



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

## COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 1, 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 September 1, 2011 at 5:36 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Brian Allen Nancy Aposhian Scott Higginson Terry Hines Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo	None	Christopher Glover	Alfred Smith Carla Wagner Melissa Jones

1. Welcome by Chairman Scott Higginson.

Chairman Higginson welcomed everyone, including Councilmember Glover, to the meeting. He expressed his appreciation to staff and the consultants for their helpfulness throughout the redistricting process.

2. Current Events Summary on Redistricting Process.

Chairman Higginson reported that following a series of public hearings, the Commission reviewed the plans submitted by the public and excluded those plans that did not comply with the benchmark criteria. He explained that a plan he and the consultants developed, which modified the original Plan B, was also reviewed. Chairman Higginson added that Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo led the Commission through an effort to move District 4 to the east and has also worked directly with the consultants on a plan that is ready to be reviewed by the Commission.

Chairman Higginson noted that the objective for the meeting would be for the Commission to make a decision on a final plan to be presented to the City Council on September 12, 2011.

Discussion ensued relative to the process for presenting the Commission's approved plan to the City Council.

3. Discuss and make recommendations on input received from the public.

Chairman Higginson reported that 62 online redistricting accounts were created and 10 Public Plans were submitted online. **(See Page 8 of Attachment 1)**

Sara Larsen, Senior Analyst for National Demographics Corporation (NDC), briefly highlighted the Public Plans that were submitted. She advised that street names were added to Public Plans 1 through 7 as requested. (See Pages 9 through 14 of Attachment 1)

Commission Member Allen noted that it was previously determined that Public Plans 1 through 3 were unworkable due to a significant reduction in the percentage of minority population in District 4. He stated that Public Plans 4 through 7, which are variations of Plan B, are workable plans that have slight boundary differences.

Further discussion ensued relative to Public Plan 7, which was analyzed by NDC, and has a plan deviation of 2.53%. (See Page 15 of Attachment 1)

Responding to a question from Chairman Higginson, Ms. Larsen clarified that the population deviation in Public Plan 7 was under by 1.66% in District 6 and over by .87% in District 2.

Ms. Larsen further remarked that Public Plan 8 (See Page 16 of Attachment 1), which was submitted by Commission Member Allen, meets the Hispanic Voting Age Population (HVAP) and the Hispanic Citizen Voting Age Population (HCVAP) in District 4; however, the plan deviation was too high and an incumbent was removed from his district.

Ms. Larsen reported that Public Plan 9 (See Page 17 of Attachment 1) was submitted by Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo at the last meeting and was subsequently analyzed by NDC. She said that she and Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo made revisions to the plan, which is now labeled Public Plan 9 Modified. Ms. Larsen added that the plan deviation for Public Plan 9 Modified is 1.6% and will be reviewed by the Commission.

Ms. Larsen, in addition, explained that Public Plan 10 was an incomplete plan submitted by Commission Member Hines. (See Page 19 of Attachment 1) She noted that for public record, all plans have been provided to the Commission.

Chairman Higginson commented that Public Plans 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were previously excluded and Public Plan 9 is set to be reviewed by the Commission.

Chairman Higginson invited the members of the public who submitted plans to address the Commission at this time. He stated that for those citizens who wished to speak, but had not submitted a plan, they would be given an opportunity to address the Commission later in the agenda.

4. Discuss and make recommendations on changes to the preliminary redistricting plans and recommendations for a proposed final redistricting plan.

Chairman Higginson opened the floor to this fellow Commission Members to discuss Plan B Modified and Public Plan 9 Modified.

Responding to a question from Commission Member Allen, Ms. Larsen clarified that with respect to Plan 9 Modified, the boundaries of the northeast corner of District 3 are 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Alma School Road.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo commented that on Plan 9 Modified, major streets such as Alma School Road, were used in order to keep the lines as clean as possible.

Additional discussion ensued relative to potential district boundaries so as not to impact the Mesa Grande Community. **(See Attachment 2)**

Chairman Higginson remarked on how well Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo and the consultants did in drawing Plan 9 Modified and said he was surprised at how close the HVAP came to meeting the target.

Further discussion ensued relative to the legal significance of a 1% decline of the HVAP as it applies to retrogression concerns with the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Doug Johnson, President of NDC, explained that the voting strength of the Latino population is very important to the DOJ. He said that if the Commission fails to “hit the benchmarks,” it would be necessary to create “a solid record” indicating that the Latino voting strength was not affected. Mr. Johnson noted that although it could be a risk, it was not an impossible hurdle. He advised that the jurisdiction would be required to make the case to DOJ explaining the reason why the target number was not reached. Mr. Johnson added that up to this point, there has not been a record indicating why this plan should work or that the Latino community is comfortable with the plan.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the arguments that could be made to the DOJ to support the Commission’s preference for Plan 9 Modified, which does not meet the benchmarks, when an alternative plan exists that does meet the benchmarks.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo advised that public comments that were received at the public hearings in Districts 1, 4 and 5 related to what effect redistricting will have not only on the Hispanic population of District 4, but also the population in the surrounding districts. She said that the questions raised were in regard to what effect maintaining the DOJ requirements in District 4 would have on diversity in the rest of the City.

Further discussion ensued regarding the manner in which DOJ would evaluate Plan 9 Modified to ensure that retrogression has not occurred and that the Latino voting strength has been maintained.

Chairman Higginson commented that the citizens in District 4 have not expressed any concerns regarding a decrease in HVAP. He noted that there have been public comments made concerning the “diffusion” of the Latino voting population in other districts.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo suggested that picking up population for District 3 around the incumbent’s home in District 1 is a possibility that might make Plan 9 Modified work.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding where population adjustments could be made to Plan 9 Modified in order to meet the HCVAP benchmark in District 4; and the effect of moving District 3 around the home of the District 4 incumbent.

Ms. Larsen utilized the mapping tool to implement further suggested adjustments to Plan 9 Modified in order to meet the population deviation in Districts 1 and 3, and meet the HVAP and HCVAP benchmarks in District 4.

Chairman Higginson remarked that District 3 can either move through a zero-population area to the south to gain population from District 2 in the east or through a zero-population area in the north to gain population from District 1. He commented that the Councilmember in District 1 may not live in the same location ten years from now and said that District 3 would then have an opportunity to grow. Chairman Higginson added that the Commission can only focus on where a Councilmember currently resides.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo stated that she was not willing to bet on where the future growth pattern for District 3 will be in ten years. She said that creating "a barbell" to the east relegates an unnatural growth pattern for District 3.

Additional discussion ensued regarding where the boundaries of the Lehi Community and Mesa Grande Community are located within the newly modified Plan B.

Responding to a question from Commission Member Aposhian, Ms. Larsen explained that in Plan 9 Modified, the eastern boundaries of District 4 are Harris Road, Gilbert Road and the canal.

Ms. Larson utilized the mapping tool to demonstrate the effects of Chairman Higginson's suggestions relative to Districts 2 and 5 wherein portions of District 5 cross the County island.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo requested that her fellow Commission Members offer their comments with respect to the plan they prefer. She stated that she has clearly stated her opinions at previous meetings.

Chairman Higginson commented that he did not see the difference between moving District 3 across a zero-population area to the south or across a zero-population to the north. He remarked that he found the "jog" to the north in the newly modified Plan 9 "appalling."

Commission Member Hines expressed her support for Plan 9 Modified, which moves District 3 north into District 1. She explained that keeping west Mesa together provides more continuity than moving District 3 into the Dana Park area. Commission Member Hines added that she was more comfortable with maintaining some compactness in District 3 as opposed to moving along miles of unpopulated freeway to obtain population.

Commission Member Aposhian commented that she originally supported the plan that Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo modified; however, she was concerned by the possible issues it could have with DOJ. She also remarked that she was not content with any of the revised drawings, but thanked Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo for her efforts in this regard. She expressed concern regarding the "barbell effect" of moving District 3 to the east and the deviation percentage in District 4.

In response to a question from Commission Member Allen, Ms. Larsen advised that in Plan B Modified, the most eastern boundary of District 3 lines up with Lindsay Road.

Commission Member Allen commented that Plan B Modified, if it could work, has “the best feel” to it, but expressed opposition to running any significant risk of having it rejected by DOJ. He stated that it comes down to what the Commission has heard from the constituents. Commission Member Allen noted that he was not offended by the “barbell” and also remarked that the Commission should not be concerned with what could happen ten years from now. He further indicated that the newly modified Plan B, which moves around the Councilmember’s home, poses a problem. He said that the Commission has tried to come up with a plan that addresses all concerns and said that the time has come to take a vote since the Commission’s two most vocal members will not agree.

Chairman Higginson stated that there will be some speculation by the public that moving District 3 around an incumbent’s home was done just to keep the incumbent in his district, as opposed to the fact that the Commission was legally required to do so. He noted that had the Councilmembers lived elsewhere, the redistricting process would have been much easier.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo remarked that it will be interesting to see what the population in District 4 will be like ten years from now with new development and Light Rail coming into District 4.

5. Take action on approving a final redistricting plan to forward to City Council for review in Study Session.

It was moved by Commission Member Allen, seconded by Chairman Higginson, that Plan B Modified be recommended to the City Council.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Allen – Aposhian – Higginson  
NAYS - Hines – Villanueva-Saucedo

Chairman Higginson declared the motion carried by majority vote.

6. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Monday, September 12, 2011, 4:00 p.m. – Study Session (presentation to the Council)

Thursday, September 15, 2011, 5:30 p.m. – Tentative

7. Items from citizens present.

Sandra Fisher, a District 3 resident, expressed her disappointment with the outcome of the vote for Modified Plan B. She stated that District 3 does not share a community of interest with the neighborhoods near Lindsay Road and Val Vista Drive. Ms. Fisher noted that moving District 3 to the north would keep the communities closer together without using a long section of unpopulated area to connect them. She added that the residents on the west side of District 3 will not have anything in common with the residents on the other side of the "barbell" created in Plan B Modified.

Responding to Ms. Fisher's comments, Chairman Higginson clarified that 174 people live in the "barbell" section of District 3. He said that should District 3 move east, the distance across the unpopulated area is the same as if it were to move to the north. He thanked Ms. Fisher for her comments.

Kit Filbey, a Mesa resident in District 2, also expressed disappointment with the vote and said that Plan B Modified was not a good plan. She stated that she has been involved in Mesa politics and noted that most people do not know what is going on with the redistricting process. Ms. Filbey said that those that do know about redistricting understand the rules and therefore, it was "a bogus argument" to say that moving the district around a Councilmember's home would bother citizens.

Chairman Higginson responded as follows: "We will see how the press reports it and if they make it an argument, it won't be bogus."

Mary McCabe, a Mesa resident, addressed the Commission and asked if there were plans for future development in the northwest area of Mesa around Councilmember Richins' home. She said that she believed such plans would be relevant information.

Deputy City Attorney Alfred Smith advised that the question was outside the scope of the Redistricting Commission.

Mike Stevens, a Mesa resident, responded to Ms. McCabe's question and explained that the area in northwest Mesa is planned for the future Chicago Cubs' Stadium and the surrounding development.

Mr. Stevens addressed the Commission and said that he was saddened that the Commission did not suggest that another meeting be held when they came so close to meeting the criteria in the newly modified Plan 9 map. He pointed out that the HVAP and HCVAP benchmarks were met and noted that it would have just been a matter of adjusting the populations in the other districts. Mr. Stevens expressed his disappointment in the rushed vote and said if the Commission had spent another hour, they could have accomplished what they intended to do. He indicated that if the Commission had considered having one more meeting and made a few more adjustments, it could have come to a resolution instead of putting an eight or nine mile gap of empty land in the district.

In response to a question from Commission Member Allen, Executive Management Assistant to the City Manager Carla Wagner explained that all the Commission Members are invited to attend the Study Session and that the consultant would make the presentation to the Council.

Mr. Johnson advised that he will begin the presentation by providing the technical details to the Council, after which the Commission Members can share their thoughts and input.

Commission Member Allen encouraged his fellow Commission Members to address the Council since he believed it was relevant that the Council know how the vote came about and what the discussions entailed.

Councilmember Glover addressed the Commission and stated the opinion that the Council would appreciate hearing from the Commission Members with respect to how they developed the Plans and why they would or would not support the Plan. He said this would allow the Council to address any concerns directly with the Commission Members.

Chairman Higginson concurred with Councilmember Glover and encouraged all Commission Members to be present at the September 12<sup>th</sup> Study Session. He also requested that the consultant provide the Council the final two maps to display the various options.

Commission Member Villanueva-Saucedo suggested that if both maps were to be shown to the Council, it might be important to demonstrate the starting point of Plan 9 Modified as well as the end result.

Chairman Higginson stated that it could be pointed out to the Council that Plan 9 Modified would clearly "raise the eyebrows" of the DOJ.

8. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Redistricting Commission adjourned at 7:26 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 1<sup>st</sup> day of September, 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

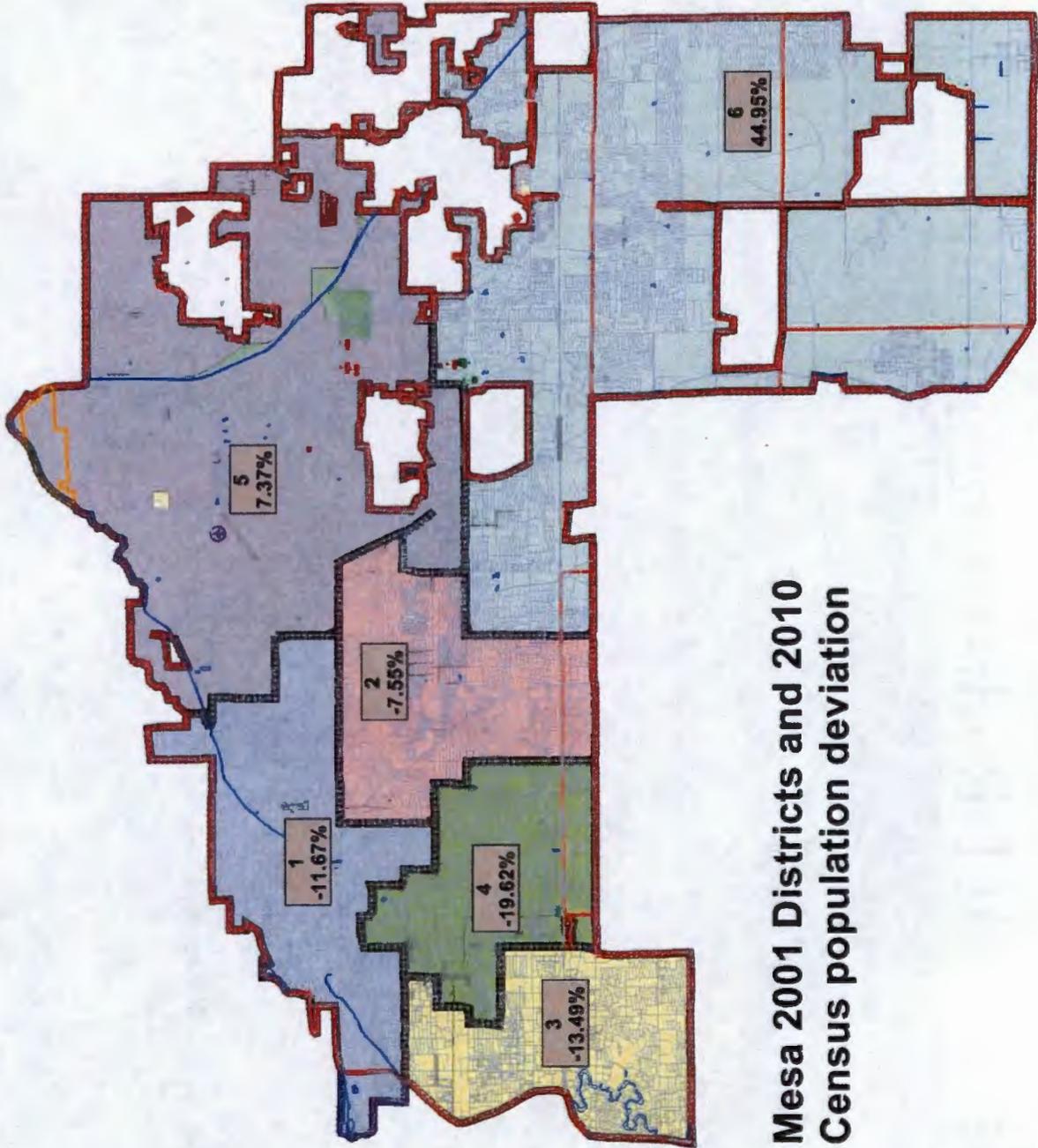
bdw  
(attachments – 2)

# Mesa 2011 Redistricting Plans



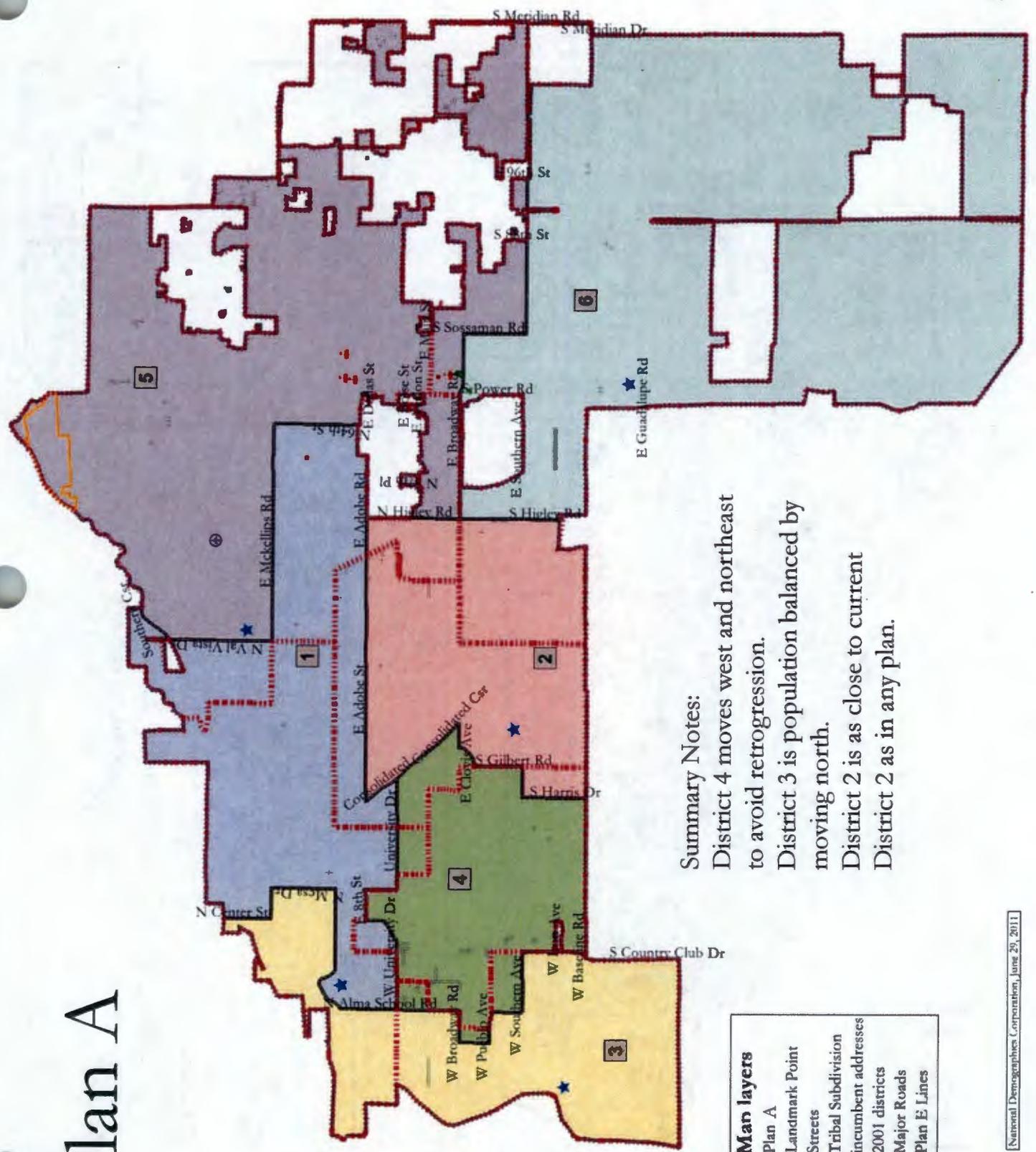
Commission  
Hearing  
September 1, 2011

# Current Population Deviation by District



Mesa 2001 Districts and 2010  
Census population deviation

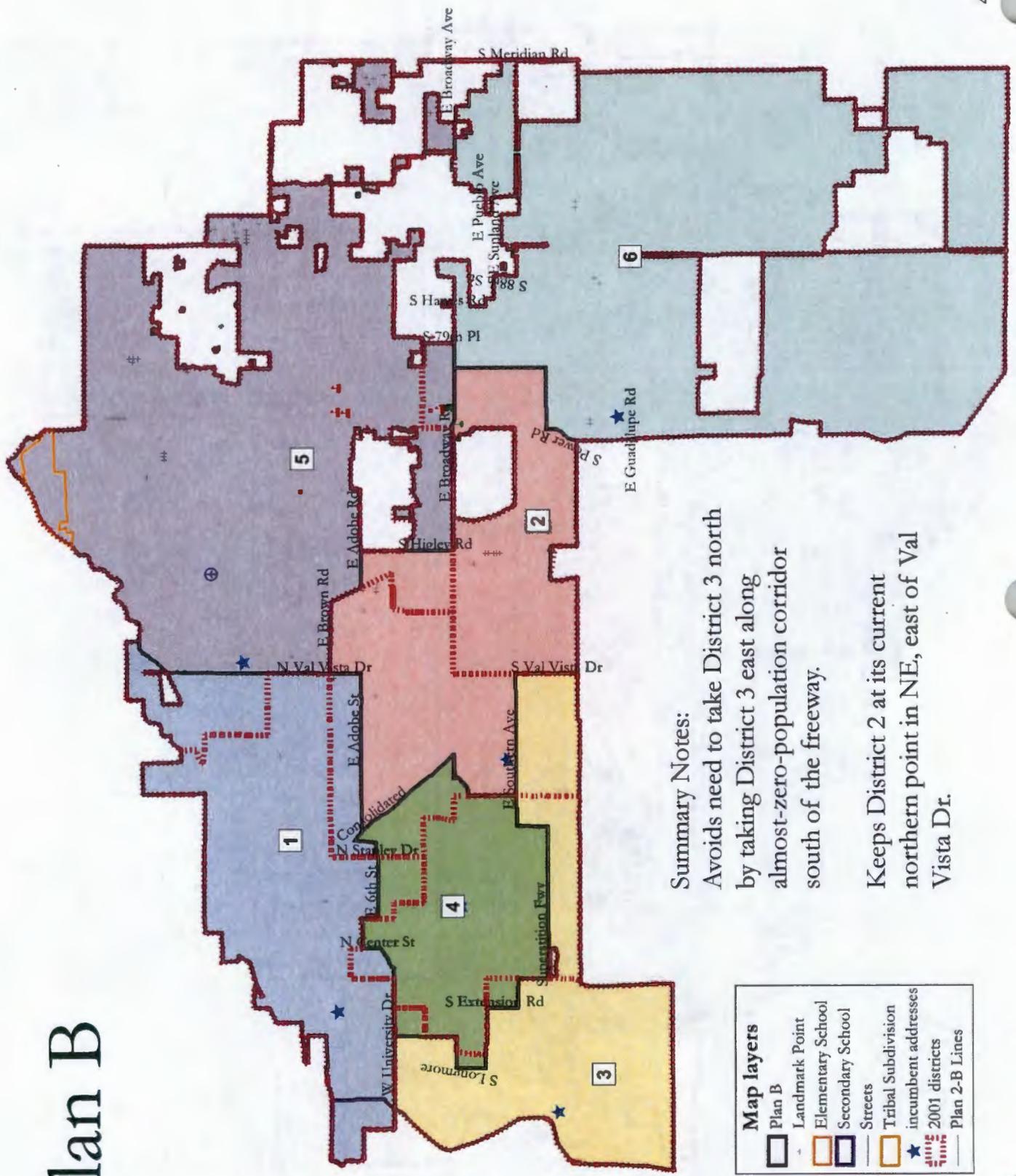
# Plan A



**Summary Notes:**  
 District 4 moves west and northeast to avoid retrogression.  
 District 3 is population balanced by moving north.  
 District 2 is as close to current District 2 as in any plan.

Man layers	
	Plan A
	Landmark Point
	Streets
	Tribal Subdivision
	incumbent addresses
	2001 districts
	Major Roads
	Plan E Lines

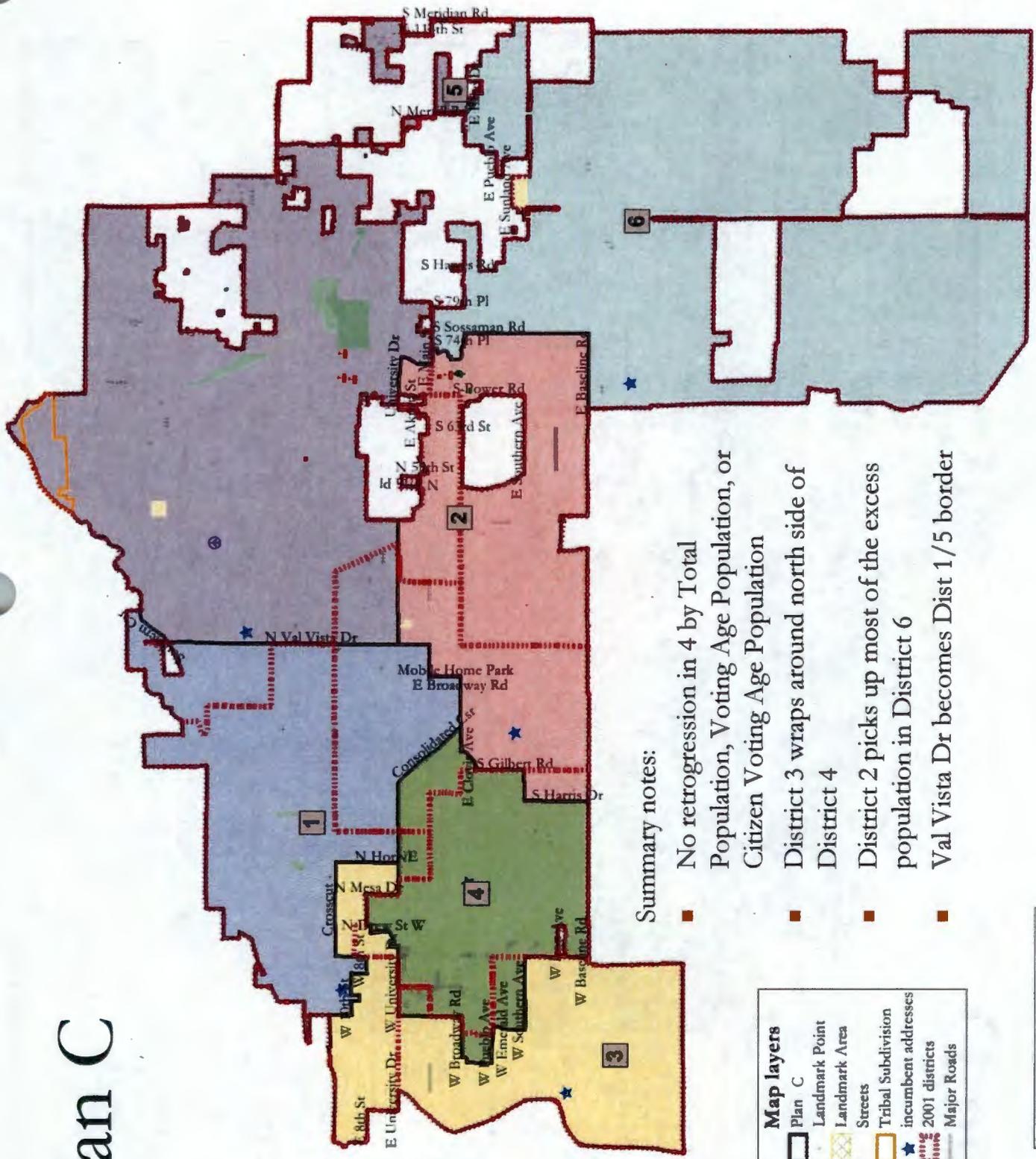
# Plan B



**Summary Notes:**  
 Avoids need to take District 3 north by taking District 3 east along almost-zero-population corridor south of the freeway.

Keeps District 2 at its current northern point in NE, east of Val Vista Dr.

# Plan C



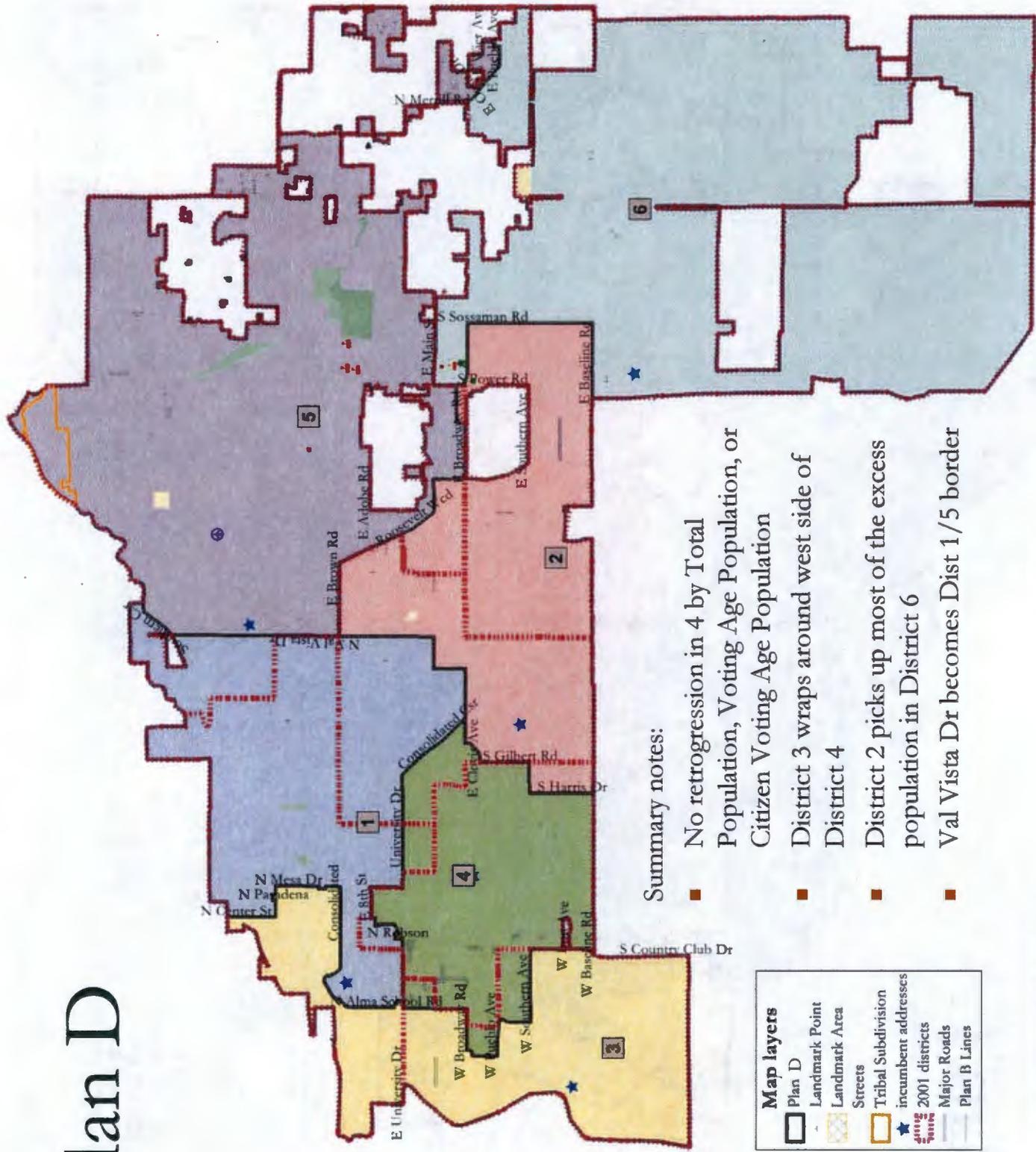
**Summary notes:**

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

**Map layers**

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

# Plan D



**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

**Map layers**

- Plan D
- Landmark Point
- Landmark Area
- Streets
- Tribal Subdivision
- ★ incumbent addresses
- 2001 districts
- Major Roads
- Plan B Lines

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## Voting Rights Act Benchmarks

■ **Hispanic Voting Age Population (HVAP): 54.4%**

□ HVAP = %H18+ Pop

■ **Hispanic Citizen Voting Age Population (HCVAP): 25.4%**

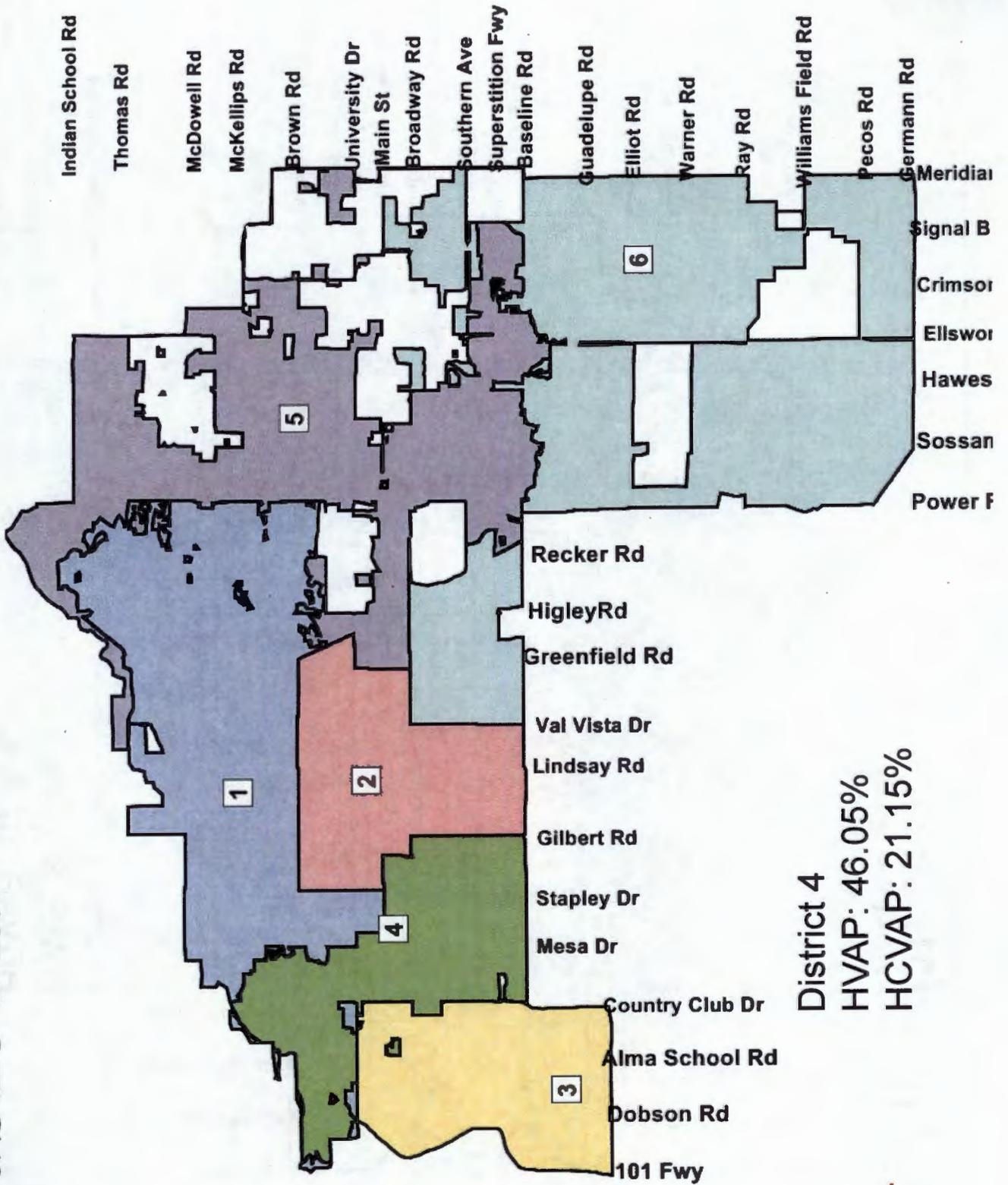
■ **Regression:** The reduction of minority population percentage of a district to a level that will make it more difficult or impossible for minority voters to elect candidates of their choice.

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# Online Input Summary

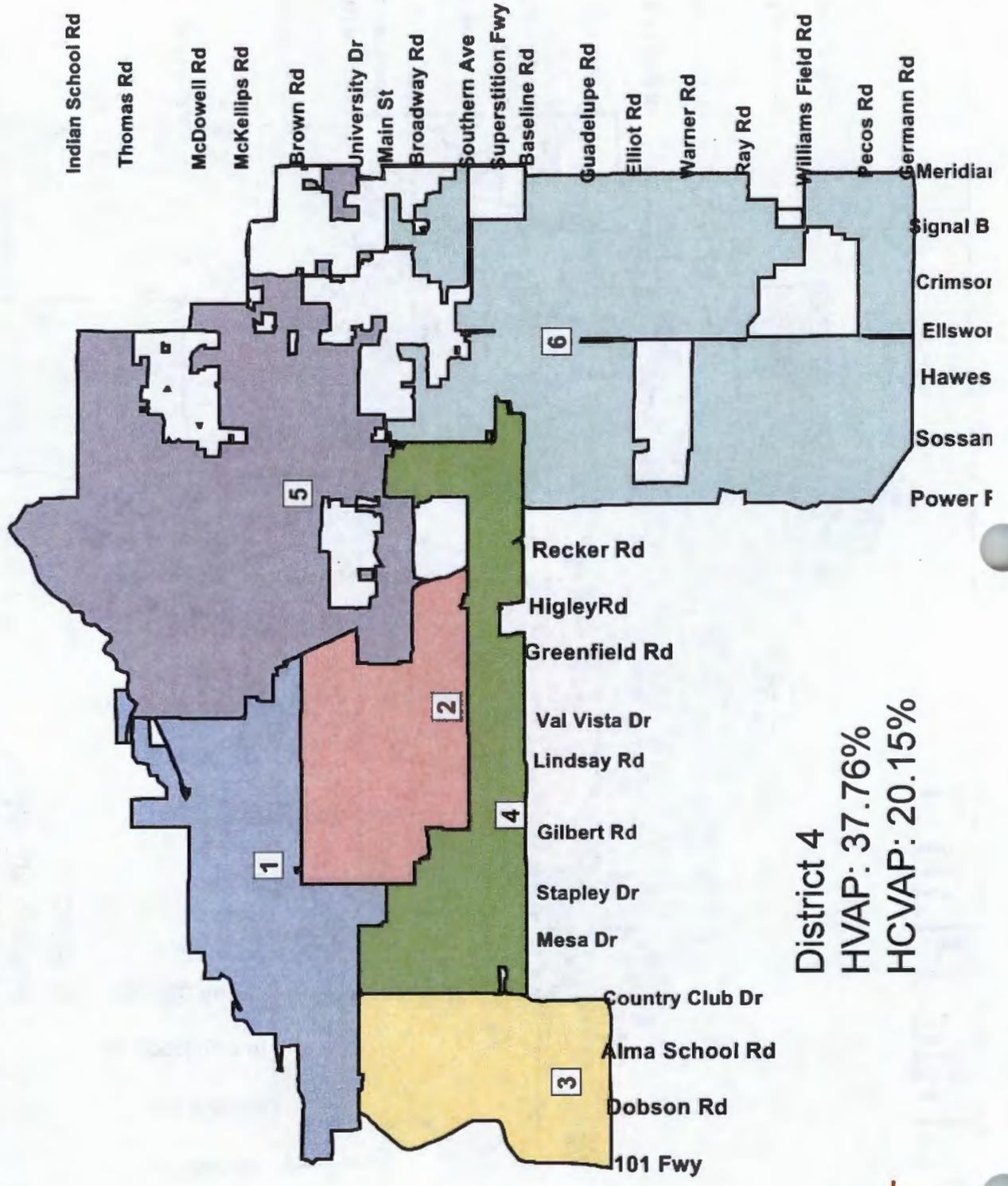
- 62 Online Redistricting accounts created
- 10 Public Plans Submitted

# Public Plan 1



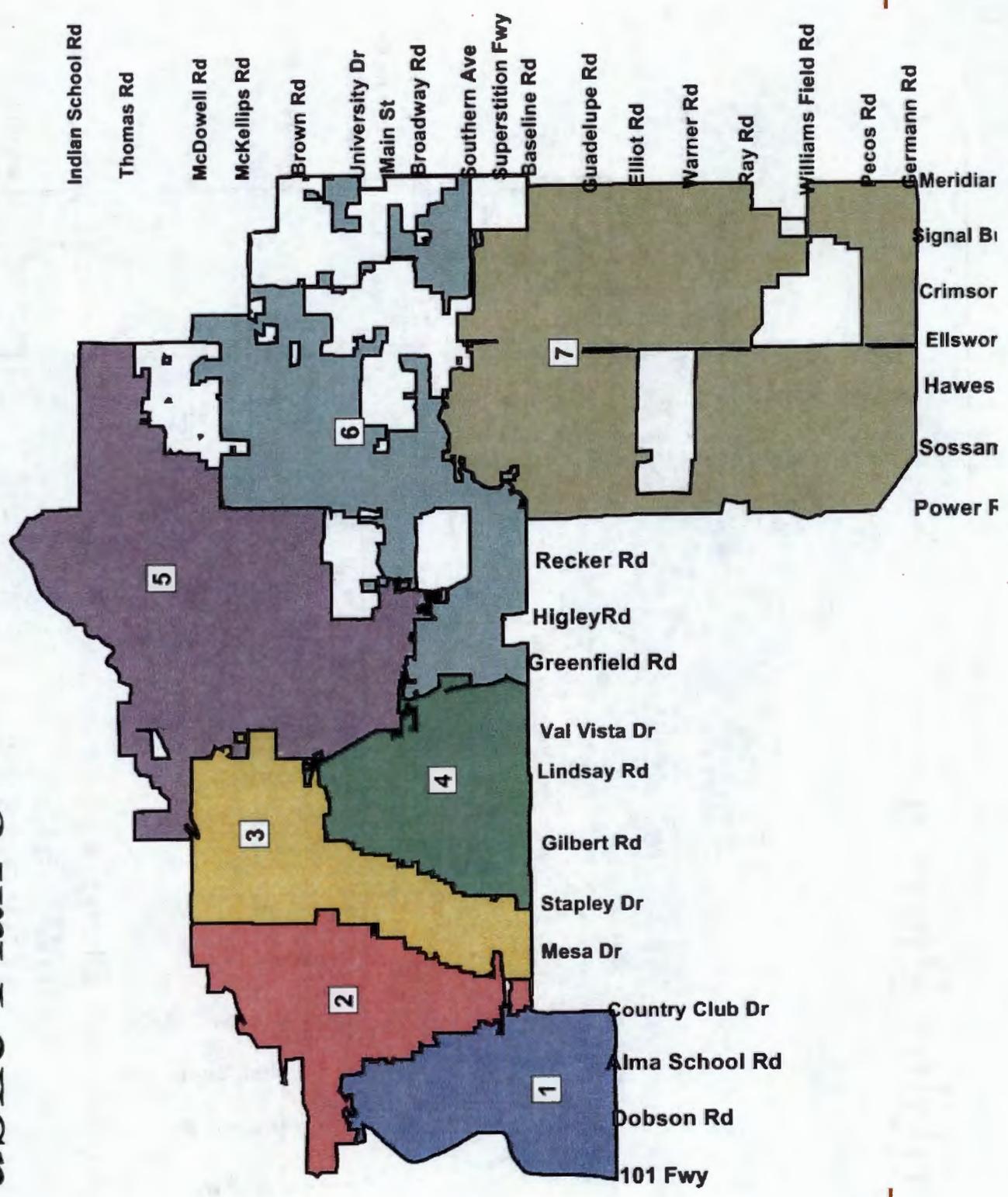
District 4  
HVAP: 46.05%  
HCVAP: 21.15%

# Public Plan 2

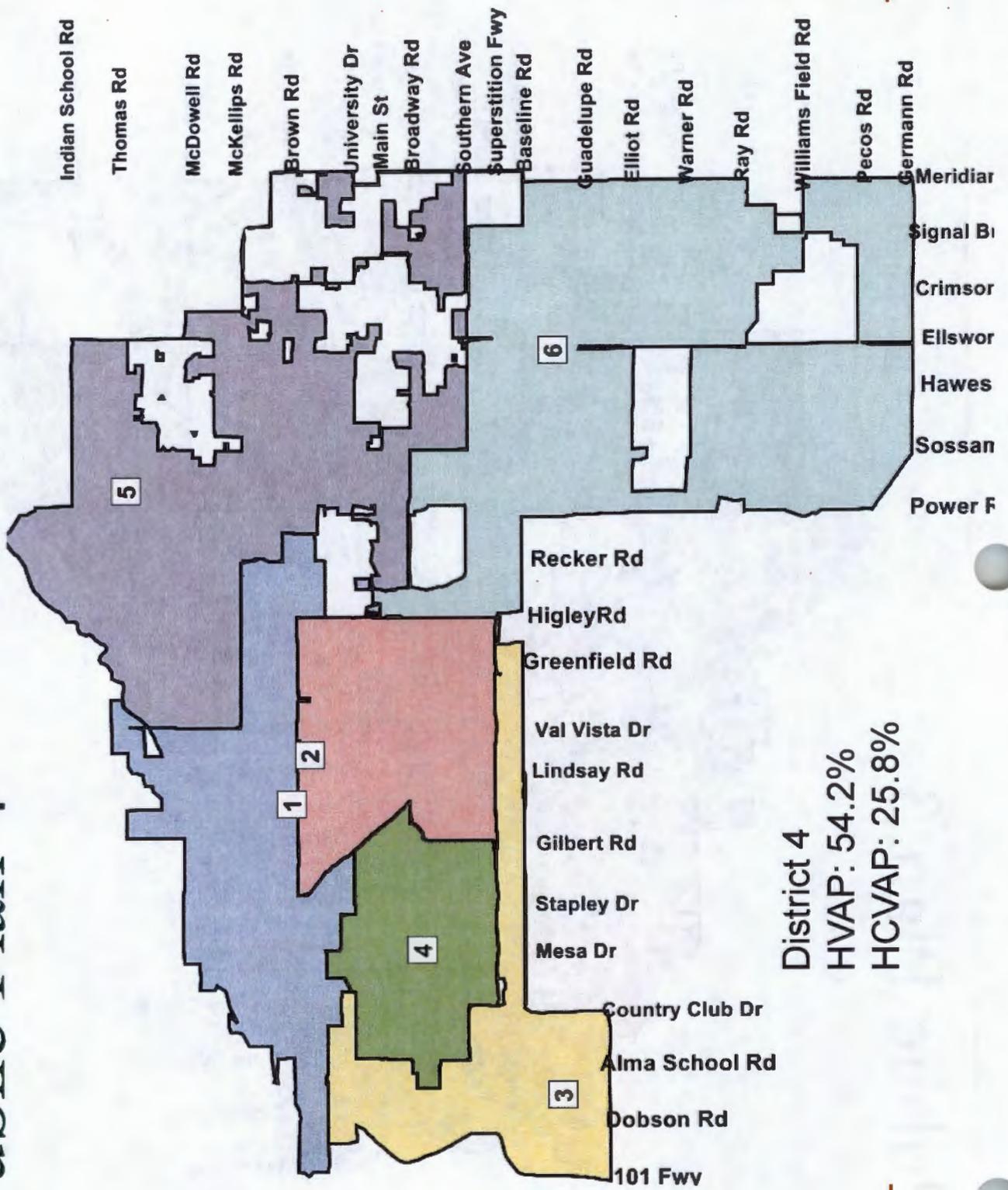


District 4  
HVAP: 37.76%  
HCVAP: 20.15%

# Public Plan 3

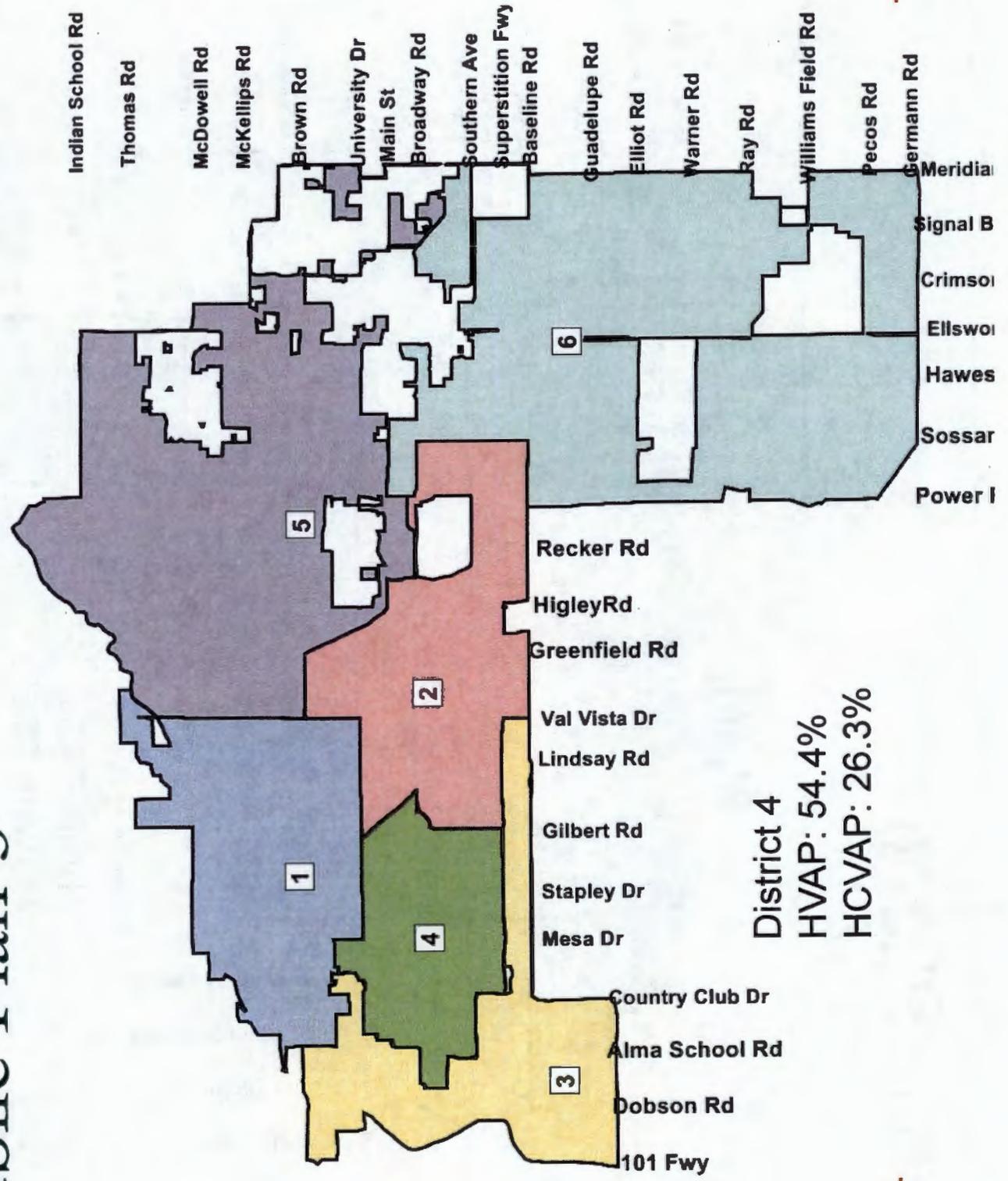


# Public Plan 4

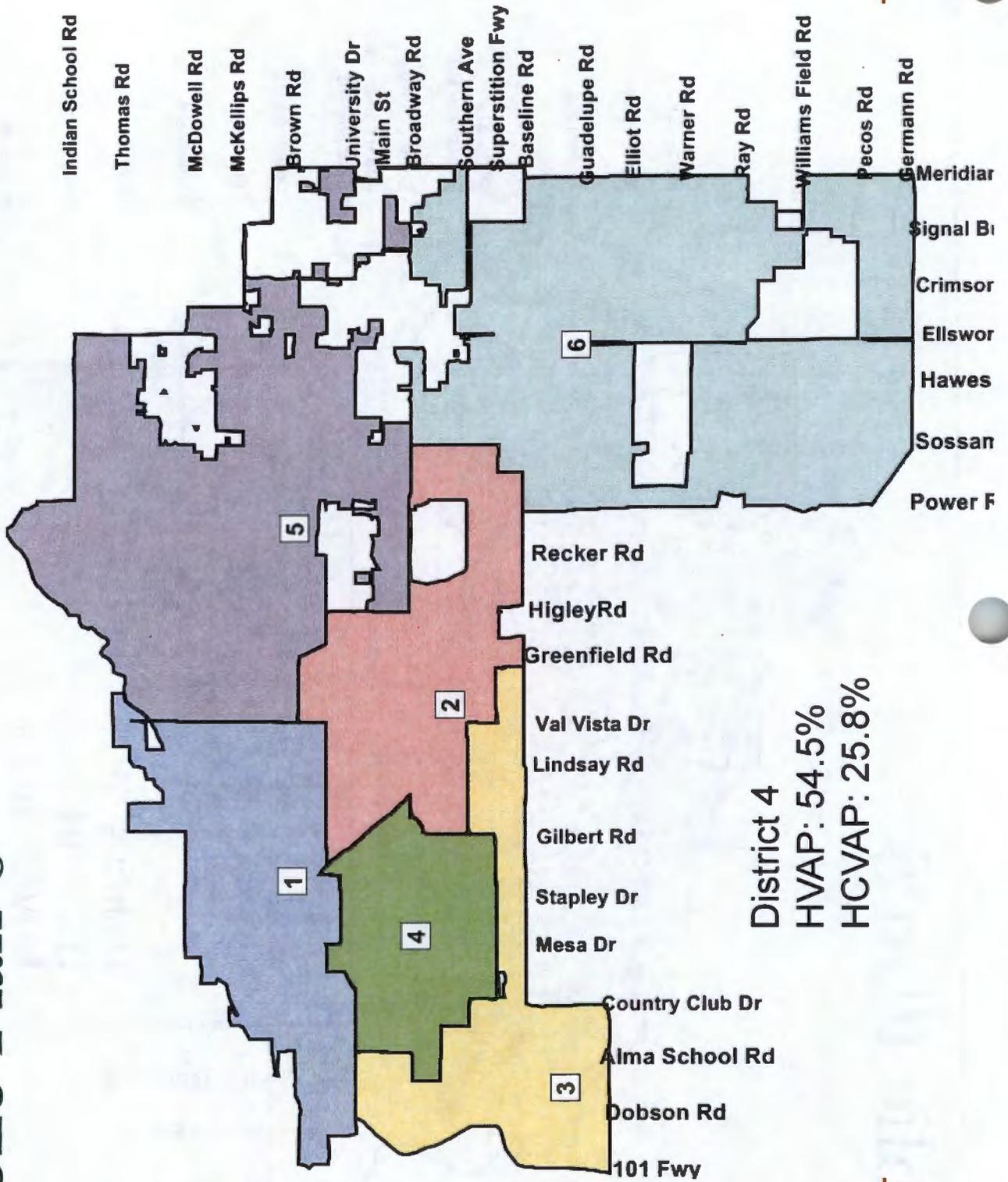


District 4  
HVAP: 54.2%  
HCVAP: 25.8%

# Public Plan 5

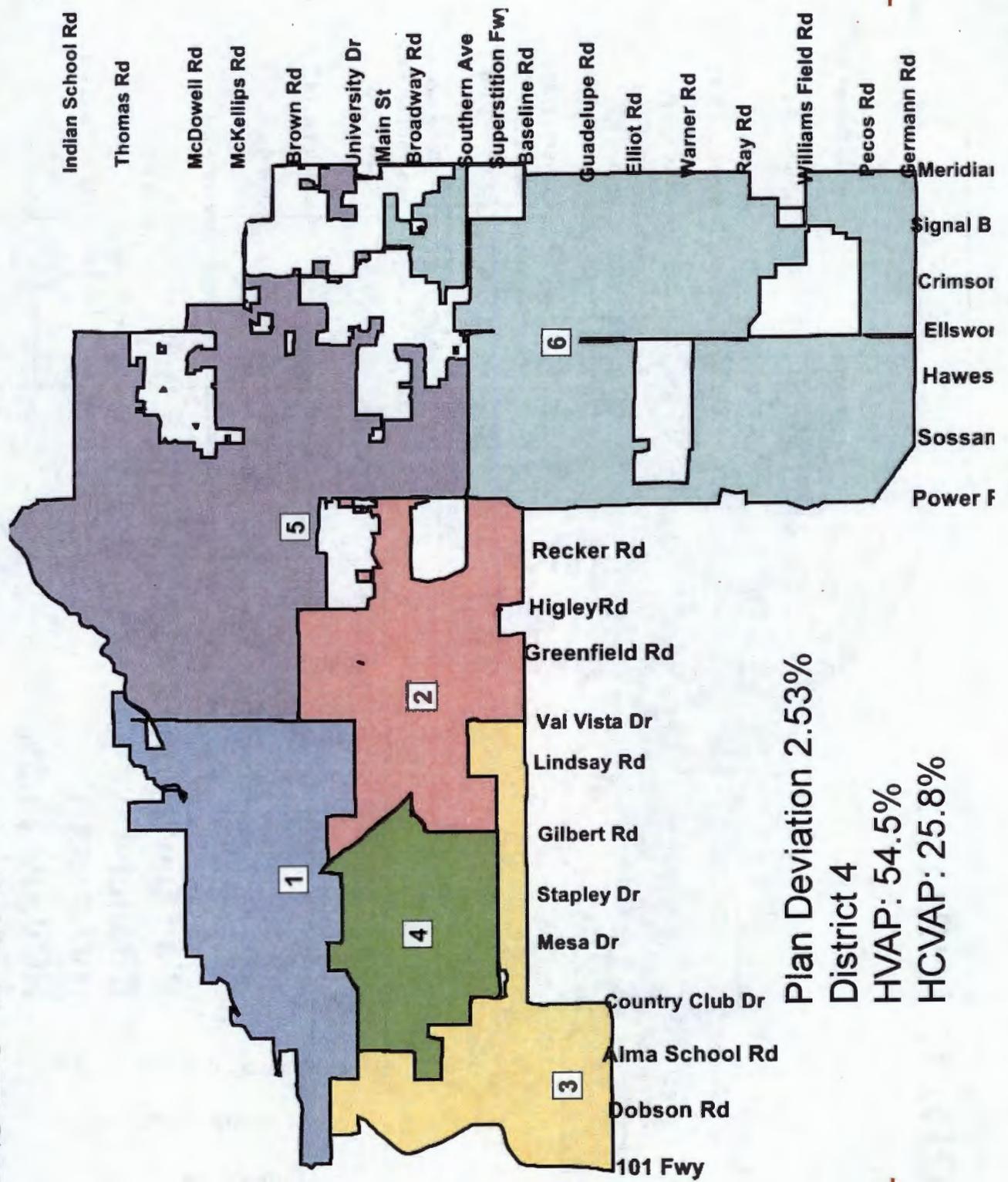


# Public Plan 6



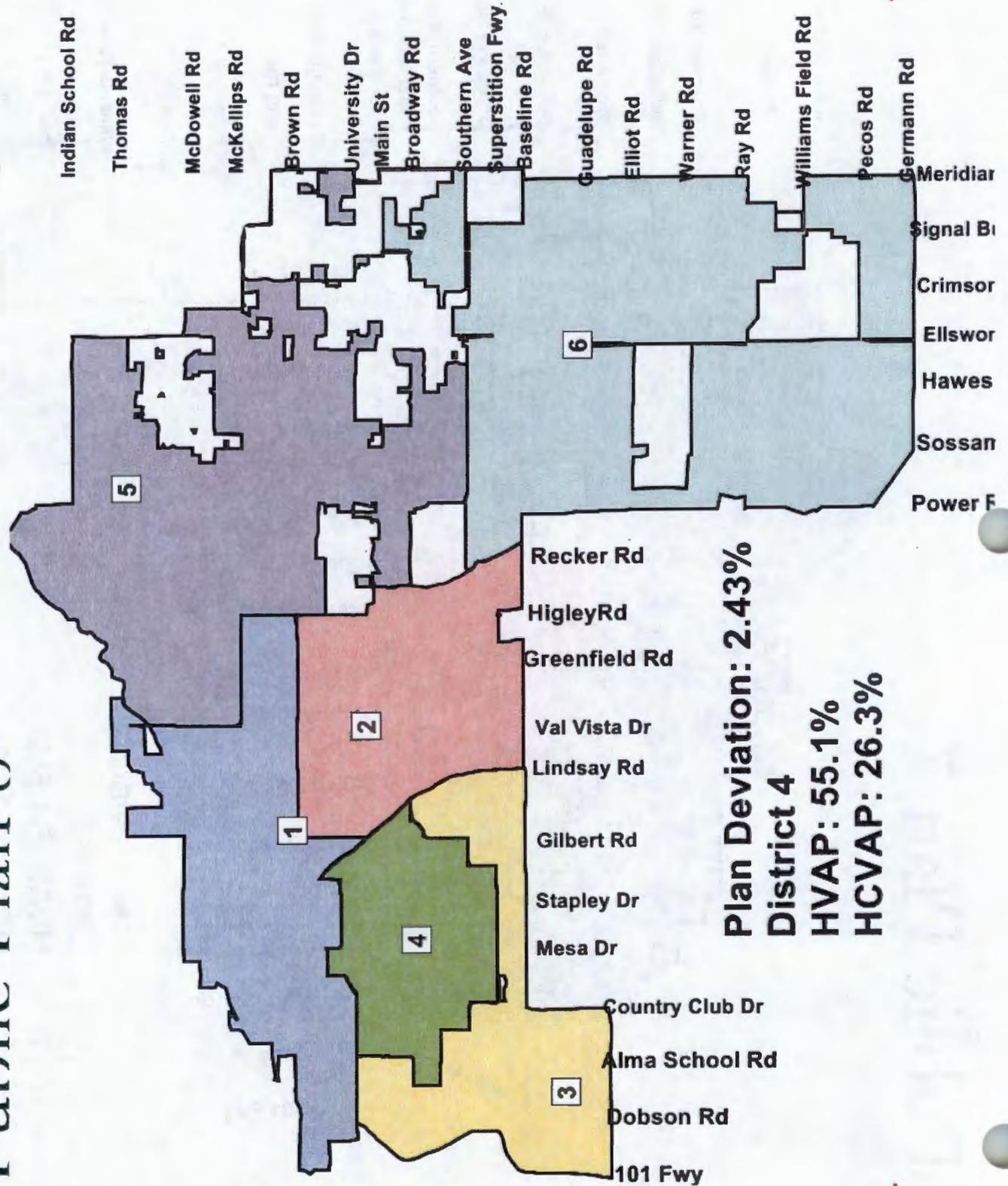
District 4  
HVAP: 54.5%  
HCVAP: 25.8%

# Public Plan 7

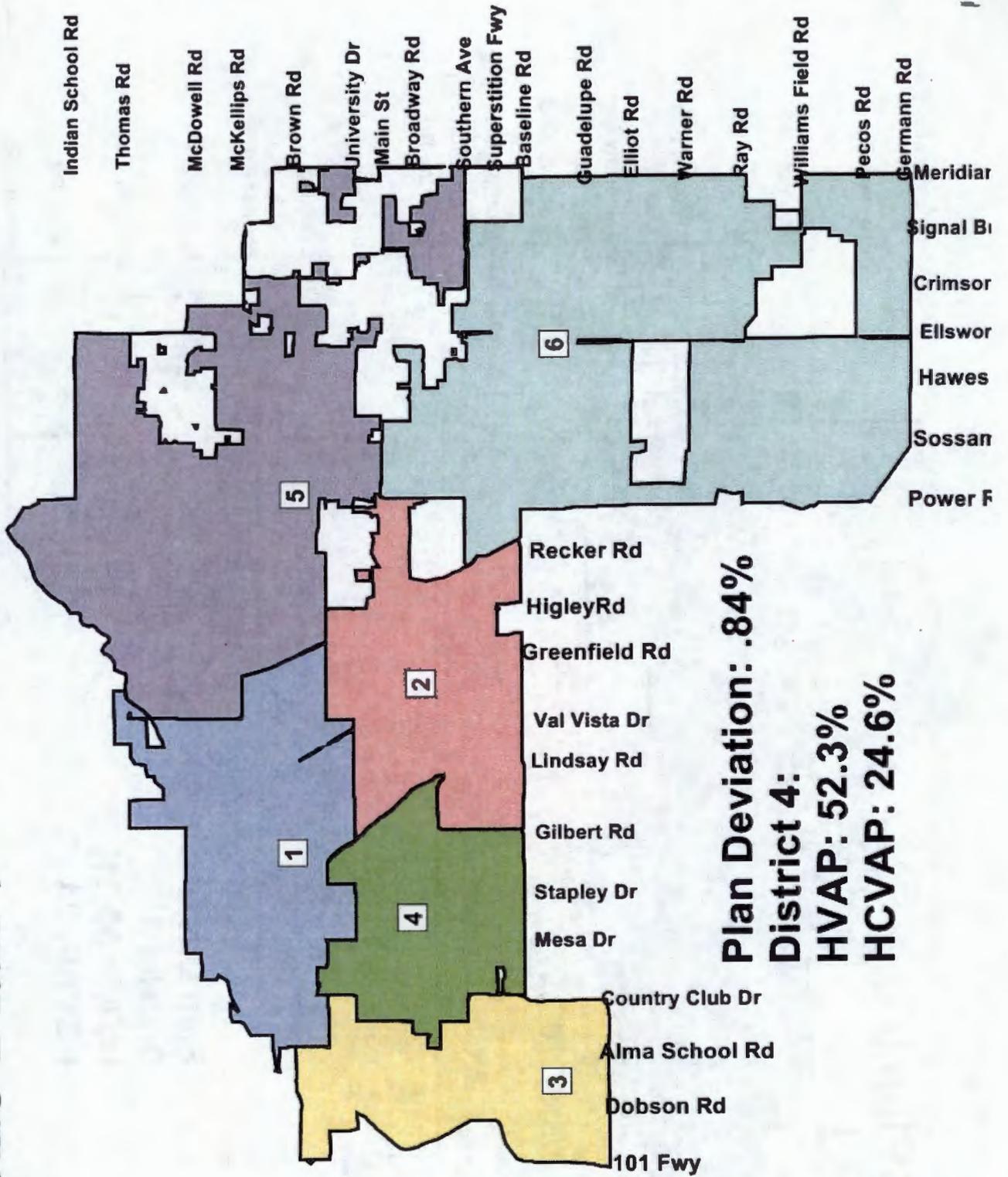


Plan Deviation 2.53%  
District 4  
HVAP: 54.5%  
HCVAP: 25.8%

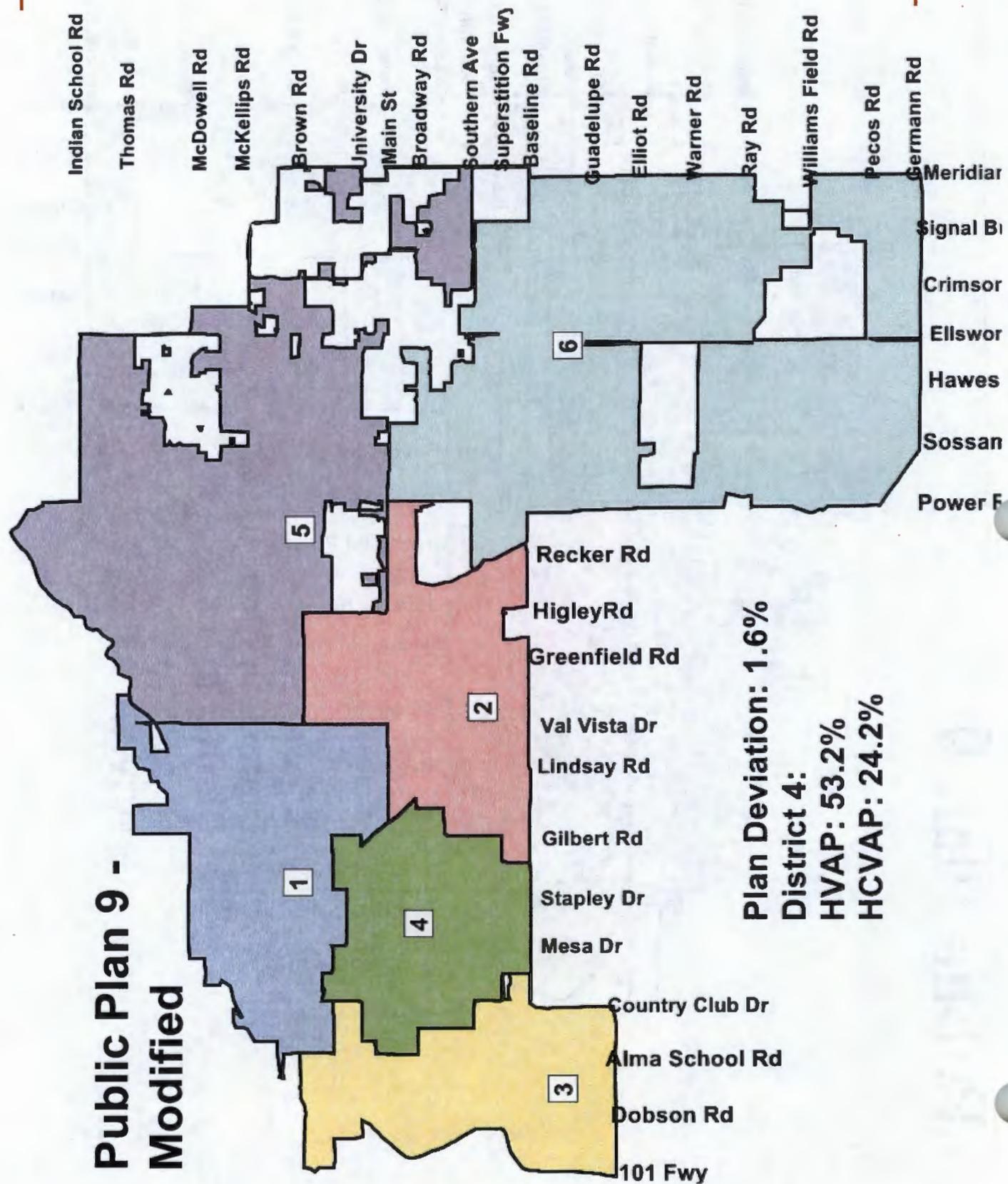
# Public Plan 8



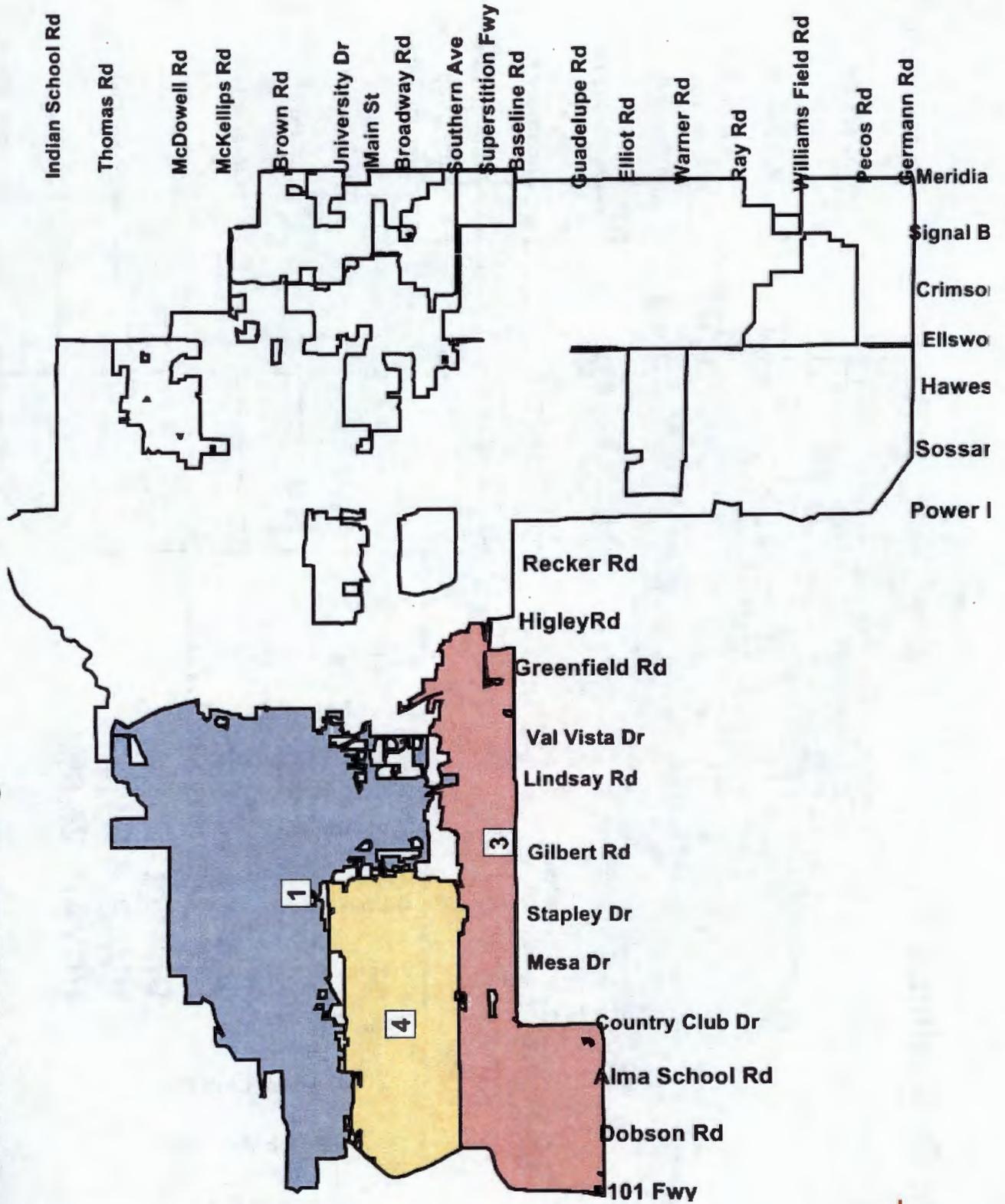
# Public Plan 9



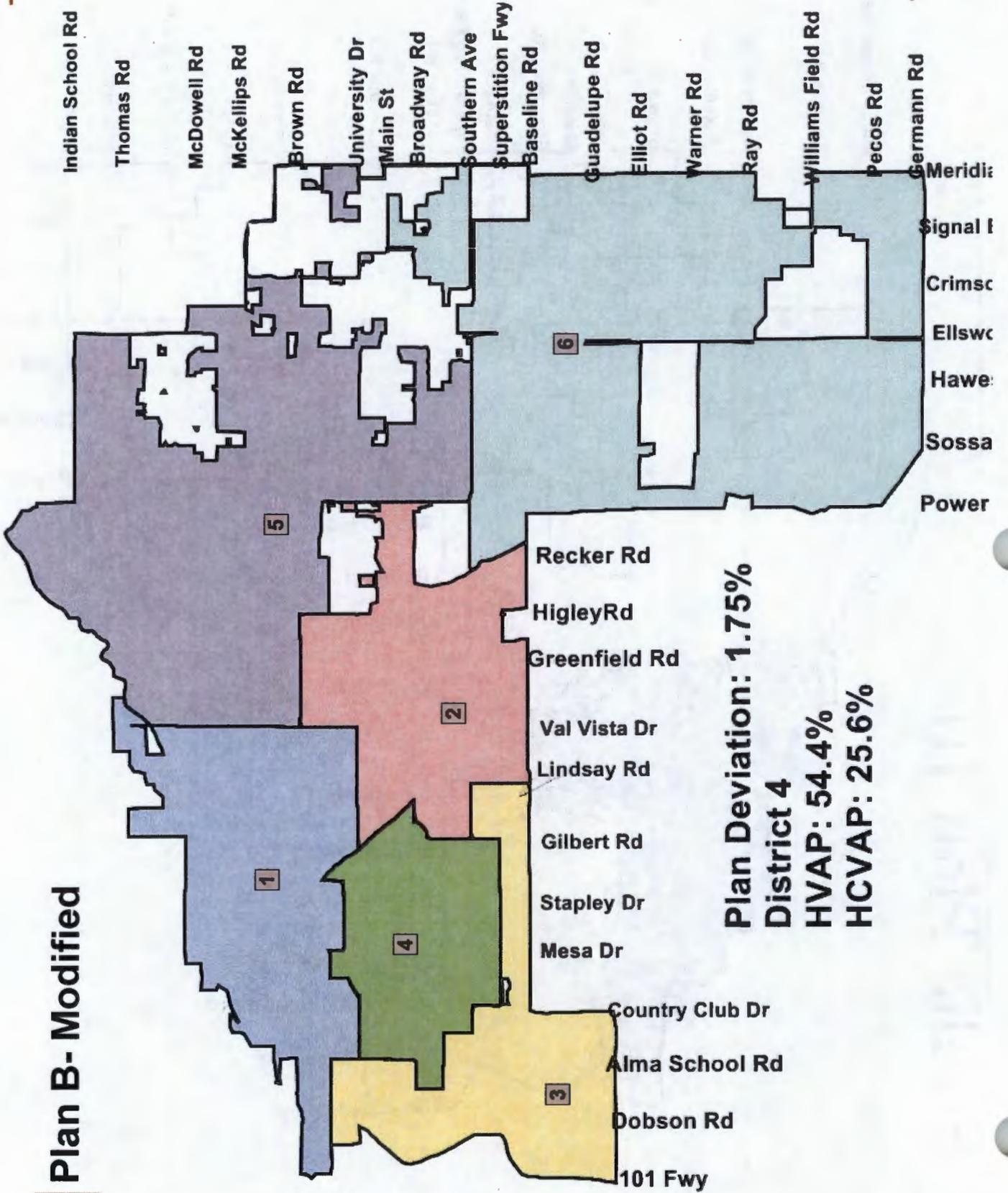
# Public Plan 9 - Modified



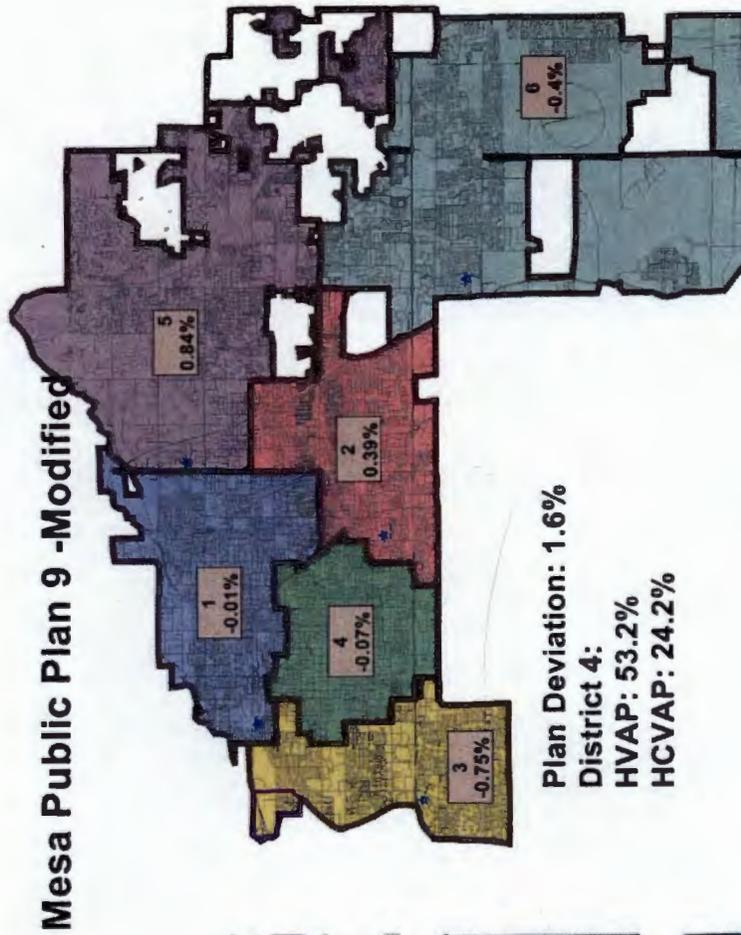
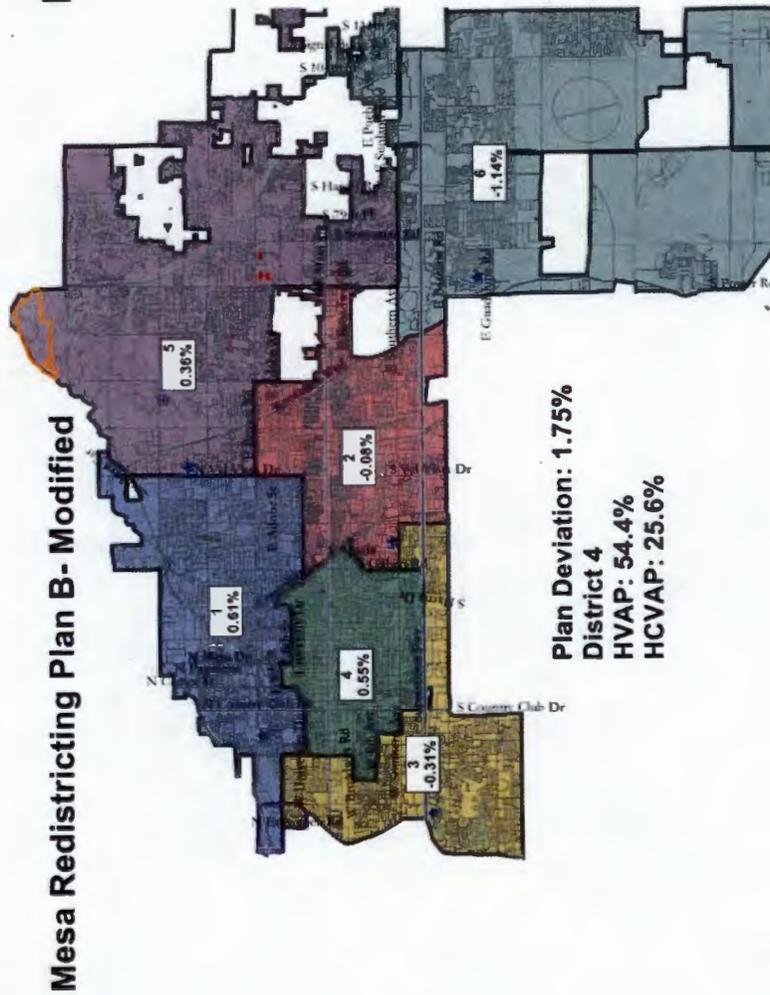
# Public Plan 10



# Plan B- Modified



# Plan B Modified v. Public Plan 9 Modified



# Mesa Grande Community Alliance



 Community Alliance  
 Boundary



Source: Mesa Neighborhood Outreach  
Created: 9/1/11

