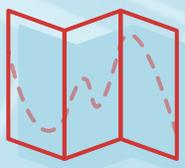




# Community-Led Redistricting



FAIR MAPS. FAIR ELECTIONS. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

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## **SCOPE**

Redistricting occurs at the federal, state, and local levels. For the purposes of this handbook, we will be focused only on the local, county-level districts. If you are interested in learning more specifically about your State Legislative or Congressional Districts, let us know, and we will connect you to additional resources.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The objective of Community-Led Redistricting is to advocate for a fair, inclusive, and transparent redistricting process in 2021. Equipped with the insight and expertise to fight for fair maps, community members will guide the map-drawing process based on their lived experiences, to ensure equitable districts for Hamilton County.

## WHAT IS REDISTRICTING?

Once every ten years, the federal government conducts a national survey called the **US Census** to measure demographic and population changes across the United States.

In Tennessee, local governments (like Hamilton County) are required to use the new Census data to redraw **electoral district** maps to account for changes in the local population—this process is called **redistricting**.

### Did You Know?



The first Census was conducted in 1790, just after the inauguration of George Washington. 23 total censuses have been conducted in the United States.

The first step in the process is to divide the local population into geographic areas known as **electoral districts**. Each electoral district should contain an equal number of people and meet some basic criteria (we will learn more about this in [Chapter 3](#)).

The **redistricting** process is necessary to ensure **electoral districts** are drawn fairly and maintain the principle of **one person, one vote**.



**One person, one vote** is the legal principle that all votes must count the same, regardless of where the voter lives or who they choose to vote for.

**One person, one vote** also means that votes cannot be grouped or manipulated for discriminatory purposes or political gain.

### KEY TERMS:

#### Census

The Census counts every person living in the United States. Redistricting follows every census cycle so that new maps can be drawn with the census results.

#### Electoral District

An electoral district is a defined geographic area used to elect representatives. In Hamilton County, we have the County Commission, School Board, and City Council districts.

#### Redistricting

Redistricting— This is when voting district lines across Hamilton County are redrawn to determine who represents the people of your County Commission, School Board, and City Council.

### KEY CONCEPT

## WHY IS REDISTRICTING IMPORTANT?

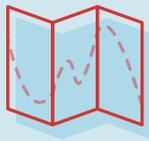
### Redistricting has a huge impact on everyone in Hamilton County—whether they know it or not.

First, it is critical to recognize the influence of redistricting on our local elections. Redistricting affects the ability of voters to cast meaningful ballots and dictates the quality of representation they have in local government. District boundaries determine who can run for office, how competitive elections are, how many voters go to the polls during elections, and the amount of meaningful **voting power** members of a community have.

### KEY TERMS:

#### Voting Power

Voting Power is the level weight (or power) each vote carries at the ballot box. Not all votes are equal, depending on how districts are drawn. Reducing or diluting voting power undermines the principle of one person, one vote by valuing some votes over others.



Redistricting also has a physical impact on the daily lives of everyone in our community. The electoral districts that emerge from redistricting are not only used in elections; they are also used as administrative boundaries that determine who gets public resources (and how).

**Each year, millions of tax dollars are allocated based on electoral district boundaries. Everything from school zoning to public safety to public health is influenced by redistricting.**



### KEY CONCEPT

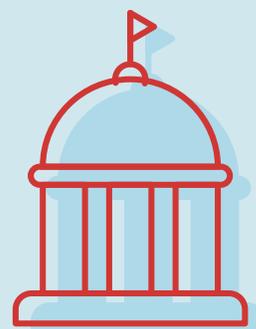
**Voting power** impacts the delivery of public services—communities with high voting power typically exercise significant influence over the electoral process, as well as the policymaking landscape.

## WHY IS REDISTRICTING IMPORTANT?

Finally, it is crucial to recognize the impact redistricting has on public dialogue and civic participation. **Poorly drawn districts increase polarization, deny fair representation, and increase division across the community.** When electoral districts are drawn to protect incumbents and eliminate competitive elections, the result is extreme partisanship and low voter turnout.

### Did You Know?

1.5 trillion dollars in federal funding will be allocated through the 2021 redistricting process.



When elected officials feel they have a 'safe' electoral district, the incentive for collaboration and responsive representation no longer encourages politicians to act in good faith. When elected officials are not forced to earn the votes in their district through competitive elections, they do not drive voters to the polls, resulting in poorly drawn districts having the historically lowest voter turnout in Hamilton County.

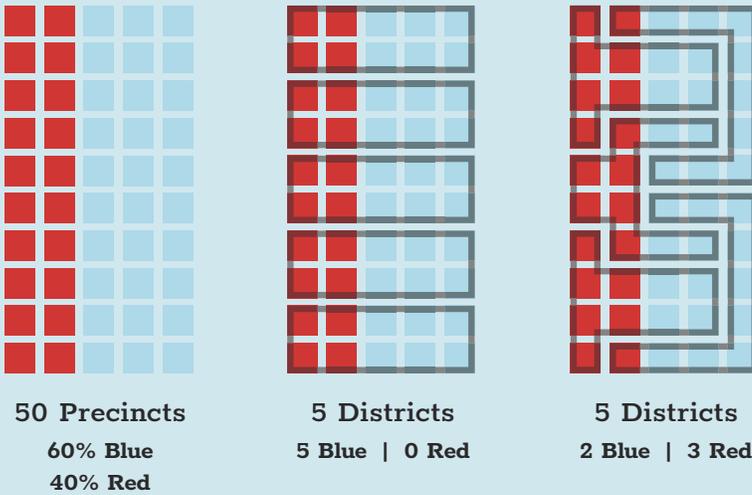
### KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Fair elections start with fair maps!** Each year, millions of tax dollars and public services are allocated based on electoral districts! Poorly drawn electoral districts result in unfair elections and low voter turnout!

# HOW IS REDISTRICTING MANIPULATED?

Here in Hamilton County, redistricting typically takes place behind closed doors and with very little to no community input. This results in manipulated district lines that divide communities and weaken voter power. Often, elected officials push for maps that secure partisan advantage or protect incumbents. Partisan maps dilute voter power and create non-competitive electoral districts that deny voters the opportunity to elect their ideal candidate for office.

## HOW TO STEAL AN ELECTION



The image above is an example of how electoral district lines can easily be manipulated to dilute voter power and favor a particular partisan outcome. The methods used to distort the redistricting process are called '**cracking**' and/or '**packing**'. Cracking and packing are used (sometimes together, sometimes separately) to divide communities.

### KEY TERMS:

#### Cracking

Cracking is the act of splitting apart members of one group into multiple districts to the point that those voters are in the super-minority in every district, and their voting power is rendered ineffective.

Instead of having meaningful influence in multiple districts, this group is so spread out they have no significant influence over any election.

Hence, the voting power of this minority group is 'cracked' apart into pieces.

#### Packing

Packing is the act of grouping together members of one group within a single district to suppress their influence in other districts.

Instead of influencing multiple districts, this group only influences one district.

The voting power of this minority group is 'packed' into a single district to limit their influence.

# HOW IS REDISTRICTING MANIPULATED?

When district lines are redrawn, **communities of interest** are a critical consideration. Communities can be grouped together to preserve the power to elect their ideal candidate, or communities can be sliced apart to dilute their voting power. This process must be community-led to maintain voting power and communities of interest.

As you can see from the image to the right, it's not difficult to break up a minority community and 'pack' people into districts that minimize their power. This method of redistricting harms traditionally marginalized communities. We will learn more about the consequences in [Chapter 4](#).

Here are other examples of communities of interest:

Residents who have identified the need for grocery stores to stay open, or come to their area to prevent food deserts. **Example: the Shallowford Road Walmart closing!**

Community members organize to make elected officials meetings more accessible to the public. **Example: having the School Board meet in different places all over the county instead of one physical location.**

A community that identifies a locally significant historical or cultural landmark and advocates for preserving the area. **Example: the Beck Knob Cemetery becoming a historical landmark!**

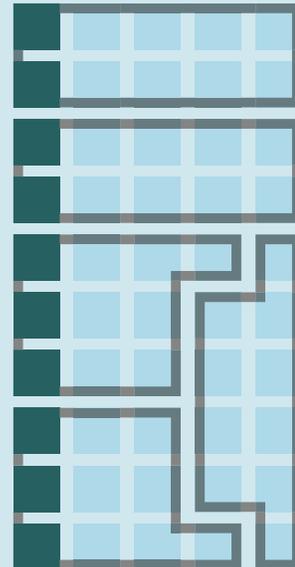
Share an example of a community of interest below:

## KEY TERMS:

### Communities of Interest

A community of interest is a geographic area that shares cultural, historical, economic interests or general daily living activities such as a central gathering place like a church or shopping center.

30% PACKING



Two districts where a group can elect their ideal candidate and three districts where they have no influence

## HOW CAN WE DRAW FAIR MAPS?

Drawing fair electoral district maps is not an easy task, but there are some general guidelines to help the process. Before we learn about the details of map drawing, it is essential to know about the rules that map drawers must consider. There are a few standards that new districts must meet before being officially adopted.

These standards are called the **5 C's of Redistricting**. According to generally accepted redistricting criteria, all districts must be:

**COMPACT** Districts cannot be drawn in odd, irregular, or jagged shapes! Districts should be reasonably close to a regular rectangular or square shape.

**CONTIGUOUS** All parts of the district must be directly connected and touching to be considered contiguous.

**CANNOT OVERLAP** Districts cannot overlap with each other or include the same territory.

**CONTAIN EQUAL POPULATION** Each district must be close to the same population—with some wiggle room under or over.

**COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST STAY INTACT** Good maps don't break up communities of interest; the districts keep these communities together to protect voting power.

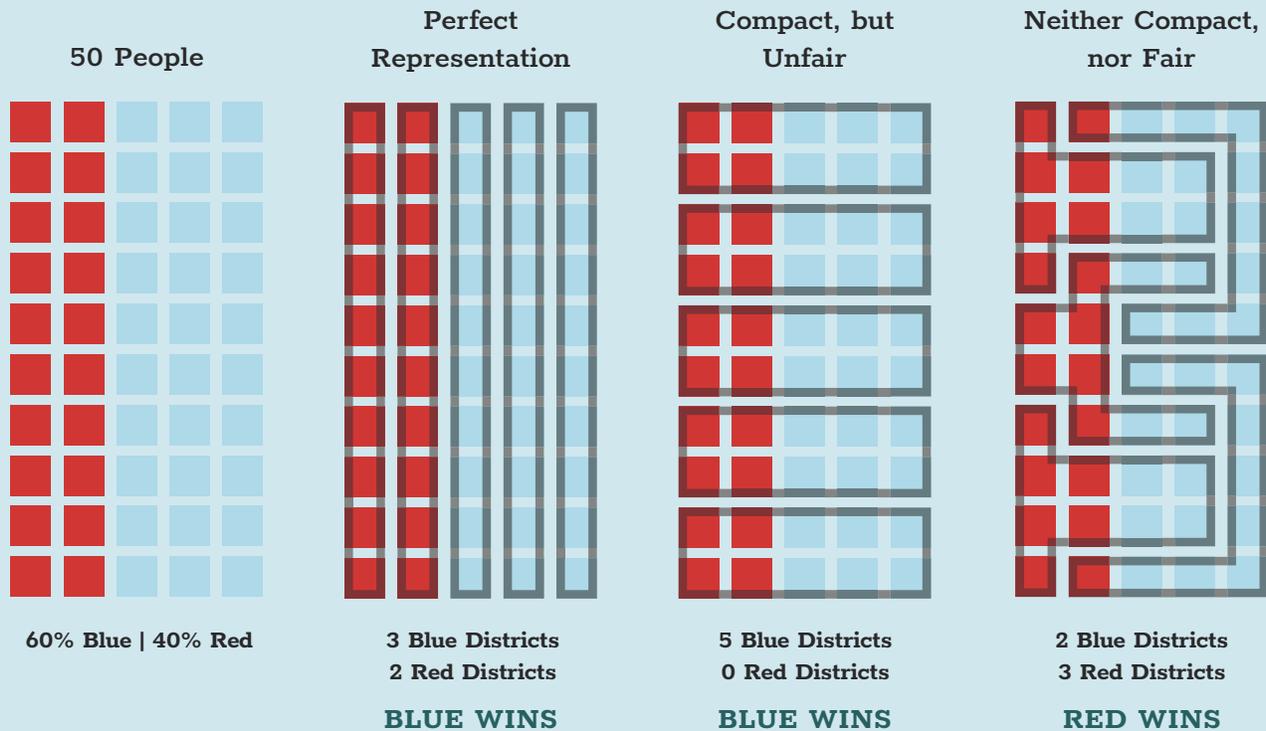
### Did You Know?



Unlike other states, Tennessee does not legally recognize communities of interest during the redistricting process, so we have to fight extra hard to make sure **ALL** voting power is equal!

# HOW CAN WE DRAW FAIR MAPS?

## THREE WAYS TO DIVIDE 50 PEOPLE INTO FIVE DISTRICTS



The electoral districts in Hamilton County have varying degrees of adherence to the 5 C's of redistricting. Please see [page 15](#) of the handbook to see a list of Hamilton County elected officials and the neighborhoods included in each district.

### KEY QUESTION

Looking at the Hamilton County electoral districts, do you see any places where communities of interest might be cracked apart?

Think about the ways that local communities define themselves. Do people feel like a school is a common institution that represents a community? How about a church? Maybe a community center?

## COMMUNITY-LED REDISTRICTING

In the past, redistricting has been a completely closed-door process with the necessary technology and expertise only accessible to a few select individuals. The Hamilton County Commission has historically not solicited public input and conducted this process behind closed doors. In previous years, communities have not been invited to give input on how electoral district boundaries are drawn.

The Community-Led Redistricting program aims to change this process so that community priorities, not political priorities, drive the map-drawing process. **People should pick their elected officials, not the other way around.**

### Here are a few ways to get involved in Community-Led Redistricting:

Call and email County Commissioners and let them know that the voters of Hamilton County want a **transparent and public redistricting process and community input included in the map-drawing process!**

Attend in-person County Commission meetings and speak during the public comment period to show support for the importance of a transparent and public process.

Write a letter to the editor of Times Free Press or other media outlets and highlight the importance of community involvement in the process!

Speak at meetings of local community organizations you are a part of (or ask us to come and speak!).

Recruit others! Talk to a friend, family member, or neighbor about redistricting and ask them to join you in the fight for fair maps!

Visit the website to learn more: [www.CommunityLedRedistricting.com](http://www.CommunityLedRedistricting.com)

## Ch. 5

# TIMELINE + WHAT'S NEXT

### **The time to start your advocacy around redistricting is now.**

Between now and the end of 2021, there are several key milestones to be aware of. Unless the state government provides an extension, the Hamilton County Commission must complete the map-drawing process by December 31, 2021.

### **Remember:**

The new electoral district boundaries will be used for the **2022 County Commission** and **Hamilton County School Board** elections in May and August 2022.



## KEY DATES

**Today** | NOW is the time to start advocacating for fair maps for Hamilton County!

**August 16, 2021** | The redistricting data is released in the legacy format

**September 30, 2021** | The deadline for the final release of the US Census Data

**December 31, 2021** | Hamilton County Commission must approve new electoral district boundaries before the end of the year

**February 17, 2022** | Deadline to qualify to run for Commission and School Board

**April 4, 2022** | Voter registration deadline for Hamilton County

**May 3, 2022** | Hamilton County Commission Primary Election

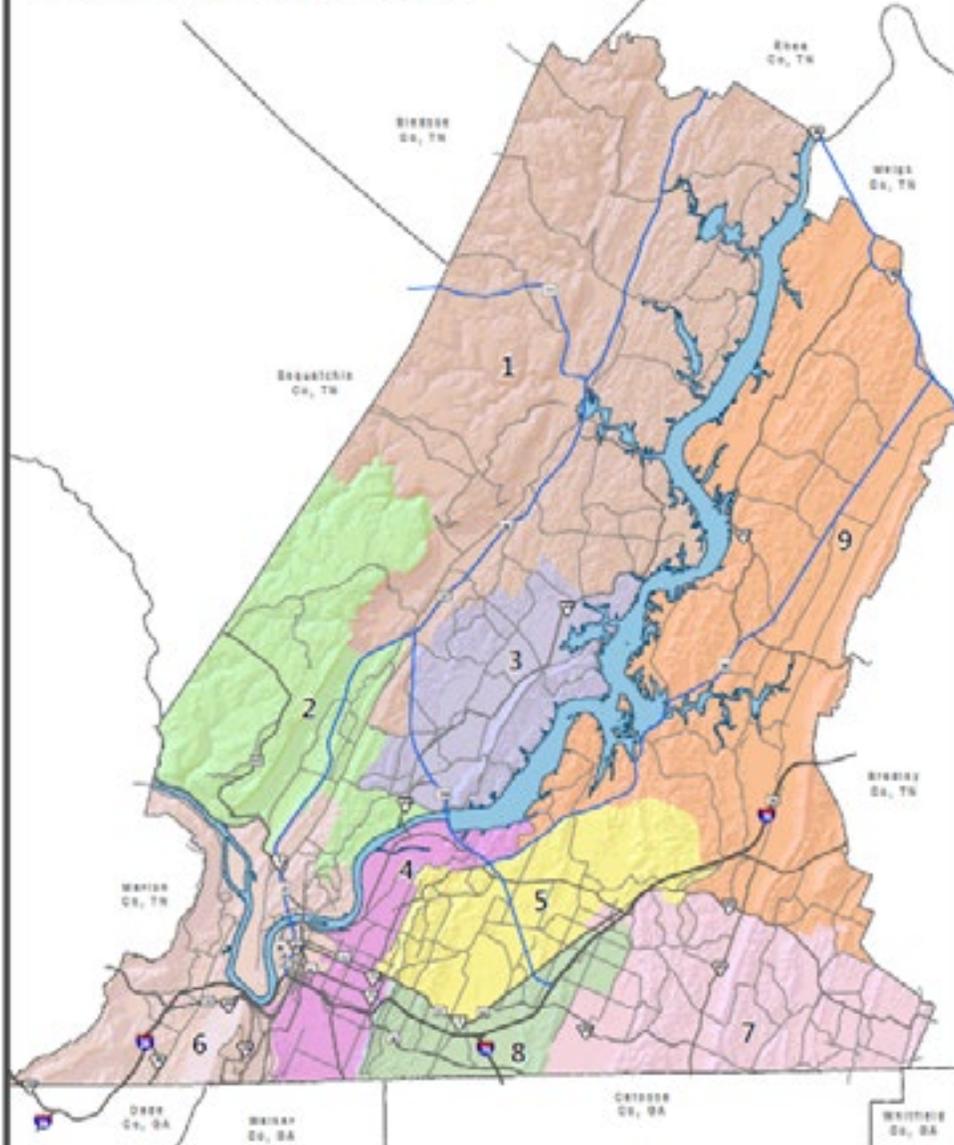
**August 4, 2022** | Hamilton County Commission and School Board General Election

# APPENDIX

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# Hamilton County Commission Districts



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**Hamilton County,  
Tennessee**

- Hamilton County  
Commission Districts
- 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8
  - 9

[www.hamilton.gov/commission/](http://www.hamilton.gov/commission/)



## DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKDOWN

### DISTRICT 1

County Commissioner: Randy Fairbanks  
School Board Member: Ronda Thurman

Soddy Daisy, Sale Creek,  
Mowbray Mountain, Falling Water

### DISTRICT 2

County Commissioner: Chip Baker  
School Board Member: Marco Perez

Signal Mountain, Half of Red Bank, Lupton City,  
Walden, Fairmount

### DISTRICT 3

County Commissioner: Greg Martin  
School Board Member: Joe Smith

Hixson, Middle Valley, Lakesite, Northgate

### DISTRICT 4

County Commissioner: Warren Mackey  
School Board Member: Tiffanie Robinson

Parts of Bushtown, Parts of Avondale, Parts of  
Southside, Highway 58 to the river, Highland Park,  
Ridgedale, Orchard Knob, Ferger Place, Alton Park

### DISTRICT 5

County Commissioner: Katherlyn Geter  
School Board Member: Karitsa Jones

Glenwood, Eastdale, Woodmore, Tyner,  
Washington Hills

### DISTRICT 6

County Commissioner: David Sharpe  
School Board Member: Jenny Hill

Lookout Mountain, Lookout Valley, North  
Chattanooga, Moccasin Bend, Hill City, Half  
of Red Bank

### DISTRICT 7

County Commissioner: Sabrena Smedley  
School Board Member: Joe Wingate

East Brainerd, Apison, Half of Collegedale

### DISTRICT 8

County Commissioner: Tim Boyd  
School Board Member: Tucker McClendon

East Ridge, Part of North Concord Road/  
Shallowford, Part of Missionary Ridge,  
Brainerd Hills, Camp Jordan

### DISTRICT 9

County Commissioner: Chester Bankston  
School Board Member: VACANT

Ooltewah, Snow Hill, Harrison, Birchwood

## KNOW YOUR REPS QUICK SHEET

### County Mayor: Jim Coppinger

**District:**  
County-wide

**Next Election:**  
2022



### City Mayor: Tim Kelly

**District:**  
Chattanooga  
City Limits

**Next Election:**  
2025



### FILL IN THE BLANK

County Commission and School Board District: \_\_\_\_\_

County Commissioner: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**NEXT ELECTION: 2022**

School Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Current District Precincts/Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_

City Council District: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

City Council Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHERE AND WHEN ELECTED OFFICIALS MEET

### COUNTY COMMISSION

**Number of Districts:** 9

**Meeting Time:** Wednesdays at 9:30 AM

**Meeting Location:** 625 Georgia Avenue Chattanooga, TN

### SCHOOL BOARD

**Number of Districts:** 9

**Meeting Time:** Every third Thursday at 5:30 PM

**Meeting Location:** 3074 Hickory Valley Road Chattanooga, TN

### CITY COUNCIL

**Number of Districts:** 9

**Meeting Time:** Tuesdays at 6:00 PM\* | Strategic Planning every first and third Tuesday at 2:00 PM | Agenda Session Tuesdays at 3:30 PM

**Meeting Location:** 3074 Hickory Valley Road Chattanooga, TN

\* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## NOTES



## KEY DATES

**Today**

NOW is the time to start advocacating for fair maps for Hamilton County!

**09.30.21**

The deadline for the final release of the US Census Data

**12.31.21**

Hamilton Commission must approve new electoral district boundaries before the end of the year.

**02.17.22**

Deadline to qualify to run for Commission and School Board

**04.04.22**

Voter registration deadline for Hamilton County

**05.03.22**

Hamilton County Commission Primary Election

**08.04.22**

Hamilton County Commission and School Board General Election

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**Community-Led  
Redistricting**