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# Virginia Redistricting Commission

## Public Hearings FAQs

*Revised July 7, 2021*

<https://www.virginiaredistricting.org>

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Article II, Section 6-A of the Constitution of Virginia requires the Virginia Redistricting Commission (Commission) to hold at least three public hearings prior to proposing any redistricting plans and at least three public hearings prior to voting on redistricting plans. These public hearings may be held virtually or in person. In-person public hearings must be held in different parts of the Commonwealth.

### **What is the purpose of the public hearings?**

The purpose of the hearings is for the Commission to receive and consider comments from the public. As opposed to Commission meetings, where the Commission makes decisions and takes action, the public hearings are the opportunity for the commissioners to hear directly from the citizens of the Commonwealth.

### **When are the public hearings scheduled?**

The Commission has established a public hearing schedule consisting of 16 public hearings. Eight will be held prior to the Commission proposing any redistricting plans and eight will be held after plans have been proposed but prior to voting to submit plans to the General Assembly. The in-person hearings will be held in eight different geographic locations. Specific times and locations for public hearings are posted on the Meetings & Hearings page on the Commission's website and will be updated as details are finalized.

### **How can I provide public comment?**

There are several ways members of the public are able to provide public comment.

#### Written Comment.

Members of the public may provide comments to the Commission in writing. Any comments submitted are a part of the written public record of the Commission. Written comments may be submitted in the following ways:

1. *Submission through email.* Comments may be emailed to [varedist@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:varedist@dls.virginia.gov) and will be posted on the Commission's website at: <https://www.virginiaredistricting.org>. These comments will be available to the Commission for review and consideration.

2. *Submission through regular mail.* Comments may be sent by regular mail to the following address:

Virginia Redistricting Commission  
Pocahontas Building, 8th Floor  
900 E. Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

3. *Submission through public comment portal.* Once the Commission officially proposes a map of districts, the map will be posted on the Commission's website. These interactive maps will have a feature that will allow members of the public to select an area of interest on the map and enter their comments about that area.

**This method of providing public comment will not be available until the Commission has officially proposed a map.**

#### Live Comment.

Members of the public may also provide comments to the Commission live during a public hearing. These comments, as with all meetings of the Commission, will be heard in real time by those in attendance and recorded. Each individual desiring to do so will be given an amount of time to provide comment not to exceed three minutes. The public may provide live public comments in the following ways:

1. *In person.* At **in-person public hearings** of the Commission, members of the public can attend the hearing and provide live, in-person comments to the Commission. Sign-up will be on site, beginning one hour prior to the hearing start time and ending one hour after the hearing begins.
2. *Virtual.* At both **in-person and virtual public hearings** of the Commission, members of the public may attend the hearing virtually and provide live comments to the Commission. Those wishing to provide virtual comment at a hearing must sign up prior to the hearing, using a link that will be provided in advance of the hearing on the Meetings & Public Hearings page of the Commission's website. Members of the public must register at least 24 hours before the time of the in-person or virtual public hearing. At in-person public hearings, comments provided by those persons physically present at the hearing will be received in full before hearing from those providing virtual comment.

#### **What type of public comment will be the most helpful to the Commission?**

It is recommended that your public comment focus on providing information to assist the Commission in identifying communities of interest.

#### **What is a "Community of Interest"?**

The Code of Virginia defines a "community of interest" as a neighborhood or any geographically defined group of people living in an area who share similar social, cultural, and economic interests. Communities of interest are defined by local community members and local circumstances. Criteria related to common interests or characteristics include:

- Shared racial or ethnic background
- Common history or culture
- Common religion or language
- Shared socio-economic status
- Economic ties
- Transportation patterns
- Communication networks (media markets)

A variety of geographic features, populations, and histories can make it difficult to define a community of interest, so it is important that the Commission hear about and understand local sentiment and circumstances in order to identify these communities. It is recommended that you consider incorporating answers to the following questions when providing public comment.

- What bonds your community?
- What do you see as the common links in your community?
- Where is your community located? How do you define the boundaries of your community?
- Why should your community be kept together? Why should your community be kept separate from another community or area?

**Where can I learn more about the Commission or redistricting in general?**

The Commission's website offers useful information and important links to redistricting sites and issues throughout the Commonwealth. Here is the website: <https://www.virginiaredistricting.org>

## Cities and Counties by Region

### Central

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
Charlottesville	Albemarle
Colonial Heights	Amelia
Hopewell	Caroline
Petersburg	Charles City
Richmond	Chesterfield
	Dinwiddie
	Fluvanna
	Goochland
	Greene
	Hanover
	Henrico
	King William
	Louisa
	Madison
	Nelson
	New Kent
	Orange
	Powhatan
	Prince George

### Southside

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
Danville	Brunswick
Emporia	Buckingham
Franklin	Charlotte
Martinsville	Cumberland
	Greensville
	Halifax
	Henry
	Lunenburg
	Mecklenburg
	Nottoway
	Patrick
	Pittsylvania
	Prince Edward
	Southampton
	Sussex

### Hampton Roads

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
Chesapeake	Gloucester
Hampton	Isle of Wight
Newport News	James City
Norfolk	Mathews
Poquoson	Surry
Portsmouth	York
Suffolk	
Virginia Beach	
Williamsburg	

### Northern

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
Alexandria	Arlington
Fairfax	Clarke
Falls Church	Culpeper
Fredericksburg	Fairfax
Manassas	Fauquier
Manassas Park	King George
	Loudoun
	Prince William
	Rappahannock
	Spotsylvania
	Stafford
	Warren

### West Central

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
Lynchburg	Amherst
Radford	Appomattox
Roanoke	Bedford
Salem	Botetourt
	Campbell
	Craig
	Floyd
	Franklin
	Giles
	Montgomery
	Pulaski
	Roanoke

### Eastern

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
	Accomack
	Essex
	King & Queen
	Lancaster
	Middlesex
	Northampton
	Northumberland
	Richmond
	Westmoreland

### Southwest

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
Bristol	Bland
Galax	Buchanan
Norton	Carroll
	Dickenson
	Grayson
	Lee
	Russell
	Scott
	Smyth
	Tazewell
	Washington
	Wise
	Wythe

### Valley

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Counties</i>
Buena Vista	Alleghany
Covington	Augusta
Harrisonburg	Bath
Lexington	Frederick
Staunton	Highland
Waynesboro	Page
Winchester	Rockbridge
	Rockingham
	Shenandoah

