

Ulster County Legislature
Commission on Reapportionment



**Meeting Agenda
December 8, 2021**

**Powered by Zoom Meeting, Dialing in by phone 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 876 7303 5652
6:00 PM**

Commissioners:

Regis Obijiski, Chair

Sarah DeStefano, 1st Vice Chair

Andy Monk, 2nd Vice Chair

Donna Lutz

Kenneth Panza

Travis Rask

Kathleen Waithe

- **Call Meeting to Order**
- **Approve the Minutes of November 10, 2021**
- **Public Comment on Agenda Items**
- **Guidance for Public Participation of Mapping (draft attached)**
- **Scheduling Mapping Group Exercises**
- **New Business**
- **Old Business**
- **Public Comment – General topics**
- **Adjourn**

Guidance for Public Participation In Redistricting

The Ulster County Commission on Reapportionment (**COR**) welcomes public input into the process of redrawing legislative districts based on population shifts according to the US Census data of 2020 and following applicable laws adjusting that data. Redistricting requires compliance with federal and state laws and rules as well as expectations outlined in our County's Charter. Ulster County will retain its 23 districts, but the boundaries of these districts may look different than what is currently in place. Reasons for potential changes are expanded upon below in a question-and-answer format. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the seven commissioners of the COR to decide by majority vote on a final redistricting plan. Any plans submitted by the public as guidance are appreciated but may not ultimately impact the creation of the new voting districts. Further information about the commission's membership and open meetings is available elsewhere on the County's COR webpage.

What are the redistricting tools needed to participate in redistricting and where can they be found?

The software the COR has selected to use for redistricting purposes is **Maptitude Online Redistricting** from Caliper. The software can be accessed using an internet browser. Any member of the public who wishes to engage in the redistricting process can access this software by [Clicking here](#).

What are some of the rules requiring compliance and expectations to keep in mind for redistricting?

Primary Considerations:

- **Equal Population:** Each district must include 7,815 residents, with a deviation no more than 5% plus or minus. That means a district can be **no larger than 8,207** on the +5% side or **no smaller than 7,424** on the -5% side.
- **Contiguity:** A district should be one piece, physically connected, not two or more separate pieces. A rule of thumb is that persons should be able to travel within any district without requiring them to cross through another district.
- **Compactness:** A district is compact if it is without contorted, dispersed, spikey, or squiggly boundaries. A rectangle or circle shapes are better examples of compactness than a hotdog or salamander shape.

In addition to the above:

- Existing **town, city, village, election district boundaries, and defining geographic features** (e.g., streams, bodies of water, railroad tracks) should be taken into consideration.
- **Not Gerrymandered:** Districts should not favor or discriminate against political parties, incumbents, or candidates.

These expectations are not intended to discourage anyone from participating in mapping but rather to ensure that good ideas are considered on their merits instead of being excluded because an important requirement was overlooked.

The COR is only considering completed plans that include all districts:

Mapping districts is a bit like pressing down a part of a big balloon that causes a reshaping of that balloon elsewhere. In other words, if you have a great idea on redrawing one district of interest, you must also draw the other twenty-two to ensure that your district of interest makes

sense in the context of the other districts that must be drawn. Drawing one district in isolation has little merit to a plan where every shape and size affects the whole.

Where are the instructions on how to use Maptitude Online Redistricting?

When you click the link provided, you will be required to establish an account with a username and password. Once completed, a user will find a six-page **Quick Start Guide**. You can refer to this guide as you go along or you may want to print out the six pages and have them by your side until you gain a level of comfort. If you are familiar with the basics of using a mouse—clicking, dragging, maximizing, minimizing, saving—you will likely have few problems.

Is technical support on navigating the software available?

Availability of personal technical support for public participation is very limited.

- If, for some reason, the Maptitude website is not working or unavailable, you may contact the Ulster County Information Services (UCIS) [HERE](#) .
- Resolving most questions, Maptitude’s Quick Start Guide, [HERE](#) , provides step-by-step instructions, and Maptitude’s web page where your mapping takes place also offers a horizontal bar of links such as “Tips” and “Help”
- If there are questions not covered by Maptitude’s instructions, email the commission at our address found [HERE](#), and your questions and comments will be directed to a person who can respond appropriately.

Who is eligible to participate?

Anyone who is a resident of Ulster County may participate.

When may the public get started, and is there a deadline?

Plans from members of the public should be submitted no later than **February 28, 2022**.

What if a school class, citizen group, or club composed of several persons wants to participate, will each of them receive an attentive review?

In this case, we would recommend that you follow a protocol similar to the one that COR itself is following: everyone creates an individual plan, submits it to the group for peer review, shares ideas, implements aspects of the plan by consensus, votes on the best plan, and submits one plan as a collective exercise. Submitting one plan that was created by a group of individuals working together would certainly get more attention than submitting multiple plans individually.

If a member of the public submits a strong and useful plan, will it be used by the COR?

To be clear, the COR appreciates all public input, and may incorporate ideas presented to us in maps created by the public. However, the final maps will ultimately be voted on and approved by the commission.

What are the deadlines for the COR Reapportionment Plan?

- **May 20, 2022:** A draft reapportionment plan must be completed and made available 10 days prior to one or more scheduled public hearings.

Jul 20, 2022: The commission shall have finalized, adopted by majority vote, and filed the reapportionment plan with the County Board of Elections.