

City of Sunnyvale Redistricting Frequently Asked Questions

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and the accompanying Glossary provide background information about the City's redistricting process. Definitions of text in ***bold italic*** can be found in the Glossary.

1. What is redistricting?

Redistricting is process of redrawing or revising the boundaries for representational districts. All jurisdictions with district-based election systems, like Sunnyvale, must redistrict every 10 years, after each census. Redistricting based on new census data keeps population counts within each district relatively equal to ensure that each city councilmember represents about the same number of constituents.

2. Who will draw the maps?

We hope *you* will. We encourage community members to submit draft map proposals. The City will conduct a series of workshops to train residents on map making tools. We will also hire a demographer to provide technical support and ensure all proposed maps follow federal and state laws. Besides drawing draft maps, we will ask you about which maps you like best.

3. Who chooses the map?

A Redistricting Commission, made of Sunnyvale residents like you, will oversee the process of redrawing district lines. The City Council will adopt a map recommended by the Redistricting Commission with your input.

4. What is the Redistricting Commission's role?

Sunnyvale's Redistricting Commission will hold public hearings to gather community input. The Commission will accept and review map proposals from the community. It may also create draft map proposals. The Commission will evaluate and narrow the map options based on community feedback. Then, it will send three to five draft proposals to the Council.

5. Why should redistricting matter to me?

Redistricting determines which neighborhoods and communities are grouped together into a district for purposes of political representation. The new district map will be in place for city council elections for the next 10 years!

How do you think district boundaries should be drawn to best represent your community? We'll need your input on the neighborhoods and communities of interest that should remain together to elect a councilmember. You will have several opportunities to share your thoughts on these communities of interest.

6. How can I get involved?

The City will be holding hearings and workshops to gather public input on how to draw district lines. Visit Sunnyvale.ca.gov/redistricting to find a schedule of all workshops and hearings. You can also sign up for the [Sunnyvale Elections email list](#) to stay informed.

7. What are the rules for drawing new district boundaries?

To the extent practicable, the Redistricting Commission must use the following criteria, in this order of priority, to draw the new maps:

1. Population equality
2. Compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA)
3. Contiguity
4. Geographic integrity of the city, local neighborhoods, or local communities of interest
5. Compactness

Incumbents' or candidates' residences should not be considered. There must be no favoring or discrimination against political parties, incumbents, or candidates.

8. How were current district lines drawn?

The current district lines were developed through a 6-month community map drawing process as part of the City's transition to ***district-based elections***. The approved map ([120 D](#)) was proposed by the Unity Group, a diverse coalition of Sunnyvale residents from different geographic areas of the City. The Council introduced an ordinance on December 3, 2019, ([RTC No. 19-0679](#)), and adopted the ordinance on December 10, 2019, establishing the district boundaries and district election sequencing.

9. What criteria was used to draw current district boundaries?

Many factors were considered, but ensuring that the districts had approximately equal populations was the main requirement. Other factors included, but were not limited to:

- ***Communities of interest***
- Compactness, contiguity, integrity, and cohesiveness
- Visible (natural and man-made) boundaries, including topography and geography

Individual residents and groups (map-makers) took the lead in drawing and proposing maps that the Council considered for adoption.

9. How will our City Council notify the public about redistricting?

The City Council will reach out through our City communications channels and local media to publicize the redistricting process. Also, we will make a good faith effort to notify local community groups about the redistricting process. Interpretation at public hearings and workshops will be provided if residents submit a request 48 hours in advance. The City Council will notify the public about redistricting meetings, post maps online before adoption, and create a dedicated web page for all relevant information about the redistricting process.