



What is Redistricting and Why Should You Care?

BART is responsible for redistricting every ten (10) years and the process closely follows the requirement of the District Act, based upon the population data resulting from the 2020 United States Census. Request for Proposals to Redistrict the nine (9) election Districts of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District were received on September 14, 2021. The Board of Directors selected GEOinovo Solutions, Inc., Murrieta California to provide election redistricting assistance.

When its conducted fairly, it accurately reflects population changes and racial diversity, and is used to equitably to allocate representation in government.

Key Points to Consider in Redistricting

Traditional Redistricting Principles

Since decennial redistricting began in the late 1960s, traditional criteria and principles have developed. While the equal population of election districts is the overriding principle there are accompanying goals. In varying degrees, the criteria are compactness, continuity, respect for communities of interest, preserving political subdivisions, and the core of previous districts. All are not of equal weight and all are subordinate to an equal population. Care must be taken not to dilute the voting strength of minorities.

Compactness

Compactness refers to a districts' geographic shape and how its interior is dispersed within its boundaries. A circle is a perfectly compact shape. In redistricting, the notion of compactness is difficult to evaluate because one begins with irregularly shaped borders and the political subdivisions may be irregular in shape. Geometric measures of compactness are often misleading because geographic features and relationships are more complex than simple geometry. The principle of compactness should be considered functionally and must compete with other criteria.

Continuity

Continuity requires that all parts of a district be connected. Districts can be drawn that are contiguous by way of water or a bridge. While crossing water is allowed it should be minimized as it makes it more difficult to respect communities of interest.

Preserving Political Subdivisions

An attempt should be made to minimize splitting cities and well-defined neighborhoods.

Respect for Communities of Interest

Communities of interest are subjective and difficult to define. A community of interest has some common thread of shared interest. Those communities can be based on such diverse elements as geography, language, socio-economic-cultural interests, even transportation corridors. Race may be considered, but it may not be the sole reason for drawing a district in a particular manner.

Preserving the Core of Prior Districts

Preserving the core of a previous district is thought to be the least disruptive to the voters in each area. One, of course, would not seek to maintain a previous district that was legally objectionable.

New districts should be drawn deliberately and with common sense. Adherence to traditional redistricting principles and the federal Voting Rights Act will ensure fair and reasonable districts.