

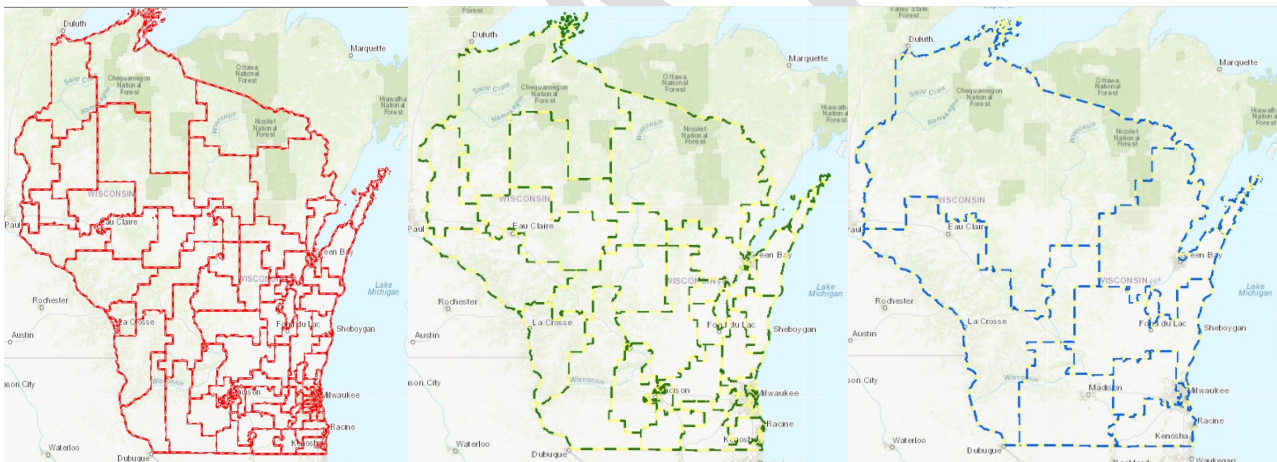
## The People's Maps Commission Criteria for Drawing Districts

### What is Redistricting?

Redistricting is the process of drawing or revising boundaries for electoral districts. This happens at many levels, from congressional districts to state legislative districts to local districts in counties and municipalities.

In Wisconsin, there are three sets of district lines to draw at the state level - 99 State Assembly districts, 33 State Senate districts, and 8 United States Congressional districts. According to current population estimates<sup>1</sup>, each Assembly district will contain about 59,000 people. Under current law, three Assembly districts are combined to form one Senate District. Each State Senate district will therefore include approximately 177,000 people. The eight Congressional districts will each encompass around 729,000 people. Voters in a Congressional district will elect a representative for the United States House of Representatives.

The maps are the current maps used in the 2011-2021 elections.



Assembly Districts (99)

Senate Districts (33)

Congressional District (8)

### When is redistricting done?

Redistricting is conducted every 10 years after the United States Census data becomes available and is next due to be completed prior to the 2022 election cycle.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/wisconsinconstitution/IV,4>

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### **Who creates the district lines?**

The People's Maps Commission (PMC) was formed in 2020 to produce maps that are fair and free from partisan bias. The PMC will do this by using line drawing criteria, as outlined below, that the PMC formulated after listening to input from the public and redistricting experts.

The Wisconsin State Constitution calls for the State Legislature to approve new redistricting maps after the United States Census is complete. The PMC will send their maps to the legislature for consideration. The legislature may decide to approve other maps. Those maps are then sent to the Governor for either a signature or veto. If the Governor does not approve of the maps sent by the legislature, the courts may become involved in the final drawing of the new maps.

### **What data are used to draw the lines?**

The data from the United States 2020 Census will be used. Data blocks from the census that show how many people are in each geographic area are given to the counties so they can consolidate the block data and draw wards. The PMC will use the ward data to build the larger districts and one PMC criterion is that the wards will not be split in drawing the larger district maps.

### **Will prior voting data be used to draw the lines?**

The PMC will not use prior election results, party registration data, or other voter preference information while generating the district maps. However, once the draft maps are complete, prior voting data will be used to compare the maps for partisan fairness (see "**Group 4: Partisan Fairness**" below).

### **Will new maps be based on existing district lines?**

No. The PMC will draw maps based on the line drawing criteria outlined below. While the Commission will consider existing political boundaries such as county and municipal lines, there will be no preference for plans that resemble the current enacted maps or those that favor any incumbent.

### **What are the non-negotiable criteria that are used to draw the lines?**

Federal law requires that the district lines must comply with the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act exists to prevent states and localities from drawing districts that deny minority populations a chance to elect a candidate of their choice.

The Wisconsin Constitution requires that each Senate district must contain three (3) Assembly districts, and districts must be contiguous, as compact as practicable, and respect other political boundaries to the extent possible<sup>2</sup>.

### **How are the criteria prioritized?**

The PMC criteria are ordered into four groups based on their importance and feasibility. The Commission will consider maps that meet the first group of criteria, then among those consider maps that meet the second group, and so on. Given the complexity of drawing fair maps, it is not possible to satisfy all the criteria completely. With that in mind, the Commission will endeavor to meet all criteria while placing greater weight on higher groups.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/research/evaluation-estimates.html>

**Group 1 – First order criteria**

**Contiguity-** Contiguity is a traditional redistricting principle whereby every part of a district is connected to every other part, and all parts can be reached without crossing district lines. Contiguity across water is allowed when there are community ties between the land areas. Discontiguity is allowed when wards themselves are not contiguous.

**Compactness-** Compactness is a traditional redistricting principle requiring districts be as compact as possible. Districts should look reasonable to the eye. Compactness will be scored mathematically using three scores (Polsby-Popper, Reock, and Cut Edges).

**Preserve Political Boundaries-** Counties, municipalities and wards will remain intact whenever possible. When comparing potential redistricting plans, the PMC will favor the plans that split municipalities and counties into as few pieces as possible.

**Group 2 - Second order criterion**

**Communities of Interest (COIs)** - Communities of Interest are geographic areas or neighborhoods contained within a contiguous area on a map where residents share common interests and bonds that deserve consideration by elected representatives. A Community of Interest may include people with common economic, ethnic, cultural, or other bonds such as unique environmental, transportation, or educational concerns. While COI represent common interests that are often linked to public policy issues, COI do not promote a particular political party, candidate, or jurisdiction. Plans that keep appropriately sized COI intact are preferred. COI regions will be shown to help make decisions about higher-ranked priorities (for example- which counties to split). The PMC encourages communities to provide COI regions and upload them on the PMC website.

**Group 3 -Third order criterion**

**Population Deviation** - This criterion relates to the of one-person, one vote requirement that each representative should have approximately the same number of constituents. PMC maps will attempt to have an equal number of people in each Congressional district, not deviating by more the one person. A one percent balance will be used for legislative districts; meaning the population size difference between the largest and smallest district will not be more than 1%. The PMC maps will prioritize whole wards and preservation of political boundaries over perfect population balance.

**Group 4 – Fourth order criterion**

**Partisan Fairness** - Among the mapping plans that satisfy all higher priorities, a preference will be given for plans that tend to lead to proportional outcomes, defined as the share of representation for each party roughly equal to statewide share of support. Results from the last five years of statewide elections will be used in assessment of this criterion.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/research/evaluation-estimates.html>

### **Competitiveness of elections as an additional consideration**

We have frequently heard from the public that non-competitive districts result in elected officials who listen and respond less to constituents, so it would be preferable that the newly drawn maps offer more competitive districts. Fortunately, the input both from prior redistricting cycles in Wisconsin and from present-day map drawing experts is that competitiveness will increase as a consequence of the way we prioritize criteria. The preference for proportionality in the partisan fairness criterion will further enhance competitiveness. The People's Maps Commission considers an increase in competitiveness to be an important outcome and benefit of our map drawing process.

### **How did the PMC decide on these criteria?**

The PMC based these criteria on expert and public testimony gathered in the past six months. In that time, the Commission has:

- Participated in more than 20 hours of public hearings
- Heard from over 1,000 Wisconsinites who represented 65 counties and 245 municipalities
- Learned from 18 redistricting experts from across the United States and Wisconsin

The PMC welcomes continued input. Wisconsinites should submit written comment or submit their own maps [HERE](#).

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/research/evaluation-estimates.html>