

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

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TO: Detroit City Council

FROM: David D. Whitaker, Director *Duffie*
Research & Analysis Division Staff

Marcel Todd, Director *M.T.*
City Planning Commission Staff

DATE: August 3, 2011

RE: Redistricting

The Detroit City Council is charged with the responsibility to draw the new City Council districts as required by the Detroit City Charter as amended via a ballot initiative passed by the citizens in November 2009. Research & Analysis Division (RAD) in conjunction with City Planning Commission (CPC) was requested to provide a report outlining potential options for City Council to utilize in drawing those districts. The following is our preliminary report addressing that issue.

When this matter was discussed at the Council table, it was undecided whether City Council divisions or an outside agency would aid your body in drafting the districts. Data Driven Detroit (D3) was identified as a potential agency because they aided in the drawing of districts for the Wayne County Commission. D3 used software specifically designed to aid in the complex mapping of voter districts called AutoBound. This software is useful in configuring districts that meet judicial scrutiny. Wayne County paid approximately \$35,000 for that assistance which included the price of the software.

If the drafting were to be done in-house City Council would be able to utilize the internal expertise that CPC provides. RAD and Law would be utilized to ensure that all legal requirements would be adhered to. This can be done without the aid of an outside vendor and at little additional cost to the City.

CPC staff has drafted some very preliminary maps to illustrate their capacity to draw the districts. These drafts were created using the 2011 census tracts (with 2010 population data) that comprise the 55 neighborhoods defined in the Master Plan of Policies (see attached map). CPC staff would be happy to meet with Council offices if desired to provide additional information on the work done thus far.

CPC staff has been using Mapinfo GIS (Geographical Information System) software in the preparation of the draft districts to date. This software allows the selection of geographical features (precincts, neighborhoods, census tracts, etc.) and the assignment of them to districts while tracking the population of the proposed districts.

The statutory requirement that districts be compact, contiguous, and of equal population¹ can lead to some subjectivity. To address this concern, the D3 used AutoBound, at a cost of \$5,740 which includes one year of technical support. If City Council decides to allow the mapping to be done in-house, staff suggests the purchase of this software. AutoBound assigns values of compactness to districts, which could be useful in defending the districts chosen. It also has a tool that can be used to track the racial makeup of the districts chosen. This is the same software purchased by the Charter Commission for the analysis of potential districts. CPC staff feels that this would be a useful tool in both creating and defending districts. Additionally, it includes some useful tools that staff's Mapinfo software does not offer.

CPC staff has received assistance from D3 in understanding the process used by Wayne County in their recent redistricting, the drafting of which was done by D3. RAD staff is reviewing the specific requirements for municipal redistricting in Michigan and providing their findings to CPC staff.

Council staff recognizes that voting precinct boundaries should be followed when developing districts. CPC understands that there are 520 precincts in the City, according to the file provided to staff that Wayne County used when redrawing its districts. Given the population change, CPC staff also understands that it is likely that precincts will have to be redrawn. This raises the question of whether redistricting should be done before or after the anticipated redrawing of the precincts. RAD staff is in contact with the Election Commission regarding this matter.

The attached maps are only very preliminary drafts which are being provided only to demonstrate capacity. Much work lies ahead before more finished work can be offered, and as stated more technical software would need to be garnered. If your Honorable Body has any questions or concerns about the content of this memorandum please inform us and we will respond promptly.

¹ Home Rule City Act, MCL 117.3a (5).



DRAFT Districts

dist	Fill	Sum(POP*10)
0		0
1	Green	104,462
2	Blue	102,480
3	Pink	98,485
4	Yellow	102,259
5	Light Blue	101,263
6	Dark Blue	99,162

