



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners
City of Ft. Pierce

FROM: Kurt Spitzer

DATE: January 17, 2022

RE: Redistricting Commission Districts

The purpose of this Memorandum is to update the City Commission on the status of our work to revise the Commission districts based on 2020 Census data.

Redistricting Criteria

Legislative districts (whether those of the Legislature, or a county or city) are required to be “as nearly equal in population” as practicable or possible. Redistricting is the process by which differences in the population of Commission districts are equalized by adjusting district boundaries, and furthers the principle of “one person, one vote.”

The overall objective of a redistricting process should be to adjust the district boundaries so that district populations are roughly equal to one-another, the plans not dilute minority voting strength, and result in district shapes that are relatively compact and are easily understood by the electorate.

There are several criteria commonly used in the redistricting process. They are considered in total and balanced with each other; however, the dominant criterion is population.

1. Equal in population. A primary objective is to have the population of individual districts be as nearly equal to one another as is possible or practicable. “Population” refers to residents, not registered voters. “Nearly equal” means that the population of individual districts should be as close to the average (“ideal”) size as is possible.

Generally, a goal of having districts that are not more than three percent (3%) over or under the average or “ideal” district population is a good goal to pursue. Further, districting plans where the difference between the largest and smallest district is greater than 10 percentage

points (e.g., the largest district is 7% over the ideal and the smallest is 5% under) raises a “red flag” in the courts.

Within the confines of generally accepted redistricting criteria, accounting for future population growth over the next decennial period may be considered by the Commission. In other words, one may decide to under-populate a district that is projected to be a high growth area over the next several years, based on sound demographic principles.

2. Avoid diluting minority voting strength. If there is a location where a significant number of minority residents reside, their ability to vote as a block should not be diluted by either dividing that population into two or more districts (termed “cracking”) or, if there is a significant minority population in two districts, moving that population into a single district (termed “packing”).
3. Use census blocks. Data from the US Bureau of the Census is updated every 10 years by surveying the population of the United States. Census data is presumed to be correct. The smallest unit within which that information is tabulated and made available are census “blocks.”
4. Compact and contiguous. Districts should be relatively compact and contiguous. Unusual, “bizarre” or serpentine district shapes that are created without furthering a valid underlying public policy purpose must be avoided. Contiguity may be achieved by crossing a waterbody.
5. Significant natural and man-made boundaries. District boundaries should follow easily recognized or understood boundaries, like major roads, waterbodies or parklands.
6. Recognize existing district boundaries. The boundaries of the updated districts may seek to retain their existing district’s boundaries to the extent possible.
7. Avoid splitting communities of interest. District boundaries should seek to avoid splitting communities that have similar interests (e.g., neighborhoods) where possible.

Census Data

The Bureau of the Census counts the population of the United States every 10 years. Data from the Census is presumed to be correct. The 2020 Census reflects the population of the country on “census day” which was April 1, 2020. Census data is required to be released to the states one year after census day; however, the Bureau of the Census failed to meet that deadline in 2021, primarily due to the effects of the COVID pandemic, which had caused field operations to be shut down for more than two months in 2020.

Thereafter, the Bureau had stated that the data would be released on or before September 30, 2021. However, “legacy” data was released on August 12, 2021. Legacy data is “final” data but required some reformatting of the electronic file base before it was usable in a redistricting process.

Existing Districts Map

The first step in the redistricting process is to determine if there is a need to adjust district boundaries because of a significant imbalance between district populations. This is accomplished by “layering” or applying the 2020 data to the (current) district boundaries that were approved in 2011.

A copy of the Existing Districts Maps with 2020 data is attached, as is a table of statistical information for the existing district boundaries. Using the existing district boundaries and 2020 Census block data indicates that adjustments to district boundaries is necessary as the difference between the largest and smallest district is well over 12 percentage points and beyond the generally acceptable tolerance of 10 points.

Draft Example Alternative Map – Alternative A

Differences in population between one district and another are equalized by adjusting the boundaries of the two districts, while following the common redistricting criteria described above.

A preliminary example of an approach (“Alternative A”) to bringing population differences within acceptable tolerances in Ft. Pierce is attached. This plan brings differences in population deviations between the largest and smallest district to under one percentage point, while using the existing district boundaries to the extent possible and significant other roadways when new boundaries are necessary.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the City and look forward to speaking with you later this week.

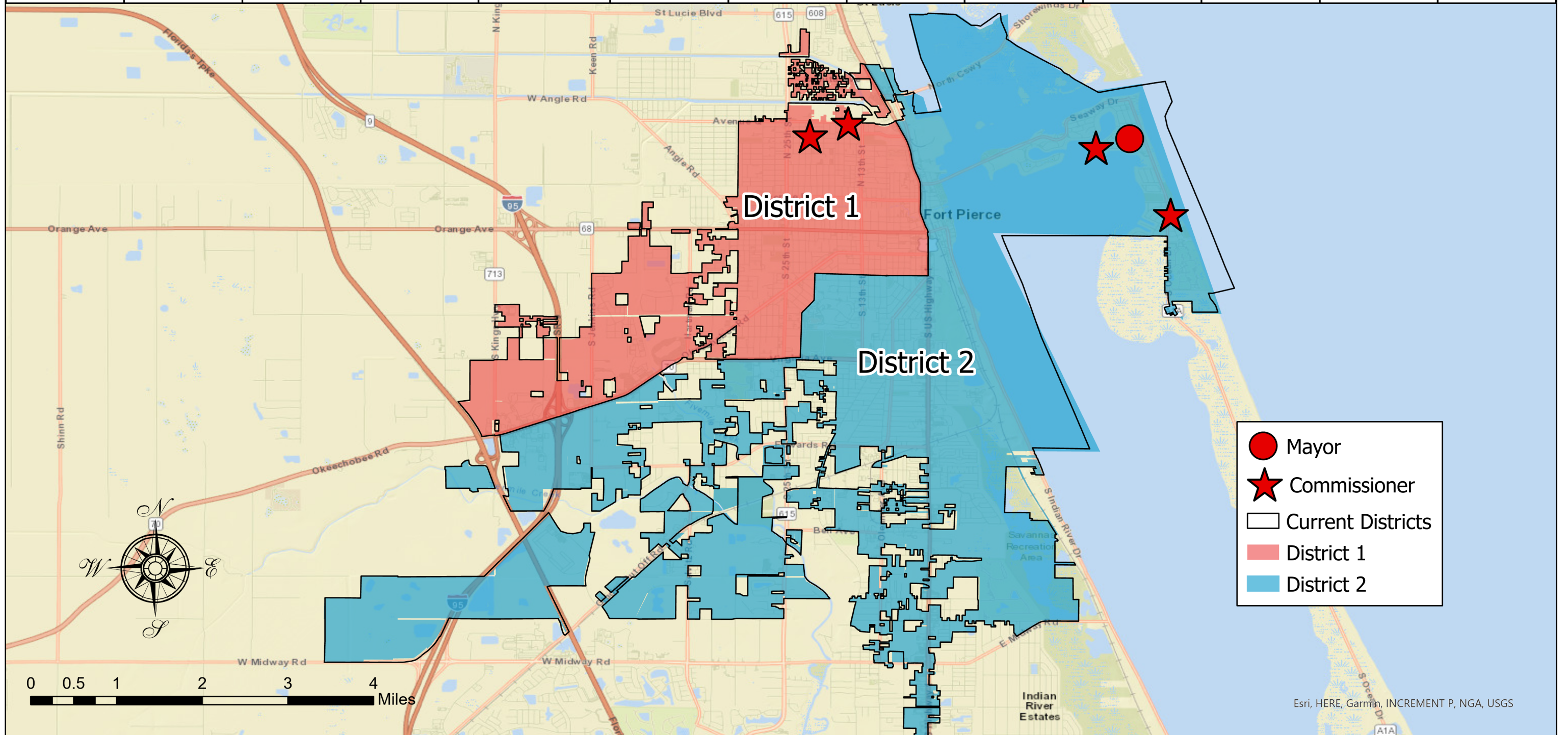
Attachments



Fort Pierce Current Districts



DISTRICT	2020 Population IDEAL	2020 Population ACTUAL	Population Deviation	Percent Deviation	Population White	Percent White	Population Black	Percent Black	Population Other	Precent Other	Population Hispanic	Percent Hispanic
District 1	23704	22221	-1483	-6.3%	4232	19%	13447	61%	4542	20%	4786	22%
District 2	23704		1483	6.3%	13837	55%	4820	19%	6530	26%	6837	27%
Totals	47408	47408	0	0	18069	-	18267	-	11072	-	11623	-



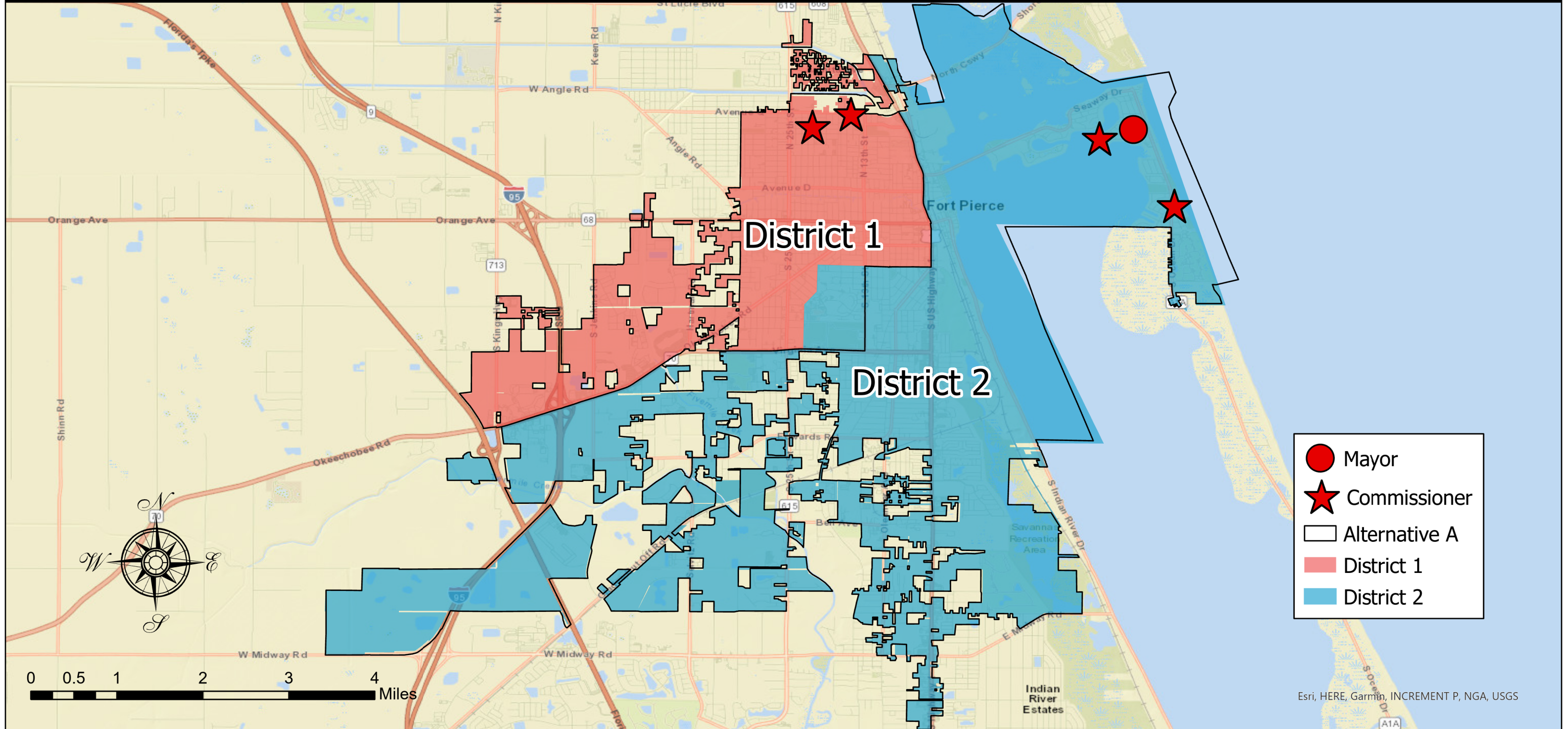
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Fort Pierce Districts Alternative A



DISTRICT	2020 Population IDEAL	2020 Population ACTUAL	Population Deviation	Percent Deviation	Population White	Percent White	Population Black	Percent Black	Population Other	Percent Other	Population Hispanic	Percent Hispanic
District 1	23704	23808	104	0.4%	5048	21%	13911	58%	4849	20%	5154	22%
District 2	23704	23600	-104	-0.4%	13021	55%	4356	18%	6223	26%	6469	27%
Totals	47408	47408	0	0	18069	-	18267	-	11072	-	11623	-



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City of Ft. Pierce

Data - Commission Redistricting Options

Current Districts												
DISTRICT	2020 Population IDEAL	2020 Population ACTUAL	Population Deviation	Percent Deviation	Population White	Percent White	Population Black	Percent Black	Population Other	Percent Other	Population Hispanic	Percent Hispanic
District 1	23,704	22,221	(1,483)	-6.26%	4,232	19.05%	13,447	60.51%	4,542	20.44%	4,786	21.54%
District 2	23,704	25,187	1,483	6.26%	13,837	54.94%	4,820	19.14%	6,530	25.93%	6,837	27.14%
Totals	47,408	47,408			18,069		18,267		11,072		11,623	

Alternative 1												
DISTRICT	2020 Population IDEAL	2020 Population ACTUAL	Population Deviation	Percent Deviation	Population White	Percent White	Population Black	Percent Black	Population Other	Percent Other	Population Hispanic	Percent Hispanic
District 1	23,704	23,808	104	0.44%	5,048	21.20%	13,911	58.43%	4,849	20.37%	5,154	21.65%
District 2	23,704	23,600	-104	-0.44%	13,021	55.17%	4,356	18.46%	6,223	26.37%	6,469	27.41%
Totals	47,408	47,408			18,069		18,267		11,072		11,623	