

## **Redistricting FAQs**

### **What is redistricting?**

Redistricting is the process of redrawing the boundaries of the City's single-member districts for electing Council members.

### **Why does the City redistrict?**

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1964 that election districts (such as city council districts) must have "substantially equal" total population, sometimes referred to as the "one person, one vote standard." "Substantially equal" has been determined to mean no more than a ten percent (10%) deviation from the most populous least populous district.

Every ten years after the U.S. Census results are released, each jurisdiction that has election districts must assess whether the election districts have "substantially equal population" using the new Census data.

If the total deviation between the most populous and least populous election district is more than ten percent (10%) after applying the new Census data, the City must engage in a redistricting process. This involves redrawing the City Council districts to ensure the total population in each district meets the "substantially equal" standard of no more than a 10% top to bottom deviation.

The City Charter at Article II, Section 1(a) also requires redistricting to balance the population in each district, "The city council shall by ordinance equalize the single member districts as required by law."

### **What standards apply to the redistricting process?**

The City Council adopted a resolution setting out the criteria to be used in redrawing the City Council districts to comply with the "one person, one vote" mandate. These criteria include:

- Easily identifiable geographic boundaries should be followed.
- Communities of interest should be maintained in a single district, and attempts should be made to avoid splitting neighborhoods.
- Councilmember districts should be composed of whole voting precincts. Where this is not possible or practicable, districts should be drawn considering county election precincts. Avoid splitting census blocks unless necessary.
- Although it is recognized that existing districts will have to be altered to reflect new population distribution in the City, any districting plan should be based on existing districts.
- Districts must be configured so that they are relatively equal in total population according to the 2020 federal census. In no event should the total population deviation between the largest and the smallest district exceed ten percent as compared to the ideal district size.

- The districts should be compact and composed of contiguous territory. Compactness may contain a functional, as well as a geographical, dimension.
- Consideration may be given to the preservation of incumbent-constituency relations by recognition of the residence of incumbents and their history in representing certain areas.
- The plan should be narrowly tailored to avoid racial gerrymandering in violation of *Shaw v. Reno*.
- The plan should not fragment a geographically compact minority community or pack minority voters in the presence of polarized voting or otherwise discriminate against protected groups so as to create liability under the Voting Rights Act.