

## **The Importance of Redistricting MD19: What your Club Needs To Know**

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At the June 2021 Spring Council Meeting, the Council of Governors unanimously passed a resolution to begin the process of consolidating our Multiple District from nine districts into five. The Strategic Planning Committee spent a good portion of 2020-21 looking at the technical and human side of changing the internal boundary lines of our current nine small districts into five larger districts within the current boundaries of MD19. The most important fact about redistricting is that your club will ultimately vote to approve or disapprove this plan. More on this below.

Redistricting is important because of the significant downward changes in our membership numbers. If membership losses in MD19 continue apace and we follow this downward trend, our multiple district could become extinct in 10 years or so. The startling fact behind this administrative change is simply this: The nine districts that make up MD19 lost an aggregate total of 808 members in our most recent Lions year, 2020-21. This is the largest single-year loss in our history, and should be seen as a wake-up call to all Lions. Simply put, it's time to get moving, and redistricting is the chosen path of the Council of Governors.

Under the plan approved by the Council of Governors, each of the nine current districts will have neighboring merger partner(s) which, when consolidated, will blend into five larger and more efficient districts. It is our goal as a Multiple District to promote this plan within a spirit of cooperation and "can-do" attitude to keep the process moving along in the face of the many challenges ahead. It is also VERY important to know that redistricting will have minimal impact on clubs or zones. About the only change your club or zone will see is a change in zone number designation. Otherwise, it will be service, leadership and membership "business as usual" for your club and zone.

### **What is Redistricting?**

Redistricting, also called consolidating, is explained clearly by Lions International in their online PDF "Guide for Consolidating Districts." Redistricting is managed over a three-year period with the main goal to increase the size of each district to a minimum of 1250 members and 35 clubs. These changes will improve district and club administration so that robust leadership, membership and service programs can operate more effectively and efficiently.

### **The Redistricting Challenge**

Redistricting is not a panacea. We have to do the hard work of consolidating in order to see the benefits. Redistricting in and of itself is never a substitute for an active and vital membership and retention program at every club. Redistricting will not magically produce new leaders in our clubs. But a mix of new leaders in the new district can inspire new leadership models which can help clubs be more effective in accomplishing their service goals.

## **The Path Ahead**

As mentioned, redistricting is a project completed over a three year period. We are currently in the middle of year two and, pending an approval by the club delegates of MD19 in June, our plan will be presented to the October 2022 LCI Board Meeting. Should our plan then be approved by LCI, redistricting would be effective on or about July 1, 2023.

In the meantime we will have lots of preparation to do, including the ongoing efforts of district merger committees who will meet to accomplish the hard work of consolidating district officers, cabinets, finances, and dozens of other important programs. The Strategic Planning committee is assisting the merger committees in this process by conducting recurring Zoom meetings that are open to Lions Clubs, Zones and Districts in MD19. That schedule is posted on the MD19 website at <https://lionsmd19.org>.

## **Your Club Will Vote On This Proposal On June 4, 2022.**

As mentioned in the opening paragraph, your club will have a say in the approval or disapproval of this major change in the organization of MD19. All clubs that are in good standing (LCI and MD19 Dues paid) will be authorized to cast ballots to approve or disapprove redistricting at a Special Convention of club delegates on **June 4, 2022**. Voting will be conducted entirely online. Shortly before the special convention, your club will receive the same voting certificates from the MD19 office that you receive before any convention, with instructions on how your club delegates can cast your club's votes.

## **The Central Information Hub for Redistricting**

From the beginning, the MD19 Strategic Planning Committee has posted all working documents on the MD19 website. This is the main hub for information on redistricting, where you will find several key documents such as a time line, road map, merger committee make-up and responsibilities, maps and flow charts. It may seem like a lot of information, but a good place to start is to click on the Frequently Asked Questions and move about the website from there. Everything can be found in the redistricting section of the MD19 website.  
<https://lionsmd19.org/redistricting.php>