



Geographic Planning & Demographic Services

Reapportionments | Census | Economic Analysis | Geocoding

REDISTRICTING WORKSHOPS

What is it and What to Expect?

I appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you and the public to facilitate the formulation of your new election plan. By using a workshop format, I have found the development of a new election plan to be of higher quality, more trustworthy, and more efficient than just working in the traditional printed plan presentations.

A workshop is similar to a retreat. It is very informal and set up in such a way that there is a free flow of information and ideas. The meeting is opened like a normal meeting and then turned over to me where I facilitate the discussions and plan modeling. No votes are taken at a workshop, just discussions.

Since the movement of one district boundary can affect the neighboring district boundaries, it is important that everyone see the effects and discuss whether any particular change is desired or not. Also, because the meetings are advertised and open to the public as with any other meeting, any interested citizens can participate too.

The format suggested is as follows:

- 1) Initial workshop: a) Go over the current districts with the 2020 census numbers, b) review the ground rules we will follow as a group, c) discuss the Federal and State criteria we will need to follow as we formulate a plan, d) explain and demonstrate how the GIS software works and what numbers to watch as various district configurations are explored, and e) discuss any issues that we may have to work around. If I have a suggested starting plan ready for the initial meeting, we will go over that district-by-district and discuss/model various options. The whole modeling process will be interactive using the GIS software.
- 2) For any subsequent workshops, we will discuss any plans and/or requested modifications from the previous workshop. If during the plan development it is necessary to work through an issue that only affects a couple of districts, I may ask permission to work with those members to work through some solutions. After that, I would report to the full group what transpired and what is being recommended.
- 3) Once we develop a plan that the majority of the group can live with, I'll formalize the plan and schedule it for a formal public hearing and then start the normal adoption process.

Redistricting is numbers and geography driven so sometimes there may be two or more options to explore. Sometimes, the limitations are such that there is only one configuration that will meet the Federal and State requirements. In those cases, it will be demonstrated why only that configuration will work.

The main focus is facilitating a free flow of ideas and equal opportunity for members to hear the discussions and see the various modeling. Using that approach, everyone can see what configurations can work and which ones cannot and why. This instills trust and confidence in the plan as well as a strong working knowledge of the final plan with the members and participating public.

I believe you will find it to be a very interesting endeavor and I look forward to working with each of you!

Mike Hefner, Chief Demographer