



REDISTRICTING 201

Background

The Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) announced details on Oct. 18 for the second round of public hearings starting in late October that give Michiganders a voice in helping shape the state's political boundaries for the next 10 years based on its new federal and state legislative district maps.

In this next phase, the MICRC is required by the Michigan Constitution to hold at least five public hearings throughout the state to solicit comment from the public about the draft proposed plans being considered for redistricting Michigan congressional, House and Senate districts.

Before drawing any lines, the MICRC was required to hold at least 10 public hearings in 2021 as the first phase of the map-drawing process. As a result, the MICRC hosted 16 public hearings to gather input before creating any maps. The MICRC used the public input it gathered to inform its decisions while drafting maps.

The first phase culminated with a vote by the MICRC on Oct. 11 to approve the 10 collaborative maps. The MICRC also received 10 additional maps that individual commissioners submitted for public review and comment during the constitutionally mandated second phase of public hearings.

In October, these public hearings are critical to ensure mapping fairness and solicit public feedback about potential redistricting plans for the Michigan Congressional, House, and Senate districts.

When and where were the MICRC's public hearings in October?

The five public hearings were held:

- **Wednesday, Oct. 20, from 1-8:00 p.m., recess from 3:30-5:00 p.m.**
TCF Center, 1 Washington Blvd., Detroit 48226
- **Thursday, Oct. 21, from 1-8:00 p.m., recess from 3:30-5:00 p.m.**
Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing 48933
- **Friday, Oct. 22, from 1-8:00 p.m., recess from 3:30-5:00 p.m.**
DeVos Place, Steelcase Ballroom, 303 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids 49503
- **Monday, Oct. 25, from 1-8:00 p.m., recess from 3:30-5:00 p.m.**
Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Road, Gaylord 49735
- **Tuesday, Oct. 26, from 1-8:00 p.m., recess from 3:30-5:00 p.m.**
Dort Financial Center, 3501 Lapeer Road, Flint 48503

All public hearings are available online to view virtually via the MICRC YouTube Channel. Details are at michigan.gov/MICRC under "Meeting Notices & Materials."



How can Michiganders comment on the MICRC’s proposed draft maps?

Michiganders were invited to attend the public hearings and make comments by signing up at any event. Speakers were asked to comment on a first-come, first-served basis. At each public hearing, the MICRC established an on-site Public Portal Station with volunteers to increase public participation and added monitors to enhance viewing of draft proposed maps. It also provides technical assistance in displaying information available on the Public Comment Portal or Mapping Portal for Michigan residents to reference during their public comments.

Michiganders can continue to make their voices heard by connecting with MICRC via:

Comments: There are two ways to provide comments on proposed maps through the commission’s Online Public Comment Portal and Mapping Portal at michigan.gov/MICRC.

Call: Individuals can call 833-YOU-DRAW (833-968-3729) for more information.

For Help: Individuals can call 2-1-1 for assistance in registering to provide public comment. This service is available in over 200 languages and is ideal for individuals without internet access.

Mail: MICRC, P.O. Box 30318, Lansing, MI 48909

What happens after the public hearings?

After the final public hearing on Oct. 26, the MICRC will take the public comments under advisement and begin its deliberation period by meeting daily starting at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 27, with the first session at the Michigan State University Union, 49 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48824.

The purpose of those meetings is to further deliberate on the proposed legislative and congressional district boundaries and adjust, if necessary. The MICRC will continue to take public comment during these meetings. Please visit www.michigan.gov/MICRC to find out additional meeting dates, locations, and times.

What are the seven ranked redistricting criteria the MICRC are required to follow?

The Michigan Constitution provides the specific criteria and procedures the MICRC must use when proposing and adopting a redistricting plan. The constitutional standards are listed below in order of priority:

- (a) **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.**
- (b) **Districts shall be geographically contiguous.** Island areas are contiguous by land to the county of which they are a part.



- (c) **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.
- (d) **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.
- (e) **Districts shall not favor or disfavor an incumbent elected official or a candidate.**
- (f) **Districts shall reflect consideration of county, city and township boundaries.**
- (g) **Districts shall be reasonably compact.**

What is the difference between a “collaborative” map and an “individual” map?

The commission drew 10 collaborative maps as a team in open meetings that have been approved for public comment and meets the criteria set forth by the state Constitution. A single commissioner creates an individual map without input from others. Several commissioners drew 10 additional maps as individuals.

Maps are labeled by the date they were created and a designated tree name to delineate them from previous draft maps. Information about all 10 collaborative draft proposed maps and the 10 individual proposed maps is available on the commission’s website, www.michigan.gov/MICRC.

When is the MICRC expected to finish its work?

After the MICRC completes its deliberation period, it is scheduled to adopt proposed maps on Friday, Nov. 5. Those maps will then be published for public review on or about Nov. 14.

As required by the Michigan Constitution, each published map will be tested for compliance with the seven ranked redistricting criteria, be accompanied by a report that includes such census data as is necessary to accurately describe the plan as well as verify the population of each district and will also have the map and legal description.

The Constitution states that upon MICRC publication of the proposed redistricting maps, the commission must provide a minimum of 45 days for additional public comment.



During the 45-day comment period, the MICRC plans to host public meetings allowing further input on Thursdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Nov. 18
- Dec. 2
- Dec.16
- Dec. 30

Details about these meetings are available at michigan.gov/MICRC under “Meeting Notices & Materials.”

The MICRC is scheduled to adopt the final maps on Dec. 30. The commission is required to publish the final maps within 30 days after adopting a plan. Included with the final maps will be reference materials and data used in drawing the final maps and any programming information used to produce and test the plan. In addition, the Michigan Secretary of State will keep a public record of all MICRC proceedings and will publish each map and required documentation.

The adopted redistricting plan with new legislative boundaries for the state House, state Senate and congressional districts will become law 60 days after publication. These district maps will take effect before the 2022 primary and general elections.

How many votes are necessary for the MICRC to approve the state’s new legislative and congressional district maps?

A final redistricting plan requires a majority vote of the MICRC that includes at least two commissioners who affiliate with each major party and two commissioners who do not affiliate with either major party, plus one additional commissioner to reach a majority for a total of seven commissioners.

What happens if a majority of commissioners fail to approve a final set of maps?

According to the state Constitution, the MICRC would use the following process to adopt a plan for that type of district where a majority vote cannot be reached:

- Each commissioner can submit one proposed plan for each type of district to the full commission for consideration.
- Each commissioner would then rank the plans submitted according to preference. Each plan would be assigned a point value inverse to its ranking among the number of choices, giving the lowest-ranked plan one point and the highest-ranked plan a point value equal to the number of plans submitted.
- The commission would adopt the plan receiving the highest total points that is also ranked among the top half of plans by at least two commissioners not affiliated with the party of the commissioner submitting the plan, or in the case of a plan submitted



by nonaffiliated commissioners, is ranked among the top half of plans by at least two commissioners affiliated with a major party.

- If plans are tied for the highest point total, the Michigan Secretary of State would randomly select the final plan from those plans.
- If no plan meets the above requirements, the Michigan Secretary of State will randomly select the final plan for each district type. Each final plan will be selected from all the submitted plans by individual commissioners (each may submit one proposed plan for each type of district to the full commission for consideration) pursuant to part (14)(c)(i) of the Michigan Constitution.

What is the potential role of the Michigan Supreme Court in the redistricting process?

The Michigan Supreme Court, in the exercise of original jurisdiction, can direct the MICRC to perform its duties.

The Michigan Supreme Court can also review a challenge to any plan adopted by the MICRC and could potentially remand a plan to the MICRC for further action if the court decides a plan fails to comply with the requirements of the Michigan Constitution. Additionally, a challenge could be brought in federal court for an alleged violation of the United States Constitution, or federal law, i.e., the Voting Rights Act.

Who are the members of the MICRC making this historic decision?

The MICRC has the exclusive authority to redistrict the state under Article IV, Section 6 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963. Therefore, the MICRC is the only entity authorized to draw and adopt redistricting plans for the state of Michigan.

Randomly selected from over 9,000 applicants, the MICRC comprises 13 citizens from across the state. They consist of four people who affiliate with the Democratic Party, five people who do not affiliate with either major party, and four people who affiliate with the Republican Party.

The members of the inaugural MICRC are:

Commissioner Douglas Clark, Retired Operations and Development Manager
Commissioner Juanita Curry, Retired Specialized Foster Care Worker
Commissioner Anthony Eid, Medical Student
Commissioner Rhonda Lange, Real Estate Broker
Commissioner Steven Lett, Semi-Retired Attorney
Commissioner Brittni Kellom, Entrepreneur and Trauma Practitioner
Commissioner Cynthia Orton, College Student
Commissioner M.C. Rothhorn, Financial Cooperator



Commissioner Rebecca Szetela, Lawyer
Commissioner Janice Vallette, Retired Banker
Commissioner Erin Wagner, Wife and Mother of Six
Commissioner Richard Weiss, Retired Autoworker and Handyman
Commissioner Dustin Witjes, Graduate Student

The MICRC staff includes Executive Director Suann Hammersmith, General Counsel Julianne Pastula, Communications and Outreach Director Edward Woods III, and Executive Assistant Sara Martinez.

Why can't the MICRC or its staff talk with members of the public about the map-making process outside of public hearings/meetings?

The Michigan Constitution under Subsection 11 prohibits the commission, its members, staff, attorneys, and consultants from discussing redistricting matters with members of the public outside of an open meeting of the commission. The exceptions to this prohibition only apply to commissioners. The exceptions are if the communication comes in writing and is relevant to the performance of their duties or occurs during a previously publicly noticed forum or town hall open to the public.

Subsection 11 is vital because it reinforces the MICRC's commitment to transparency, integrity, and impartiality while inviting meaningful public participation in its meetings and ensuring that access to information is maintained throughout the redistricting process.

For more information about redistricting or to sign up and receive alerts, please visit www.michigan.gov/MICRC.