

Public Meeting Comments 10.5.21

Timestamp	Meeting Date	Agenda Item	First and Last Name	Zip Code	Representing	Comments
10/5/2021 8:18:04	Oct. 5, 2021	public hearing and mapping	Susan Bickel	85718	self	I was present at the Tucson public meeting last Wednesday evening and I would like to thank the commissioners for spending some time with us. The meeting was quite long and I suggest that during the next round of public hearings, you schedule one meeting devoted to Tucson and Pima County. When VC Watchman commented on the sea of red in the audience, it is plausible that he thought he was acknowledging supporters of RedforEd when in fact they were Republicans determined to turn a non-partisan event political. I was pleased overall with the results of the first day of mapping. It appears that the commission is focusing on respecting tribes and minorities. There is one exception however. Commissioner Mehl's suggested district to include Oro Valley and Marana east to Houghton Road is likely to become the least diverse district in Arizona. By design. This is an obvious gerrymandering attempt to change from a well-balanced competitive district to one that is overtly Republican.
10/5/2021 8:23:12	Oct. 5, 2021	Yesterday's polarized voting report	Jay Simpson	85016	Myself	In order to proceed in an orderly fashion in the preparation of draft maps, the IRC should request that Dr. Lisa Handley complete her polarized voting analysis. There was no discussion during the October 4th meeting as to when the analysis would be completed for the rest of the state. While it is very helpful to have her report on Maricopa County, Navajo County and Apache County (she found substantial evidence of polarized voting in each of those three counties), the IRC should request her report on at least Yuma, Santa Cruz and Pima Counties as well. It seems likely that she will find evidence of polarized voting in those three counties and there may be other areas of the state as well. It seems prudent to have those reports in hand before attempting to draw congressional or legislative districts. In addition, it would be helpful to ask Dr. Handley to make an assessment as to the number of Congressional Districts and Legislative District that should be drawn to protect the voting rights of minority voters. It is not a forgone conclusion, as some members of the Commission surmise, that there are two CDs and eight LDs necessary for VRA compliance. There could be more and there could be fewer minority-majority districts depending on population growth, minority dispersion and the influx of new residents from California and the Midwest. Moreover, it is vitally important that the Commission avoid concentrating all of the hispanic voters into one or two districts. In redistricting terminology, this is referred to as the practice of "packing" whereby districts are drawn to consolidate the population of a community into a small number of districts in order to dilute the minority community's influence over a greater number of districts. The practice of "packing" is totally inconsistent with the letter and the spirit of Proposition 106 which created this Commission for the purpose of ending the practice of gerrymandering in favor of creating fair and competitive maps.
10/5/2021 8:29:15	Oct. 5, 2021	Brian Kingery	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	Mr. Kingery's voice is very difficult to hear. His voice is coming in and out. Thank you.
10/5/2021 8:33:15	Oct. 5, 2021	access to your meeting this morning	Juлие Pindzola	86301	myself	The AGENDA for today's meeting does NOT have a viable link to your webex meeting. This not right. You want this public access to be democratic yet the technology support you provide the public is weak. PLEASE amend and repost your agenda ASAP with the correct and viable link so we can see and hear your meeting. THANK YOU
10/5/2021 8:39:09	Oct. 5, 2021	renumbering the grid districts	Julie Pindzola	86301	myself	Please do not renumber things that are half started. You will introduce a tremendous amount of confusion given we have all built maps and understandings based on the GRID maps as currently numbered.
10/5/2021 8:39:41	Oct. 5, 2021	Grid maps	Rita Day	86301	Myself	I agree with Commissioner Mele to try to keep the district numbers close to what they were in last Redistricting. It just makes it less confusion.
10/5/2021 8:42:52	Oct. 5, 2021	mapping	Susan Bickel	85718	self	when will these maps be available for review by the public?
10/5/2021 8:54:50	Oct. 5, 2021	Grid maps	Rita Day	86301	Myself	The commission is taking a break so all of those in the meeting can log onto the grid maps. But what about the public? Are you going to give us directions so we can also log on and follow along. During the last 30 minutes often times the screen only showed population numbers for districts 1-4. It would be more helpful to see the full picture of all the districts.
10/5/2021 9:03:11	Oct. 5, 2021	4) A. Legislative Districts/Southwest Valley	Trey Terry	85395	myself	Regarding the legislative map, and the idea of splitting Yuma County, I wanted to draw attention to one of the major "ripple effects" that causes. My name is Trey Terry and I serve on the Agua Fria High School District Governing Board. My district is originally over 60 years old and contains some of the older communities in the southwest valley. On top of that, Buckeye and Goodyear are two of the fastest-growing communities in the entire nation so we have seen rapid growth recently. The Agua Fria High School District has five different high schools, however under the last commission, we were split into four different legislative districts. This becomes a major hurdle in being represented at the state level as our community has been split up into tiny slivers of districts. How does Yuma impact? Well, when you split Yuma County, you have to "find" population elsewhere and cross hours of empty desert, to complete the districts. My community has been the victim of this practice. The result is that I live 20 minutes from downtown Phoenix, yet I have a State Representative that lives closer to Sea World in San Diego, CA, than he does to me. Despite me being an elected official in his district, in the same political party, I maybe see or hear from him only once or twice every two years during election season. This past practice has disenfranchised my neighbors. Now, I totally understand why Yuma wants to split. They want more representation. In the past, they've been able to get as many as four legislators serving at the same time. My city of Goodyear, which is almost identical in population to Yuma and one of the fastest-growing cities in America, has never had more than one legislator serving us. Ironically, Yuma County's population is very close to the exact population needed for a legislative district. It is also historically a very competitive district. I would argue that Yuma County speaking in one voice to try to get more representation reflects that they are in fact a single community of interest, separated by hundreds of miles of desert from other large communities in Arizona. I strongly believe Yuma County should once again be united on the legislative map so the "ripple effects" do not disenfranchise other Arizona voters. At the same time, I would ask for the southwest valley communities of Goodyear, Avondale, Buckeye, and Litchfield Park be united in the legislative map as we are in daily life. Thank you.
10/5/2021 9:08:39	Oct. 5, 2021	reviewing submitted plans	Julie Pindzola	86301	myself	Can you please add the IRC assigned plan numbers to the plans found in the Shared Plans on the Redistricting System area? There is a disconnect from the Hub maps listed by CD and LD numbers you've assigned, to the plans listed under account access to Open and Shared Plans. WE currently have to open the Hub published pan to get the date and submitter's name. Then we have to go and hunt the editable list of maps by name and date. This should be cross numbered to help us home in on the map we want to review or edit and resubmit. THANKS
10/5/2021 9:32:57	Oct. 5, 2021	Technology	Betty Bengtson	85718	League of Women Voters of Arizona	It is often difficult to hear Brian Kingery when he is talking, especially when he turns his head to look at his screen. I note he could move his mike closer. It also is sometimes difficult to hear Doug Johnson when his voice trails off or his head is turned. The commissioners are doing a good job of speaking into their mikes today. Thank you.
10/5/2021 9:37:24	Oct. 5, 2021	your new District 2, No AZ	Julie Pindzola	86301	myself	Thank you Commissioner Lerner. The map 1.1 wipes out the competitive districts 6 and 7 in place for a Large Red District now number 2. Putting things back like the current districts would be a reasonable starting concept. No northern AZ is not inherently conservative. It depends on how you draw the maps!
10/5/2021 9:44:44	Oct. 5, 2021	your view of competitiveness	Julie Pndnzola	86301	myself	Let's be honest. Part of the representativeness pertains to funding from Washington DC and Phoenix that any elected official may endorse, but the political parties that win seats plays a much larger role in policies and budgets. We want a politically balanced state. The current districts worked hard to help No AZ be politically balanced to a reasonable degree. Your current direction would unwind that greatly.

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10/5/2021 9:58:47	Oct. 5, 2021	VI. Draft Map decision discussion and possible action concerning revisions to the Grid Map.	William Bowlus-Root	85365	Myself	<p>I generally like the way both CD Test Map Version 1.0 and CD Test Map Version 1.1 deal with the Yuma area. However, Version 1.1 makes two changes that are hard to understand.</p> <p>First, on the west side it severs the major downtown business district from the primarily Latino community that uses it the most. The boundaries in v1.0 better respect the community and it's interests.</p> <p>Second, a number of blocks on the east side have been added that straddle I-8. That's not a bad thing, except that the eastern border of those changes cuts right through the Foothills area and several major subdivisions and mobile home parks that form a cohesive community are now divided. The v1.0 map is preferable, or if you need to move blocks in this particular area, then you should make sure the boundaries keep the Foothills area intact. A suitable line might be half-way between Fortuna Blvd and Foothills Blvd.</p> <p>Similarly, you've divided other subdivisions and mobile home parks located on the north side of I-8. They should retain their integrity, even if you put the line between them.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>
10/5/2021 10:03:44	Oct. 5, 2021	Mapping Meetings on Webex	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	I appreciate the fact that you post your regular meetings on YouTube real time. If you can post the Webex meetings in a timely manner, I would greatly appreciate that too. Thank you.
10/5/2021 10:08:09	Oct. 5, 2021	Competitiveness	Nancy Meister	85364	self	I agree with Com Watchman that competitiveness means being able to elect a person to represent them not that they will have someone who will "attend" to their needs.
10/5/2021 10:12:01	Oct. 5, 2021	VI. Draft Map decision discussion and possible action concerning revisions to the Grid Map.	William Bowlus-Root	85365	Myself	<p>Commissioner Neuberger's concern/question with the way the commission seems to be making sure that all the minority areas are given as much voice as possible by putting all of them into a unified district is valid. Her concern is that, while they may have a stronger voice by being all together, that also deprives them of having any voice in other districts. By putting them all together in a single district, they would have a stronger voice - in that district, but viewed through another lens it's a great way to create a ghetto. It's also called packing, one of the tried and true tools of gerrymandering. To be fair, it's only necessary to draw a minority-majority district so that the minorities in them are large enough to win a competitive election. They can easily do that with 55-60% of the voters. They don't need 80%. Packing them all into a single district does not help them any more than making sure they are spread into neighboring districts where they have less than enough to win any election in any of them.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>
10/5/2021 10:12:34	Oct. 5, 2021	Competitiveness criterion and representation	Laura Huenneke	86004	self	I fear that Chair Neuberger's comments about a minority group being large enough to "demand" attention and representation [even if falling short of the formal measures of competitiveness] are somewhat naive. This is the very basis of Voting Rights Act protections - historically, it has been quite common for minority groups to be ignored and to have essentially zero chance of electing a representative of their choice, even if they are numerous enough to seem like a potential bloc of interest. I know in the Flagstaff region there is zero attention from current state legislators - no open houses or visits, no answers to requests for assistance, no showing up at important local public events, even blocks on social media interactions - though the Flagstaff population is large enough to merit attention from your perspective. I support the comments of Commissioners Lerner and Watchman - you should keep the competitiveness discussion focused on the formal metrics that the Commission voted to adopt, and not settle for some vague statements about a community or a minority population being "large enough to demand attention."
10/5/2021 10:16:59	Oct. 5, 2021	VI. Draft Map decision discussion and possible action concerning revisions to the Grid Map.	William Bowlus-Root	85365	Myself	<p>You had the Yuma area right in both CD Test Map Version 1.0 and CD Test Map Version 1.1 (with minor tweaks).</p> <p>However, you got it completely wrong in CD Test Map Version 1.2. Combing all of Yuma County in CD7 or CD9 does not respect the consensus of the Communities of Interest testimony you received. Please do not do that. It deprives the community of its potential to influence legislation that is crucial to it's well-being and interests.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>
10/5/2021 10:29:35	Oct. 5, 2021	VI. Draft Map decision discussion and possible action concerning revisions to the Grid Map.	William Bowlus-Root	85365	Myself	<p>To answer commissioner Lerner's question, the consensus during the public comments testimony was that Yuma wanted to remain split for BOTH Congressional and Legislative districts.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>
10/5/2021 10:32:19	Oct. 5, 2021	Yuma County Congressional districts	Nancy Meister	85364	self	Yuma County should be in 2 Congressional Districts and 2 Legislative Districts as it does in the present maps. Please ask Com.. York to speak into the mic.
10/5/2021 10:33:07	Oct. 5, 2021	competitiveness	Lynne hudson	85704	self	If I am not mistaken, the courts have already ruled that competitiveness is no less important than any other criterion. "To the extent possible" is in the definition of all or most other criteria. Commissioner Neuberger seems to have a broader definition of competitiveness than other commissioners AND others concerned with fair elections. Her expressed idea that what really matters is if a minority has sufficient numbers to be listened to does not align with facts on the ground. Republican legislators routinely defy the wishes of the majority on many issues, let alone minority concerns--e.g., Prop 208 and recent bipartisan criminal justice reform bills. That is why Prop 108 was supported by the majority of all Arizonans in 2000.
10/5/2021 10:37:45	Oct. 5, 2021	Brian Kingery	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	Please get Mr. Kingery a longer mic or move it closer to his mouth. It is very difficult to hear him. Thank you.
10/5/2021 10:39:34	Oct. 5, 2021	Audio	Nancy Meister	85364	self	Brian, the mapping person, needs a mic so the public can hear him.
10/5/2021 10:52:09	Oct. 5, 2021	Process	Lynne Hudson	85704	self	Kudos to our commissioners. They have clearly done their homework, as evidenced by their efforts to modify the grid map to accommodate COI preferences.
10/5/2021 10:58:27	Oct. 5, 2021	Community of interests	Nancy Meister	85364	self	Our US Constitution separates church and state.. Should church affiliation be part of the conversation about district lines?
10/5/2021 11:12:43	Oct. 5, 2021	Yuma City vs County	Nancy Meister	85364	self	There are parts of the city in current CD4 (Gossar) but it would make more sense for the City to be in current CD 3. The foothills area - none incorporated - fits with northern Yuma County, La Paz and Mohave County.

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10/5/2021 11:21:28	Oct. 5, 2021	VI. Draft Map decision discussion and possible action concerning revisions to the Grid Map.	William Bowlus-Root	85365	Myself	<p>Commissioner Lerner wondered how to deal with the Colorado River edge of the state and how that interacts with Yuma County.</p> <p>While its true that all the counties along the western edge of the state share an important waterway that affects all of them, there is a difference. The northern and central counties - down to about I-10 have that resource as their main concern. However, Yuma County (and part of La Paz County) are primarily agricultural and their proximity to the border is a key differentiator. They are also largely Latino, so they share an affinity with the other border counties.</p> <p>It would be a mistake to create a Colorado River district that encompasses all the counties along the western border. While that might seem like a good idea when looking at a map, it doesn't translate to a cohesive unit on the ground.</p> <p>As was mentioned during the public testimony meeting here, Yuma County benefits from being split for both congressional and legislative districts. (Although speakers tended to refer to the benefit of the legislative split when they spoke, the rationale they espoused to back their support for it was also applicable to the congressional districts and was also mentioned if only in passing.) Please restore that split to the congressional districts and do not include the entire county in either CD7 or CD9.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>
10/5/2021 11:35:24	Oct. 5, 2021	AUDIO ISSUES	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	I have already mentioned that it is difficult to hear Brian Kingery. He has made a few statements that were clear. Now, his voice is faded again. So is Doug Johnson's voice. Please fix these audio issues. Thank you.
10/5/2021 11:49:52	Oct. 5, 2021	AUDIO PROBLEMS	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	I am virtually attending the October 5, 2021 meeting, but it is very difficult to hear everyone. I think Brett Johnson just spoke, but his voice cut out completely. Doug Johnson's voice is muted and it is very difficult to hear Brian Kingery. Even Chairwoman Neuberger is muted at times. Is it a public meeting if the public can not hear the proceedings?
10/5/2021 11:58:33	Oct. 5, 2021	Mapping of CDs and LDs	Phyllis Smith	85331	self	<p>Brian K is hardly audible. Other than Doug Johnson, most at the center table speakers cannot be heard. Please speak into the mike or turn computer mike to highest level. This problem has limited my ability to understand what description and changes were made and why and the process for making changes.</p> <p>Also, movement to different sections of the state whether for a look at a CD or LD is too fast and creates chaos on the screen. It would be helpful to focus on one CD until all comments are received before moving on to another. Same with the LD comments. Showing first the effect of the comment on the district would be helpful, i.e. demographics, competitiveness, community of interest. Then move to an adjacent district to see the effect on that district.</p> <p>It appears there is still more of a concern with equal population of the CDs rather than focusing on more of the other 5 criteria in the 1.0 version of the maps. I hope to see more in future iterations.</p>
10/5/2021 13:12:59	Oct. 5, 2021	Mapping	Suzanne Mead	85331	Self	If the commission is looking for a "philosophy" or strategy to set AZ on an upward trajectory culturally and economically, it should draw a map that makes it harder for factions to divide and conquer. There is a danger in Balkanizing the state by over emphasizing COI. Tying some disparate groups together while allowing for political balance may help curtail the extremist trend. After all, as Chair Neuberger has oft mentioned, we are all in this together.
10/5/2021 13:17:04	Oct. 5, 2021	mapping discussion	Peggy Yeargain	85268-2229	myself	Thank you for volunteering for this important job. My name is Peggy, and I have lived in Maricopa County for 47 years. I reside in Fountain Hills where I built a home in 1984. I am a retired special education teacher-I taught in Mesa for 30 years and then in Fountain Hills. Now I mostly do a lot of volunteer work in my community. Redistricting is important to me, particularly the key principal of competitive districts. I feel that my district is not competitive. For example, as a public school advocate when I visit the state capital to contact my representatives about education funding, they are openly hostile and quick to shut me down. They respond as if they do not need my vote, because they don't! Arizona is a very purple state; many folks are registered as independent. Yet I live in a district where my representatives only need to respond to a small group of voters in order to get re-elected time and time again. I am asking you to fix this. Arizona needs competitive districts in order to make progress.
10/5/2021 13:17:14	Oct. 5, 2021	mapping and northern AZ discussion	Laura Huenneke	86004	self	Your discussion today about potential legislative districts in the northern part of the state - it would be good for you to acknowledge that you still have a public hearing to hold this week where Flagstaff and Kayenta are satellite sites! So you can anticipate having some good additional ideas to come from residents of this region. Please don't get too attached to your new concepts of boundaries before you hear about your grid maps and preliminary maps from the perspective of a whole portion of the state.
10/5/2021 13:33:35	Oct. 5, 2021	Maps	Suzanne Mead	85331	Self	Thank you Chair Neuberger for suggesting that we need more competitive legislative districts. In Nov. 2020 one of 9 CDs were competitive, measured by wins of 5% or less; three of 30 LDs state senate races were competitive. 90% weren't. This commission can do much better. 20-30% of the voting population should not be dictating policy for the majority of Arizona citizens.
10/5/2021 13:48:41	Oct. 5, 2021	IRC adopted standard for competitive districts	Jay Simpson	85016	Myself	This past summer the IRC spent hours hearing from nationally recognized experts on redistricting in an effort to define the Arizona constitutional requirement that the IRC draw districts that are competitive. The experts all agreed that the best method to ensure competitive districts is to look to actual election results in statewide elections and then balance the voting power in each of the districts. After receiving all of the input, the IRC voted to adopt a measure of competitiveness using nine statewide elections and a two tier bandwidth to measure whether a proposed district meets the adopted criteria. During the meeting on October 5th, Chair Neuberger suggested, for the first time, that the measure of competitiveness previously adopted by the IRC could and perhaps should be ignored in favor of a subjective analysis of whether a particular group, such as the Indian tribes, could win the attention of their elected representative. Not only does this ignore the teaching of the redistricting experts and the measure adopted by the IRC, it creates an unworkable test that is totally subjective. The IRC should adhere to its previously adopted measure of competitiveness.
10/5/2021 13:54:26	Oct. 5, 2021	mapping	Susan Bickel	85718	self	Commissioner Mehl apparently did not hear over 30 people who spoke in Tucson last Wed night, arguing for fair and competitive districts. (since I couldn't see his face on the screen, perhaps he left the lengthy meeting early, possibly after only 26 very vocal, loud, militant and partisan red shirts spoke. This was evidenced by the Pima County Republican Chair who literally shouted to the commission during her presentation, as if her decibel level would be more convincing.) I would suggest that the commissioners listen again to the testimonies of those 30 citizens who spoke last. The Rillito river SHOULD NOT be the southern boundary of District 17. Commissioner Mehl's interest of narrow retail/economic interests represented by the very partisan Tucson chamber of commerce, to include voters in Oro Valley, Marana, Saddlebrooke, the Catalina Foothills and northeastern Pima county denies the traditional multicultural melting pot that Tucson has always been. His suggested district can be pictured by seeing a district which circles the city on the north and east by Republicans, while a diverse population of Jewish synagogues and a Jewish Cultural center, Mosques and other houses of worship are in the heart of the city of Tucson. Many of the worshippers live north of the river. The city includes multi-generational families from many different ethnic backgrounds. Commissioner Mehl's suggested changes will compartmentalize privileged, white, Christian voters, represented during the public hearings by a conservative vocal minority. This is troubling since these speakers express such disdain for diversity. As a commission, I think it is important to keep in mind that understanding that people who do not look like them, come from the same background or perhaps do not enjoy the same economic status, still have priorities such as health, security and opportunity. Everyone should have an equal opportunity to be represented by officeholders who understand that shared values, hopes and dreams, do not discriminate on the basis of income, ethnicity, lifestyle or political party. I am disappointed that today's conversation about mapping has been dominated by one voice, which has insisted upon redrawing maps to his advantage and interests. I encourage all commissioners to revisit the comments made during the COI hearings and the grid map hearings and listen carefully to those who spoke quietly and respectfully, asking for fairness and competitiveness. In the case of Tucson, volume and quantity of comments do not represent the will of the all of the people. It only represents the will of the group who wear red shirts as part of their attempt to intimidate and silence others. Commissioner Mehl's comment of "it (the maps) can't be any worse" is insensitive at best.
10/5/2021 13:55:59	Oct. 5, 2021	Maps	Suzanne Mead	85331	Self	In order for us to be able to comment on maps in progress, we need to see the maps.