

**MINUTES**  
**Approved by the Commission**  
**Commission for Reapportionment**  
**Thursday, September 16, 2021**  
**1:00 P.M.**  
**Council Chambers, Meridian City Hall**  
**Meridian, Idaho**

Members: (Commissioners) Cochairs Bart Davis and Dan Schmidt, Commissioners Thomas Dayley, Nels Mitchell, Amber Pence, and Eric Redman; (Commission Staff) Paul Boucher, Elizabeth Bowen, Keith Bybee, and Todd Cutler

Absent/Excused: None

Also present (Signed in): Treg A. Bernt, Jason Pretty Boy, Luke Cavener, Branden Durst, Lori Den Hartog, Kris Hooker, Valerie James, Phil McGrane, Brian Merrell, Teresa Schmalz, and Robert Simison

**The meeting was called to order by Cochair Davis at 1:00 p.m. A silent roll call was taken.**

### **Opening Remarks**

Cochair Davis explained the purpose of the Commission for Reapportionment. The commissioners introduced themselves.

### **Public Testimony**

Cochair Davis described the process of how the commission would receive testimony and invited the public to testify.

- Branden Durst testified on the two congressional plans he submitted. He advised the commission that it would be helpful for future commissions to have the ability to upload plans from other online platforms into Maptitude. He described the plans he submitted: C012, C013, L013, and L024. He testified on the county splits he made and on the different ways commissioners should split various counties to achieve their targets. Cochair Davis explained the concepts of external and internal splits for those in attendance. Mr. Durst explained that it was easier for clerks and voters to use natural dividing lines such as the Boise River. Commissioner Redman commented on District 18 on Plan L024; Mr. Durst assured the deviations were within the acceptable range. Cochair Davis summarized Mr. Durst's statement regarding his 5% population deviation spread.
- Brian Merrell testified and gave a [handout](#) to the commissioners. Mr. Merrell testified about his plan "Treasure Valley by City 23", focusing on Canyon, Ada, and Owyhee Counties. He noted his desire, reflected in his plan and testimony, to keep the City of Kuna and surrounding rural areas intact. Mr. Merrell testified on congressional plans, noting his submissions, and commented that satisfactory plans could be created without dividing counties. On the inquiry of Cochair Davis, Mr. Merrell explained that Ada County was split twice with Canyon County in his plans. Cochair Davis warned against using 10% deviation when making congressional plans, because congressional plans must have a smaller deviation than legislative plans.
- Ada County Clerk Phil McGrane testified and gave a [handout](#) to the commission. He described how the final plan affects the county commissioners in facilitating voting. He advised the commission to use clear boundaries, specifically roads, and referred to his handout and city districts as an example. Mr. McGrane advised the commission to ignore precinct boundaries since the lines would be redrawn anyway at the conclusion of redistricting. He submitted that the Ada County Commission was happy to lend its help. Commissioner Mitchell followed up on Mr. McGrane's statement, asking if he would recommend the commission ignore precinct lines in other parts of the state. Mr. McGrane said that other counties would generally prefer to follow precinct lines, however, the commission should look at population size and split counties/precincts where necessary. Commissioner Mitchell asked

how long Mr. McGrane's office would need for final review and recommendations. Mr. McGrane responded that his team may be able to find issues within 24 hours.

- Teresa Schmalz spoke about her family's connection to her neighborhood and highlighted points of interest in the west Boise area. She testified in support of Plan L023, specifically District 15, but appreciated the whole statewide plan that L023 outlines.
- Senator Lori Den Hartog testified representing herself, and supported Brian Merrell's statement regarding Kuna and Melba's shared connection. She acknowledged it has been a challenge for Meridian to be represented by four legislative districts. Senator Den Hartog noted that Kuna has less in common with Meridian than Melba. She appreciated Mr. McGrane's testimony and supported the idea of doing what made sense for elections and the voters. Cochair Schmidt asked if Kuna and Melba could be considered a community of interest. Senator Den Hartog replied no, the two cities just had a lot in common. Cochair Schmidt asked whether she recommended they ignore the county line to connect the two cities. Senator Den Hartog replied yes, if the numbers made sense to do so.
- Valerie James gave [handouts](#) to the commissioners of a plan she drew in another program. She testified on the area near Kuna/Melba and explained how the boundaries on her plan were drawn. She mentioned that Branden Durst's plan was very similar to hers. Ms. James mentioned precinct lines had to be split on her plan in order to achieve the minimal deviations and noted she would submit her plan later when it's ready. She encouraged the commission to consider splitting precincts. Commissioner Schmidt mentioned Ms. James's comment about the unity of the prison complex with the community of Kuna and asked where the prison workers live. She responded that representation was important based on where she lived, not where she worked. Commissioner Mitchell asked about the handout she gave to the commission, asking for clarification on the population deviation numbers as compared to the commission's 52,546. Ms. James responded that in Ada County, the average district was going to have 55,000 people unless it was split into 10 districts.
- Jason Pretty Boy stated his opinion differed from the prior Kuna testimony. He noted that population was continuing to grow rapidly, and the commission should consider the long term effects of the commission beyond ten years. Cochair Davis pondered if the commission should consider areas that expect rapid growth but also noted that the commission may not have the skill to estimate that accurately. Mr. Pretty Boy agreed, stating that forecasting growth could be a challenge to do accurately. Commissioner Mitchell commented the factors to consider were limited per statute and noted the significant changes in growth as well. He said the Legislature would have to grant the ability for the commission to examine that growth as a factor.
- Treg Bernt, the Meridian City Council President, testified that he and Mayor Simison have similar comments so he would defer his testimony to him.
- Mayor Robert Simison testified on Plan L01. He likes the commission's draft for Canyon County and Boise, but he disliked the plans for Star, Meridian, and Kuna. He supported the advice to disregard precinct lines, and instead focus on keeping cities as intact as possible. He added that, if necessary to split apart the county, the commission should make cuts in the north. He commented that Meridian would submit a plan and written comments in the future. He appealed to the commission not to lessen the city of Meridian or other communities because of anticipated future growth. Mayor Simison requested two complete districts for the city of Meridian, or a third district that was shared partially with another city. Finally, the commission should consider road issues when working on areas surrounding Boise. Commissioner Pence asked which districts encompassed Meridian within L01. Mayor Simison responded there were five. Commissioner Dayley asked if there were any plans that Mayor Simison liked. Mayor Simison responded there were no plans that he liked currently, but the city would submit one later.
- Cochair Davis stated that the commission wished to publish a better draft plan soon, and the next two to three weeks would be the most ideal time to receive feedback.

- Jose Kristensen testified about Jordan Morales's plan, L023. She liked that it used roads and geographic features as lines and attested that it would be difficult for individuals to understand when the lines were not clear. She commented on Plan C01 and said she didn't like that plan as counties should be kept whole.

**With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.**