



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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To: City of Madison Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee (AHRC)

From: City of Madison Planning Division Staff

Date: August 17, 2021

Subject: Redistricting Criteria

This memo summarizes the required criteria the AHRC must integrate into the redistricting process, as well as optional criteria used in 2011 that the Committee may or may not wish to integrate into its deliberations. Other optional criteria may be considered, although consideration should be given to whether adding more criteria would dilute the impact of required/priority criteria (i.e., it may be better to address a smaller number of things well rather than a larger number of things in a mediocre fashion).

Required Criteria

Alder districts must:

1. **Have equal population** (federal requirement). *In recent redistricting efforts, the City has considered equal population to be within +/-3% of the "ideal" population of an alder district. For this redistricting effort, the ideal population is 13,492 (2020 city population of 269,840 ÷ 20 alder districts).*
2. **Enhance the participation of communities of color and communities that primarily use a language other than English** (federal requirement). *The 2020 Census offers detailed data on the location and racial/ethnic composition of City residents. This dataset will be used to illustrate patterns in the composition of the City's population to avoid bisecting a specific community of color with a ward boundary and/or Alder District boundary. Communities of interest formed by primary language of residents cannot be mapped as easily as race/ethnic background. American Community Survey data can be used, but these data are based on a sample of the population and therefore have a margin of error. Additionally, these data are only available for the block group or larger geographies.*
3. **Be compact** (state requirement).
4. **Be contiguous** (state requirement).
5. **Account for Communities of Interest** (state requirement). *The Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) states that "[r]especting communities of interest in a redistricting plan means attempting to group like-minded or similar people so that they may elect a representative of their choice who reflects their common values in a manner relevant to legislative representation." Furthermore, the LRB notes that "[t]his principle is distinct from federal requirements relating to the protection of racial and language minority groups in a redistricting plan."*

Optional Criteria

The Committee may wish to consider optional additional criteria in its deliberations of alder district boundaries. The 2011 redistricting process considered the following criteria, which the Committee may still want to consider for this 2021 process:

6. **Where practical, use major roads and other physical barriers (railroads, open space areas) as boundaries.** *As evidenced by the 2011 districts, this criteria did not govern in many instances – many districts cross the Beltline and Interstate, for example. However, it was used in other areas, such as East Washington Avenue. It can conflict with the following criteria, which was also used in 2011:*
7. **Ensure numerous alder districts are exposed to future population growth.** *Recent peripheral growth patterns are likely to continue. It is beneficial for peripheral growth to be split between multiple districts on both the east and west sides to maintain representation that is as equal as possible in between redistricting processes. For example, while District 9 on the west side was the second fastest growing district in the City, west side growth would have been even more concentrated in one district if growth on the west side wasn't split between Districts 1 and 9. The City absorbing the Town of Madison (2022) and Town of Blooming Grove (2027) should also be considered as part of this element. There are 4,189 people in the Town of Madison that will need to be absorbed into south side City of Madison alder districts. An additional 654 people from the Town of Madison will need to be absorbed into the City from the area between Sherman Avenue and Fordem Avenue. An additional 1,553 people will be added on the near east and southeast side of the city from absorbing the remaining areas of the Town of Blooming Grove.*

Communities of Interest

Aside from the federal requirement to enhance democratic participation of communities of color and people that primarily use a language other than English (as described under Required Criteria above), other communities of interest the Committee may want to consider are:

1. **Neighborhoods/neighborhood associations.** The City has dozens of neighborhood associations that are established via Council resolution. Association-to-alder communication (and vice versa) are an important part of the City's engagement with residents. Although split neighborhoods are OK, it can be easier for associations if they are communicating with just one alder.
2. **Elementary school attendance areas.** Elementary school attendance area boundaries are set by the school districts. City staff has mapped these boundaries for the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) area. Attendance area boundaries are the default for where a child would attend school. Sometimes they are not continuous. The City has no control over these boundaries. Boundary adjustments are rare, but they can be redrawn by school districts as needed. Note that an adjustment is likely on the south and southeast sides of the city to reflect the new MMSD elementary school being planned at the Badger Rock site at the corner of Rimrock Road and East Badger Road.

Other communities of interest may be considered as well, but any consideration should have "mapable" data available.