



City of Petaluma Districting 2021- 2022



Agenda

Things we will cover:

- The California Voting Rights Act (CVRA)
- What is Districting
- Traditional Districting/Redistricting Principles
- The Fair Maps Act
- How the public can participate in the process
- Public Hearing Schedule

What is the CVRA?

The California Voting Rights Act is a state law that prohibits the use of At Large Election Systems in local government if there is Racially Polarized Voting.

“At Large” is defined as anything other than a system in which an elected official lives in a district, and is only elected by members of that district.

“Racially Polarized Voting” is defined as differences in voting patterns which can be shown to be correlated to race, religion, national origin, or membership in any other protected class.

What is the CVRA?

The California Voting Rights Act takes the principles of the Federal Voting Rights Act and expands it regarding districted elections in two key ways:

While Federal law uses “majority minority” districts as a standard for vulnerability, the CVRA only requires “ability to influence.”

The CVRA requires that plaintiffs get full reimbursement for legal fees associated with any successful challenge.

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The CVRA requires that plaintiffs get full reimbursement for legal fees associated with any successful challenge. ***These can be lessened or eliminated if the district follows a strict and prompt process for districting.***

What is Districting

Definition

Districting is the initial process of creating election district boundaries.

These boundaries determine:

- Eligibility to run for office – must live within boundaries to qualify for election.
- Who votes in the election – only voters within the district vote for their councilmember.

What is Districting

Definition

Districting is the initial process of creating election district boundaries.

These boundaries do not determine:

- How the city decides to govern. The city can still work to achieve goals that benefit the city as a whole rather than the interests of any single district.
- How services or relationships between the city and the public are managed.

Traditional Districting Principles

Preventing a Districting from Becoming a Gerrymander

There are a number of criteria that have been used nationally and upheld by courts.

- Relatively equal size – people, not citizens
- Contiguous – districts should not hop/jump
- Keep districts compact – appearance/function
- Maintain “*communities of interest*”
- Follow city/county/local government lines

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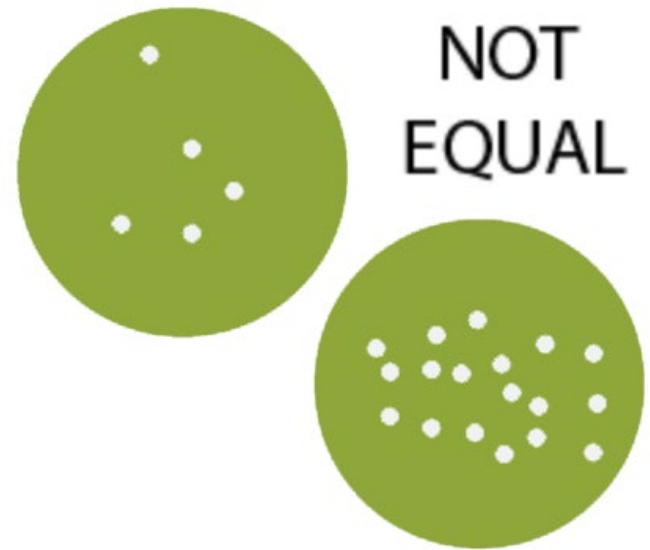
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Equal Population

Utilizing the US Census Decennial File

What is “equal” population has been a key subject in districting litigation.

- Population Equality is based on “People” not citizens or voters or other metrics.
- 10% deviation or better.



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Contiguity

Two definitions for what is contiguous

Contiguity should be thought of as “literal” and “functional.”

- An area that is one whole piece is “literally contiguous.”
- An area that represents how the population functions or how people are connected is “functionally contiguous.”



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Compactness

Determining what is “compact”

The measure of compactness can get complicated.

- Ratio of the circumference of a district and the area of a district.
- Measuring the number of distinct straight lines and the number of kinks and bends.
- Simply outlawing funny shapes.

NOT
COMPACT



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Communities of Interest

Bringing like people together for representation

Communities of interest are the building blocks of districts.

A community of interest includes ethnic and language minorities and other groups.

- Subjective
- Open-ended to be as inclusive as possible

Examples of Voting Rights Act Communities

- Latinos
- Asians
- African Americans

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Examples of Voting Rights Act Communities

- Latinos
- Asians
- African Americans

While communities of interest may include race, it cannot be the *predominant factor* in drawing district boundaries.

Communities of Interest

Bringing like-minded people together for representation

A community of interest includes ethnic and language minorities and other groups.

Other Communities, example are:

- People living near an industry (farming, higher education, manufacturing)
- Senior Citizens or Students
- Downtown / Urban
- Rural or Agricultural
- Homeowners or Renters

Communities of Interest

Three Critical Questions in Defining YOUR Community

Communities can be best described by answering these three questions:

- Does the community have a shared culture, characteristics or bond?
- Is the community geographic in nature? Is the community able to be mapped?
- What is the community's relationship with the jurisdiction being districted? How is it affected by the policy decisions made by the elected officials?

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Starting in 2020, cities and counties doing redistricting have additional criteria they must follow under the California Fair Maps Act.

- Process/transparency when conducting redistricting
- Not using incumbent or candidate residence as a Community of Interest
- Not drawing districts to advantage a political party

Community of Interest Forms

Submitting Your COI Form

- Input can be provided in community workshops, public hearings or using the City's Community of Interest Form.

 **PETALUMA** Tell Us About Your Community
— COUNCIL CHAIR —

Help shape the future of City of Petaluma's City Council Districts

The Petaluma City Council has begun the process of transitioning to district elections, using U.S. Census data to draw the City of Petaluma's City Council district boundaries. This ensures the districts are balanced in regard to population. The City Council wants to hear from you on how these boundaries should be drawn. Complete this form to tell the City Council about your **community of interest** – keeping communities of interest together is a high ranking criteria in the redistricting process

What is a Community of interest?

A Community of Interest is a group of people in the same geographically definable area who share common social and economic interests. Some examples of Communities of Interest are:

- Senior citizens
- LGBTQIA+ communities
- College students living near campus
- People who live downtown or in a neighborhood
- Dog park community
- Residents who share a common language
- People that use the same transportation systems

What criteria will help the City Council understand the importance of your community in the redistricting process?

When documenting your community it is important to address the following questions to assist the City Council in the redistricting process:

1. Does your community have a shared culture, characteristics, or bond?
2. Is your community geographic in nature? Is your community able to be mapped? Is there density within your community?
3. Describe your community's relationship with the City and how it is affected by policy decisions made by the City Council.

The public can submit any testimony, but it is important to remember that your input can be best used if it addresses all three of these questions.

What You Can Do to Further Participate in the Redistricting Process?

1. Provide your comments on your community of interest by completing this worksheet and return it by email to City staff at mypetaluma@cityofpetaluma.org or drop off a hard copy to 11 English Street, Petaluma, CA 94952 or attend a public hearing and read your comments to the Council.
2. Attend one of the City of Petaluma City Council public meetings, times and locations to be publicized on the website.

Communities of Interest

Drawing YOUR Communities of Interest

The City of Petaluma will be using DistrictR as a public mapping tool to allow residents to draw their own Communities of Interest and Districts.



You draw the lines.

www.districtr.org

Next Steps

Upcoming Hearings

November 15, 2021

Public Hearing to discuss
Communities of Interest

December 6, 2021

Public Hearing to gather input on
draft maps

December 20, 2021

Determine final maps and election
sequencing



**REDISTRICTING
PARTNERS**