



EID Redistricting Process—Frequently Asked Questions

Responses provided by Tom Cumpston, EID General Counsel

Q.1. Why is EID required to redistrict and how frequently must it be done?

A.1. Every ten years when new federal census data becomes available, EID has a mandatory legal duty to re-evaluate its division boundaries. Our obligation is to use the census data to ensure that population is evenly distributed among the District's five divisions and that the division lines also take into account the criteria specified by California Elections Code 22000(a): 1) topography, 2) geography, 3) cohesiveness, 4) contiguity, integrity, and compactness, and 4) community of interests of the District. We know that in the last 10 years Division 5, which encompasses El Dorado Hills, has grown more rapidly than the rest of the District, so much of our effort will be focused on that portion of the District to ensure through this process that El Dorado Hills as well as all areas are fairly and equally represented.

Q.2. I understand that the District has a Board policy that states that it will re-evaluate division boundaries at least every five years to ensure that population is evenly distributed among the divisions and that the other Election Code criteria are considered. If that is the case, why wasn't that policy done before the 2010 census?

A.2. Board Policy 1010 was first adopted in late 2006 as part of a comprehensive review of board policies for the District. The intention was to consider the first interim adjustment in 2016, since the policy was put in place less than five years before the 2010 census. In retrospect, it seems that despite the policy's good intentions, it now appears that its feasibility is questionable because of the lack of current census data on which to base a mid-cycle change to division lines. Any new boundaries would be estimates at best and would be vulnerable to legal challenge. I will be recommending that the Board amend a change in the policy at a later date.

Q.3. What exactly is the District's process for redistricting?

A.3. By law, the EID Board of Directors has the ultimate responsibility for making all redistricting decisions. However, the Board has established a three-fold process that features a citizens' advisory committee, extensive computer work by EID staff, and outreach to the public.

The most technical and time-consuming part of the process is adapting the census' population data to EID's boundaries. The census data are organized by units called "census enumeration blocks." About 2,700 of these units overlap EID's boundaries, but their borders do not necessarily match up to ours. The many "holes" inside our service area complicate this situation. Overall, nearly ¼—650 blocks—lie partly within and partly outside EID. For each of those blocks, an appropriate portion of the total population needs to be assigned to the territory within EID, and there is no single solution that suits all 650 blocks. The same problem will occur when new lines for Director divisions are considered: unless those division lines follow the census tract boundaries exactly, there will need to be a second round of analysis to ensure accurate population counts within each division.

The rest of the computer work is pretty straightforward. Using mapping software, we can analyze how proposed division boundaries compare to key factors like school district, fire district, and other governmental boundaries, EID's water service zones and sewer service areas, natural dividing lines like roads and rivers, and the County General Plan's Community Region, Rural Center and other land-use designations.

Working with the advisory committee, we will review this information and develop and test various redistricting proposals against the legal criteria. Once several alternatives are proposed by the Redistricting Advisory Committee, community workshops will be held to ensure that other members of the public also have opportunities to participate in the process.

Q.4. How is the District's process different that from other agency processes?

A.4. The state is also redrawing its legislative and congressional districts, and most local government agencies will be, too, but the details of their processes vary because of the different laws that govern them. The District and many other agencies are mandated to redistrict according to Elections Code 22000(a) as I previously mentioned. The County is covered by another portion of the same code. The state's procedures for partisan congressional, state legislature, and Board of Equalization seats is very different, thanks to statewide initiatives approved by the voters in 2008 and 2010.

More >>

Q.5. Some people have asked why the City of Placerville is included in the redistricting process when many city residents are not direct customers of EID. Can you tell me more about this?

A.5. Yes, it is true that the City of Placerville is included in the process. Although the City is a wholesale EID customer, it is part of EID's service area and has been since EID was formed more than 80 years ago. The United States Constitution's Equal Protection Clause requires that every qualified voter within EID's service area must have a vote of equal weight for our Board of Directors, because they are all affected by EID's powers, policies, and actions. The "one person, one vote" standard applies regardless of whether the voter is a wholesale water customer, a retail water and sewer customer, or not presently a customer at all. The El Dorado County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) governs all changes to EID's service area, so City residents could legally be removed from EID's electorate only if LAFCO approved a proposal to de-annex the City from EID.

Q.6. Who is on the Redistricting Advisory Committee, and how can the public get involved otherwise?

A.6. As I mentioned earlier, we have selected five members to be on the committee who represent all five of our divisions, and the committee is meeting monthly. Committee selection criteria included being a respected individual with long-term residence and community involvement; no past or present EID connections, except as customers; expertise and /or interest in the subject matter; and diversity in EID services received and water rate classifications. Committee members are Maryann Argyres, Division 1; John Winner, Division 2, Judge Patrick Riley, Division 3; Judge Denny Davis, Division 4; and Bob Luca, Division 5. I serve as liaison between the committee and EID's staff.

Committee members' biographies may be found on our website at www.eid.org on the redistricting webpage. We believe that our committee members fit the criteria established very well and are pleased to have such a renowned group of dedicated individuals representing the citizens in this process.

There are lots of other ways for members of the public to get involved, too. We will have two evening public workshops, tentatively scheduled for late May and late July. I am giving public updates to the EID Board at the second Board meeting of each month. The redistricting page at the EID website has a growing body of information and maps for people to review. Interested people can sign up to receive e-mail alerts every time the redistricting web page is updated.

Q.7. What is the timeline for the process?

A.7. It is estimated that there will be four to six Redistricting Advisory Committee meetings, the two public workshops I mentioned, and my monthly interim status reports to the Board, culminating in the presentation of final redistricting options, including a preferred option, in the August 22, 2011 Board meeting. The draft schedule may be found on the Redistricting webpage.

Q.8. I've heard that EID is not going to have the redistricting done in time for it to be effective for the 2011 EID Board elections. Is this true?

A.8. Yes, it is true. Unfortunately, state law bars all changes of division boundaries within 180 days of a Board election, and unlike most agencies, EID has off-year elections. Therefore, the new division boundaries could be effective for the 2011 Board elections only if they were adopted by the EID Board by May 11, 2011. The detailed census data was not available until March 8. Training on using this data was held on March 16 and 17, and the extensive analysis needed to adapt the data for EID's use made it infeasible to meet that deadline.