

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 16, 2023

PREPARED BY: Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk

REQUEST: PALM DESERT REDISTRICTING 2023: PUBLIC HEARING #3
REGARDING REDISTRICTING OF CITY COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Conduct a public hearing to receive public input on district boundaries.
2. Select two (2) to three (3) “focus” maps and provide direction on any proposed revisions.
3. Receive and file a report on the redistricting process and permissible criteria to be considered to redraw district boundaries.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On June 22, 2023, the City Council unanimously directed staff to take the necessary steps to transition to five single-member districts prior to the November 2024 Election and to eliminate use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in future elections. On August 24, 2023, the City Council adopted the Redistricting Public Education and Outreach Plan.

The City is initiating a redistricting process to shift from the current two-district system to five single-member districts. The redistricting process will determine where the new City Council district lines will be drawn. The new districts will impact how voters elect City Council Members until the next redistricting process following the 2030 Census. The districts must be drawn using the 2020 census data and in compliance with the FAIR MAPS Act, which was adopted by the California legislature as Assembly Bill 849 and took effect January 1, 2020, and was updated by Assembly Bill 764 that takes effect January 1, 2024.

Under the amended Act, the City Council shall draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority (Elections Code 21621):

1. Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the Voting Rights Act.
2. Geographically contiguous.
3. Undivided neighborhoods and “communities of interest” (socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together).
4. Easily identifiable boundaries.
5. Geographical compactness (do not bypass one group of people to get to a more distant group of people).
6. The districting body shall not adopt election district boundaries for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against an incumbent, political candidate, or political party.

Once the prioritized criteria are met, other traditional districting principles can be considered, such as:

1. Future population growth.
2. ~~Respect voters’ choice/continuity in office~~ (Due to the passage of Assembly Bill 764, this criterion may no longer be considered).

District 1 was population adjusted following the 2020 Census and resulted in a majority/minority voting district. Upon review of the City’s voting age population data, preserving District 1 as a majority/minority voting district (a district in which an identified minority comprises the majority of voting age population) is possible while remaining in compliance with the other mapping requirements noted above and the terms of the settlement agreement. Therefore, it is recommended that the City Council keep District 1 in its current configuration.

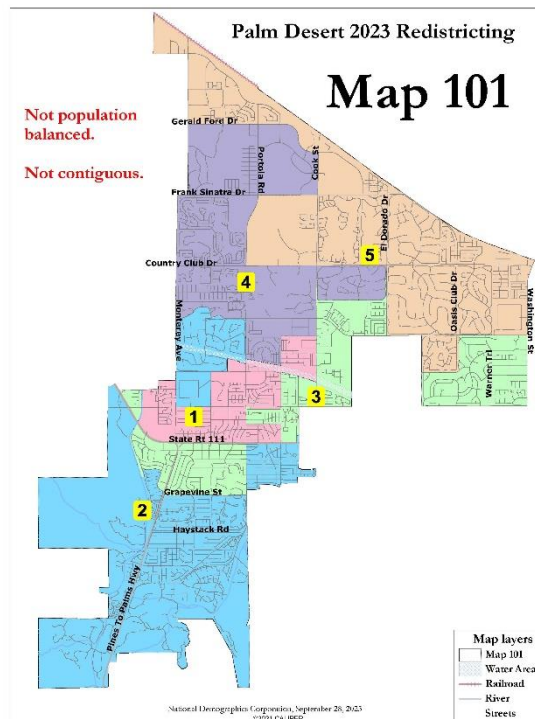
The purpose of this public hearing is to receive City Council and community input on the draft maps. The City Council is requested to select two to three “focus” maps for further consideration and may request revisions to any of the draft map(s). Any revised maps will be brought back at a fourth public hearing, scheduled for December 14, 2023.

Sequencing of Elections

When considering the sequencing of elections, the City Council must take into consideration public testimony related to the sequencing of elections and whether a particular area has a history of being under-represented and relatively low turnout and thus should be assigned a to the higher-turnout Presidential 2024 election cycle. Secondly, it is standard practice to match the district election years to the year of the resident officeholder. The sequencing of elections will not result in a shortened term for any officeholder.

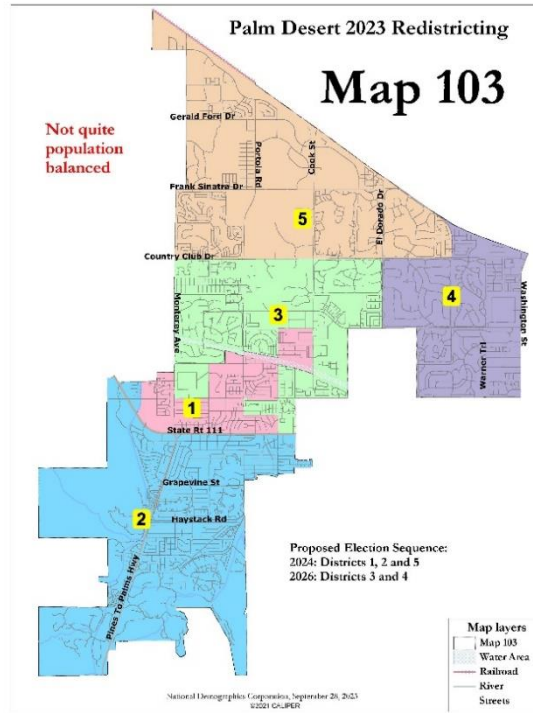
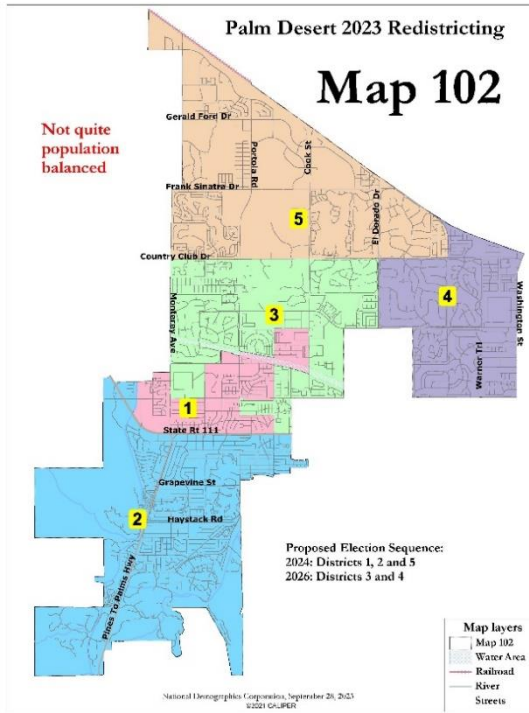
Map 101, Public Submission

Map 101 was submitted by a member of the public. The author did not provide any comments related to developing this map. Analysis indicates the map exhibits a population deviation of 14.51% and is not geographically contiguous, which is not permitted under the FAIR MAPS Act.

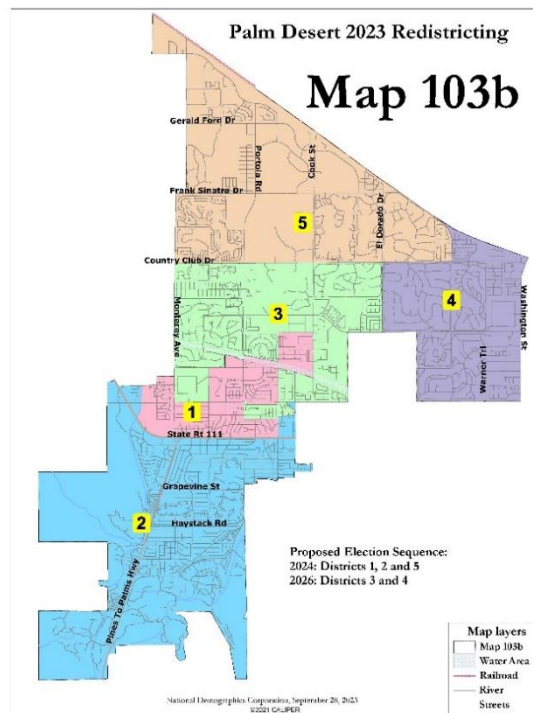
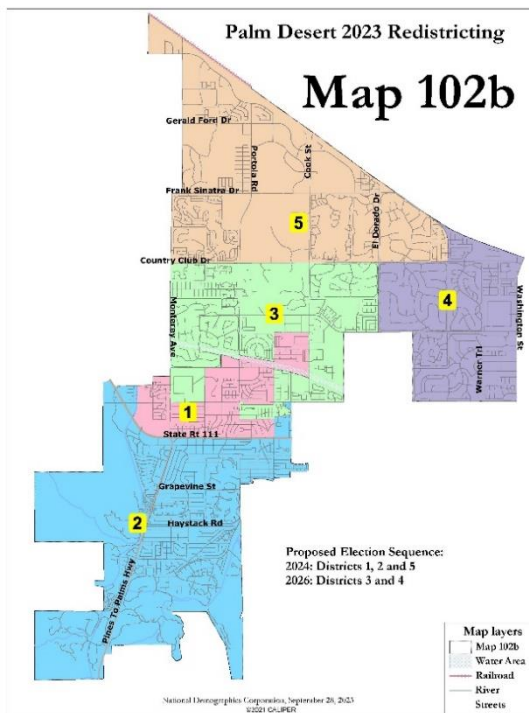


Maps 102 and 103, Public Submission

Maps 102 and 103 are public submissions and are identical. The authors provided written comments related to developing these maps (see Attachment 4). Analysis indicates that the maps exhibit a population deviation of 10.31% which is slightly higher than allowed.

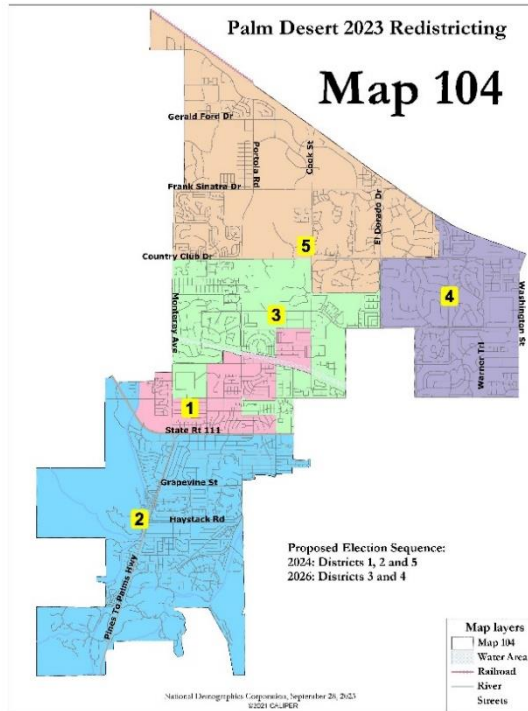


The City's demographer prepared Map 102b and 103b (still identical maps) with minimal changes for population balance. Analysis indicates that the maps exhibit a population deviation of 8.97%.



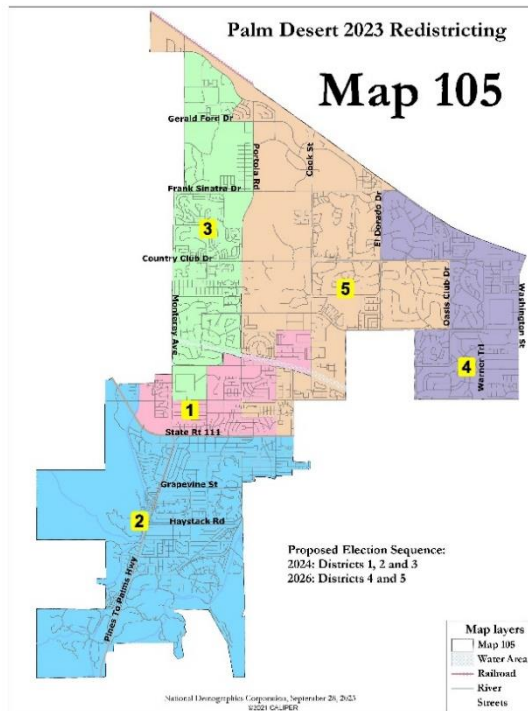
Map 104, Demographer Submission

Map 104 was submitted by the City’s demographer. Analysis indicates that the map exhibits a population deviation of 8.75%.



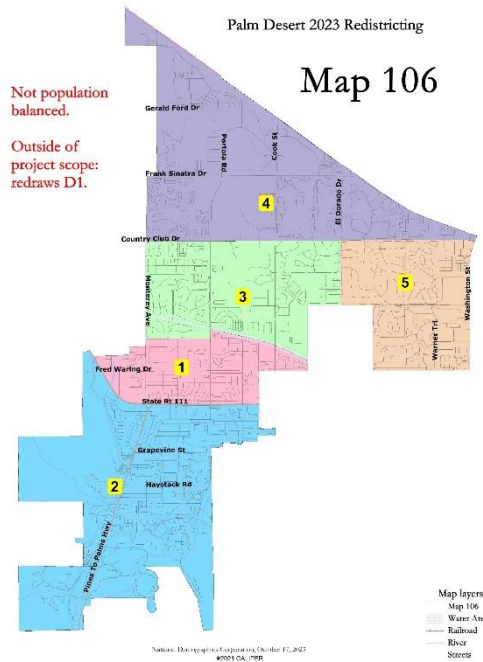
Map 105, Demographer Submission

Map 105 was submitted by the City’s demographer. Analysis indicates that the map exhibits a population deviation of 6.50%.



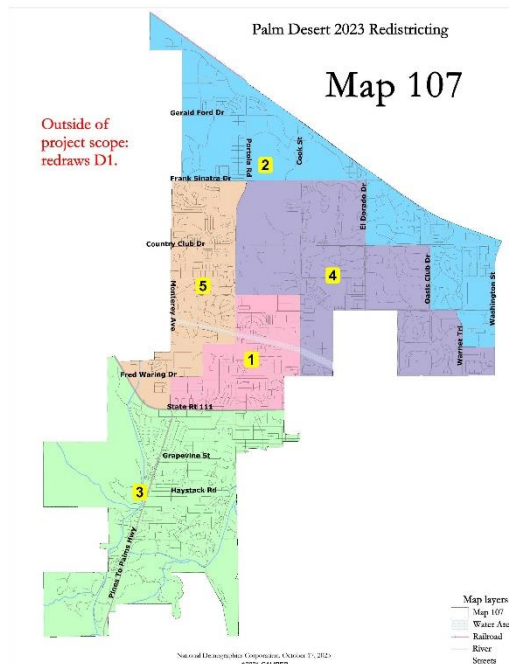
Map 106, Public Submission

Map 106 was submitted by a member of the public. The author did not provide any comments related to developing this map. Analysis indicates the map exhibits a population deviation of 13.85% which is not permitted under the FAIR MAPS Act. In addition, this map significantly alters District 1, which would go against the terms of the settlement agreement.



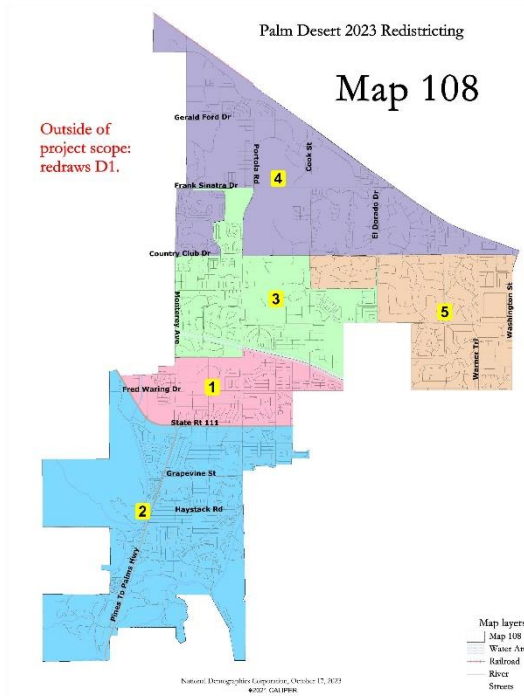
Map 107, Public Submission

Map 107 was submitted by a member of the public. The author did not provide any comments related to developing this map. Analysis indicates the map exhibits a population deviation of 6.43%. However, this map significantly alters District 1, which would go against the terms of the settlement agreement.



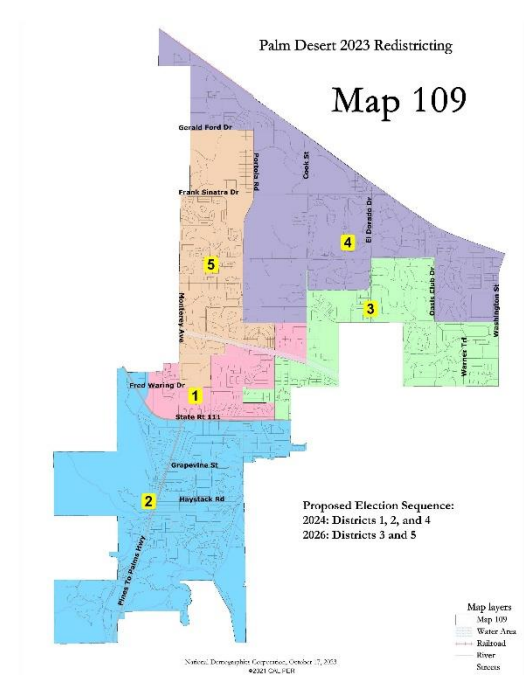
Map 108, Public Submission

Map 108 was submitted by a member of the public. The author did not provide any comments related to developing this map. Analysis indicates the map exhibits a population deviation of 4.81%. However, this map significantly alters District 1, which would go against the terms of the settlement agreement.



Map 109, Demographer Submission

Map 109 was submitted by the City’s demographer. Analysis indicates that the map exhibits a population deviation of 8.59%.



The City has posted all draft maps to the City’s redistricting website: <https://redistrictpd.org/>, which includes an interactive review map tool which can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Future Projected Growth

In June 2023, City staff provided a map depicting residential projects already approved or under construction north of Fred Waring Drive. As previously noted, the City may consider future population growth when selecting a final map provided that federal and state criteria have been met. The below chart summarizes the number of units and projected population growth in each of the districts as represented on the draft maps eligible for adoption.

	Map 102b/103b		Map 104		Map 105		Map 109	
	Units	Population	Units	Population	Units	Population	Units	Population
District 5	4,200	8,904	4,200	8,904	2,457	5,209	1,488	3,155
District 4	69	146	69	146	69	146	3,130	6,635
District 3	418	886	418	886	2,161	4,581	69	146

Based on the above chart, Maps 105 and 109 achieve a greater balance in dividing future population growth in north Palm Desert. By balancing future population growth in the northern area there may be fewer boundary adjustments following the 2030 Census.

Note: The Merle Self-Help Lots A and B totaling 14 units/30 population was excluded from the above chart, as these properties are located in District 1. Population projections of 2.12 per unit are based on the total unit count multiplied by the average household size in Palm Desert per the US Census Bureau's data compiled under the 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

Public Participation

The public is encouraged to participate and provide input at community workshops and public hearings. The public may provide input during the public comment period of these meetings or by contacting the City Clerk’s Office via email or phone:

City of Palm Desert
 Attn: Anthony Mejia, City Clerk
 73-510 Fred Waring Drive
 Palm Desert, CA 92260
cityclerk@palmdesert.gov
 (760) 346-0611

The public may also subscribe to a mailing list to stay informed about upcoming redistricting meetings by contacting the City Clerk’s Office as noted above.

Additionally, City staff are available to present at any civic or community group meetings on the redistricting process and how to participate. Please contact the City Clerk’s Office to schedule a presentation.

Community Workshop #1

On September 6, 2023, at 6 p.m., the City conducted a Redistricting Community Workshop at the Palm Desert City Hall, Administrative Conference Room, and via Zoom. City staff facilitated a brief presentation and a robust question-and-answer period. However, no attendees desired to offer public comment. The workshop video was posted to the redistricting website, under the schedule tab: <https://redistrictpd.org/>.

Public Hearings #1 and #2

On September 14 and 28, 2023, at 4:30 p.m., the City Council conducted pre-map Public Hearings with in-person and virtual access. City staff facilitated a brief presentation and responded to questions. Links to the meeting agendas, staff reports, meeting videos, presentations, and public comment are posted on the City's redistricting webpage, under the schedule tab: <https://redistrictpd.org/>.

Map Drawing Workshops

On October 4 and 16, 2023, at 5 p.m., via Zoom, the City facilitated a demonstration of the online map drawing tool and responded to questions. The workshop was recorded and posted to the City's YouTube channel and the City's redistricting webpage, under the schedule tab: <https://redistrictpd.org/>.

Next Steps

After today's public hearing, City staff will highlight the selected "focus" maps on the redistricting website and will solicit community input on said maps. City staff will facilitate community workshops as noted below and there will be opportunities for public comment. Any public comment will be summarized and submitted to the City Council as part of the December 16, 2023, Public Hearing.

- **November 29, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. (In-Person Only)**
Palm Desert iHub
37023 Cook Street, Suite 102
Palm Desert, CA 92211
- **December 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. (In-Person and Via Zoom)**
Palm Desert City Hall, Administrative Conference Room
73510 Fred Waring Drive
Palm Desert, CA 92260
Attend on Zoom: <https://palmdesert.zoom.us/j/84020763120>

Legal Review

This report has been reviewed by William Priest and the City Attorney's Office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Maps
2. Residential Development Map, dated June 2023
3. Presentation
4. Written Public Comments