

Media

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

8-26-11

people ought to have a representative like themselves, sensitive to their neighborhood, and who can easily be held responsible.

"I know that there is an attempt to move the balance of power in this city. I'm saying it's the wrong thing to happen in this city. I'm saying that we need councilmembers that represent not one region, not one enclave, but we need councilmembers that represent the length of this city, and we need to begin by designing districts that are more linear, north and south..... We'll have councilmembers that won't just be representing just north and south, we'll have council members that will be representing all parts of the city, all cultures of the city all economic strata," Pearson said.

After dismissing gerrymandering as "political rhetoric," Pearson focused on "big differences" in the new Willow District. When he was on the council previously, "there was a bias against North Peoria that was unhealthy and unproductive," he said.

"I remember thinking that population growth would change this, that it would change the balance of power to the north, and then we'd get our share. I was wrong to think that. That was-- the wrong the wrong thing -- to think that.

"I've come to believe that the great-

est challenge facing this city is not the economy, or job creation or even protecting our beautiful natural landscapes. The most daunting challenge is how to develop the heart of the city, how to become one city, not a collection of parts.

"Too often we identify with a homeowners' association, or a region of Peoria. Despite what we say publicly, councilmembers look out for their constituents first. It's human nature; it's the way to get reelected.

"Just as there is a division on this council, there is a growing divide between north and south Peoria -- new, and old. So, if human nature is at play here, how do we help the heart of the common mind. One way is to design district boundaries that cross the divide both literally and figuratively -- crossing the divide."

He goes on to praise the self-serving city redistricting map that keeps most incumbents intact as one that is "imperfect, but begins to form council districts that cross geographical and cultural boundaries and stands for a better chance of playing to the heart of the city."

If a district is diverse, who does the official represent? Himself? Nobody? Take your pick.

Time to stop this social engineering? I think so.

Dick Feyrer

## *Time to stop social engineering*

In his own words, Councilmember Dave Pearson trashes the notion that

# COMMENTARY

*Editorials, Opinions and Letters*

## Turn your attention now to state legislative redistricting

The contentious debate over council district boundaries is all over but the shouting. It remains to be seen whether the final map approved in a 4-3 split vote will weather the DOJ review process.

But council district boundaries are not the only lines that will change for the next 10 years. There are state legislative district boundaries and Maricopa County Supervisors' district boundaries.

Boundaries have to change. It's the law. Every 10 years, regardless of your personal feelings, the Census Bureau counts heads and boundaries change across the country.

No getting around it, the county, state and federal redistricting process will affect a few neighborhoods and it could be yours. It is a laborious process, one that few people find interesting unless they are into the numbers game, or the politics

associated with redistricting. Some people follow it so closely they can name all of the members of the Arizona Redistricting Commission. Those individuals are the ones who will decide which areas state legislators will represent.

Arizona Redistricting Commission members are: Chair Colleen Mathis, Independent of Pima County; Linda McNulty, Democrat of Pima County; Jose Herrera,

Democrat of Maricopa County; Scott Freeman, Republican of Maricopa County; and Richard Stertz, Republican of Pima County.

Do you live in District 4? 9? If you live in Peoria, one of those districts could affect your representation. The Arizona Redistricting Commission will decide where your legislative district boundaries will be. So, it behooves each of us who live in this state to pay close attention to where

those district lines meander.

If you wish to learn more about the state legislative redistricting process, visit [www.azredistricting.org](http://www.azredistricting.org). There you will find biographies of redistricting commission members.

Pay close attention to what is happening in your own back yard. You may be happy with the way things are.

Fine. But, remember, the lines will change. Be ready for change.

7-15-11

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *Council meetings quite a show these days*

I moved to Peoria when the population was approximately 40,000 people. Since that time, everyone knows there has in fact been significant growth to the north. That's where the vacant land happens to be.

However, that does not necessarily indicate there is a distinct split in our city, unless, you are a few of our politicians. Last time I looked, there are no north or south Peoria resident sections at our stadium. Nor are there any signs at the Peoria Performing Arts Center or Rio Vista Park, or our restaurants on Bell and 83rd Avenue that segregate north Peoria citizens from south Peoria citizens.

At the events in the city that I have attended, no one is required to wear badges

that identify you as a northerner or southerner. Peorians get along just fine. Old Town has gotten some nice facelifts over the years. As a matter of fact, Old Town is looking pretty good these days.

This whole redistricting issue has magnified how some of our politicians continue to think there is this great divide among north and south Peoria. Quit making such a big deal of this so-called split. It doesn't exist.

The only split we have in Peoria is our city council. From what I have watched on channel 11, it's a good thing the staff is competent because for now, from what I've seen, four clowns seem to be in charge of the circus. I would like to recommend that more Peorians watch Channel 11 once in a while. There is quite a show going on these days.

**Wilma Mamich**

## New districts crafted by ego

Self-preservation dictated what happened with redistricting in Peoria. Several residents made it clear this wasn't the end of the issue when election comes around.

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7-9-11

### OUR VIEW

## Peoria districts crafted by ego, self-interest

One by one Peoria residents approached the City Council on Tuesday night to plead for their representatives to do what is in the best interest of the city when choosing a new district map.

"Ask yourself is it ethical?"

"I'm appealing to your sense of honor to do the right thing."

"Regain your moral compass."

"Your actions have awakened a silent majority."

Their appeals were all for naught as the council on a 4-3 vote selected a map that left all of the elected officials in their district by ripping apart communities.

"This is politics, American style," Councilman Dave Pearson said.

Actually, it's politics Peoria style of late. A solidly divided council has

emerged in recent months over city issues from the budget, to paying an obligation on Northern Parkway and, most recently, on redistricting.

Pearson, Ron Aames, Carlo Leone and newcomer Tony Rivero made it abundantly clear that they knew what was better for the citizens of Peoria than those who elected them. Instead of compact districts that represent communities with similar interests, the slate chose a jigsaw-puzzle map that has the Willow District stretching from east to west across Peoria, then looping from north to south.

"It's an insult to people's common sense," Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat said.

What's more insulting is how Pearson dismissed citizens' concerns and public outcry as "political rhetoric."

He said he favored the loop-the-loop

version because it forced Councilwoman Joan Evans to represent constituents from both the north and south portions of the city, bridging the growing divide between the regions. If that were the case, there were other maps that bridged that gap in more than one district.

But the problem with a better, practical solution is that some council members wouldn't be able to retain their seats. That just wasn't acceptable to those in the majority bloc who saw their political futures in doubt.

Ego and self-preservation fueled what happened with redistricting in Peoria. But several residents made it clear that Tuesday's council vote wasn't the end of the issue. They will have their say when they get the opportunity at the ballot box.

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Vol. 57 - No.27

July 8, 2011

## Split decision for redistricting map

By CAROLYN DRYER  
Editor

It was a hard-fought victory for four councilmembers, a 4-3 vote for Redistricting Map 8, with a few tweaks by Councilmember Ron Aames. The Palo Verde District councilmember had requested extra redistricting maps to specifically keep incumbents within their existing council districts, and that is what was approved at Tuesday's council meeting.

There were objections to Map 8 from several members of the public, many of whom voiced their displeasure with the entire process. Map 8 did have its proponents, however.

Pamela Potter said she still liked Map 8 because it brings Willow District north and keeps Councilmember Joan Evans. Potter said she did not think

it was a good idea to put existing councilmembers in the same district.

Potter said she did not want to see what she called "a good council" disrupted.

Helmuth Hack, after reviewing all the maps, said he also believed Map 8 was better than the others.

Another resident was not so accepting of Map 8. He told those councilmembers who support Map 8 that when they came up for reelection, "we're going to remind you." He chided Map 8 supporters that, although what they were doing was legally right, they would be reminded that they went out and asked for the public's opinion, then decided it did not matter.

One resident who wanted to see council adopt Map 1, registered disappointment in the redistricting process, saying "people



Photo by Carolyn Dryer

Mesquite Council District resident Jeanette Dubrell and Ironwood Council District resident Chris Williams talk in the lobby of City Council Chambers following a 4-3 council vote for Redistricting Map 8.

spoke out," professionals were paid to draw up the maps, and then certain councilmembers did not

like what they saw, and what they subsequently did was "ludicrous." He said he believed certain

members of council "have ignored the voices of the people."

Ventana Lakes resident

Dick Feyrer drew an "out of order" scolding from Mayor Bob Barrett when he began his allotted three minutes of time with a statement aimed at Councilmember Tony Rivero. Feyrer suggested Rivero might want to excuse himself to go to the bathroom to avoid having to vote on the map. Feyrer has made his opinion clear about his opposition to Map 8 in other public meetings.

Ironwood District resident Christian Williams noted the city's 42-percent growth in the last 10 years, and told council he hoped the citizens of Peoria wake up and "recall."

Palo Verde District resident Bill Bercu made no statement about which map he preferred, but did present a PowerPoint graphic that asked the question, "Why is there support for Map 1?" Would it open

MORE MAP ON A2

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## MAP: Scathing session, From A1

Willow District for a new councilmember? Would there be a sudden election in Palo Verde?

Ventana Lakes resident Joe McCord reiterated his dislike of Map 8, saying, "It rips a whole district (Willow) to shreds." He addressed Councilmembers Dave Pearson, Carlo Leone, Aames and Rivero, asking them to act with a sense of honor and dignity, and "do the right thing, in this case, Map 1, not Map 8."

Rachelle Barrett, the mayor's wife, came to the podium and said she was not going to say anything councilmembers had not already heard. But, she told a story of attending an event in the East Valley, where a comment was made about the redistricting discussions taking place in Peoria, and she was "ashamed."

David Evans, who is married to Councilmember Joan Evans, read a letter from a resident in Willow Council District, who was displeased with Aames and Map 8. There was one statement in the letter, which Aames asked the mayor to rule out of order, but Barrett allowed Evans to continue reading.

After all public comments were heard, Rivero made the motion to adopt Map 8, while Leone seconded.

A lively discussion followed, at which time, Rivero explained that when he came on council, the redistricting process had already been in progress with the hiring of the National Demographics Corporation to draw up maps. At his meeting with city staff, Rivero said he was told the maps could not keep incumbents in their existing districts.

Aames called the argument bogus that council chose to ignore public comments. He said there were few citizens at the redistricting meetings he attended, and that "some citizens now say they didn't want to see more maps." Aames mentioned the possible political agendas of certain public speakers, at which time, the mayor told him he was out of order.

Evans said she knew she was "certainly at risk," but in the best interests of the city, she wanted compactness, "keep neighborhoods together." She attempted to amend the vote on Map 8 with a motion to move 62 homes and two farms south of Skunk Creek (including her own residence) into Palo

Verde District, but her motion died for lack of a second.

Aames responded to Evans' remarks, saying, "We can all draw a circle around our own home."

To which, Evans replied, "Yes, that's what happened," suggesting that is what Aames has done with his incumbency stand for Map 8.

Pearson began his defense of Map 8 with a historical perspective, beginning with his first term on council in the 1990s (He served on the council, but ran for mayor in 1997, and was defeated by John Keegan). When he was on council, Pearson said, he could not get anybody to help him with anything.

Pearson said that just as there is a division on the council, there is a division in the city, north vs. south. He said Map 8 crosses "cultural and geographic boundaries. We need councilmembers who represent the length of the city."

Although the linear Willow District on Map 8 looks "jagged and ragged," Pearson said, it represents all areas of the city.

Vice Mayor and Mesquite District Councilmember Cathy Carlat pulled no punches.

"One of these maps, Map 8, shouldn't exist," she said. "Everybody can see, when you look at it, Map 8 is gerrymandered. It is an insult to people's common sense."

Carlat said Willow District, as drawn, has no commonality, and that council needs to look at a map that makes common sense for the next decade.

Leone said Map 8 keeps Evans in her district.

"It may not be much of a district, but it keeps her people in her district," Leone said. "If Joan doesn't want to go to Ventana Lakes, that's her problem."

Leone mentioned the people he would be losing from his district and the area he will be gaining, calling it "a new adventure." He also said McCord (Joe McCord, who lives in Ventana Lakes) "wants to run in Willow District." The mayor stopped Leone at this point, and was also told not to attack Evans, either.

Evans said, "I just want to make it clear, whatever district I am in, I will run again - I have a lot of signs left. I want what is best for Peoria."

Reach the reporter at [cdryer@star-times.com](mailto:cdryer@star-times.com), or 623-847-4604.

7-8-11

from  
P. ...  
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# COMMENTARY

*Editorials, Opinions and Letters*

## Councilmembers should represent all of Peoria

It is almost over. At least until the U.S. Department of Justice reviews it.

Map 8 was the final choice in a 4-3 decision this past Tuesday as Peoria City Council concluded its redistricting process.

There has been a lot of head-butting during the discussions over the past few weeks. It became extremely contentious during the last two council discussions, to the point that Mayor Bob Barrett had to calm down two members of the public and two members of city council.

As one resident observed in the council chamber

lobby following the vote, such contentious behavior is not good for the city.

Yet, it is that kind of behavior that allows the public to see within the minds and hearts of their elected officials. Passion is a wonderful trait when it is aimed at good-hearted, well-meaning goals. However, passion can be a mighty destructive force when used to attain personal power.

Egos drive many elected officials, from the smallest school governing board to the office of the U.S. President. Without egos, we would not be the democratic society we so proudly hold

up as an example for the rest of the world to envy.

But, Peoria is just one of thousands of small municipalities throughout our country and one of hundreds in Arizona. All are going through the same redistricting process because the law requires it. Not all are facing the same challenges, however.

With a 42-percent growth factor in the last 10 years, Peoria is one of a handful of cities and towns in our state that must contend with moving boundaries far beyond the normal two or three blocks here and there.

The problem in Peoria lies

with how certain councilmembers perceive their duties and obligations as public servants. Let us explain. The council seat is not yours; it belongs to the citizens of Peoria. You do not own the area within your council district boundaries. It is part of the larger area known as Peoria. You represent not just the people who live within your council district; it is your duty and obligation to represent all of the people who live in Peoria.

It is good that you enjoy representing your neighbors, Joe and Jim and John, who live across the street. But, there is Zelda, Marie and

Joanne 20 miles away, who also rely on your wise review of council issues. And it doesn't take a gerrymandered redistricting map to do that job.

True, each councilmember has to follow their conscience and vote accordingly. But, this is not a council of one; it is a council of many, all of whom serve each and every citizen who lives in Peoria. The main thing to remember is you serve all, even those who rub you the wrong way. You elected to run for office, and with all the heat being generated lately, you'd better learn how to stay cool.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

7-8-11

## *None of us 'jumped up and down'*

Recently, Pamela Porter and Ron Jones each had letters published about Peoria's redistricting. Porter's long letter suggested that Joan Evans had some other reason for wanting Plan 1 than that it offers the most compact, representative districts. I assure everyone that Joan has been completely honest and transparent through this entire process. She does not have any secret plans or agenda. She has consistently wanted what's best for the city. She believed from the start that compact districts are extremely important for the next 10 years.

Jones' letter refers to the "handful of crazies jumping up and down over the three new maps." Here are some of the more than 40 citizens who spoke out against Plan 8, one of the "three new maps," during the June 16 council study session or in public hearings (hopefully, all spelled correctly):

Eva Osuna, longtime community leader

Joe Pfeiff, longtime community leader

Jan Wilson, Cofounder of the Peoria's United Parent Council

Steve Poe, former Peoria City Councilman

Joe McCord, Peoria School Board Member

Kathy Knecht, Peoria School Board Member

Fred Olson, Dentist  
Dick Feyrer, retired newspaper editor from Wisconsin

Armando Macias, Teacher  
Jeanette Dubreil, Republican Party Congressional District 4 Chair

Dick Terbush, former school district superintendent

Karen Garbe  
Christian Williams  
Lynda and Tom Reithman

During the study session, I pointed out that Plan 1 keeps a higher percentage of Councilmember Ron Aames' present constituents in his district than Plan 8,

## *Council hostility, conflicts of interest at City Hall*

Being at the July 5 City of Peoria council meeting, I can say that it is sad the lack of leadership within the city, and how ugly the petty bickering that goes on among elected officials and citizens that attend.

The new majority was disenfranchised by the old majority, and it was the old majority that has set the current tone of hostility. The old majority seems to have their followers that always show up and direct functions in committees (at least it seems that way; their ideas are not in the best interest of all citizens.

For redistricting measures, Arizona

citizens should adopt the recently passed proposition in California, stripping government from drawing the lines or even being involved. I also suggest that citizens demand the departure of a non-profit group called International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and its local chapters from consulting and giving guidance to city staff.

In one book published by ICMA, they are proud of the ways cities can raise revenue at the expense of individuals in the minority. The thinking is that they will be weak in fighting ordinances directed at them.

I also suggest that because the city manager is a board member of this group that there is a conflict of interest and would be in the best interest of the people if he resigned.

I also suggest that citizens would be better off without the current city attorney.

**Helmuth Hack**

## *Pearson: What a way to start mayoral campaign*

I believe Dave Pearson kicked off his campaign for mayor Tuesday night, openly supporting a 10-year redistricting plan which can only be characterized as a radical experiment in the social engineering of council districts.

He boasted that the new districts will

contain not the traditional communality of interest, allowing voters to be represented by a neighbor they can count on. Rather, he supported the monstrosity adopted at his urging, 4-3, standing that traditional value on its head.

Now, gerrymandered districts, in which a variety of different types of folks are deliberately thrown together regardless of proximity, are to be lauded. What's next, quotas? Gerrymandering has become the new normal for Peoria?

Pearson expressed a concern about what might happen to downtown if the new population in the city's northern regions were allowed to have the political power their numbers suggest. Instead, the new plan is to split that vote by creating vertical, north-south districts, while preserving federally mandated minority voting power.

This is a double-barreled travesty as it not only preserves a status-quo mindset, by rigging the maps to preserve all the incumbents - except a new white woman, but also rewrites the rules to prevent residents of new developments from becoming too politically uppity, overly influential or change-oriented.

Everything's just fine the way it is, of course, in the paradise of Peoria, which wants the tax revenue from new development in the north but not at the price of full citizenship for residents there. This is unbelievable. And Pearson wants to become mayor? What a way to start.

**Dick Feyrer**

## Peoria selects redistricting map that preserves incumbents

by Sonu Munshi - Jul. 6, 2011 04:45 PM  
The Arizona Republic

A divided Peoria City Council on Tuesday selected a redistricting map that preserves all incumbents.

Councilmen Ron Aames, Carlo Leone, Dave Pearson and Tony Rivero voted for the map, identified as Map 8, instead of one that was among the first six presented to the public, which had not taken incumbency into account.

The vote came after 90 minutes of debate and weeks of meetings that had turned testy as council members and residents disagreed over whether the council should have added the map that preserved all incumbents later in the process.

Map 8 now will be sent to the U.S. Department of Justice for final approval.

If approved, new council district boundaries will be in place for the 2012 election. Races in three districts, Ironwood, Mesquite and Willow, will be on the ballot.

Redistricting is done after each census to adjust for growth and ensure equal representation, while maintaining a minority district population and keeping communities of interest, such as large neighborhoods like Westbrook Village, together in one district.

Peoria's redistricting process sparked controversy more than a month ago after

the same split majority asked for three new maps that would preserve all incumbents. Each of the initial six maps would have drawn a council member out of his or her district.

Mayor Bob Barrett, Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat and Councilwoman Joan Evans opposed the introduction of the additional maps and on Tuesday voted against Map 8.

A few residents at Tuesday's meeting spoke in favor of Map 8, but more criticized it as not representing the choice of most residents. Several residents raised the specter of a recall against those council members voting for it.

The council majority voting for Map 8 did offer one thing that residents sought, an explanation.

Rivero said that when he joined the council in January, he had asked staff whether the council could be kept intact while meeting all federal guidelines. He said he was told no.

Rivero said that after the revised request for three new maps, the consultants was able to draw maps that met federal guidelines but

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did not pit one councilmember against another.

Rivero said the controversy erupted because the new maps were injected later in the public process. But, he said, "Map Number 8 should have been part of the original recommendations to the council."

The biggest change under Map 8 is to the Willow District, which currently is in south-central Peoria from Olive Avenue to Union Hills Drive. Under Map 1, the district would have moved farther north. However, under the chosen map, the district will begin near Greenway Road and extend vertically to Happy Valley Road. The district will not be fully contiguous.

The vice mayor criticized Willow's proposed boundaries, saying it would dramatically alter the district Evans represents. "Everyone can see Map 8 is gerrymandered. It's an insult to people's common sense," Carlat said. Leone said Map 8 keeps Evans in her district, no matter how it's shaped.

He said the redistricting process also would bring new constituents into his district, but he doesn't have a problem with it. "To me it's a new adventure," Leone said.

Pearson said the redistricting issue has been focused too much on the process rather than the maps, a result of council members lobbying support on both sides. "This is politics, American style," he said.

Pearson said five of the six council districts in Maps 1 and 8, the two that were up for a vote Tuesday, were "pretty much the same."

Willow, he acknowledged, doesn't look as "pretty" in Map 8, but he said he didn't see why contiguity needed to be a factor. He said

Map 8 ensures geographical and cultural diversity. Pearson said there is an attempt to move the "balance of power" north, but Map 8 ensures council members don't represent just one enclave.

Aames, who pushed for the new maps, said it was "a bogus argument" that the council had ignored public input. Aames said he also heard from residents who wanted their council member preserved.

"The point is while some citizens say it's outrageous, others wanted to see more maps," Aames said. "This wasn't the 11th hour, this was the next iteration."

Aames said if he were drawn into another district, he would represent those who didn't vote for him for a longer period as he has 3 1/2 years left on his term.

Resident Pamela Potter spoke in favor of Map 8, said Peoria has "a really good city council and I don't want that disrupted."

Helmuth Hack said he liked that map because it preserves voters' recent choice of representation, in reference to last year's council elections.

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But resident Gene Sweeney, a Peoria Planning and Zoning Commission member, urged council to approve Map 1 to regain its "moral compass."

Several residents cautioned council members they would face consequences for not taking into account the will of the people and putting self-preservation over what they said was good for the city as a whole.

A Westbrook Village representative said he would have been satisfied with either map as both kept his large retirement community in one district. He said he hoped the council could "come together" once the redistricting process is complete.

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## **Aames: Another shameful editorial on redistricting**



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7-5-11

**By Ron Aames**

Regarding the editorial "Peoria's redistricting maps disregard the public's input" (Peoria Republic, Opinions, Saturday):

It was misleading for the The Republic's editorial board to report that members of the Peoria City Council disregarded public input when they considered additional redistricting maps.

On May 11 and 12, the initial six redistricting maps were available for preview at three locations in the city. Small numbers of residents went to these locations to review these maps. About eight residents attended the preview held in the Pine Room at City Hall, while about 12 attended the preview held at Lighthouse Church on 83rd Avenue.

The residents I talked to at those meetings were not sure which map they preferred and some of them said they wanted to see maps that kept their council member in their district. Also, other citizens who looked at the maps on the Peoria website told me they wanted to see maps that kept all council members in their district.

The point is that while a few citizens now say they didn't want to see additional maps, others wanted to see more maps. In fact, the council was being responsive to citizen input by requesting additional maps, not disregarding input, as the editorial stated.

Also, it is the council's responsibility to consider different maps under different criteria, not bury our heads in the sand and say we can't consider other maps. What if we always said the first thing we see is it, with no consideration of other options? That would not be good for the city.

The May 11 and May 12 meetings also were the first time council members had a chance to review the initial maps. It wasn't the 11th hour, as the editorial claims. Soon after, a majority of the council asked for additional maps for preview at the next public input meetings on June 14 and 15.

It is shameful that the editorial board makes these arguments. It may think it is good for selling newspapers, but the real result is that citizens come to distrust its opinions. I certainly do.

## **Natalie Gilstrap**

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**From:** Wanda Nelson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 13, 2011 4:47 PM  
**To:** Natalie Gilstrap  
**Subject:** FW: Editorial and reply concerning redistricting and Aames 7/1 and 7/5

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**From:** Bo Larsen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 13, 2011 4:46:39 PM  
**To:** Wanda Nelson  
**Subject:** Editorial and reply concerning redistricting and Aames 7/1 and 7/5  
**Auto forwarded by a Rule**

### **Peoria's redistricting maps disregard the public's input**

7-1-11

#### **Our View: The Arizona Republic editorial board, West Valley**

Peoria's City Council will decide Tuesday on political jurisdictions for the future. It may also decide the political fate of its council members.

Residents have vowed legal challenges and tough re-election battles for incumbents if they support a redistricting map that preserves incumbency. They maintain the council ignored the clear preference of residents by excluding that choice from final consideration.

Two maps will be considered: Map 1, which would draw Councilwoman Joan Evans out of Willow District and into Councilman Ron Aames' Palo Verde District; and Map 8, which leaves all representatives in their districts but is a mess to look at.

The majority of the council muddied the redistricting process by insisting that incumbency be considered at the 11th hour. Peoria historically has not considered incumbency when redrawing its district maps but did so this time, late in the game, because of Aames' insistence that the council was misled.

Aames maintains the additional maps did not disenfranchise anyone. In the first six maps, he said, a council member would be drawn into a district where residents had not voted for him or her.

That's true, but when it happened in the past, residents handled the shift.

Aames also rejected arguments that residents preferred another map, which wasn't included in the final options. He said the council only collects feedback on the maps, and they're not votes.

They may not be votes, but they certainly shouldn't be dismissed out of hand. Those willing to take the time to engage civically should not have their opinions disregarded.

Aames and other council supporters of the incumbency map need to realize that it's a slap in the face to put their interests above those who elected you to serve theirs.

Friday, July 1, 2011 at 12:28 PM

July 1, 2011

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *Bring civility to civic duty*

Why has the Peoria redistricting process become so acrimonious? Why are citizens accusing council members of putting their own priorities ahead of those of the city, and talking of gerrymandering? And, I would ask, which council members are really doing that?

The city attorney was mistaken when he informed council and residents that where current council members live could not be taken into account in redistricting- in fact most cities strive to maintain incumbents in their districts to avoid just what is happening now in Peoria. Six maps were initially drawn- before residents could give valid input that used the census data. I wrote to Mayor Barrett that I felt these were invalid, as the process required citizen input. His emailed reply was "I agree with you completely." Yet, he continues to admonish Dr. Ron Aames for asking that three new maps be drawn, maps which, legally, kept incumbents in their district, and which were drawn after residents had a chance to give input. Citizens complain about an excessive amount of money being

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I ask the citizens of Peoria to attend the July 5th council meeting and to not let a small number of citizens with a political agenda hijack this process. We have a very well run city, so please encourage the city council to make a choice that leaves the council members able to represent their

constituents and to run again in their same districts if they wish to.

**Pamela Potter**

### *It's not personal; it's political*

Let's get real. This latest riff between the mayor and four councilmembers may have less to do about the flap over redistricting than over who has the power at City Hall and the next mayoral race.

Ever since Vicki Hunt was disqualified from a re-election run, and newly elected Tony Rivero became an "independent" councilmember, this council has more 5-2 or 4-3 votes opposed to the mayor's wishes than I can remember.

Dating back to Mayor (John) Keegan's term (eight years) and Mayor Bob Barrett's term (five years) so far, never has the mayor had less control over city issues. This is refreshing from a citizen's point of view.

To the handful of crazies jumping up and down over the three new maps, if you would stop jumping, you could read between the lines.

**Ron Jones**

## Bring Civility to Civic Duty

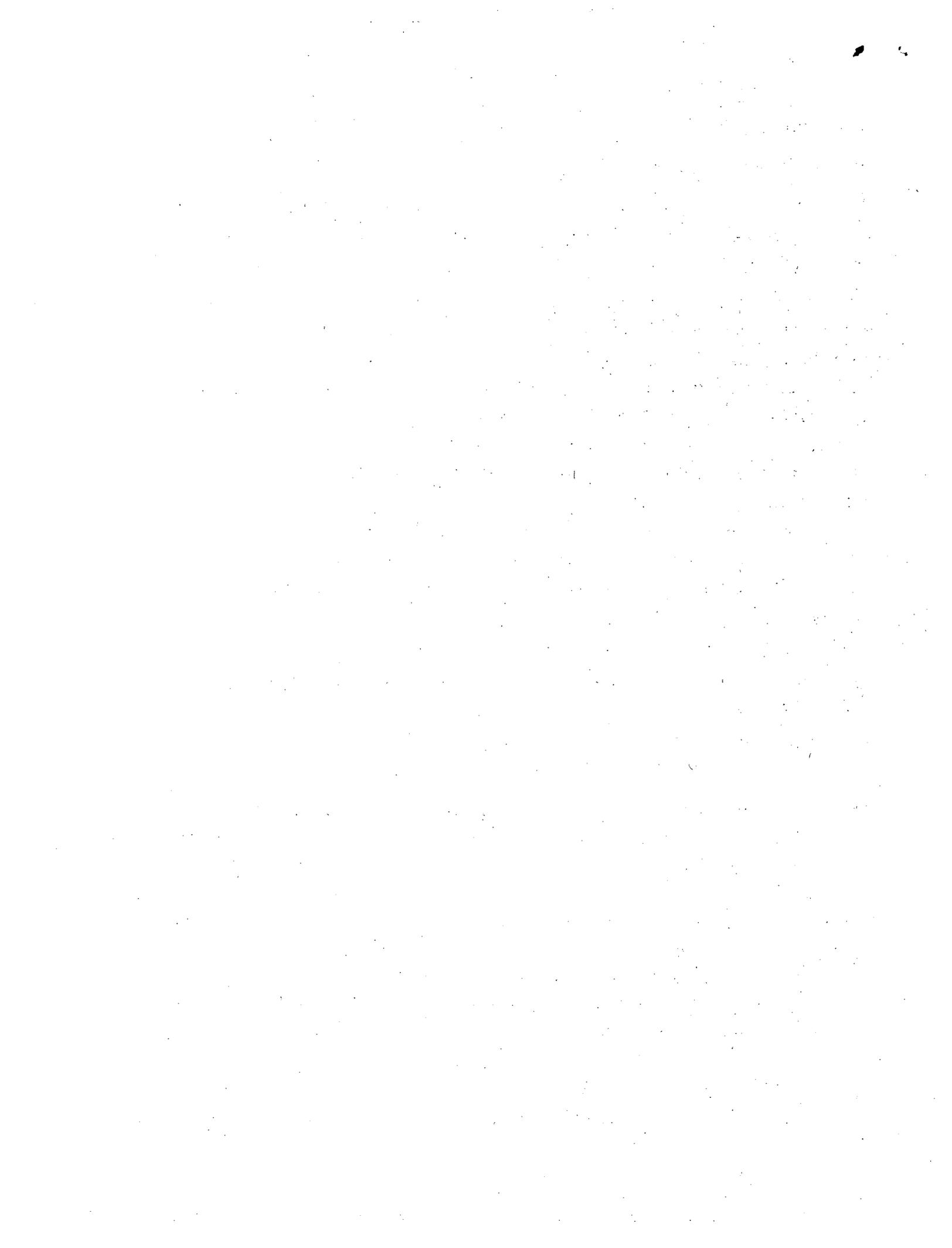
Pamela Potter | Posted: Thursday, June 30, 2011 8:30 pm

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June 29, 2011

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# PEORIA REPUBLIC

MIDWEEK, JUNE 29, 2011

A GANNETT COMPANY

Z2 SECTION P



Ron Aames



Tony Rivero

# NEW



Mayor Bob Barrett



Joan Evans



Cathy Carlat



Dave Pearson



Carlo Leone

# MAJORITY

Council members Dave Pearson, Ron Aames, Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone have come together in recent months to form a majority bloc on many key issues including budget talks and redistricting. Their approach has been to question staff proposals to gain efficiencies and to shake up the status quo. The minority leadership questions whether the change is for the better. **PAGE 3**

# Changes blowin' in wind for Peoria council

By Sonu Munshi  
The Republic | azcentral.com

From budget talks to redistricting, a new dynamic has emerged on the Peoria City Council that has placed the mayor in the minority.

Council members Dave Pearson, Ron Aames, Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone have come together in recent months to form a majority bloc on many key issues.

This can leave Mayor Bob Barrett, Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat and Councilwoman Joan Evans in the minority.

The majority, which came together after the election of Rivero last fall, says its approach is to question staff proposals to improve government transparency, to gain efficiencies and to shake up the status quo.

But it has the minority elected leadership questioning whether the change is for the better.

The shift has come with verbal grumblings, direct retorts and eye-rolling, especially after a slew of 4-3 votes during this spring's budget sessions, when several council members picked out line items and questioned staff with a level of detail most agree had not happened before.

The split sharpened in recent weeks when the majority pushed for a redistricting map that many criticized as an attempt to preserve incumbents.

Political divides on city councils aren't unusual, says David Berman, a senior research fellow at the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University.

But, he says, for a mayor to be in the minority all of a sudden "puts him in an awkward position."

Berman warns that sometimes such divisiveness can prompt recalls, a word that has bubbled up in the redistricting controversy.

No recall petitions have been taken out with the City Clerk.

## Shifting politics

The 4-3 voting pattern took shape after Rivero replaced Councilwoman Vicki Hunt in January.

Depending on which council member you ask, the 29-year-old freshman is either inexperienced or fresh, new blood.

Rivero's vote has bolstered others on the council who would often dissent from a minority position.

Rivero, who has an extensive education, said he respects the mayor.

"It's OK to disagree; we just need to be able to have those discussions at least," he said.

Former minority members such as Pearson call the new bloc a "loose coalition of



Tony Rivero (left) and Ron Aames celebrate Rivero's election to Peoria City Council in November. They are part of the new majority on the council. CARLOS CHAVEZ/THE REPUBLIC

council members who have found some common interests."

The mayor calls it cronyism.

"It's all about 'I'll support your deal if you'll support mine,'" Barrett said.

The mayor said he has been "extremely disappointed" in some of Rivero's votes. Barrett added: "Education does not equal good leadership skills, or common sense."

## 4-3 votes emerge in budget talks

City administrators this spring presented elected leaders with a budget that filled a \$3.7 million shortfall.

However, council budget talks took an extra two days or 12 more hours than last year as council members discussed such topics as spending on vehicle maintenance, lobbyists and vehicle and communication allowances.

The level of detail drew sharp criticism from Carlat and Evans, who said their colleagues were micromanaging staff.

Carlat and Barrett said forcing cuts in areas like car allowances and training for employees when the city manager had produced a balanced budget and staff has not received raises in three years would lead to staff exodus.

"I feel like we didn't have as civil a discourse as we could have," Evans said.

Rivero said the detailed budget discussions produced tension but that it resulted in "good public policy, not micromanaging."

Aames said to say some of the budget

cuts they brought up were unnecessary when the budget was already balanced is "a false argument."

"We could spend that money on something else," he said.

The majority rejected staff's proposal to create a health clinic for city employees. Staff billed it as a long-term money-saver for employees and for the city, but Leone said he would have supported it only if residents could access it.

"They need to remember we serve the little people who live across the street from City Hall," Leone said.

A veteran councilman, Leone has long criticized a project to expand Northern Avenue into a parkway because of the impact it would have on some of his constituents. He and the majority removed the project from the city's capital plan. Evans joined the majority on that vote, which was more of a philosophical victory as removal from the capital budget did not remove the city's obligation to help pay for the project.

"What you're doing is you're making Peoria the laughingstock amongst other cities," Barrett said just before the vote.

## Redistricting heightens split

By May, tension heightened as Aames and the three others voted to have additional redistricting maps drawn to preserve incumbents. The call came after each of the initial maps drew two council members into the same district, meaning one would lose their seat.

Aames and Leone have openly criticized

the city attorney for the way the matter has been handled. They say the council was never told incumbency could be considered in redistricting, which happens after each census to ensure equal representation in each district.

Barrett and others in the minority criticized the move to add new maps as serving political interests over the process to gather public input that already had taken place.

Carlat said she feels "frustrated and scared" for the city's future. In the past, she said, despite differences, "the greater good of Peoria would come out in the end vote."

Now, she said, she sees things happening for "personal and political agendas."

Carlat has been a scathing critic over redistricting and her belief that Aames and others put their interests before the public's.

The majority says it's easy for Carlat and the mayor to take a political high-horse when they have nothing to lose because redistricting does not affect them.

In the end, the majority selected one of the initial maps and one that preserves all incumbents. On Tuesday, the council should narrow it to one.

## Heated rhetoric

Council debate has been heated, including when Pearson stopped the mayor in a recent discussion, telling Barrett he was "out of order" for criticizing Aames. Pearson later said that "council leadership has an attitude of my way or the highway."

He and others in the majority speak of a fractured relationship and little attempt from the council leadership to reach out to mend differences. Instead, they say they get publicly lectured. Pearson equated it to dealing with "a playground bully."

The differences were evident during an economic development debate on a proposed business incubator. Aames questioned spending \$12 million on the incubator with no tangible returns in sight.

"We don't have endless money; we want to make sure there's a good chance of getting returns," he said.

The mayor questioned whether that position is holding back the city.

"Some of us are looking at the horizon and others are looking at their feet," Barrett said. "And right now those looking at their feet are in the majority."

The mayor said he would actively campaign in the 2012 election when Pearson, Carlat and Evans go up for re-election.

"People should see that the city is regressing, and I hope they make a correction for us," he said.

## Peoria City Council undergoes major change in dynamics

by Sonu Munshi - Jun. 29, 2011 10:01 AM  
The Arizona Republic

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## Bring civility to civic duty



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By Pamela Potter

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*Pamela Potter lives in Peoria.*

Monday, June 27, 2011 at 04:07 PM

June 24, 2011

# Special Report: Redistricting

By **CAROLYN DRYER**  
EDITOR

If you were seeking high drama, you did not have to wait until 9 p.m. Tuesday to watch "Combat Hospital" to get it. Instead of "Welcome to Kandahar," citizens of a growing metropolis in the desert could have heard, "Welcome to the Peoria, Ariz. redistricting meeting."

Unlike the TV show, the redistricting meeting lasted just shy of two hours.

From the opening to closing pound of the gavel, residents and councilmembers alike voiced highly dramatic opinions about the proposed redistricting maps that will take effect in the 2012 elections.

## Redistricting process

City Attorney Steve Kemp went over the redistricting process with council, and reviewed events of the past year.

It was June 2010, when city council was given a review of the legal issues, criteria and schedule for council redistricting. In October 2010, council voted

to hire National Demographic Corporation to handle the redistricting process. NDC had to submit a time schedule, conduct scoping, outreach and community forums. The first minority redistricting forum was held in January. Other redistricting meetings were held that month and February. Once census information became available March 8, six redistricting maps were drawn up by NDC, citizen kits were made available and concept reviews were held in April and early May.

"We're on time to have council have a July 5 vote," Kemp said.

Present Tuesday to go over the three concept maps council approved two weeks ago was Doug Johnson, president of NDC. There was also a translator for Spanish-speaking residents and a court reporter. Transcripts of all public meetings must be submitted along with the final redistricting map to the U.S. Department of Justice.

## The maps

Johnson praised residents of Peoria for their active participation in the redistricting process. He described all of the elements of the three maps council approved to go forward for a final vote July 5. In particular, Johnson pointed out

that Mesquite District in the far north now contains enough residents to form two districts, noting that because of that fact, "something has to move north."

In Plan 1, Willow District just moves north to pick up that population, Johnson said, and Ironwood District stays largely where it is. South of that, Palo Verde District expands to fill the former Willow District. This is the plan that would essentially move Councilmember Joan Evans out of her current Willow District.

Also in Plan 1, Acacia, a main concern because of its mainly Latino population, moves eastward to take in the remaining southern portion of Willow District, while Pine District squeezes to the west of Acacia.

Plan 2 leaves Mesquite District much the same with a southern border staying mainly at Happy Valley Road with a slight dip south to the west of 83rd Avenue into a county island. But rather than move one entire district north, Ironwood and Willow both move north with Willow to the east of Westbrook Village. Palo Verde moves up to where Ironwood used to be.

Plan 8 involved additional criteria that have current councilmembers remaining in their districts. Mesquite is north of Pin-

naele Peak Road. Willow does not move entirely north, but starts just south of Councilmember Joan Evans' residence, with a thin piece adjacent to Ironwood across Bell Road, north of Westbrook Village and around Ironwood, dropping south along the western edge of Ironwood. Ironwood is similar to Plan 1 and fills in part of Willow.

Again, Acacia options are "fairly limited," Johnson said.

Once Johnson completed his presentation, councilmembers were asked for comments. Vice Mayor and Mesquite District Councilmember Cathy Carlat said she had another map, Aames Version 4.

Johnson said that was a plan that came through the public participation process, stressing it was a map from the public, not from council direction.

Councilmember Ron Aames said he felt it was an improvement to the current Plan 8, "pretty much keeps Willow whole."

Mayor Bob Barrett asked Johnson if whatever map is selected, can it still be tweaked, and Johnson replied in the affirmative.

**MORE REDISTRICTING ON A4**

# REDISTRICTING: Citizens voice discontent , From A1

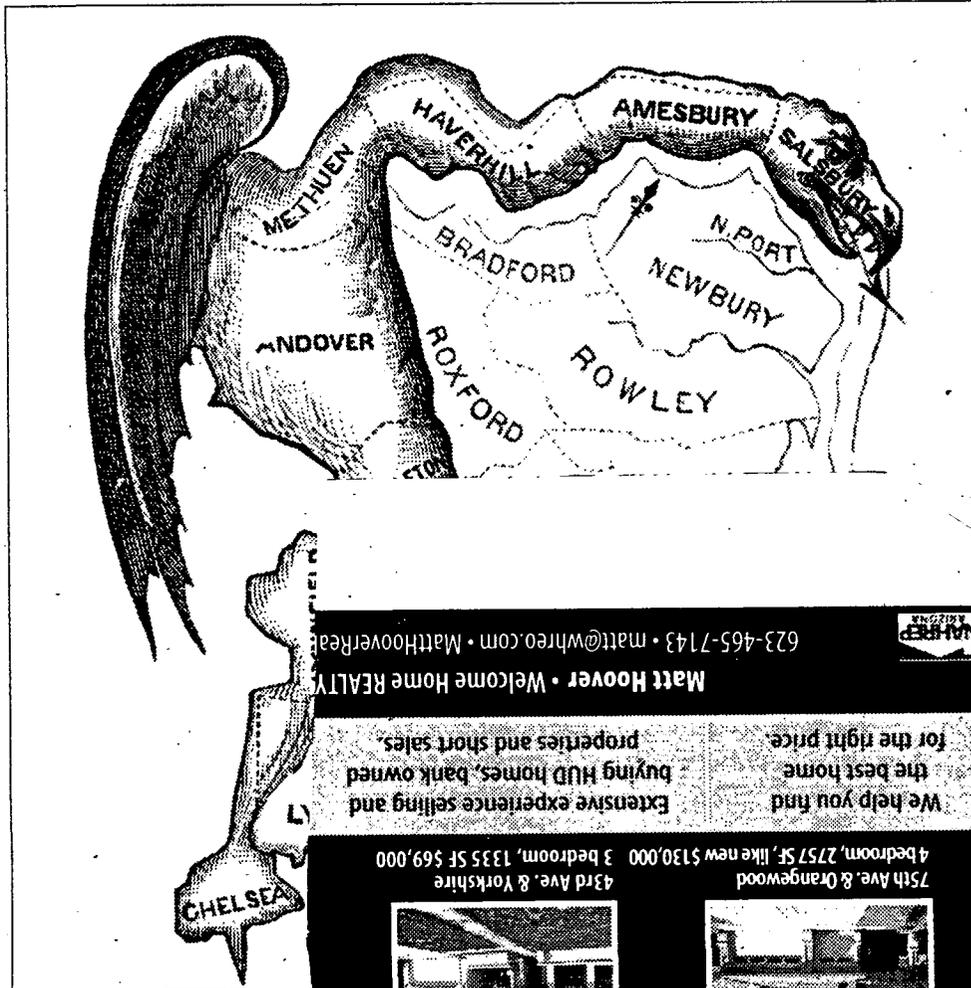
Johnson also responded "yes" to a question from Councilmember Dave Pearson about tweaking being a common practice during the redistricting process.

When asked about retaining communities of common interest, Johnson said the maps met those criteria.

Evans said she wanted to "make it clear" she never, at any time, submitted a plan to NDC and was "adamantly opposed to any plan that saves anyone in particular."

## The public speaks

Then, it was time for public comments. And there were plenty. All but one member of the public voiced opposition to Plan 8.



This political cartoon was published in the Peoria Times. It depicts the electoral districts drawn in the Democratic-Republican Party's Plan 8 as a turkey, a reference to the word gerrymander.

One resident pointed his remarks to Aames, saying Evans "has just as many constituents as you do in that district."

He was referring to the Plan 8 redrawn Paloma Verde district south of Bell Road.

Another resident, Joe Pfeiff, called Plan 8 a "marionette" and said it was "purely self-interest." He asked the charitable organization to go back to Plan 4 and scorecard sales.

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were 4,600 tickets purchased with coupons that appeared in various publications. In a comparison of attendance for two-team facilities in the Cactus League, PSC was in the middle, with the Diamondbacks/Rockies coming in first at 359,308 (average 10,888 per game); Dodgers/White Sox second at 194,863 (average 6,719); Mariners/Padres third at 188,244 (average 6,072); Rangers/Royals

greatest possible praise."

Dick Feyrer, also of Ventana Lakes, said, "I know a political boondoggle when I see one, so here I am to protest." He said the online magazine, *Slate*, put Arizona on its list of shame, finding Rep. Trent Franks' district the second-most gerrymandered congressional district in the nation.

"Wait until they hear about what's likely to take place here tonight, which I assure you - they will," Feyrer said. "Your own debate, specifically the instruction to your consultant to help try to preserve your political butts, could easily become your undoing in court."

Former Councilmember Steve Poe questioned what he called "changing the rules in midstream." He said the public deserved to know if certain councilmembers' self-preservation was the reason for spending more money for additional maps (\$1,250 each).

Jan Wilson urged reconsideration of Map 5.

Kathy Knecht, a Willow resident, commended Evans for "not trying to manipulate the process for her own self-interest."

Armando Macias asked, "Is it in the best interests of Peoria to do what is best for councilmembers or what is best for citizens?"

The final public speaker said ignoring citizen input has no business in council or state decisions. He asked council to reconsider Maps 3, 4 and 5.

**Council comments**

When it came time for council comments, Aames was the first to speak. He said he appreciated everyone's comments. Then, he proceeded to rebut an editorial in the *Peoria Re-*

**"We are four fulfilling our legislative duties, drawing maps for what we think is best for citizens."**

- Councilmember Ron Aames

**"No. 8 is an abomination."**

- Mayor Bob Barrett

public and objected to the newspaper referring to him and three other councilmembers as "egocentric rogues."

Aames also said it was incorrect to say city staff worked on the maps for almost a year, saying it was more like three months. He said council did get input from citizens and cited the numbers of comments received about the various maps. He did not comment on the number of e-mails he has sent to the city clerk in favor of Plan 8.

Aames also defended his and Councilmember David Pearson's motivation, saying it was not about their own incumbency.

He said councilmembers were never asked what the criteria was, but were told they could not consider councilmembers' residences.

"We are four fulfilling our legislative duties, drawing maps for what we think is best for citizens," Aames said.

When Evans asked for Maps 3 and 5 to be brought back for reconsideration, the vote was 4-3 no, with Pearson, Aames, and Councilmembers Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone in the majority.

Councilmember Cathy Carlat said, "I would think people who came here would be insulted being referred to as statistics," and also "for this council

to shake their head, we don't care, throw it away, toss it out."

Carlat said she wanted to hear why certain councilmembers wanted Map 8. She asked each if they had a "reason to give to the people."

Rivero and Leone had no comment, but Pearson said, "Clearly, this is not a vote."

As for comments, Pearson said the process had fallen through, all the maps follow federal guidelines, and council had narrowed the choice down to three maps. He asked why widen that now.

Carlat fired back, "I don't think I heard the answer," pointed to votes that came in from citizens on Maps 3, 4 and 5, and asked why those were being disregarded.

Pearson asked City Attorney Steve Kemp if the "votes" that came in on the maps were actually votes, at which, Kemp replied, they were "public input."

Aames brought council back to the subject of "disenfranchising voters," and reiterated his background in statistics.

Mayor Bob Barrett said, "I noticed in the last two days, you (Aames) voted for No. 8 five times."

Barrett also said, "Why is it wrong for people not to have you and not to throw Evans under the bus?"

At this remark, Pear-

son told Barrett he was out of order, and Barrett apologized, but said, "Her district, most of it south of her, goes away. People, no matter what happens, district representation goes away."

Then, Barrett said he would say what one public speaker said he would not say, "No. 8 is an abomination."

Aames took up most of the "tweaking" time on Plan 8. He moved lines as part of his Plan 8, Version 4, which will be actually the new Plan 8 when it comes time July 5 for council to select the one map for submission to the Department of Justice.

Reach the reporter at [cdryer@star-times.com](mailto:cdryer@star-times.com), or 623-847-4604.

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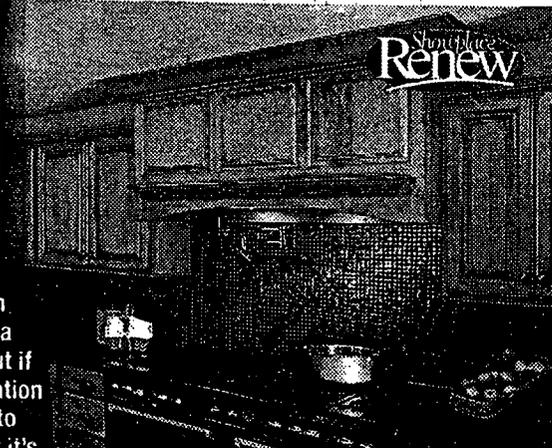


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# COMMENTARY

*Editorials, Opinions and Letters*

## Redistricting process shows unyielding power of politics

It was not supposed to end like this, and it is likely not going to end like this, no matter how the redistricting maps are tweaked to make the final one selected by Peoria City Council smell like a rose.

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don't have just a vested interest in what happens in Peoria. We have a history and love of the city in our bones. That is why we continue to be a part of activities, local, business, human interest, and yes, government.

But what is taking place at Peoria City Hall these days is not government at work; it is government at its lowest. To those councilmembers who think they are finally wielding the big stick, we've got

news for you. Vengeance is not yours. Your day in court is coming, and you will answer for your actions, one way or another. Maybe not today, not this year, but eventually, you will answer.

## It's bias and insulting to call four councilmembers rogues

Peoria is redistricting to be compliant with 2010 population numbers. Our U.S. constitution stipulates that defining new districts is a legislative responsibility. While redistricting doesn't go to the voters, citizen input is often sought by cities, primarily to see if there are communities or neighborhoods that want to remain whole regarding council representation.

Six maps were initially drawn and viewed by a small number of Peoria citizens. Later, by council consensus, three additional maps were drawn.

Recently an editorial in another newspaper ranted that four council members in Peoria were egocentric rogues to consider additional maps because the public had already reviewed some maps. First, what is wrong with viewing more maps and second, many

citizens had sent in maps prior to the public viewing that kept all councilmembers in their current districts. These citizens wanted additional maps to view because their maps were never considered. In this regard, having additional maps allowed for greater public transparency, not less as was stated in the editorial.

Also, it was incorrect to say that the Peoria staff had been working vigorously to set new boundaries for more than a year. Over the past three months, National Demographic Corporation, the consultant Peoria hired to outline maps, has done some work with staff, but only at the last minute in May did we start seeing some maps. At about this time, the council also learned that the city attorney was not correct concerning all the criteria he

### GUEST COMMENTARY



Councilmember Ron Aames  
Palo Verde District

said the council had to follow to meet US Justice Department redistricting requirements, including obstinately that we couldn't consider where councilmembers lived. We learned we only had to draw contiguous districts that are closely equal in population size and keep minority groups together.

While interested citizens, city staff, and consultants don't define the maps, the council is interested in their ideas. Partic-

ularly, the council did get input from Peoria citizens, some who wanted and some who didn't want to see additional maps, and those inputs have been considered.

I personally do not want to disenfranchise voters by drawing maps that completely move councilmembers out of the district where they were duly elected into other geography in the city where no voters elected them. Citizens sometimes think that if an elected official is drawn out of a district, she or he is no longer elected. But that isn't how voting works in America. Elected officials remain in newly created districts where no one voted for them for the remainder of their terms, which for three of the current Peoria council members would be 3 1/2 more years and for the other three 1 1/2 more years.

Many cities, including Mesa and Glendale, stipulate as one of their redistricting criteria that councilmembers not be drawn out of their current districts. Why? Because they don't want to disenfranchise voters. Mesa even has this requirement in their city charter and the councilmember there I spoke with was adamant that it is a vital part of what voting means in America. It should be a vital part in Peoria, too.

Redistricting processes are iterative and very frequently across the country cities draw additional maps to consider in their decision-making. The four who were called rogues are duly elected representatives of citizens in Peoria fulfilling their legislative duty by drawing maps they feel are best for the city and all citizens.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *Councilmembers, good for you or for citizens?*

I was surprised when I heard the Peoria City Council (4-3 vote) asking for additional redistricting maps that would keep the six current councilmembers in their districts. I had attended some of the first redistricting meetings before any maps were drawn, where the consulting firm that was hired by the city went over the process, stated the federal government guidelines and the criteria the council felt was important.

They asked that the public let them know about neighborhoods, HOA or school districts that the public felt should remain in the same district, not divided between two districts.

I specifically remember the question being asked, "Will where current councilmembers live be taken into consideration when you develop the new district maps?"

Their answer was, "The council could have made that part of the criteria, but they chose not to make it part of the criteria, just

as they did in the past redistricting."

So, when Councilmember Ron Aames asked for an additional three maps to be drawn to take into consideration where each councilmember lived, I couldn't believe what I was hearing. He and other councilmembers had been at the meetings I attended; they heard what I heard, so it should not have surprised him that two councilmembers would have to be in the same district - with the population moving north of Bell Road and six of seven councilmembers living south of Bell that was bound to happen.

Every councilmember, including Aames, had the full contract to read before the consulting firm was hired, where the criteria was clearly stated. There was ample time to add "where the current councilmembers live" as part of the original criteria or contract for drawing the original six redistricting maps. To change the criteria at such a late date gives way to speculation as to why it is so important to keep all six current councilmembers in their current districts (or what would be called their district), no matter how chopped up the districts become.

And why would it be awful for Peoria if two current members had to run against each other?

What you as councilmembers will answer with your vote is which map has the best drawn district for the entire City of Peoria, or the map that is best for you?

**Karen Garbe**

### *Redistricting process disappointing*

I'd like to express my deep concern over the actions of several members of the Peoria council: those who voted to add additional redistricting maps in order to retain their seats on the council. One of those additional maps, No. 8, is under consideration for adoption by the council.

Map No. 8 may not be illegal, but it is clearly a blatant use of gerrymandering to seek and retain political power. Usurping the open and fair process which had been established to create a new district map appears to be based on no more than purely selfish interests.

Of the remaining maps, I do support Map No. 1, but I would respect the council more if

members would also reconsider maps 4 and 5, two other maps prepared by National Demographics Corporation, which have been examined and commented on throughout the process.

Map 8, however, should be tossed out and disavowed. We need to remember that the redistricting process was established for the good of all Peoria citizens. The consideration of Map 8 makes a mockery of that process and fuels the cynicism of those who say that "all politicians are in it for themselves."

Personally, I have expected better of politicians, including our council members, and have seen many instances where they have worked unselfishly to put the interests of the entire community first.

But in this case, I'm disappointed with the actions of several council members who appear determined to fulfill the negative stereotype too many people have of their elected officials.

What this boils down to is simple:

Map 8 is best for Ron Aames, Dave Pearson, Carlo Leone, and Tony Rivero.

Map 1 is best for the 154,000 citizens of Peoria.

**Joe Pfeiff**

6-24-11

## Letters: Redistricting, courtesy, Bob Boze Bell

### Gerrymandering move in Peoria causes concern

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Of the remaining maps, I support Map No. 1, but I would respect the council more if members would also reconsider Maps 4 and 5, also prepared by National Demographics Corp., which have been examined and commented on throughout the process.

Map 8, however, should be tossed out. We need to remember that the redistricting process was established for the good of all Peoria citizens. The consideration of Map 8 makes a mockery of that process and fuels the cynicism of those who say that all politicians are in it for themselves.

Personally, I have expected better of politicians, including our council members, and have seen many instances where they have worked unselfishly to put the interests of the entire community first — contrary to the cynical views many hold of elected officials.

But in this case, I'm disappointed with the actions of several council members who appear determined to fulfill the negative stereotype too many people have elected officials.

What this boils down to is simple: Map 8 is best for Ron Aames, Dave Pearson, Carlo Leone and Tony Rivero. Map 1 is best for the 154,000 citizens of Peoria.

—Joe Pfeiff, Peoria

## **Redistricting process disappointing**

**Joe Pfeiff | Posted: Thursday, June 23, 2011 9:00 pm**

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## **Redistricting process shows unyielding power of politics**

**STAFF EDITORIAL | Posted: Thursday, June 23, 2011 8:00 pm**

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## **It's bias and insulting to call four council members rogues**

**By RON AAMES, Peoria Councilmember | Posted: Thursday, June 23, 2011 10:58 am**

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Recently an editorial in another newspaper ranted that four council members in Peoria were egocentric rogues to consider additional maps because the public had already reviewed some maps. First, what is wrong with viewing more maps and second many citizens had sent in maps prior to the public viewing that kept all council members in their current districts. These citizens wanted additional maps to view because their maps were never considered. In this regard, having additional maps allowed for greater public transparency, not less as was stated in the editorial.

Also, it was incorrect to say that the Peoria staff had been working vigorously to set new boundaries for more than a year. Over the past three months National Demographic Corporation, the consultant Peoria hired to outline maps, has done some work with staff but only at the last minute in May did we start seeing some maps. At about this time, the council also learned that the city attorney was not correct concerning all the criteria he said the council had to follow to meet US Justice Department redistricting requirements, including obstinately that we couldn't consider where council members lived. We learned we only had to draw contiguous districts that are closely equal in population size and keep minority groups together.

While interested citizens, city staff, and consultants don't define the maps, the council is interested in their ideas. Particularly, the council did get input from Peoria citizens, some who wanted and some who didn't want to see additional maps, and those inputs have been considered.

I personally do not want to disenfranchise voters by drawing maps that completely move council members out of the district where they were duly elected into other geography in the city where no voters elected them. Citizens sometimes think that if an elected official is drawn out of a district, she or he is no longer elected. But that isn't how voting works in America. Elected officials remain in newly created districts where no one voted for them for the remainder of their terms, which for three of the current Peoria council members would be 3 1/2 more years and for the other three 1 1/2 more years.

Many cities, including Mesa and Glendale, stipulate as one of their redistricting criteria that council members not be drawn out of their current districts. Why, because they don't want to disenfranchise voters. Mesa even has this requirement in their city charter and the council member there I spoke with was adamant that it is a vital part of what voting means in America. It should be a vital part in Peoria too.

I'm wondering if this other newspaper also considers Mesa and Glendale council members to be egocentric rogues?

Redistricting processes are iterative and very frequently across the country cities draw additional maps to consider in their decision-making. The four who were called rogues are duly elected representatives of citizens in Peoria fulfilling their legislative duty by drawing maps they feel are best for the city and all citizens.

The definition of rogue is worthless person. It's a very low point for the editorial board of a newspaper to call four council members worthless persons. I would expect this from the National Enquirer, but not from a local paper that claims to consider all sides of an issue.

*Dr. Ron Aames, Peoria Councilman*

## Peoria residents: Redistricting map could be 'boondoggle'

by Sonu Munshi - Jun. 23, 2011 11:10 AM  
The Arizona Republic

A dozen or so incensed Peoria residents told City Council on Tuesday that one of the three redistricting maps inserted in the mix to preserve incumbents is a case of gerrymandering.

They warned the council the issue would be Peoria's "political boondoggle," could lead to costly legal challenges and could lead to council members being bounced in the next elections.

Peoria has spent the spring planning for redistricting, which adjusts council district boundaries after each census to ensure equal representation. The city has received more than 1,100 comments on possible maps.

The council earlier this month narrowed the options to three. In a 4-3 vote, the council had inserted an additional map, drawn later in the process, to preserve incumbents.

That map, known as Map 8, drew plenty of invective Tuesday for the majority who supported it: Ron Aames, Dave Pearson, Carlo Leone and Tony Rivero.

Aames maintained the addition of the map process did not "disenfranchise" anyone. In each of the first six maps, he said, a council member would be drawn into a district where residents had not voted for him or her.

Aames also rejected arguments that residents had preferred another map, which didn't get included in the final three options. He said the council only collects feedback on the maps, and they're not "votes," as opponents have called them.

Doug Johnson, the city's redistricting consultant and the city attorney reaffirmed that point.

Each of the maps was "the best we could do to meet the criteria," Johnson said. "Whether it's best for the community is a decision for you (council) to make."

The council on Tuesday, in another split vote, further narrowed the possibilities to Map 8 and Map 1. The council should decide on one map July 5.

Nearly two hours of discussion included Councilwoman Joan Evans accusing Aames of making one map version appear as if it was endorsed by her, and Pearson telling Mayor Bob Barrett he was "out of order" when he criticized Aames.

Aames has maintained he and other council members were led to believe that preserving

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incumbents could not be a factor in redistricting. He later realized that other cities have done so and that it's not prohibited by federal law.

Regardless, residents deplore the path the council majority's decision, which they say overthrew their input.

Dick Feyrer said the action "to help try to preserve your political butts could easily become your undoing in court."

Joe McCord said, "I guarantee you, if you choose plan 8, your opponents in the next election will beat you over your heads and rip you to pieces with it."

Christian Williams said Map 8 may be legal, but it's not logical. He said it "artificially inserted" council members to ensure they don't get drawn into each other's districts.

Councilwoman Evans asked Aames if he had suggested a version of Map 8 that he had drawn as Evans 1 in an e-mail to the consultant. Aames said he believed he had but that it didn't happen.

"Mr. Aames chose to call it Evans 1 and I will make it really clear to our listening public and to my fellow council members, I never at any time submitted to you nor will I," a ticked-off Evans said.

She added: "I want people to know it was never an Evans plan nor an Evans desire."

Barrett questioned Aames' argument that incumbents should not be drawn out because they could end up representing residents who never voted for them. Map 1, which has moved forward, would draw Evans out of Willow District and into Aames' Palo Verde District. That would force Evans off

the council at the end of her term. She would have to wait until Aames' term is up if she chose to challenge him on the ballot.

"Why is it wrong for people who voted for you to not have you, but it's OK to throw Joan under the bus and disenfranchise all her," Barrett said.

Pearson cut off the mayor, saying "this council was out of order" for criticism of a member.

Barrett apologized but went on to say Evans too would be unable to represent people who voted for her.

Aames explained his logic. He said Evans' term is up in about 18 months, whereas he has another 3 1/2 years on council, which would mean if he was drawn into another district, he would represent those who hadn't voted for him for a longer period.

Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat asked the majority to explain their vote. Apart from Aames, Pearson is the only one who spoke up. He said the council has followed a legal process, and each map follows U.S. rules. He said the public feedback was just that, feedback and

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not votes that should necessarily outweigh the council's decision.

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6-22-11

## OPINIONS

# 4 thumb redistricting noses at voters

Peoria has a very big political problem. Our community should be outraged at four council members, who are manipulating the system to preserve what seems to be their newly formed voting bloc by hijacking the redistricting process.



**My Turn**  
**KIM PRICE**  
**OLSEN**

Initially, the City Council unanimously voted to have an independent firm draw redistricting maps. The firm was instructed to not consider where council members lived but rather to draw legal maps in the best interest of the city, its citizens and neighborhoods.

Six maps were developed and, over nearly a year, city staff held community meetings, asking citizens for input regarding the maps. Sounds appropriate, right?

Well, in the middle of what seemed to be a transparent and respectful process, Councilman Ron Aames realized that his political backside would be at risk if certain maps were selected. So Aames asked for three new maps, using council members' residential addresses as a priority, and his three buddies crossed the line with him.

Aames argued against expert and legal advice that recommended the council go forward with

the six original maps because, he claims, other cities have made protecting council members' incumbency a priority. In the end, even the firm that drew the maps refused to endorse the three new maps requested by Aames.

The citizens of Peoria overwhelmingly selected Map 5, one of the original maps. This map is problematic for Aames, Dave Pearson, Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone because it puts Aames in Leone's district. On the other hand, it makes good sense because the purpose of redistricting is to distribute residents equally across the city and the growth has not been in their districts.

In an effort to preserve Aames' council seat and stoke what appears to be a "you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" power grab, the group narrowed the maps to three by tossing the two maps most liked by the community.

Aames, Pearson, Rivero and Leone ignored hundreds of citizens who took the time to be involved in the process. The additional maps and meetings will cost the city taxpayers thousands of dollars, plus staff and legal time, and will put the city at risk of being accused of gerrymandering.

A final council vote on a map is scheduled for early July.

*Kim Price Olsen lives in Peoria.*



click to enlarge

By Ron Aames

Regarding the editorial "Peoria residents, rise up against the rogues" (*Peoria Republic*, June 18):

Peoria is redistricting to be compliant with 2010 population numbers. Our U.S. Constitution stipulates that defining new districts is a legislative responsibility. While redistricting doesn't go to the voters, citizen input is often sought by cities, primarily to see if there are communities or neighborhoods that want to remain whole regarding council representation.

Six maps were initially drawn and viewed by a small number of Peoria citizens. Later, by council consensus, three additional maps were drawn.

In editorial, *The Republic* editorial board said that four council members in Peoria were "egocentric rogues" to consider additional maps because the public had already reviewed some maps. What is wrong with viewing more maps and second many citizens had sent in maps prior to the public viewing that kept all council members in their current districts? These citizens wanted additional maps to view because their maps were never considered. In this regard, having additional maps allowed for greater public transparency, not less as *The Republic* editorial board told its readers.

Also, it was incorrect to say that the Peoria staff had been working vigorously to set new boundaries for more than a year. Over the past three months National Demographic Corporation, the consultant Peoria hired to outline maps, has done some work with staff but only at the last minute in May did we start seeing some maps. At about this time, the council also learned that the city attorney was not correct concerning all the criteria he said the council had to follow to meet US Justice Department redistricting requirements, including obstinately that we couldn't consider where council members lived. We learned we only had to draw contiguous districts that are closely equal in population size and keep minority groups together.

While interested citizens, city staff, and consultants don't define the maps, the council is interested in their ideas. Particularly, the council did get input from Peoria citizens, some who wanted and some who didn't want to see additional maps, and those inputs have been considered.

I personally do not want to disenfranchise voters by drawing maps that completely move council members out of the district where they were duly elected into other geography in the city where no voters elected them. Citizens sometimes think that if an elected official is drawn out of a district, she or he is no longer elected. But that isn't how voting works in America. Elected officials remain in newly created districts where no one voted for them for the remainder of their terms, which for three of the current Peoria council members would be 3 1/2 more years and for the other three. 1 1/2 more years.

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I'm wondering if *The Republic* also considers Mesa and Glendale council members "egocentric rogues".

Redistricting processes are iterative and very frequently across the country cities draw additional maps to consider in their decision-making. The four of us are duly elected representatives of citizens in Peoria fulfilling our legislative duty of drawing maps that we feel are best for the city and all citizens.

*The Republic* editorial characterized us as rogues who don't care about citizens. The definition of rogue is worthless person. It's a very low point for *The Republic* to call four council members worthless persons.

*Ron Aames represents the Palo Verde District on the Peoria City Council.*

## Citizens, rise up against the rogues

**Our View:** The Arizona Republic editorial board, West Valley

Transparency in government is what Peoria residents want. Transparency is what they are getting in council members' actions regarding redistricting.

It looks horrible, but Peoria residents shouldn't turn away from it.

A majority of Peoria City Council members have made it clear they don't care what the people they serve want. Their goal is to ensure that district lines are drawn to protect their political careers.

The hope of most politicians is that the mandatory reset of district boundaries will preserve their political strength. Few have been as blatant as some Peoria City Council members in pressing the issue.

For more than a year, city staffers, community members and a consulting firm have worked to reset district boundaries in Peoria. New boundaries are required after every census to ensure adequate representation for all residents.

Those involved with the process say that's exactly what they came up with when they presented six new district maps to the council. The results, however, were maps that threw several council members into new districts where they would have to compete with other incumbents if they wanted to retain their posts.

This is nothing new. It has happened in Peoria in the past, and no one made a fuss.

But this time, a bloc led by Councilman Ron Aames, ordered the group to return to the drawing board and create more maps that would make incumbency a priority. Carlo Leone, Tony Rivero and Dave Pearson supported the additional maps over the objections of Mayor Bob Barrett, Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat and Councilwoman Joan Evans.

Barrett called the action "self-serving" and "an abomination." He said the city used the identical process in 1990, 1995 and 2000 without any objection.

"The council agreed to this process more than a year ago," he said. "To have it changed at the last minute is outrageous."

The city's redistricting consultant was concerned about the lack of public input on the newly added maps. He said the criteria were stated from the beginning and that's how the process was conducted.

Last week, the council, after heated discussion with objectors, adopted three maps for consideration, including one of the later creations considering incumbency. Two of the three are fairly straightforward; the third resembles a Picasso piece. Public meetings on those maps were held this week.

Residents involved in the process now say city officials are disregarding their suggestions in favor of their own political futures. Public feedback had overwhelmingly supported a map in which Aames would have gone into Leone's district. But the public's preferred map was not selected as one of the final three for consideration.

"The message is that they really don't care about our input," said Kim Price Olsen, who had encouraged fellow residents to attend community meetings on redistricting. "It's going to be tough to get them (residents) to come out and get involved again when the council acts in their own interests."

She's probably right, but we urge residents to fight that natural impulse. In light of what's happened, this is the most important time for Peoria residents to let their voices be heard because the council will approve a preferred concept map June 21. A final vote is set for early July.

Public officials have a responsibility to their constituents and to act in the best interest of the community. When they act like egocentric rogues, they deserve an earful from the people they serve.

Friday, June 17, 2011 at 02:27 PM

# Citizens divided on redistricting maps

By CAROLYN DRYER  
EDITOR

At one of the three council redistricting public meetings held this week, the first one at Rio Vista Recreation Center, citizens were able to look at the boundaries on the three maps that made the final cut. There was division in the audience when it came to the boundary lines on map 8.

One audience member, Richard Terbush, who lives in the Willow District represented by Councilmember Joan Evans, wanted to know who was responsible for the maps that were in the top three. He said he wanted

to know the reasons why councilmembers selected those three, Maps 1, 2 and 8.

City Attorney Steve Kemp said it was inappropriate for him or any member of city staff or the consultant, National Demographics Corporation, to speak to what council thought. He said Terbush perhaps should be asking councilmembers to answer his question.

There were councilmembers present at the redistricting meeting: Evans, Councilmember and Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat, who serves the Mesquite District; Councilmember Carlo

Leone, Pine; Councilmember Tony Rivero, Acacia; and Councilmember Ron Aames, Palo Verde.

Carlat stood up and said, "As you can see, my district at the top is divided by Happy Valley Road. The middle districts are not my fight."

But she talked about what was said during council's discussion about which maps should make the final three.

Referring to the three extra maps, Carlat said, "I did not do that. I completely disagree with the concept. Mr. Aames said in the council meeting a specific request for three maps with coun-

cilmembers in each."

Carlat said she would like to have comments as quickly as possible on the final three maps, and told the residents at the meeting that maps 5, 3 and 4 received the highest public input, but apparently did not carry the weight they should have.

Kemp said he would work with NDC to get the public's input on the remaining three maps as quickly as possible.

Evans stood up and said, "Basically, what happened, four people selected those



Photo by Carolyn Dryer

Palo Verde District Councilmember Ron Aames listens Tuesday while citizens comment on the final three maps being considered for redistricting.

## Mayor calls new maps 'self-serving'

By CAROLYN DRYER  
EDITOR

Mayor Bob Barrett sat quietly during a brief presentation, but following the presentation, wasted no time in blasting the purpose and cost

of additional redistricting maps.

In a special study session Tuesday afternoon, Barrett sat with other members of city council as Chief Financial Officer Brent Mattingly

**MORE MAYOR ON A2**

**MORE MAPS ON A5**

# MAYOR: Maps 'self-serving,'

From A1

gave an overview of the city's contract with National Demographics Corporation. It was a cut and dried summary, which laid out in simple terms the procurement process, members of the evaluation committee, proposal components, the selection process, evaluation results and contract award.

Before he began, Mattingly said it was an "open, competitive and fair process." He said the request for proposals was standard and out of three bids, NDC was selected after an August review and September interviews with the three bidders.

Under the RFP criteria, bidders submitted their project plan and method of approach, the firm's experience, staff capabilities and assignments, cost considerations and conformance to the city's RFP.

The selection process was based on an evaluation and scoring, with a top of 1,000 points based on the RFP submittal, and 500 points based on the interview presentation and answers to questions.

The results indicated NDC scored 810 points, Research Advisory Services scored 790, and CityGate GIS chalked up 725 points. Interviews resulted in NDC obtaining 435 points, while Research Advisory Services earned 335 points.

The contract was awarded Oct. 19, 2010.

That statement ended Mattingly's presentation, and that was when Barrett called on councilmembers with any questions. Hearing none, Barrett questioned Mattingly on the number of times the redistricting contract came up for discussion during council meetings

"In our pursuit of self-preservation on council, we're spending taxpayer dollars. Self-serving maps are expensive."



Mayor  
Bob Barrett

or study sessions before the contract was awarded.

Mattingly replied, "On at least a couple occasions."

Then came Barrett's comments aimed at certain councilmembers, although they remained nameless.

"In the contract we approved under criteria (scope of work), Item 10, residence of councilmembers will not be considered," Barrett said.

(The actual wording reads: "The current residence of an incumbent Councilmember shall not be considered in the formation of proposed new district boundaries, nor shall the current residence of an incumbent Councilmember influence the final adoption of the new district boundaries.")

Following the study session, Barrett elaborated, saying, "Any new maps council directed them to draw in addition to the original six cost the taxpayers \$1,250 per map. In our pursuit of self-preservation on council, we're spending taxpayer dollars. Self-serving maps are expensive."

Reach the reporter at [cdryer@star-times.com](mailto:cdryer@star-times.com), or 623-847-4604.

**MAPS:** From A1

maps. The same four people decided on the names (of each district)."

One Palo Verde resident asked about accountability when it came to citizen input on the various maps. He asked how NDC would know if he submitted 30 votes for one particular map.

Kemp said the process was simply a way for citizens to comment, and it was NDC's job to correlate responses. He said it was not a statistical process, just a way for the public to comment.

The resident asked if the reason the boundaries were being changed was to achieve socio-economic balance and boundary lines were to correspond to changing demographics.

Kemp said the process is meant to keep communities of interest together and eliminate retrogression.

Willow District resident Jan Wilson objected to the new maps, saying she went to one of the meetings in the beginning of the redistricting process and she did not like having new maps. She said it was her opinion that map 1 was the best even though, "sadly, Mrs. Evans is out of the district."

Aames again stood to comment, saying, "To keep harping citizens were not considered, my constituents said their maps weren't considered."

Aames pointed to the comments received for the first six maps, and especially map 5, the numbers for which, he said, were "unbelievably high." (He said map 5 received 518 votes compared to 11 votes for map 1, three votes for map 2, and seven votes for map 4.) He talked about his career in marketing research, where, he said, he never saw such a high deviation.

"So, I'm not going to



Photos by Carolyn Dryer

**Councilmember and Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat, right, and Councilmember Joan Evans, seated across the aisle, listen to comments during the public meeting Tuesday at Rio Vista Recreation Center. Councilmember Ron Aames is seated in the background at right.**

pay much attention to that," Aames said. "Some person went very wild on No. 5."

He said the redistricting process was not an art contest, referring to the unusual shapes on map 8, which is the additional map that leaves all current councilmembers in their same districts.

"I'm looking for continuity from past districts," Aames said.

Councilmember Carlo Leone suggested NDC was late in getting the maps to councilmembers, and blamed the city attorney and city management for the lateness. He talked about not wanting to see two colleagues running against each other as the reason he supported map 8.

Willow District resident Kim Price Olsen said Leone's remark about two colleagues voting against each other is "not the reason for redistricting. Map 8 is all about protecting incumbents. It does not keep cohesive districts together.

"This plan is for 10 years, not the three years Ron Aames has left on his term. Although it may be legal, it's not right. No. 1 is the best map for the city."

Aames responded by

saying, "We're all entitled to our opinion, not necessarily the right opinion. All are legitimate maps."

**More redistricting meetings scheduled**

Peoria citizens are encouraged to attend any or all of the public meetings listed below that will be held pertaining to this process. At each meeting, concept maps will be displayed that portray suggested district boundaries.

- June 21- Public comment will be presented by the consultant to city council, with the intent of selecting a final concept map that evening. The meeting will be held during a council meeting 5 to 9 p.m. at Peoria Council Chambers, 8401 W. Monroe St.

- July 5- City Council will ratify the final concept map. Pending Justice Department approval, that plan will set the district lines for the 2012 elections. This will be held 5 to 9 p.m. during a regular council meeting at Peoria Council Chambers, 8401 W. Monrie St.

Sessions are open to the public and will be telecast on Cox channel 11 and at [www.peoriaaz.gov/PeoriaTV](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/PeoriaTV).



**City Attorney Steve Kemp explains the legalities of redistricting to citizens at a meeting Tuesday afternoon at Rio Vista Recreation Center. National Demographics Corporation senior research analyst Justin Levitt is at right.**

## Letters to the Editor: Bundgaard, redistricting

### Aames acting solely in self-interest

The city staff of Peoria spent months gathering and analyzing public input. They used that input to create six maps that satisfied federal guidelines and recognized the desires and needs of the people of Peoria.

Given the shape of our city, the maps reflect the best possible boundaries for the City Council districts now and in the future. Contrary to Councilman Ron Aames' assertion, these maps were not gerrymandered. To gerrymander is to draw district boundaries in such a way as to favor an individual, group or political party.

Ironically, Councilman Aames demanded the creation of three new gerrymandered maps. With the support of council members Leone, Rivera and Pearson, Aames directed the staff to have these concepts ready by the June 7 meeting of the City Council.

Each of these maps was to be drawn in such a way as to protect Aames' seat on the council. Unlike Councilwoman Joan Evans and others who have gone before her, Aames evidently believes that his seat on the council is an entitlement and not a position of service. His personal agenda is more important than the need to maintain cohesive neighborhoods and communities.

I hope the residents of Peoria take note of this betrayal of public trust, and voice strong opposition to these tactics.

—Gall Long, Peoria

Thursday, June 16, 2011 at 01:57 PM

## **Can't believe what's going on**

**Sherry Davis | Posted: Thursday, June 16, 2011 6:15 pm**

What happened to the Peoria city council? They used to be so good and now they are doing this horrible thing with the new districts. And all because two members are afraid they might lose their seats. They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

I cannot believe what's going on down at city hall. The people voted overwhelmingly for a plan and the council members (it was those 4 men that always vote together) just simply ignored the results. Doesn't it matter anymore what the people want? Is it all in the hands of a couple of council men who worry the voters might vote them out? Well, we will.

Do Mr. Aames and Mr. Pearson really think the voting public in Peoria doesn't know what's going on? That we don't recognize dirty politics when we see it? You guys better wake up or we might just recall you now and not wait for the next election. The council in Surprise got out of hand and the people there kicked them all out.

So we're not a Democracy in Peoria any more? I understand the redistricting Plan 5 got the most votes by a huge margin but because it didn't protect the seats of a couple of councilmen, they just threw our votes away, wasted all that money on consultants, then forced the consultants to come with a new plan, at more cost, which would protect their butts! I guess Aames and Pearson don't care about the public any more.

I watched the Peoria council meeting on channel 11 and I was absolutely dumbfounded by Mr. Aames silly statements. He worried that he would be representing people who didn't vote for him. Doesn't he know that he represents all the people of Peoria, not just those who voted for him? He's such a joke. Since he thinks so little of us then I guess we'll just have to vote for someone else, anyone else, at the next election.

Has anyone looked at that monstrosity of a redistricting map that Aames and Pearson came up with? Their plan 8 district ambles all over the city make no sense whatsoever except, of course, that the jerry-rigged lines keep them in office. Someone needs to draw new lines that put them in Glendale or Youngtown, anyplace to get them out of Peoria.

**Sherry Davis**

## Be outraged by Peoria redistricting actions



[click to enlarge](#)

By Kim Price Olsen

Peoria has a very big political problem. Our community should be outraged at four council members, who are manipulating the system to preserve what seems to be their newly-formed voting bloc by hijacking the redistricting process.

Initially, the city council unanimously voted to have an independent firm draw redistricting maps. The firm was originally instructed not consider where council members live but rather to draw legal maps in the best interest of the city, its citizens and neighborhoods.

So, six maps were developed and over a period of nearly a year, city staff held multiple community meetings, asking citizens for input regarding the six

maps. Sounds great, right?

Well, in the middle of what seemed to be a transparent and respectful process, Councilman Aames realized his political backside was at risk if certain maps were selected. So Aames asked for 3 new maps, using council members' residential addresses as a priority, and his three buddies crossed the line with him.

Aames argued against expert and legal advice which recommended the council go forward with the 6 original maps because he claims other cities have made protecting council member's incumbency a priority. In the end, even the firm which drew the maps refused to endorse the three new maps requested by Aames.

The citizens of Peoria overwhelmingly selected map # 5, one of the original maps. This map is problematic for Aames, Pearson, Rivero, and Leone because it puts council member Aames in Carlo Leone's district. On the other hand, it makes good sense because the purpose of redistricting is to distribute residents equally across the city and the growth has not been in their districts.

In an effort to preserve Aames' seat on the council and stoke what appears to be a "you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" power grab, the group narrowed the maps to three by tossing the two maps most liked by the community.

Aames, Pearson, Rivero and Leone completely ignored hundreds of citizens who took the time to be involved in the process. The additional maps and meetings will cost the city taxpayers thousands of dollars, plus staff and legal time, and it puts the city at risk of being accused of gerrymandering.

The final vote for redistricting will be held on June 21. This leaves very little time for community input from citizens who were asked to participate, were given a ballot and told their input was necessary and would be valued.

*Kim Price Olsen lives in Peoria.*

Thursday, June 16, 2011 at 01:29 PM

## Redistricting map proposals causing dissent in Peoria

by Sonu Munshi - Jun. 16, 2011 10:32 AM  
The Arizona Republic

Peoria residents this week expressed anger and frustration over the late insertion of three new proposals for redrawing the City Council district lines.

They said the additions, which came at the behest of Councilman Ron Aames, brushed aside residents' input and pushed for a gerrymandered map that keeps incumbents in their districts.

"This was a ridiculous step," Peoria resident Mike Hutchinson said at a public meeting on redistricting.

A majority of residents speaking at Tuesday's meeting at the Peoria Community Center opposed the move.

Aames defended the addition in a heated argument with a resident. . He said the city attorney had led the council to believe incumbency by federal law could not be a factor in redistricting. Aames said he later realized it could be. Mesa and Glendale, for instance, consider where council members live when redrawing maps to adjust for population growth.

Aames said the city's redistricting consultants at National Demographics Corporation, appeared to have gone out of their way to exclude at least one council member, which he said could be considered gerrymandering.

Redistricting, a process that happens every

10 years after the census, raised some council members' concerns when the consultant unveiled six maps this spring. Each map, drawn up after meetings to gather community input and based on factors such as keeping a roughly equal population in each district, put two council members in the same district. That meant one council member would lose. .

Late last month , Aames and three other council members, Dave Pearson, Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone, directed the consultant to draw three more maps that preserved incumbents.

The council last week narrowed the number of maps to three: two were from the original set, while the final one preserved all incumbents.

The three maps were shown to the public Tuesday and Wednesday to gather feedback before council selects one on Tuesday.

The impact of each map includes:

- Map 1: Councilwoman Joan Evans would be drawn out of Willow District. She would become part of Aames' Palo Verde District.

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Because Aames was re-elected last year, she would have to wait about two years after completing her current term to run for office if she wanted to represent Palo Verde.

- Map 2: Pearson would be drawn out of Ironwood District. He would find himself in Aames' Palo Verde District. Pearson would be in the same situation as Evans under Map 1.

- Map 8 preserves all incumbents.

Map 8 has Aames support, but drew the ire of residents and Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat, who said it's not contiguous and doesn't make geographic sense. Carlat said Map 8 would redraw Evans' district into an area she doesn't have anything to do with on a daily basis.

"She doesn't drive on those streets, she doesn't shop in those stores," Carlat said.

Evans supported Map 1 even though it would draw her out. "One is the only one solid in every community," she said.

Resident Joe McCord pointed at two maps he brought to show the shape of Palo Verde and Willow districts in Map 8, which he described as "a complete train-wreck."

An upset Karen Garbe, who lives in north Peoria, said the decision to preserve incumbents didn't "make any sense."

"He doesn't read a contract," Garbe said of Aames.

That was in reference to something Mayor Bob Barrett highlighted at a council meeting earlier Tuesday.

Barrett read aloud an excerpt of the council-approved contract with the redistricting

consultant, which states: "Unless NDC is otherwise directed by the city, the residences of incumbent council members will not be a consideration in the development of district plans."

Barrett said Aames should have read the contract.

Aames said he hadn't seen that portion of the contract. He said the contract was approved on the council's consent agenda, a listing of routine items that are approved in one fell swoop. Aames said next time he'll ensure such contracts are looked at more closely with greater discussion.

Still, Aames said he, too, was following the will of constituents. Pam Potter sided with Aames, her councilman. She questioned how much community input the consultant had taken into account when she was able to come up with a map that preserved everyone and still met federal guidelines on equal population in each district.

Plus, she said, it wouldn't be fair for residents to be represented by a council member they didn't elect and for an incumbent to represent residents who never

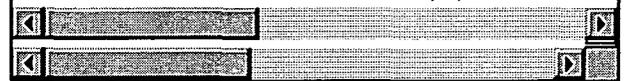
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voted for him or her.

Leone said it's unfair to blame some on the council when the council and residents received the detailed population data late, which made it difficult to do a careful analysis of the maps.

He blamed the fracas on the city manager, the city attorney and the consultant.

After Tuesday's selection, the final map should be up for a formal council vote at its first meeting in July. If the U.S. Department of Justice approves it, the new council lines would take effect for council elections next fall.

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## Readers react to Peoria redistricting actions

### Peoria redistricting is a self-serving disgrace

#### What happened to the Peoria City Council?

Council members used to be so good and now they are doing this horrible thing with the new districts. And all because two members are afraid they might lose their seats. They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

I cannot believe what's going on at City Hall. The people expressed overwhelming support for a plan and the council members (it was those four men who always vote together) just simply ignored the results. Doesn't it matter anymore what the people want? Is it all in the hands of a couple of councilmen who worry the voters might vote them out? Well, we will!

Do council members Ron Aames and Dave Pearson really think the voting public in Peoria doesn't know what's going on? That we don't recognize dirty politics when we see it?

You guys better wake up or we might just recall you and not wait for the next election. The council in Surprise got out of hand and the people there kicked them all out.

I watched the Peoria council meeting on Channel 11 and I was absolutely dumbfounded by Mr. Aames silly statements about the redistricting process. He worried that he would be representing people who didn't vote for him. Doesn't he know that he represents all the people of Peoria, not just those who voted for him? He's such a joke. Since he thinks so little of us then I guess we'll just have to vote for someone else, anyone else, at the next election.

Has anyone looked at that monstrosity of a redistricting map that Aames and Pearson came up with? Their Plan 8 district ambles all over the city makes no sense whatsoever except, of course, that the jury-rigged lines keep them in office.

Someone needs to draw new lines that put them in Glendale or Youngtown, anyplace to get them out of Peoria.  
—Sherry Davis, Peoria

#### Voice of the people ignored

Upon learning of preliminary census numbers, Peoria officials determined the need to redraw district lines to ensure equal populations within each district.

Citizen participation was highly encouraged and specific criterion was provided for use in determining appropriate placement of new district lines. Peoria residents took this task to <sup>heart</sup> and submitted hundreds of maps to the city.

When the maps were narrowed to six, some City Council members, who find themselves residing outside their district boundaries, demanded new maps be produced to ensure they maintain residency within their districts.

This was not part of the criteria established by city officials and circumvents the voice of the people. You don't change the criteria after the fact because you don't like the outcome!

For the council members who supported the request for additional maps, shame on you. This is politics as usual. You are thinking only of yourselves and not about the people.

Thank you to Mayor Bob Barrett, Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat and Councilwoman Joan Evans. You not only listened to the will of Peoria residents but stood up for their good-faith efforts in following criteria and producing logical district boundaries.  
—Lynda Reithmann, Peoria

Thursday, June 16, 2011 at 02:03 PM

## Council to discuss redistricting contract after controversy



**SONU MUNSHI**  
peoria reporter

[click to enlarge](#)

Redistricting in Peoria has gone beyond the redrawing of council district boundaries and entered highly political territory.

Councilman Ron Aames has blasted the process Peoria has followed, saying staff misled him and council. He said the city attorney led council to believe incumbency could not by federal law be considered when redrawing lines to adjust for population growth.

That frustration led to a last-minute addition to tonight's council study session, a look at the city's contract with its redistricting consultant, National Demographics Corporation.

Mayor Bob Barrett told the *Westside Insider* that questions had come up and he wanted it discussed in public.

"Other council members have been making noises about it," Barrett said. "I feel like we can deal with those but we can deal with those in public."

It may well only be that, a discussion. Council cannot vote on any matters in a study session.

Barrett doesn't buy the argument that council was misled. The city's contract with NDC states: "Unless NDC is otherwise directed by the city, the residences of incumbent councilmembers will not be a consideration in the development of district plans."

The entire council approved that contract without questions, the mayor said.

Aames "clearly had the opportunity to read the contract," Barrett said.

Aames said he hadn't seen that portion of the contract earlier. He said the contract was approved on the council's consent agenda, a listing of routine items that are approved in one fell swoop. Aames said next time he'll ensure such contracts are looked at closely with greater discussion.

Redistricting began raising concerns when the consultant this spring unveiled six maps based on community input and other factors such as keeping roughly equal population in each district and keeping together the city's large Hispanic cluster in the Old Town area.

Each of the six options put two councilmembers in the same district, meaning one would lose out.

Aames said the consultants appeared to have almost gone out of their way to exclude at least one council member.

Aames pointed out that other cities including Glendale and Mesa make it a point to keep council members in their districts.

Late last month, Aames and three other council members (Dave Pearson, Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone) directed the consultant to draw three more maps that preserved incumbents.

Aames said he was following the will of constituents, such as Mark Dotson, who said he and his wife had come up with four maps that met all guidelines and still preserved incumbents.

The council last week narrowed the number of maps to three: two were from the original set of maps that would displace incumbents, while the final one preserved all incumbents.

These maps are being shown to the public again Tuesday and Wednesday before the council makes a final selection toward the end of the month. [See meeting dates and times here.](#)

Here's a look at the political impact of each map:

**Map 1:** Councilwoman Joan Evans would effectively be drawn out because District D was named Palo Verde and District B, Willow. That means Evans would be placed in Palo Verde, which is Aames' district. Since Aames was re-elected last year, she would have to wait for about two years after serving out her current term before she could run for office if she wanted to represent Palo Verde.

**Map 2:** Councilman Dave Pearson, who represents Ironwood District, would be drawn out because he would find himself in Palo Verde District, or district D. So he would be in the same situation as Evans under Map 1.

**Map 8:** Preserves all incumbents.

[Click here](#) to view tonight's council meeting.

## Peoria City Council narrows redistricting maps to 3 choices

by Sonu Munshi - Jun. 12, 2011 12:00 AM  
The Arizona Republic

The Peoria City Council shortlisted three maps outlining new political-district boundaries that would apply to council elections for the next 10 years.

The council on Tuesday, amid an acrimonious backdrop, narrowed the options from nine proposed maps.

Councilman Ron Aames, who last month got a council majority to support drawing three new maps to preserve incumbents, had some tense exchanges with the city's redistricting consultant. The latter made clear his disapproval of adding maps after public meetings had already occurred. Mayor Bob Barrett and Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat said the additional maps were politically self-serving.

Several residents spoke in favor of Aames, while one opposed the new maps.

Ultimately, the council chose one of those newly-added maps among the final three. Maps 1, 2 and 8 will go before residents in three meetings June 14 and 15. The council should decide on a final map at its June 21 meeting and vote on it in early July.

Public feedback was overwhelmingly for Map 5 in which Aames would have gone into Councilman Carl Leone's district. But it did not get Aames, Leone, Dave Pearson or Tony

Rivero's support.

Map 1 puts Evans and Aames in the same district. Map 2 puts Aames and Pearson in the same district and Map 8 preserves all incumbents.

The council boundaries were certain to change to better distribute residents in each district as the city has gained 45,000 residents since 2000, largely in the Mesquite District. From the beginning, City Attorney Steve Kemp maintained that incumbency would not be a consideration. But after the release of the six maps, each putting two council members in the same district, Aames said he realized other cities had asked that incumbents not be drawn out.

He said he felt staff misled the council into thinking that keeping incumbency out of the equation was a federal mandate. It resulted in last month's vote to add the additional maps that would keep every council member in his or her district. Leone, Pearson and Rivero had sided with Aames.

Barrett, Carlat and Joan Evans had said the addition of the new maps this late in the game was unfair to residents, who

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participated in multiple public meetings to give input on the original six maps.

On Tuesday, redistricting consultant Alan Heslop said his firm, National Demographics Corp., does not endorse the new maps preserving incumbents because of that lack of public input.

Heslop reiterated that keeping an equal population in each district was the main criteria Peoria laid out, as well as keeping together communities of interest such as large neighborhoods. Where incumbents live was not to be considered, he said.

"The city is changing the rules of the game at a very unfortunate stage," Heslop said.

The consultant cautioned city leaders that adding new maps without much public input could lead to a backlash.

"There are political repercussions if you draw plans that are perceived to protect incumbency," he said, adding that people expect governments to be "open and transparent."

Aames had mentioned that Glendale considered incumbency when redrawing its boundaries, but Heslop said that was a direction city leaders did from the start. And even in Glendale, federal and state guidelines would trump that direction if necessary, he said.

Joe McCord, of Peoria, said he was disappointed the council was disregarding public feedback, which was given only on the first six maps. He called the additional maps gerrymandering, the mapping process of protecting political interests.

Aames reiterated that he felt misled by city

staff on the guidelines at the outset.

Aames said he felt there was no effort made to maintain council members in their districts when it could have been done. He said it would be unfair for a council member to be out of his or her district and be forced to represent a district in which people never voted for him or her. Aames still has 3 1/2 years left in his term.

Evans after the meeting said that Map 8 is not in the city's best interest "because it's too spread out."

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## Peoria council narrows redistricting maps to 3

by Sonu Munshi - Jun. 12, 2011 12:00 AM  
The Arizona Republic

The Peoria City Council shortlisted three maps outlining new political-district boundaries that would apply to council elections for the next 10 years.

The council this week narrowed the options from nine proposed maps.

Councilman Ron Aames, who last month got a council majority to support drawing three new maps to preserve incumbents, had some tense exchanges with the city's redistricting consultant. The latter made clear his disapproval of adding maps after public meetings had already occurred. Mayor Bob Barrett and Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat said the additional maps were politically self-serving.

Several residents spoke in favor of Aames, while one opposed the new maps.

Ultimately, the council chose one of those newly added maps among the final three. Maps 1, 2 and 8 will go before residents in three meetings June 14 and 15. The council should decide on a final map at its June 21 meeting and vote on it in early July.

Public feedback was overwhelming for Map 5 in which Aames would have gone into Councilman Carl Leone's district. But it did not get support from Aames, Leone, Dave Pearson or Tony Rivero.

Map 1 puts Councilwoman Joan Evans and Aames in the same district. Map 2 puts

Aames and Pearson in the same district, and Map 8 preserves all incumbents.

The council boundaries were certain to change to better distribute residents in each district as the city has gained 45,000 residents since 2000, largely in the Mesquite District.

From the beginning, City Attorney Steve Kemp maintained that incumbency would not be a consideration.

But after the release of the six maps, each putting two council members in the same district, Aames said he realized other cities had asked that incumbents not be drawn out.

He said he felt staff misled the council into thinking that keeping incumbency out of the equation was a federal mandate. It resulted in last month's vote to add the additional maps that would keep every council member in his or her district. Leone, Pearson and Rivero had sided with Aames.

Barrett, Carlat and Evans had said the addition of the new maps this late in the game was unfair to residents, who

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participated in multiple public meetings to give input on the original six maps.

On Tuesday, redistricting consultant Alan Heslop said his firm, National Demographics Corp., does not endorse the new maps preserving incumbents because of that lack of public input.

Heslop reiterated that keeping an equal population in each district was the main criteria Peoria laid out, as well as keeping together communities of interest such as large neighborhoods.

Where incumbents live was not to be considered, he said.

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June 10, 2011

# Redistricting plans down to 3

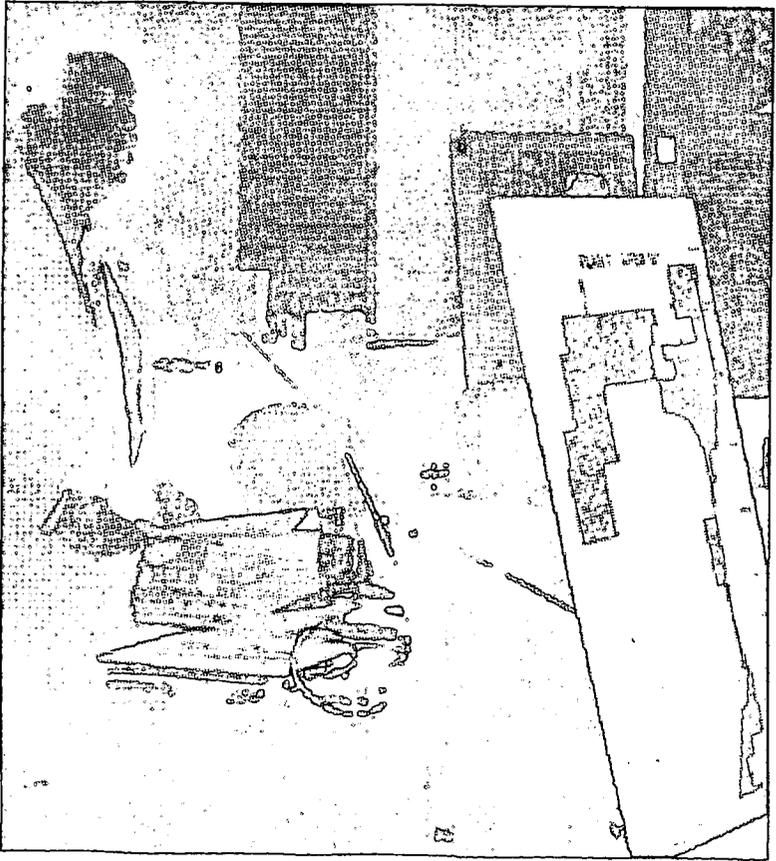


Photo by Carolyn Dryer

**Mesquite District resident Joe McCord expresses his disdain for the way Peoria City Council added three additional maps to the six preferred by residents at previous public meetings. He brought a map showing the boundaries of one council district drawn on Plan 7.**

By **CAROLYN DRYER**  
EDITOR

It wasn't pretty, but the process that took place Tuesday evening got the job done. Council decided on the final three redistricting concept maps it would like to present to the public during five different meetings in the next few weeks.

Included in the top three maps (1, 2, 8) is No. 8, which was one of the three additional concepts council requested be drawn up by redistricting consultant, National Demographics Corporation (NDC).

Alan Heslop, consultant to NDC, stood before council and talked about the redistricting process in Peoria, calling it an excellent one in which "citizens of Peoria can congratulate themselves." He said six meetings, one in each council district, were held in January, and criteria was established excluding political viewpoints and incumbent addresses. National Demograph-

ics also hosted two minority meetings.

Heslop said 410 detailed comments were received in May, there were multiple daily contacts, and there was a volume of public input.

You engaged citizens in this process and they answered you."

Heslop then said that at the end of the process, three more concept maps were requested. He emphasized that the last three concept maps were not endorsed by NDC. He went further, saying the city has the power to draw plans, but it should exercise that power with care, noting there were legal requirements that have to be met.

"You cannot protect incumbents at the expense of a minority," he said.

In addition, Heslop said, there are Arizona statutes that contain "unusually strong language on compactness," and legal constraints that must be satisfied.

"But, I'm not clear as to the

public's reaction to these plans because we haven't had public reaction," Heslop said.

He said there are political repercussions of it is perceived negatively by the public. He mentioned two other jurisdictions where a city attorney decided that if district lines drew an incumbent out of a district, that incumbent had to resign immediately. He said another jurisdiction used incumbent criteria to redistrict, and that criteria was stated at the beginning of the process. However, he said that particular jurisdiction has not experienced the extent of population gain nor extent of population shift that Peoria has.

Heslop said NDC has done its best in the redistricting process and would assist the city the best of its ability.

"But we would urge full public process," he said.

Councilmember Ron Aames

**MORE MAPS ON A2**

## MAPS: More public meetings, From A1

said Heslop was correct that NDC was asked to provide three additional concept maps. But he also said he felt NDC, by drawing maps that had one councilmember automatically out of his/her district, "you definitely went out to exclude."

"Continuity is the word I like," Aames said. "Preserve the way voters have voted."

In the first six maps, Aames said not one represented all councilmembers staying in the same district. He said he asked for block by block data two weeks ago and just received that information Tuesday before the council study session. He said after looking at revised data, he was concerned about the legitimacy of maps 1 through 6.

"In terms of citizen input, they drew maps with all council people in their districts, but you didn't consider that. I know when we get to map 8, mine is more compact than yours, and I made sure minority concentration is kept.

"I'm not pleased with some of the staff here or the council, including myself."

He then began to cite the city clerk and planning department, saying the redistricting process should not be under the city attorney."

Mayor Bob Barrett interrupted Aames momentarily to caution him about veering away from the topic at hand, and especially for pointing fingers at certain department heads.

Aames continued, "I feel council didn't take full responsibility - it let things happen."

Councilmember Dave Pearson asked Heslop if all nine maps met the federal requirement, and Heslop said all met the population requirement and to the best of his technical knowledge, it met minority requirement. Heslop said the Department of Justice will look with particular care at the way the process has afforded minorities, but that every "technical" need was met.

Turning to Aames, Heslop expressed disappointment at the councilmembers inference that NDC finagled census data.

"There is a public interest in maintaining continuity," Heslop said. "It is absurd to suggest we did not take that into consideration ... This city is changing the rules of the game at a very important stage."

### Public redistricting meetings start next week

Using the 2010 Census figures, the City of Peoria is in the process of redrawing the City's current electoral district boundary lines. YOUR involvement and input is needed. You are encouraged to attend any or all of the public meetings listed below that will be held pertaining to this process. At each meeting, concept maps will be displayed that portray suggested district boundaries. Your comments, suggestions, and ideas on the presented concept maps will be requested.

June 14 and 15- City will conduct public scoping meetings, giving residents a chance to indicate their preferences among the final three maps.

Two June 14 meetings will be held 3 to 4:30 p.m. at Rio Vista Recreation Center Lakeview Room, 8866-A W. Thunderbird Road

"I'm very happy to hear there are no errors," Aames said. "I think some of the problem is council did not take the responsibility."

At this time, Barrett opened the public comments section to get citizen opinions. He also asked each councilmember to choose their three preferences to present at upcoming public meetings. Four residents of Aames' Palo Verde District said they wanted to keep him as their councilmember.

A fifth resident in the Mesquite District, Joe McCord, brought an enlarged concept map of Plan 7, which has one district winding around two others in a horseshoe shape.

McCord said, "You made a covenant with me and the citizens of Peoria. Provided us with detailed background material, even a ballot to vote with. We did everything you asked."

After all of the public meetings, McCord said 900 voted for plans 1 through 6.

"Now, you want to disregard that covenant," McCord said, calling the additional three maps a "pernicious political ploy. Not in Peoria. There's a word for what you're doing - gerrymandering. Keep your covenant because it's the right thing to do."

The next speaker, a Palo Verde District resident, said, "I'm not sure everyone in Peoria likes to be represented by someone we didn't elect either."

He said he and his wife drew up four maps that kept all councilmembers in their district and with demographics taken into consideration. He said he has lived in Peoria since 1969 and Aames was the only councilmember he had met going door to door. His preference was Map 8, which keeps everyone in place.

At the end, Maps 1, 2 and 8 were approved as the finalists, and council decided to go ahead and give each area of each map a name.

In Map 1, A is Mesquite, B - Willow, C - Ironwood, D - Palo Verde, E - Acacia, and F - Pine.

In Map 2, A - Mesquite, B - Ironwood, C - Willow, D - Palo Verde, E - Acacia, F - Pine.

In Map 8, A - Mesquite, B - Willow, C - Ironwood, D - Palo Verde, E - Acacia, F - Pine.

To view the maps, visit [www.peoriaaz.gov](http://www.peoriaaz.gov), click on "Redistricting."

7 to 8:30 p.m., Peoria Community Center Main Conference Room, 8335 W. Jefferson St.

The June 15 meeting will be held 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Sunrise Mountain Library Community Room, 21109 N. 98th Ave.

•June 21- Public comment will be presented by the consultant to the City Council, with the intent of selecting a final concept map that evening. This meeting will be held during a council meeting 5 to 9 p.m. at Peoria City Hall, 8401 W. Monroe St.

•July 5- City Council will ratify the final concept map. Pending Justice Department approval, that plan will set the district lines for the 2012 elections. This will be held 5 to 9 p.m. during a regular council meeting at Peoria City hall, 8401 W. Monroe St.

## **Barrett, Carlat and Evans listened to people's will**

**Lynda Reithmann | Posted: Thursday, June 9, 2011 8:30 pm**

Upon learning of preliminary census numbers, City of Peoria officials determined the need to re-draw district lines to ensure equal populations within each district.

Citizen participation was highly encouraged and specific criterion was provided for use in determining appropriate placement of new district lines. Peoria residents took this task to heart and submitted hundreds of maps to the City of Peoria.

Now that the maps have been narrowed down to six, a number of city councilmembers who find themselves residing outside their district boundaries, have demanded new maps be produced to ensure they maintain residency within their districts.

This was not part of the criteria established by city officials and their request totally circumvents the voice of the people. You don't change the criteria after the fact because you don't like the outcome. For the councilmembers who supported the request for additional maps, shame on you. This is politics as usual. You are thinking only of yourselves and not about the people.

Thank you to Mayor Bob Barrett, Vice-Mayor Cathy Carlat and Councilmember Joan Evans. You not only listened to the will of Peoria residents, but stood up for their good-faith efforts in following criteria and producing logical district boundaries.

**Lynda Reithmann**

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## WESTSIDE INSIDER



### Three new redistricting maps ready for comment



**SONU MUNSHI**  
peoria reporter

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Three new concept maps are ready for public comment as Peoria continues through the redistricting process.

The City Council recently voted 4-3 to add three more maps to the mix in which none of the council members would lose their districts as part of the redrawing of council district boundaries.

The prior six maps drawn by consultants from National Demographics Corporation would have placed two incumbents in the same district, effectively leaving one out of his or her current district.

Councilmembers Ron Aames in the Palo Verde district, Dave Pearson in Ironwood and Joan Evans in Willow would no longer live in their current districts under any of the initial six maps.

Aames, with support from Pearson, Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone, requested the additional options.

The council is scheduled to narrow the concept maps from nine to three on Tuesday. Resident can view the new maps and comment ahead of Tuesday's meeting [from this link](#).

Once narrowed to three, residents can comment and indicate their preference at meetings on June 14. Council will narrow the map choice to one on June 21.

The U.S. Department of Justice has to approve the final choice. The chosen maps would affect the 2012 council elections. Ironwood, Willow and Mesquite districts are up for re-election next year.

Tuesday's council meeting starts at 4 p.m. and can be viewed [live here](#).

6-6-11

June 3, 2011

# Redistricting divides incumbent interests

## Council vote brings total maps for consideration to nine

By CAROLYN DRYER  
EDITOR

Six concepts have already been drawn up for Peoria City Council to ponder. That does not mean council has to select from one of them.

It just got more complicated. After a 4-3 vote Tuesday at a special meeting, council voted to have National Demographics,

its redistricting consultant, draw up three additional maps that would keep current councilmembers within the boundaries of their existing districts.

Mayor Bob Barrett was one of the dissenting voters (Councilmember Joan Evans and Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat also dissented), and before the vote was taken, said he felt the public was not being served by

adding three more plans for review since they had already had input in the six maps already drawn up. He said adding three more maps that would keep current councilmembers in their existing districts "reeks" of self-interest.

Barrett said, "Standards were not imposed on council. Anyone who had heartburn with that could have objected at that time."

He pointed to three previous occasions in 1990, 1995 and 2000, when councilmembers were drawn out of their districts. In the last district boundary change, former Mayor and Mesquite Council-

member Ken Forgia was drawn out of the Mesquite District when Westbrook Village became part of the Ironwood District.

Willow District Councilmember Joan Evans came out strongly against

adding three more maps to the pool, saying "I think it behooves us to be statespeople ... My goal is to see what's best for Peoria .. serve our citizens."

**MORE REDISTRIC ON A2**

## City manager calls new public information manager a 'natural fit'

Peoria has tapped Bo Larsen, a former public relations director for Banner Thunderbird Medical Center, to be its new public information manager.

Larsen brings the city nearly 30 years of experience in public relations, marketing, television and video production. He represented Banner Thunderbird for nearly eight years before taking a job in northern Idaho in 2008. During his time with Banner, he served on the Peoria Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors and was active in numerous community events and programs.

"We feel lucky to have found someone with Bo's mix of professional experience and local knowledge to be Peoria's new chief



**Bo Larsen**

spokesperson," said City Manager Carl Swenson. "His good humor and comfort with the community makes him an excellent fit for the city."

Larsen will oversee the city's Office of Communications, which comprises not only public information but also Web development, social media, internal communications and Peoria Channel 11.

"This is an exciting opportunity for me," Larsen said. "I've worked closely with Peoria agencies over the years, so this seems like a natural fit."

Larsen, a University of Montana graduate, has been married 23 years and has two daughters. Before his job at Banner Thunderbird, he worked for John C. Lincoln Health Network and U-Haul International, among other Valley companies. He began his career as a sports producer with CNN in Atlanta.

Larsen spent just a few months in Idaho before returning to Arizona. He was recently communications director at Payson Regional Medical Center.

Larsen began his duties with the city May 31 at a salary of \$92,500.

# REDISTRICT: From A1

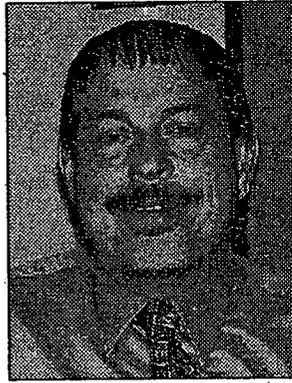
Evans also felt that districts should be named after the most recent election.

Palo Verde District Councilmember Ron Aames, who made the motion to direct National Demographics to draw up three more maps that would keep current councilmembers in their existing districts, disagreed with Evans, saying council was "just told these would be the criteria," Department of Justice requirements.

"But that is not the case," Aames said. "The real gerrymandering is when you vote somebody out of office - to your benefit ... It's a strange situation when a councilmember still has three and a half years on his term, voted out. We're ignoring voters who voted for him. I stand by the motion to see three more districts defined."

Ironwood District Councilmember Dave Pearson said, "I agree we should have had this discussion up front. In truth, we didn't last time. I don't think six is a magic number."

Pearson said he felt councilmembers were certainly within their rights and encouraged others on council to vote for three more maps.



**City Attorney  
Steve Kemp**

If council cannot come to a decision by the deadline mandated by the DOJ, it would have to "take the risk" in the 2012 election, City Attorney Steve Kemp said. City Clerk Wanda Nelson has to have boundaries for people who pull nomination packets, he said.

"If (U.S. Department of) Justice has an issue with that, it could file a lawsuit to set election aside," Kemp said. "We could have council elected at large. Realistically, Justice could have the courts draw district lines. Independently of Justice suing, you could have advocacy groups suing for injunctive relief."

He said the courts do not like to get involved unless the legislative body cannot or will not make a decision.

Aames said that was an "oddball" possibility and if council accepted his motion, there would be nine maps from which

to choose.

During an interview last week, Kemp said if one looks at the history of redistricting in Peoria, "every concept council has adopted has been the result of tweaking."

In 2000 in the Palo Verde District, council made modifications.

And, a council policy not to displace a councilmember is just that, a policy decision, Kemp said, but he added there are legal constraints.

"Incumbency is a factor, but not the driving factor," he said.

The percentage allowed for deviation has changed, a change laid down by the U.S. Department of Justice. In 2000, map drawers were allowed to deviate 10 percent. Since that time, the standard moved back to 5 percent deviation.

"We have to be much closer in district populations than we had to be in the past," Kemp said.

Next week, at the 7 p.m. June 7 council meeting, there will be a decision about three preferred concepts. June 14 and 21, public comment will be taken by consultants on three concepts council has narrowed down as its preferences.

Reach the reporter at [cdryer@star-times.com](mailto:cdryer@star-times.com), or 623-847-4604.



## Divided Peoria City Council OKs adding maps to redistricting proposal

by Sonu Munshi - Jun. 3, 2011 10:23 AM  
The Arizona Republic

A divided Peoria council has chosen political self-preservation as an option for the redrawing of council district boundaries.

Council members sparred for 30 minutes over a proposal to add maps to a consultant's redistricting proposal before approving the proposal by a 4-3 vote.

The city's redistricting consultant had proposed six maps that each would have placed two incumbents in the same district, effectively throwing one out of his current district.

That didn't sit well with Councilman Ron Ames, who could have ended up an incumbent without a district.

Ames proposed having the consultant put together three more maps, this time preserving districts for the six council members.

Ames said three new maps should be presented because city staff gave the council the wrong impression that incumbency could not be considered.

Ames said he realized later other cities, including Glendale and Mesa, do take that into account.

Ames said there is no requirement from the U.S. Department of Justice to not take

incumbency into account.

He argued that the process Peoria followed, in fact, is unfair to those council members, who based on the current concept maps, have been drawn into each other's districts.

He argued that by choosing to overlook residency, some council members were put at a disadvantage "because you gerrymander by favoring one council member over another."

He found support from council members Dave Pearson, Tony Rivero and Carlo Leone.

Pearson, who would be up for re-election in 2012, said he saw no reason why Peoria shouldn't try to preserve incumbents if other cities have done so, and even if Peoria hasn't in the past.

"We're not bound to status quo, we're bound by the law," he said.

Mayor Bob Barrett and two other council members objected, saying it would negate the public process that has already taken place.

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Barrett said that council members have lost seats before to redistricting, but didn't object to the process.

"The difference is that those councils, even though you realize you run the risk of being drawn out of your district, you do what's best for the city; you don't pursue self-serving interests," Barrett said.

Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat said by adding three more maps to the mix, the public would be excluded from the process.

"To start a new process in midstream is unfair to the people who have been participating . . . and to discount what they have done and to discount how they tried to get involved based on our rules, is unfair," Carlat said. "This is about the city as a whole . . . not a single person's address."

Councilwoman Joan Evans said she had realized early on that she may be vulnerable to being left outside her district. Now, she would be up for re-election in 2012. But she said she understood that the process would set the boundaries for the next 10 years, "not just right now."

"Hopefully, it includes me being able to run again. If it doesn't, then it's been a great run," Evans said.

Arizona cities are reconsidering council boundaries because of population growth shown in the latest census. Peoria has added 45,000 people since 2000, bringing its population to 154,000. Each council district is required to have about the same number of residents.

Officials from city consultant, National Demographics Corporation, had come up with six concept maps, which had been

revealed to the public last month.

National Demographics would have to come up with the new maps by Tuesday. The council is scheduled to narrow the concept maps from nine to three that day. That is to be followed by "scoping meetings" on June 14 for residents to indicate their preferences.

On June 21, the council will choose its preferred concept, which will be finalized in July. The Justice Department has to approve the plan, which would be in effect for the 2012 council elections.

Based on the six maps already proposed, Aames in Palo Verde district, Pearson in Ironwood or Evans in Willow would no longer live in their current district.

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## How are 'the poeple' best served?

**STAFF EDITORIAL | Posted: Thursday, June 2, 2011 9:00 pm**

We suppose there were times in our history when elected officials truly represented the people who voted them into office. They were perhaps benevolent representatives of "the people," who tirelessly toiled in the hallowed halls of Congress and the tiny city halls of early America.

Today, elected officials in many large cities are paid handsome sums to sit in offices outfitted with the latest technology and have multiple assistants to do their bidding. Some mayors in Valley cities have three or four assistants on call.

This is not a bash of cities that are growing by leaps and bounds, such as Peoria. Instead, it is a call to elected officials to remember who they serve: the people.

If there is an outcry to be made about the new council district boundaries, it should come from a councilmember's constituents. If a constituent objects to the new boundaries, go to the June 7 council meeting and voice your displeasure. If a constituent was concerned about having his councilmember displaced, a month or two ago would have been a good time to become involved in the redistricting process.

Yes, it is the council's responsibility to choose the new district boundaries. But, it is each councilmember's obligation to ensure he or she is casting a vote for "the people," not for their own political future.

Mayor Bob Barrett nailed it when he said the motion to make three more maps available for redistricting consideration that do not displace a current councilmember from an existing district "reeks" of self-interest.

Whether they believe that or whether they believe residents who voted for them have a right to keep the person they voted for, councilmembers still need to remember why redistricting is required by law. It is meant to ensure all districts are as close to the same size in population numbers as can possibly be accomplished.

It is a matter of making sure each district has an equal distribution of residents, not just votes. For, no matter how many people vote, a councilmember has to represent all residents, voters and non-voters alike.

As much as we would like to see all eligible voters vote, some of "the people," are willing to let others make decisions for them. Make sure it is the right decision.

## Redistricting divides incumbent interests

By CAROLYN DRYER, Editor | Posted: Thursday, June 2, 2011 8:30 pm

### *Council vote brings total maps for consideration to nine*

Six concepts have already been drawn up for Peoria City Council to ponder. That does not mean council has to select from one of them.

It just got more complicated. After a 4-3 vote Tuesday at a special meeting, council voted to have National Demographics, its redistricting consultant, draw up three additional maps that would keep current councilmembers within the boundaries of their existing districts.

Mayor Bob Barrett was one of the dissenting voters (Councilmember Joan Evans and Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat also dissented), and before the vote was taken, said he felt the public was not being served by adding three more plans for review since they had already had input in the six maps already drawn up. He said adding three more maps that would keep current councilmembers in their existing districts "reeks" of self-interest.

Barrett said, "Standards were not imposed on council. Anyone who had heartburn with that could have objected at that time."

He pointed to three previous occasions in 1990, 1995 and 2000, when councilmembers were drawn out of their districts. In the last district boundary change, former Mayor and Mesquite Councilmember Ken Forgia was drawn out of the Mesquite District when Westbrook Village became part of the Ironwood District.

Willow District Councilmember Joan Evans came out strongly against adding three more maps to the pool, saying "I think it behooves us to be statespeople ... My goal is to see what's best for Peoria .. serve our citizens."

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Next week, at the 7 p.m. June 7 council meeting, there will be a decision about three preferred concepts. June 14 and 21, public comment will be taken by consultants on three concepts council has narrowed down as its preferences.

*City Council has requested the preparation of three additional concept maps for consideration. Visit the city's website at [www.peoriaaz.gov](http://www.peoriaaz.gov) and click on "Redistricting" to view the additional concept maps that will be posted by June 6. Your comments regarding the maps can be e-mailed to [redistricting@peoriaaz.gov](mailto:redistricting@peoriaaz.gov), faxed to 623-773-7304, or delivered to Peoria City Hall, 8401 W. Monroe St., Peoria, AZ 85345.*

# Council redistricting final meetings set

By CAROLYN DRYER  
EDITOR

June and early July are nearing and Peoria City Council has a short time left to redistrict and redraw council district boundaries. The public has a final opportunity to comment in the following three weeks.

•June 7, the City Council will hold a study session to review the six concepts released in May, with a goal of narrowing the field to three.

•June 14, the city will conduct one or two "scoping meetings" so residents

can indicate their preferences among the final three maps.

•Finally, at its June 21 session, council will choose its preferred concept, which then will be finalized and brought up for a vote at the first meeting in July. Pending approval by the federal Justice Department, that plan will set the lines for the 2012 elections.

The sessions are open to the public and, as always, will be telecast on Cox channel 11 and at [www.peoriaaz.gov/PeoriaTV](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/PeoriaTV).

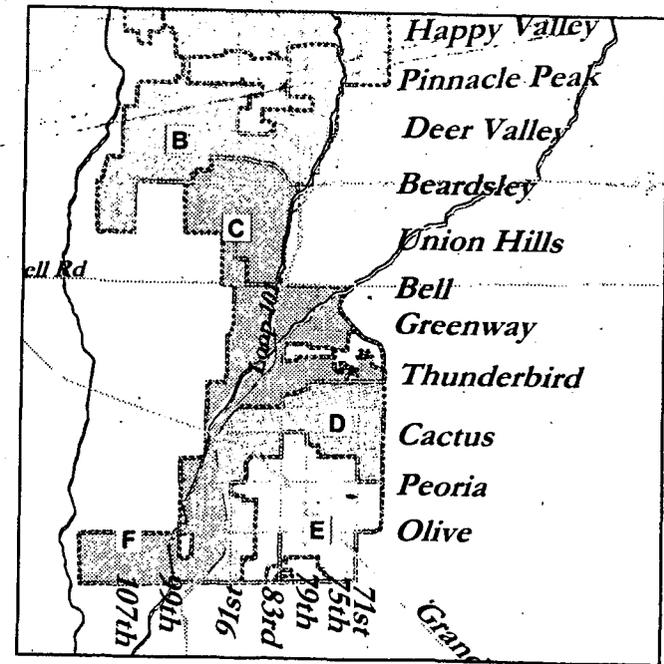
Just an overview of each of the six different redistricting plans indicates that no matter which plan is adopted, at least one councilmember will have his or her district boundaries moved – if the council districts designated B, C, and D are labeled Ironwood, Palo Verde and Willow, respectively. Keep in mind that on all of the concept maps, there are no specific council district names used, only the letters A through F. But for those who look closely, the new boundaries in the southern and northern areas of the city have an uncanny resemblance to the council districts known as Pine,

Acacia and Mesquite. Senior Deputy City Clerk Rhonda Geriminsky said the city cannot take names and addresses of councilmembers into consideration when drawing up new council district boundaries. But Palo Verde Councilmember Ron Aames begged to differ, saying there is no requirement of the Department of Justice that councilmembers' residences not be considered. Citizens can find where their councilmembers live

Acacia and Mesquite. Senior Deputy City Clerk Rhonda Geriminsky said the city cannot take names and addresses of councilmembers into consideration when drawing up new council district boundaries.

But Palo Verde Councilmember Ron Aames begged to differ, saying there is no requirement of the Department of Justice that councilmembers' residences not be considered.

Citizens can find where their councilmembers live



MORE REDISTRIC ON A2

Plan 6 has districts that roam across the map.

# REDISTRICT: From A1

and the ramifications of specific redistricting plans being adopted. Visit the city website at [www.peoriaaz.gov](http://www.peoriaaz.gov) and find the link to council election campaign finance reports. It gives addresses on the campaign finance reports. Then, look at the six separate redistricting concept maps, and here is what shapes out.

If Plan 1 is adopted, Palo Verde Council District boundaries move north of Thunderbird Road, which leaves Ron Aames in the Willow Council District, and Councilmember Dave Pearson out of Ironwood Council District into Palo Verde. Plan D district is not named.

If Plan 2 is adopted, Pearson's Ironwood District boundaries move north of his residence. That leaves him in the Palo Verde District, Aames into Willow, and Councilmember Joan Evans out of Willow into Palo Verde.

If Plan 3 or 4 is adopted, Aames is out of the Palo Verde Council District, and would be in the Pine Council District, and Dave Pearson is also out of the Ironwood Council District and now is in the Palo Verde District.

If Plan 5 is adopted, Aames and Pearson no longer live in their respective council districts, and Joan Evans would no longer reside in the Willow District. Aames would be living in the Pine District, while Pearson and Evans would live in Palo Verde.

Plan 6, the most convoluted plan of all, sends one district crawling around in a circle - from 67th to 95th avenues (along Loop 101), Thunderbird to Cactus roads west, then south along Loop 101 to Northern

Avenue in a mile-wide swath with about three jogs to the west at Butler Drive and Peoria Avenue. Plan 6, if "D" district is named Willow, it moves Evans to Palo Verde District and Aames to Evans' former area.

Plan 6 also has the Pine District (if designated "E") running from Northern all the way to Union Hills Drive along the western boundary of the city. In this plan, Palo Verde is lumped into two separate blocks connected by a roadway at Bell Road and Loop 101.

Although he could not say for sure, it is Aames' feeling that other councilmembers share his thoughts on the maps put forth so far.

Aames said, "I'm in the process of requesting additional maps."

One of Glendale-City Council's redistricting criteria is that two councilmembers will not be left in one district.

"And that could be our criteria, too," Aames said. "Part of the problem, however, a councilmember lives in an area where voters chose that person.

"In Plan 1, if D is Willow, Palo Verde moves up to B, and I would not be representing people who voted for me."

Aames told an interesting story about the "re-sign to run" exception.

He said, "If in Plan 1, D was called Willow, and the election in Willow goes to 2012, both Joan and I would be in that geography. I could actually run against Joan, I would have geographically my district back and it would be called Willow. But Palo Verde would not have a representative for two years. If I ran against Joan in the Willow District and I lost, I would still have

two more years of office left in Palo Verde.

"If I wanted to run again in Palo Verde after my two years were up, I would have to move there."

Aames said people need to understand the first six concept maps are just starting points. People have different ideas in what's in the best interests of the entire city, and the council will decide.

*Dave Pearson and Joan Evans could not be reached for comment.*



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Today's Deal



## Peoria Councilman seeks new redistricting map



**SONU MUNSHI**  
peoria reporter

[click to enlarge](#)

The Peoria City Council on Tuesday is slated to decide whether to ask its redistricting consultant to come up with a fresh map that would preserve all incumbents in their districts.

The move comes at the behest of Councilman Ron Aames who said he realized only a few days ago that unlike the impression given by the city staff to the council earlier, the federal government has no requirement that "we exclude considering where council members live when redistricting is done," Aames told the *Westside Insider*.

Aames saw a recent *Arizona Republic* article which mentions that the criteria for redistricting in Glendale includes avoiding lumping more than one council member in one district.

"And I saw Mesa has the same rule and then I googled and saw it's the practice in many other parts of the country," Aames said.

He checked the city charter as well and noted that the only statement in the city charter pertains to the need to redistrict so that there are equal numbers of citizens in each district.

"There is no reference to incumbents," Aames said. "The council didn't set that criteria but it was implied to us that that had to be the criteria."

City Attorney Steve Kemp said it's up to the council to choose the final map.

"If council wants more maps drawn, we'll certainly draw more maps," he said.

Kemp had repeatedly said in redistricting-related meetings that keeping incumbents in their district was not to be a consideration when drawing up new maps.

Aames said some might argue that what he's proposing is gerrymandering. But, he said, in his view, the six concept maps are a form of gerrymandering because they only leave some councilmembers hanging in the balance, making it unfair for those council members to be in that position.

Gerrymandering is the illegal practice of reconfiguring an electoral district to give unfair advantage to a political party or group.

Aames said if he, for instance, were to be drawn out of his district, he would end up representing residents for the next three years of his term who did not elect him.

"That's not really what redistricting is about," he said. "It's about having equal numbers in each district."

The city had earlier this month unveiled six concept maps the consultant had come up with for the redistricting process that would impact the council elections in fall 2012.

Based on the six concept maps drawn up,

council members Aames, Dave Pearson or Joan Evans appeared likely to find themselves without a district.

Peoria is scheduled to have elections for Ironwood, Willow and Mesquite districts.

The six maps were based on the decennial census. Peoria and other cities go through redistricting to ensure each district has an equal number of residents. Peoria has added more than 45,000 residents since 2000.

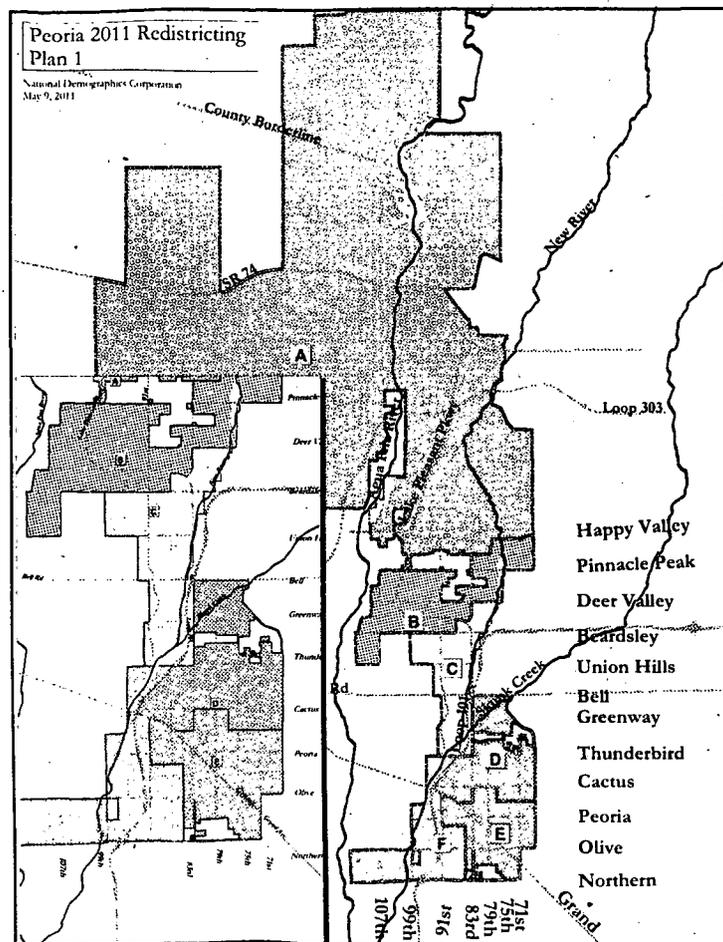
Kemp said he expects the earlier timeline set for the redistricting process to still hold true. At a June 7 study session, the council will attempt to narrow the field to three maps. That is to be followed by one or two "scoping meetings" on June 14 so residents can indicate their preferences. among the final three maps.

At its June 21 session, the City Council will choose its preferred concept, which then will be finalized and brought up for a vote at the first meeting in July. Pending approval by the U.S. Justice Department, the plan will set the lines for the 2012 elections.

Sessions are open to the public and will be telecast on Cox Channel 11 and at [www.peoriaaz.gov/peoria11](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/peoria11)

Thursday, May 26, 2011 at 03:50 PM  
Report a Violation

Topics: Peoria, WEST VALLEY NEWS, Peoria redistricting, Ron Aames



## Peoria prepares to narrow list of redistricting maps

by Sonu Munshi - May 13, 2011 09:00 AM  
The Arizona Republic

It has come down to six concept maps.

Depending on which redistricting map is chosen, City Council members Dave Pearson, Ron Aames or Joan Evans appear likely to find themselves without a district. That creates a highly political atmosphere.

Residents at public meetings this week to unveil the maps seemed generally pleased with what they saw because all six options kept large neighborhoods in the same district.

A consultant drew the six maps based on the decennial census.

Peoria and other cities go through redistricting to ensure each district has an equal number of residents.

The latest census numbers show Peoria has 154,000 people, adding more than 45,000 since 2000.

The six concept maps will be presented to the council at a June 7 study session. Council members will narrow the options to three.

Another community meeting will follow on June 14 with a final council direction expected June 21.

At a public meeting at Christ's Church of the Valley, Peoria resident Christian Williams and two others liked concept 5 because it

maintained compact districts, rather than having meandering boundaries.

Williams said preserving incumbents was not a priority. "I'd rather be near my neighbor than be concerned about a representative," he said.

Karen Garbe lives in north Peoria's Mesquite District, which experienced the most growth in the past decade. As a result, she likely will find herself in a different district. She favored a plan that she thought best represented the diversity she wanted to be part of.

"A new district would give us the chance to have a new voice," Garbe said.

The city's boundaries must be redrawn to accommodate roughly 25,000 people in each district. At the same time, the minority community in south Peoria's Acacia District has to be kept intact to maintain its voice as a group.

And neighborhoods with a strong identity were to be kept together. Early in the process, residents such as those from Vistancia and Westbrook Village made that

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clear.

The impact upon incumbents was not to be considered.

The proposed maps show either Aames in Palo Verde, Pearson in Ironwood or Evans in Willow could be drawn out.

Under the first map, Evans and Aames appear to be in the same district. The second brings Pearson into Aames' district. Plans 3, 4 and 5 appear to put Aames in Carlo Leone's district, while the final map puts Pearson and Leone in the same district.

All of this assumes the council will stick to a similar layout for each district. At this point, the concepts are unnamed. That decision will fall to the council.

Aames said he would want to tweak all the maps a little.

"I feel there are somewhat better boundaries that still meet the federal requirements," he said, without elaborating.

He said each council district has been well-represented despite members' policy differences.

Pearson said choosing the concepts would have to be made within the guidelines, but "clearly it will be a political policy decision."

He said he liked the first concept because it's compact, which he said makes it easier for anyone to run for council. That plan would also keep him clearly within his district.

Evans could not immediately be reached for comment. Before the maps were unveiled, Evans had said she wouldn't consider the plans from the viewpoint of what served her

best.

"It's my job to look at the six plans that are presented and figure out what best serves the city of Peoria," she said.

Anyone getting districted out could turn to Ken Forgia for lessons on how to deal with that.

The former Mesquite councilman in 2000 found himself in Ironwood after redistricting. He represented Mesquite for about a year until his term ended. He didn't run again.

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## **Get involved in redistricting**

**STAFF EDITORIAL | Posted: Thursday, May 12, 2011 5:00 pm**

Residents had three opportunities this week to attend public meetings about council boundaries and the redistricting process. It happens every 10 years by law, and it gives American citizens a chance to tell their representatives how they want their voting district boundaries to be drawn.

Even if you did not attend one of the meetings, you still can voice your opinion about the boundaries. Remember, you will not have this opportunity again until 2021.

As was pointed out at one of the first study session and council meeting where redistricting was discussed and the redistricting consultant was hired, the demographics of Peoria have changed considerably over the years. Still, minority groups must not be forgotten. The U.S. Department of Justice will have to approve the boundaries before they are put into place.

So, if you have questions or comments, make your feelings known by visiting the city's website at [www.peoriaaz.gov](http://www.peoriaaz.gov), and click on the "Redistricting" tab to learn how you can participate in this process.

## Peoria seeks public input on redistricting



**SONU MUNSHI**

Peoria reporter

[click to enlarge](#)

Suggestions are pouring in for an issue with potential political ramifications: redistricting.

How do you redraw City Council district boundaries with new census numbers to ensure each has about the same number of residents, all the while making sure changes don't break up a minority group's voice and perhaps most interestingly for council members, don't draw themselves out of their own district?

A second round of public meetings on redistricting is lined up for Wednesday and Thursday to share concept maps an outside consultant created after the previous round of community meetings on how to reshape district boundaries.

Peoria has added more than 45,000 residents since the last census in 2000, and is up to 154,065 residents, according to the decennial census results released this year.

A bulk of that growth has occurred in the northern part of the city, in the Mesquite district. As a result, city officials expect the northern boundaries of five council districts — Pine, Acacia, Palo Verde, Willow and Ironwood — to shift farther north. Palo Verde and Willow could see their southern boundaries move north.

At least two residential communities, Westbrook Village and Vistancia, have said they don't want to be separated into different council districts, which would break up a bloc when it comes to city issues and voting for council members.

Inside City Hall, the buzz is all about how some districts, especially Ironwood and Willow, could see a change that may draw out incumbents Dave Pearson and Joan Evans, respectively.

But veteran Councilman Pearson, told *The Insider* there has always been a way to make it work without any councilmember being booted from his or her district.

"That's still my view; there is a way to work it out without political nastiness that could occur," said Pearson, who has at times been a minority voice on the council.

Evans said she wouldn't consider the plans from the viewpoint of what serves her best. "It's my job to look at the six plans that are presented and figure out what best serves the city of Peoria," Evans said.

Whatever the new boundaries, they will play into the 2012 election. Evans, Pearson and Cathy Carlat's seats are all on the ballot. None of the three has announced intentions to run again.

Peoria City Attorney Steve Kemp said protecting incumbents would not be part of the "objective factors" considered.

However, the council gets the final vote on the map, which also must get a nod from federal authorities.

After this week's community feedback is collected, six concept maps will be presented to council at a June 7 study session. Council will narrow the options to three maps. That should be followed by a community meeting June 14 and a final weigh-in by council June 21.

For more, visit [www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting)

Tuesday, May 10, 2011 at 12:50 PM

## **Council redistricting meetings set**

**Posted: Thursday, April 21, 2011 7:51 am**

Using the 2010 Census figures, the City of Peoria has begun the process of redrawing the city's current electoral district boundary lines. Citizens are encouraged to attend one of the public meetings listed below that will be held pertaining to the process. At each meeting, concept maps will be displayed that portray suggested district boundaries. Comments, suggestions, and ideas on the presented concept maps will be requested.

Individuals who would like to have their name added to a "Citizen Redistricting Contact List," or who would like more information about the process are asked to call the Peoria City Clerk at 623-773-7340, e-mail to [www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov](mailto:www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov), or visit [www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting).

May 11, 6 to 8 p.m., Christ Church of the Valley, 7007 W. Happy Valley Road, Building 600.

Alternate meeting dates and times:

May 11, 2 to 4 p.m., Peoria City Hall Pine Conference Room, 8401 W. Monroe St.

May 12, 6 to 8 p.m., Lighthouse Church, 14185 N. 83rd Ave., Building B.



## Census: Peoria sees 42 percent growth, remains 9th-largest city in Arizona

by Sonu Munshi - Mar. 15, 2011 02:15 PM  
The Arizona Republic



It's official.

Peoria has pushed past the 150,000 marker with 154,065 residents, according to the decennial census results released late last week .

The city added 45,701 residents from 2000 to 2010, which was the sixth biggest gain in Arizona, behind Phoenix, Gilbert, Surprise, Chandler and Goodyear.

Census map | Growth driven by Phoenix, W. Valley

A majority of the Valley's growth occurred on the west side, at a 69 percent clip.

Peoria's 42 percent growth meant the city stood its ground as the ninth-largest city in Arizona. Despite rapid growth in spots like Surprise and Buckeye, Peoria remains the West Valley's second-biggest city, behind Glendale.

Mayor Bob Barrett said Peoria's numbers didn't come as a big surprise, although they were slightly below expectations, for which he partly blamed the recession.

A population census estimate last July projected the city's population at 168,000.

"Everyone has suffered a reduction after the meltdown in the second half of the decade," Barrett said.

The long-awaited census numbers carry weight for funding, redistricting and planning.

Peoria expects to get an additional \$1.6 million in state-shared revenues for the upcoming fiscal year as a result of the census, according to city Budget Director Jeff Tyne.

Federal dollars are divvied based on population counts.

Another huge impact would be on the city's redistricting process, which is under way and should be in place for the 2012 election.

After each census, congressional, legislative and local districts are redrawn to adjust for population numbers so that districts have roughly equal population.

Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat, who represents Mesquite District, said having the census numbers would allow Peoria to "rebalance" the city's representation.

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# Redistricting meeting draws few people

By CAROLYN DRYER  
EDITOR

There were perhaps five people sitting in the audience from minority groups during a minority outreach redistricting meeting held Monday morning at Peoria's council chamber. The meeting was called to encourage public involvement among minorities in redrawing the city's council district boundaries.

After each census, decennial and mid-decennial, the city is required to adjust its district boundaries to ensure roughly equal population in each district. City Attorney Steve Kemp said the old rule was a 10-percent differential or less. But, he pointed out the city today is looking at a 5-percent differential.



**Gilbert Vasquez breaks into a smile Monday during a minority groups outreach meeting in preparation for redistricting in the City of Peoria.**

*Photo by Carolyn Dryer*

With new rules in place since 2000, cities must look at contiguity vs. compactness vs. preserving minority representation with more concern on compactness than in the past.

Also, in the past, those charged with drawing new boundaries look at preserving districts for existing elected officials. This resulted in gerrymandering. Peoria does not consider elected officials' residences when new boundaries are drawn for council districts. That was a result of a 1988 City Charter initiative, Kemp said.

Arizona is one of 17 states the U.S. Department of Justice presides over when it comes to redistricting, Kemp said.

This came in 1965 with the passage of the Voting Rights Act. He added that with minority population regression in districts, the DOJ will evaluate the redistricting process more critically this year, "Making sure all voters have a choice."

Kemp said over the years, minority population regression has effectively diminished the number of minorities in certain districts. This has occurred specifically in Acacia District in southeastern Peoria.

"One of the difficulties in Peoria is income levels of the Latino population has increased," Kemp said.

Regression means the

**MORE REDISTRICTING ON A4**

ing ten rights, but also expresses the effect these young ladies had on others, and encourages the audience to treasure life. The entire concert seeks to raise awareness about many of society's tragedies in a manner that brings comfort to the families and honor to the victims.

Richelle and Melia have devoted one year to planning and then organizing the production.

"Even after I decided to organize this, I didn't actually begin until Melia said she would help me," Richelle said. "I honestly don't think this concert would have pulled itself together, without Melia."

When asked what she hoped people would take from the concert, Melia said,

"I hope that people will

man before. There are many things that plague us in this world and some are either not recognized or ignored. The moral of our concert is to live life (with) an infectious positive energy."

Richelle added, "This performance is not meant to mourn those that we've lost, but instead, to celebrate their lives."

Richelle said she believes Makenzie would be very pleased that the girls were raising money for charity.

"Makenzie was very altruistic. She loved dance and to inspire people, and this really combines both," Richelle said. "Makenzie's family currently lives in Texas, so they will not be able to attend, but Makenzie's father once said, 'We know that God is a God

client has a purpose that is unfolding in the lives of all who knew MacKenzie.'

"His wish has come true."

After the concert, the audience is encouraged to tour Live It! Awareness Expo with information booths about the charities recognized in the dances. Concessions will also be available for additional donations.

"The information booths will be available for anyone during intermission and after the show. People will be available to answer questions and accept donations for the Red Means Stop Foundation," Melia said.

Open to the public, the event will have one showing, 6:30 p.m. Feb. 4 in the Ironwood High School auditorium. Admission

In 2000, the city ad-  
different districts.  
from each other living in  
living across the street

Peoria's rapid growth  
during the last decade  
guarantees that the dis-  
tricts will look much dif-

"We're a population-oriented district.  
of influence of a minority  
population in a minority  
percentage loss and loss

## REDISTRICTING: Lengthy process, From At



# City schedules public meetings on 2011 council redistricting

The City of Peoria has begun the process of redrawing the city's current electoral district boundary lines. Residents' involvement and input is needed. They are being encouraged to attend any or all of the public meetings listed below that will be held pertaining to this process.

At each meeting, the redistricting process will be discussed, and residents' thoughts will be requested on Peoria's communities of interest, followed by time for questions and answers.

If residents would like

to have their names added to a "Citizen Redistricting Contact List," or if they would like more information about the process, they are asked to call the Office of the Peoria City Clerk at 623-773-7340, e-mail to [www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov](mailto:www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov), or visit the city's website at [www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting).

Following are the council districts and scheduled meetings for public involvement:

**Acacia District**  
6 to 7 p.m. Jan. 26,  
Peoria City Hall, Pine

Conference Room, 8401  
W. Monroe St.

**Pine District**  
7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Sun  
Valley Elementary School  
Library, 8361 N. 95th  
Ave.

**Palo Verde District**  
5 to 6 p.m. Feb. 7, Oa-  
sis Elementary School  
Library, 7841 W. Sweet-  
water Ave.

**Willow District**  
6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Oak-  
wood Elementary School  
Library, 12900 N. 71st  
Ave.

**Ironwood District**  
5 to 6 p.m. Feb. 9, Des-  
ert Harbor Elementary  
School Library, 15585 N.  
91st Ave.

**Mesquite District**  
6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Feb. 9,  
Sunrise Mountain Library  
Community Room, 21109  
N. 98th Ave.



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By CAROLYN DRYER  
EDITOR

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Photo by Carolyn Dryer

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**MORE REDISTRICTING ON A4**

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Posted: Thursday, January 27, 2011 8:00 pm | Updated: 8:56 am, Thu Jan 27, 2011.

By CAROLYN DRYER, Editor |

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With new rules in place since 2000, cities must look at contiguity vs. compactness vs. preserving minority representation with more concern on compactness than in the past.

Also, in the past, those charged with drawing new boundaries look at preserving districts for existing elected officials. This resulted in gerrymandering. Peoria does not consider elected officials' residences when new boundaries are drawn for council districts. That was a result of a 1988 City Charter initiative, Kemp said.

Arizona is one of 17 states the U.S. Department of Justice presides over when it comes to redistricting, Kemp said. This came in 1965 with the passage of the Voting Rights Act. He added that with minority population regression in districts, the DOJ will evaluate the redistricting process more critically this year, "Making sure all voters have a choice."

Kemp said over the years, minority population regression has effectively diminished the number of minorities in certain districts. This has occurred specifically in Acacia District in southeastern Peoria.

"One of the difficulties in Peoria is income levels of the Latino population has increased," Kemp said.

Regression means the percentage loss and loss of influence of a minority population in a minority oriented district.

"We're beginning to see that," Kemp said, noting that the Palo Verde District now has a 22-percent minority population.

He said some regression is expected due to increases in income levels, which results in distribution of minority population across the city as people move into "move up neighborhoods."

In the handout Monday, one paragraph stated the DOJ is concerned that regression is not the result of governmental action.

Kemp said there was more focus on protecting minority language communities and the burden of justification has been placed on local government. That is one of the reasons the city held the minority outreach meeting Monday, he said.

Gilbert Vasquez, a resident of Trilogy at Vistancia in North Peoria, and a lifelong resident of the West Valley (raised in Glendale), made some startling statements at the meeting.

He said, "Minorities don't vote. So, why have minorities in a group? They don't vote anyway."

Kemp said it was to give them an opportunity.

Vasquez said, "They have the opportunity all the time. They just don't do it. Personally, it shouldn't matter. They don't vote. They just don't care."

He said it was a cultural thing, and that many just do not believe their vote matters.

But, the requirement to reach out to them is the law.

Peoria's rapid growth during the last decade guarantees that the districts will look much different than they do now.

In fact, City Attorney Steve Kemp, who conducted the meeting, noted that Acacia, Pine, Palo Verde and Willow, and Ironwood districts would continue to see their northern boundaries move farther north. Palo Verde and Willow will probably see their southern boundaries move north as well. This will have an impact on the narrow point of the city between Bell and Beardsley roads.

"An entire district could be moved," Kemp said.

During the redistricting process, the city must collect information about annexations since 100, population, minority population and projected housing development. Also, there must be information about past elections, canvasses, voting patterns, minority or majority block voting; communities of interest, areas that are viewed as a local community, such as Westbrook Village in the Ironwood District, and Vistancia in the Mesquite District.

Kemp said some do not have a defined area, but if communities of interest are separated, the perception could be the city is doing something resulting in regression or gerrymandering.

The city must show development patterns since 2000, and how population and minority population may have been impacted.

Natural and physical landmarks also have to be considered. One of the situations the city wants to avoid is having people living across the street from each other living in different districts.

In 2000, the city adopted district boundaries based on a population of 108,000. That boundary change resulted in a median district population of 18,000 with a variance of up to 10 percent. District populations varied from a low of 17,100 to a high of 18,900.

In 2010, the city's population is anticipated to be approximately 160,000 (based on the census and sewer hookups). Based on this population, districts will have a median population of 26,700 with a variance of 5 percent. The district populations could vary from 26,066 to 27,334, a variance of about 1,300.

The next steps involve a six-month process. Initial census information is expected anytime from February to May. Kemp said initial redistricting concepts will be developed in April and May with public input on those concepts May to June.

In June, council will hold a study session to identify preferred final options, and a review with submission to the DOJ for preclearance in July. Once the approval is received from the DOJ, the city will adopt the new boundaries and approve an ordinance to that effect with new boundaries applying to the 2012 elections.

To the question, "What happens if a councilperson is redistricted out?" Kemp said that person would remain in office until the end of their present term.

To learn more, visit the city website at [www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting).

## **City schedules public meetings on 2011 council redistricting**

**Posted: Thursday, January 27, 2011 5:00 pm**

The City of Peoria has begun the process of redrawing the city's current electoral district boundary lines. Residents' involvement and input is needed. They are being encouraged to attend any or all of the public meetings listed below that will be held pertaining to this process.

At each meeting, the redistricting process will be discussed, and residents' thoughts will be requested on Peoria's communities of interest, followed by time for questions and answers.

If residents would like to have their names added to a "Citizen Redistricting Contact List," or if they would like more information about the process, they are asked to call the Office of the Peoria City Clerk at 623-773-7340, e-mail to [www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov](mailto:www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov), or visit the city's website at [www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting).

Following are the council districts and scheduled meetings for public involvement:

### **Acacia District**

6 to 7 p.m. Jan. 26, Peoria City Hall, Pine Conference Room, 8401 W. Monroe St.

### **Pine District**

7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Sun Valley Elementary School Library, 8361 N. 95th Ave.

### **Palo Verde District**

5 to 6 p.m. Feb. 7, Oasis Elementary School Library, 7841 W. Sweetwater Ave.

### **Willow District**

6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Oakwood Elementary School Library, 12900 N. 71st Ave.

### **Ironwood District**

5 to 6 p.m. Feb. 9, Desert Harbor Elementary School Library, 15585 N. 91st Ave.

### **Mesquite District**

6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Feb. 9, Sunrise Mountain Library Community Room, 21109 N. 98th Ave.

## Peoria seeks resident participation in redistricting



**SONU MUNSHI**  
peoria reporter

[click to enlarge](#)

Peoria is hosting a series of public meetings to share information about the often controversial redistricting process, which would reshape the city's political boundaries.

Residents are being encouraged to put in their two cents on the redrawing process.

Redistricting happens every time new Census numbers are released to adjust for changes in population. The aim is for each district to have about the same number of people.

Peoria's current population is estimated at about 160,000. If this is borne out in Census figures, each district would have to have between 26,000 and 27,000 residents. The current boundaries, based on the 2000 Census, assumed each council member would represent about 18,000 residents based on the population of 108,000. The Mesquite District in north Peoria has shown the most growth in the past decade.

City officials expect the northern boundaries of five council districts - Pine, Acacia, Palo Verde, Willow and Ironwood- to shift further north. Palo Verde and Willow could see their southern boundaries move north.

The changes aren't just something to be put on paper. They would apply to the next council election in 2012. Potentially, some council members could find themselves out of their district.

The next council election is in Ironwood, represented by Councilman Dave Pearson, Willow, represented by Councilwoman Joan Evans, and Mesquite, represented by Vice Mayor Cathy Carlat. Meetings are being held in each council district.

To participate in the redistricting process, or to be added to the "Citizen Redistricting Contact List," contact the City Clerk's office at 623-773-7340, or email [www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov](mailto:www.cityclerk@peoriaaz.gov). There's also a website: [www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/redistricting)

### Meetings:

Wed, Jan 26, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. — Peoria City Hall, 8401 W. Monroe St. — Acacia District

Wed, Jan 26, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. — Sun Valley Elementary School, 8361 N. 95th Ave. — Pine District

Mon, Feb 7, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. — Oasis Elementary School, 7841 W. Sweetwater Ave. — Palo Verde District

Mon, Feb 7, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. — Oakwood Elementary School, 12900 N. 71st Ave. — Willow District

Wed, Feb 9, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. — Desert Harbor Elementary School, 15585 N. 91st Ave. — Ironwood District

Wed, Feb 9, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. — Sunrise Mountain Library, 21109 N. 98th Ave. — Mesquite District

Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at 10:06 AM

12-24-10

## Council district boundaries will change

By **CAROLYN DRYER**  
EDITOR

12-24-10

As the old song goes, "There'll be some changes made" once the census numbers in Peoria are final. But first, each council-member will hold public scoping meetings in their districts. Then, there will be a public meeting with the city's demographic consultant, National Demographic Corporation.

City Attorney Steve Kemp said citizen kits will

soon be issued to allow residents to draw their own ideas for new boundary lines for council districts. Those ideas will be submitted to city officials and National Demographic and be taken into account for redistricting.

Census information will not be available until February and maybe not until April.

"The city will be looked at block by block and tract by tract in terms of population," Kemp said.

Since the 2000 census, Peoria has seen an increase of 9,000 people per council district, and from a survey of utility connections, has 162,000 residents. Kemp said the biggest differential between districts can be no more than 5 percent. Also, a district has to have contiguous boundaries and be compact.

Arizona is one of 17 states covered by the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

**MORE CENSUS ON 5**

## Census could change district boundaries

By CAROLYN DRYER, Editor | Posted: Thursday, December 23, 2010 2:30 pm

As the old song goes, "There'll be some changes made" once the census numbers in Peoria are final. But first, each councilmember will hold public scoping meetings in their districts. Then, there will be a public meeting with the city's demographic consultant, National Demographic Corporation.

City Attorney Steve Kemp said citizen kits will soon be issued to allow residents to draw their own ideas for new boundary lines for council districts. Those ideas will be submitted to city officials and National Demographic and be taken into account for redistricting.

Census information will not be available until February and perhaps until April.

"The city will be looked at block by block and tract by tract in terms of population," Kemp said.

Since the 2000 census, Peoria has seen an increase of 9,000 people per council district, and from a survey of utility connections, now has 162,000 residents. Kemp said federal courts have said the biggest differential between districts can be no more than 5 percent. Also, a district has to have contiguous boundaries and be compact.

Arizona is one of 17 states covered by the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"We have an affirmative duty to assure our minority community participates in the election process and elects candidates of their choice," Kemp said. "The Acacia District is a minority influenced district. Under federal law, we have a duty to maintain those percentages."

But that has become a problem in Peoria, Kemp said.

"The Latino community's income has grown," Kemp said, "so (people) have moved around the city. They have more income, more choices. So, it's really an integration of the community - a good thing. But, from the feds' (viewpoint), we don't have the concentration as in the past."

Kemp said the city anticipates submitting the redistricting plan in June to the U.S. Department of Justice, which now requires electronic submission.

"One of the difficulties is sheer volume," Kemp said.

To check out the census link, visit the city's website at [www.peoriaaz.gov](http://www.peoriaaz.gov).

## Census will reshape Peoria's council districts

by Sonu Munshi - Nov. 5, 2010 10:18 AM  
The Arizona Republic

It's time to pull out some sharpies.

Peoria has hired consultant National Demographics Corporation for \$57,000 to help with its redistricting process. That will start once new census numbers are released by the February deadline.

After each census, congressional, legislative and local districts are redrawn to adjust for population numbers so that districts have roughly equal population. The redrawing of maps would lead to some residents getting shifted from one district to another.

That shift also means a change in political boundaries for council members, one or more of whom may even find themselves out of his or her current district.

### Residents impacted

"It's going to be very controversial," City Attorney Steve Kemp said.

He said the process has a political element to it and at the same time affects residents.

"They may have had a longtime relationship with a particular council member or sometimes people develop an identity in a particular district and they are no longer part of that," Kemp said.

Peoria plans to hold public meetings by January.

Kemp said based on estimated population growth - largely in the northern Peoria, Pine, Acacia, Palo Verde, Willow and Ironwood districts - should see their northern boundaries move further north. Palo Verde and Willow could see their southern boundaries move north.

The changes would apply in the 2012 council elections slated for Ironwood, represented by Councilman Dave Pearson, Willow district, represented by Councilwoman Joan Evans, and Mesquite district, represented by Cathy Carlat. Carlat's district, with 55,000 residents, is going to be cut in half.

"This is going to be a major shake-up in our city," Carlat said.

Residents, too, can suggest how to divvy up Peoria's estimated current population of about 160,000 into six districts. Each district will have between 26,000 and 27,000 residents, compared to 18,000 residents a decade ago.

### Challenges ahead

Council members will send their preferred

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option to the U.S. Department of Justice, which makes the final decision.

The federal government places some caveats on the process. A district with a primarily minority population has to stay intact, so its voting power as a bloc remains. In Peoria, that district is Acacia.

In the last two decades, Kemp said Peoria has witnessed a regression of the minority Hispanic community in Acacia. He said that's because with a rise in income levels, many have moved into more-expensive homes outside the area. That would make it hard to fulfill the federal mandate.

"We literally will have streets where we're going to have one side of the street in one district and another side of the street in another district," Kemp said.

Communities of interest also have to be protected. These are neighborhoods with a strong identity such as Vistancia or Desert Harbor.

Each district's population has to also be within a 5 percent difference of each other.

Another challenge is a narrow point of the city between Bell and Beardsley roads. Peoria is only 1.25 miles wide at that point without natural landmarks.

Kemp said to bring three council districts through that narrow point to move up north would be a head-scratcher.

A warning to the sitting council from Kemp - the federal guidelines don't leave room for accommodation of keeping their district intact so council members don't find themselves out of it. That's a concern because council members are required to

live in the district they represent.

Also, Maricopa County voting precinct boundaries could be significantly different from city boundaries. So it would be hard to avoid having residents in the same precinct in multiple council districts.

"In some cases preserving incumbents is going to be an extremely challenging issue," Kemp said.

### Political ramifications

Political consultant Phillip Hubbard, who in 1990 was involved in legislative redistricting, said, "There are few things in politics as political as redistricting."

And for elected officials, it could mean they find themselves out of their own district.

"When the music stops, someone won't have a chair," Hubbard said.

Ask former Peoria Mayor Ken Forgia. As a councilman in the Mesquite district, he found himself ousted from his own district in 2001 and dumped into Ironwood after Westbrook Village, where he lived, shifted to

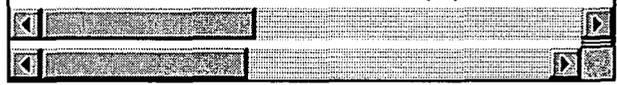
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Ironwood after the 2000 census.

Hubbard said in his experience he said there is typically some horse trading.

"It's common for an elected official to say, 'I'd be happy to give this one to you because the community never liked me anyway,'" Hubbard said.

The final boundaries are drawn by council members, under federal guidelines, despite the potential for conflict of interest.

Rob Richie, executive director of fairvote.org, said there are certain voters whom politicians want or would like to get rid of. Or, an incumbent may try to avoid running against someone else, so they carve out a district that doesn't include the potential opponent or put two elected officials in the same district.

But council members are accountable to voters and risk getting criticized if they put their own interests ahead of a credible redistricting process, Richie said.

Pearson said hiring a consultant can dampen the political aspects of the process.

"Left internally, you would see more pressure on staffers," he said.

And Hubbard said public participation in the process, if only from "political junkies," is vital.

"The reality is that only a few people participate in these things but those few who do, their opinion really can count," he said. "If a decision goes to court, for instance, their comments, which are public record, can make a difference."

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## Peoria prepares to redraw council districts

by Sherry Anne Rubiano - Jan. 29, 2009 08:19 AM

The Arizona Republic

Peoria is preparing to redraw its district boundaries after the 2010 census.

The city is required to adjust the boundaries for its six City Council districts after each census to accommodate population changes.

Peoria also must redraw district lines to be in accordance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a federal law that applies to Arizona and 16 other states. Under that law, government bodies need to take steps to ensure there are opportunities for minority representation and minority candidates, said Steve Kemp, city attorney .

"When we do redistricting decisions, we have to protect the ability of recognized minority voters to influence the election process," he said.

The council discussed redistricting at a recent study session .

District lines were last redrawn after the 2000 census.

In 2000, Peoria's estimated population was 108,364, with about 18,000 residents per district.

In 2010, the city's population is estimated to be between 156,000 and 162,000, with 25,000 to 27,000 residents per district.

Kemp said he can make some redistricting projections based on the number of registered voters in each district.

He said the southern districts - Acacia, Palo Verde and Pine - will likely be geographically larger, whereas the Mesquite District will likely be a bit smaller. He said boundaries for the Ironwood and Willow districts may also extend, depending on what changes are made to the Mesquite District.

The city is already in the planning process.

"The census isn't going to be started until about April of 2010, but we have to be ready when we do get census data back," City Clerk Mary Jo Kief said.

Kief said city staff would like to hire a consultant to help review and analyze census block data, which will be used during the redistricting process.

Once the city receives the census data, it will identify any major changes and new communities of interest since the last

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redistricting. Staffers also will identify changes in racial and ethnic composition of communities that affect district boundaries and identify natural and physical constraints.

Kemp said that if there are significant minority populations identified in the 2010 census, that may require the formation of another minority-emphasis district. In Peoria, the current minority-emphasis district is Acacia.

The city will hold several public meetings and meet with minority groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

A proposal will be presented to the City Council in early 2011. The city must submit its redistricting proposal to the U.S. Department of Justice for approval before the new district boundaries are implemented. The new district lines will be in effect for the 2012 elections.

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# Peoria Times



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January 23, 2009

## Council boundaries set to change in 2012

By **CAROLYN DRYER**  
EDITOR

Council representation will change for many residents in 2012. The reason? Census figures will be changing because of the city's growth, and in three or four districts, boundary

lines will change as well to comply with Department of Justice rules.

City Attorney Steve Kemp and City Clerk Mary Jo Kief summarized the requirements of the DOJ during a council study session Tuesday afternoon.

The city was incorpo-

rated in 1954, but became a charter city in 1983. It is required to adjust district boundaries to provide equal population in each district. Adjustments must be made after each decennial and mid-decennial census.

Arizona is one of 17

states subject to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended. The act requires DOJ review and approval of redistricting proposals before they can be implemented. The proposals must also show if there is a large minority population in a district as well.

In 2000, Kief said Peoria's population was 108,364. In 2007, the population was 146,743 and of that total, 27,348 (18.6 percent) were Hispanics.

Over a 10-year period, the city experienced a 35.4-percent increase in population growth. Today,

estimates put the city's population at 156,000 to 162,000 in 2010, when the census will be taken.

"The minority population is significant in the Acacia district," Kief said.

**MORE BOUNDARIES ON A2**

## **BOUNDARIES:** From A1

However, in 1990, the number of Hispanics in Acacia was 45 percent, but has since dropped to 30 percent.

The VRA requires redistricting decisions to protect the ability of recognized minority voters to influence the election process. (In Arizona, this is primarily Latino. If a minority population is significant, the VRA requires formation of a minority emphasis district to protect minority candidates from racial block voting against them.)

Also, the cohesiveness of a minority population plays a part, Kief said, and if a minority population does not have cohesive voting, the court generally treats it differently.

Throughout the city, district populations must be equal with a 10-percent deviation. A district must be contiguous; it cannot be separated. However, it can be connected by rights of way.

A district must follow natural and artificial boundaries, such as State Routes 101, 303 and U.S. 60; Lake Pleasant Parkway; New and Agua Fria rivers.

Communities of interest also must be taken into consideration. Those in Peoria include Westbrook Village, Ventana Lakes and Desert Harbor, where common amenities are located. Then, there are political subdivisions such as precincts and county lines. An interesting part of Peoria's redistricting process involves two counties: Maricopa and Yavapai.

"We're already in the planning process for redistricting," Kief said. "We're reviewing the 1990 scope of work."

She said the city would probably need a consultant that has knowledge

and expertise city staff does not necessarily possess.

In the coming months, Kief said the city would begin collecting information and hold public meetings and post an interactive page on its Web site. Kief said she would meet with all minority groups and work with the city's public affairs department to make sure those groups receive all of the pertinent information.

Citizens can also submit their own suggestions for redistricting.

"It's very much a citizen process," Kief said.

Kemp said documents should be sent and pre-clearance received from the DOJ in 2011 to ensure new boundaries are in effect for the 2012 election.

Kief said the city is working closely with Maricopa County because "they will be drawing precinct lines and also state legislative districts."

Council districts expected to pick up residents are Acacia and Palo Verde. Pine and Willow will pick up some new residents and lose a few others, Kemp said, while Mesquite's geographic boundaries are expected to be smaller and Ironwood and Willow - all districts in the south part of Peoria - are expected to be larger.

Numbers show the following voter registration numbers in each district:

Mesquite	26,000
Ironwood	13,000
Palo Verde	10,000
Willow	11,000
Acacia	7,000
Pine	10,000