

# **Plan for 2021 Redistricting of Indian River County Commissioner Districts**

## **Introduction**

The Florida Constitution requires that following the decennial census, the Board of County Commissioners “shall divide the county into districts of contiguous territory as nearly equal in population as practicable.” Florida statutory law mirrors this requirement by stating that the districts “shall be as nearly equal in proportion to population as possible.” Florida statutory law further states that changes to county commissioner districts “shall be made only in odd-numbered years.” Thus, the Board must undertake and complete the redistricting process before the end of 2021.

The purpose of this plan is (1) to establish a process and criteria to guide county staff in developing preliminary and final district boundaries, and (2) to inform the public with respect to the process and criteria and to invite public input at all stages of the process.

It is noted that while each commissioner is required to reside in his or her district, voting for commissioners in Indian River County is “at large” – meaning that each commissioner is elected by all voters in the county, not just those residing in the commissioner’s district.

## **Redistricting Objectives**

The objectives of the redistricting process are (1) to establish district boundaries which meet all requirements of state and federal law, (2) to act through a process which encourages cooperation with and participation by the Supervisor of Elections and local municipalities, and the School Board, depending on whether the School Board wishes to undertake its own redistricting process and (3) to ensure that the process is open and transparent to the public, with ample opportunity for public input.

## **Redistricting Criteria**

To the extent reasonably possible, county staff is directed to consider and balance the following criteria in developing preliminary and final district boundaries:

1. **Population.** Districts shall be as nearly equal in population as possible. Total population (rather than voting population) shall be used. Final population figures (i) shall not exceed a deviation of 6% between the largest and the smallest district, and (ii) shall not exceed a deviation of 3% between any district and the “ideal population” (defined as the total population of the county divided by five);

2. **Compactness.** Districts shall be compact, rather than sprawling;
3. **Contiguity.** Districts shall be contiguous – that is, no portion of a district shall be geographically separate and apart from the rest of the district;
4. **Respect for Existing Districts.** The geographical core of existing districts shall be preserved. Current commissioners shall be maintained in their current districts;
5. **Communities of Interest.** Neighborhoods and other communities of interest shall be included within a single district, rather than split among two or more districts;
6. **Natural Boundaries.** Districts shall follow major natural or man-made boundaries – e.g., major roads, rivers, bridges, canals, etc.;
7. **Census Blocks.** Districts shall follow United States Census Bureau blocks; and
8. **Fair and Equal Representation.** No district shall be drawn to split or minimize the political influence of any group of residents.

#### **Schedule**

- July 13, 2021 - general discussion by the Board, including adoption of a schedule to complete the redistricting process
- August 17, 2021 - first public hearing by the Board to discuss redistricting plans and criteria, to solicit public input, and to adopt a final plan setting forth the criteria upon which the new districts will be based. The County Attorney's office will prepare a proposed plan prior to the meeting
- Between August 17, 2021 and October 19, 2021 - County staff, working with the Supervisor of Elections and municipal representatives who wish to participate, will develop conceptual district maps. Upon development, the maps will be posted by the County and Supervisor of Elections on their websites and at their facilities. Any other local government, including the School Board and other municipalities, will be invited to post the conceptual maps as well
- October 19, 2021 - second public hearing by the Board to discuss the conceptual maps, solicit public input, and provide final instructions to staff for the development of a final proposed map

- Between October 19, 2021 and December 7, 2021 - County staff will develop a final proposed map. Upon development, the map will be posted in the same manner outlined above for the conceptual maps
- December 7, 2021 - third and final public hearing by Board to discuss the final proposed map, solicit public input and adopt a final district map

Please be aware that this schedule may change due to the timing of receiving the 2020 decennial census data.

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