



## **Redistricting Hillsborough 2021**

### **Process Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (Board or BOCC) directed that a process be developed to assist the Board in its effort to redistrict County Commission Districts 1 through 4 subsequent to the release of the 2020 U.S. federal decennial census data in compliance with Hillsborough County Charter, and Florida Statutes.

Staff of the County Administrator and County Attorney's Office respectfully submit the following recommendation to the Board for its consideration and approval.

#### **REAPPORTIONMENT PROJECT OVERVIEW**

In accordance with the County Charter single-member districts should have populations as near to equal as possible. The last redistricting of County Commission districts occurred in 2011. With the availability of the 2020 Census data expected in mid-August 2021, and under provisions of the County Charter, Hillsborough County must undertake redistricting of Commission Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4. The goal of this process is to realign district boundaries such that each adheres as closely as possible to the equal representation principle.

#### **LEGAL PARAMETERS FOR REDISTRICTING**

##### **Hillsborough County Charter:**

The legal parameters for the County's redistricting effort are set forth in the Hillsborough County Charter.

Section 4.03 provides:

"The territory of three districts shall embrace the entire territory of the County, and be designated as districts 5, 6, and 7 respectively. The territory of four districts shall be established by dividing all of the County into four separate areas, designated as districts 1 through 4 respectively, as nearly equal in population as practicable."

"Should the Board of County Commissioners desire to make substantial changes to the proposed boundaries that were initially advertised and considered at the public meeting, the board of county commissioners shall hold an additional meeting to consider such new boundaries within

28 days of the first meeting and shall cause an accurate description of the new proposed districts to be advertised once each week for two weeks in a newspaper of general circulation and via electronic media.

Section 4.06 further states:

"Within 120 days after the certification of the federal decennial census, the Board of County Commissioners shall reapportion districts 1 through 4."

These two sections provide a clear statement of the overall objective for the redistricting process.

### **Florida Statutes:**

Ch. 124.01 (3), F.S., reads as follows:

"The board of county commissioners shall from time to time, fix the boundaries of the above districts so as to keep them as nearly equal in proportion to population as possible; provided, that changes made in the boundaries of county commissioner districts pursuant to this section shall be made only in odd-numbered years."

### **CRITERIA FOR REDISTRICTING**

The process of redistricting must first focus on creation of districts having an equal division of population to comply with the requirements for equal representation under the law. Requirements of the Voting Rights Act, and constitutional and case law must be reflected in the redistricting criteria.

Staff has evaluated legal requirements and policy parameters based on feedback from the Board of County Commissioners, County Administration, and the County Attorney's Office. Staff proposes the following redistricting process:

- Commission districts have equal population to comply with the "one person, one vote" requirement. Best efforts shall be made to minimize the population variance among districts.
- Districts be created in as compact a form as possible and should be contiguous.
- The 2020 Census counts provided under Public Law (PL) 94-171 from the U.S. Census Bureau shall be used as the official source of population counts and demographic information redistricting.
- The Board of County Commissioners maintain a County Commission district to maximize the opportunity for a minority representative candidate to be elected, with a target of zero percent retrogression (no negative change) of minority composition in that district.

- Develop Commission districts to allow representation of general areas of the County having similar or common interests or affinities. Geographic neighborhood, existing boundaries and natural boundaries should be considered in the establishment of district lines and used as divisions where practicable.
- Be sensitive to the pattern of voting districts established by the Supervisor of Elections. Commission districts to be drawn to minimize public confusion with regard to voting.

These statements of criteria are recommended by the County Attorney’s Office as the guiding rationale and philosophy throughout this redistricting process.

### **USING PROFESSIONAL STAFF AND TECHNOLOGY TO ASSIST IN REDISTRICTING**

The Hillsborough County Charter requires that the County Commission districts be redistricted within 120 days after certification of the 2020 census. In order to perform this function in the required time frame, the County will make significant use of its Geographic Information System (GIS) professional staff and technology to produce alternative redistricting plans adhering to the redistricting criteria outlined herein.

Accordingly, these plans will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners during BOCC workshops held in September 2021. These plans will identify current district lines and demographics, as well as district boundaries and demographics for proposed alternatives.

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS**

The Board of County Commissioners has 120 days to adopt new district boundaries after receipt of the certified 2020 Census. The timeframe to accomplish this is planned for August 16, 2021 through November 16, 2021, which will be adjusted depending on receipt of census data or other extenuating factors. The BOCC action agenda and public participation schedule for this redistricting program is detailed in Attachments A and B, and includes the following four parts:

- A BOCC workshop to inform the Board with initial maps for approval to take to public meetings for review and feedback
- Conduct public meetings in each of the four single member commission districts to educate and accept feedback
- Hold two mandatory BOCC Public Hearings coinciding with required public advertisements (and more if necessary)
- Final approval of a reapportionment map and submittal to the Florida Department of State and U.S. Department of Justice

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY**

Four public meetings are planned, one in each single-member commission district. During these meetings, staff will present workshop materials from meetings with the Board of County Commissioners. Alternative plans for redistricting will be presented. Staff will ask for public comment, and provide a means for additional written comment, to be made part of the redistricting record. Public comments submitted will be provided to the BOCC as back-up to material to the public hearing process.

Attached, is the 2021 Redistricting Communications Tactics document (Item B) that outlines a list of potential tactics that may be deployed to assist with the redistricting communications that considers residents with and without access to digital technology.

## **PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Proposed amendments to any maps and/or proposed new maps for full Board consideration submitted by an individual Commissioner shall be transmitted through the Office of Government Relations and Strategic Services no later than September 18<sup>th</sup> to allow time for processing and criteria validation. Due to the limited timeframe and validation procedures necessary to successfully complete the redistricting process, maps will not be accepted by the public.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD BY THE BOCC**

Two public hearings will be scheduled before the Board of County Commissioners. These are to be scheduled in November. The Board will be presented with the distilled and refined alternative redistricting plans from the workshops and public meetings. These public hearings will be the final step in the redistricting process by the Board of County Commissioners. The Board will be asked to approve one plan from the alternatives, which will be submitted by the County to the Florida Department of State and the United States Department of Justice. Upon adoption of the selected alternative, the County has met the 120-day timeline obligation established by the County Charter.

## **SUBMISSION TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

A certified copy of meeting minutes reflecting the description of the boundaries, as changed, will be provided to the Florida Department of State for filing.