-committees/redistricting-special-committee>) Follow links on this page to find the General counsel's legal guidance, minutes of Redistricting meetings, draft maps, etc.

Find your own Representative at [City Council Contact information](https://www.coj.net/city-council) (Go to: <https://www.coj.net/city-council>)
<https://www.duval elections.com/Election-Information/Council-District-Boundaries>]

For more on Florida's Fair Districts Constitutional Amendments, see [Fair Districts Now](https://fairdistrictsnow.org/) (Goto: <https://fairdistrictsnow.org/>) and [AllontheLine](https://www.allontheline.org/florida) (Goto: <https://www.allontheline.org/florida>).