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From: **James Turpin** <[turkop@att.net](mailto:turkop@att.net)>

Date: Wed, Apr 21, 2021 at 4:57 PM

Subject: Questions Regarding Redistricting Commission Structure

To: Meg Lamb <[mlamb@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:mlamb@dls.virginia.gov)>

ML-

I realize this is not your responsibility but I wanted to raise some questions about the Redistricting Commission Committees. If you could forward this to Amigo W it would be appreciated.

These are process based and do not relate to specific policy issues.

It would be helpful if some of these questions could be addressed at next week's meeting. Hopefully, this will reduce the amount of public comment or future discussion.

Here are some potential concerns that I have heard:

1. Will these be the only Committees?
2. How many members will there be of each Committee?
3. What will be the ratio of legislators to citizen members on each Committee?
4. Will Committee meeting be open?
5. If it is over three members, how will this be done under FOIA?
6. When are these Committees expected to complete their assigned tasks?

Again, I am just trying to be helpful and hopefully expedite the process. There aren't any hidden agendas.

Hope this is received in the manner it was intended.

Please feel free to let Amigo know he can reach out to me directly if he desires. We have worked together previously on a General Laws issue.

Thanks.

JST



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

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**April 26 meeting, Agenda item #4. Public comment**

1 message

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**Richard Mr Zimmermann** <richardzimmermann@verizon.net>  
To: "varedist@dls.virginia.gov" <varedist@dls.virginia.gov>

Sun, Apr 25, 2021 at 1:34 PM

Commissioners:

Political community in districts should coincide with authentic communities in Virginia residents' public behavior as consumers and commercial networks.

Most voters in a Congressional District should shop in the same places. For one example, VA-04 voters at Southpark Mall in Colonial Heights do not also shop 81 miles away in Greenbrier Mall, Chesapeake.

Authentic behaviors of the people are readily available for commissioners to see, mapped in the Rand McNally 2010 Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide. They can also to be found in current Virginia Planning District reports at the Library of Virginia and in university libraries statewide.

Sincerely,

Richard G. Zimmermann, Jr.  
VOTER NUMBER 808020532  
[1226 Brookside Landing](#)  
[Chesapeake VA 23320](#)



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

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## Mapping 'community of interest' per intersection of three citizen comments

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Richard Mr Zimermann <richardzimermann@verizon.net>  
To: "varedist@dls.virginia.gov" <varedist@dls.virginia.gov>

Wed, Apr 28, 2021 at 4:16 PM

Commissioners:

There is an intersection of the two citizen comments from the April 26 meeting by KEN CHASIN emphasizing "hub-center" public services in a planning district and STEPHEN MARTIN emphasizing common regional geographies. The shared 'community of interest' is in the water shed serving the populations in each region.

Mostly nesting three kinds of districts by water shed can reflect the political community's common interest in (a) waste water treatment and water reclamation in droughts, and (b) runoff management from parking lots & fields for flood and pollution control. --

Just a suggestion to try out in a What-if-Scenario in the mapping process, using "water shed" as one of the layers for a "community of interest". --- Watersheds for each county and city are mapped in Virginia Planning District reports.

Sincerely,  
Rick Zimermann  
[1226 Brookside Landing](#)  
[Chesapeake VA 23320](#)

April 30, 2021

To the Commissioners:

I want to commend the Virginia Redistricting Commission for the thoughtful way in which it has approached its work since it was organized. In the spirit of full disclosure, I will note that I have worked with several organizations in support of redistricting reform for more than a decade and also applied to be a citizen member of the commission. However, I am submitting this comment as a private citizen, drawing on my experience as a former journalist who has provided communications support to several non-profit organizations.

I commend the commission's decision to create two subcommittees to facilitate its organizational work, and am pleased that one of those subcommittees will focus specifically on the important work of citizen engagement.

When she proposed creating the subcommittees at the commission's April 26 meeting, Co-Chair Greta Harris said the Citizen Engagement Subcommittee's tasks would include devising an "advertising plan" for promoting the commission's meetings and public hearings. Ms. Harris may have used that term casually, but I wanted to respond more specifically on budgeting for advertising, per se.

When the Division of Legislative Services reviewed the commission's budget at the April 12 commission meeting, it reported that the Redistricting Commission Selection Committee had already spent \$160,516, or 15 percent of the budget for this fiscal year, on advertising to encourage citizens to apply for the commission. The retired judges on the committee were clearly committed to making the commission as diverse as possible and reaching out to all parts of the commonwealth. Further, the judges and DLS staff faced very tight deadlines for developing a communications strategy.

The fact that 1,238 Virginians applied for the commission demonstrated that "the system" did, in fact, work. However, I doubt whether paid advertising played much of a role, if any, in the decision of persons to apply. I suspect most applicants were encouraged by someone they knew, read stories or editorials in newspapers, saw a televised news report, received an email from an organization that was committed to redistricting reform, or saw a social media post by one of these groups or a personal friend. As it plans its communications strategy, it might be helpful for the commission to review how its own eight citizen members found out about the application process and decided to apply.

The commission *will* likely have to deal with advertising requirements as they relate to its procurements. However, I believe there is no requirement that the commission spend its precious dollars on advertising, per se. A better use of the funds would be to bolster the communications capabilities of the DLS staff by contracting for public relations support and/or spending the funds to improve the commission's website and update it regularly. Advocacy groups—such as the League of Women Voters, OneVirginia 2021, the National Black Non-partisan Redistricting Organization, the Virginia Citizens Engagement Table and others--stand ready to help the commission publicize its meetings and public hearings. Making better use of these existing

networks—and addressing any gaps that may exist—would be a more efficient and effective use of the commission’s limited time and funds and help us all involve as many Virginia citizens as we can.

As it begins its work, the Citizen Engagement Subcommittee may find it helpful to reach out to advocacy groups to better understand the nature of their own “reach” and how the commission could work more collaboratively with them to achieve their mutual goals. This could also be done more formally through an online survey, the solicitation of public comments, or scheduling a public hearing with subcommittee members to address that specific question. That kind of upfront planning should serve the commission well down the road, and save the commission from having to “reinvent wheels” that are already rolling.

Sara Fitzgerald

Falls Church, Virginia



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

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## Virginia Redistricting Strategy Proposal

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**Ken Chasin** <kenchasin1@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 30, 2021 at 11:17 AM

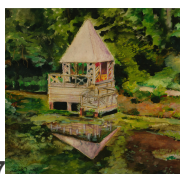
To: VA Redistricting &lt;varedistrictingcommission@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

Cc: ktbarnes@princeton.edu

Attached you will find a copy of my latest proposal on the strategy for redrawing the election maps for Virginia's congressional districts. The document is in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. The contents are an in-depth expansion of comments I made to the Redistricting Commission in its most recent Zoom meeting on Monday, April 26, 2021.

I would welcome a public dialogue with the Commission on my proposed strategy for redrawing the state congressional district maps. Finally, I would like to be considered as a technical resource for the Commission.

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**Ken Chasin**

Mobile Phone: 508-246-6887

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 **Virginia\_Redistricting\_Strategy\_Proposal\_2021\_v7.pdf**  
383K

## Introduction

### Background

In 2020, a Virginia constitutional amendment to end gerrymandering in the state was passed and a Virginia Redistricting Commission was established. The Virginia Redistricting Commission's mission is to redraw Virginia's election maps for both its congressional districts and for its state legislative delegates. Public comments on the redistricting process are being encouraged by the Commission.

### Redrawing of Virginia Election Maps

The overriding principle for redrawing Virginia's election maps should be that it is "**data driven**" not partisan driven. This implies that key demographic factors such as ethnicity/race, industry/occupation and educational levels of residents should be driving forces in shaping the new election maps.

## Redistricting Criteria

### Overview

The drawing of Virginia's new congressional district maps should be guided by the following criteria:

1. Incorporate the concept of communities of interest/communities of place
2. Their land areas must be contiguous and be of equal population as much as possible
3. Allow for racial fairness
4. Don't give a partisan edge
5. Preserve existing geographic boundaries
6. Reflect the U.S. census data as concerns the number of congressional districts allocated to Virginia.
7. The land area chosen for each new congressional district map should be reflective of key demographics.

### 1) Communities of Interest/Communities of Place

The *Virginia Redistricting Commission* has established that one of the criteria for redrawing any Virginia election maps is that the maps reflect "*communities of interest*" or "*communities of place*". The *National Conference of State Legislatures* (NCSL) has also established this criterion for every state in the United States. Communities of interest share similar historical, cultural, or economic interests. **However, they should not be defined by political affiliation.**

Wikipedia defines a community of place as such:

"A **community of place** or **place-based community** is a community of people who are bound together because of where they reside, work, visit or otherwise spend a continuous portion of their time.<sup>[u]</sup> Such a community can be a neighborhood, town, coffeehouse, workplace, gathering place, public space or any other geographically specific place that a number of people share, have in common or visit frequently...."

### 2) Contiguous Space and Equal Populations

Per past U.S. Supreme Court rulings, each congressional district's land area must be contiguous and each district within the same state must be of approximately equal size in population. In the case of Virginia,

this implies that each newly designed district's population must be within a 5% +/- range of one-eleventh of Virginia's current population (currently at **784,201**). At the present time, the following Virginia congressional districts do NOT fall within a 5% +/- range of 784,201: VA-01, VA-02, VA-05, VA-09, VA-10.

### 3) Racial fairness

The redrawn congressional district maps should not intend to or have the effect of diluting the power of minority voters or their ability to elect candidates of their choice.

### 4) No Political Party / Candidate Advantages

The newly redrawn Virginia congressional district maps must not give a partisan edge or advantage to any one political party, candidate or incumbent.

### 5) Preserve Existing Geographic Boundaries

The newly redrawn Virginia congressional district maps should adhere to the guideline of not splitting existing city, town, or county boundaries as much as possible.

### 6) Reflex U.S. Census 2020 data

Unless the U.S. census data 2020 for Virginia indicates otherwise, the number of Virginia congressional districts will remain at eleven (11).

### 7) Reflective of Key Demographics

The newly drawn congressional district maps must take into consideration percentage breakdowns of the following demographics:

- a) Race/Ethnicity % Distribution (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, etc.)
- b) Industries and Occupations
- c) Urban/Rural breakdown
- d) Education (Enrollment/Level of Educational Achievement)



## Proposed Strategy for Redrawing Virginia’s Congressional District Maps

### Overview

The proposed strategy for redrawing Virginia’s congressional district maps is based on a **hub-and-spoke** architecture where the hubs are Virginia’s 25 most-populated counties and the spokes are adjacent smaller populated counties . The proposed overall congressional district maps architecture is modeled after how the *Virginia Association of Counties -Regions* (“*VACo*”) is organized which currently has thirteen designated state regions and a subset (80+) of all existing counties in the state of Virginia.

### District Architecture -the Hubs

Virginia’s 25 most populated counties represent significant communities of interest and place and account for two-thirds of Virginia’s total population. These counties can be used as the hubs for any new congressional districts because that is where:

- Most people live in Virginia
- Highest concentration of schools exists
- Highest concentration of jobs and industries exist
- The largest collection of major shopping centers occurs
- Where many major religious centers are located
- And further these counties provide a wide-array of government products and services to their residents and neighboring smaller counties (e.g.; Police , Courts, Utilities, Election Polling Locations & Libraries).

### District Architecture – The Spokes

Each district hub will have attached to it adjacent smaller populated counties going out in wider arcs until a congressional district population of one-eleventh of the total population of Virginia is achieved. The total population of Virginia as of 2020 was: **8,626,210**. The total population of the twenty-five (25) most populated counties in Virginia is: **5,756,900**.

Candidates for the adjacent counties must satisfy the following criteria:

- Either be adjacent to the congressional district hub and/or each other to be in compliance with the “contiguous” rule.
- Should have similar demographics as much as possible as regards:
  - a) Race/Ethnicity % Distribution (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, etc.)
  - b) Industries and Occupations
  - c) Urban / Rural breakdown
  - d) Education (Enrollment/Level of Educational Achievement)

## Candidate Virginia Congressional Districts to be Redrawn / Rationale

The overriding rationale for redrawing the map for any particular Virginia congressional district is to have its demographic attributes fall within a 95 % to 105% range of the averages for those demographic attributes for all of the state congressional districts.

The demographic attributes recommended to be used as benchmarks for redistricting are:

1. Urban versus Rural percentage breakdown of a congressional district
2. Congressional District Population (use actual count not averages)
3. Land Area (square miles)
4. Median Household Income
5. Race/Ethnicity %s Distribution (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, etc.)

### VA-01 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- Current population not within 95% to 105% of 1/11 of Virginia's total population. Has an excess of **48,945** current residents.
- District's Urban Land Area is **69.54%** and deviates from the state-wide average of **75.51%** by a negative **5.97%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of White Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **6.83%**.

### VA-02 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- Current population not within 95% to 105% of 1/11 of Virginia's total population; shortfall of **52,070** residents.
- District's Urban Land Area exceeds the state-wide average by **16.99%**.

### VA-05 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- Current population not within 95% to 105% of 1/11 of Virginia's total population; shortfall of **40,231** residents.
- District's Urban Land Area falls short of the state-wide average by **40.21%**.
- Entire Land Area is 10,030 square miles that exceeds all of the other Virginia congressional districts total land areas. VA-05 is larger in area than six US states (Vermont, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, and New Hampshire).
- Current Percentage (%) of White Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **9.41%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Hispanic Residents falls short of the state-wide average of **5.5%**.

## VA-06 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- District's Urban Land Area falls short of the state-wide average by **11.17%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of White Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **18.07%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Black Residents falls short of the state-wide average by **7.83%**.

## VA-08 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- District's Urban Land Area exceeds the state-wide average by **24.2%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of White Residents falls short of the state-wide average by **9.49%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Hispanic Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **9.74%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Asian Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **6.51%**.

## VA-09 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- Current population not within 95% to 105% of 1/11 of Virginia's total population shortfall of **71,919** residents.
- District Urban Land Area falls short of the state-wide average by **33.76%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of White Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **25.62%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Black Residents falls short of the state-wide average by **8.33%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Hispanic Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **9.74%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Asian Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **6.51%**.

## VA-10 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- Current population not within 95% to 105% of 1/11 of Virginia's total population; excess of **81,696** residents.
- District Urban Land Area exceeds the state-wide average by **10.02%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Black Residents falls short of the state-wide average by **12.62%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Asian Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **8.96%**.

## VA-11 Congressional District

Rationale for redrawing district's map:

- District Urban Land Area exceeds the state-wide average by **24.46%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of White Residents falls short of the state-wide average by **15.79%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Hispanic Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **9.43%**.
- Current Percentage (%) of Asian Residents exceeds the state-wide average by **13.81%**.

## Redistricting Efforts to Date

### Demographics Data Collection/Organization

As of March, 2021, I have downloaded U.S census data for 2019 for the state of Virginia as it pertains to the existing congressional districts of Virginia and its twenty-five most populated counties. The data has been organized into a set of multiple separate Microsoft Excel 2019 workbooks. Each Excel workbook contains multiple worksheets presented in several formats; raw data, data ranges, tabular and charts (e.g., funnel charts) The data that has been captured includes:

- Congressional district population counts, median incomes and land areas in square miles
- Current political party representing the Congressional district
- Urban/Rural Percentage breakdowns of Congressional districts
- Congressional district ethnicity percentages and population counts
- Congressional district educational levels and resident counts
- Congressional district income brackets and resident counts
- Congressional district industry types and corresponding employment counts
- County population counts, median incomes and land areas in square miles
- County ethnicity percentages and population counts
- Henrico County Programs & Services
- Compilation of a list of all the community colleges in Virginia; enrollment counts and location

### Data Sources for Redrawn Congressional District Maps

- Most current data available from the US Census Bureau for zip codes/ZCTAs is from the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimates.
- Demographic / GIS data sourced from the GIS departments of the twenty-five most populated counts
- Virginia Regions Study Guide
- Authoritative articles found in Wikipedia
- Virginia County Map from “*Maps of World*” organization
- *Virginia Demographics by Cubit*

## Appendices

### About the Author (Ken Chasin)

- Resident of Charlottesville, Virginia
- Retired senior-level Information Technology professional
- Areas of expertise include business intelligence solutions, data warehousing and data analysis
- Have worked in multiple industries that include:
  - Computer Manufacturing
  - Health Care (HMOs)
  - Insurance (Property & Life Liability)
- Have developed strategic planning documents for large corporations.

### Virginia Association of Counties – Regions (“VACo”)

The Virginia Association of Counties exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, and promote the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia. It currently represents over eighty (80) Virginia counties.

For more information about the Virginia Association of Counties-Regions, please visit the Web site <https://www.vaco.org/county-profiles/vaco-regions/>. This Web site includes the following information:

- County Employment
- County Profiles
- Rural Caucus
- Regions