



Washington State
Redistricting Commission

Your Voice. Your Vote. Redistricting 2011

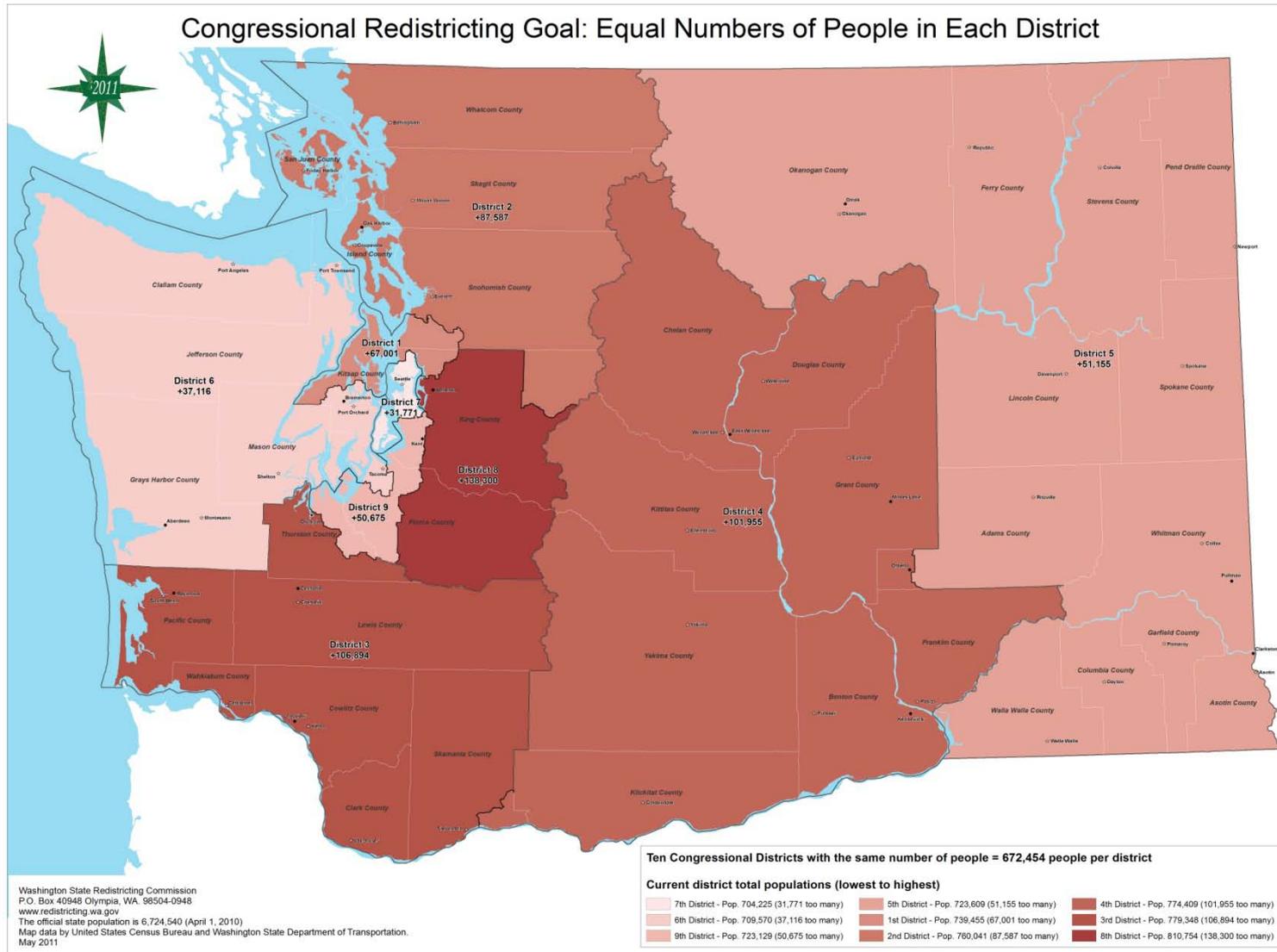
Redrawing congressional and legislative
districts in Washington State

Congressional Redistricting

- The US Constitution Requires a Census every 10 years, in order to apportion the 435 seats in the US House of Representatives among the states.
- The ideal size of each Congressional district is 672,454
- Washington gains a 10th seat in 2011



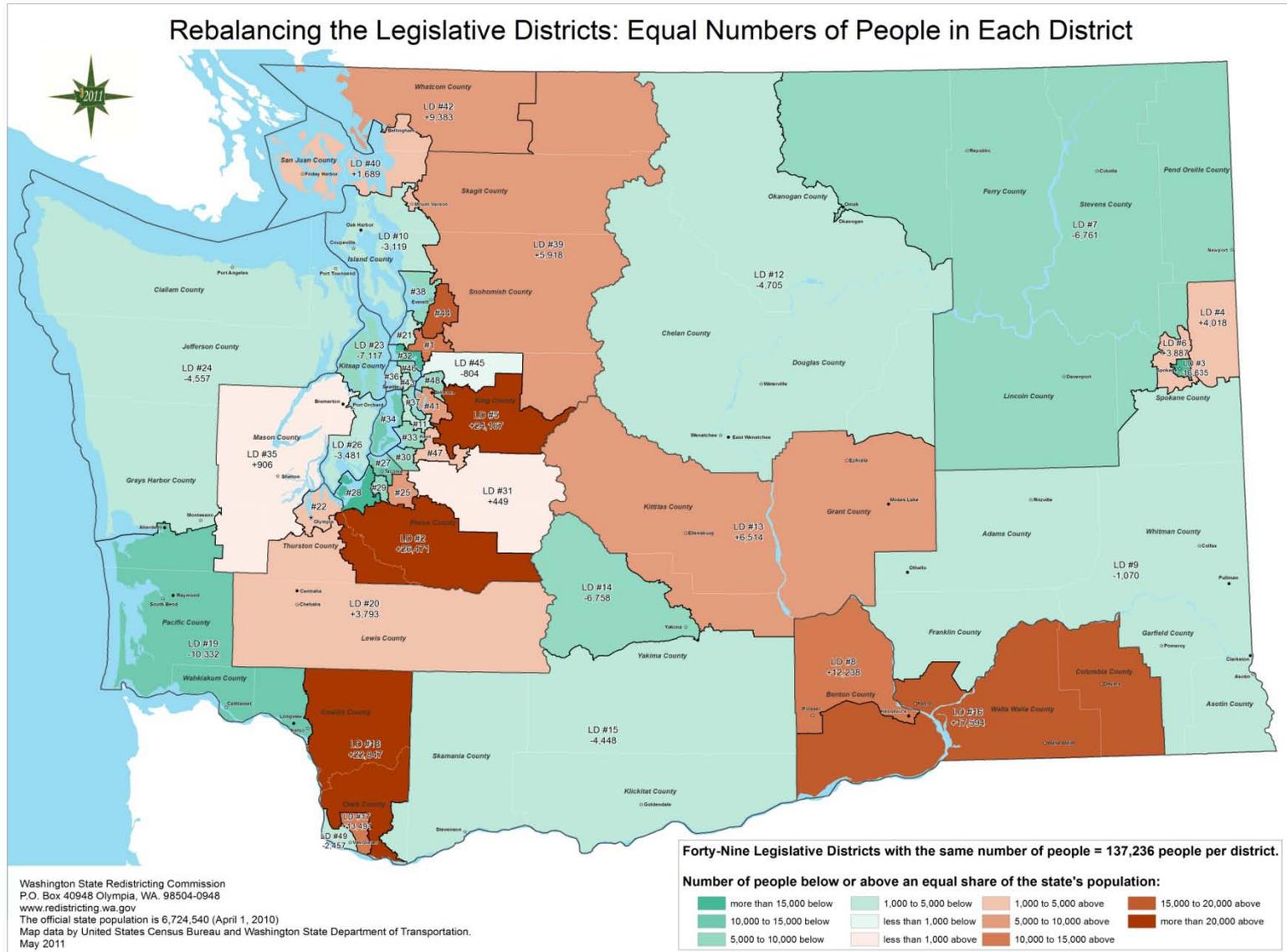
All 9 Districts must lose population



Legislative Redistricting

- The State Constitution requires redistricting of the 49 legislative districts in each year ending in 1, following the decennial census
- Ideal size of each legislative district is 137,235 and 1/2

District population shifts = Districts out of balance



Local redistricting

- Counties and Some Cities also must redraw the boundaries of their Commissioner or Council Districts
- And any local districts based on population must be redrawn.
- Precinct boundaries to be adjusted by 2012



Washington's Redistricting Commission

- New commission appointed every 10 years
- Four members appointed by two largest political parties in House and Senate
- The non-voting Chair is appointed by the four commissioners
- Can't be a lobbyist, or run for office for two years
- Approve a plan by Jan 1, 2012



Flaws, Chaos and Gerrymandering

- **“Back to the drawing board: The first redistricting maps proposed by Republicans and Democrats are flawed”**
- **[“Redistricting Roundup: Chaos in Colorado: Compromise nowhere in sight”](#)**
- **“Despite GOP control, Louisiana redistricting proves a cruel mistress”**
- **“Get ready for start of redistricting war”**

How has redistricting changed over the years?

1889
The state Constitution requires that the Legislature redistrict based on "the number of inhabitants" after each U.S. Census.

1889
The original Legislature consists of 70 representatives and 35 senators. More are added in 1890 and 1901 to keep up with the state's population growth.

1931
Citizens complain that representation is badly apportioned and debate using an initiative to redraw district boundaries.

1954
The League of Women Voters proposes its own redistricting initiative—Initiative 199—after legislators battle along party lines to redraw voting boundaries.

1956
Initiative 199 passes, linking redistricting to population trends in the state. But in the next session, the Legislature amends the resulting redistricting plan significantly.

1958
The League of Women Voters proposes an amendment to the state Constitution that would establish a commission to take over redistricting if the Legislature failed to quickly adopt a redistricting plan. Voters reject the amendment.

1960s
The League of Women Voters proposes another initiative to improve redistricting. The federal court gets involved after finding that the districts drawn in 1957 were discriminatory. The Legislature takes three years to pass compromise legislation that satisfies federal justices.

1970s
The U.S. District Court finds that the 1965 redistricting legislation is unconstitutional. The state is restricted from holding further elections under the existing law. The court gives the state until February 25, 1972, to create a fair redistricting plan. The Legislature fails to meet the deadline, and the court draws the redistricting plan for the state.

1980s
In 1982, growing weary of the constant battles, the Legislature proposes a bill to create an independent, bipartisan redistricting committee to begin work in 1991. But facing another court imposed 90-day mandate, it appoints a temporary five-commissioner panel, which successfully meets the 1983 redistricting deadline.

1983
Voters approve a ballot measure to amend the state Constitution and institute the commission. Washington becomes the third state in the U.S. to redistrict by commission.

1991
The first Redistricting Commission meets and successfully creates a redistricting plan by the constitutional deadline.

2001
The second Redistricting Commission generates a redistricting plan by the constitutional deadline.

2011
The third Redistricting Commission convenes.

Pre-1950s

1950s

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2011



What makes Washington's process work?

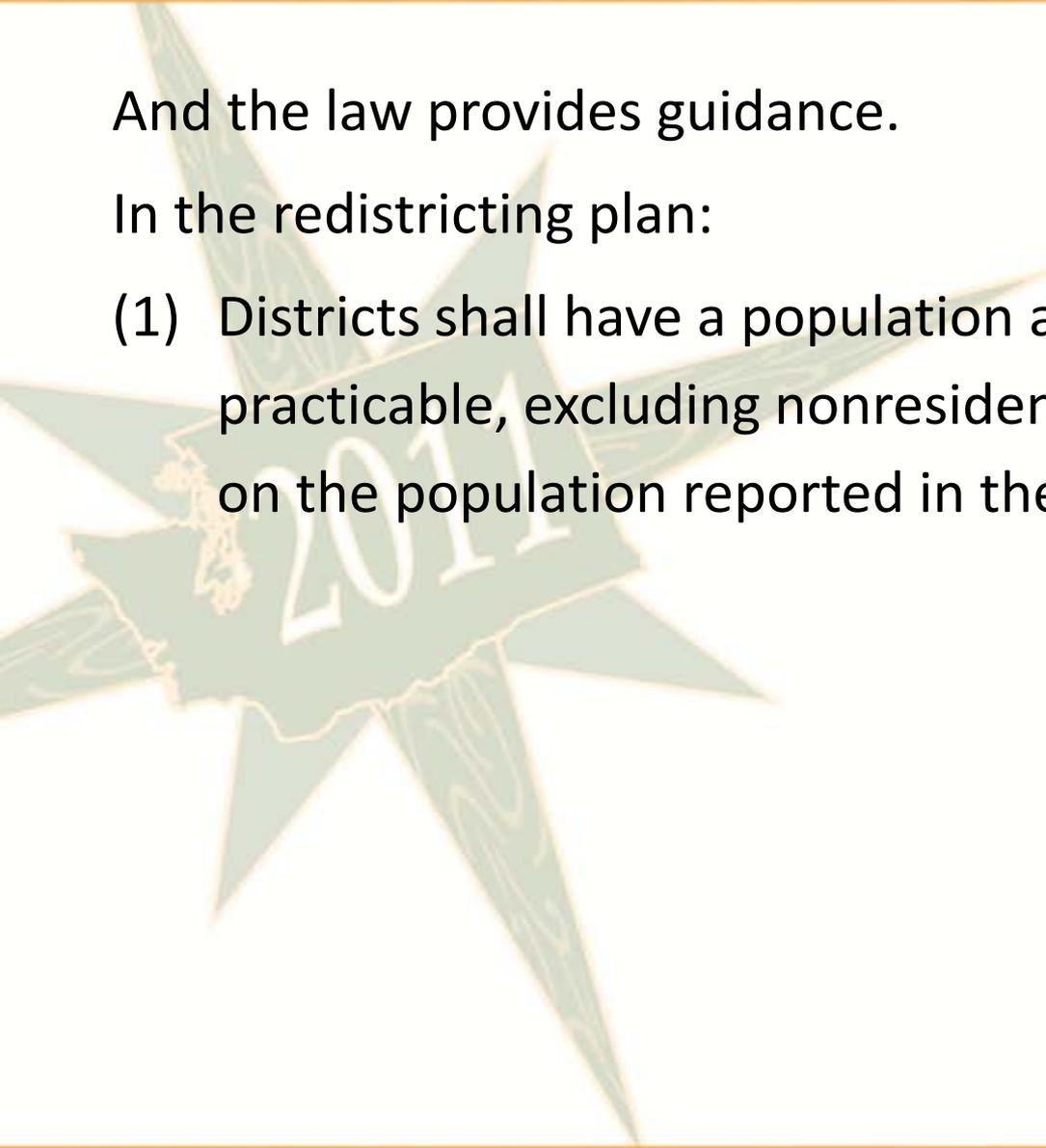
- Bipartisan
- Public participation-- “3rd Party plans”
- Firm deadline—January 1, 2011
- Commissioners cannot be a legislator or lobbyist or seek public office for two years following completion

RCW 44.05.090 – Redistricting Plan

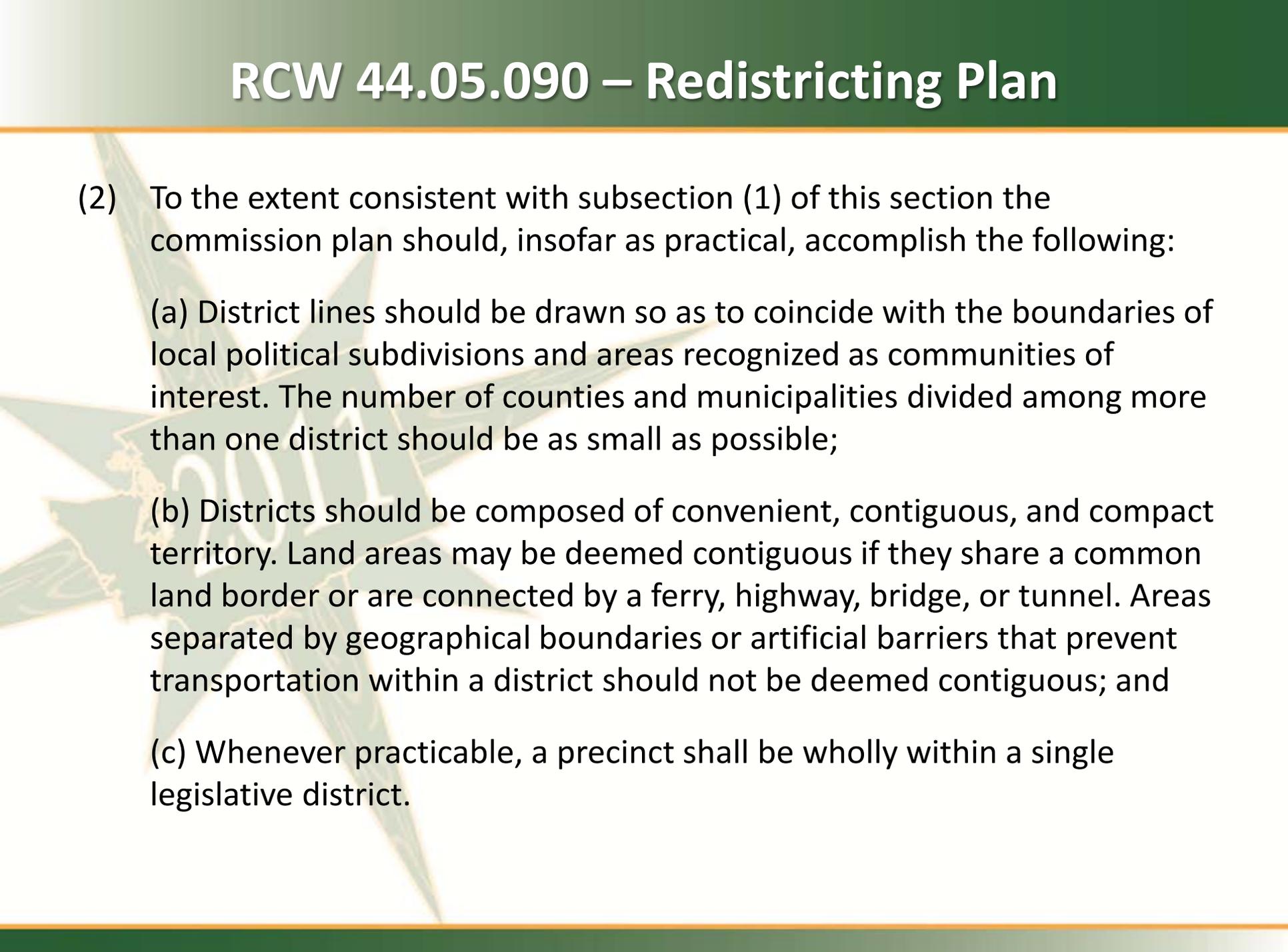
And the law provides guidance.

In the redistricting plan:

- (1) Districts shall have a population as nearly equal as is practicable, excluding nonresident military personnel, based on the population reported in the federal decennial census.



RCW 44.05.090 – Redistricting Plan

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- (2) To the extent consistent with subsection (1) of this section the commission plan should, insofar as practical, accomplish the following:
- (a) District lines should be drawn so as to coincide with the boundaries of local political subdivisions and areas recognized as communities of interest. The number of counties and municipalities divided among more than one district should be as small as possible;
 - (b) Districts should be composed of convenient, contiguous, and compact territory. Land areas may be deemed contiguous if they share a common land border or are connected by a ferry, highway, bridge, or tunnel. Areas separated by geographical boundaries or artificial barriers that prevent transportation within a district should not be deemed contiguous; and
 - (c) Whenever practicable, a precinct shall be wholly within a single legislative district.

RCW 44.05.090 – Redistricting Plan

- (3) The commission's plan and any plan adopted by the supreme court under RCW [44.05.100](#)(4) shall provide for forty-nine legislative districts.
- (4) The house of representatives shall consist of ninety-eight members, two of whom shall be elected from and run at large within each legislative district. The senate shall consist of forty-nine members, one of whom shall be elected from each legislative district.
- (5) The commission shall exercise its powers to provide fair and effective representation and to encourage electoral competition. The commission's plan shall not be drawn purposely to favor or discriminate against any political party or group

What if the deadlines are missed?

- If deadlines are missed or an agreement isn't reached in time, the State Supreme Court steps in and must adopt a plan by March 1, 2012



Commission timeline

- Monthly Commission meetings on second Tuesday
- **May – July:** Public Forums
 - **August 15:** Third party plans due
 - **Mid-September:** DRAFT Commission plans released followed by two-week public comment period
 - **November 1:** Goal for completion of Commission congressional and legislative plans
 - **January 1, 2012:** Statutory deadline
 - **February 10:** Deadline for Legislative amendments

Schedule of public forums

Tuesday, May 17 – Aberdeen

Wednesday, May 18 – Olympia

Thursday, May 19 – Vancouver

Monday, May 23 – Renton

Tuesday, May 24 – Bellevue

Wednesday, May 25 – Everett

Thursday, May 26 – Bellingham

Tuesday, June 7 – Pasco

Wednesday, June 8 - Yakima

Thursday, June 9 – Wenatchee

Monday, June 13 – Seattle

Tuesday, June 14 – Auburn

Thursday, June 30 – Bremerton

Monday, July 11 – Tacoma

Tuesday, July 12 – Spokane

Wednesday, July 13 – Walla Walla

Thursday, July 14 – Moses Lake

How do I submit my ideas about boundaries?

- Draw a map and send it to us by **August 15, 2011**
- All districts or any part of any district—you draw the line
- Create a plan using commission software – available in Olympia
- Submit a plan electronically (map or table).
- Submit plan on maps provided by commission
- Questions about plan submission?
360-786-0770 or www.redistricting.wa.gov

How can you help?

- Attend a forum in person or via webcast
- Tell us what you think is most important about your community—in person, over the web, by mail or email
- Host a webcast in your community
- Connect with the media and tell your story

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Questions?

