

Palm Desert Redistricting Community Workshop #3
December 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.
Palm Desert City Hall, Administrative Conference Room

City Clerk Mejia narrated a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the background and schedule of community workshops and public hearings, reviewed the criteria for drafting district boundaries, reviewed Focus Map 109, and anticipated population growth. Following the presentation, City Clerk Mejia responded to a series of clarifying questions related to the redistricting process.

In attendance were 24 people either in person or via Zoom.

In summary, the public comments centered around the attendees' disappointment that the City Council did not select more than one focus map and requested that the City Council reconsider Map 102 as a focus map. It was further asserted that the City Council decision to select a single focus map was dependent upon the demographer's response that she could not find a solution in which Map 102 could be adjusted in a manner that did not split at least one HOA or gated community.

As noted in a written public comment, after the November 16, 2023, Public Hearing, it was discovered by a member of the public that Map 102 could be population balanced and avoid splitting any HOA or gated communities by moving the Hidden Palms Community into District 3 and moving the properties on Country Club Drive between Portola Avenue, Cook Street, and Hovley Lane (Marriot properties and Silver Sands Raquet Club) into District 5.

City staff informed the public that it cannot bring forward "Map 102c" as the deadline for new map submissions passed and the City Council already took action to select Focus Map 109. However, if desired, the City Council may bring forward "Map 102c" as an additional focus map for consideration at the final scheduled Public Hearing on January 11, 2024.

Furthermore, members of the public raised concern and objected to Map 109, citing that it splits the following communities of interest in two districts:

- Residents north of Country Club Drive have shared issues related to development growth, traffic, wind, and blow sand.
- Students and taxpayers north of Frank Sinatra Drive are within the Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD). Further noting that the City's financial support of Desert Sands Unified School District does not benefit students attending PSUSD.
- Residents north of Country Club Drive are a younger demographic with shared interests.

Additionally, those opposing Map 109 expressed concern that the two northern districts extend too far south (as far south as Fred Waring Drive), and this dilutes northern residents' vote. They state that the northern and southern areas differ greatly, and historically more City funds are expended in the south; therefore, to ensure the northern area has fair representation on City Council, the northern area should not be placed in districts that also include southern areas.

During the workshop, straw polls were conducted to gauge attendees' sentiments as follows:

- 14 of the 24 attendees supported Map 109 as presented.
- 9 of the 24 attendees supported a request to the City Council to include "Map 102c" as an additional focus map.

In support of Map 109, one individual commented that Map 109 attempts to address future population growth in an effort to reduce the number of changes to the district boundaries following the 2030 Census; this may result in fewer voters being shifted from one district to another and potentially into a new election cycle. Another individual submitted a written comment indicating that Map 109 bridges the northern and mid-city areas, hopefully mitigating damage done by the fractionalizing of the City via redistricting; and that Map 109 does an adequate job of addressing future population growth to minimize disruptions after the 2030 Census.