

June 8, 2022

## **San Francisco Elections Commission Redistricting Initiative**

Commissioner Cynthia Dai

Commissioner Robin M. Shapiro

### **Overview**

Every ten years the Director of Elections is required by charter to evaluate the federal, state, and local legal compliance of its supervisorial district boundaries and provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors no later than 60 days after the federal census results are published. Should the Director of Elections find that the districts do not align with population requirements, a nine-person, independent redistricting task force (henceforth RDTF) is formed. Three sets of three task force members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, Elections Commission, and Mayor, respectively.

The purpose of redistricting is to ensure fair supervisorial representation for San Francisco voters. The RDTF must adhere to the United States Constitution, the Federal Voting Rights Act (henceforth VRA), and the San Francisco Charter. The RDTF is required to complete redrawing of district lines before April 15<sup>th</sup> of the year in which the first lines will be used.

This year's redistricting process drew significant attention from the public around many stages of the RDTF's operations and decision-making. Following the completion of its final map, the RDTF provided a multi-page final report of their process and recommendations for future commissions. Based on feedback from the public and independent advocacy groups, the San Francisco Elections Commission aims to offer a public forum for education, dialogue, and soliciting strategic recommendations for process improvements.

### **Objective(s) & Deliverable(s)**

This initiative seeks to survey the holistic San Francisco City & County redistricting process and explore alternatives to current procedures where appropriate. The Elections Commission will solicit public and subject matter feedback, explore best practices, and synthesize collective input. Based on discovery and insights, the Elections Commission may produce a memorandum that outlines strategic recommendations and/or a proposed Charter amendment for the Board of Supervisors' consideration.

### **Scope**

This initiative may span at least six months in time though may extend longer as necessary. The initiative will be a joint undertaking by all members of the Elections Commission. Members of the public, advocacy groups, subject matter experts and others are encouraged to participate in the process. Special guests may also be invited by Elections Commissioners to present during relevant Commission meeting agenda items. Special meetings earmarked for redistricting-specific subject matter may be called as needed.

## Approach

The Elections Commission will examine the holistic San Francisco redistricting process. The work will consider current procedure, explore best practices, and evaluate appropriate alternatives in five interrelated categories, though may expand in scope where relevant and appropriate:

1. RDTF Member Composition
  - a. Type (e.g., independent body of citizens)
  - b. Structure (e.g., size, alternates)
  - c. Candidate recruitment (e.g., timing, channels, candidate pool)
  - d. Qualifications & representation (e.g., racial and ethnic diversity)
  - e. Selection criteria & vetting conditions (e.g., political involvement, conflicts of interest, prior participation)
2. Onboarding
  - a. Training & Preparation (e.g., legal, technical, redistricting criteria, best practices)
  - b. Tactical Planning (e.g., deadlines, timeline, action plan with draft map milestones, roles, responsibilities)
  - c. Staffing & support
3. Redistricting requirements & criteria
  - a. Charter requirements (e.g., criteria, considerations, ranking, etc.)
4. Operation
  - a. Public outreach process
  - b. Procedural mapping process (e.g., draft maps, interim deadlines, etc.)
  - c. Voting process (e.g., simple vs super majority change approvals)
5. Accountability & Transparency
  - a. Public input & notice periods
  - b. Decision-making requirements (e.g., written rationale for maps, final reports)
  - c. Intra-commission communications & political communications
  - d. Member replacement / recourse (e.g., misconduct, violation, OR external/personal circumstances)
  - e. Task force recourse (e.g., should a map not get approved)

## Items for Election Commission Discussion

- 1) Initiative Plan & Goals Agreement
- 2) Timeline
- 3) Speakers
- 4) Public Outreach & Engagement
- 5) Final Deliverable(s)