

## COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MINUTES

June 16, 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 16, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Nancy Aposhian Scott Higginson Terry Hines Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo	Brian Allen	Alfred Smith Carla Wagner

Chairman Higginson excused Commission Member Allen from the meeting.

1. Welcome by Chair Scott Higginson.

Chairman Higginson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Current Events Summary on Redistricting Process.

Chairman Higginson stated that there were no current events concerning the redistricting process to report at this time.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and make recommendations on drafting redistricting plans.

Doug Johnson of National Demographics Corporation (NDC) addressed the Commission relative to this agenda item.

Chairman Higginson suggested that the Commission Members refrain from asking questions regarding the individual Draft Plans during Mr. Johnson's initial presentation, after which time more detailed questions/discussions could take place under agenda item 4.

Mr. Johnson displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**See Attachment 1**) and provided an overview of four Draft Plans (A, B, C and D) that were distributed to the Commission Members. He reported that the various Plans were created after taking into account the line-drawing criteria (See Page 2 of Attachment 1) and considering the current balance of population in

Mesa. He explained that all of the growth has occurred in the southeast portion of the community, which necessitates a significant shift of Council districts from the under populated west towards the over populated east.

Mr. Johnson also commented that the current District 4 has the "Hispanic ability to elect," which is an area upon which the Department of Justice (DOJ) would focus its review. He noted that the current Hispanic percentages for District 4 that must be met in order to avoid retrogression include 61% of Total Population, 54% of Voting Age Population and 24% (American Community Survey) or 25% (Census Special Tabulation) of Citizen Voting Age Population.

Mr. Johnson briefly highlighted key questions that were considered in the creation of the four Draft Plans. (See Page 5 of Attachment 1) He also emphasized that the Draft Plans offer four distinctly different approaches to this redistricting and added that no one Plan was better than the others.

Mr. Johnson referred to the map of Plan A (See Page 6 of Attachment 1) and explained that the redistricting process begins by focusing on the Federal Voting Rights Act, Section 5 preclearance issues related to District 4. He stated that Plans A and B would avoid retrogression in District 4 and Plans C and D "are close" and could be acceptable to the DOJ if they "make sense" from the community perspective.

Mr. Johnson discussed the specific boundary adjustments in Plan A and noted that the pink lines represent the existing district boundaries and the black lines delineate proposed district boundaries. He said that the specific boundary adjustments in Plan A include District 4 moving north and west; District 3 wrapping around the north side of District 4; District 1 moving to the southeast and picking up a large portion of District 2; District 2 picking up most of the excess population in District 6; and Val Vista Drive becoming the District 1/District 5 border.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Courts prefer that municipalities strive for zero population deviation and precisely drawn, balanced districts. He noted that after that occurs, deviations can be made for specific reasons.

Mr. Johnson displayed a map of Plan B (See Page 7 of Attachment 1) and commented on the boundary adjustments which include movement of District 3 around the west side of District 4; District 2 picking up most of the excess population in District 6; and Val Vista Drive becoming the District 1/District 5 border. He also noted that the borders between Districts 1, 2 and 4 are almost identical to Plan A, and added that the border between Districts 2 and 5 in the northeast corner remains as it currently exists.

Mr. Johnson further remarked that Plan C (See Page 8 of Attachment 1) is a very different redistricting approach than Plans A or B. He highlighted the boundary adjustments in Plan C as follows: District 1 moves across Val Vista Drive; Districts 2 and 5 divide up the excess population in District 6; District 3 wraps around the north side of District 4; and Val Vista Drive becomes the District 1/District 5 border. Mr. Johnson also noted that Districts 3 and 4 are essentially the same as in Plan A.

Mr. Johnson, in addition, reported that with respect to Plan D (See Page 9 of Attachment 1), District 4 does not move west, but is slightly short of the retrogression benchmark by Total Population and Voting Age Population. He explained that in order for the City of Mesa to

proceed with Plan D, it would be necessary to solicit significant input from the Hispanic community that the Plan was acceptable. Mr. Johnson added that DOJ would take such input into consideration and in their follow-up investigation, actually contact Hispanic citizens, elected officials and organizations to solicit their feedback with respect to Plan D.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the boundary adjustments in Plan D, which include District 3 moving north, not around District 1; District 2 picking up most of the excess population in District 6; Val Vista Drive becoming the District 1/District 5 border; the existing northeast border between District 2 and 5 remaining at Brown Road; and District 5 keeping the area between the two County islands.

Mr. Johnson further remarked that with respect to the four Draft Plans, he has taken “a big picture look at the community,” focused on the Census data and created options that present “an outsider’s perspective.”

4. Discuss and make recommendations on strategies and approaches dealing with the redistricting process.

The Commission Members discussed the fact that the District 4 boundaries in Draft Plans A, B and C were drawn in an effort to meet retrogression standards and keep neighborhoods together; that District 4 is 20% under populated, which creates a challenge in finding populations around it that make up the shortage, but do not reduce the voting strength of Hispanics; and that elementary school district boundaries were not taken into consideration with respect to the Draft Plans.

Chairman Higginson acknowledged that there were many definitions for “neighborhoods” and stated that in his opinion, they could be defined by elementary school district boundaries.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo expressed appreciation that Mr. Johnson began this process by first addressing District 4, which has the propensity to cause the most problems in the redistricting process. She also noted that she was pleased that the Draft Plans included more than one option that did not include any retrogression.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo voiced the following concerns regarding Plan A: District 2 would lose too much of its original center; District 3 would cut through too many existing neighborhoods, and in particular, the Evergreen neighborhood. She stated that during the last districting process, the draft plans attempted to cut through the Evergreen neighborhood, which prompted significant input from the residents. She further remarked that where Districts 2, 5 and 6 come together on Plan A, there was some “carving out” along neighborhood lines in the area of Arbor and Coralbell and real “middle of the neighborhood notches.” She added that as much as she likes the fact that District 4 does not have any retrogression in Plan A, she prefers Plan B.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo further commented that in general terms, Plan B tends to be “a bit more respectful” of the neighborhoods in District 3, although it still runs into the same issue regarding the Evergreen neighborhood. She noted that in District 6, there were less cuts through the neighborhoods, and added that there were cleaner lines with the areas between Districts 2, 5 and 6 and that they seemed to be more aligned along geographic boundaries.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo also remarked that with respect to school boundaries, individuals who have children identify themselves by their school boundaries or by the school their children attend, even though they might not know the entire boundaries. She stated that because there is so much open enrollment now, it might be less of an issue than even ten years ago.

Chairman Higginson stated that with respect to Plan B, he questioned whether the “northern little pod of yellow” which has been drawn in District 3 would create any problems for the neighborhoods since they were historically included in District 1.

Mr. Johnson clarified that the area begins at Consolidated and Mesa Drive and goes up to the northwest.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo voiced concern that the manner in which the lines are drawn could encroach on the Lehi area, which is such a defined community with its own sub-area plan.

Chairman Higginson commented that there was “a very horizontal strata structure in communities and economics” in the City of Mesa and said he was not as concerned with what happens to District 2 in Plan A because it is taking the district and stretching it in an east-west linear fashion. He stated that in Plan B, the option was to maintain the district as much as possible by keeping the “northern hump” in the district.

Mr. Johnson responded that the way the numbers work out, the eastern and western parts of the City are largely interchangeable. He stated that if the Commission Members preferred the western part of the community in Plan B and the eastern part in Plan D, with some fine tuning, they can be mixed and matched if there was an issue with data.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo reiterated that she was generally pleased with Plan B, although there were still some issues with regard to the Evergreen neighborhood. She referenced the area on the map near 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Robson that was now purple and used to be green. She noted that the proposed boundaries divide the entire Evergreen neighborhood and inquired if it was possible to keep the entire neighborhood in one district or another and find an alternative solution to balance out the population. She emphasized that the issue was that the neighborhood remain intact, no matter what district it was in.

Further discussion ensued relative to potential boundary movements with respect to the Evergreen neighborhood.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo suggested that Mr. Johnson consider other factors that the Evergreen neighborhood might have more in common with District 1 than District 4. She also requested that Ms. Wagner provide the Commission Members maps depicting the boundaries for the Evergreen neighborhood and the Washington Park-Escobedo area, the latter of which she suggested remain in District 4.

Chairman Higginson stated that with respect to Plan C, in his opinion, it makes more sense regarding the boundaries between Districts 2, 5 and 6. He inquired if it was possible to mesh Plans B and C.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo concurred with Chairman Higginson's comments regarding Districts 2, 5 and 6. She also expressed concern, however, regarding the proposed boundary lines for Districts 3, 4 and 1.

Mr. Johnson noted that as long as District 4 is the same in Plans B and C, which it is, he could flip the version of District 3. He said he could come back next week with a Plan E that combines Plans B and C.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo commented that with regard to Plan C, she was concerned with the "stretch" of District 1. She noted that the neighborhoods in the western end and eastern end were so vastly different in terms of housing stock and the manner in which the neighborhoods developed. She stated that Plan C was not her favorite and added that it was not as "cohesive" as Plan B.

Chairman Higginson suggested that if District 3 from Plan B was inserted into Plan C, the eastern end of District 1 would remain where it is. He stated that was the difference that has been identified by the Commission and the consultant and everything else falls out.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo commented that she preferred Plan B with respect to keeping similar communities of interest together. She stated that she did not mind as much the "hump" in District 2 versus "the stretch" of District 1 in Plan C. She added that there were fewer differences with those neighborhoods versus the stretches of District 1 in Plan C.

Commission Member Hines concurred with Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo's comments.

Mr. Johnson stated that there was no need to come to a final decision with regard to one plan this evening.

Responding to a question from Commission Member Aposhian, Deputy City Attorney Alfred Smith clarified that the Mesa City Charter provides that once the Final Draft Plans are presented to the Council, the Council can review and make changes to the plans, after which time the plans are sent back to the Commission to incorporate any changes they deem appropriate. He stated that the Commission has final control with respect to the redistricting process, subject to DOJ approval. Mr. Smith added that the Council would adopt a resolution approving the final plans.

In response to a question from Chairman Higginson, Executive Management Assistant Carla Wagner stated that the only member of the Council that she is aware of who has seen the Draft Plans is Mayor Smith.

Mr. Johnson clarified that he has not had formal briefings with any of the Councilmembers regarding the Draft Plans.

Chairman Higginson requested input from the Commission Members regarding Plan D. He reiterated that Mr. Johnson advised that this plan falls short of retrogression and would require input particularly within the Latino community that it was an acceptable option.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo stated that although Plan D was a cleaner looking map, because it falls short of retrogression, she would anticipate hearing “copious” comments from the Latino community regarding the Plan. She stated that it was her preference that Plan D be avoided altogether.

Chairman Higginson clarified that it was his understanding that at the July 7, 2011 Study Session, the Council would review the Draft Plans that the Commission recommends move forward for public comment. He also concurred with Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo’s comment that there was no reason to put forward a Plan to the public that would generate controversy and not be looked upon favorably by the DOJ.

Mr. Johnson commented that the only discussion point with respect to Plan D is that it demonstrates the reason the District 3 boundaries in Plans A, B and C were drawn the way they were.

Ms. Villanueva-Saucedo also commented that Plan D provides “no pocket of Hispanics” that can be picked up from Districts 3 or 1.

Mr. Johnson responded that since District 3 is already under populated, the goal of Plan D is to avoid exacerbating that shortage by not taking any population from the district.

Chairman Higginson summarized that Plans A, B and C take District 4 and allow it to expand to pick up as many of the Hispanic Census blocks as are needed for population growth, as well as significant Latino populations to help with retrogression and that the rest of the districts “sort themselves out from there.”

Mr. Smith stated that he wanted to clarify that the Commission was not saying that Plan D was a flawed plan, but merely one that the Commission Members did not believe would be met with community interest and support.

Chairman Higginson confirmed Mr. Smith’s comments.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the proposed schedule of meetings (See Page 10 of Attachment 1); that it was the consensus of the Commission Members that the tentatively scheduled meeting for June 23<sup>rd</sup> was unnecessary and that they could accomplish any remaining issues at the June 30<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting; that it was also the consensus of the Commission Members to recommend three Draft Plans to the Council at the July 7<sup>th</sup> Study Session briefing; and that at the June 30<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting, Mr. Johnson would present a Draft Plan E, which would meld Plans B and C.

#### 5. Scheduling of future meetings and general information.

Chairman Higginson stated that the next meeting of the Council Redistricting Commission would be held on Thursday, June 30, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. He requested that Ms. Wagner advise Commission Member Allen of the revised schedule.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo also requested that Ms. Wagner make arrangements for her to call in to the meeting since she would be out of town.

Ms. Wagner briefly highlighted the proposed schedule of public meetings to be held in each Council district, as well as additional meetings of the Council Redistricting Commission.

Mr. Johnson provided a brief demonstration of the online redistricting system, which will be available to citizens via the City's website.

Responding to a question from Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo, Mr. Wagner clarified that the City will issue a press release advising citizens that the online redistricting system is available for public input and feedback.

6. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

7. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission adjourned at 6:49 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 16<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2011. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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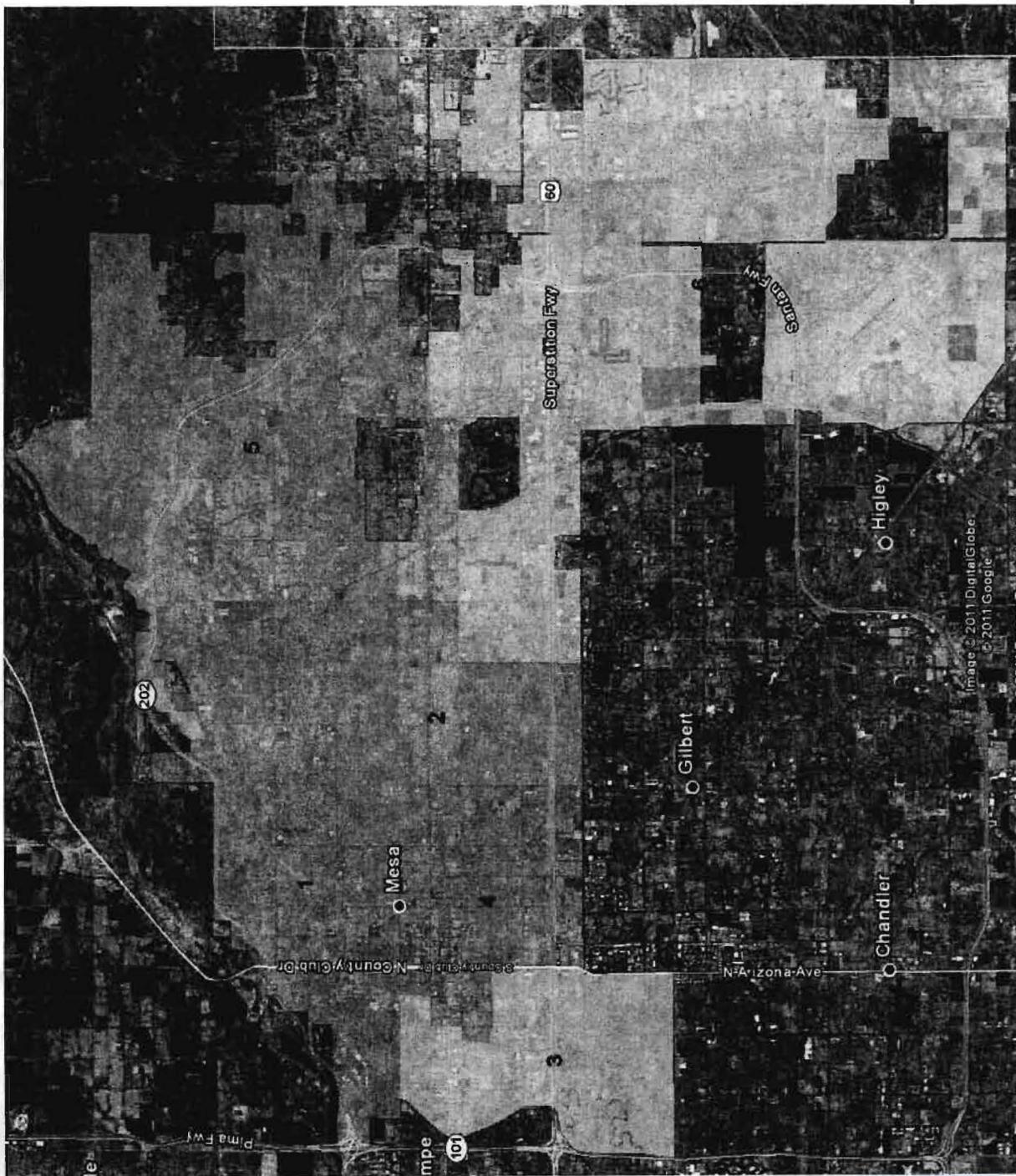
LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

# Mesa 2011 Redistricting Draft Plans

## National Demographics Corporation

Douglas Johnson,  
President

June 16, 2011



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# Line-drawing criteria

## City, State & Federal Legal Requirements:

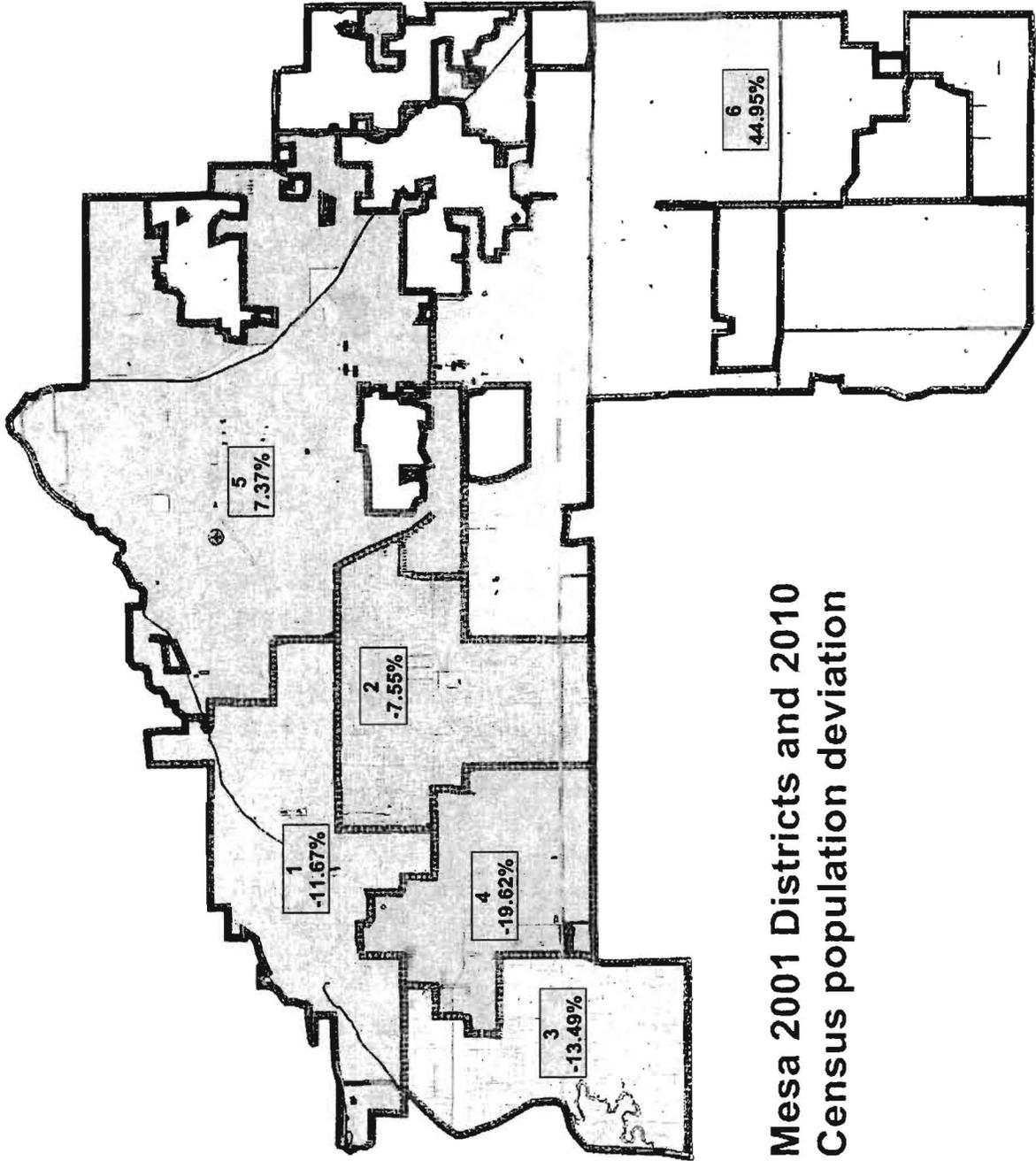
- Equal Population
- Voting Rights Act
- Contiguous territory in as compact form as possible \*
- Incumbents must remain in their districts

## Traditional Redistricting Goals:

- Communities of interest
  - Visible (Natural & man-made) boundaries
  - Compactness & contiguity
  - Continuity in office
  - Population growth
  - Preserve Core of existing districts
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\* The degree to which this general law provision applies to charter cities such as Mesa is unclear.

# Current Population Deviation by District



Mesa 2001 Districts and 2010  
Census population deviation

# Current District Percentages

Dist	% Hisp.		% NH		% NH		% NH		% NH		% NH	
	Wht	DOJ	Blk	DOJ	Ind	Asn	Hwn	Oth	DOJ	Hwn	Oth	DOJ
1	26.2%	62.9%	4.0%	3.9%	2.0%	2.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
2	26.4%	65.8%	3.6%	1.7%	1.5%	3.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
3	20.7%	54.3%	6.5%	4.5%	3.6%	0.9%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%
4	61.0%	31.3%	3.3%	2.3%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
5	11.7%	82.3%	2.2%	1.0%	2.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
6	16.1%	75.3%	3.4%	1.2%	3.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Total	26.4%	64.3%	3.8%	2.3%	2.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%

Dist	% NH18+		% NH18+		% NH18+		% NH18+		% NH18+		% NH18+	
	Wht	DOJ	Blk	DOJ	Ind	Asn	Hwn	Oth	DOJ	Hwn	Oth	DOJ
1	21.8%	68.2%	3.6%	3.5%	2.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
2	21.6%	71.3%	3.2%	1.5%	1.6%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
3	25.2%	59.5%	6.2%	4.1%	3.8%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%
4	54.4%	37.9%	3.2%	2.3%	1.0%	0.8%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
5	9.2%	85.6%	1.8%	0.9%	2.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
6	13.1%	79.4%	3.0%	1.0%	2.9%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Total	21.8%	69.7%	3.4%	2.1%	2.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%

Abbreviations:  
 Dev. = Deviation  
 Hisp = Hispanic  
 NH = "Non-Hispanic"  
 Wht = White  
 Blk = Black / African American  
 Ind = Native American  
 Asn = Asian American  
 Haw or Hwn = Hawaiian and Pacific Islander  
 Oth = Other  
 OthMR or MR = Multi-Race  
 Fil = Filipino  
 "DOJ" = Aggregated according to U.S. Department of Justice guidance  
 CVAP = Citizen Voting Age Population

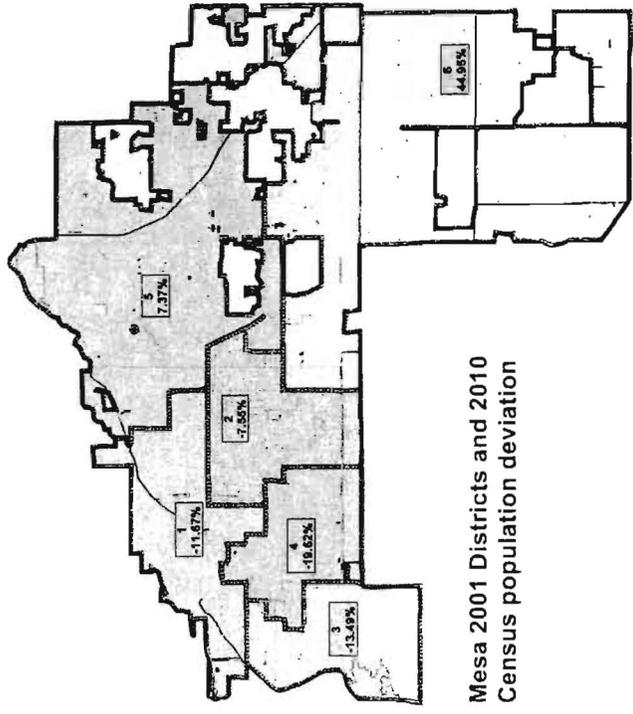
Red circles indicate key Voting Rights "retrogression" benchmarks.

Dist	% American Community Survey (ACS)												
	% Total CVAP	% Hisp CVAP	% NH Wht CVAP	% NH Blk CVAP	% NH Asn CVAP	% NH Ind CVAP	% NH Hwn CVAP	% NH MR CVAP	% NH Oth CVAP	% NH Wht CVAP	% NH Blk CVAP	% NH Asn CVAP	
1	88.5%	11.9%	80.4%	2.1%	1.2%	3.2%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	3.2%	0.0%	1.4%	4.0%
2	92.4%	11.0%	84.0%	1.4%	1.0%	1.2%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	0.1%	2.1%	4.3%
3	85.0%	17.8%	70.0%	5.2%	2.2%	4.6%	0.1%	2.3%	4.9%	0.2%	1.4%	1.4%	4.5%
4	66.6%	25.4%	65.0%	3.9%	0.8%	3.8%	0.0%	0.8%	4.3%	0.2%	2.7%	1.6%	8.5%
5	97.8%	8.1%	87.1%	1.6%	1.3%	0.4%	0.1%	1.4%	0.5%	0.1%	1.6%	1.6%	3.5%
6	94.7%	9.7%	83.9%	2.2%	1.8%	1.0%	0.1%	1.6%	1.2%	0.3%	1.6%	1.6%	4.2%
Total	89.1%	12.4%	80.4%	2.5%	1.4%	2.0%	0.1%	1.4%	2.1%	0.2%	1.7%	1.7%	4.5%

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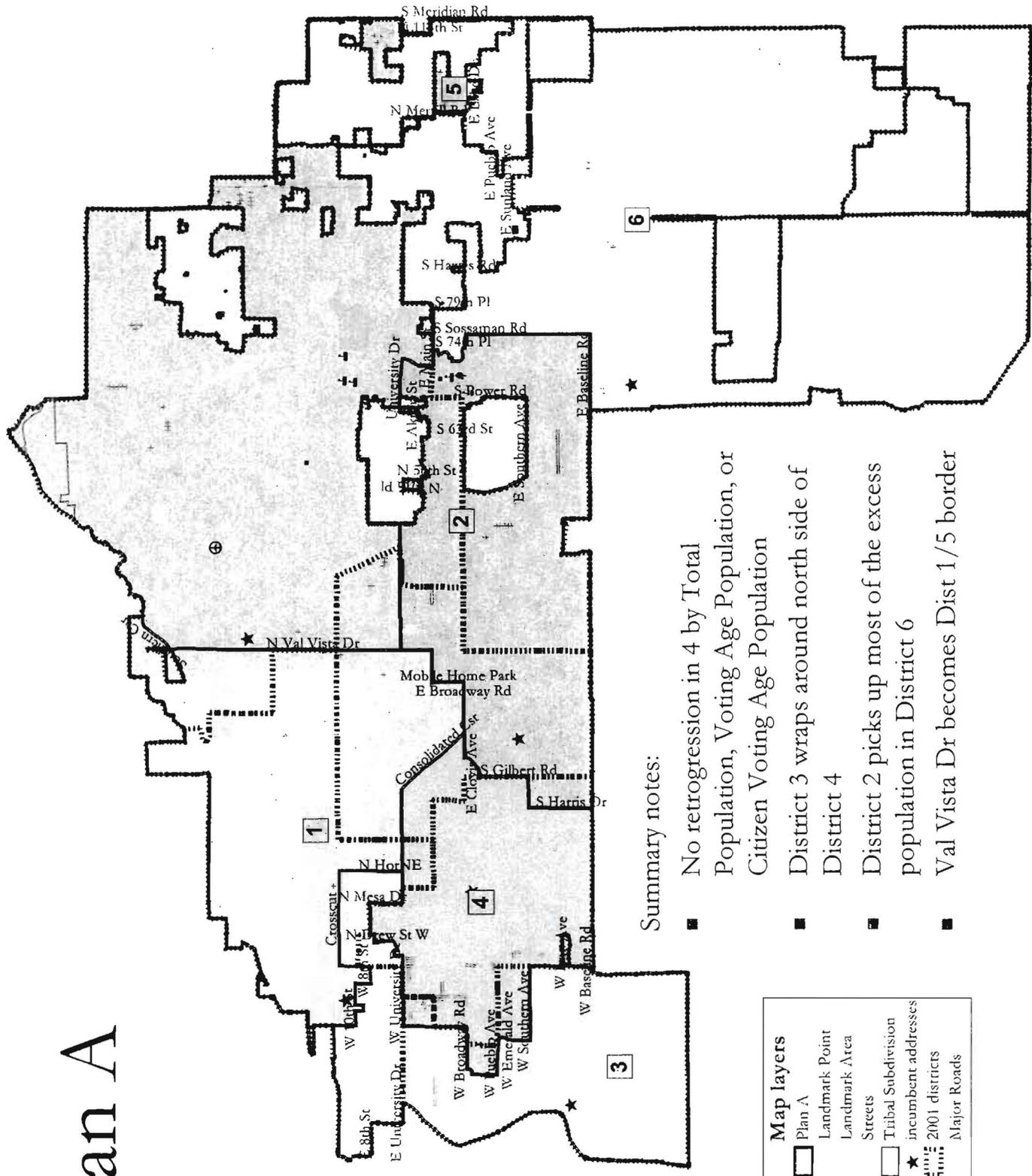
# Key Questions

- How to avoid retrogression in District 4?
- Does District 2 or 4 (or both) pick up the extra population from District 6?
- Does District 3 pick up the needed population from just over the top of 4 or from the west side of 1?
- Can some of the “notches” and “stair-steps” from 2001 be made more compact?



Mesa 2001 Districts and 2010  
Census population deviation

# Plan A



**Summary notes:**

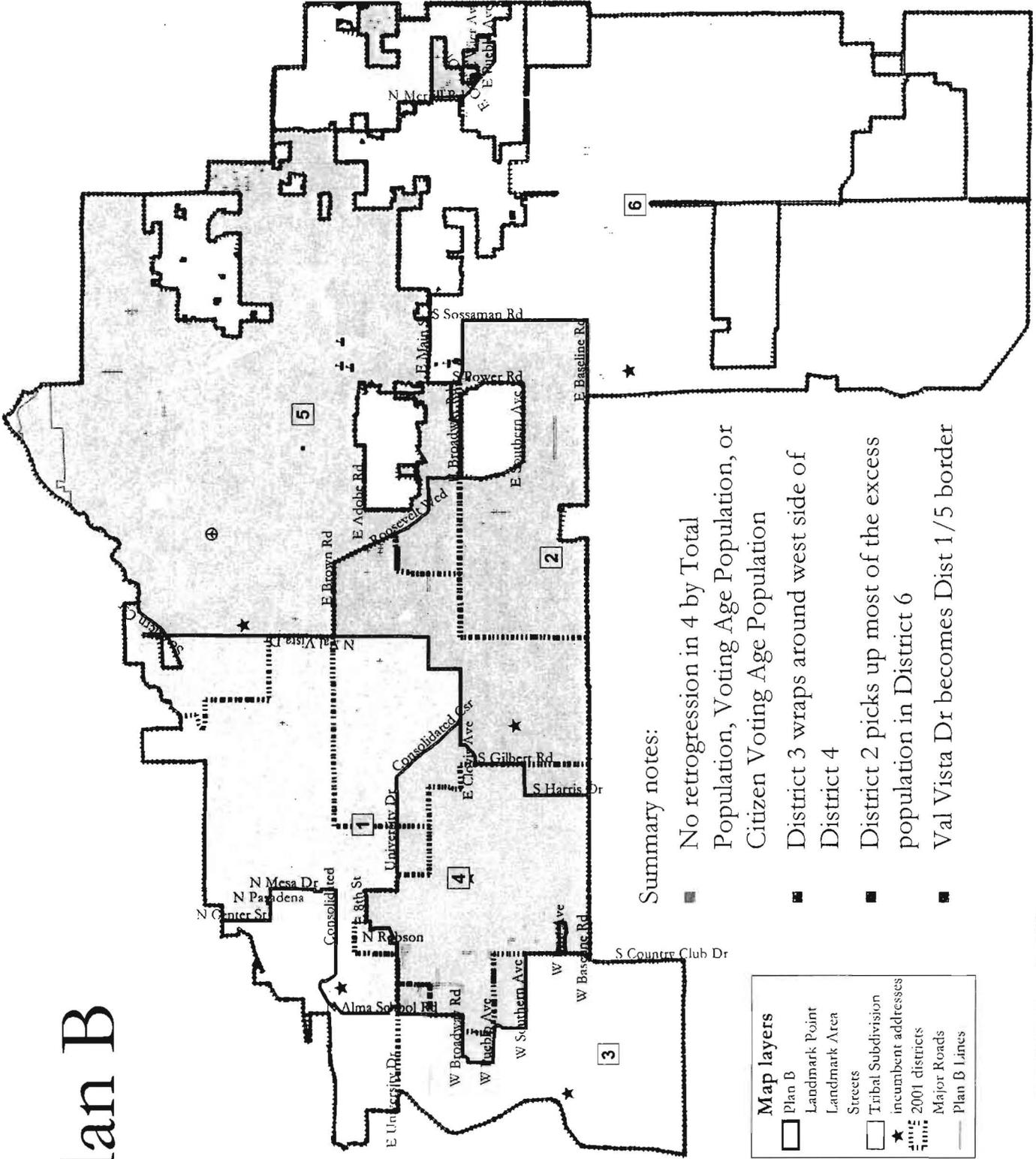
- No retrogression in 4 by Total Population, Voting Age Population, or Citizen Voting Age Population
- District 3 wraps around north side of District 4
- District 2 picks up most of the excess population in District 6
- Val Vista Dr becomes Dist 1/5 border

**Map layers**

- Plan A
- Landmark Point
- Landmark Area
- Streets
- Tribal Subdivision
- ★ incumbent addresses
- ▨ 2001 districts
- Major Roads

[National Demographics Corporation, May 26, 2011.]

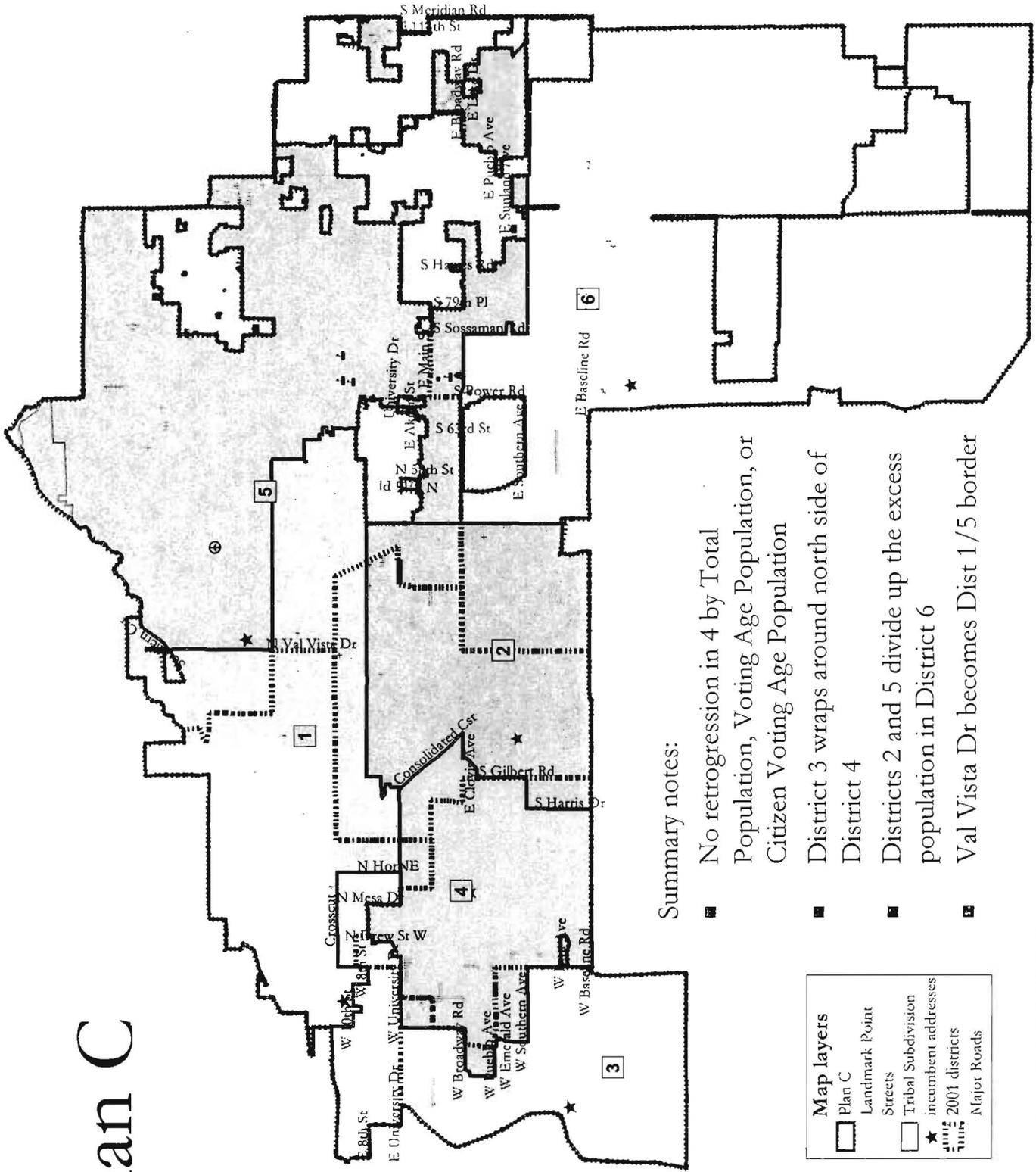
# Plan B



**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



**Summary notes:**

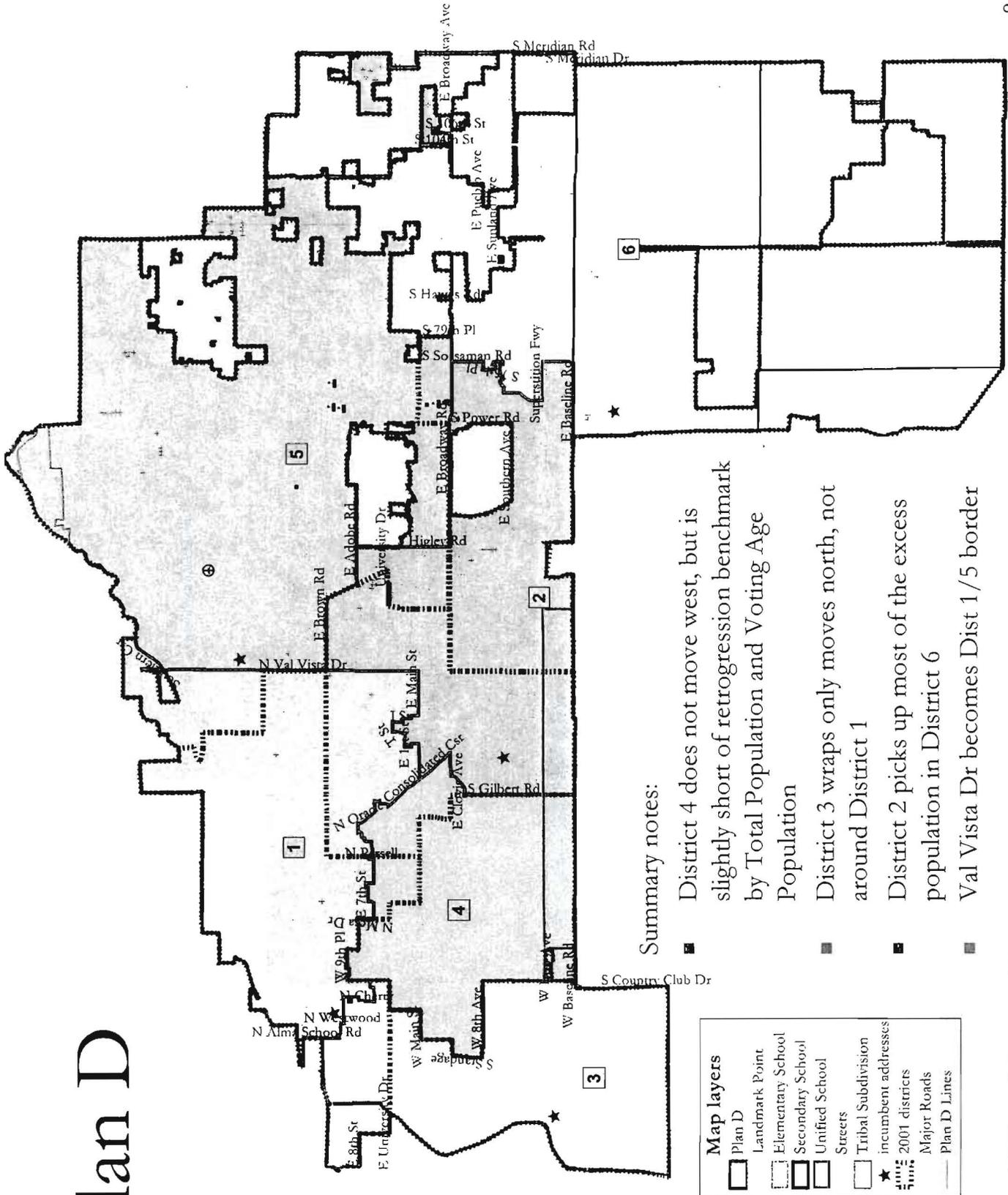
- No retrogression in 4 by Total Population, Voting Age Population, or Citizen Voting Age Population
- District 3 wraps around north side of District 4
- Districts 2 and 5 divide up the excess population in District 6
- Val Vista Dr becomes Dist 1/5 border

**Map layers**

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

Parsons Demographics Corporation, May 26, 2011.

# Plan D



# Schedule

## Proposed Schedule:

- April Appoint Commission
- May 2 Receive census data
- June 16, ~~23~~, 30 Commission Meetings
- July 7 Council Study Session: Review of draft plans
- August 8, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20  
Public Hearings (one in each district)
- August 25 Commission Meeting: Considers plans and public input
- September 8 Commission Meeting: Plan Selection
- September 15 Council Study Session: Hear/discuss final recommendations
- September 22 Commission Meeting (if needed)
- September 26 Regular Council Meeting: Adopt resolution
- November 1 Submittal to Department of Justice