



To: Lake County Government Reform Implementation Committee

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Subject: Independent Redistricting Commission Makeup and Principles

Date: April 27, 2018

This memorandum provides information about independent redistricting commissions, the commissions makeup, how commission members are selected, any principles used when developing new district maps, and whether and how those principles are prioritized. Independent redistricting commissions are exceedingly rare at the municipal level but are becoming more prevalent at the statewide (legislature) and federal (congressional) level.

During this research Management Partners identified four counties that use independent redistricting commissions: Champaign County, Illinois; Dane County, Wisconsin; San Diego County, California; and Tompkins County, New York. Additionally, the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, and Washington have created independent redistricting commissions for their congressional and/or legislative districts. Some states, including Colorado, Michigan, and Ohio will be voting in 2018 to create independent congressional redistricting commissions.

The makeup, selection of members, and principles of the independent redistricting commissions in the counties we identified are shown below.

Champaign County, Illinois

- Commission Makeup, 11 total members
 - Four Champaign County Board members
 - Seven Champaign County residents selected by the Board Chair
- Method for Selecting Commission Members
 - No apparent published criteria
- Redistricting Principles
 - No apparent published principles
- Redistricting Principle Prioritization
 - No apparent published prioritization

Source: <https://ccrpc.org/documents/champaign-county-redistricting/>

Dane County, Wisconsin

- Commission Makeup, 9 or 11 individuals who
 - Must be a Dane County resident
 - Not a member of the Dane County Board or employed by Dane County, including consultants
 - Not a registered lobbyist before Dane County
 - Not in an official position with a partisan organization (nor have been for the past year)
 - Not a participant in the State of Wisconsin 2011 partisan redistricting process
 - Must be impartial
 - Have a basic familiarity with maps
 - Potential conflicts of interest, including any financial interest coming from Dane County, must be disclosed
- Method for Selecting Commission Members
 - The City of Madison, Dane County Towns Association, and Dane County Cities and Villages Association will each submit to the Dane County Board Chair a list of no more and no less than three candidates that meet the eligibility criteria for membership on an impartial citizen redistricting commission. The Dane County Board Chair will select one candidate from each of the submitted lists to serve as a member on an impartial citizen redistricting commission.
 - The Dane County Board Chair will make three or four additional citizen appointments and the Dane County Clerk will also make three or four additional citizen appointments to an impartial citizen redistricting commission after the opportunity to serve has been communicated through a recruitment process that is structured to contact broad and diverse sections of the Dane County electorate. Interested persons shall apply. Applications shall be screened initially by County Board staff to remove any applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria. The Dane County Board Chair and Dane County Clerk will then make the final appointments of members to an impartial citizen redistricting commission.
- Redistricting Principles
 - i. Equal population
 - ii. Contiguity
 - iii. Compactness
 - iv. Political boundaries such as cities, villages, towns, school districts, or districts thereof
 - v. Racial, ethnic, or language minority representation and communities of interest
 - vi. Geography and natural boundaries, such as rivers, lakes, etc.
 - vii. Neighborhoods
- Redistricting Principle Prioritization
 - The prioritization of the redistricting principles is as shown above.

Source: <https://dane.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4687861&GUID=C683D7B3-3558-4C5E-91BD-0E63EE0D54F0>



San Diego County, California

- Commission Makeup, five former or retired state or federal judges who are residents and registered voters in San Diego County
- Method for Selecting Commission Members
 - Board of Supervisors randomly selects five members and two alternates to the commission
- Redistricting Principles
 - No published principles
- Redistricting Principle Prioritization
 - No published prioritization

Source: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/politics/sdut-new-law-would-allow-for-independent-county-2012sep24-story.html>

Tompkins County, New York

- Commission Makeup, nine individuals who are county residents, registered voters, and knowledgeable about Tompkins County and its municipalities, and about government and electoral processes. Commission members cannot be currently elected officials.
- Method for Selecting Commission Members
 - Individuals send in applications to be vetted by the Government Operations Committee of the Tompkins County legislature who then recommend nine individuals to be appointed by the Tompkins County legislature.
- Redistricting Principles
 - The Plan shall comply with the requirements of state and federal constitutions and laws as to proper district apportionment.
 - The Plan shall comply with the standards for reapportionment as set forth in Section C-2.11 of the Tompkins County Charter and Code as follows:
 - Standards of reapportionment: The Tompkins County Legislature shall, in approving a plan of reapportionment, be guided by the goals of equality of representation consistent with the policies of the State Legislature as interpreted by the courts of appropriate jurisdiction.
 - Factors to consider are: Minimization of population variance among districts; Compactness of districts; Practicable consistency with existing municipal boundaries and neighborhoods within Tompkins County; Balance and reasonableness of representation for the diversity of citizens residing in all parts of the County.
 - In considering a Plan, the Commission shall not consider the location of the residences of incumbents.
 - The current number of County legislative districts is 15. The County Charter and Code allows between 11 and 19 districts. The Commission may recommend a change in the number of legislative districts.



- The Commission may inform and educate itself by seeking the advice of experts, except that any expenditures for that purpose must be approved by the County Legislature in advance.
- To allow for the greatest dissemination of information, the recommended plan and any other alternatives shall consist of large, colored district maps, which shall be displayable on the County's website. The maps would be made available for review in the County Legislature Office, each municipal office, and at all libraries within the County.
- The Commission shall publicize its activities.
- Meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public.
- The Commission shall solicit input from County Legislators, the general public, municipal officials, good government advocacy groups, and others. It shall hold a reasonable number of fact-finding hearings and may hold focus group sessions. Commission meetings should be held in various geographic and neighborhood locations around the County.
- The Commission shall solicit input from the Tompkins County Commissioners of Election regarding the implications of the district boundaries under consideration.
- Although it may be considered as a factor, the Commission shall not automatically assume a particular number of legislative districts for the City of Ithaca based on the number of city-designated wards.
- The Commission shall make every effort to minimize the use of "sliver+D1 election districts" (i.e., small areas in one municipality or neighborhood attached to much larger areas in another for the sole purpose of reducing population disparities between districts) formed when County legislative districts and City ward districts are not co-terminus. However, should the Commission find sliver districts desirable for the benefit of the best Plan, it may recommend them.
- In its deliberations, the Commission shall consider possible redistricting impacts on communities of interest such as rural or minority populations. It may also consider the effect on student populations.
- Redistricting Principle Prioritization
 - The prioritization of the redistricting principles is as shown above.

Source: <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/redistricting/Memo%20and%20Charge.pdf>



Statewide Independent Redistricting Commissions

The statewide independent commissions vary in size from 5 to 14 members and use a range of methods to select them, though most commission members are selected by majority and minority legislative leaders and the governor of the state. While each state uses slightly different principles for developing maps they generally conform to the principles used in California, which are:

- Districts must be of equal population to comply with the US Constitution.
- Districts must comply with the Voting Rights Act to ensure that minorities have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.
- Districts must be contiguous so that all parts of the district are connected to each other.
- Districts must respect the boundaries of cities, counties, neighborhoods and communities of interest, and minimize their division, to the extent possible.
- Districts should be geographically compact, that is, have a fairly regular shape.
- Districts shall not be drawn to favor or discriminate against an incumbent, candidate, or political party.

