

Rice County, Minnesota

Redistricting Plan #2

Submitted by:

Common Cause Minnesota

Submitted on:

April 5, 2022 1:35pm

April 5, 2022

To: Rice County Commissioners

As Elected Officials, you are tasked with the exciting opportunity to make sure each person's voice can be fairly represented! Redistricting is based on the idea of "one person, one vote," and creating districts that have the same number of people. We hope you are up for the challenge! The process of how district lines are drawn influences who runs for office, who is elected, and the quality of the representation each constituent in Rice County receives. Elected officials are the people's lobbyists and advocates and are supposed to be our voice in spaces of power we can't access.

We seek a transparent redistricting process where information is readily available online and updated consistently and timely. Where constituents share feedback, propose plans, and offer commentary as they relate to preliminary documents and submissions, and have multiple opportunities to engage in the process. Ultimately, a transparent process where those ultimately tasked with creating district lines take that input directly into account, seek to reflect community voices and requests into the drawing of the final map.

While we wish the County had been more forthcoming with ways constituents, especially multilingual or disabled community members, could learn about and engage in the redistricting process, we are writing today to urge you to consider and give weight to constituent's voices.

We understand the redistricting process creates a short timeline for Counties to finalize maps, however, the county didn't need to wait for municipal resolutions before providing information to the public about how they could submit their proposed maps. The discussion of the weight to be given to redistricting principles could have similarly been had before municipal maps were finalized.

We hope the Board is deliberate in reviewing public comments and proposals while adjusting proposed maps to include community voices. By requiring public comments and proposals to be submitted a week prior to the public hearing, it allows for viewing and revision. However, if a decision is adopted at the upcoming April 12 hearing, then the decision to allow constituent input was merely performative; a symbolic gesture to deflect from potentially gerrymandered maps drawn with little if any public input being incorporated

On behalf of our Rice County members, community partners and leaders, enclosed is a community drawn map created by Common Cause MN in partnership with community leaders and organizations. As you will see, the enclosed proposed Rice County map demonstrates the opportunities the redistricting process could create when communities are centered in the process of informing their district maps. This is a once in a decade opportunity to fairly reimagine the distribution of power in a manner that reflects current and future prosperity. More importantly the enclosed map does not violate any local, state, or federal laws and honors local redistricting principles; at least those publicly communicated. It further demonstrates that all Rice County constituents can be fairly captured without cracking or packing specific groups.

The goal was to assure that ward boundaries did not crack or pack BIPOC populations, or other communities of interest. These efforts organically resulted in providing a ward in which they would serve as a plurality in primary elections. The Rice County map this collective effort produced unites north Northfield into D2 and includes downtown and south Northfield into D1. Additionally, we unite diverse communities in Faribault in D3 (39% BIPOC, with a 30% voting age population), as the Latinx and Black/African American populations see an increase

in their share of the district, each being over 15% of the district population. The rural townships on the eastern half of the county are paired with Northfield, with the western half joining the northern part of the city and the eastern half joining downtown and the southern part. The three mobile home parks in west Faribault remain united. The mobile home parks in rural townships west of Faribault (Millstone Creek and Cedar Shores) are united into D5 with the Riverside mobile home park in Morristown.

We ask that you consider Communities of Interest as you draw county districts. Land does not vote, political subdivisions do not vote - people that live, work, and thrive within district maps do. Communities of Interest are defined as a neighborhood or group of people who have common policy concerns and would benefit from being maintained in a single district, for example, residents of mobile home parks or economic corridors of a given group of constituents.

We ask that you protect the collective voices of constituents in Rice County and communities of interest while resisting the urge to pack or crack constituents into districts to benefit special interests like political parties or keep safe seats for incumbents. A least change method to drawing county district maps allows for baseline maps from 60years ago to determine the future of Rice County. Rice County constituents or businesses from 60yrs ago are not the same, they don't have same needs or aspirations as today's constituents or those who will call Rice County home in the next 10yrs. A least change approach is not legally applicable to local governments drawing maps; it only applies to courts.

Thank you for your attention to our request and your dedication to putting Rice constituents first, ahead of self and special interests. We are available to answer any questions you may have about this position statement or attached proposed Rice County map.

Respectfully submitted,

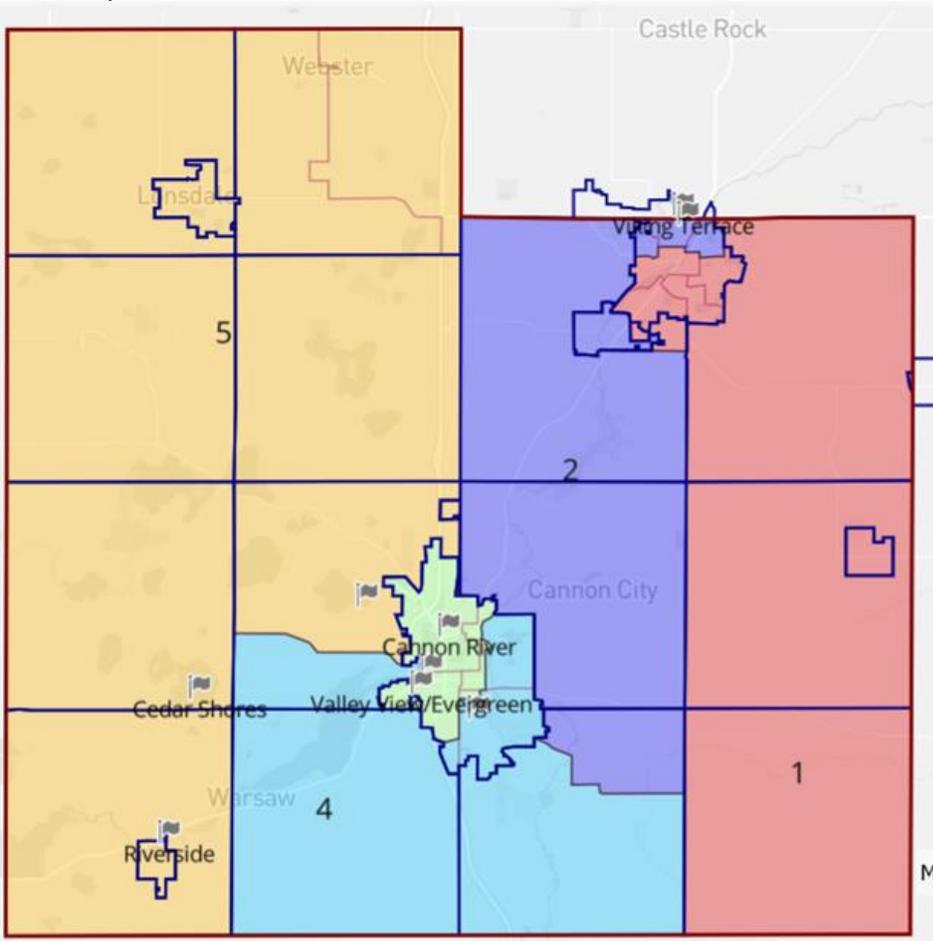
ABelladonna-Carrera

Annastacia Belladonna-Carrera,
Executive Director
50 yrs of Holding Power Accountable

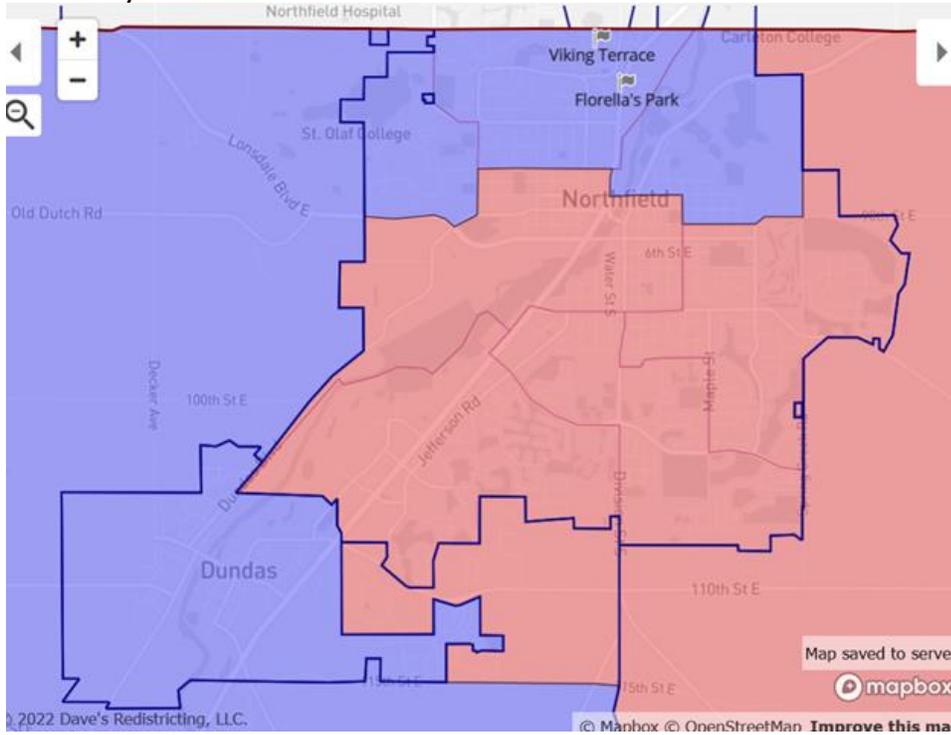
Enclosed: Proposed Rice County Map



Full County



Boundary of D1 and D2



Boundary of D3 and D4

