

Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC)

Mapping Process and Procedures

V1.22.24

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Key Terms and Definitions

Communities of Interest (COI): “Communities of interest may include, but shall not be limited to, populations that share cultural or historical characteristics or economic interests. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.”

Voting Rights Act (VRA): The Voting Rights Act of 1965 aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented historically marginalized groups from exercising their right to vote as guaranteed under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It applies to redistricting to prevent states and localities from drawing districts that deny underrepresented minority groups a chance to elect a candidate of their choice. Protected groups, by federal law, include African Americans, Hispanic, Native American and Alaskan Natives. All district maps must comply with the Voting Rights Act. Protected groups may also encompass minority language and national origin.

District Maps: Maps of individual electoral districts that, when assembled, comprise a complete Redistricting Plan for each of the types of districts the MICRC is required to draw state Senate (38 districts), state House (110 districts), and U.S. Congressional (13 districts).

Draft Maps: Initial maps drafted by the Commission prior to public hearings.

Alternate Draft: A draft map put forth for consideration by an individual Commissioner during the draft map period.

Draft Proposed Maps: Maps approved for display and feedback during the Public Hearings.

Proposed Maps: Maps that have been approved and published to begin the public comment period.

Final Maps: Maps that are approved by a final vote with at least two Commissioners from each affiliation.

CONSTITUTIONAL MAPPING CRITERIA (IN RANK ORDER)

1. Districts shall be of equal population as mandated by the United States constitution, and shall comply with the voting rights act and other federal laws.
2. Districts shall be geographically contiguous. Island areas are considered to be contiguous by land to the county of which they are a part.
3. Districts shall reflect the state's diverse population and communities of interest. Communities of interest may include, but shall not be limited to, populations that share cultural or historical characteristics or economic interests. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.
4. Districts shall not provide a disproportionate advantage to any political party. A disproportionate advantage to a political party shall be determined using accepted measures of partisan fairness.
5. Districts shall not favor or disfavor an incumbent elected official or a candidate.
6. Districts shall reflect consideration of county, city, and township boundaries.
7. Districts shall be reasonably compact.

DISTRICT DETAILS

District Type	District Count	Ideal District Size	District Size w/ Deviations
*State Senate	38 districts	265,193 people	251,933 - 278,453 people (-5.0% to 5.0% deviation)
*State House	110 districts	91,612 people	87,031 - 96,193 people (-5.0% to 5.0% deviation)
Congressional	13 districts	775,179 people	771,303 - 779,055 people (-0.5% to 0.5% deviation)

*District Count Set by Michigan Constitution

In 2021, the Commission adopted maps for the State Senate, the State House, and Congress. The State of Michigan held elections with those districts in 2022. In December 2023, the District Court in the *Agee, et al v. Benson, et al* federal case held that the following State House districts were drawn in an unconstitutional manner and therefore must be redrawn by the Commission: 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14. The District Court held that the following State Senate districts were drawn in an unconstitutional manner and therefore must be redrawn by the Commission: 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11. The Commission has appealed the District Court’s decision to the Supreme Court of the United States. The District Court ordered the Commission to first redraw the State House districts. The District Court ordered the Commission to “submit to th[e] court—and make available on its own website—newly drawn district plans for Michigan House Districts 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 14, and for any other districts as reasonably necessary to cure the unconstitutional racial gerrymanders, no later than February 2, 2024.” The District Court will issue a scheduling order at a later date for the timeline for redrawing the State Senate districts.

MICRC 2024 MAPPING SCHEDULE

[View a schedule of the Commission's 2024 mapping sessions.](#)

Proposed Mapping Session Process

PRIOR TO SCHEDULED MAPPING SESSION

1. Research and Review

Commissioners should review, research and take notes on public comment regarding the scheduled mapping area.

Considerations for preparation:

- i. Review the constitutional ranked criteria for redistricting. Although compliance with the Voting Rights Act (“VRA”) and other federal laws is mandated as part of the first constitutional ranked criterion, Commissioners shall not consider race as a factor in any of their mapping decisions. After draft plans have been prepared and prior to any vote on approval of such plans, the Commission’s retained experts and VRA counsel will analyze the draft plans for compliance with the VRA.
- ii. COIs from public comment (see COI considerations document on page 21 for types of public comment, where to locate and additional considerations).
- iii. Review any ACS data, ESRI data, etc.
 1. Are there any additional COIs that should be considered not mentioned in public comment?
- iv. Familiarize yourself w/ landmarks, regional boundaries, geographic or topographic details (some may be overlap with COI commentary).
 1. County, city, town, township boundaries, school district boundaries etc.
 2. Rivers, water-basins, parks, or conservation areas.
 3. Economic zones (airports, power plants, manufacturing, hospitality etc.)

2. Draft maps from individual commissioners (*OPTIONAL*)

Commissioners may, **but are not required to**, draft maps individually for sharing during the public mapping meeting. Individual maps are not required from Commissioners. Collaborative mapping among the entire Commission during a public meeting is required.

- a. To maintain public transparency and trust, Commissioners **should not** share individually drafted district maps with other Commissioners, or collaboratively draft district maps prior to the public meeting. The Commission is constitutionally required to draw district maps during public meetings.
- b. Commissioners who have produced individual maps they intend to share with the Commission should notify Commission staff, EDS and the Secretary at least one day prior to the scheduled mapping session for that area so that it may be incorporated into data layer and publicly posted.

DRAFT MAPPING SESSION

The below work process outlines draft mapping session procedure.

1. Announce Mapping Area

Commission Chairperson to announce the area(s) and district type(s) being discussed at the mapping session for the public record.

- a. EDS to open and display mapping software and show the area(s) being discussed.
- b. Chairperson to repeat the announcement after resuming from breaks.

Note: Regional lines serve as guidelines for initial mapping sessions and the Commission is not required to map strictly within regional lines. A draft district may extend across regional lines. However, the District Court in the *Agee* matter ordered the Commission to “submit to th[e] court—and make available on its own website—newly drawn district plans for Michigan House Districts 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 14, and for any other districts **as reasonably necessary** to cure the unconstitutional racial gerrymanders, no later than February 2, 2024.” (Emphasis added).

2. Collaborative Line Drawing Session

The Commission will choose an area to begin collectively drawing district lines.

a. Considerations of where to begin and proceed drawing within the state:

- i. All of the districts at issue in the redrawing process are within the southeast Michigan region. Therefore, all drawing should begin and proceed within that area.

b. Collaborative Mapping:

- i. A Commissioner, selected in alphabetical order (following roll-call vote procedure) will begin the drawing of a district in the scheduled area.
 1. The selected Commissioner is encouraged not to pass.
 2. The selected Commissioner may elect to choose one of the pre-created alternative district maps presented by individual commissioners as a starting point.
- ii. Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson facilitates the discussion between Commissioners regarding placement or adjustment of proposed lines. Chairperson/ Vice-Chairperson instructs EDS to make proposed adjustments based on the discussion of the full Commission.

1. Considerations when drawing or adjusting lines:

- a. Ranked criteria from the Constitution. As noted above, although compliance with the VRA and other federal laws is mandated as part of the first constitutional ranked criterion, Commissioners shall not consider race as a

factor in any of their mapping decisions. After draft plans have been prepared and prior to any vote on approval of such plans, the Commission's retained experts and VRA counsel will analyze the draft plans for compliance with the VRA.

- b. Input from consultants
 - c. After the initial district line is drawn, subsequent district line drawing may require the Commission to adjust or reconsider lines in previously completed districts.
- iii. **Review of Proposed COIs:** Commissioners to review COIs and public comment prior to the meeting and discuss and consider Communities of Interest and diverse populations within the area being mapped.
 - iv. **Consult with Consultants:** Request input from consultants, things of note and items to consider when line drawing. Commission may make modifications as needed based on consultant feedback.
- c. **Record Keeping:** All major decisions and rationale catalogued by MICRC staff and MDOS and entered into the repository.
 - d. **Alternate Drafts:** An Alternate Draft of a single district, grouping of districts or area that may be produced at the request of any Commissioner for consideration by the full body during deliberations on Draft Proposed Maps. These alternate drafts may be considered for integration into the collaborative map as a starting point for mapping or an alternative to it.
 - i. During the collaborative mapping process, any Commissioner may indicate they would like to create an Alternate Draft. Commissioners may create an Alternate Draft in one of two ways.
 - 1. Request EDS to draw the Alternate Draft during the public meeting.
 - a. After the Commission finalizes that single district, upon recognition by the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, the individual who requested an Alternate Map may direct EDS on how to draw their Alternative Draft of the district. Drawing of the Alternate Draft maps will not occur simultaneously with the collaborative mapping but will take place after the previous map's draft district is completed.
 - b. If more than one Commissioner requests to create an Alternate Draft for that district, a que will form in the order of request.

2. Individual Commissioners may choose to draw their Alternative Draft map independently prior to or after the public meeting using the mapping software, and submit the Alternate Draft to EDS, MICRC Staff and the Secretary for public posting.
 - a. Commissioners creating a map prior to the collaborative mapping session for consideration should notify Commission staff, EDS and the Secretary at least one day prior to the scheduled deliberation session so the map may be posted online for public viewing.
 - b. Commissioners submitting a map after the collaborative mapping session may present their map to the Commission at the subsequent meeting as an Unfinished Business agenda item. Commissioners creating alternative maps after the collaborative mapping session should notify Commission staff, EDS and the Secretary at least one day prior to the scheduled deliberation session.
 - c. Commissioners submitting a plan should utilize the following naming convention (note underlines between each section):
Date_ Version Type of District Initials

Sample: 10-05-21_v1_CD_ABC

- e. **Follow the process above until all districts in the scheduled areas are completed to the Commission's satisfaction.** The Commission will have compiled Draft Maps and Alternate Draft Maps for formal consideration during its deliberations.
 - f. **Record Keeping:** Explanation and rationale will be catalogued by MICRC staff and MDOS and entered into the repository.
3. **Consultation with consultants:** Request input from consultants, things of note and items to adjust. Commission may make modifications as needed based on feedback.