

County Legislature Reapportionment

Proposed Amendments to Draft Map as Shown on

Map Submitted by Mike Baden, May 19, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Ulster County Legislature reapportionment. The commissioners are to be commended for their volunteer efforts on this project and all their hard work. I would like to address my analysis of the proposal and offer suggestions to better achieve the statutory requirements of redistricting. I believe the draft map district lines can be revised to better meet the statutory framework established by the state constitution, municipal home rule law and Ulster County charter. I would like to offer amendments to your draft map which, I believe will improve compliance with these statutes, and decrease any unintended harm to our communities. I hope you will review and consider these amendments to your proposal.

My starting map began with the commission's proposed work product. I offer no change to districts 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,19, and 22 from the commission's proposed map. **I offer my amendments and have shared my proposal on the Maptitude site labeled MB_May 15_2022 for you to review.**

1. Keeping municipalities and communities intact, when possible.

The draft map establishes districts that divide, unnecessarily, several towns, villages and communities. The district boundaries in the southern half of the county in particular appear disjointed. Current legislative districts in the southern half of the county include four intact municipalities (Town of Gardiner, Town of New Paltz, Village of Ellenville, Village of New Paltz), three municipalities divided into two districts, and two municipalities divided into three districts. In the draft map, not a single municipality in southern Ulster is left intact. Eight municipalities are divided into two districts, and one is divided into three districts.

These proposed amendments to the draft map adhere more fully to the unambiguous criteria set forth in Municipal Home Rule Law Article 4, §34, Subsection 4, and the Ulster County Charter § C-10, by preserving, as much as practicable, the existing municipal boundaries and pre-existing political subdivisions while maintaining district contiguity as required by statute. With my proposal no hamlet in Ulster County is divided into more than 1 Legislative District.

- a. Hamlet of Kerhonkson** —For at least the last decade, all of the hamlet of Kerhonkson was contained in a single legislative district. The amended map keeps the hamlet of Kerhonkson whole by moving the portion of Kerhonkson that is in

the Town of Wawarsing from District 15 into District 21, and moving the southwest portion of Marbletown from District 21 into District 18. The boundaries of Districts 14 and 15 within the Town of Wawarsing are adjusted to balance population requirements.

- b. **Town of Marbletown** — For at least the last decade, the Town of Marbletown has been represented in two districts — District 18 and District 19. Placing the southwest corner of Marbletown into District 21 unnecessarily dilutes the voices of the people of Marbletown, fragmenting their representation into a tiny portion of another district. The amended map moves the portion of Marbletown that is in District 21 back into District 18, and accommodates the population change by placing all of the hamlet of Kerhonkson in District 21.
- c. **Village of Ellenville** — The draft map fractures the existing boundaries of the Village of Ellenville, creating micro-districts containing very small population numbers that negatively impact the administration of our local elections. The amended map moves all of the Village of Ellenville into District 15.
- d. **Town of Gardiner** — of Gardiner has always been contained in a single district. The amended map restores Gardiner to sit entirely in District 16 by removing the portion of District 16 from the Town of Shawangunk, removing the portion of District 17 from Gardiner, and extending District 16 into a portion of the Town of Plattekill.
- e. **Village of New Paltz** — The draft map fractures the existing boundaries of the Village of New Paltz, creating micro-districts containing very small population numbers that negatively impact the administration of our local elections. The amended map moves all of the Village of New Paltz into District 20.
- f. **Town of New Paltz** — The entirety of the Town of New Paltz has always been contained in a single district. The amended map restores the Town of New Paltz to sit entirely in District 17 by removing the portion of District 17 in Gardiner, removing the portion of District 9 from the Town of New Paltz, and extending District 17 into a portion of the Town of Esopus to include the hamlet of Rifton, as currently exists. The map also brings District 9 up to the required population threshold after making this adjustment by moving the northernmost portion of the Town of Plattekill into District 9. This change also acts as a benefit to the Hamlet of Clintondale, which is now fully intact within District 9.

- g. **District 4/District 23 Border** – In the commission’s draft map a single census block located in the Town of Woodstock (District 23) has been included with District 4. This error must be corrected as it would require a micro voting district for these 14 residents.

2. Keeping Districts Compact and Contiguous

Both state and local law set forth that districts should be compact and contiguous. The draft map does neither in several instances. The map as amended sets forth district lines that are significantly more compact and contiguous and which fall squarely within the ambit of existing state and local Law.

Boundary between District 23 and District 18 — In the draft map, the Town of Hurley's Election District 5 is part of District 18, but it is disconnected from the rest of District 18 because of the Ashokan Reservoir. On paper, it appears contiguous, but due to the reservoir, it cannot be reached from the rest of the district without leaving the district first. Town of Hurley's Election District 5 is also a part of the Glenford community, which is part of the core of the existing District 23. The charter statutory authority specifically mentions **defining geographic features** be taken into account. I submit the Ashokan Reservoir is a defining geographic feature. The amended map moves Hurley ED 5 from District 18 into District 23, as is the case in the current District 23. To comply with the population requirements, the portion of Town of Woodstock east of Zena Road is moved from District 23 into District 4.

Relevant Statutory Authority

New York State Municipal Home Rule Law

Article 4, §34, Subsection 4 (*As Amended on October 27, 2021, S.5160, A.229c*)

4. “Notwithstanding any local law to the contrary, any plan of districting or redistricting adopted pursuant to a county charter or charter law relating to the division of any county, except a county wholly contained within a city, into districts for the purpose of the apportionment or reapportionment of members of its local legislative body **shall be subject to federal and state constitutional requirements and shall comply with the following standards, which shall have priority in the order herein set forth, to the extent applicable:**

a. If such plan of districting or redistricting includes only single-member districts, such districts shall be as nearly equal in population as is practicable; the difference in population between the most and least populous district shall not exceed five percent of the mean population of all districts. If such plan of districting or redistricting includes multi-member districts, the plan shall provide substantially equal weight for the population of that county in the allocation of representation in the legislative body of that county; and

b. Districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minority groups to participate in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice; and

c. **Districts shall consist of contiguous territory; and**

d. **Districts shall be as compact in form as practicable; and**

Districts shall not be drawn to discourage competition or for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring incumbents or other particular candidates or political parties. The maintenance of cores of existing districts, of pre-existing political subdivisions including cities, villages, and towns, and of communities of interest shall also be considered. To the extent practicable, no villages, cities or towns except those having more than forty percent of a full ratio for each district shall be divided; and

e. **Districts shall be formed so as to promote the orderly and efficient administration of elections."**

Ulster County Charter

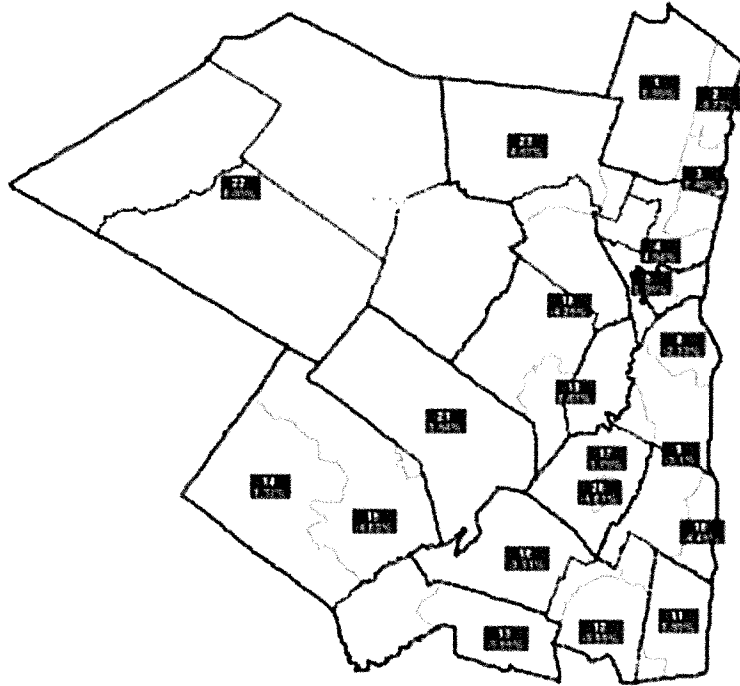
§ C-10. Commission on Reapportionment.

A. A Commission on Reapportionment shall be established as soon as practicable after the availability of data from the census of 2010 to create 23 single-member districts for the Ulster County Legislature and thereafter to meet and evaluate existing legislative districts no later than 60 days after the necessary census data becomes available from the decennial federal census and **reapportion them as necessary to meet established standards in state and federal law for equal and fair representation of all people in Ulster County, keeping districts compact and contiguous while taking also into account existing town, city, village and election district boundaries and defining geographic features but giving no consideration to providing advantage to one or another political party.** This Commission shall consist of seven members who are County residents, are eligible to register to vote and are not public officers or employees...

PROPOSED MAP

Mike Baden

5/19/2022



MB_May 15_2022 file on Maptitude Share