

FINAL REPORT TO THE CECIL COUNTY COUNCIL
Cecil County Redistricting Commission
November 2021

Introduction

The Cecil County Council, via Resolution No. 52-2021 Appointment-Redistricting Commission 2021, established a redistricting committee to examine the 2020 Cecil County Census Data to determine if the current councilmanic districts met the intent of balanced populations within each district so that each of the five elected council persons represent approximately the same number of people.

The Commission membership includes five representatives appointed by each of the political central committees (equaling ten representatives) and the appointment of a commission chairperson. The result is that there are eleven voting members.

Five meetings were identified with the understanding that all of the meetings may not be needed or that, if necessary, additional meetings could be scheduled.

Commission Mission

The Redistricting Commission's mission is to propose a new councilmanic redistricting plan based upon the 2020 Census. The Commission's proposed plan shall then be presented to the Cecil County Council for its consideration. Furthermore, Cecil County Charter Section 214 stipulates that compactness, contiguousness, substantially equal, and due regard for natural, geographic, and community boundaries serve as factors guiding the creation of the redistricting plan.

Process

At the initial meeting Mr. David Black, Cecil County Government's Geographic Information Systems Coordinator, provided a thorough analysis of the 2020 Census Data as applied to the current councilmanic districts.

According to the 2020 Census Data, as adjusted to account for incarcerated individuals as required by State law, the population of Cecil County is 103,963. With five councilmanic districts, the ideal population per Council district is 20,793 persons. Significant disparities were noted between the ideal population and the 2020 populations of District 1 and District 2.

The table below was created from the 2020 Census Data and provided to the Redistricting Commission for their consideration and use.

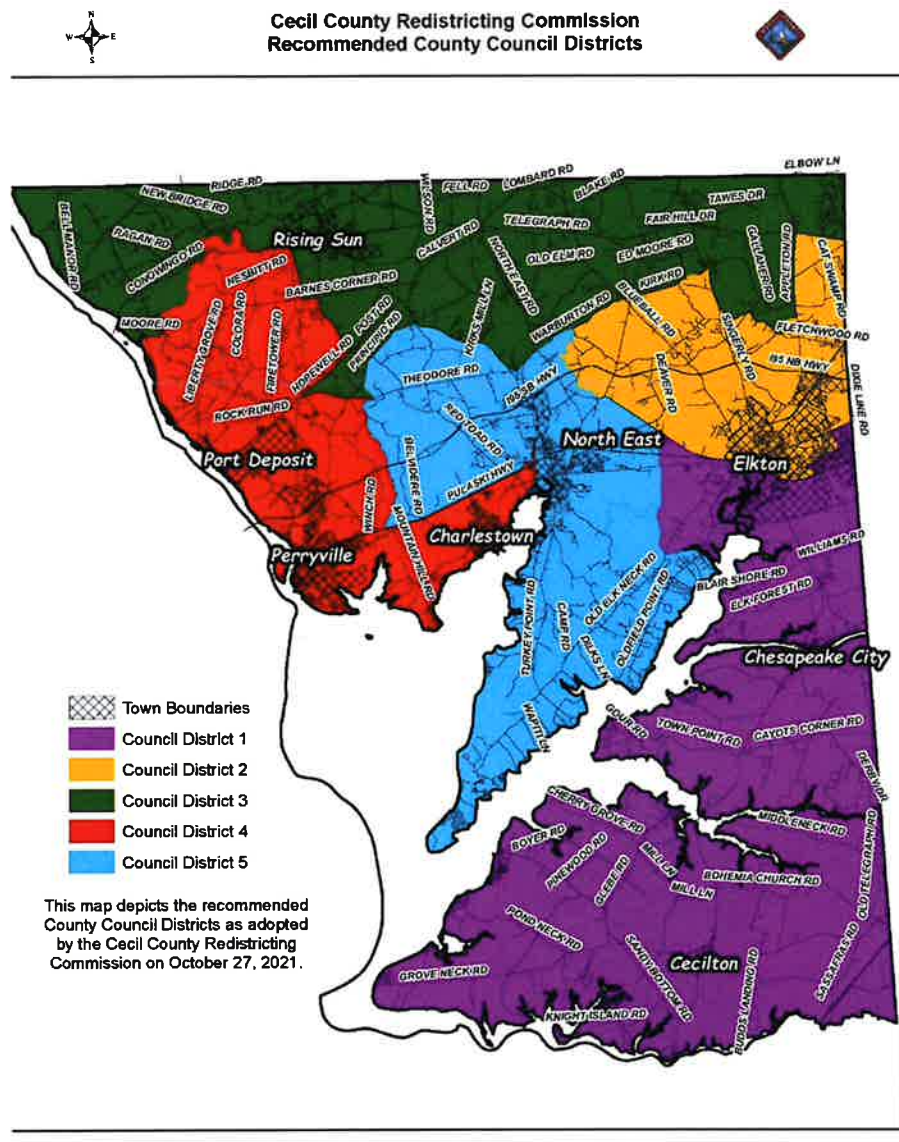
<i>Council District</i>	<i>Population per 2020 Census</i>	<i>Ideal district population</i>	<i>% deviation from ideal</i>
1	18,618	20,793	-10.46
2	22,880	20,793	10.04
3	20,979	20,793	0.89
4	20,210	20,793	-2.80
5	21,276	20,793	2.32

As will be discussed later (in the “Substantially Equal” section of this report), the total deviation of the existing councilmanic districts is 20.50%. This exceeds the deviation permitted by law, and thus, the Redistricting Commission could not choose to “stand pat” and make no changes to district boundaries.

Over the course of the next three meetings Commission members reviewed eleven proposed reconfigurations. After discussion, debate, and further redefining of proposed district lines, the Redistricting Commission approved one map for consideration by the Council at their October 27, 2021 meeting. The final vote for the recommended map was seven to four.

Proposed Redistricting Map

The map below depicts the recommended County Council Districts map as adopted by the Redistricting Commission on October 27, 2021.



With the proposed reconfiguration, the population of the five councilmanic districts shall be as follows:

Council District	Proposed configuration - population	Ideal district population	% deviation from ideal
District 1	20,661	20,793	-0.63
District 2	20,837	20,793	0.21
District 3	20,979	20,793	0.89
District 4	20,210	20,793	-2.80
District 5	21,276	20,793	2.32

Criteria Variables

Section 214(d) of the Cecil County Charter lists four criteria regarding councilmanic districts. Quoting Section 214(d) in its entirety:

“Any residency district established in accordance with this section shall be compact, contiguous, substantially equal in population, and have common interests as a result of geography, occupation, history, or existing political boundaries.”

This report shall address each of the four criteria individually.

1) Compactness

Compactness is a practical or functional concept. A district would not be sufficiently compact if it was so spread out that there was no sense of geographic community. That is, if a district’s members and its representative could not effectively and efficiently stay in touch with each other, or if it was so convoluted and tortuous that there was no sense of district identity, that is, if its members and its representative could not easily tell who actually lived within the district.

The proposed map meets the compactness criteria of the County Charter.

2) Contiguousness

A district must also be contiguous. The definition of contiguity is simple.

A contiguous district consists of territory touching, adjoining, and connected as distinguished from territory separated by another territory. In other words, a district that is divided by another district does not meet the contiguity requirement.

The proposed map meets the contiguity criteria of the County Charter.

3) Substantially Equal

In the 1964 case of *Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 U.S. 533, the United States Supreme Court noted that “mathematical nicety is not a constitutional requisite” when drawing legislative plans. All that is necessary is that they achieve “substantial equality of population among the various districts.” Substantial equality has come to mean that a legislative plan will not be invalidated for inequality of population if its overall range is less than 10%. The 10% standard was first articulated in a dissenting opinion written by Justice Brennan in the case of *Gaffney v. Cummings*, 412 U.S. 735 (1973), and the U.S. Supreme Court later endorsed said rule.

To determine if the proposed councilmanic district populations are substantially equal, each district’s percentage deviation from the ideal was calculated.

Council District	% deviation from ideal
District 1	-0.63
District 2	0.21
District 3	0.89
District 4	-2.80
District 5	2.32

Then, the absolute value percentage of deviation of the largest district was added to that of the smallest district. Shown tabularly:

District	Deviation	Absolute Value	Notes
4	-2.8	2.8	Smallest negative deviation
5	2.32	2.32	Largest positive deviation

The resulting deviation (5.12) is within accepted tolerances. In other words, 5.12% is less than the permitted 10% standard.

4) Common interests as a result of geography, occupation, history, or existing political boundaries

In the Matter of Legislative Districting of the State, 370 Md. 312 (2002), the Court’s holding is that the requirement imposed on the General Assembly to give due regard to natural and political boundaries is subsidiary or secondary to its primary duty to create compact, contiguous legislative districts of substantially equal population. In the give-and-take process of redistricting, a process that is both

political and practical, the first set of requirements – to create compact, contiguous, equally-populated districts – takes precedence over the second – to follow natural and political boundaries in drawing the lines.

This same reasoning was followed during the Redistricting Commission’s deliberations regarding the recommended councilmanic redistricting plan. Additionally, Cecil County’s at-large voting process allows all voters to cast votes for representatives from all five councilmanic districts.

In addition to these factors, the Redistricting Commission also included the following in their deliberations:

1) Precinct Impact

The recommended map impacts citizens in part of Precinct 3-1 (near Thomson Estates) and citizens in part of Precinct 3-5 (near Delancy Rd). Both areas are recommended to shift to Council District 1.

The Commission, in its deliberations, wanted to minimize voter confusion, avoid the possibility of voter disenfranchisement, and limit potential impacts to the election process as a whole. 1,263 registered voters reside within the areas proposed to shift to Council District 1.

2) Fiscal Impact

The Redistricting Commission notes that the recommended map minimizes impacts to voters and existing precinct lines. As such, the fiscal impacts to the Board of Elections are anticipated to be minimal.

Official Recommendation

The 2021 Cecil County Redistricting Commission by majority vote recommends the map depicted in this report to the Cecil County Council for consideration and adoption through the completion and analysis of the 2030 United States Census.

Chair Person Remarks

I want to thank each of the members of the redistricting committee for his/her commitment to fulfill the expectations of the Cecil County Council. Furthermore, I want to recognize and offer special appreciation to Council Manager – Jim Massey, GIS Coordinator – David Black, and Director of the Cecil County Board of Elections – Ruie Lavoie. Each provided critically needed service to the Commission as we reviewed the data, considered the options and selected the final recommendation.

Chair – Dr. Carl D. Roberts

Cecil County 2021 Redistricting Commission Members

Commission Members

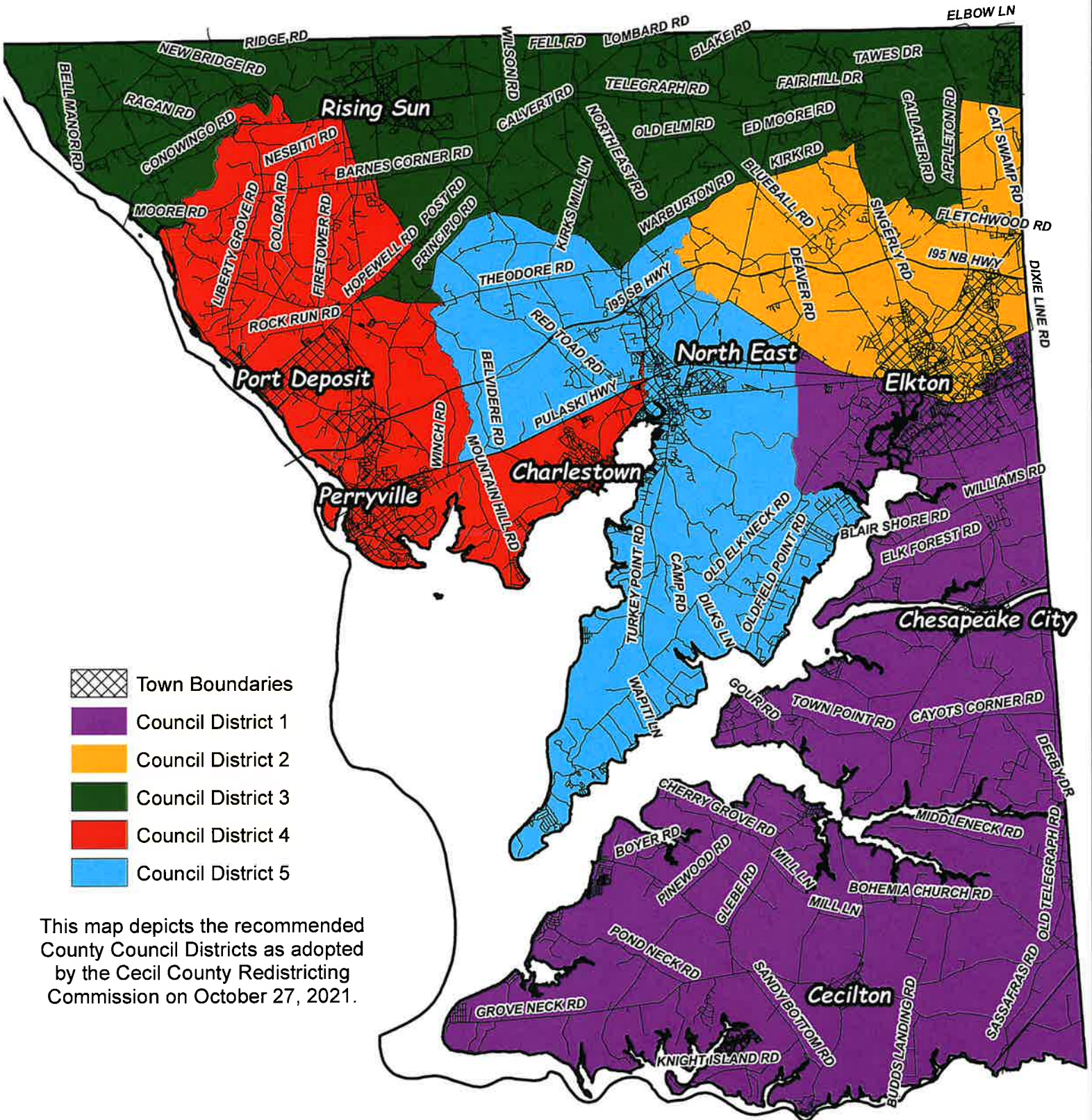
Carl Roberts, Chair
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Phyllis Kilby
Peter LaPointe
Maryanne Othello
Judith Rudolph
Vincent Sammons
Patrick Ulrich
Michael Welker







Staff Support:

David R. Black, GIS Coordinator
Ruie Lavoie, Election Director
Jim Massey, Council Manager



Cecil County Redistricting Commission Recommended County Council Districts



-  Town Boundaries
-  Council District 1
-  Council District 2
-  Council District 3
-  Council District 4
-  Council District 5

This map depicts the recommended County Council Districts as adopted by the Cecil County Redistricting Commission on October 27, 2021.