

# memorandum

---

**TO** Elections Commission                      **DATE** October 18, 2020  
**FROM** Jill Rowe, Commissioner  
**RE** Redistricting Task Force

---

## **I. Background**

Following each decennial census, San Francisco redraws its supervisorial districts to account for population changes. After the census results are released, the Director of Elections has 60 days to report to the Board of Supervisors if there is a population shift in excess of one percent for any supervisorial district. If the Director reports such a population shift, the San Francisco City Charter requires the Board of Supervisors, within 60 days, to convene and fund a Redistricting Task Force.

The Task Force is comprised of nine members. Three are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, three are appointed by the Mayor, and three are appointed by the Elections Commission.

The Task Force works with an outside consultant to rebalance the population counts in each supervisorial district. In doing so, it holds multiple community hearings to receive input from the people of San Francisco.

## **II. Considerations for the Redistricting Task Force Members**

While some of the laws may have changed since prior redistricting, prior considerations used by the Task Force have included:

1. Making the districts roughly equal in population, with certain maximum variations established by the San Francisco Charter;
2. Avoiding the dilution of the voting power of racial, language, ethnic, political, social and economic minorities;
3. Creating geographically compact and contiguous districts;
4. Keeping distinct neighborhoods, institutions and commercial zones intact; and
5. Reflecting the core of existing districts.

### **III. Timing**

As currently posted on the Census Bureau website, the Bureau will send its redistricting counts to the states no later than April 1, 2021. Taking a conservative approach (earliest realistic census data release), we can estimate a release of results on March 1, 2021.

Again taking a conservative approach, we can estimate that the Director notifies the Board of Supervisors of a population shift in 30 days, by March 31, 2021, and we can estimate the Board of Supervisors convenes the Task Force in 30 days, i.e., by April 30, 2021. Using that conservative approach, **the Elections Commission should plan to have its three appointments selected by April 30, 2021.** (Using the latest possible deadline for each step in the process, the Task Force might actually be convened as late as August 1, 2021.)

The Task Force must present a final plan for new supervisorial district lines no later than April 15, 2022.

In 2002 and 2011, the Commission accepted Task Force applications, vetted them for minimum criteria, interviewed all qualified applicants at a full Commission meeting, and then voted on its appointments. Assuming the Commission follows the same process for 2021, it would likely want to **vote on the appointments no later than its March 2021 meeting.** It would therefore want to **interview applicants either at its February 2021 meeting or its March 2021 meeting.** It would likely want to **begin accepting applications in or around its January 2021 meeting,** in order to allow time to publicize the process, and vet and review applications in advance of interviews.

### **IV. 2002 Minimum Criteria for Applicants**

In 2002, the Elections Commission established the following minimum criteria for applicants to the Redistricting Task Force.

1. Registered to vote in San Francisco;
2. Represents San Francisco's diverse population;
3. Has not been paid by a political campaign in the last 5 years;
4. Has general knowledge of San Francisco's neighborhoods and geography;
5. Has a flexible schedule for attending meetings;
6. Has no conflict of interest prohibited under the conflict laws applicable to other City officers; and
7. Does not reside in the same supervisorial district as any other Commission appointee.

**V. 2011 Minimum Criteria for Applicants**

In 2011, the Elections Commission established the following minimum criteria for applicants to the Redistricting Task Force.

1. Registered to vote in San Francisco;
2. Represents San Francisco's diverse population;
3. Has not been paid by a political campaign in the last 5 years;
4. Has general knowledge of San Francisco's neighborhoods and geography;
5. Has a flexible schedule for attending meetings;
6. Has no conflict of interest prohibited under the conflict laws applicable to other City officers;
7. Has voted in San Francisco at least once in the last five years;
8. Is not currently a direct hire employee of an elected official in San Francisco.

**VI. Posted Guidelines for Application Requests in 2011**

In 2011, the Commission asked applicants to provide:

1. A statement confirming that they meet the minimum criteria for appointment;
2. A statement of interest in the position;
3. A statement of availability for a flexible schedule; and
4. A resume.

We were unable to locate the manner or place in which these guidelines were posted, though we have determined they were not posted by DHR. It appears the Commission received approximately 25 qualified applications.

**VII. Recommendations for 2021 Appointments**

For discussion purposes only, I recommend the following process for the Commission's appointments to the Redistricting Task Force.

1. At our October 2020 meeting:
  - a. Vote on the minimum criteria for appointees.
  - b. Select one Commission member to draft guidelines for applicants.

2. At our November 2020 meeting:
  - a. Vote on the wording of the guidelines to be posted for applicants. The guidelines should include an introductory statement of the reason for and function of the Task Force.
  - b. Vote on the manner in which the guidelines will be posted (e.g., Department and Commission websites, twitter, other social media, word of mouth...)
  - c. Select a Commission member to oversee the posting of the guidelines. The guidelines should state that applications should be submitted to the Commission Secretary.
  - d. Select a Commissioner who will be responsible for reviewing the initial applications to ensure they meet the minimum guidelines, and notifying all qualified applicants that they will be interviewed by the full Commission at its March meeting.
3. Post the guidelines and open the application process in January 2021.
4. At our March 2021 meeting, interview all qualified applicants. (I believe this can or perhaps must be done in open session.) Depending on the number of applicants, we may want to limit the interview time to 3-5 minutes per applicant.
5. At our April 2021 meeting, and after public comment, vote on the three appointees. (I believe this can or perhaps must be done in closed session.) A motion can be made for a slate of three candidates, and the Commission can vote yes or no for that slate. If a majority approves the slate, the voting stops. If a majority does not approve the slate, a new motion must be made with a different slate, and a new vote will be taken. The appointments should be made conditional upon the Board of Supervisors convening the Task Force.

Note: these are my recommendations for discussion purposes only. They must be subject to robust public and Commissioner comment, and votes by the full Commission.