Escondido Districting Criterion 4: COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST (COI)

In Escondido, City Council District lines must maintain communities of interest ("COI") intact when possible. Keeping communities of interest and neighborhoods intact is the fourth criterion the Commission uses to draw lines. This means that it is the fourth most important criterion to follow, behind population equality, compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and contiguity and compactness.

WHAT IS A COI?

In the most simple terms, a COI is a group of people in the same area that shares a common bond or interest. In Escondido, the definition also specifically includes racial, ethnic, and language minority groups. The definition is broad, leaving communities a lot of discretion in determining which issues are important to them and bring them together.

However, in Escondido a COI may not be based on a relationship with a political party, candidate or incumbent. So, the Commission is not allowed to draw lines based on common support for a City Council member or political party.

HOW WILL THE COMMISSION FIND OUT WHAT COIS ARE LOCATED WHERE?

Communities of interest are best established through oral or written testimony from individuals or groups with first-hand knowledge of them. Census and other outside data can lend additional support, but should not replace first-hand knowledge of the community. COI testimony should address at least two points: the community’s common interests and its geographic location.

While in Escondido, COI specifically includes racial, ethnic and language minority groups, community members are not limited to these kinds of interests in establishing a COI. In fact, it is up to those most familiar with a community, those who live in or work with it, to identify the interests that unite it. This can include social interests such as common heritage, culture, or history; support for a school or community center; or desire to address a problem, such as the lack of healthy food options or high levels of crime; as well as common economic interests such as similar work opportunities, a desire to bring more jobs into the community or improve infrastructure.
HOW DO I TELL THE COMMISSION ABOUT MY COI?

1. **Explain the nature of the bond or common interest that forms the community:**

   Your oral or written testimony should describe the interests that the community shares. You should establish as clearly as possible what the common interests are and why or how they are important to the community. For example:

   * Testimony about a common interest in a community center should include the name and location of the center and describe the community's involvement in it or why it is important, e.g., the community accesses a variety of educational and recreational opportunities for children, adults, and senior citizens at the community center.

   * Testimony about a shared culture or heritage should identify the heritage and indicate why it is a common bond, e.g., common history, language, culture, etc.

2. **Explain the geographical location of the community of interest:**

   Your testimony must also state where your COI is located so line drawers know where it is. This includes at least a description of the COI’s exterior boundaries. This includes physical boundaries, such as streets, bodies of water, railroad tracks, or shopping centers/military bases, that delineate the outside border of the community, as well as legal or geographic boundaries, such as city or county lines that indicate a COI’s geography.

   A map showing the location of the COI, along with oral or written testimony identifying the location, can be extremely helpful to allow both community members and Commissioners to locate the COI. A map showing the COI on a larger city or county map can be particularly helpful in locating the COI.

Feel free to use the attached “Define Your Community of Interest Form” to submit your COI information to the Commission. You can give it to the Commission at a hearing or by mailing it or dropping it off at the City Clerk’s office. In addition, you can email COI information to districting@escondido.org.

Please give your COI information to the Commission as soon as you can. The deadline to submit COI information is October 31, 2013.
What bonds your community? What do you see as common interests or links in your community?

Where is your community located? What are the boundaries of your community, e.g. streets, railroad tracks, shopping center, etc.?

Feel free to provide a map if you would like. Maps are very helpful! Examples of maps include Google Maps, road maps, or even hand-drawn maps. Just please be sure any map you provide clearly shows the borders of your community, such as streets, railroad tracks, shopping malls, etc., so the Commission can locate it on a map of the city when it draws district lines.

You can submit this form to the Commission in the following ways:
At a Public Input Hearing on October 10, 12, 17, 19, 24 or 27.
By email at districting@escondido.org
Mail or drop off to the City Clerk’s office:
Escondido Independent Districting Commission
c/o Escondido City Clerk’s office
201 N. Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025

Please provide this information as soon as you can, but no later than October 31, 2013.