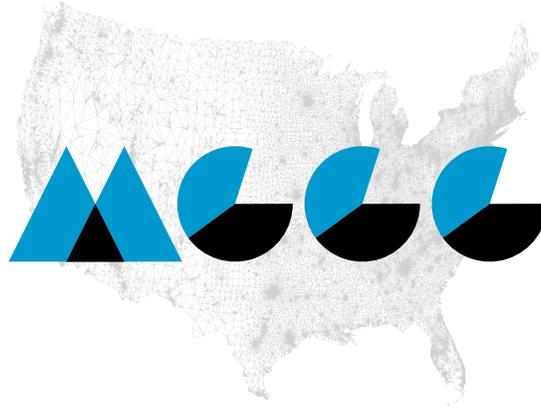


Wisconsin PMC Submission Portal Overview through August 1, 2021



MGGG Redistricting Lab

Contents

1	Week 1: June 7 - June 13	2
2	Week 2: June 14 - June 20	2
3	Week 3: June 21 - June 27	3
4	Week 4: June 28 - July 4	4
5	Week 5: July 5 - July 11	4
6	Week 6: July 12 - July 18	5
7	Week 7: July 19 - July 25	6
8	Week 8: July 26 - August 1	7
9	COI coverage maps	9

Contributors

Liz Kopecky and Valeria Velasquez contributed to this report.



	WRITTEN	theory	COI	DISTRICTS	CD	SD	AD	COI MAP
Week 1	3	1	1	4	4	0	0	8
Week 2	21	18	3	5	2	2	1	12
Week 3	15	7	2	5	5	0	0	38
Week 4	4	4	0	4	3	1	0	34
Week 5	2	2	0	17	10	5	2	25
Week 6	6	6	0	12	7	3	2	92
Week 7	5	4	1	6	1	1	4	79
Week 8	8	5	3	21	15	3	3	353
TOTAL	64			74				641

Table 1. Summary of Submissions

Introduction

This report was prepared by the MGGG Redistricting Lab at Tisch College of Tufts University to summarize submissions regarding Wisconsin redistricting to the [PMC Public Comment Portal](#).

Notes on the summary table

- Table 1 summarizes the written testimony, districting plans, and community of interest (COI) maps submitted to the PMC portal to date.
- We classified the written testimony into two main categories.

Theory of gerrymandering: principles or processes for fair redistricting, or warnings about unfair redistricting; and

COI descriptions: written descriptions of communities or guidance for handling specific areas and regions of the state.

In the table, these are abbreviated as "theory" and "COI" types. Note: These two classifications do not always add to the total because some submissions fit both types, and others fit neither.

- Districting plans, however, do not neatly divide up as either Congressional districts (CD), Senate districts (SD), or Assembly districts (AD).
- Figure 1 displays all COI Maps submitted to the portal, and there are insets for Milwaukee (Figure 2), Southwest WI (Figure 3), Dane County (Figure 4) and the Eau Claire area (Figure 5).

Recurrent themes

1. COI maps and written testimony were the most common types of submissions.
2. Commenting has been under-used so far with only five submissions receiving comments.
3. The following keywords appear frequently:
 - "school district" (×72); "county" (×109); "lake" (×52) and "river" (×59);
 - "fair", "unfair", or "fairness" (×55); "gerrymander" (×34); "partisan" (×24); and
 - "Milwaukee" (×102), "Madison" (×41); and "Racine" (×35).
 - "clean" (×32), "pothole" (×24), "trash" (×18), "violence" (×51)



1 Week 1: June 7 - June 13

15 submissions: 3 Written, 4 Districting, 8 COI Map

Written testimony. The three written submissions this week concerned fairness, with one commenter describing disproportionate outcomes in the State Assembly: "When one party gets 64-35 majority while getting 205,000 fewer votes, that is not a democracy. End this egregious, unfair districting." ([Submission w34](#))

One written comment expressed the importance of preserving the City of Whitewater in one Congressional district. ([Submission w39](#))

Districting plans. Three complete maps and one partial map describing the Wauwatosa community were submitted. One mapper wrote that their goal was to "unpack" Madison and Milwaukee. ([Submission p37](#))

One mapper explained their process in detail: "In this methodology, high population counties in Wisconsin were ignored until all the low population counties were selected in their entirety. The result was that only six counties were split... When counties were split, both municipalities and school districts were respected as much as possible." ([Submission p40](#))

COIs. Eight COI maps were submitted this week. One commenter from Milwaukee highlighted the need for "more resources with fresh food and more jobs [in the area]." ([Submission c26](#))

Another Milwaukee County commenter noted that their community was "united by common environmental interests" such as water, vegetation, and parkway maintenance. ([Submission c19](#))

2 Week 2: June 14 - June 20

38 submissions: 21 Written, 5 Districting, 12 COI Map

Written testimony. The written testimony this week primarily focused on concerns about partisanship, gerrymandering, and representation. These themes appeared in at least 16 comments. Most commenters expressed concern about a partisan process or preference for a non- or bipartisan commission to draw the ones. One commenter wrote about allowing the state legislature to draw the maps without the commission.

Other themes included preserving communities (×2); preserving city or county boundaries (×2); competitive elections (×2); drawing compact districts (×1); and using algorithms to redraw districts (×1).

Districting plans. Three complete plans and one partial plan showing the "Lake Mills economic zone" as a State Assembly district were submitted. A fifth incomplete demonstration plan was submitted to show that: "It is possible to create equitable maps by drawing concentric rings moving



outwards from cities, and then conjoining rural areas into their own subset district. Due to time constraints this map is far from perfect, but it does illustrate that using this method can achieve relatively even distribution among both political parties and among various ethnic minorities." ([Submission p94](#))

The complete plans referenced "more competitive districts" for Congressional districts and a more "fair and balanced Wisconsin". The mapper who submitted an earlier Congressional district plan ([Submission p40](#)) in Week 1, submitted State Senate districts with "significant focus on the priorities of county lines, municipal lines, and some school districts." ([Submission p76](#))

COIs. Twelve COI maps were submitted this week. There were repeated mentions of schools and school districts in this week's COIs. One commenter stated that their COI was "tied closely to the school district boundaries and an interest in appropriate funding for rural public schools." ([Submission c79](#))

The COIs also referenced concerns about the lack of job opportunities, which were echoed by another commenter from Eau Claire county who stated that lots of people were leaving the county due to gentrification and not enough resources. Two COIs mentioned the importance of the ecology in their respective region.

3 Week 3: June 21 - June 27

58 submissions: 15 Written, 5 Districting, 38 COI Map

Written testimony. The written testimony this week primarily focused on concerns about partisanship, gerrymandering, and representation. These themes appeared in at least 6 comments. Most commenters expressed concern about a partisan process or preference for a non- or bipartisan commission to draw the ones. One commenter wrote that only the legislature can create maps.

At least six commenters referenced maps or attachments. We recommend reaching out to these individuals for clarification.

Districting plans. Five complete plans were submitted this week. One map was drawn by a computer algorithm that outputs "compact and competitive districts." ([Submission 102](#))

Three mappers referenced preserving specific regions or communities of interest. Several of the same regions—Fox Valley, Central Sands, the Driftless area, northern Wisconsin—were referenced more than once, but resulted in different maps. ([Submission p114](#)) ([Submission p192](#))

COIs. One submission goes into great detail on how interconnected and unified the community of Iowa County is based on their collaboration, economic systems, volunteering and history. They are passionate about what unifies her community: "Keep us together to clearly hear our voices." ([Submission c116](#))

Many commenters discussed and/or mentioned lakes and the environment, delving into related topics like water quality distribution, recreation and the impact their COI's ecology has on their



lives: "To the extent that political district boundaries can respect or conform to watershed or sub-watershed boundaries, the more closely we can expect to collectively align policy, identity, and activity to support clean water and manage water resources." ([Submission c204](#))

There are strong ecological concerns and appreciation for the environment coming out of Milwaukee. One particular commenter was adamant about Milwaukee's collective support for the environment and willingness to invest (pay more taxes) in urban infrastructure, stating that a neighboring county, Ozaukee County, should not be included in the same electoral district because of ideological differences around those topics. ([Submission c206](#))

4 Week 4: June 12 - July 18

42 submissions: 4 Written, 4 Districting, 34 COI Map

Written testimony. The written testimony this week referenced computer-generated maps and competitive elections.

Districting plans. Two complete plans and two partial plans were submitted. The partial plans included one Western Wisconsin Congressional district and one Western Wisconsin State Senate district.

COIs. Many commenters brought up that their community's interests and voting power are hindered by district/ward lines that fragment them into different parts that make it hard to represent them well. School district lines continue to be a frequent example, including this comment from Walworth County. ([Submission c244](#))

One commenter raised the issue of prison gerrymandering: "[In the] Green Bay Correctional Institute, [there are] several thousand inmates who cannot vote but who are counted in the population of Allouez." ([Submission c295](#))

5 Week 5: July 5 - July 11

44 submissions: 2 Written, 17 Districting, 25 COI Map

Written testimony. The two written submissions this week both referenced concerns about partisan gerrymandering.

Districting plans. This week 17 partial district plans were submitted. Nine of the submissions were single Congressional districts submitted by one individual (Timothy Daley). A different commenter put in a partial plan with eight districts in and near Milwaukee that "focused on bringing COI neighborhoods together." Though it is labeled a Congressional plan, the districts are the size of Assembly districts. ([Submission p314](#))



All of the Senate and Assembly plans focused on completing districts in southern and southeastern Wisconsin. One commenter used their map to illustrate a theory of how members of the Assembly, Senate, and Congress should work together, so the districts are on several scales. ([Submission p1057](#)) One submitter used their map to illustrate their preferred State Assembly district lines within their preferred State Senate and Congressional district. ([Submission p1092](#))

COIs. Twenty-five COI maps were submitted this week. Concerning their community in Milwaukee, one commenter stated, “[Riverwest, Harambee and Brewers Hill’s] cultural and racial diversity creates a special and unique place for people to live, work and socialize.” They emphasize that the community is split into three assembly districts, despite being a “tight, well-defined area within Milwaukee.” ([Submission c752](#))

Several submissions focused on Glendale and, in particular, highlighted and lauded its diversity. One commenter continued the trend of expressing concerns over schools and schools districts and their financial support. ([Submission c1090](#)) Several commenters discussed the Glendale commercial environment. ([Submission c514](#)) ([Submission c1065](#))

A sub-theme of environmental consciousness was prevalent throughout many submissions, particularly in those with COIs centered around lakes and other natural landmarks. Five submissions mentioned the need for the preservation of green spaces. Three others expressed concern over water sustainability and quality in various bodies of water.

6 Week 6: July 12 - July 18

110 submissions: 6 Written, 12 Districting, 92 COI Map
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Written testimony. One commenter expressed that school districts should play a larger role in drafting new district lines, as they are “already mapped and do not overlap.” ([Submission w1227](#)) Partisanship was also a big focus, with commenters, in particular, expressing frustration with the lack of Democratic influence in the state government. Regarding elections before 2020, one commenter stated, “Democrats weren’t even bothering to run in the Senate and Assembly districts in which I live because the gerrymandering was so bad it was next to impossible to win.” ([Submission p1164](#)) Another commenter expressed the desire for smaller towns to be included with the neighboring cities they are most socioeconomically intertwined with. They added that, currently, their small town is split in half, with one side being represented by a state senator based out of a city farther away ([Submission w1189](#)).

Districting plans. This week seven Congressional plans, three State Senate plans, and two State Assembly plans were submitted.

Of the seven Congressional submissions, three were new population-balanced plans and two were endorsements of a previously submitted partial plan.

The new population-balanced plan submissions explained three different approaches to district-drawing. One mapper prioritized competitiveness and split the greater Milwaukee area into northern and southern districts. ([Submission p1275](#)) One mapper explained their approach prioritized



preserving counties, and where counties had to be split, preserving school district boundaries. (Submission p1224) The final new plan submitted this week prioritized preserving county boundaries and COIs, such as "school districts, major watersheds, and journalism media markets." (Submission p1218)

COIs. Thirteen different submitters mentioned school districts, many of which demanded that their school districts not be split between electoral districts. One submitter reported that the two school districts in his proposed community were both split (Submission c1207). We note that if a town is a single school district, that is often given as a reason to keep it together, but at least one commenter proposed the opposite, claiming that a city having multiple school districts is a reason to keep it together: "[My city] does not have its own school district so it's very important for it to have its own city identity." (Submission c1168)

We saw an increase of submissions coming from rural communities or mentioning them, with 10 submissions including the word "rural." Some concerns in rural communities include improving poor internet service, increasing funding for public schools, and supporting farming communities. The dynamics of rural vs. urban communities are visible: one submitter expressed their desire to conserve a "rural feel" by not combining with city territory (Submission c1272); by contrast, another submitter feels that their "urban town" of Grand Chute must be combined with nearby North Appleton (Submission c1274).

Environmental themes continued this week. Regarding green space recreation, one submitter stated, "If we were to hold a rally or community meeting, it would be about coming together to make sure the park is back alive." (Submission c1165) Many other submissions echoed the positive impact that the nearby wildlife, green spaces or bodies of water have on their COIs. Some submissions falling into this category also expressed concerns over the health of their waterways (Submission c1178) (Submission c1181)

One commenter felt that UW Stevens Point was unfairly split. They stated, "[This] is another example of the devious technique of [the separation] of perceived communities which include progressive and moderate voting residents." (Submission c1215)

7 Week 7: July 19 - July 25

90 submissions: 5 Written, 6 Districting, 79 COI Map
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Written testimonies. In this week's written testimonies, commenters criticized gerrymandering and urged for the redistricting process to be non-partisan and fair. One commenter mentioned a news headline, "GOP considers 'cracking' cities" and called on the dilution of Wisconsin Democrats to stop. (Submission w1295) Similar testimonies this week point to a much larger awareness of gerrymandering tactics in this cycle.

Districting plans. This week four partial plans and one complete plan were submitted. Mark Fuller submitted a State Senate and State Assembly plan that follows Wisconsin's constitutional nesting requirement of three assembly districts being wholly contained in a single state senate



district. These maps were endorsed by another submitter from the same area, Daniel Russell, who created a similar State Assembly Plan ([Submission p1422](#)).

The submitter who created a complete congressional district plan “tried to keep counties as whole as possible,” which was also a high priority for Mark Fuller, who referenced their “county-preserving” methodology from an older submission.

COIs. This week 79 COI maps were submitted to the portal. One submitter, Laura Vuchetich, detailed how six suburban Milwaukee Communities identify as the unincorporated “North Shore” and should be preserved by future district plans. They note that these communities’ share safety and emergency services and that “schools, businesses, public services, press all consider it one entity.” ([Submission c1338](#)) This example highlights the importance of considering colloquially known areas with unofficial names and other unincorporated communities when drafting district plans.

Many submissions came from municipalities in Walworth County, a socioeconomically interconnected community. The area’s holistic identity is informed by the location of their school districts and their dependence on each other’s businesses and resources. ([Submission c1496](#))

We continue to see submissions uplifting rural concerns, including broadband access, conservation, and investments in rural education and infrastructure. ([Submission c1377](#)) ([Submission c1498](#)) The desire for sustainability and conservation of natural resources seems to be present across political parties, as was stated in ([Submission c1288](#)). Another submission opposed that some tribal nations in northern Wisconsin are currently detached from the 7th congressional district. ([Submission c1471](#))

One submitter, Paul Sickel of Milwaukee, created two maps representing the state’s “media markets” as different COIs. They believe that legislative districts should preserve these markets. This example highlights the idea of using unconventional data sources to inform the location of COIs. ([Submission c1388](#)) ([Submission c1387](#))

8 Week 8: July 26 - August 1

382 submissions: 8 Written, 21 Districting, 353 COI Map

Written testimony. Multiple written testimonies this week criticized Wisconsin’s partisanship in the redistricting process and its history of gerrymandering. One commenter cited potential biases in the past redistricting process and urged that their town be returned to its historic districts ([Submission w1972](#)). Another stated that the district lines running through their town make it difficult for them to participate in civic activities, highlighting the importance of county and municipality lines being respected whenever possible ([Submission w1910](#)).

Districting plans. This week, three Congressional plans, three State Senate plans, and 15 State Assembly plans were submitted. Of the three Congressional plans, one was complete and population-balanced, though with some continuity gaps ([Submission p1777](#)).

The State Senate submissions include a single-district plan creating a rural district across Racine, Kenosha, and Walworth Counties, and one complete plan ([Submission p1655](#)), ([Submission p1738](#)).



Three partial plans and six single-district plans of southeastern Wisconsin were submitted. Of the single-district plans, three maps showed an identical district in across Whitewater and Fort Atkinson, and one submitter proposed an alternative district across the same area ([Submission p1650](#)), ([Submission p1653](#)).

Two of the submissions represented COIs. One commenter highlighted the importance of preserving Iowa County: "After the 2011 redistricting, my part of Iowa County was gerrymandered into a Dane County district where we have very little representation for our interests as residents in a rural area. Put Barneveld back in Iowa County!" ([Submission p2145](#))

COIs. This week, there was a boom of COI submissions, with many from Milwaukee, specifically from areas north and northwest of Marquette University. This seems to be due to a push by BLOC ([Black Leaders Organizing For Communities](#)), a community organization that represents "the Black community in Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin." Though all of these submissions followed a set structure and used similar demographics, issues and businesses to describe their communities, they effectively emphasized unifying issues and their common need for representation. Submitters described their COIs as diverse, low-income and as having a large sector of youth. The issues that were consistently mentioned were uncleanliness, poorly maintained roads, lack of recreational activities and programs for children, policing, and car theft. Examples include ([Submission c1736](#)), ([Submission c1821](#)), ([Submission c2397](#)), and ([Submission c1907](#)).

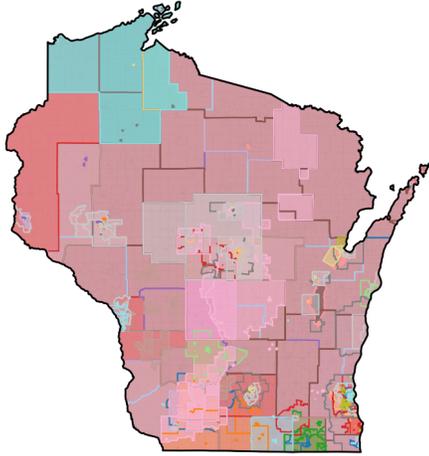
Two submissions ([Submission 2115](#)), ([Submission 2144](#)) emphasize that Juneau and Adams Counties should not be split up, citing ongoing conservation projects and the shared working-class economy. The importance of conservation and the large role that indigenous communities play in it was echoed by others as well ([Submission 2168](#)).

Submitters continue to express their COI's heavy identification with their school district and ask that they not be split up between districts ([Submission 1832](#)). One submitter states that the Milwaukee Public School system is under-resourced because of "the state's school funding formula reliant on property taxes/values." ([Submission 1936](#))

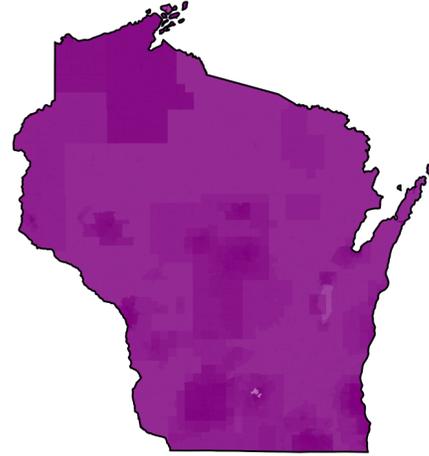
Lorna Young, member of the AAPI Wisconsin Executive Committee, submitted several maps of different Asian sub-communities (such as Hmong, Lao, Desi and Filipinx) in Milwaukee ([Submission c1997](#)), ([Submission c2009](#)), ([Submission c2000](#)), ([Submission c2011](#)). They stated that their maps were created with input from knowledgeable AAPI community leaders and highlighted the distinctions in these groups' histories. They believe that "the 'Asian' designation in the US Census/ACS is not disaggregated to give visibility to the specific AAPI sub-communities"

Submitters from Iowa County criticized the last redistricting cycle for splitting up the county into three districts, some of which brought up concerns over gerrymandering ([Submission 1694](#)), ([Submission 2145](#)). Submitters from this more rural region feel that their needs and interests are inadequately represented when paired with urban areas.

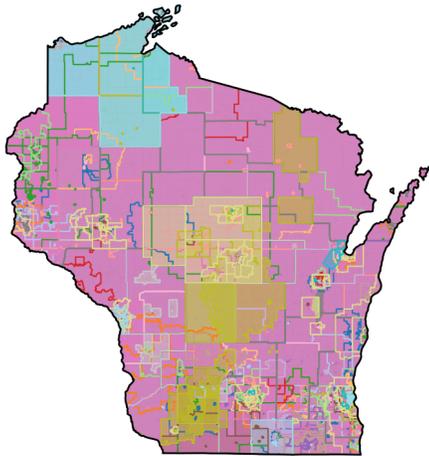
9 COI coverage maps



Week 8 COI Submissions (560 areas)



Week 8 COI Heatmap

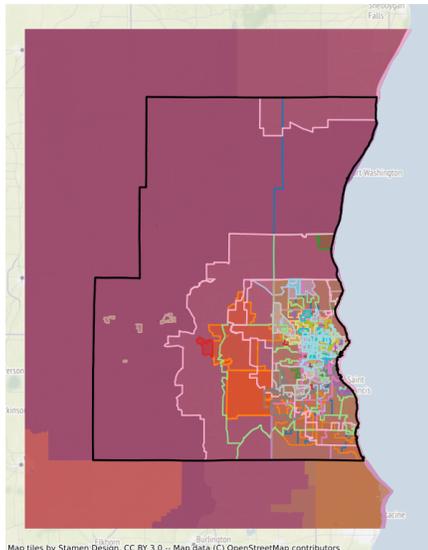


Cumulative COI Submissions (1004 areas)

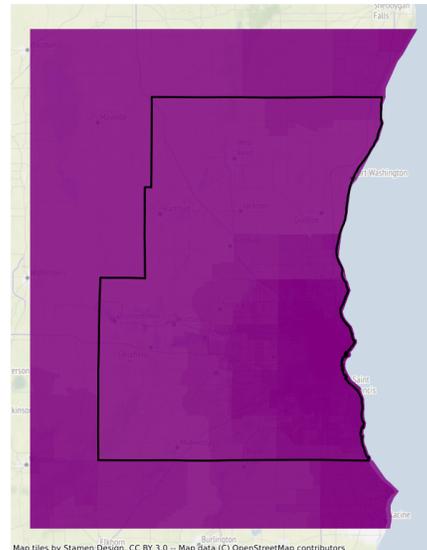


Cumulative COI Heatmap

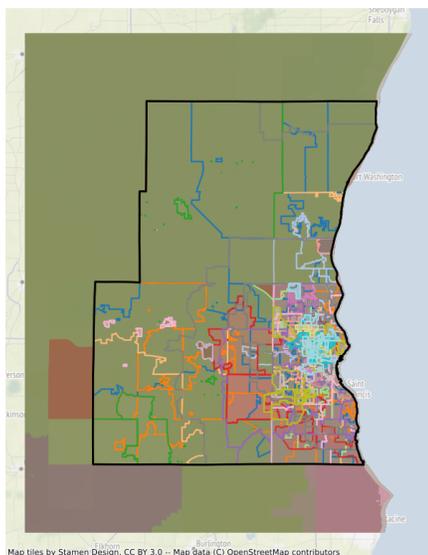
Figure 1. Wisconsin Communities of Interest



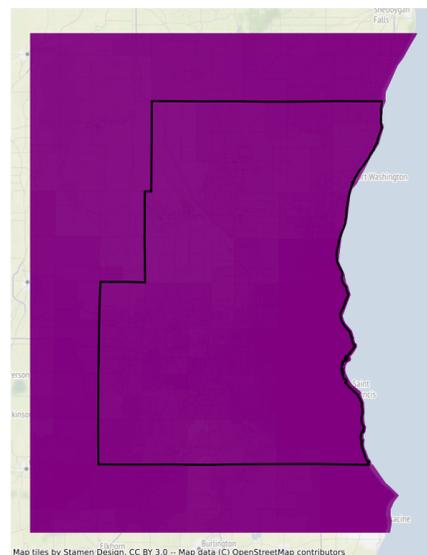
Week 8 COI Submissions (328 areas)



Week 8 COI Heatmap

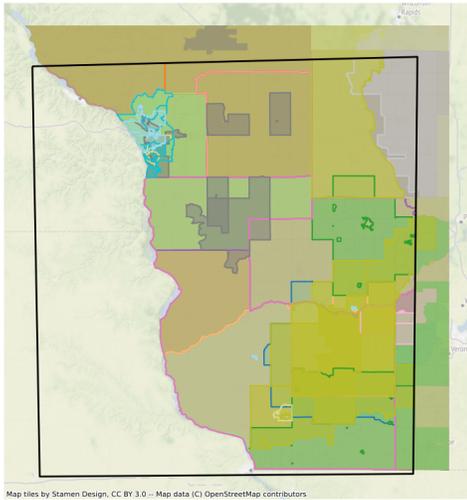


Cumulative COI Submissions (451 areas)

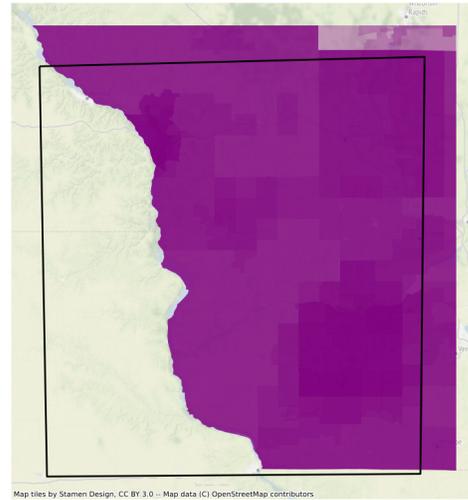


Cumulative COI Heatmap

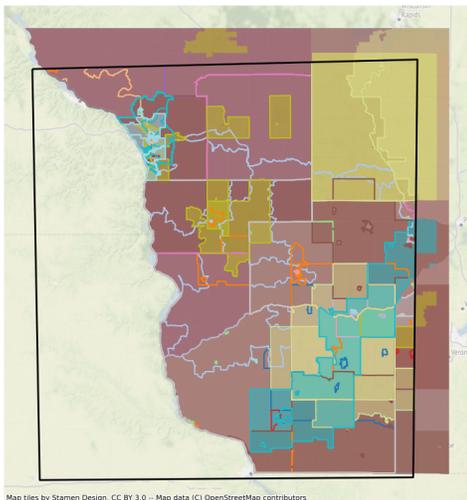
Figure 2. Greater Milwaukee Communities of Interest



Week 8 COI Submissions (72 areas)



Week 8 COI Heatmap

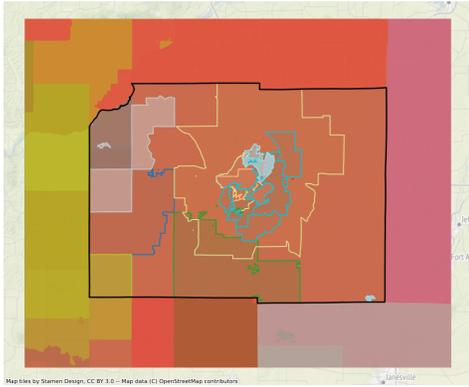


Cumulative COI Submissions (114 areas)

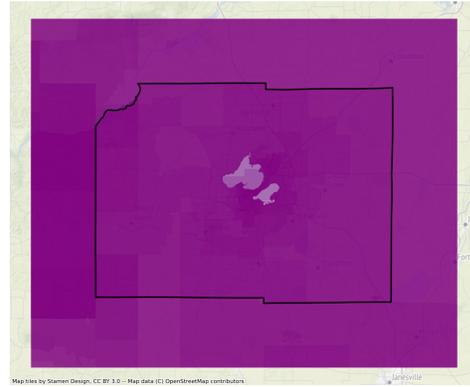


Cumulative COI Heatmap

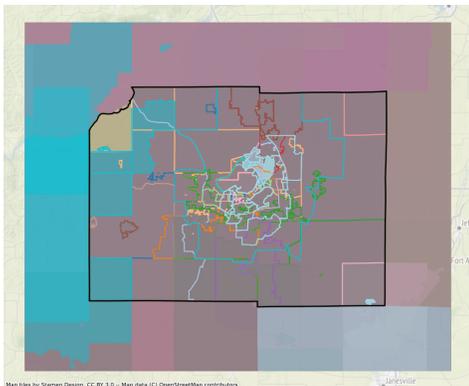
Figure 3. Southwest Wisconsin Communities of Interest



Week 8 COI Submissions (52 areas)



Week 8 COI Heatmap

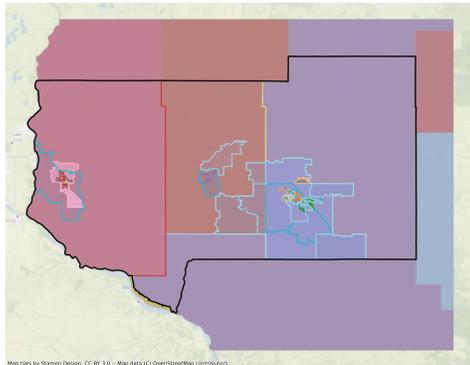


Cumulative COI Submissions (133 areas)

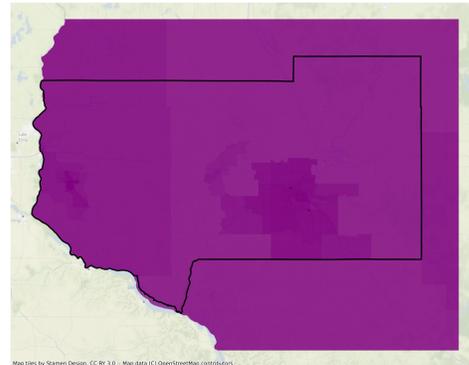


Cumulative COI Heatmap

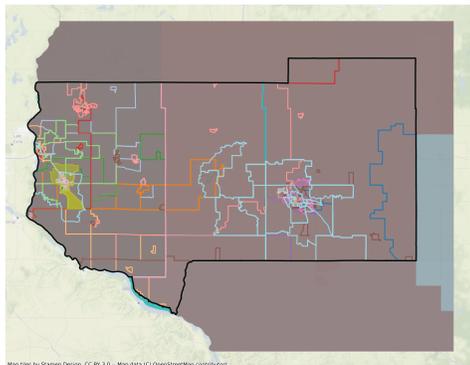
Figure 4. Dane County Communities of Interest



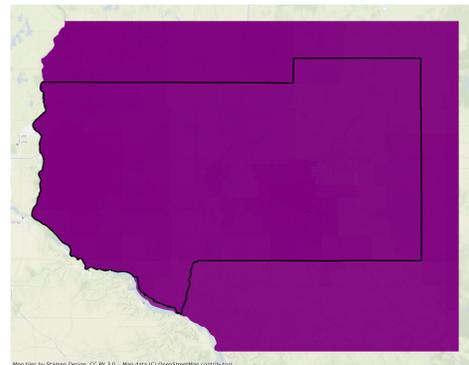
Week 8 COI Submissions (56 areas)



Week 8 COI Heatmap



Cumulative COI Submissions (120 areas)



Cumulative COI Heatmap

Figure 5. Riverfalls - Eau Claire Communities of Interest