

From: [D. Muirhead](#)
To: [CC Public Comment](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] comment City Council August 18 #7. Re-Drawing Council District Boundaries
Date: Monday, August 16, 2021 10:23:10 AM

Dear Morgan Hill City Council,
A comment for your August 18 meeting of the City Council
Item #7. Re-Drawing Council District Boundaries

It is ironic that while communities in other parts of the country are working to reduce the effects of segregated neighborhoods, our lawmakers choose to have us divide ourselves based on various "identities". Their theory is that this causes effective and fair representation in future elections. Of course, if Council members and Administration staff regularly shared what you individually hear from residents with the larger community, we would have a sense of what "other" communities of interest care about to balance against our own interests and concerns.
A real Community rather than a collection of Islands.

But since the FAIR MAPS Act restricts the hand we can be dealt, that is the game we will have to play.

The staff report lists a subset of potential community features:

1. School attendance areas;
2. Natural dividing lines such as major roads, hills, or highways;
3. Areas around parks and other neighborhood landmarks;
4. Common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns; and
5. Shared demographic characteristics, such as:
 - a) Similar levels of income or education;
 - b) Languages spoken at home; and
 - c) Single-family and multi-family housing unit areas.

Missing from the last drawing effort was clearly identifying the community features considered and how the various proposals ranked against them.

I think including these will be very important in helping the community chose from the final set of maps this time.

The Monterey corridor (including downtown) could be a community of interest. But I would prefer that it be sliced east-west so that several districts have a stake in those businesses and housing.

Except for the tail created for incumbent protection, I like my district in the south end of town. We have a little bit of everything: single-family and multi-unit housing, a school, two large parks, a City facility, shopping centers, and a mix of commercial and industrial businesses.

A question on NDC presentation slide "Redistricting Rules and Goals".

I do not understand if "Other Traditional Redistricting Principles" is telling us things we can/should do or no longer can/should do?

- * Minimize voters shifted to different election years
- * Respect voters' choices / continuity in office
- * Future population growth
- * Preserving the core of existing districts

I have repeatedly spoken against incumbent protection.

In the May 5, 2021 staff report on district boundaries, a substantive requirement for district boundaries is

* Districts must not be adopted for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against a political party.

Since our Council seats are theoretically non-partisan, this does not affect us. In the May meeting, responding to public comment, I thought I heard City Clerk Bigelow say that creating districts around existing incumbents was still possible but far down on the list of priorities.

If nothing else, having the community features clearly identified will be a valuable education tool for all of us.

Good Luck. Doug Muirhead, Morgan Hill

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