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Cuyahoga County Districting Commission Reviews Population Changes in County Council Districts, Introduces Consultants

Census Bureau's Four-Month Delay in Releasing Data Forces Districting Commission To Complete New Districts in Less than Three Weeks

CLEVELAND, Yesterday, August 17, 2021, the Cuyahoga County Districting Commission, which Cuyahoga County Council appointed to reapportion Cuyahoga County's Council districts, held its second meeting at the Cuyahoga County Administration Building.

Section 3.04 (2) of the Cuyahoga County Charter requires the County Council to appoint a five-member Districting Commission every ten years, immediately following each decennial Federal Census, to draw the boundaries of the County's Council districts. Once established, the Commission shall prepare and certify to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections a detailed apportionment of Council districts that reflect the criteria outlined in the Charter.

Cuyahoga County's Charter requires that the Districting Commission complete its apportionment of Council Districts "...the same date as the apportionment for the Ohio General Assembly," which is September 1, 2021. The U.S. Census Bureau historically has released the data needed for reapportionment by April of the year following the decennial federal census, which would have been roughly four months before the Districting Commission's deadline. This year, however, the Census Bureau did not release the necessary data until August 12, 2021, less than three weeks before the Districting Commission's deadline.

“The Census Bureau’s delay is forcing us to complete what should normally have been four months of work in just nineteen days,” Said Districting Commission Chair Rob Frost. “Our greatest concern is public input. County Council districts belong to the residents who live in them and, despite our compressed timeline, we will do everything we can to make sure residents and organizations have a chance to share their perspectives.”

The Districting Commission introduced a three-firm consulting team that will be assisting them with the redistricting process: R Strategy Group, Target Smart, and Muller Public Strategies. R Strategy Group, which is based in Cleveland, is the lead firm and will oversee the project and facilitate public engagement. DC-based Target Smart and Muller Public Strategies of New Jersey will perform the data analysis and map-drawing components of the project. Background and contact information for the consulting team is attached to this release.

As part of their presentation, the Districting Commission’s consulting team reviewed their preliminary analysis of the populations of Cuyahoga County’s Council districts based on recently released 2020 census data.

The Cuyahoga County Charter requires that “all districts shall be of substantially equal population, compact and composed of contiguous territory....”

According to the 2010 census, the population of Cuyahoga County was 1,280,122. In 2011, the Districting Commission established Council districts with populations within $\pm 5\%$ of an average district population of 116,374.

According to the 2020 census, Cuyahoga County’s population is 1,264,817, a loss of 15,305 residents. As a result, the average district population for this year’s apportionment is 114,983, an average population loss per district of 1,391 residents.

These population changes, however, are not uniform across Cuyahoga County. Table 1 below breaks down the population change of each Council district.

Council District	2020 Census	2010 Census	Population Change	Population Change %
1	121,879	118,137	3,742	3.17%
2	114,200	115,832	-1,632	-1.41%
3	113,989	116,495	-2,506	-2.15%
4	118,013	118,265	-252	-0.21%
5	119,446	116,824	2,622	2.24%
6	122,430	119,680	2,750	2.30%
7	109,250	115,213	-5,963	-5.18%
8	106,835	113,396	-6,561	-5.79%
9	111,092	112,896	-1,804	-1.60%
10	108,498	117,324	-8,826	-7.52%
11	119,185	116,060	3,125	2.69%

Table 1: Population change in Cuyahoga County Council districts from 2010 to 2020.

Table 2 below compares the 2020 populations of Cuyahoga County's Council districts with the 2020 average district population of 114,983.

Council District	2020 Census	± Ideal District of 114,983	Percentage Deviation from Ideal District
1	121,879	6,896	6.00%
2	114,200	-783	-0.68%
3	113,989	-994	-0.86%
4	118,013	3,030	2.64%
5	119,446	4,463	3.88%
6	122,430	7,447	6.48%
7	109,250	-5,733	-4.99%
8	106,835	-8,148	-7.09%
9	111,092	-3,891	-3.38%
10	108,498	-6,485	-5.64%
11	119,185	4,202	3.65%

Table 2: Deviation from 2020 ideal population for Cuyahoga County's Council districts.

The populations of the four highlighted districts in Table 2 deviate from the ideal district size by more than $\pm 5\%$, the standard for population variance used by the 2011 Districting Commission. In addition, Council District 7 falls just 0.01% below the $\pm 5\%$ deviation threshold.

From a population-balancing perspective, the four highlighted districts would need to be redrawn to meet the 2011 Districting Commission’s criteria.

The Districting Commission’s consultants presented preliminary racial demographic information about the current County Council districts based on the 2020 census. Table 3 below lays out this analysis.

Council District	White (only)	Black or African-American (Alone)	Hispanic or Latino (Alone)	Asian (Alone)	Two or More Races
1	87.2%	2.1%	3.8%	3.1%	3.3%
2	75.0%	8.0%	8.7%	3.3%	4.4%
3	45.6%	18.4%	27.8%	2.5%	4.8%
4	81.7%	4.1%	6.4%	3.6%	3.7%
5	85.7%	2.9%	3.4%	4.3%	3.4%
6	78.2%	8.5%	2.6%	7.0%	3.3%
7	30.7%	52.4%	7.6%	5.3%	3.2%
8	22.5%	68.3%	4.6%	0.5%	3.5%
9	29.0%	61.8%	2.6%	2.4%	3.6%
10	33.8%	56.6%	2.8%	2.5%	3.5%
11	45.3%	45.1%	2.4%	3.1%	3.3%

Table 3: Initial 2020 racial demographics of Cuyahoga County Council districts.

Council Districts 7-11 have significant black/African-American populations, and Council District 3 has the largest Hispanic/Latino population of the 11 districts.

The consultant team also shared Table 4 below, which includes key dates on the Districting Commission’s timeline.

Date	Event
Ongoing	Community outreach and engagement
August 17	Commission meeting
August 19	Commission meeting
August 19-23	Creating initial maps Developing website
August 23	Commission Meeting—Presentation of initial maps Begin public review of proposed maps
August 24-25	Continue soliciting/receiving public input Continue map drawing and data analysis incorporating input and comments from Commissioners and public
August 26	Commission Meeting Presentation of alternative maps
August 30	Commission Meeting
August 31	Finalize maps/data for transmission to Board of Elections

Table 4: Key dates on the Districting Commission’s timeline.

The Districting Commission considered a recommendation from its consultants that they add another public meeting to its schedule for the week of August 23, 2021, and that all three scheduled Commission meetings be held outside of downtown Cleveland to make them more accessible to county residents. The Commission asked the consultants to present a plan for these public meetings at its next meeting.

The Cuyahoga County Districting Commission has scheduled its next meeting for **Thursday, August 19, 2021, at 3:00 pm**. It will be held at the **Cuyahoga County Administration Building, 2079 E. 9th Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44115, in Committee Room A on the 4th floor**.

The materials from the Districting Commission’s August 17 meeting may be downloaded at [Agenda](#) and [Slide Presentation](#). Video of the August 17 meeting may be viewed on [YouTube](#).

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