



Agenda Item 1.A



TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Eric Danly, City Attorney

SUBJECT: Public Hearing #4 to Receive Community Input on Voting Districts to Be Established for City Council Elections, Including District Maps Prepared by the City's Demographers and Maps Submitted by Members of the Public, to Identify Preferred Maps and Map Features and to Direct Desired Changes to Draft Maps

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Hold the fourth public hearing to receive input on City Council voting districts, and the second hearing to receive public comment on draft voting district maps
- 2) Receive presentation providing details regarding a total of 23 voting district map alternatives published on February 4, 2022, and 3 maps submitted after February 4.
- 3) Provide direction on preferred maps and map features and direct changes desired for the draft maps.

BACKGROUND

On October 4, 2021, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2021-164 N.C.S. declaring its intent to initiate procedures to consider transitioning from at-large to district-based elections pursuant to California Elections Code Section 10010, part of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA). The resolution of intent approved a tentative schedule for conducting public hearings and related actions that would comply with the requirements for transitioning to district elections.¹

Before developing draft district boundaries, the City Council received comments from residents and interested community groups at two public hearings to understand the community's view of how voting district boundaries should be drawn. The first public hearing before any district maps were drawn occurred on November 1, 2021. The second public hearing occurred on November 15, 2021.

¹ https://petaluma.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=31&clip_id=3419&meta_id=505873 Link to the October 4, 2021 Staff Report and Resolution.

At the direction of the City Council, we requested and received a 90-day extension as permitted under the CVRA to provide more time to engage the community and develop district maps. To meet the CVRA districting deadline and cap the City’s potential attorneys’ fees exposure at \$30,000, the City Council must adopt district maps on or before April 4, 2022.

At the November 15 public hearing, the City Council directed the creation of maps with six voting districts for City Council seats, and directed that the seventh, Mayoral seat be elected by the voters at large. The Council’s direction was intended to preserve the separately elected mayoral seat specified by the Petaluma City Charter while satisfying the CVRA districting requirements.

Since November, staff has conducted a comprehensive outreach campaign in English and Spanish to inform the community about the districting process and how they can participate. The outreach campaign has included:

- A dedicated webpage
- A dedicated mapping tool
- A paper map for hand drawn input
- Articles in the City’s weekly updates
- Ads in the Argus Courier
- Social Media posting
- Open Houses
- Email newsletters
- Postcards mailed to all households
- Printed flyers and maps

To increase input from our Latinx and Spanish speaking community, we also reached out through focus groups, a WhatsApp group, Spanish language media and outreach to our partners such as the Petaluma Health Care Center, the Family Resource Center, and other groups with a Latinx following.

So far, we have received the following input from community members regarding the City’s transition to district elections:

- 49 Community of Interest forms
- 31 comments from our website
- 26 maps
- 6 emails from the community.

The table below lists the scheduled hearing dates and map posting deadlines leading to adoption of a district elections ordinance and final district map which will complete the City’s transition to district elections.

Action	Date
Public Hearing #4 – Review Draft Maps	2/14/22
Deadline to Submit Maps for Staff Analysis and Council Consideration and Possible Adoption	2/23/22
Post 2nd Round Draft Maps	2/25/22
Public Hearing #5 – Review 2nd Round of Draft Maps	3/07/22

Post Final Map(s)	3/11/22
1st Reading of Ordinance (Consideration of Final Map)	3/21/22
2nd Reading of Ordinance (Approval of Final Map)	4/04/22

Maps submitted after 2/23/22 will be accepted as public testimony but there will not be sufficient time for staff to analyze or publish them for possible Council adoption in accordance with the CVRA map noticing requirements.

In addition to attending the City’s districting public hearings, members of the public have multiple ways to participate in and contribute to the City’s transition to district elections, including:

1. Sending an e-mail to districtelections@cityofpetaluma.org or calling (707) 778-4321.
2. Mailing input to the City Clerk at 11 English Street, Petaluma CA 94952.
3. Dropping off input in green drop boxes (typically used for payments) located in the parking lots of the Petaluma Community Center and City Hall
4. Providing input through the District Elections webpage at cityofpetaluma.org/districtelections.
5. Completing a proposed map using the mapping tool created with ESRI Redistricting software and located on the district elections webpage.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The City Council held a public hearing on January 31, 2022, to review the first draft district maps prepared by Redistricting Partners. The Council directed a small change to the Plan A draft map to include the planned Corona Smart Station property in District E (Attachment 1), and that the map be reposted for public review. At Council request, data layers to the map tool including zoning, schools, parks, floodplain were added. The Council also directed that staff hold an additional public hearing for a detailed review of all the maps that were submitted by community members.

Summary of community of interest testimony

Attachment 2 to this staff report includes summary of themes and a list of the comments and community of interest responses we have received. Residents’ comments regarding maintaining communities of interest addressed four regions as described below.

Theme	Description
East Petaluma	Comments about this area emphasized concerns about public services and neighborhood investment needs like road repairs, economic investment, and public safety.
Southwest Petaluma	Testimony focused on family-oriented themes, with many submissions referring to local schools or parks as central community components.
Central Petaluma	Submissions focused on community history and neighborhood pride.
Northwest Petaluma	Submissions focused on the fact that this area is more rural at the western extreme with neighborhoods to the north that are connected by local parks and the community college.

Summary of community maps

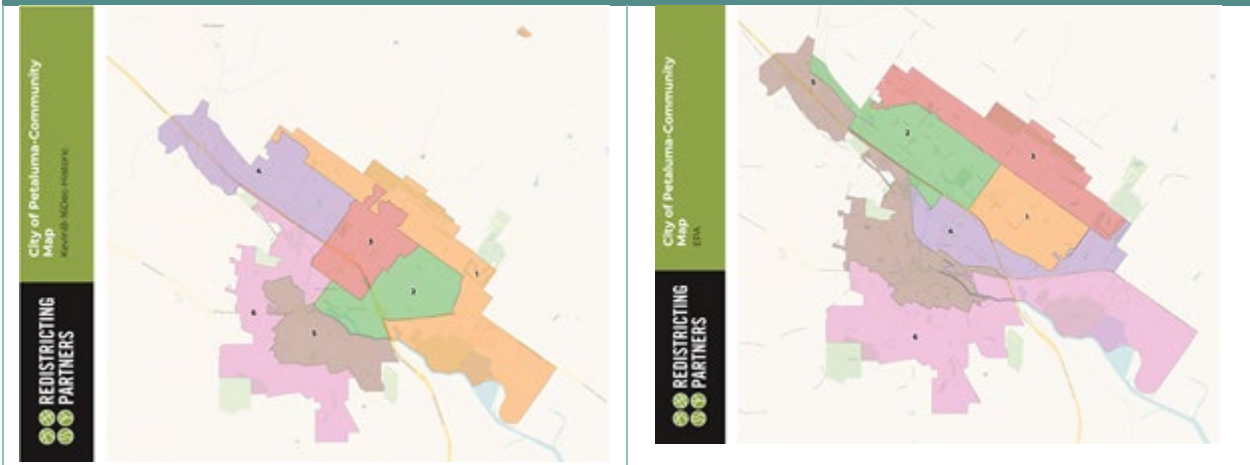
Attachment 3 includes a list of the community maps submitted, including the map name, a description from the map author (if provided), and a link to a web version of the map that will retrieve the map in a searchable window (if originally submitted via the mapping tool). The web version of each map allows for street level zoom for detailed review.

Attachment 3 also includes an image of each of the maps submitted by community members and what is referred to as “atlas” information for the maps. The atlas information provided includes the total population deviation among the voting districts comprising each map and demographic analysis for the districts in each map.

In addition to offering the City Council choices for selecting entire district maps and district map features, district maps submitted by members of the public help our demographers collect data and assess trends that may help inform the map-drawing process. The 26 different maps submitted by members of the public can be grouped according to the following themes identified by Redistricting Partners for the purposes of map comparison and selection. In the following list, the titles of maps submitted by members of the public are grouped under the general themes the maps reflect.

1. East Petaluma: Keeps eastern most portion of Petaluma in one whole district	
KevinB-16Dec-Historic	EPA

1. East Petaluma: Keeps eastern most portion of Petaluma in one whole district



Gayle1



Block_Districts



2. Highway 101 Divider: Uses Highway 101 as a direct divider

ChristinaPlan

Gayle1

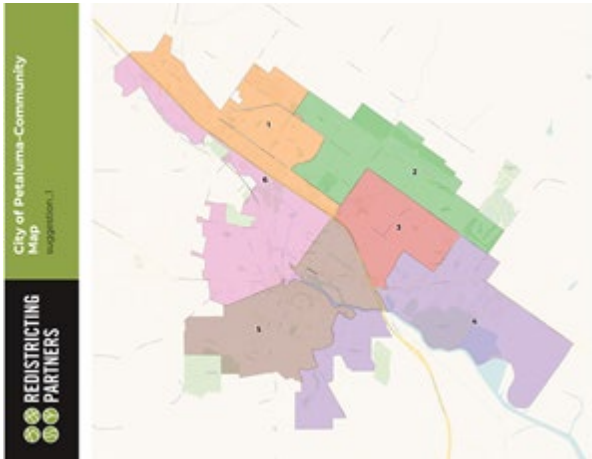
2. Highway 101 Divider: Uses Highway 101 as a direct divider



Suggstion_1



City_of_Petaluma_AAH_2



Gsillianplan2



Version_1



Blocked_Districts



Kevin-B-15Dec

3. North Highway 101 District: Norther portion of Petaluma along the 101 kept whole on both sides.

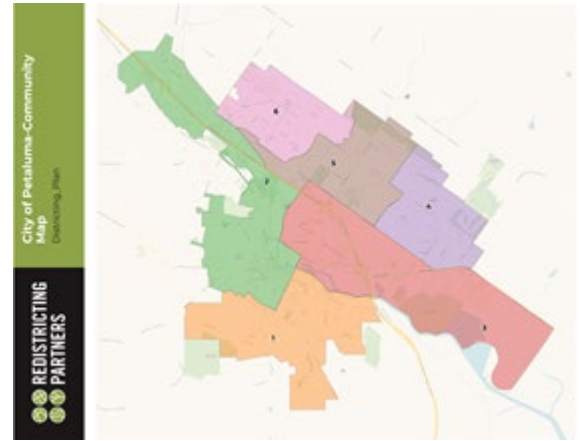
3. North Highway 101 District: Norther portion of Petaluma along the 101 kept whole on both sides.



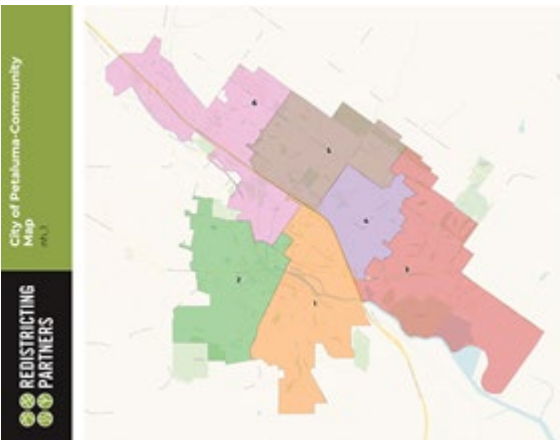
Petaluma_distrioting



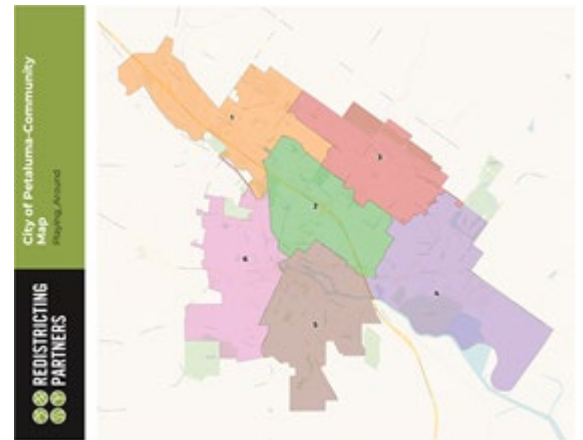
Districting_Plan



Nh_1



Playing Around



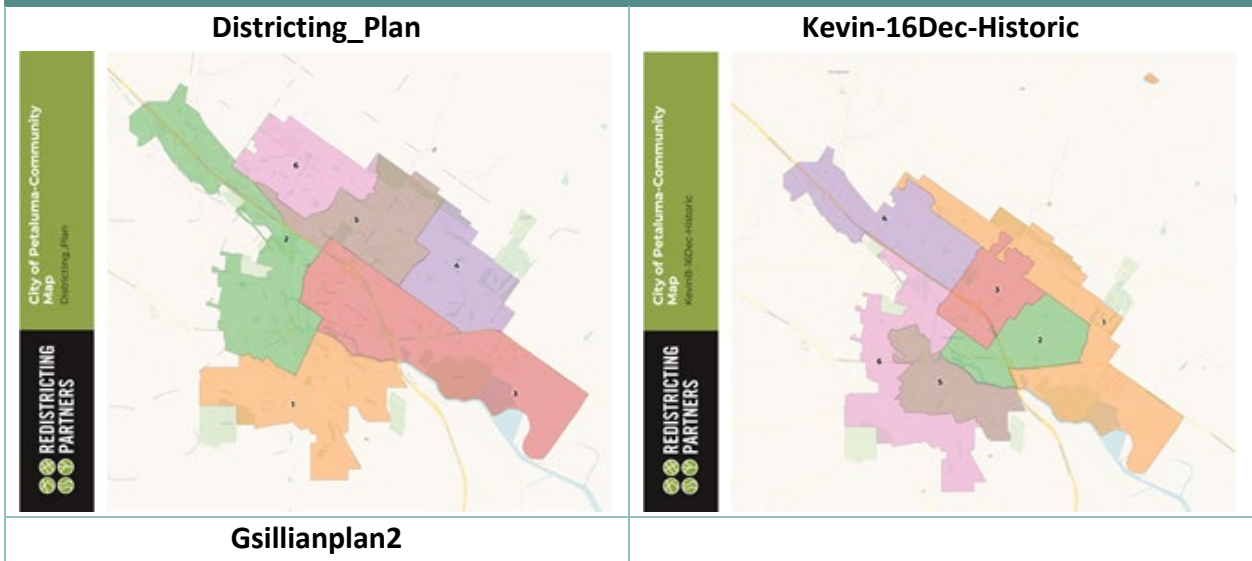
Redistricting_Rangy

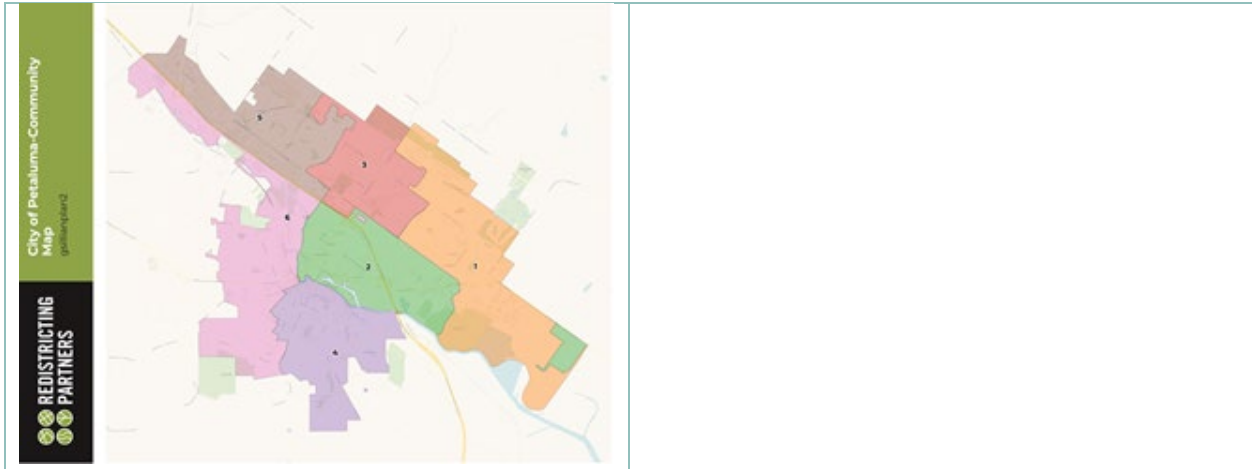
RoyRedlich2

3. North Highway 101 District: Norther portion of Petaluma along the 101 kept whole on both sides.

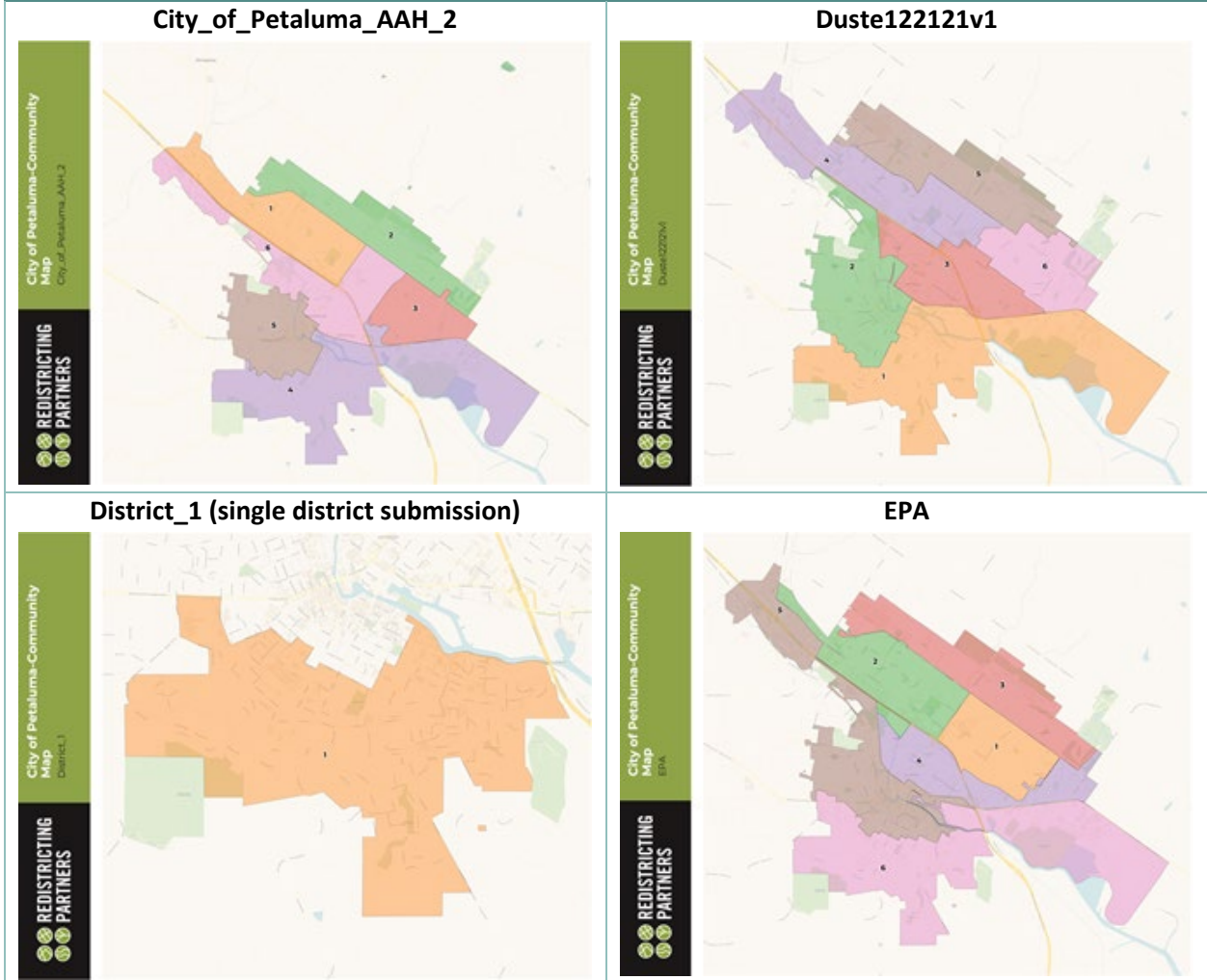


4. Petaluma River divider: River used as a boundary line between districts





5. Whole South District: Southern portion of the city kept whole in one district.



Development of draft maps presented at the January 31, 2022, hearing

Using the public interest testimony and publicly submitted maps, Redistricting Partners drafted three proposed maps that were presented at the January 31, 2022, hearing. The City Council unanimously favored Map A and directed one revision related to the planned Corona SMART station location. Map A, as revised by the City Council, is further discussed in this section of the staff report.

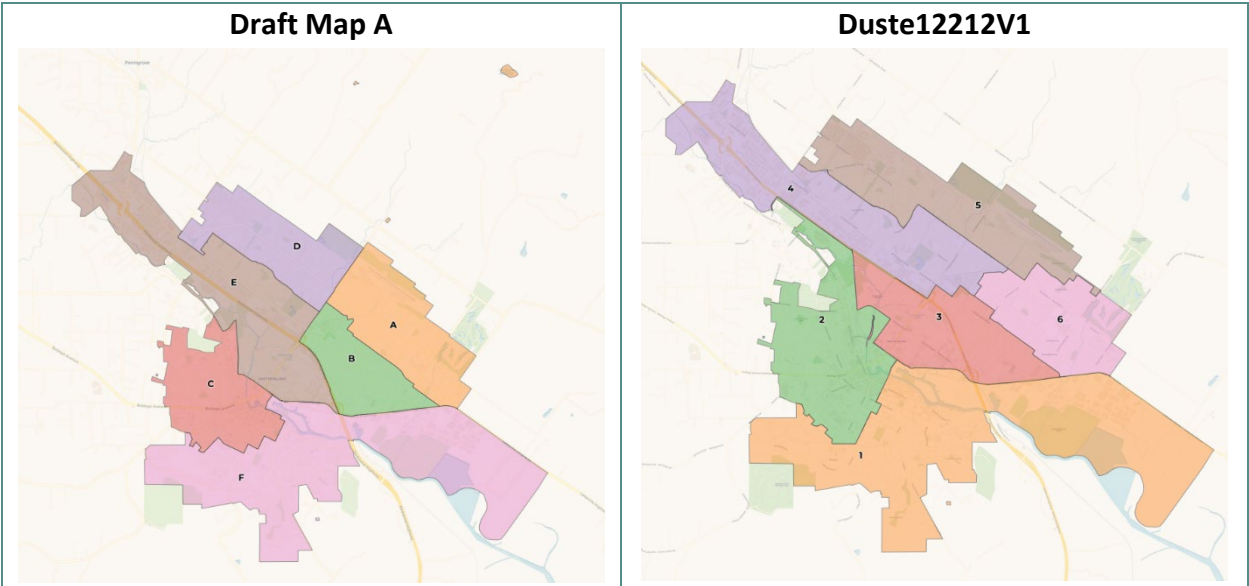
Draft Map A Analysis

Map A attempts to maintain as many of the communities of interest described in the public testimony in Attachment 2 to this staff report as possible. The table below shows how that testimony is reflected in *Map A*. The themes with an asterisk were areas that were split due to population.

Themes in District A	Themes in District B	Themes in District C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport Neighborhoods • East Washington Corridor* • Adobe Creek • Wiseman Park • Casa Grande High School • Eastside Petaluma* • “Neglected Suburbia”* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E Washington Corridor* • Redwood Neighborhood • Eastside Petaluma* • “Neglected Suburbia”* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “West side Parks • Valley Vista • Petaluma Junior High School • Western Ave Neighbors* • Downtown • Heritage District* • Oakhill/Brewster • Cherry Valley Elem. School • Outer Downtown • Historic Downtown/Theater District
Themes in District D	Themes in District E	Themes in District F
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRJC • Morning Star Subdivision • Washington Street Corridor* • “North East Petaluma”* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural west side • Midtown • Washington Street Corridor* • North East Petaluma* • Midtown / Payran Neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schollenberger • Petaluma High School • Western Ave Neighbors* • Windsor Valley / Hayes Hill • Lower Raymond • Helen Putnam Park

Themes in District A	Themes in District B	Themes in District C
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Heritage District* ● McNear Elem. / Sunnyslope ● Victoria/West Haven ● Eastside Petaluma*

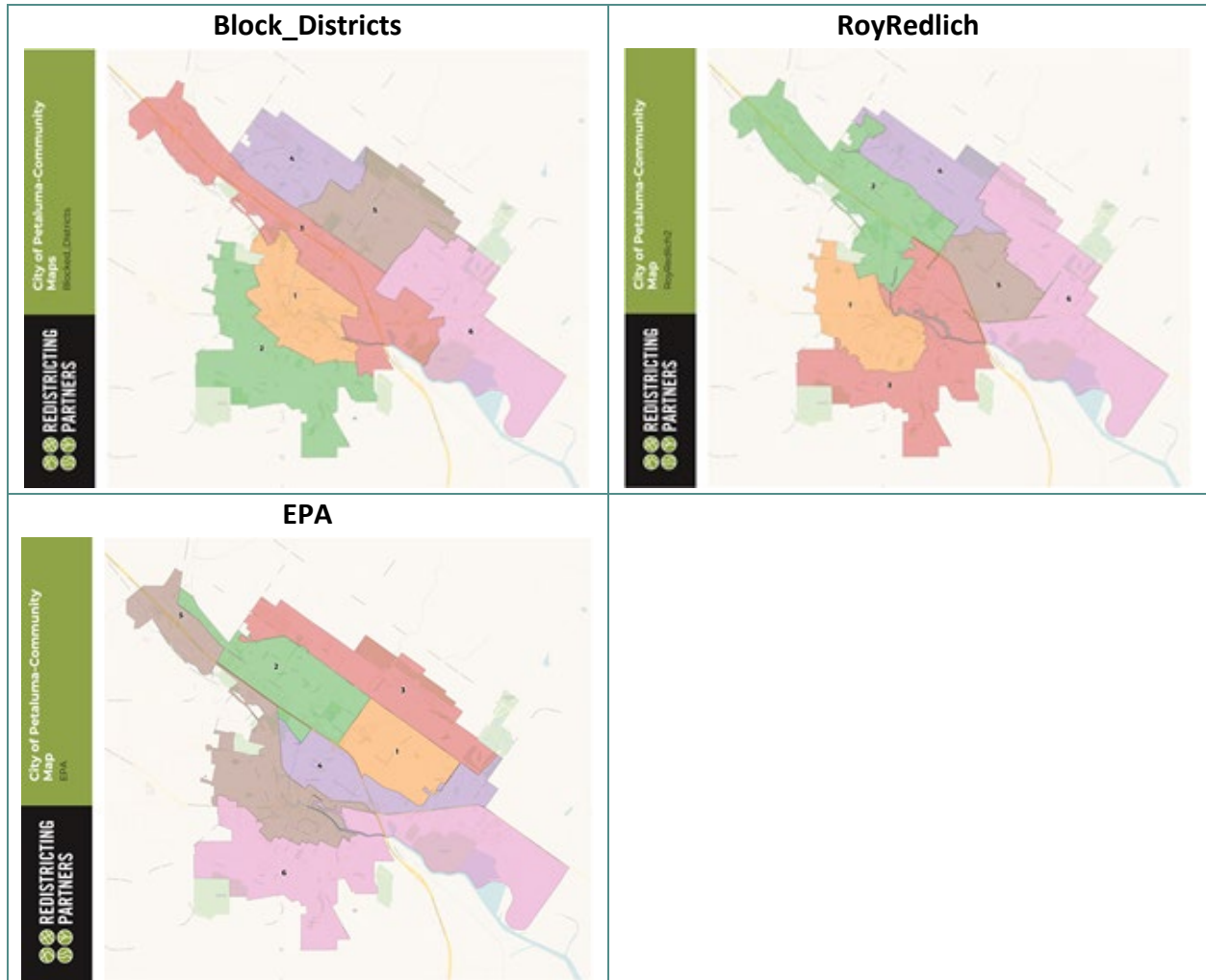
Map A comparison to community map duste122121v1 (Duste)



- *Map A* can be viewed as a more compact version of the map entitled *Duste* submitted by a member of the public.
- District F in *Map A* follows a similar shape and direction following Lakeville Highway over Highway 101 by the Petaluma River when compared to District 1 in *Duste*, but map A's District F avoids splitting downtown
- *Map A's* District C is similar in shape to *Duste's* District 2 with slight differences. *Map A* District C uses the railroad to Lakeville as boundaries more prominently than *Duste's* District 2, and District C keeps downtown more intact, versus *Duste's* District 2, which uses D Street as a boundary.
- To avoid splitting the airport neighborhoods and the Wiseman Park neighborhood, *Map A* does not include a district like District 5 in *Duste* and instead includes Districts D and A.
- District E in *Map A* follows a similar rural west community of interest shape as District 4 in *Duste*. However, while *Duste* stays predominately above Hwy 101, *Map A's* District E goes over Highway 101 to include and maintain Midtown.

Other public maps that include similarities to *Map A*

- **Block_Districts** - District 2 is similar in structure to District F in *Map A*, and Districts 4 and 5 use Washington Ave as a border
- **RoyRedlich2** - Districts 1 and 2 are similar in structure to District C and E in *Map A*.
- **EPA** - District 6 is similar in structure to District F of *Map A*
- **EPA** - Like *Map A*, Districts 1 and 2 use Washington Ave as a border



Some public input is not reflected in *Map A*. For example:

- **Including the East Washington Corridor in one district.** Some public maps used East Washington Street as a divider, while others created districts that included both sides of East Washington Street.
- **Keeping the most eastern district entirely above Highway 101.** Map A2 jumps south of the 101 into the southwestern portion of the city. Some public maps follow the same

structure, while others created districts that maintain the eastern district entirely north of Highway 101.

- **Splitting the rural western portion of the city along Highway 101.** Map A2 keeps the northwestern portion of the city whole, while several public maps split that area along Highway 101.

Timing and Sequencing of District Elections

The City Council has not yet determined the timing and sequence of district elections. Four City Council seats will be up for election in November 2022 – the Mayoral seat and three other Council seats. The City Council will determine which three City voting districts will elect Council representatives in 2022. The Mayoral seat will also be filled in 2022 and continue as an at-large seat on the City Council. The remaining three City Council seats will be filled by district elections in 2024. The district elections ordinance that the Council adopts will specify which districts will be the first three to elect district representatives in 2022, and which three districts will elect district representatives in 2024.

The CVRA provides some guidance regarding determining which new voting districts should elect their representatives first. The CVRA specifies that the district election voting sequence must “give special consideration” to the CVRA’s purposes and “take into account the preferences expressed by members of the districts.” The purposes of the CVRA include eliminating minority voting dilution and addressing ongoing discrimination in voting. By law, the terms of sitting Petaluma City Council members are not affected by the transition to district elections. Those Councilmembers whose seats are not up for election in 2022 will continue to serve as at-large members of the City Council until the 2024 election.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public outreach for this public hearing included notification by social media through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and NextDoor. We also sent weekly emails to the City’s mailing lists and provided updates to the City’s website for project information. A dedicated webpage on the City’s website: cityofpetaluma.org/districtelections and an email: districtelections@cityofpetaluma.org were established to provide updates and respond to community questions and feedback.

This item appeared on the City’s tentative agenda on the January 24th, 2021, City Council meeting which was a publicly noticed meeting, and this item was noticed in compliance with the California Brown Act.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

This action helps achieve the following City Council goal:

Workplan Item #161: Increase community engagement through programs that attract new followers. Complete minority outreach strategy and begin implementing recommendations from the strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15320, 15378 and 15061(b)(3) as a public hearing to receive input on potential voting district boundaries. This action does not have the potential to result in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ALTERNATIVES

No alternatives are suggested as this time. The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony about the proposed district map options. New drafts will be presented at subsequent hearings that address testimony received at this public hearing.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

There are financial impacts on the City's General Fund due to the need to devote staff time and to retain special legal counsel and demographers, to assist with the transition to district-based elections. These costs are estimated to be up to \$300,000. Additionally, the City will be required to reimburse the prospective plaintiffs for documented costs of up to \$30,000. This cost is included in the adopted FY 21/22 General Fund budget.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [Redistricting Partners Draft Map Plan A.2](#)
2. [Community of interest responses](#)
3. [Maps submitted by members of the community, including the map name, author description \(if any\), url \(if any\), and atlas information.](#)