



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MINUTES

June 30, 2011

The Council Redistricting Commission of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on June 30, 2011 at 5:32 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT

Nancy Aposhian
Brian Allen
Scott Higginson
Terry Hines
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo*

COMMISSION ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Linda Crocker
Alfred Smith
Carla Wagner

*Commission Member Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo participated in the entire meeting via telephone.

1. Welcome by Chair Scott Higginson.

Chairman Higginson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Current Events Summary on Redistricting Process.

Chairman Higginson reported that at the previous meeting there were concerns regarding a few neighborhoods and it was determined that some modifications were necessary. He said the Commission members have received four basic plans from the Consultant that reflect the modifications.

Chairman Higginson said that the objective for this meeting is to determine which plans should be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for the July 7, 2011 Study Session. He stated that the plans selected will also be the plans that will be presented to the public. He added that at the Study Session, Council will have the opportunity to make observations and comments however, the selected plans will still be presented to the public.

3. Approval of minutes from the May 12, 2011, June 2, 2011 and June 16, 2011 Redistricting Commission meetings.

It was moved by Commission Member Hines, seconded by Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo that the minutes from the May 12, 2011, June 2, 2011 and June 16, 2011 Redistricting Commission meetings be approved.

Carried unanimously.

4. Hear a presentation, discuss and make recommendations on draft redistricting plans.

Doug Johnson of National Demographics Corporation (NDC) displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**See Attachment 1**) and said that the presentation is identical to the presentation made at the last meeting with the addition of Plan E. He stated that the criteria established at the last meeting consisted of a combination of City, State and Federal requirements as well as the use of traditional redistricting goals.

Mr. Johnson explained that Plans A,B,C and D that were presented at the last meeting each demonstrate a different approach. He said the key differences are reflected on the west side of the City in regards to how Districts 1 & 3 inter-relate, and how District 4 will obtain the population necessary and avoid retrogression. He discussed the eastern portion of the City and taking extra population out of District 6. He also questioned whether the population should be moved into District 2 or District 5 (or a combination of both). He noted that Plans A, B, C & D have not been changed since the last meeting.

Mr. Johnson explained that Plan E (See Page 6 of Attachment 1) is a new map that originated from Plan C and changes Districts 1 & 3 on the west side. He advised that Plan E is a combination of Plan C on the east side and Plan B on the west side. He referred to a map and said that it demonstrates how different pieces of the plans can be cleaned up and pieced together.

Mr. Johnson advised that he could answer questions and make adjustments to the plans with the assistance of the mapping software. He said that specific details can be viewed and revisions can be made that will assist the Commission in making a determination as to which plans will be presented to the Council and the public.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo advised that she is comfortable with several of the recommendations that have been incorporated into Plan E. She said that Plan E is more respectful of the neighborhoods located in the intersection of Districts 1, 3, and 4. In addition, she said that Plan E is a "cleaner" looking map and if presented along with a couple of the other maps will provide the public with a variety of options. She remarked that she is pleased with how well the Commission's suggestions were incorporated into Plan E and that it is time now to hear feedback from the residents.

In response to questions from Commission Member Aposhian and Chairman Higginson, Mr. Johnson explained that having a high school in each district was not something that was considered in the development of these plans. He advised that the Census Bureau provided landmark overlays that sometimes included a school. He said that if having a school in each District is something that the Commission wants to explore in more detail he could obtain a map from the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

In response to a series of questions from Commission Member Allen, Mr. Johnson explained that the boundaries in Plans A, B, and C are exactly the same. In addition, he advised that the white areas on the map indicate County islands.

Chairman Higginson advised that the redistricting process begins by “growing” one District. He said because of the need to maintain the highest number of registered Hispanic voters in District 4, it was determined that District 4 would be the District that needed to grow first and then they would determine the impacts on the other Districts.

Commission Member Allen commented that once District 4 is squared away and meets all the legal requirements, then the population can be balanced in the other Districts prior to hearing feedback from the public.

Mr. Johnson advised that there is the Charter provision that indicates that the incumbents will be kept separate. He added that after legal requirements are met the redistricting process becomes a balancing act using traditional criteria.

Chairman Higginson expressed his concern in having District 3 moved into District 1. He advised that in his research he discovered that there is zero population along the southern boundary of District 4 from the US-60 to the south. He said that the Commission should consider one more map and provided the following suggestions and observations for the creation of Plan F:

- The section of District 2 south of the freeway be added to District 3.
- The southern boundary of District 2 be moved to Southern Ave. just south of Councilmember Finter’s residence.
- The southeast corner of District 4 that is Gilbert Rd/Harris Rd be added to District 3.
- The communities of recognition that parallel the freeway while they are separate are of similar makeup.

Commission Member Aposhian said straight lines should be drawn when possible and it does not appear that keeping the divisions neat was accomplished by moving the boundary to Harris Drive. She stated that the boundary had previously run straight down Gilbert Road to Baseline Road and that making this change could be confusing to residents. She expressed her concerns regarding the communities of interest in the southeastern portion of District 4.

In response to the comments made by Commission Member Aposhian, Chairman Higginson stated that Plan D keeps the southeastern rectangle in District 4. He said moving the boundary to Harris Drive and adding that section to District 2 did not impact retrogression as it is not a highly populated Hispanic area.

Mr. Johnson advised that the challenge is that District 4 needs to pick up population and there are no surrounding neighborhoods where the Hispanic concentrations are as high as in District 4. As a result, he said that trades of 20% Hispanic neighborhoods for 40% Hispanic neighborhoods had to be made.

Discussion ensued regarding areas of Plan E that could possibly be moved in or out of District 4 and what effect the moves would have on the retrogression issue.

Mr. Johnson advised that the mapping software is up and running and will be introduced when the plans are presented to the Council. He made the suggested adjustments on the map displayed which moved District 3's southern boundary west. He noted that this adjustment takes population out of District 2.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo expressed great concern in regards to stretching District 3 across the southern boundaries of Districts 4 and 2. She advised there is more than one way to define a community of interest besides ethnicity. She said she appreciated the tracking of the Hispanic population to avoid retrogression issues in District 4 however, there is a vast discrepancy regarding the neighborhoods. She stated that these are entirely different neighborhoods with different levels of activity, organization and housing types. She added that the neighborhoods are not similar and that this adjustment does not compare to what was accomplished on previous maps.

Extensive discussion ensued relative to how the communities are affected by moving part of District 3 across the southern boundary into Districts 4 and 2.

In response to a question from Commission Member Allen, Mr. Johnson explained that the goal is to obtain the smallest amount of deviation as possible while also meeting the other redistricting criteria.

Commission Member Hines concurred with Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo's comments regarding the neighborhoods in Districts 3, 4 and 2 that will be drastically changed by stretching the southern boundary east.

Commission Member Allen remarked that stretching District 3's southern boundary so far east gives the impression that the residents who live near Greenfield Road are members of the Dobson Ranch Community.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo commented that the areas are so distinctly different that the thought of combining them gives her "heartburn." She said there is a difference in having neighborhood numbers work out on paper versus changing the character of the neighborhood. She added that she was extremely uncomfortable with stretching the southern boundary that far to the east.

Chairman Higginson stated that the new option needed to be put out to the public. He said that the Commission will also be hearing concerns regarding the possibility of moving District 3 up into District 1.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo outlined her concerns in regards to stretching the southern boundary which included the fact that there are character differences in the neighborhoods on the southern border; the level of organization in the neighborhoods; the citizens in those neighborhoods may not attend a public hearing; and the fact that the public hearings are being held in the summer.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo stated that she wanted to make sure that she voiced concerns on behalf of the residents in District 2 that may not normally come to the table like they do in Districts 3 and District 1.

Responding to the statements made by Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo, Chairman Higginson advised that the Commission must also listen to the residents who are organized and do come to the hearings. He said the Commission is not saying the neighborhoods that are not organized or not attending the hearings will not be heard. He noted that the Commission will listen to all resident opinions equally.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo stated that she would continue to voice her concerns as the differences that have been discussed this evening are more distinct than in previous meetings. She added that she did not think that anyone would be happy in having their neighborhood divided in terms of the character.

Chairman Higginson noted that there are also differences in the Lehi and Dobson Ranch areas. He said both viewpoints have merit and should be presented to the public for discussion.

Mr. Johnson highlighted boundary adjustments that were made using Plan D for the creation of Plan E (See Page 6 of Attachment 1) as follows: District 4 was moved out to Val Vista Dr; District 2 was moved up to Adobe Road; District 1 uses Adobe Road as the southeastern border; most of Evergreen was moved from District 1 into District 2. He noted that retrogression was not impacted with the section of Evergreen that was moved.

Further discussion ensued regarding the population of Districts and where changes could be made that would have the least amount of impact on neighborhoods, including the Evergreen community.

Mr. Johnson displayed the overall view of what will be Plan F.

Discussion ensued regarding how many options or Plans should be presented to the Council and the public. The Commission agreed that Plan D did not meet the retrogression requirements and is therefore off the table. It was also found that Plan C was similar to Plan E and therefore, Plan C was retired.

Chairman Higginson stated that the Commission concurs that Plans A, B, E and F will be presented to the Council and the public.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo stated the opinion that it may be best to present 4 maps to the public so that residents can weigh different concepts. She added that she hopes residents will submit plenty of suggestions.

Responding to Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo's concerns, Chairman Higginson stated that it is best to include larger portions in the plans so that there is at least a community that will be represented and obtain attention from a Councilmember.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo concurred with Chairman Higginson that if a Plan F is to be presented it should be an "extreme Plan F" in order to generate public feedback.

Mr. Johnson used the Mapping Tool to create a more extreme Plan F, which now has a total deviation of 3.2%.

Commission Member Aposhian commented that at the last meeting it had been decided that there would only be three maps presented to the Council and public.

Chairman Higginson responded that due to the issues that have been raised there will now be four maps presented.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo stated that she feels comfortable with sending Plans A, B, E, F forward. She said these plans represent a variety and each has a distinction that will invoke good public comments.

Discussion ensued regarding the growth that will occur in Districts 5 and 6 and whether or not the population in those districts should be under deviated to allow for the growth.

Mr. Johnson advised that the Commission will be meeting again after the public hearings to make a final decision on one map and at that time additional fine tuning can occur.

5. Take action on approving draft redistricting plans to forward to City Council for review in Study Session and to submit for Public Review.

Chairman Higginson advised that the Commission concurs that Plans, A, B, E, and F, will be randomly renamed A, B, C and D.

It was moved by Chairman Higginson, seconded by Commission Member Allen, that Plans A, B, E, and F will be randomly renamed A,B,C and D and forwarded for Council review on July 7, 2011 and also to the public.

Carried unanimously.

6. Discuss and make recommendations on strategies and approaches dealing with upcoming redistricting public meetings and Council Study Session presentation.

Discussion ensued regarding how the Plans should be presented at the Council meeting.

Chairman Higginson said that he intends to be present for the Council meeting and encourages other members of the Commission to attend the Council meeting as well.

Mr. Johnson requested that the Commission members speak after he makes his presentation and address any questions from the Council as to why specific plans were selected.

Chairman Higginson advised that he would make a short opening statement before the presentation and that any Commission members that wish to speak may do so. He also said he would make an introductory statement at the public meetings as well. He added that there may be residents that come to the public hearings that will no longer be a part of particular Districts.

Mr. Johnson stated that for the public meetings the individual Councilmembers for the specific District may be present and may wish to join Chairman Higginson in an introductory statement.

Executive Management Assistant to the City Manager, Carla Wagner, advised that the schedule for the Public Meetings was previously provided to the Commission members. She inquired as to which Commission members will be present at the public meetings and said that all Commission members are welcome to attend.

Chairman Higginson directed that each one of the Commission members email Ms. Wagner and inform her which public meetings they plan on attending. He requested that Ms. Wagner notify him if there are any meetings at which a Commission member will not be in attendance.

Ms. Wagner stated that she will email the calendar with the dates and locations of the public meetings to each of the Commission members.

7. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Redistricting Commission Meeting – Thursday, August, 25, 2011 (tentative)

Redistricting Commission Meeting (Final Selection) – Thursday, September 8, 2011

8. Items from citizens present.

Mark Freeman, President of the Lehi Community Association, apologized for not having a member of the Lehi Community present to participate in previous meetings. He advised that the Lehi area is the oldest historical community in Mesa and expressed his concern regarding some of the redistricting suggestions that would cut through the community. He said that the Lehi Community works diligently with their Councilmember and would like to continue that relationship. In addition, he said that the Dobson Ranch and Lehi neighborhoods have very different agendas and that Councilmember Kavanaugh would have his hands full listening to all of Lehi's concerns as well as Dobson Ranch's concerns.

Mr. Freeman advised that the Lehi Community was established in 1878, was incorporated into Mesa in 1970 and in 2002 the Lehi sub-area plan was established. He said that there is a geographical boundary map available that may assist the Commission in their decision. He requested that the Commission keep in mind that Lehi is a community that does not want to be divided.

Ms. Wagner advised that a map was provided to the Commission members that depicts the Lehi neighborhood.

Kevin Rogers, Boardmember of Lehi Community Association, stated that the Lehi Community is a long standing rural neighborhood. He said that the Association is requesting that the Commission do what they can to not split the neighborhood. He thanked the Commission and staff for their efforts on this project.

Chairman Higginson thanked Mr. Freeman and Mr. Rogers for their comments.

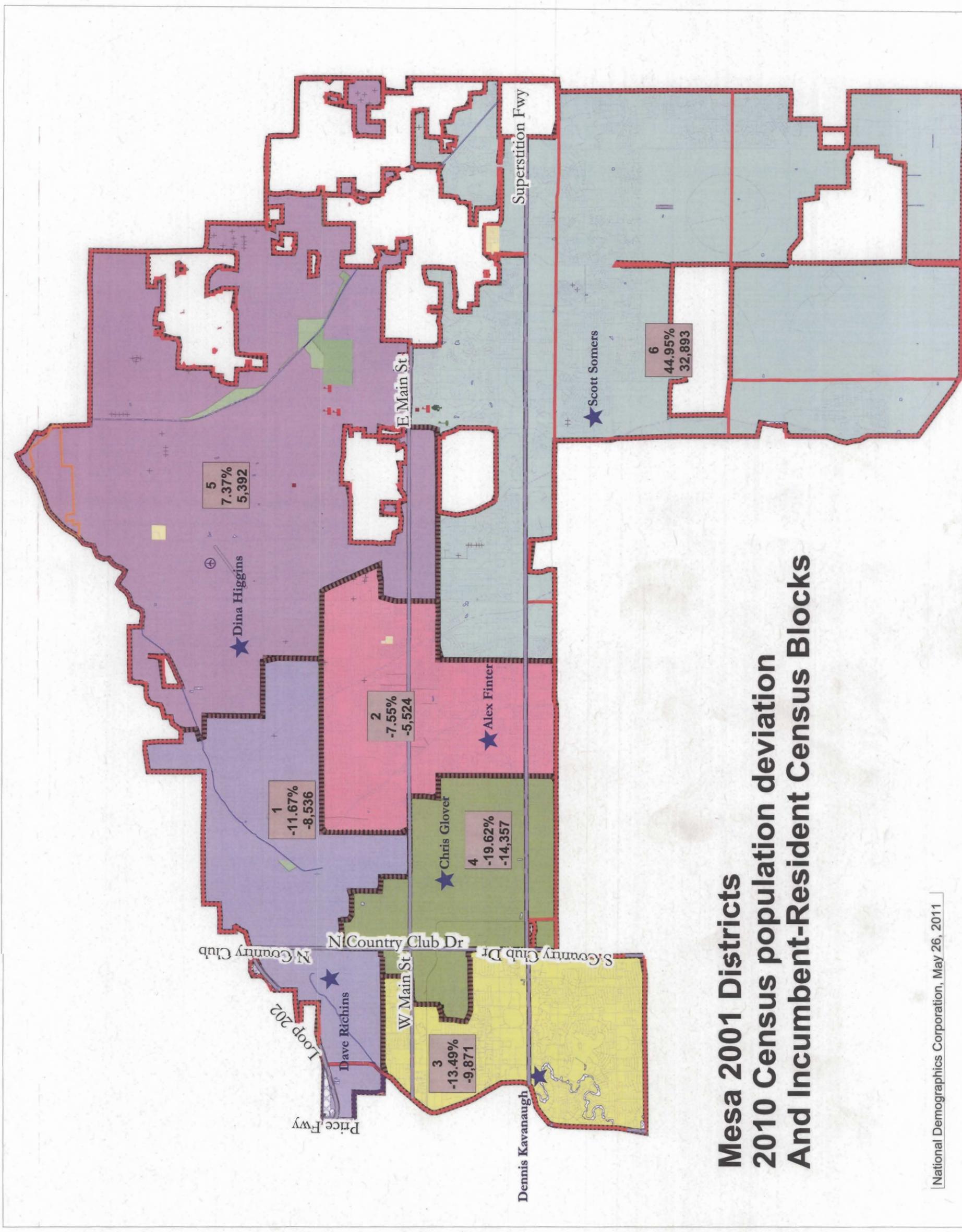
9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Council Redistricting Commission of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 30th day of June, 2011. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

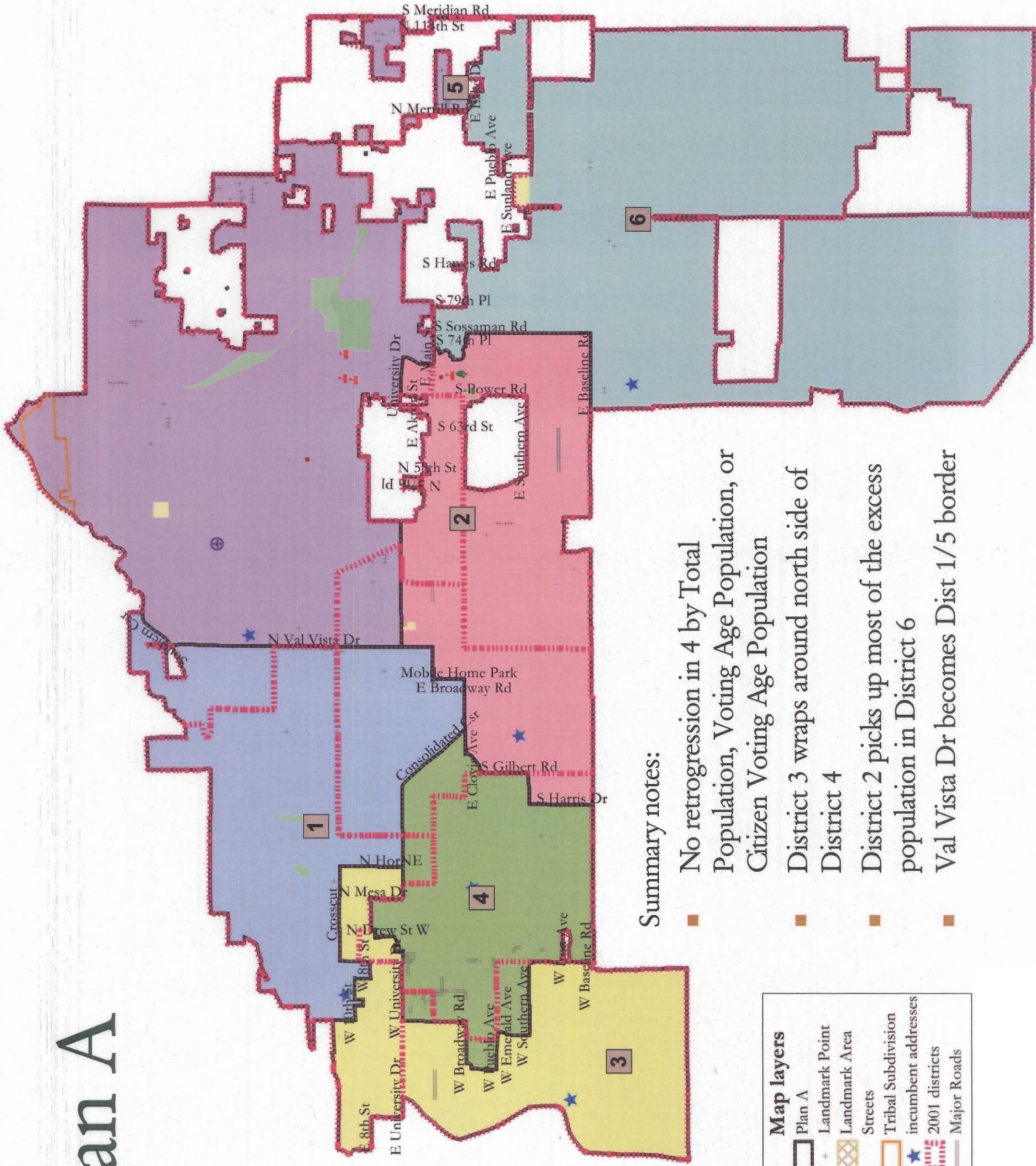
LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

bdw
(attachments 1)



Mesa 2001 Districts 2010 Census population deviation And Incumbent-Resident Census Blocks

Plan A

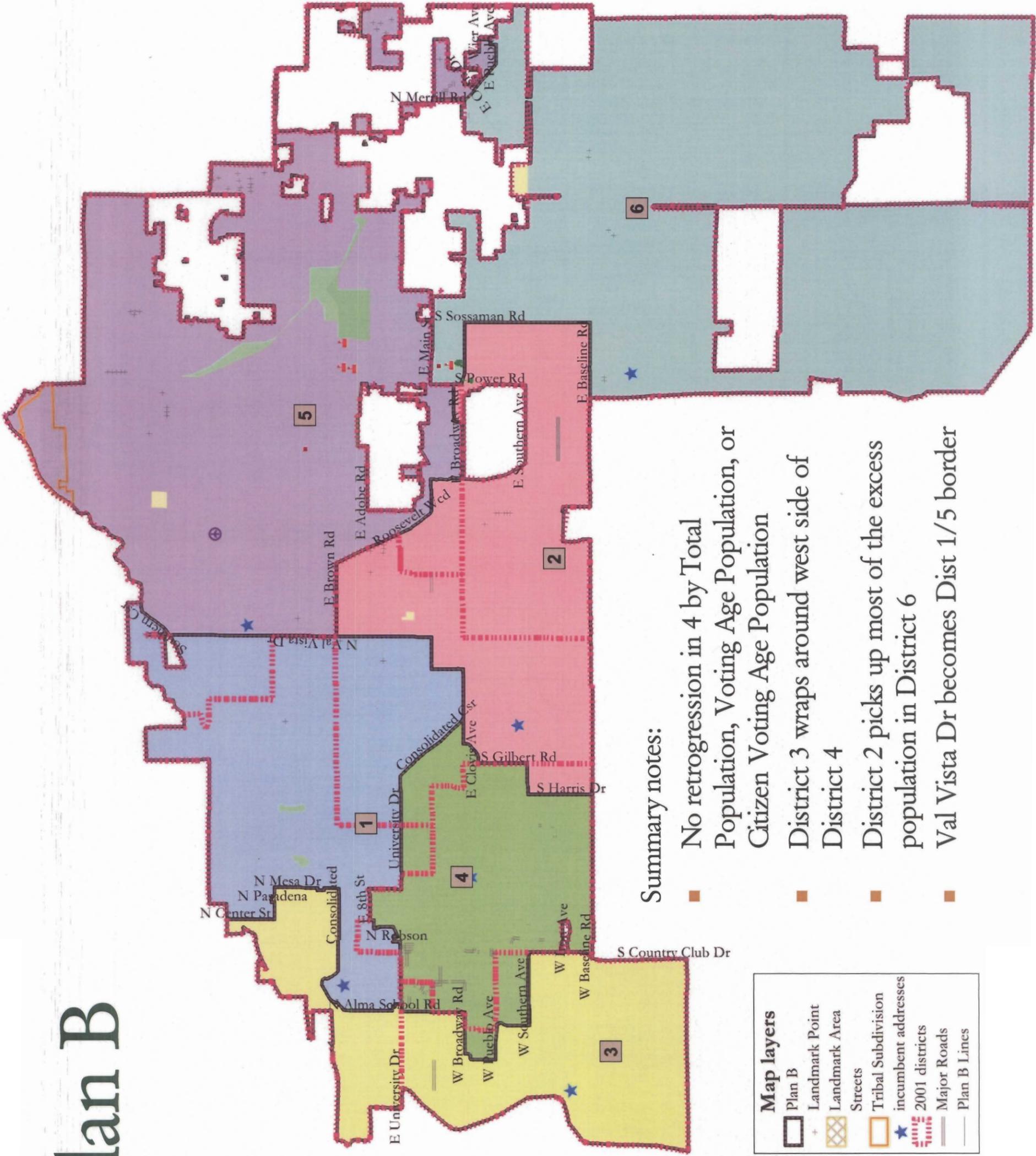


Summary notes:

- No retrogression in 4 by Total Population, Voting Age Population, or Citizen Voting Age Population
- District 3 wraps around north side of District 4
- District 2 picks up most of the excess population in District 6
- Val Vista Dr becomes Dist 1/5 border

Map layers	
	Plan A
	Landmark Point
	Landmark Area
	Streets
	Tribal Subdivision
	incumbent addresses
	2001 districts
	Major Roads

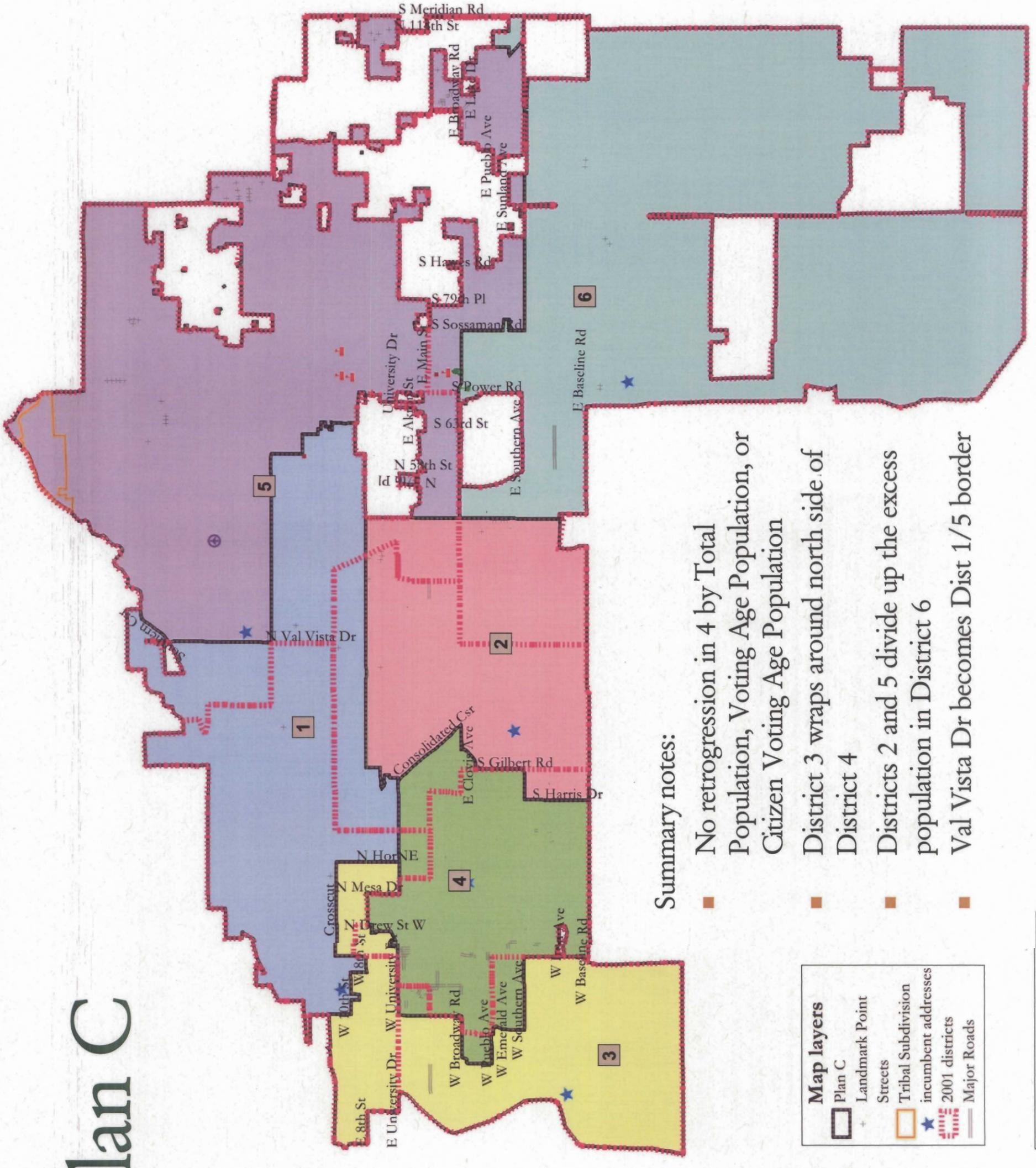
Plan B



Summary notes:

- No retrogression in 4 by Total Population, Voting Age Population, or Citizen Voting Age Population
- District 3 wraps around west side of District 4
- District 2 picks up most of the excess population in District 6
- Val Vista Dr becomes Dist 1/5 border

Plan C



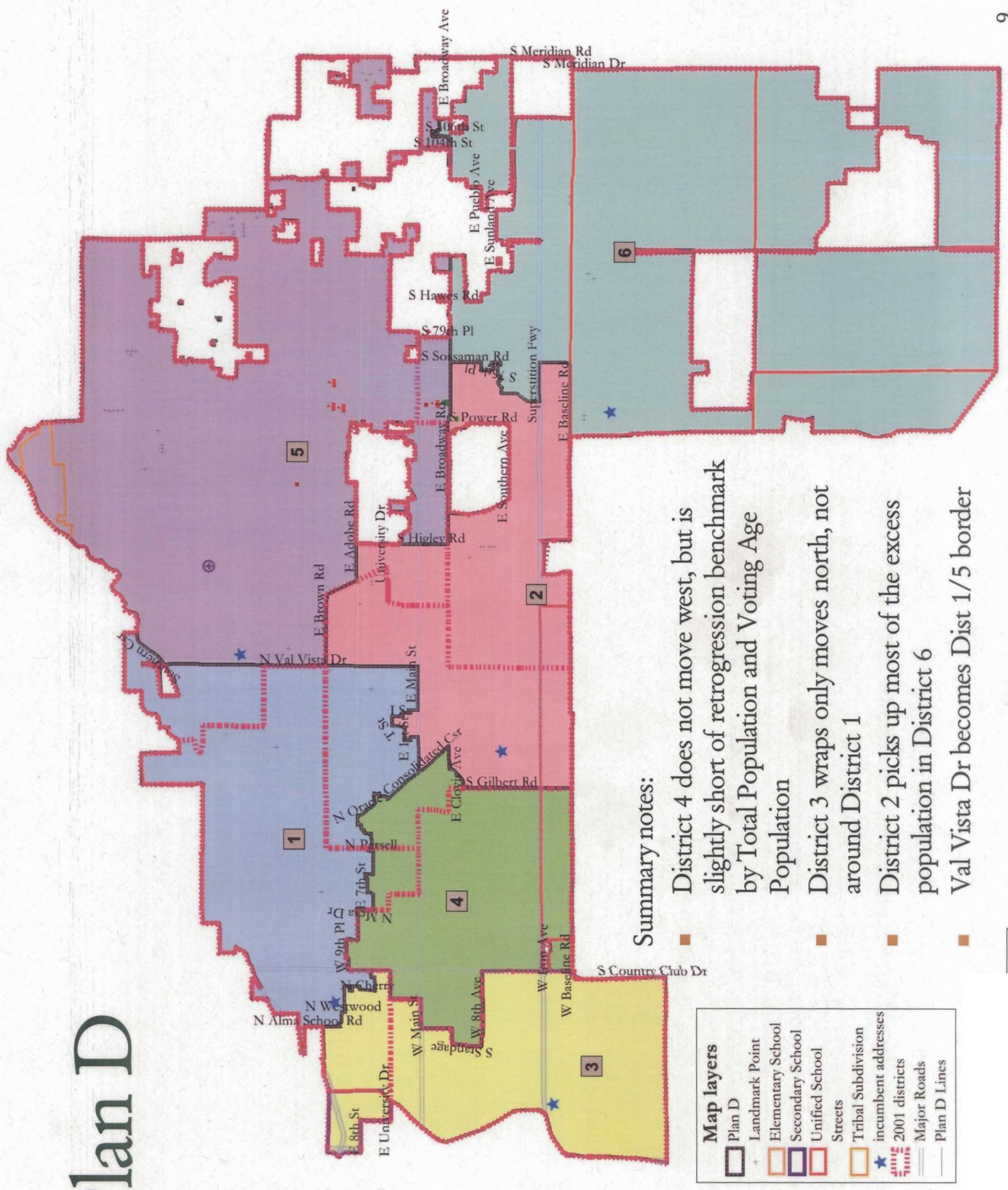
Map layers

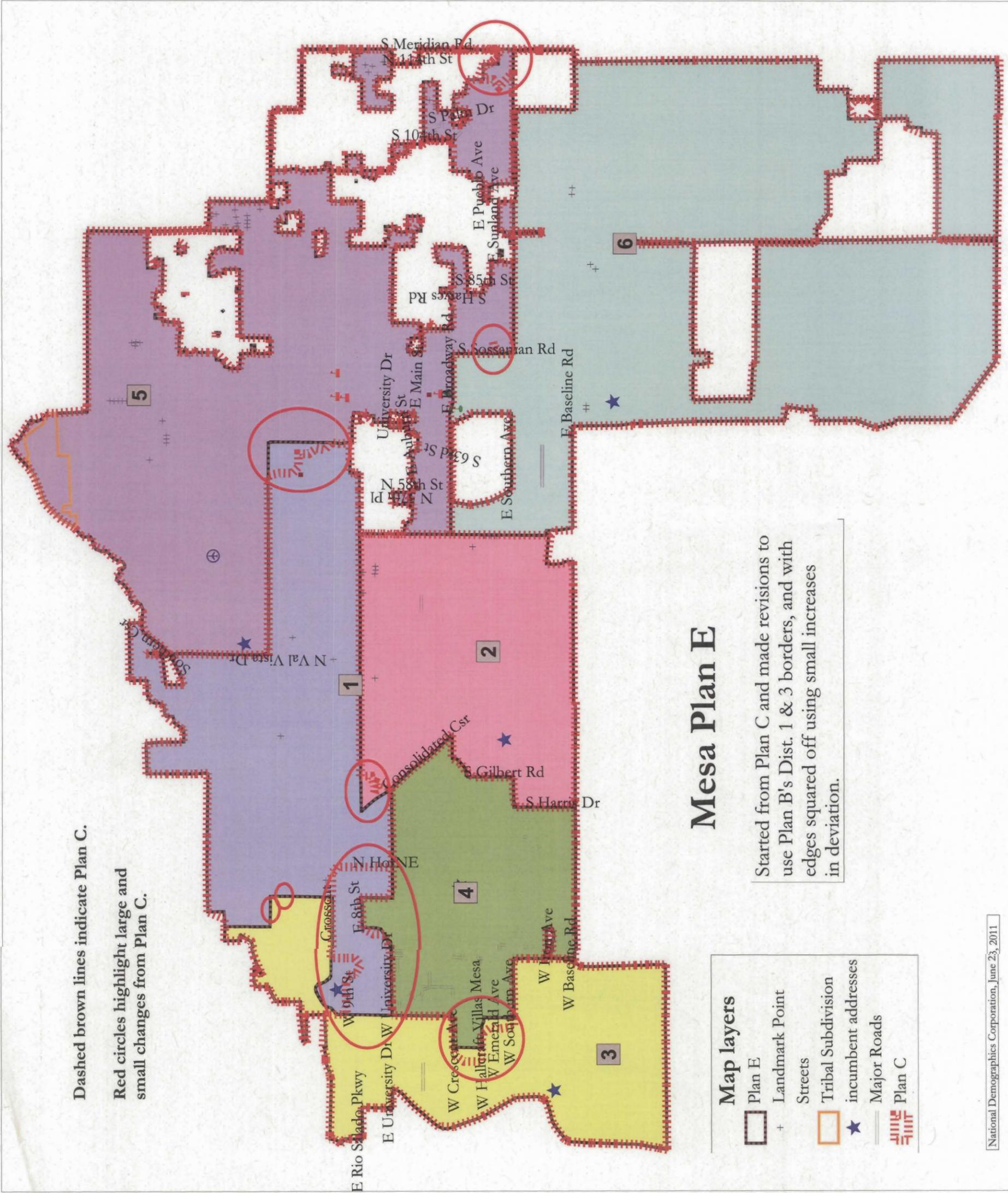
- Plan C
- Landmark Point
- Streets
- Tribal Subdivision
- incumbent addresses
- 2001 districts
- Major Roads

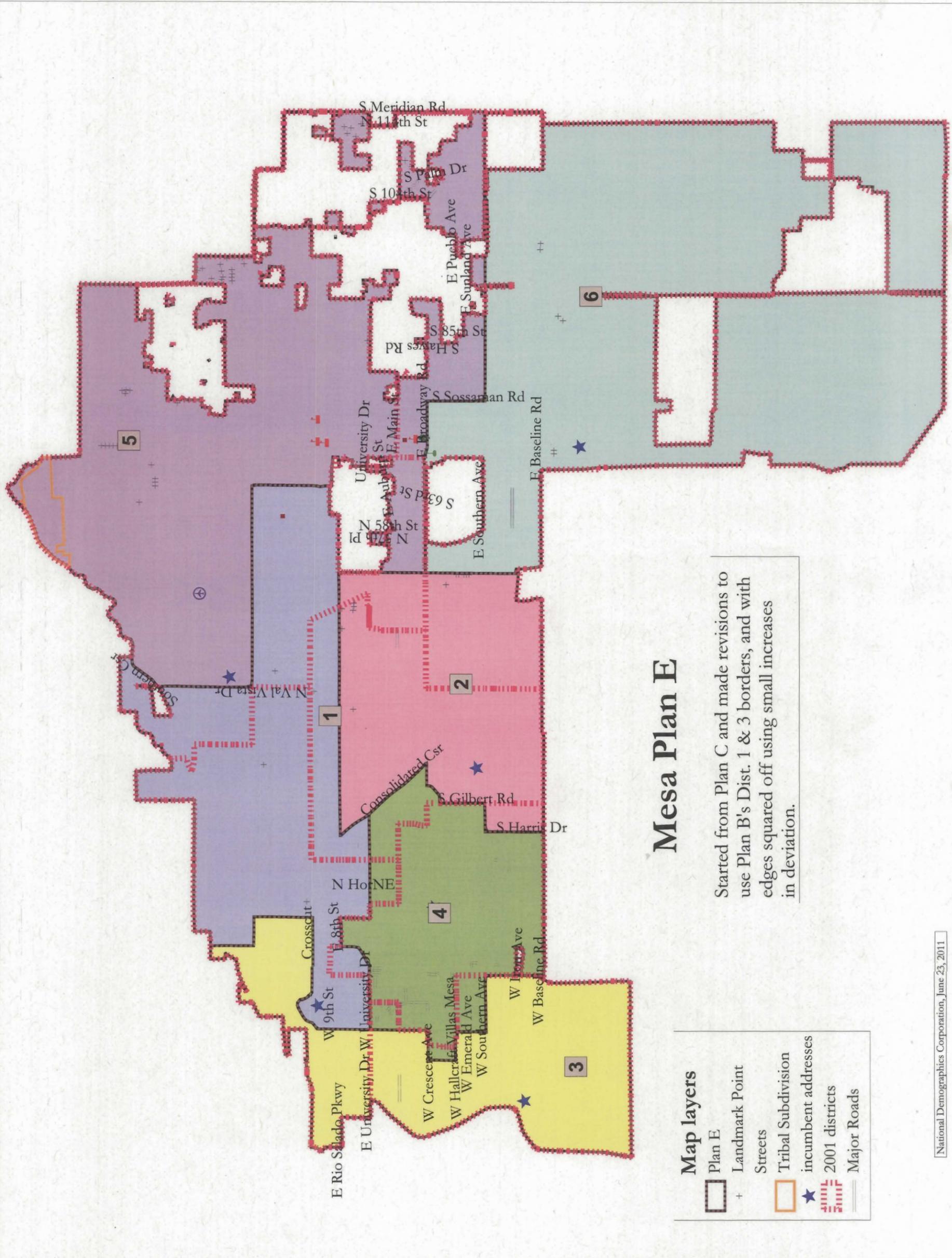
Summary notes:

- No retrogression in 4 by Total Population, Voting Age Population, or Citizen Voting Age Population
- District 3 wraps around north side of District 4
- Districts 2 and 5 divide up the excess population in District 6
- Val Vista Dr becomes Dist 1/5 border

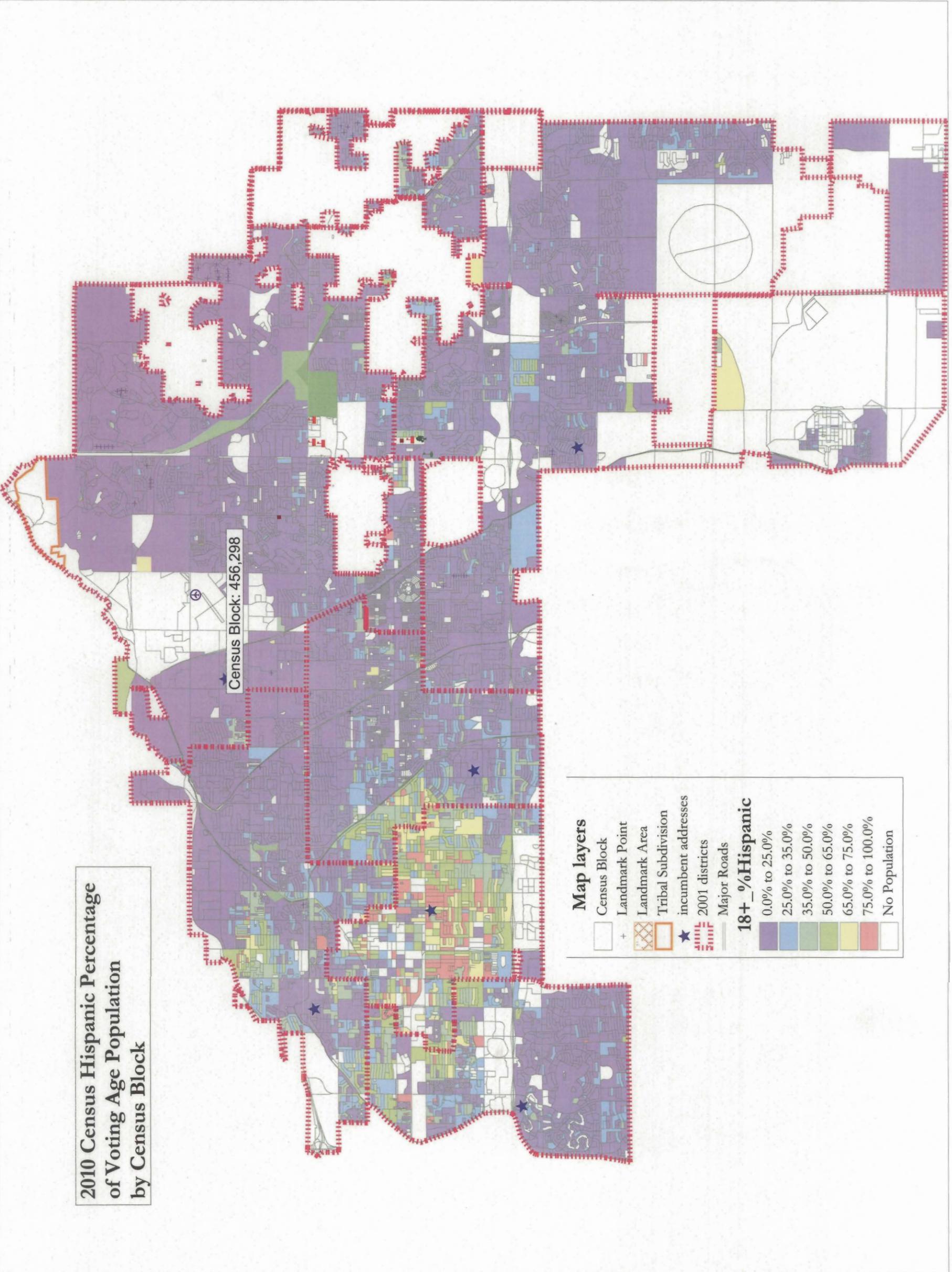
Plan D







**2010 Census Hispanic Percentage
of Voting Age Population
by Census Block**



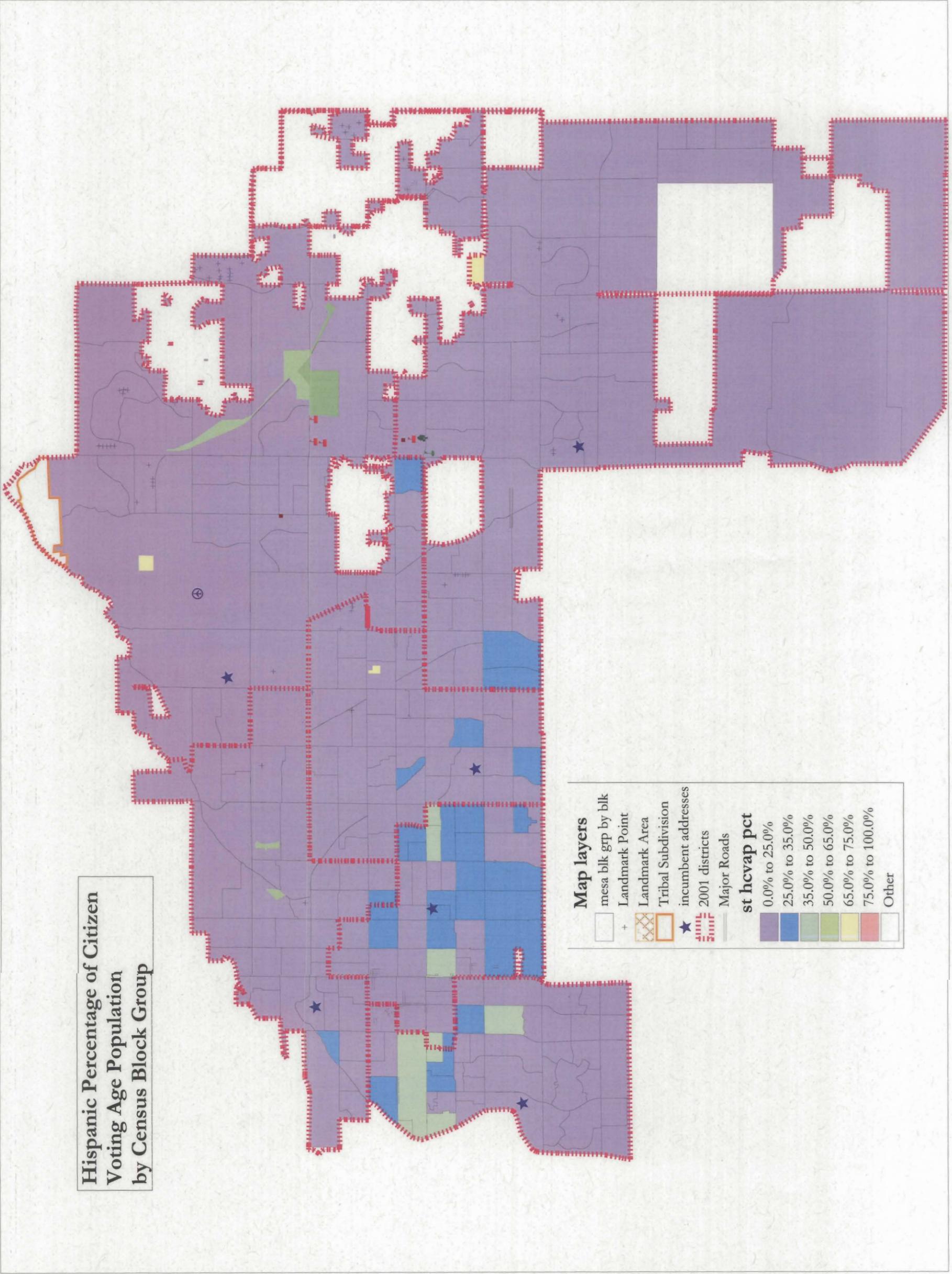
Map layers

- Census Block
- Landmark Point
- Landmark Area
- Tribal Subdivision
- incumbent addresses
- 2001 districts
- Major Roads

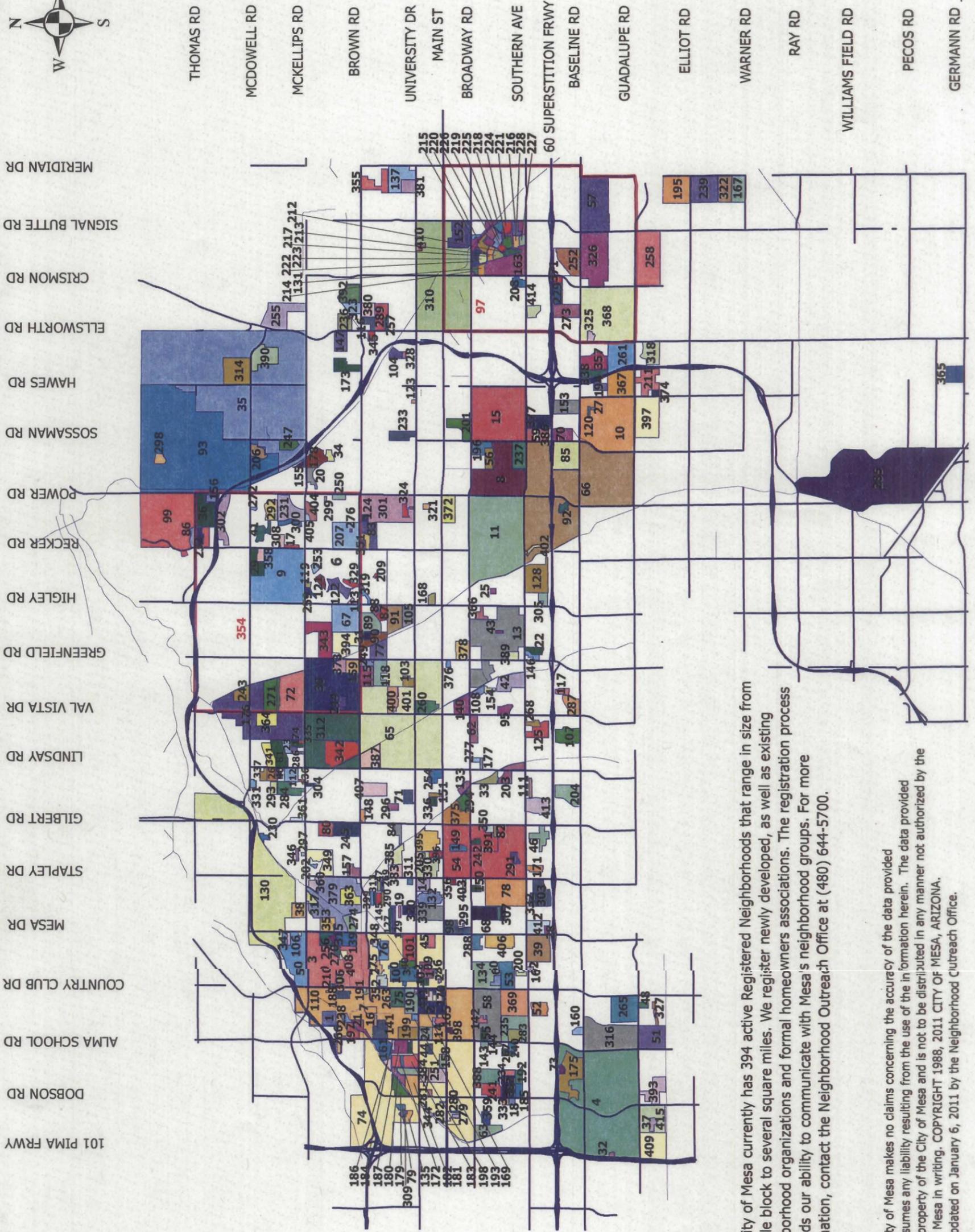
18+ %Hispanic

- 0.0% to 25.0%
- 25.0% to 35.0%
- 35.0% to 50.0%
- 50.0% to 65.0%
- 65.0% to 75.0%
- 75.0% to 100.0%
- No Population

**Hispanic Percentage of Citizen
Voting Age Population
by Census Block Group**



Mesa's Registered Neighborhoods



The City of Mesa currently has 394 active Registered Neighborhoods that range in size from a single block to several square miles. We register newly developed, as well as existing neighborhood organizations and formal homeowners associations. The registration process expands our ability to communicate with Mesa's neighborhood groups. For more information, contact the Neighborhood Outreach Office at (480) 644-5700.

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