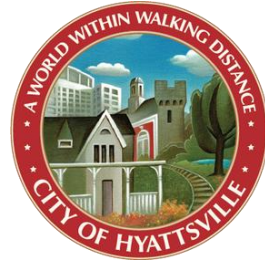


City of Hyattsville

2022 Redistricting Commission

memo on Council's requests

following November 7 Council vote



Members: Leland Dudek, Jennifer Gafford, Greta Mosher, T. Carter Ross (Recordkeeper), Alicia Sanchez Gill Freemyn, Andrew Sayer (Chair), Krystil Smith, Cynthia Totten

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1. Summary

Following months of research, discussion, and outreach, the Redistricting Commission arrived at two recommended candidate maps for Hyattsville's Ward boundaries. One map, Minimal Adjustments, favored small changes to current boundaries to avoid disrupting many residents. The other, Growth Conscious, made larger (though still modest) changes aimed to (1) keep Hyattsville's Wards in closer population balance over the decade to come through the City's ongoing and upcoming (unevenly distributed) housing development, and (2) unify additional communities of interest currently split between multiple Wards.

At their November 7, 2022 meeting Council voted to reject both of these maps, and requested a new option taking into account some specific suggestions of Councilmembers. We have assessed which of these suggestions are practical within the requirements of the Redistricting process and provide new maps for Council's consideration adopting some of those suggestions. While as directed we provide these maps to Council as options we do not formally recommend them, as (1) the public have had little opportunity to weigh in on these maps; (2) these edits are sometimes counter to prevailing public opinion and/or our guiding principles in drawing Ward boundaries; and (3) we wish to share our concerns that this skirts close to the idea of "politicians picking their constituents" that the formation of a Redistricting Commission was designed to avoid. This risks damaging public perception of trust in local government.

The Growth Conscious map has had the most public support through the redistricting process and we present it again here. Ultimately, whatever map Council votes to adopt, some residents will be disappointed. There are strong, mutually-incompatible preferences over several areas of the City, especially Suffrage Point. Additionally, some residents will find their Wards moved for the second time in 20 years, which is regrettable but also seems unavoidable given the requirements of the redistricting process and the uneven distribution of new housing development in Hyattsville from the previous two decades to the present. All maps move a similar number of residents from their current Wards. We also provide historical background for Council on the 2002 and 2012 redistricting processes.

2. Updated guidance on interpretation of “substantially equal populations” clause

Historical research by Recordkeeper Ross after the November 7 Council meeting led him and Chair Sayer to realize that language in the clause on “*substantially equal populations*” in redistricting requirements had been interpreted differently compared to the 2012 ([Memo: Proposed Ward boundary options, The Hyattsville Redistricting Committee, February 15, 2012](#)), and 2002 ([Memo: Recommendations of Hyattsville Redistricting Committee to Mayor and City Council, September 23, 2002](#)) cycles. Our guidance was that Ward populations should fall within the range $\pm 10\%$ from an exactly equal distribution ($21,187 \div 5 = 4,237$ residents), hence the range 3,814 to 4,661. The 2012 Redistricting Committee’s instructions focused on ensuring that the most populous Ward had no more than 10% more people than the least populous, which is a stricter interpretation (permitting approximately half that level of Ward-to-Ward variation). The 2002 Committee’s interpretation was that the sum of the most positive and most negative deviations from an equal population should be no more than 10%, less strict than the 2012 interpretation.

On November 14, 2022, following consultation with City staff, we were advised that the prudent course of action would be to follow the 2012 precedent to avoid potential legal challenge to new maps. We note that complying with the 2012 interpretation mathematically also means the other two interpretations are satisfied. For Minimal Adjustments that variation (most to least populated Ward) is 16%. We therefore withdraw this map from consideration due to the very limited time frame for additional modifications in advance of next year’s required elections and notice periods. We received this guidance early afternoon of November 14, and our final Redistricting Commission meeting before the November 21 Council meeting was that same evening. As our substantive discussion and voting on maps to present must happen in accordance with the Open Meetings Act (which imposes scheduling constraints to ensure sufficient public notice and opportunity to engage), there was very limited opportunity to consider the Council Requests map options or changes to Minimal Adjustments. We voted to only focus on the Council Requests options, as Minimal Adjustments had less public and Council support. For Growth Conscious the ratio between most to least populated Wards is 9.6%, so this map is compliant under either interpretation. For our new Council Requests maps the ratio is 9.1% for both options, also compliant.

The Commission believes that the population requirement wording is ambiguous. Given (at least) two interpretations have been used in Hyattsville, for clarity we recommend that a specific mathematical definition be provided for the redistricting cycle following the 2030 Census.

3. Council’s requests at the November 7, 2022 Council meeting

We chose to take the Growth Conscious map as a basis to try addressing Councilmember and public comments when considering these requests and recommendations, as this map seems to have stronger public and Council support. We tried to provide maps meeting these requests to the extent reasonable while still meeting redistricting requirements and retaining where possible our general redistricting goals (equity, keeping communities of interest together, being conscious of approved ongoing housing development, preferences for straighter boundaries that do not split immediate neighbors).

Councilmember **Haba** (Ward 4) requested to include the (undeveloped) portion of Ward 3 along Oliver Pl., south of the Metro line and north of Edward M Felegy Elementary School, in Ward 4. This takes the Metro lines as a natural boundary between Wards; we agree this is a reasonable change to make and have also included it in our revised recommended Growth Conscious map concept. It does not to our knowledge affect any residents, businesses, or facilities. The present-day boundary appears to be a quirk of the Census Bureau's drawing of census block boundaries (which have been used widely when drawing Ward boundaries) and the reason we had not suggested using the Metro lines as the boundary previously was that we had been unaware that the current boundary did not in fact already represent Metro property.

Councilmember **Solomon** (Ward 5) advocated again for making the Ward 4/5 combined boundaries adhere to the West Hyattsville-Queens Chapel Sector Plan as much as possible ([see map here](#)). While he did not express it at the meeting, we are informed Councilmember **Sandino** (Ward 5) shares this view. We had considered the Sector Plan bounds before but had not previously provided a map based on this as they would result in Wards 4 and/or 5 (dependent on how the boundary was drawn) becoming too large, and Ward 2 becoming too small (unless it expanded across Queens Chapel Road, which would undermine the Sector Plan). We were also concerned about many of these changes needing to be reversed following the 2030 Census (which would be disruptive for residents) if currently-approved and ongoing housing developments in Hyattsville (disproportionately in Wards 3 and 5) are all completed. This was discussed in more detail in our previous memo to Council. However, for the Council Requests maps, we did want to provide Council an option which would move some of this area.

Specifically, this would mean moving the Park Place Condominiums by Driskell Park (currently in Ward 1 but moved to Ward 5 by both Minimal Adjustments and Growth Conscious) out of Ward 1 and likely into Ward 2 (Park Place sits opposite the Castle Manor and Prince George's Apartments in Ward 2), as these are not part of the Sector Plan (the homes and commercial properties on the eastern side of 38th Ave south of Hamilton St, also moved by those maps, are and would remain in Ward 5). This population gain to Ward 2 would then be offset by moving part of the Sector Plan Area bounding Ward 5 into Ward 5. Two specific areas were identified by Councilmembers **Solomon** (Ward 5) and **Strab** (Ward 2) as candidates:

- Around the portion of Ward 2 along Longfellow St., bounded by Queens Chapel Rd. to the West and Sacred Heart to the north. This was a candidate as properties immediately South are part of Ward 5, and this section is comparatively isolated from other parts of Ward 2. Councilmember **Solomon** (Ward 5) noted that he has an existing relationship with many of these residents due to previous work on Longfellow St. affecting both Wards 2 and 5 (e.g., traffic calming and common water runoff concerns from Sacred Heart renovations).
- Around the portion of Ward 2 along Hamilton St. west of Castle Manor. This would extend Ward 5 further along Hamilton St., up to 38th Ave., placing a boundary between single family homes and apartments (as opposed to between housing of similar types).

Councilmembers **Strab** (Ward 2) and **Wasczak** (Ward 1) were concerned about the area around the new Suffrage Point development; presently the upper lot, which has recently had some residents move in, is in Ward 2; the lower lot, presently undeveloped and under legal challenges, is in Ward 1. Growth Conscious moves the area around Suffrage Point into Ward 1 (everywhere south of Hamilton St. east of 40th Ave., and the homes on the northern side of Hamilton St. for those blocks). These changes had been made in Growth Conscious in

response to desires to (1) unify developments into single Wards; (2) keep similar communities together avoiding boundaries through residential streets where possible; and (3) draw maps with straight lines where possible. These desires come both from the mandate presented to us by the City, as well as public opinion from residents around that development who expressed the strong desire to have the homes most adjacent to Suffrage Point in the same Ward as the development.

The desire to keep all that area a single Ward was almost unanimous; however, there was a split of opinion over which Ward it should be (with a slight public preference for Ward 1). We had chosen Ward 1 as this means straighter map lines, a boundary behind houses (rather than dividing immediate neighbors), unification of parts of Hyattsville's historic neighborhoods in Ward 1 (see later discussion), and keeps the source of some current water runoff/drainage issues (around Suffrage Point construction) in the same Ward as the ultimate sink of this water (which flows down the hill, drains to the swamp area of Trumbule Trail in Driskell Park/Magruder Woods, and then down an unnamed creek into the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia).

Councilmember **Strab** (Ward 2) requested a map returning the area to Ward 2, compensated by keeping the present-day northern part of the Ward 1 boundary, as well as moving part of western Ward 2 to Ward 5 (as discussed above). We offer two different options moving Suffrage Point to Ward 2 (and partially balanced by changes to the Ward 1/2 boundary along 42nd Ave.). While this keeps a straight-line boundary, it does divide the community to the north of Queensbury Rd. between Wards 1 and 2 (Growth Conscious unifies this area in Ward 2). We have received limited commentary from residents of that part of Ward 1; however, one commented that they like the Growth Conscious map and don't see their identity rooted in any Ward in particular.

Throughout the redistricting process, we considered each potential change on its own merits but, necessarily, also in the context of the city-wide Ward maps due to the strong constraints of population counts. This inevitably means compromise and that not every reasonable request can be accommodated. Multiple imperfect maps can be drawn. Suffrage Point led to the majority of public comments (in either direction). Keeping it in one Ward or another necessarily has knock-on effects to the boundaries of other Wards due to the substantial populations in neighboring blocks. We wish to remind readers that satisfying the desires of residents or Councilmembers in one part of the City necessarily involves making (possibly disruptive) adjustments to residents in other Wards, and we do not wish to be, or appear to be, showing favoritism to any particular residents or Councilmembers.

Other Councilmembers tended to be in favor of one or both of the Minimal Adjustments or Growth Conscious maps as presented; some felt it was not Council's place to make block-specific suggestions and preferred not to comment.

4. Ongoing and new public opinions on proposed maps

As mentioned in our previous reports, public feedback throughout has been in favor of, where possible, (1) keeping communities together, (2) straighter lines, and (3) avoiding boundaries across minor residential roads in favor of boundaries such as parks, commercial areas, behind properties, or between blocks of different character. While no map satisfies everybody, the Growth Conscious map has consistently been more popular than Minimal Adjustments or other candidate maps that were drafted and discarded. Indeed, most of the changes made in developing the Growth Conscious map grew from Hyattsville residents' suggestions. A common feeling is that to maintain residents' equal voting power and representation on Council, the Growth Conscious map's putting Wards 3 and 5 (more ongoing housing development) on the lower end of the permitted range compares to Wards 2, 4, and (to a lesser extent) 1 resulted in more effective representation. More recent public feedback tends to continue the above trend. Some specific comments from Hyattsville residents since Council's November 7 vote are:

- About Suffrage Point and immediate surroundings. We received slightly more comments in favor of Growth Conscious as presented (i.e., this area all moving to Ward 1) than against it (keeping part or all in Ward 2). Several residents of blocks around Suffrage Point felt that they and their neighborhood's interests would be better served by Ward 1 Councilmembers than Ward 2 and vice versa. Strongly worded comments were received in support of both Wards 1 and 2, including split opinions within the same blocks. It is impossible to draw a map that all members of this community will approve of.
- About the portion of Ward 3 currently south of East–West Highway and east of Queens Chapel Rd. Since fairly early on our outreach with residents of that area had shown a consensus that it made most sense to take this area out of Ward 3 as it was physically isolated from the rest of the Ward. One commenter asked if the area could be moved into Ward 4 instead. We investigated this but found it unfeasible; this area consists of approximately 1,150 residents and moving more any of the blocks which currently border Ward 4 would make an expanded Ward 4 too populous to be compliant with redistricting rules. Two or three blocks could be moved if the current Ward 2 “cutout” across Queen's Chapel were restored, though this would create a somewhat artificial and jagged boundary. We did not feel it reasonable to do this as this would split a community of interest across a widely identified natural boundary (Queens Chapel Rd.) and split that existing Ward 3 sub-community across multiple Wards.
- At various stages the idea of moving away from a 5-Ward, 10-member Council was also raised. We note that this has been discussed several times through this process and during the previous (2002 and 2012) Redistricting cycles. We do feel that consideration of reconfiguring the council, perhaps by moving to a higher number of single-member Wards, would give more flexibility in drawing Ward boundaries but considered more fundamental questions like that outside of our mandate given the limited time available for the Redistricting process such that new maps can be in place in advance of the 2023 municipal election cycle.

Aside from those residents who attended the Nov 14 Redistricting Commission meeting, the public have not had the opportunity to comment or suggest revisions to the Council Requests maps.

5. “Growth Conscious” map version 4

We present again the Growth Conscious map concept, shown in Figure 1, for consideration. This map has received a lot of public exposure and input and, compared to Minimal Adjustments and earlier (abandoned) maps, was consistently well received. We note that due to the compressed timeline the public have not yet the chance for commentary or iteration on the Council Requests concept, aside from those who attended our November 14, 2022 public meeting.

Growth Conscious draws boundaries in order that coming developments will keep Ward populations and thus residents’ representation on Council more balanced as people move into the City’s new housing developments, already approved, and under construction or in the late stages of planning. Compared to today’s Wards, Growth Conscious aims to keep Wards 3, 5, and (to a lesser extent) 1 to the lower part of the permissible population range (due to substantial development) and Wards 2 and 4 toward the upper (as these Wards have minimal or no expected development). These adjustments were achieved by further unification of condo associations and apartment communities into single Wards and replacing some boundaries with straighter lines, increasing public feelings of fairness, and puts one boundary behind a row of houses in order to keep communities of interest together. The changes compared to current Ward boundaries are:

- The portion of Ward 3 east of Queens Chapel Rd. is moved entirely into Ward 2.
- The Ward 1/2 boundary runs along 42nd Ave., Queensbury Rd., and behind the row of houses on the northern side of Hamilton St. This unifies the Suffrage Point development in Ward 1 and unifies two of the City’s historic subdivisions in Ward 1.
- The Ward 2/4 boundary becomes straight along Queens Chapel Rd. We note that these blocks had been moved into Ward 2 in the previous redistricting cycle.
- Houses, stores, and Park Place Condominiums south-east of Hamilton St. and 38th Ave. by Driskell Park are moved into Ward 5.
- Volunteer Fire Department buildings are unified into Ward 3 (presently split between Wards 3 and 4).
- Hamilton Manor Apartments are unified into Ward 5 (presently split between Wards 4 and 5), by moving part the block bounded by Queen’s Chapel Rd., Lancer Dr., Jamestown Rd., and Madison St. into Ward 5.
- Ward 4’s western boundary extends further down Ager Rd. and behind the houses south of Jamestown Rd. This also unifies the North Pointe apartments into Ward 4 (presently split between Wards 4 and 5).
- Ward 4’s northwestern boundary extends up Oliver Pl. to the Metro lines to encompass a small area of undeveloped land that is otherwise an isolated part of Ward 3 due to the existing census block boundary.

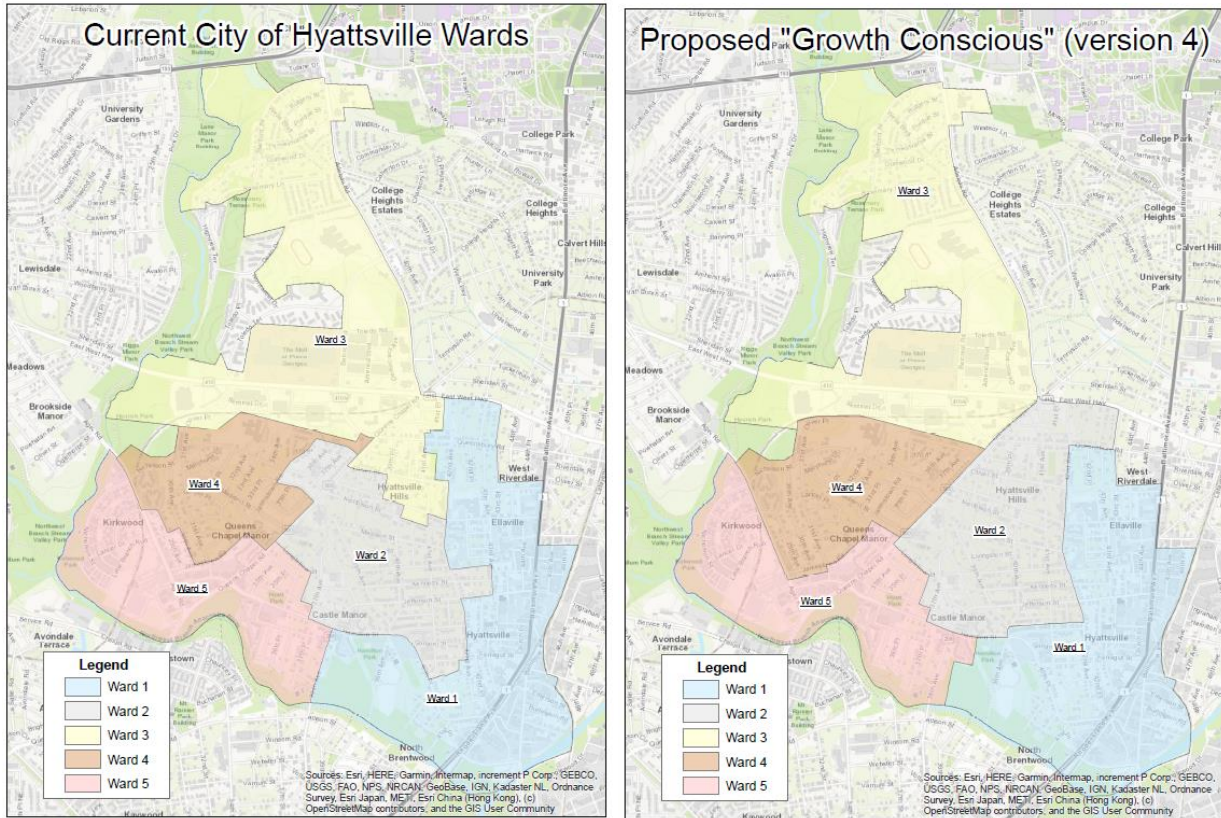


Figure 1. Current Hyattsville Wards (left) and the proposed Growth Conscious map (right).

This represents version 4 of the Growth Conscious concept. The only difference from the previous is the change to Ward 4 along the Metro line which does not move people or businesses.

6. "Council Requests" map options

As noted previously, the Council Requests maps take Growth Conscious as a basis and makes specific adjustments requested by Council members as far as practical within the constraints of the redistricting requirements. We offer two options, which differ in their treatment of the Ward 1/2 boundary. These are shown in Figure 2. The changes compared to Growth Conscious for both Council Requests options are as follows:

- Park Place Condominiums south of Hamilton St. and east of 38th Ave by Driskell Park are moved into Ward 2.
- Much of the southwestern corner of Ward 2 moves to Ward 5. This line encompasses the area north of Hamilton St. west of 38th Ave. and south of Longfellow St., as well as the homes immediately north of Longfellow St between 36th Ave. and 37th Ave. (and on both sides of the 36th Ave. spur), Sacred Heart community, and the homes north of

Longfellow St. between Queens Chapel Rd. and 36th Ave. These specific choices decrease the instances of immediate across-street neighbors being in separate Wards.

The differences between the two options occur around 42nd Ave., Suffrage Point and Driskell Park. A zoomed view illustrating the differences around Driskell Park is shown in Figure 3. Council Requests option A draws the following boundaries here:

- All the way down 42nd Ave. from East–West Highway to Farragut St, then along Farragut St. west to 41st Ave., including the houses on the southern side of Farragut St. west of the alley which connects Farragut St. and Emerson St. Then, up 41st Ave. to Gallatin St., following Gallatin St. west to 40th Pl., and encompassing the southern lot of Suffrage Point.
- Then, west along Hamilton St. to 38th Ave., jutting out to encompass Park Place Condominiums (but not the commercial properties on the southeastern corner of Hamilton St. & 38th Ave.).

This option keeps Top of the Park and homes on the northern side of Emerson St. between 40th Pl. and Farragut St. in Ward 1. This avoids a Ward boundary between the homes on both sides of Farragut St. or Emerson St. in this area. Keeping Top of the Park in Ward 1 increases its population to compensate for the expected growth in Ward 2 population due to the growth of Suffrage Point. By jutting out to encompass the southern lot of Suffrage Point and Park Place, this map becomes less compact around the northern side of Driskell Park.

Council Requests option B draws the following boundaries here:

- All the way down 42nd Ave. from East–West Highway to Farragut St, except also taking in the apartments on the western side of 42nd Ave opposite Hyattsville Middle School between Oglethorpe St. and Oliver St. (the Hyattsville House and 6030 42nd Ave. communities).
- Then along Farragut St. west to the alley connecting Farragut St. and Emerson St., down that alley and along Emerson St. to the intersection with 40th Pl. Then, continuing just south of this junction along the southern property line of 4924 40th Pl., before extending down to the Driskell Park trailhead and following the unnamed creek (which drains out of the Trumbule Trail swamp area, that is itself fed by, among other things, runoff from the Suffrage Point area and its stormwater retention basin) to Hyattsville's southern boundary at the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River.
- Following the City's southern boundary to the back (eastern) property lines of the homes on the eastern side of 38th Ave.
- Then, extending roughly north along the back property lines of these homes, and the back of the commercial properties on the southeastern corner of Hamilton St. & 38th Ave, up to Hamilton St, and then to the southeastern corner of Hamilton St. & 38th Ave.

This option extends the logic concerning the community influenced by Suffrage Point to keep the entirety of Suffrage Point, associated neighborhood, and drainage in Ward 2 (essentially the same logic but opposite Ward choice from the Growth Conscious plan). This keeps today's southern Ward 1/2 boundary west of 42nd Ave, but also takes in part of 40th Pl. roughly northwards of Emerson St. and much of Driskell Park within Ward 2.

Keeping the Top of the Park community in Ward 2 means this must be balanced by putting the Hyattsville House and 6030 42nd Ave. communities in Ward 1, otherwise Ward 1's population becomes too small. These latter two communities are currently in Ward 3 so they will move under all scenarios; as they are apartments bordered by Hyattsville Middle School and single-family homes, this change does not introduce a Ward boundary between homes of similar type. It also seems reasonable in that it places the housing directly opposite the school in the same Ward as the school — these are some of the residents who may be most impacted by the current Hyattsville Middle School redevelopment and past/future foot and vehicle traffic from the school.

This option unifies Suffrage Point with the area its runoff drains into in a single Ward, and results in slightly more compact Ward 1/2 boundaries than Council Requests option A. In moving these properties and 40th Pl. it does, however, disrupt residents here in ways that other maps do not. Further, we received several comments through the redistricting process that Driskell Park feels like it "belongs" to Ward 1. There may therefore be resident resistance to this option.

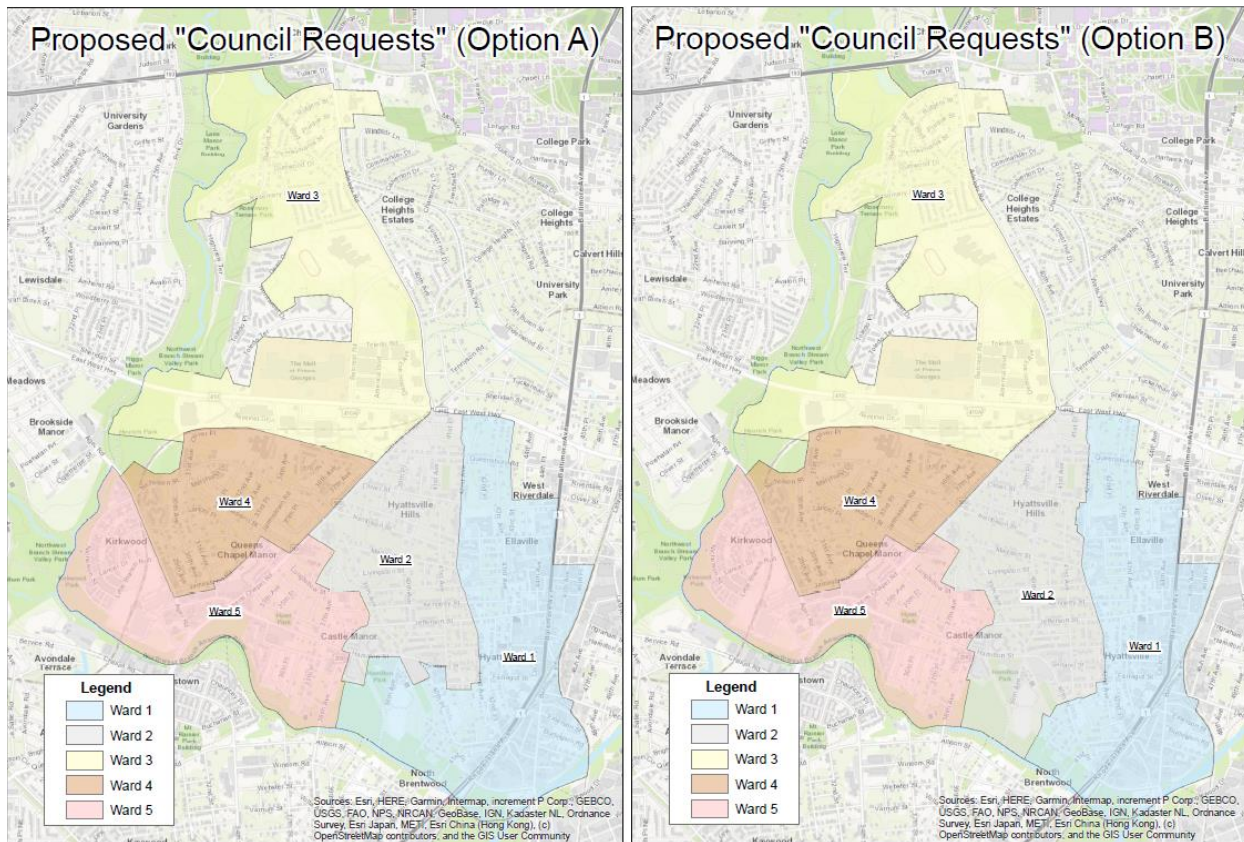


Figure 2. The Council Requests maps; option A on the left and B on the right.



Figure 3. Ward 2 boundaries around Driskell Park in the Council Requests A and B maps. Red lines represent Council Requests option A, and blue lines represent Council Requests option B. Note the lines are the same around the western side of Park Place/Hamilton St./38th Ave. on the west of the map, and on the eastern side of 42nd Ave. on the east of the map. Image uses the Google Earth base map.

We provide these Council Requests options for consideration but, as noted previously, feel that Growth Conscious is the best of these candidate maps for the city. Other configurations (including an alternative Minimal Adjustments plan) might have been possible to consider, but due to the compressed timeframe for creating these new map concepts in advance of 2023 elections, and late-breaking guidance on the interpretation of the 10% population variation clause, there is not time for the Committee to meet, discuss, and vote while maintaining compliance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Furthermore, it is preferable to not delay further the redistricting process as it will either unacceptably shorten the time between adoption and the May 2023 elections or it will mean running the elections based upon the current maps. This could lead to a candidate or candidates who are elected in May 2023 being removed from the elected seat if their Ward boundary is changed as part of the redistricting process.

7. Population counts and forward-looking discussion

Table 1 shows the populations of the current Wards, together with the populations under the recommended Growth Conscious map, and of the Council Request maps. Wards 3 and 4 are identical under all concepts. The proposed changes to their boundaries were seen as the most fair and logical way to adjust Ward 3 and expand Ward 4, respectively, based on natural boundaries and expected development. To provide some additional context for discussion, Table 2 shows the number of housing units (using present-day Ward boundaries) approved for construction within Hyattsville at present in the 2020–2030 timeframe. We note there is no guarantee that all will be constructed and inhabited, and that there is no standard conversion between housing units and population estimates (as it depends on multiple factors), but assuming 1–2.5 people per housing units seems reasonable. We note that all map population estimates used for redistricting are based on population as recorded by the 2020 Census; Table 2 is only provided to aid the discussion below.

Table 1. Ward populations based on 2020 Census data for the current and maps discussed here. Red indicates non-compliance of current maps.

Map	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5
Current	4376	3859	5201	4026	3725
Growth Conscious version 4	4226	4435	4055	4423	4048
Council Requests option A	4265	4205	4055	4423	4239
Council Requests option B	4181	4289	4055	4423	4239

Table 2. Total number of expected new housing units in current Ward boundaries in the 2020–2030 time frame, based on current developments. Data courtesy Taylor Robey, Hyattsville City Planner.

Current Ward	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Total new housing units	325	83	1,876	0	1,153	3,437

It is likely that, following the 2030 Census, Ward 3 may have to shrink again as 1,876 new housing units are approved within it, including several projects currently under construction (Table 2). This provided motivation to keep it nearer the smaller end of the permitted range now; there was no obvious additional portion to change between Wards at this time. All concepts put Ward 4 close to the upper limit of the permitted range, as there are currently no approved housing developments within it.

Because of this large and unevenly distributed expected population growth, redistricting following the 2030 Census is likely to be quite disruptive to Hyattsville. While speculative, it seems likely that Wards 2 and 4 will have to expand into the area of present-day Wards 3 and 5 further to counter this growth.

All maps move a similar number of residents (per 2020 Census counts) from their current Wards and so are similarly disruptive at the present time: Growth Conscious moves 3,611, and Council Requests options A and B move 3,599 and 3,359, respectively. Council Requests option B moves the fewest people from their current Wards. Due to the Ward-to-Ward population balance of the resulting maps, however, Growth Conscious is likely to be less disruptive in 2032 redistricting than the other maps. In particular, it seems likely to reduce the number of changes made in 2022 that may be reversed in 2023 — such flip-flopping is viewed unfavorably by residents. This is because Growth Conscious places Wards 2 and 4 (no/negligible expected population growth) at the top of the permitted range, Wards 3 and 5 (potentially several thousand new residents in each by 2030) at the bottom, and Ward 1 (moderate expected growth) in the middle. In the Council Requests map options Wards 1, 2, and 5 are all in the middle of the permitted range. This also means that the Growth Conscious option is likely to keep Hyattsville residents' voting representation on Council more even over the decade 2020–2030 than either of the Council Requests map options.

The new maps insert Ward boundaries within individual census blocks. As census data are only available at the census block scale, we are unable to provide exact population counts for the Wards. We also note that intentional data obfuscation by the Census Bureau for privacy protection means that even the census block data are estimates, not true counts. Our sub-block population estimates divide the total census block population by the total number of housing units and then count the number of housing units which would end up within each Ward for the split block. We feel the added uncertainty in population count introduced by splitting blocks is justifiable given (1) the City has no control over census block definitions (this is done by the Census Bureau) and (2) resident sentiments consistently favor splitting some blocks, outweighing the decrease in precision.

8. Map compactness

Table 3 shows the Polsby-Popper (PP) scores quantifying compactness of the Wards for all maps. Details of this metric are in our previous reports, but it calculates a score from 0 to 1 to each Ward where 0 represents a minimally compact boundary (i.e., a very “wiggly” or snake-like structure) and 1 represents a maximally compact shape (a circle). The shape of Hyattsville's external boundaries constrains this but if the current Wards are sufficiently compact to meet the City's criterion, then maps with a similar or higher Polsby-Popper metric should be as well.

For all maps presented, PP scores for individual Wards range from slightly decreased to greatly increased from current values. Ward 5 becomes slightly less compact under all scenarios. The average PP scores for Growth Conscious (0.42), and Council Requests options A (0.37) and B (0.39) are all higher than for the current Wards (0.32). If the current Wards were judged to be “*reasonably compact*” during the last redistricting cycle, by this logic both proposed options should be too. Growth Conscious represents the most compact map. Throughout the process, more compact maps have consistently been seen as “*fairer*” and “*less political*” by residents.

Table 3. Polsby-Popper (PP) compactness scores for current and proposed maps.

Map	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Average
Current	0.28	0.41	0.16	0.37	0.40	0.32
Growth Conscious version 4	0.45	0.54	0.20	0.59	0.33	0.42
Council Requests option A	0.32	0.39	0.20	0.59	0.35	0.37
Council Requests option B	0.38	0.46	0.20	0.59	0.39	0.40

9. Demographics

Racial and ethnic breakdowns for all the maps are shown in Tables 4–7 (using Census Bureau terminology). As in previous responses, we note that self-identification for respondent’s race and ethnicity are separate Census questions; for the latter options are “Hispanic” or “non-Hispanic”, and the data we have are unable to provide further breakdowns (e.g., totals of people who are “White” and “non-Hispanic”, etc.). We believe that many of Hyattsville’s Hispanic residents self-identified as “Some Other Race” in the Census’ race question, which is in line with Census Bureau analysis of responses to its race and ethnicity questions in 2020 ([see this report](#)).

For these calculations, we used only Census data for the census blocks within each Ward that are not divided. This is because we know that housing unit type (e.g., apartment, townhouse, single-family home) is often linked to wealth which is also often linked to race. As the census block splits in our maps were often based on different housing types, this, combined with the Census Bureau’s intentional data obscuration, means that such racial/ethnic sub-block estimates are likely to be less accurate than for total population and may be systematically (as opposed to randomly) wrong. For this reason, we only use breakdowns from the non-divided Census blocks within each Ward, which generally correspond to over 90% of each Ward’s population, and provide numbers rounded to the nearest 1% (more significant digits can falsely imply higher precision).

We note that part of the motivation for the Ward 4 boundaries during the 2012 redistricting process ([see pages 21–22 here](#)) was to create a Hispanic-majority Ward as a substantial Hispanic population was found within this part of the City. Redistricting guidance on protecting this community’s representation and power per the Voting Rights Act supported creation of such a Ward. Between then and now, the Hispanic population of Ward 4 has increased from approximately 50% to 60%, and Ward 5 is also a Hispanic-majority Ward. All maps discussed herein maintain Wards 4 and 5 as Hispanic-majority. In addition, in all maps Ward 3 goes from a 45% Black or African American (in Census terminology) population to 51%.

Table 4. Ward racial and ethnic breakdowns based on 2020 Census data for the current Wards. Numbers rounded to the nearest 1% so row totals may not sum to 100%. Numbers in bold indicate where a response is significantly higher than the city-wide average.

Ward	1	2	3	4	5
% White	38	39	23	12	11
% Black or African American	32	27	45	21	28
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1	2	2
% Asian	3	2	7	3	2
% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
% Other	14	19	14	48	46
% Multiracial	11	11	10	14	10
% Hispanic (ethnicity)	23	31	22	65	60

Table 5. Ward racial and ethnic breakdowns based on 2020 Census data for the proposed Growth Conscious Ward map. Numbers rounded to the nearest 1% so row totals may not sum to 100%. Numbers in bold indicate where a response is significantly higher than the city-wide average.

Ward	1	2	3	4	5
% White	39	37	21	12	11
% Black or African American	34	25	51	21	30
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1	3	2
% Asian	3	3	8	3	2
% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
% Other	13	21	9	46	45
% Multiracial	10	12	9	15	10
% Hispanic (ethnicity)	22	32	17	64	59

Table 6. Ward racial and ethnic breakdowns based on 2020 Census data for the Council Requests option A Ward map. Numbers rounded to the nearest 1% so row totals may not sum to 100%. Numbers in bold indicate where a response is significantly higher than the city-wide average.

Ward	1	2	3	4	5
% White	40	40	21	12	14
% Black or African American	32	25	51	21	28
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1	3	2
% Asian	3	2	8	3	2
% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
% Other	13	19	9	46	43
% Multiracial	11	12	9	15	11
% Hispanic (ethnicity)	22	30	17	64	56

Table 7. Ward racial and ethnic breakdowns based on 2020 Census data for the Council Requests option B Ward map. Numbers rounded to the nearest 1% so row totals may not sum to 100%. Numbers in bold indicate where a response is significantly higher than the city-wide average.

Ward	1	2	3	4	5
% White	39	39	21	12	14
% Black or African American	32	27	51	21	28
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1	3	2
% Asian	3	2	8	3	2
% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
% Other	14	19	9	46	43
% Multiracial	11	12	9	15	11
% Hispanic (ethnicity)	23	30	17	64	56

As in our previous reports, we note that other socioeconomic data (e.g., income, education level) are not available at the census block level. We examined these data from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS), but these are (1) only available at a coarser census tract level, which does not enable us to meaningfully assess the result of block-scale moves between Wards, and (2) last reported in 2017 so may be less reflective of current conditions, particularly in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (affecting the USA from 2020 onward).

10. Historical notes and other discussion

Reflecting on the history of Ward boundary changes in Hyattsville, the Redistricting Commission felt it would be worthwhile to look at how the past two redistricting cycles changed the City's Ward makeup.

The 2012 redistricting process had to accommodate the 2006 annexation of University Hills, which was incorporated into Ward 3 between redistricting cycles without changes to other Ward boundaries, as well as a 19.2% increase in the City's population from the 2000 Census to the 2010 Census. Part of this growth was due to the completion of several new housing developments, including Renaissance Square and Arts District West in Ward 1 and University Town Center and Mosaic at Metro in Ward 3, in addition to the annexation. These had led to substantial increases in population in the northern and eastern portions of the City.

In 2012, the Redistricting Commission was guided by a desire *"to provide districts of equal population size, creating contiguous and compact wards with relatively smooth boundaries, and protecting a Hispanic community of interest in West Hyattsville by creating a 'minority opportunity ward' with at least a 50 percent Hispanic population. Additionally, the locations of incumbent Councilmembers were taken into account in the process, when feasible."* ([Hyattsville Redistricting Committee. Memorandum to Mayor and City Council: Revised Ward Boundary Options, March 29, 2012](#)). To achieve these goals, Wards 2, 3 and 5 moved to the north and west, undoing an extension of Ward 1 into the neighborhood near the current site of HN. St. Mary Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church (at the time Concordia Lutheran School) that had been made during the 2002 redistricting. This is shown in Figure 4.

The newly configured Ward 1 also unified the Hyattsville Historic District subdivisions of the Holladay Company's Addition (1887) and Wine and Johnson's Second Addition (1884) into Ward 1 and Wine and Johnson's Third Addition/Hyattsville Hills (1923) into Ward 2. Hyatt's Addition to Hyattsville (1859) and Wine and Johnson's First Addition (1882) remained split between Wards 1 and 2.

All of the scenarios offered in 2012 include a degree of this shifting of Ward boundaries, although the scenarios drawn without regard to council members' addresses had greater changes in this regard. Such scenarios were rejected by the Council. It is worth noting that the 2022 Commission has purposefully not considered council members' addresses in its process.

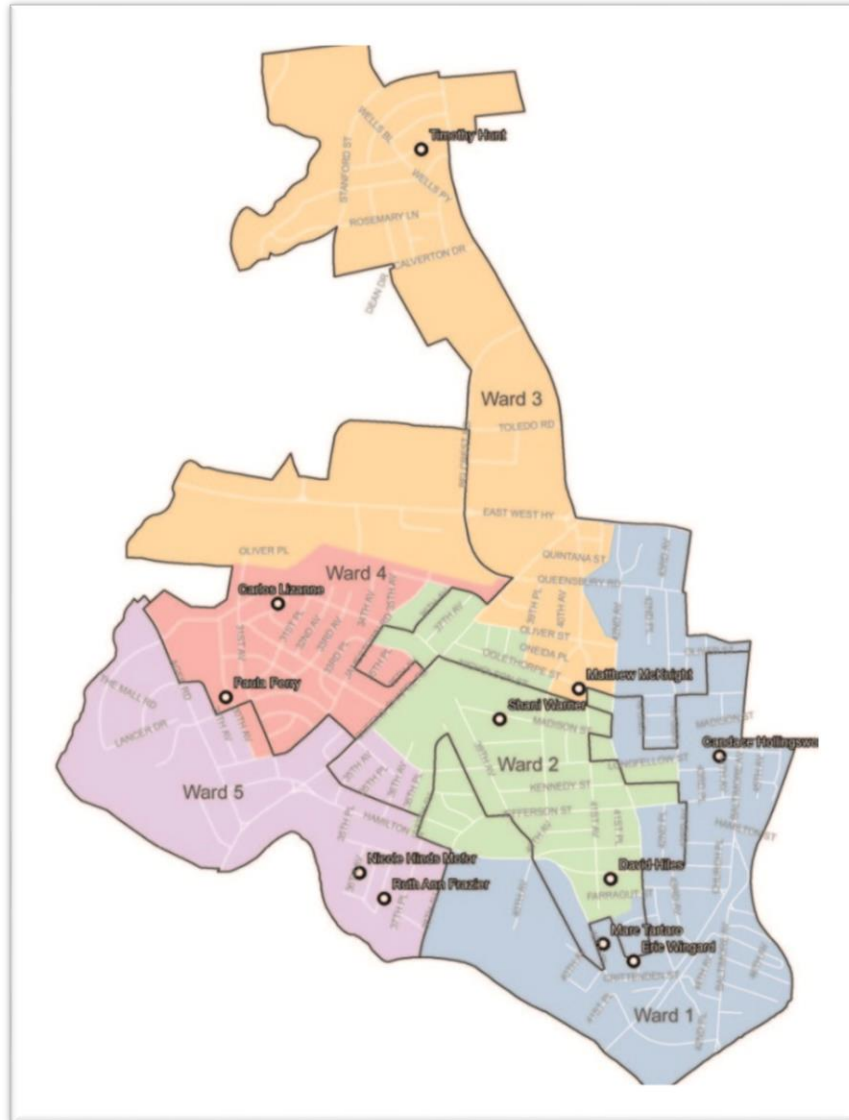


Figure 4: Ward boundaries adopted following the 2002 (solid lines), and 2012 (colors) redistricting efforts, the latter corresponding to current boundaries. 2012 City Council member residences are also labelled. Image courtesy City of Hyattsville.

The 2022 Redistricting Commission has been tasked with rebalancing the City’s wards to accommodate the 20.7% growth in population from 2010 to 2020. During this time, Ward 3 has seen the completion of Editors Park and Mode at Hyattsville (previously called Post Park), as well as the addition of more housing units in the University Town Center area, and the Arts District East development in Ward 1.

Of the maps developed by the 2022 Commission, the (abandoned) Minimal Adjustments map makes significant changes to Ward 3, moving the boundary to the north and west, continuing the changes made in 2012 due to the shift of the center of population of the City in that direction and dividing the area between Wards 1 and 2.

The Growth Conscious map similarly continues the shifting of Ward boundaries begun in 2012. In addition to the shift in Ward 3, it was necessary to make additional changes pulling Ward 2 further north and west to help accommodate council's direction to consider population growth from future development. From a Historic District perspective, this has the effect of bringing all of Hyatt's Addition to Hyattsville (1859) and Wine and Johnson's First Addition (1882) into Ward 1, uniting the oldest subdivisions of the City. We note here that using the back property lines of homes facing Hamilton St. as the boundary between Wards 1 and 2, a suggestion of some residents of that area, does move a string of properties from Wine and Johnson's Third Addition (1923) into Ward 1, as does moving the blocks between Longfellow St. and Jefferson St. east of 42nd Ave. to Ward 1. Similarly, both maps push the Ward 4 boundary east and south in ways that were begun during the 2012 redistricting and suggested in maps rejected during the 2002 redistricting process.

The changes in the Growth Conscious map also allow for more compact Wards with smoother boundaries that balance Ward population while leaving room for known future development, including the completed homes in Riverfront at West Hyattsville and Suffrage Point occupied since April 2020 (and therefore not counted by the 2020 Census).

We also note that in 2012, one of the proposed maps resulted in a 4-Ward system (noting at that time that the 10-member Hyattsville City Council was the second largest in Maryland, the idea received some Council support; [see here](#)). Between the 2000 and 2010 Census Hyattsville's population grew from 14,733 to 17,557; between 2010 and 2020 it grew to 21,187. With 3,437 housing units approved for construction, it is not inconceivable that the population will grow by 5,000–7,500 by 2030, roughly double the 2000 population. Each Council member would then be responsible for twice as many residents as then — allaying somewhat the concern about Council size with respect to City population.

Going from five two-member Wards to 10 single-member Wards (or some other configuration), however, could conceivably result in Wards with more individual character (each current and proposed Ward currently contains neighborhoods of somewhat distinct age and character; some neighborhoods remain split) and give more flexibility when drawing boundaries to keep these communities of interest together. We recognize that City voters rejected several options for reducing the number of Council members in a 2017 advisory referendum ([see results here](#)); however, given the question of number of Wards has been raised during at least three consecutive redistricting cycles, we encourage Council to consider researching this question again at an appropriate time.