

Michigan 2021 Redistricting: Good Governance/Communities of Interest Plan

Author: Zac Stoor

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This map aims to achieve perfect population balance while keeping communities of interest together and splitting counties and municipalities only when necessary. The requirements for maps drawn by the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) are, in order of priority: population equality and Voting Rights Act (VRA) compliance, geographic contiguity, communities of interest, partisan fairness, lack of favor or disfavor towards incumbents, avoiding political subdivision splits, and compactness. Since population balance and communities of interests are both prioritized by the MICRC over political subdivision splits, this map also prioritizes them even when it means an additional county or municipal split.

In Detroit, the Black population is high enough and sufficiently concentrated to justify two VRA districts. The first, District 12, is 51.6% Black. The second, District 13, is 46.5% Black and 38.1% white. The City of Detroit is only split once, and the Downriver suburbs of Wayne County are kept together in District 13. Drawing two majority Black districts is not possible in the Detroit area, but is also unnecessary as there are enough crossover votes from white voters and non-Black minority voters to enable Black communities to elect their candidates of choice even without a majority of the population. This map is therefore compliant with the VRA and still maintains communities of interest in Wayne and Oakland Counties.

Every major metro area has been preserved as well as possible. In the Detroit metro, parts of southern Wayne county were included in District 7 to keep the Downriver suburbs together and maintain two VRA districts. District 7 covers most of the state's southern border. Washtenaw County has been preserved whole and incorporated Livonia and other, less diverse suburbs of Detroit to maintain the VRA status of Districts 12 and 13. District 8 is now entirely contained within the Oakland County suburbs, splitting them far less than the prior map. District 9 is now centered almost entirely on southern Macomb County, while also including predominantly white Grosse Pointe in Wayne County for VRA reasons. District 10 in the "Thumb" is mostly rural, incorporating northern Oakland and Macomb Counties as well. The Tri-Cities of Bay City, Saginaw, and Flint have been kept together, with Midland being included as well for its ties to the region and to keep District 10 from needing to draw in more suburban territory. District 4 is now focused on the Lansing metro area and its surrounding counties. District 6 is centered on Kalamazoo and the southern Lake Michigan lakeshore. District 3 pairs Grand Rapids and its immediate suburbs with suburban Ottawa County. District 2 consists of Muskegon and the rural north-central Lower Peninsula, including rural northern Kent County. District 1 covers the northern Lower Peninsula and the entire Upper Peninsula.

This map complies with all relevant federal and state law and is perfectly population balanced. All communities of interest in Michigan, especially metro areas, are preserved as well as possible under this map. The only area of contention for this map would be partisan fairness, as it has an efficiency gap of 4.5% in favor of Republicans. However, many of the competitive districts, like Districts 3, 4, 6, and 9 trended heavily towards Democrats in 2020, so it is unclear whether that efficiency gap would remain in future elections.