

SJC GIS Follow-up to Pam Eibeck Question of 2021-07-28
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During the 7/28/2021 training session, Pam Eibeck had asked if (paraphrased) we had an existing stockpile of COI boundaries from the previous (2011) redistricting effort. Due to changes in statute and criteria, and a wide range of other issues that may have also since changed, the short answer is "no".

We do have present-day city and Census place boundaries for reference, per FAIR Maps Act criteria #3 (as presented on one of the large printed maps on exhibit during the training session); but no stockpile of *present-day* COI boundaries, per FAIR Maps Act criteria #2.

Still, you are welcome to browse the documents from the 2011 cycle - just exercise a bit of caution, and don't assume that the material is necessarily still relevant today:

Formal results documents: https://www.sjgov.org/departments/bos/redistricting_plan

Informal in-process documents: <https://sjmap.org/RedistrictingArchive/>

(this was our "best effort" at providing an open record at the time - the FAIR Maps Act now has specific requirements that supercede)

While the results themselves may no longer be relevant, there was a "how to begin" incremental strategy employed during that cycle that might still have some relevance today...

Implied in Pam's question is another potentially overwhelming question: how/where do you even begin to craft a county-wide redistricting scenario?! The strategy employed in 2011 was to begin by focusing on the region with the largest deviation, and consider the possible solutions to that region in isolation first, then see how it developed from there.

In 2011, District 5 began with a deviation of about 22% over ideal; so the Tracy, Mountain House and south-central region of the county was considered first. A series of 5 possible approaches were developed for that region, and then a single preferred solution was identified among them. This didn't yet "lock in" a final boundary for District 5, but helped reduce the overall perceived scope of the problem by having a "go-to" solution for the first 1/5th of it.

The remaining 4/5th's of the problem then seemed less daunting, and were handled in a more-or-less similar fashion: by identifying preferred approaches for each "sub-region" of the county in turn, then reconciling the various sub-region preferences against each other, allowing for a bit of give and take as needed to best satisfy the adopted criteria.

Thus it progressed: District 2 began with a deviation of about 19% under ideal, and a preferred solution was sought for the northern Stockton region. Once the first two districts had preferred solutions, then only 3/5th's of the problem remained. After another round, only 2/5th's of the problem remained.

Granted, the final 1/5th of the problem still might get a bit tricky to fit everything in as desired, satisfying the criteria across the entire county simultaneously. However, as long as you remember the "why" behind the preferred sub-region approaches, then it can help guide you as to where best to apply any needed final adjustments.

There are other approaches as well, and this is not meant to limit your approach in any way. It is provided merely as a follow-up to Pam's question and its implications: specifically, to what extent anything from the 2011 cycle might still be relevant to the current cycle.