APPENDIX
VOLUME VII
PART 2

ADDITIONAL RECORD MATERIALS

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COI Clusters for Michigan

MGGG Redistricting Lab and OPEN-Maps Coalition

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Contributors

Staff and students of the MGGG Redistricting Lab who made direct contributions to this project include Jamie Atlas, Luis Delgadillo, Jack Deschler, Moon Duchin, Max Fan, Cyrus Kirby, Elizabeth Kopecky, JN Matthews, Lucy Millman, Chanel Richardson, Vievie Romanelli, Parker Rule, Robbie Veglahn, Valeria Velasquez, and Zach Wallace-Wright. We also thank the other members of the Lab.

Active members of the OPEN-Maps faculty working group include Erin Chambers (St. Louis University), Ranthony Edmonds (the Ohio State University), Parker Edwards (University of Notre Dame), Vladimir Kogan (the Ohio State University), and Ari Stern (Washington University).

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1 Introduction

This report summarizes *Community of Interest (COI) clusters* extracted from public commentary submitted to the MICRC from March through the end of August 2021.

An initial round of clusters provided to the commission chose a resolution that produced 36 clusters, numbered A1–A36, using all submissions to the public portal through early August. We chose a data resolution that produced 36 clusters in an attempt to create a number that would be manageable for the commission to use in their work, with each cluster still reflecting a synthesis of many views. The resolution of clustering is a choice, but it's important to choose a resolution that balances usability with richness—too many (therefore small) clusters will be overwhelming to consider in the process and will be supported by too little testimony, while too few (therefore large) clusters will be geographically diffuse and will lack clear themes. Detailed methods and code will be made publicly available in a separate report and repository.

On September 1, the full dataset of submissions collected through August 31 was subjected to geographic sorting, producing clusters B1–B36. In two cases, a pair of clusters that were small and proximal were merged, leaving 34 clusters total, which are now numbered C1–C34.

We begin with summary descriptions of the COI clusters around the state, followed by heatmaps, followed by the raw testimony that supported each cluster.

1.1 How to use this report

As the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission proceeds around the state to draw and adjust lines for its new districts, members of the commission and members of the public can consult this report to find synthesized and organized public testimony.

Steps

- Consult the **overview of cluster centers** (Figure 1) to see which clusters are most relevant to the part of the state under consideration.
- Begin with the **summary description and heatmap** in Section 2. This should help form a sense of the geographic scale of the cluster and will provide a summary of important themes. For large clusters, we have used a text classification technique to produce subclusters with different themes highlighted by submitters.
- Next to the name of the cluster is a link that will jump you straight to the **table of raw data** in Section 3. There, you can read the submissions for yourself! Some submissions are very long, so we have truncated them after a character limit equivalent to several tweets. In the first column of these tables, you can find a link that will take you straight to the detail page for the original submission in the public portal. Note that the top row of the table contains a link that jumps you back to the summary page for the cluster.

By flipping between the overview, the summary descriptions/heatmaps, the tables of supporting data, and the submission pages on the public portal, we hope that users will be able to form a high-level view of public testimony, supported by specific detail.

Figure 1. Overview of cluster centers, shown against the backdrop of the counties of Michigan (lighter lines) and the ten regions in use by the MICRC (darker lines).

2 COI clusters: Summary descriptions and heatmaps

Cluster C1 — Oakland County. (27 submissions) Collection of small, interdependent towns with common transportation corridors. Commuters travel within the county for employment and shared businesses, community spaces, recreational areas, and services.

Cluster C2 — Royal Oak Area. (17 submissions) Predominantly White, inner ring suburbs. Strong local economy with commercial areas that attract shoppers. Connected to Detroit via Woodward Corridor.

Cluster C3 — Southwest Macomb County. (15 submissions) Area includes White, working class suburbs, as well as growing immigrant and Black population in South Warren. LGBTQ community is cited in Hazel Park.

Cluster C4 — East Detroit / Grosse Pointe. (42 submissions) Diverse area with significant Arab-American and Bangladeshi (Bangla-speaking) population. Important employers include the auto industry, with the Chrysler Plant cited. Concerns about industrial waste, cost of living, and gentrification. Grosse Pointe described as upscale, white-collar community with shared public services. Disagreement about whether East Detroit and Grosse Pointe belong in one district.

Cluster C5 — Greater Lansing Area*. (59 submissions) Residents are concerned with keeping the Lansing area and "Tri-Counties" together. Shared metro area services.

This cluster splits thematically into C5-1, whose top-cited themes concern economic conditions and racial/ethnic diversity, and C5-2, whose themes are more rural, suburban, and school-based.

C5-1 (32 submissions)

C5-2 (25 submissions)

Cluster C6 — Lake St. Clair. (29 submissions) Dependence on the infrastructure, economy, recreation and lifestyle surrounding Lake St. Clair. Environmental conservation of the lake is important. Lakeshore communities shade into Grosse Pointe.

Cluster C7 — Northwest Suburbs. (7 submissions) Mix of middle and working class suburbs. Many cite important Black and Jewish population. Sizeable Caribbean community, concerns about resources for navigating education system and criminal justice system. Freeways link area to Detroit.

Cluster C8 — Northwest Detroit and Palmer Park. (7 submissions) LGBTQ and African American residents. Lower income and middle class neighborhoods, with pockets of wealth.

Cluster C9 — Western Wayne County. (9 submissions) Commenters highlight a clear distinction between rural areas and urban/university areas.

Cluster C10 — Southwest Detroit. (21 submissions) Several submitters urge commission to keep Dearborn and Dearborn Heights together as one community. Diverse area with significant Hispanic and Arab-American population. Includes some Detroit waterfront communities.

Cluster C11 — Benton Harbor area. (36 submissions) Benton Harbor itself is described as a small city with concentrated Black population. Shared health care and agricultural networks in the area. Environmental concerns regarding lakeshore conservation. Berrien, Cass and Van Buren share tourism-based economy with surrounding townships.

Cluster C12 — Kalamazoo and Battle Creek. (22 submissions) Universities and shared infrastructure, especially transit, make these areas economically interdependent. Area has many recreational opportunities. Focus on K-12 school districts and suburban atmosphere.

Cluster C13 — Northern Grand Rapids. (17 submissions) Rural and agricultural community extending north from Grand Rapids, with important fruit-growing industry. Creston neighborhood in Grand Rapids cited for local businesses and restaurants.

Cluster C14 — Grand Rapids Metro. (55 submissions) Within the greater Grand Rapids area, special importance was placed on school districts, shared public services, and infrastructure needs. Kentwood is frequently cited as cohesive and some submitters hope it can be kept whole.

This was thematically split into two subclusters, with C14-1 more focused on infrastructure and city schools, while C14-2 cited suburban themes with greater frequency. Geographically, these overlap substantially.

C14-1 (38 submissions)

C14-2 (17 submissions)

Cluster C15 — West Central. (16 submissions) Rural and suburban combination, relies on Grand Rapids for public services. Shared infrastructure. Rural, farming areas near Lake Michigan.

Cluster C16 — Van Buren and Allegan Counties. (57 submissions) Lakeshore community with agricultural and tourism industry, outdoor and recreational activities, environmental and watershed concerns. Shared cultural events. Shared rural identity reported between Allegan and Van Buren Counties.

Subcluster 16-1 describes the area in terms of waterways, tourism, and recreation; subcluster 16-2 is more thematically focused on rural/agricultural issues and local businesses.

C16-1 (20 submissions)

C16-2 (37 submissions)

Cluster C17 — Upper Peninsula. (12 submissions) Submissions emphasized a strong Upper Peninsula regional identity. This region also identified three main zones: communities bordering Lake Superior, communities bordering Lake Michigan, and those that border the Wisconsin border. Main concerns in this area were about environmental threats and the prosperity of tribal communities. Regional economies depend on Marquette County and many public services are available closer to Marquette City.

Cluster C18 — Upper Mitten. (71 submissions) Small towns and rural communities united by seasonal, tourism-based economy and agriculture. Commuters travel to nearby counties for goods, services, and hospitals. Concerns include a lack of essential services, access to broadband, and keeping the coastline and watersheds clean. Local universities, particularly Central Michigan University.

Subcluster 18-1 has major themes of outdoor and recreational spaces, environment, and agriculture, with many submitters describing shared services. Subcluster 18-2 has discussion of shared values and identity, including religion.

C18-1 (51 submissions)

C18-2 (20 submissions)

Cluster C19 — Central Zone. (22 submissions) Commitment to education and health care service availability for the region. Water conservation and environmental preservation was a key concern. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, while contributing jobs and economic activity to the region, pose several environmental concerns to residents. This cluster centered around environmental concerns, especially those affecting river conservation. Submissions were made up of small towns and rural communities.

Cluster C20 — Mt. Pleasant. (12 submissions) Combination of rural, small towns, and medium-sized cities. They share resources with the Grand Traverse Bay Area, and report several farming communities.

Cluster C21 — Tri-Cities. (35 submissions) Regional economy mixing urban, suburban and rural areas in the Tri-cities of Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland. Residents have pollution and flooding concerns, particularly in the Tittabawasee and Saginaw Rivers. Several submitters cite Delta College and SVSU as regionally important.

Cluster C22 — Wayne County Suburbs. (13 submissions) Diverse area with significant Black, Hispanic, and Arab-American communities. Residents mention pollution, K-12 schools, and community centers.

Cluster C23 — Monroe Area. (21 submissions) This area is described as a "bedroom community." Some commenters mention environmental concerns and needs for infrastructure maintenance. Some suggested that Monroe County (more agricultural but with community connections to the other two counties), Wayne County, and Lenawee County should be kept together.

Cluster C24 — Downriver. (23 submissions) Includes cities and townships South of Detroit. Working-class character and access to and organization around the Detroit river. This is a diverse community with a large Arab-American population. Farms/agricultural areas and a mix of manufacturing plants are cited. Residents mention environmental and pollution concerns.