

## **Guilford County Board of Commissioners Redistricting Guiding Principles**

Based upon the new census data, it is clear that the Guilford County Board of Commissioners will need to redraw its districts. In order to meet current election schedules, it is highly recommended that the redrawn districts be approved by November 18, 2021.

The Board of Commissioners is authorized to redraw its district pursuant to NCGS 153A-22. (A copy of the statute in its entirety is attached hereto.) It is important to note that the statute only appears to allow for redistricting by the Board of Commissioners where the Board “finds that there is substantial inequality of population among the districts.” However, as noted herein, this substantial inequality exists based upon the 2020 census data. It has been found that a 10% variation between the most and least populated districts is by definition “substantially unequal”; the level of disparity shown by the 2020 Census shows a disparity of around 20% between districts 4 and 5 in Guilford County.

The obligation for the Board of Commissioners in the statute is to create new districts which “are as nearly equal [in population] as practicable, and each district shall be composed of territory within a continuous boundary.” As you can see below, these two statutory obligations constitute two of the principles set out herein.

There are other legal and practical requirements, however. The US Constitution, the NC Constitution, Federal statutes such as the voting rights act, as well as NC statutes all place additional considerations on the redistricting process. It is also important to note that some of the guidelines may push the demographics of a district in different directions and, so, the ideal district is one that maintains a **balance** of guiding principles.

### **List of guiding principles.**

- **Fair and balanced.** The districts should be a fair balancing of all necessary principles. No one principle should be abandoned in concession to another. **Case law, NC and US Constitution**
- **Compliance with applicable law.** The Board of Commissioners shall, as it does with all its endeavors, comply with all relevant law. The make-up of the district will not unfairly discriminate on the basis of race or partisanship. Guilford County recognizes that some demographics differences are inevitable in a population as diverse as Guilford County's; however, the district, taken together, will not create an unfair and non-representative impact on county elections. **State, Federal law, case law, NC and US Constitution**
- **Equal population distribution ('one person, one vote').** The Board of Commissioners will follow the mandate to keep all districts as equal in population as practicable. In no circumstance will the difference in population between the most and least populous district be more than 5%. **State, Federal law, case law, NC and US Constitution**
- **Contiguity.** All parts of a district will be contiguous as required by NCGS 153A-22. **State law, case law**

- **Compactness.** To the extent practicable, Guilford County will promote compactness of districts. *State law, case law*
  
- **Preservation of precincts and political boundaries.** The Board of Commissioners will endeavor to avoid splitting precincts and will, to the extent practicable, try to preserve political boundaries and census tract lines. *State, Federal law, case law, NC and US Constitution*
  
- **Preservation of communities of interest:** Geographical areas, such as neighborhoods of a city or regions of a county, where the residents have common political interests that do not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of a political subdivision, such as a city or county shall be preserved where possible. *Permissible under State and Federal law; an approved criterion in case law*
  
- Preservation of cores of prior districts:** Existing district lines shall be maintained to the extent possible in order to continuity of representation. *Permissible under State and Federal law; an approved criterion in case law*
  
- Avoiding pairing incumbents:** There will be an attempt to avoid pairing incumbents within a district to avoid a district losing representation. *Permissible under State and Federal law; an approved criterion in case law*
  
- **Competitiveness and proportionality:** Districts will attempt to be drawn in such a way as to not be unfairly and disproportionately partisan to the extent such efforts reflect the make-up of the county's demographics. *State, Federal law, in particular the Voting Right Act, case law, NC and US Constitution*

**Population count for Guilford County Board of Commissioners districts- 2020 Census data.**

District	Deviation
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1	-2.74%
2	-2.40%
3	-2.51%
4	14.04%
5	-5.98%
6	3.77%

7	-2.47%
8	1.71%

20.03%
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Average District Population = 67,662