

DANE COUNTY REDISTRICTING 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***What is redistricting?***

Redistricting is the process of redrawing the lines of districts from which public officials are elected to reflect population shifts in accordance with the results of the U.S. Census. The boundaries for County Board districts are adjusted based on population changes that have occurred over the previous decade. Through the redistricting process, the population within each supervisory district is equalized so that residents across the county have equal representation on the Board of Supervisors. The approved final map is then used for the next decade.

2. ***When does redistricting take place?***

The redistricting process takes place between April and October 2021.

3. ***Why are we talking about this when it won't take place for another year?***

In 2016, the County Board approved 2016 OA-032 creating a nonpartisan citizen Redistricting Commission. To follow the intent and direction of the ordinance, there are several pieces that need to be put into place including:

- Appointing the Commission – to include an application process
- Orienting and educating the Commission
- Procuring and testing mapping software to allow the public to submit maps
- Engaging the public on the process

There is also interest in whether the County Board should consider changing the number of County Board districts and making a recommendation in the coming months.

4. ***What are the duties of the Redistricting Commission?***

Within 30 days of census data becoming available, and no later than May 15th, 2021, the Commission shall propose a tentative county supervisory district plan and map, guided by criteria set forth in statute. The mapping process shall include opportunities for the public to submit map proposals for consideration.

The Commission will then develop up to three maps for consideration by the County Board. If none of the maps submitted by the Commission are adopted by the county board, the maps shall be re-referred to the Commission which shall have the opportunity to submit an amended map to the county board.

5. ***Who can apply to be on the Commission?***

All members of the Commission shall be residents of Dane County and meet the following criteria:

- a) May not be a member of the Dane County Board, an employee of Dane County or a contract consultant;
- b) May not be a lobbyist registered with the Dane County Board;

- c) May not hold or have held an official position with a political party or partisan organization within the year prior to appointment; *(NOTE: one definition would be holding a position with an organization which endorses candidates;)*
- d) May not have participated in the State of Wisconsin 2011 partisan redistricting process;
- e) Must be impartial, which includes refraining from engaging in any political party activity or supporting the election or defeat of any candidate or referendum during their tenure on the Commission, and at the time of appointment no intent to seek election to the office of county board supervisor in the spring primary and general election immediately following redistricting;
- f) Have a familiarity with maps; *(NOTE: the application should ask applicants to describe their familiarity with maps.)*
- g) Disclose any potential conflict of interest in conformance with s. 9.60 *(NOTE: it will be up to the appointing authorities to consider conflicts; the application should include a request for affiliations.)*

6. *How will the public apply to be on the Commission?*

An application will be developed outlining the eligibility criteria and will also set time duty expectations so members understand the workload and importance of the process. The application will be shared as broadly as possible to encourage all residents of Dane County to apply. The County Clerk will manage the application process.

7. *Who will staff the Commission?*

The County Clerk and the Planning and Development Department shall provide the Commission with such staff assistance as may be required to carry out its functions.

8. *What are some of the key considerations for the Redistricting Commission?*

- What is an acceptable tolerance or variance?
- Should Dane County preserve or change the majority minority districts?

9. *What criteria will the Commission use to evaluate maps?*

In order of priority:

- a) Each district should represent the same population size, be contiguous, and compact;
- b) Minimize the number of municipal boundaries crossed;
- c) Ensure fair and effective representation of the diverse ethnic and racial population in Dane County;
- d) Take into consideration geography and natural boundaries such as rivers and lakes;
- e) Keep intact neighborhoods and communities of interest and association, whether historical, racial, economic, ethnic, religious, or other;
- f) Districts shall be drawn without regard to incumbency.

10. *Which county departments are involved?*

The County Board Office, the County Clerk's Office, the Land Information Office, and the Planning and Development Department are all involved in the process.

11. Who else is involved in redistricting?

- Wisconsin Elections Commission
- Wisconsin Legislative Technical Services Bureau

12. What document(s) guide the redistricting process?

- [2016 OA-032](#) – Amending Chapter 15 of the Dane County Code of Ordinances, Creating an Independent Citizen Redistricting Commission.
- [Wis. Stat. 59.10](#)

13. How is the public involved?

The intention of the Commission is to involve members of the public throughout the entire process. In addition to public meetings and workshops, members of the public will have an opportunity to submit proposed district maps for consideration by the Commission.

14. What kind of tools do we need to involve the public?

The staff team is in the process of identifying the options for online mapping software to allow the public to prepare, evaluate and submit proposed maps.

15. What budget implications do we need to think about regarding redistricting?

There will likely be costs associated with the mapping software. There will also likely be additional costs related to public engagement.

16. Once the Redistricting Commission recommends three maps to the County Board, how will the County Board Office process work?

A resolution recommending the three maps to the Board will be composed and referred to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will recommend a map to the Board. The Board will hold a public hearing and approve the initial map by July 1st. This process should be specified in Chapter 7.

17. After municipal governments opine on the map, is there a role for the Redistricting Commission?

The Commission should reconvene to consider changes requested by local governments. Again, the Executive Committee will accept the referral of the final map and make recommendations to the County Board.