

City of Amarillo Single Member Districts - Initial Research

June 13, 2024

There are five legal principles that govern the process:

1. One Person / One Vote – US Constitution
2. Section 2 of the U.S. Voting Rights Act
3. Shaw v. Reno line of cases
4. Texas Election Laws
5. City Charter

One Person/One Vote

- Requires that members of an elected body be drawn from districts of substantially equal population.
- Applies to the single-member districts of “legislative” bodies such as city councils.
- Exact equality of population is not required, but a “total maximum deviation” of no more than 10% in total population between the most populated and the least populated city districts based on the most recent census should be achieved.

Shaw vs Reno Guiding Principles:

- Race may be considered as one factor among others.
- Race may not be the predominant factor to the subordination of traditional redistricting principles. Bizarrely shaped wards are not unconstitutional per se, but the bizarre shape may be evidence that race was the predominant consideration.
- If race is the predominant consideration, a proposed plan may still be constitutional if it is “narrowly tailored” to address compelling governmental interest such as compliance with the Voting Rights Act.
- If a plan is narrowly tailored, it will use race no more than is necessary to address the compelling governmental interest.

City of Amarillo Quadrant Demographics

| District | Voting Age Population | Total Population | Ideal Population | Deviation |
|-----------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Northwest | 30,531 | 39,499 | 50,098 | -21.16% |
| Northeast | 31,901 | 45,879 | 50,098 | -8.42% |
| Southwest | 54,506 | 70,535 | 50,098 | 40.79% |
| Southeast | 32,157 | 44,578 | 50,098 | -11.02% |

- There are more residents of voting age in the SW district than there are people of any age in any other single district.
- The SW district exceeds the ideal population by 40%.
- 54,138 white population in the SW district is greater than any other district's total population.
- Using the Quadrants, Amarillo's current Total Maximum Deviation is **61.95%** (Southwest + Northwest).

Example Redistricting Criteria

- Identifiable geographic boundaries should be followed.
- Communities of interest should be maintained.
- Avoid splitting neighborhoods.
- Composed of whole voting precincts (when possible/practicable).
- Configured so they are relatively equal in total population.
- Compact and composed of contiguous territory.
- Preservation of incumbent-constituency relations by recognition of the residence of incumbents.
- Not crack or pack minority voters.
- Composed of whole census block groups or blocks.
- Within acceptable Total Maximum Deviation.
- Narrowly tailor the plan to comply with the Voting Rights Act.