

From: [JP Theberge](#)
To: [COSD, Redistricting](#)
Subject: [External] Re: Board Letter from Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council
Date: Thursday, December 2, 2021 8:27:49 AM
Importance: High

Hello I want to confirm that the Town Council letter was downloaded from the link below and distributed. Thanks!

On Dec 1, 2021, at 6:56 PM, JP Theberge <jp@culturalledge.net> wrote:

Dear Commissioners:

Attached please find a letter from the Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Town Council board along with a GIS file that delineates our community. Thanks for your consideration.

- JP Theberge, Chair

DUE TO LARGE FILE SIZE AND ATTACHED MAPS, DOWNLOAD HERE:

[EFHG town council redistricting letter.pdf](#)

<EFHGEV Community 2.kml>



2021 Board Members

JP Theberge, Chair
Scott Sutherland, Vice-Chair
Sheri Powers, Treasurer
Debbie O'Neill, Secretary
Eric Anderson
Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin
Jon Dummer
Melanie Fallon
Gregory White

December 1, 2021

David Bame, Chair
San Diego County Independent Redistricting Committee

Esteemed Commissioners:

We are the Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Town Council, a community organization representing the residents and interests of the northernmost rural unincorporated communities within the San Dieguito Planning Area for over 40 years. We are asking the redistricting commission for two important considerations which we detail further below:

- Do not split up the historically and jurisdictionally united neighborhoods/towns of Elfin Forest, Harmony Grove and Eden Valley. We have provided a GIS file with the actual boundaries of this community for your reference.
- Do not gerrymander us awkwardly into an east county district with which we have no connection. We are a north county / coastal community and would like to continue to be represented by a supervisor in a coastal or north county district as has historically been the case.

Background and Character of Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove

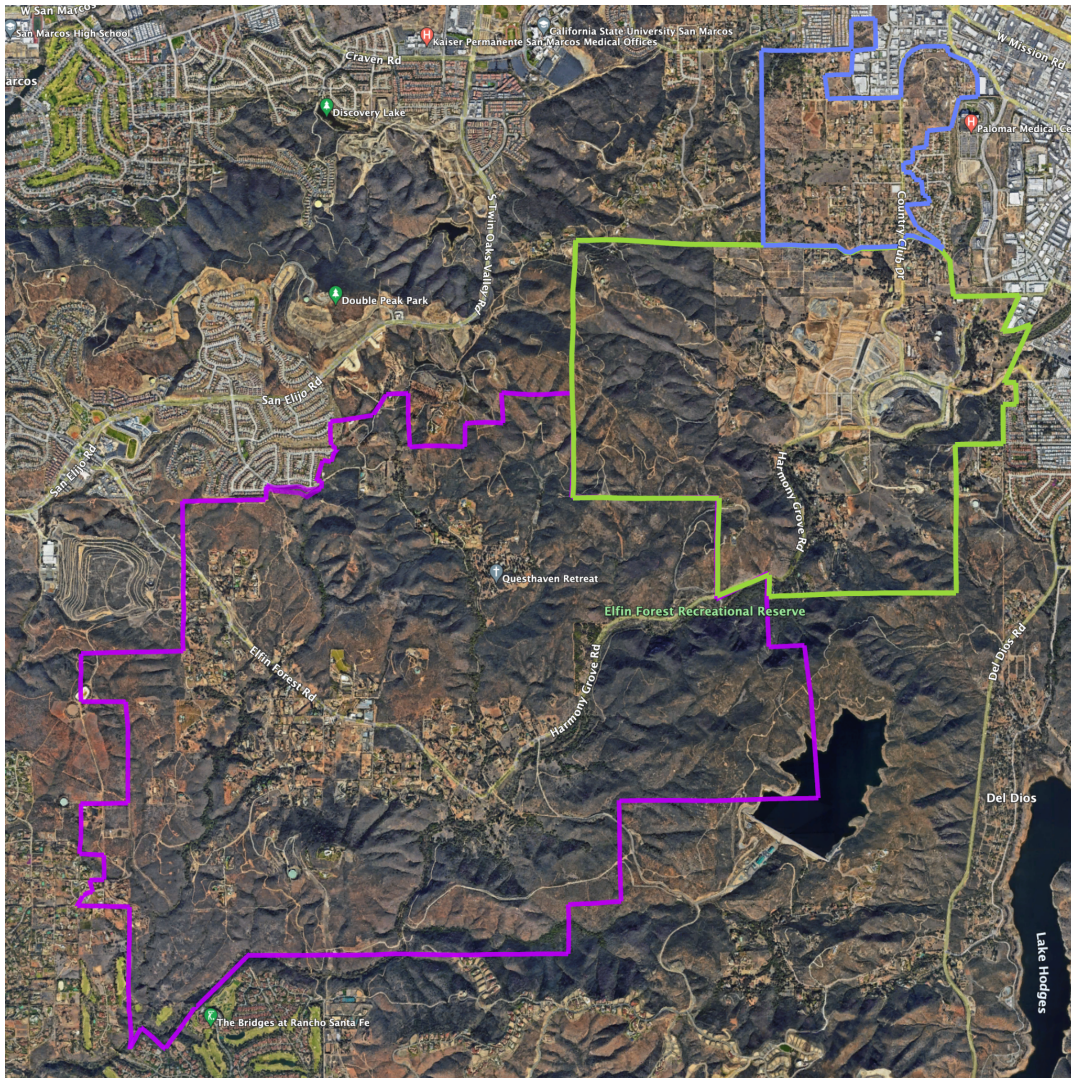
The Town Council has been in existence for over 45 years and is recognized by the County of San Diego Land Use and Environment Group and embodied in an approved community plan document¹. Its members are elected every two years by a vote of members of the Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest communities. The communities of Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove are longstanding communities in the unincorporated portion of San Diego County. Harmony Grove history goes back to 1896 with the founding of the Harmony Grove Spiritualist Association, which includes one of the oldest churches in San Diego County. It recently burned down during the Coco's Fire. Elfin Forest's origins date back to homesteaders in the early 1900s and the Volunteer Fire Station and Town Council was established in 1940. The Town Council incorporated Harmony Grove into its boundaries in the late 1990s and has since represented both adjacent communities which are linked through common values such as conservation, rural environment, independence and a rural environment.

¹ County of San Diego, The Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove portion of the San Dieguito Community Plan.

One of the main concerns for residents in this community is the prevalence of wildfire; both towns are located largely in Very High Fire Severity Zones and have seen dozens of wildfires throughout their history including the Harmony Grove Fire which destroyed nearly 100 homes and killed a resident. Most recently, in 2014, the Coco's Fire destroyed over 30 homes in Harmony Grove alone. The community values its rural nature, open space and biological resources. The community is largely rural in nature, although we do have a small village center. The community includes a number of commercial farming operations, equestrian facilities as well as many private ranches and a wide variety of animal keeping practices (goats, horses, alpacas, sheep to name a few).

Geography

Our community comprises approximately 3,300 people and includes both rural and suburban residents. Within the unincorporated San Dieguito Planning area of San Diego County, the Elfin Forest town/neighborhood (purple line on the map below) stretches from Rancho Santa Fe (as far south as the Bridges at Rancho Santa Fe) adjacent to the borders of Encinitas and San Marcos to the west and north. Just northeast of Elfin Forest is the Harmony Grove town/neighborhood (green line on the map below) which borders the City of San Marcos to the west and the City of Escondido to the east. The last, northernmost remaining town/neighborhood is Eden Valley (blue line) which stretches north up Country Club Road from Harmony Grove and borders the City of Escondido to the north and east and the City of San Marcos to the West. These three neighborhoods/towns comprise the northernmost unincorporated rural communities in the San Dieguito Planning area. I've attached GIS files that mark these boundaries.



We are a united community

Aside from being represented by one Town Council, our mostly rural community is represented by the San Dieguito Planning Group as well as by one supervisor in District 5. We are in the same County Service Areas (CSA 107 and CSA 17) and the same fire district (Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District). We have shared community events including our annual Fourth of July Picnic and Parade (45 years running) as well as our annual Keepin' it Rural Trail Run and Festival (this Sunday at the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve)². We share a Fire Safe Council (the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove FSC) as well as a Community Foundation which gives grants to Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest residents to improve their communities. We are mostly within one water district (Olivenhain Municipal Water District). We advocate for our community to our elected officials and County staff as one united rural community.

There are outside interests that seek to divide our community for cynical reasons. These outside interests do not represent our community that has been united for over one hundred years.

² The Keepin' it Rural 5k 10k Trail Run and Festival at the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve, www.letskeepit Rural.com

Redistricting concerns #1 - split maps

Our community is small and not often taken into consideration by elected officials and the general public due to our small numbers. As such, we take extraordinary measures to ensure our voices are heard. Our influence depends on having a united community that is able to exert pressures on our elected officials to ensure our needs are met whether through community input, litigation, petitions or other grassroots activities. Maps shared with the redistricting commission earlier this year showed our community split into two. Maps 13a and 14 had a large portion of Elfin Forest in one district with Harmony Grove in another. We strenuously object to that.

We respectfully ask that the commission take extraordinary efforts to keep our community together. We will vigorously oppose any map that splits our community into two districts.

Redistricting concerns #2 - we are a North County and Coastal community not an East County community.

Through our outreach efforts, residents have indicated that they feel more comfortable being associated with either a north county district (similar to our current District 5) or a coastal district (similar to the current district 3) for the following reasons:

- The eastern half of our community is adjacent to and shares a large boundary with Escondido. Many of us shop and socialize and pick up our mail in Escondido. Our zip code is 92029 (Escondido).
- The western half of our community is immediately adjacent to San Marcos, Encinitas and Rancho Santa Fe and are linked via values, schools and businesses to our neighbors in San Elijo Hills, Olivenhain and the City of Encinitas.
- We are connected to Rancho Santa Fe via a shared fire district, a shared planning group and shared concerns about fire and sprawl development.

We have zero connection with East County and would ask the commission not place us in that district. The awkward boundaries that have been created to put us in an east county district are reminiscent of gerrymandering. We have historically always been linked to North County (from 2010 on due to redistricting) and to the Coastal district prior to that.

We respectfully ask the commission to remove our community from any east county district as currently proposed. Given our small numbers, this should be easily accommodated. We will vigorously oppose any efforts to place us in an East County district as shown in Maps 13a and 14.

Redistricting concerns #3 - special interests appear to be attempting to manipulate the maps to place us in a district we do not wish to be in.

Our community is not well known. The only groups advocating for us would be community related groups or allies who are supportive of our cause. We have read recent numerous comments from outside interests and one anonymous group in particular, the Unity Map Coalition, with no clear affiliation (and no web presence) seems to be keen to place Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove into an east county district against our wishes. We have not been reached out to by any coalition. In most maps, this would create an unusual and awkward carved out portion that makes little sense in the context of the surrounding districts (the coastal district or the north county district).

We are not affiliated nor connected in any way to the Unity Map Coalition nor chambers of commerce or EDCs and question why they might be attempting to manipulate the system to go against the community's wishes. Please disregard any input regarding our community from these groups.

Potential mapping preferences

We have no particular preference for a specific map as long as our community's wishes are respected:

- We ask that our community be kept together which means Elfin Forest, Harmony Grove and Eden Valley are within the same district.
- We ask that we not be placed in any iteration of an East County district (District 3 in Map 13 or District 2 in Map 14).
- Consider consolidating our community into the coastal district (if practical) or, if infeasible, the North County district (similar to current D5).

We have attached to this document, various potential scenarios given the maps up for consideration. Whichever map the commission ends up selecting should be easily modified to respect the wishes of our community of interest.

Thank you for your consideration,

JP Theberge

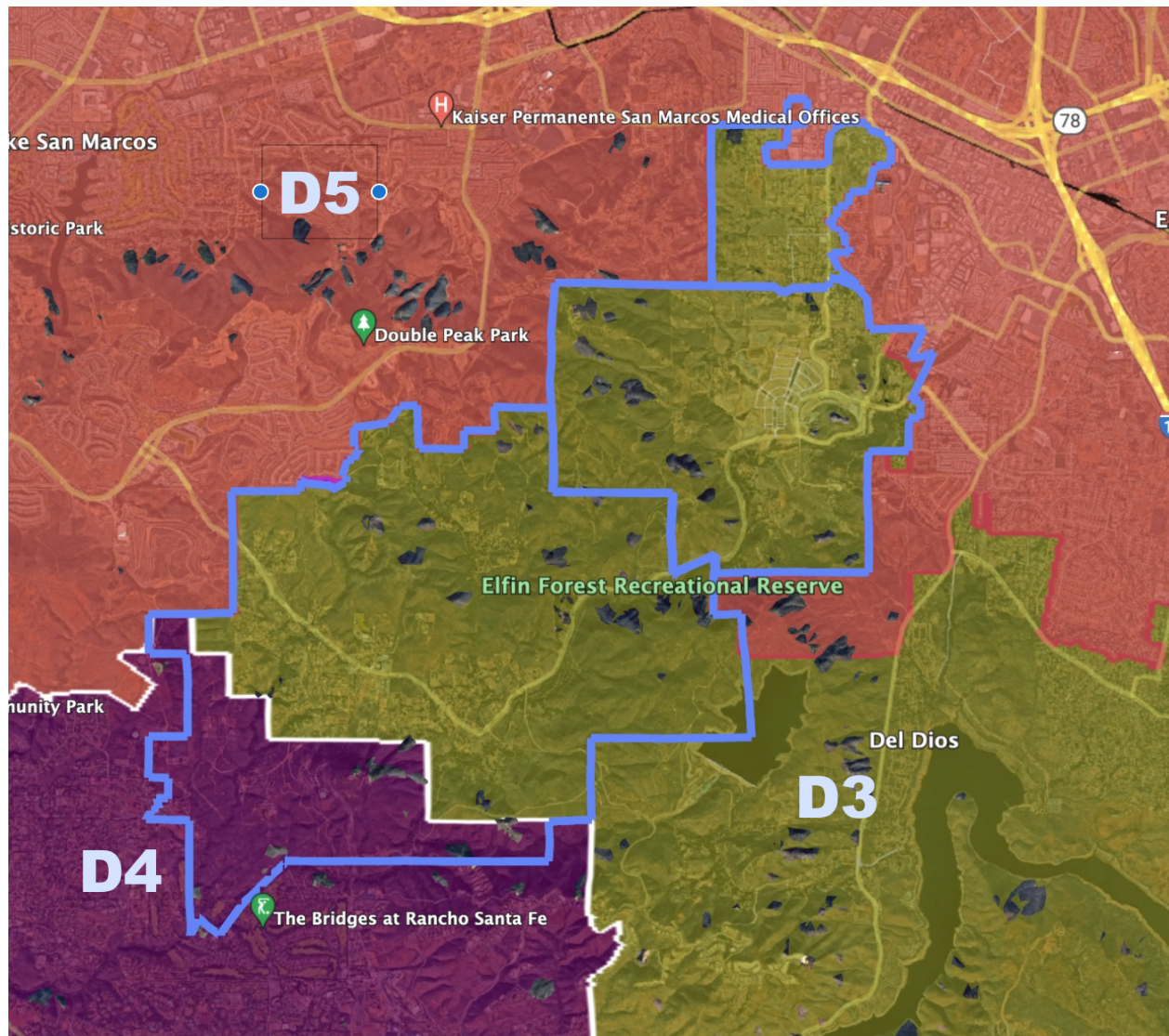
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP Theberge', written in a cursive style.

Chairman, Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Town Council

Attachments

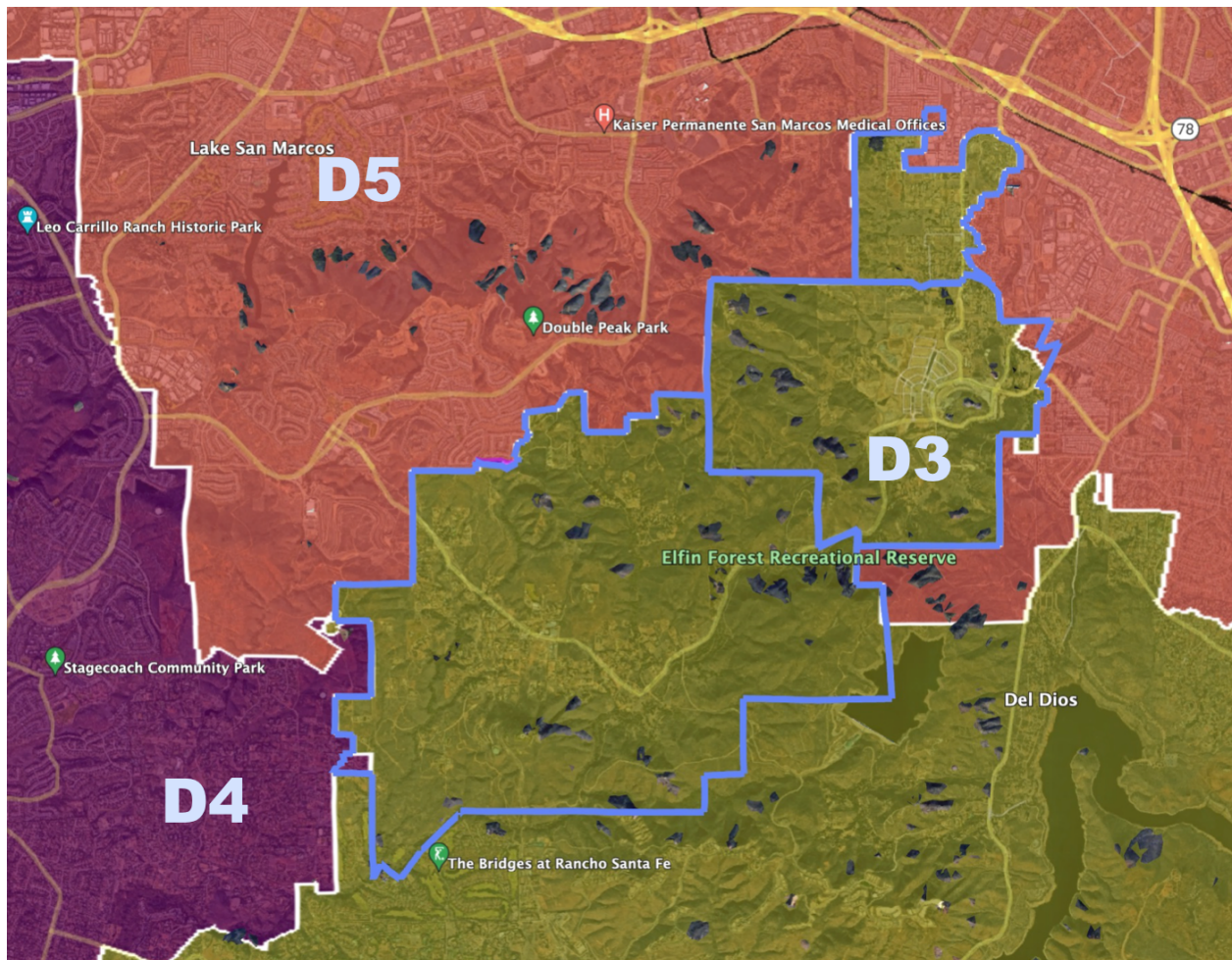
Map 13a v.1

- Combine our community (blue boundary).
- Shift our entire community into District 4 consolidating with the Elfin Forest and RSF portions (which also happen to be in the San Dieguito Planning Area and in same fire district).
- If infeasible, move the entire community into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from District 3 (east county).



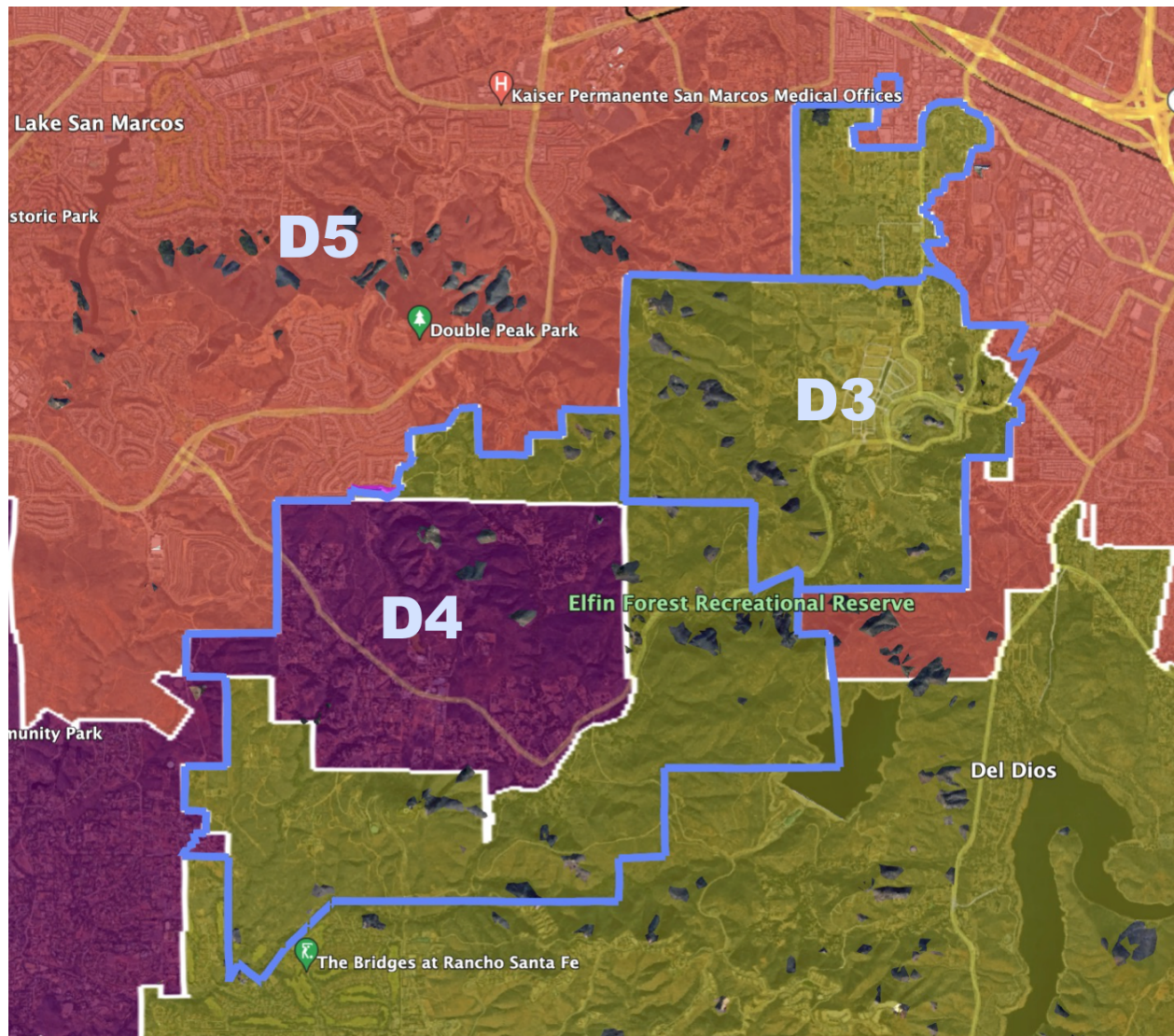
Map 13a v.1-6

- Combine our community (blue boundary).
- Move community into District 4.
- If infeasible, move into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from east county District 3.



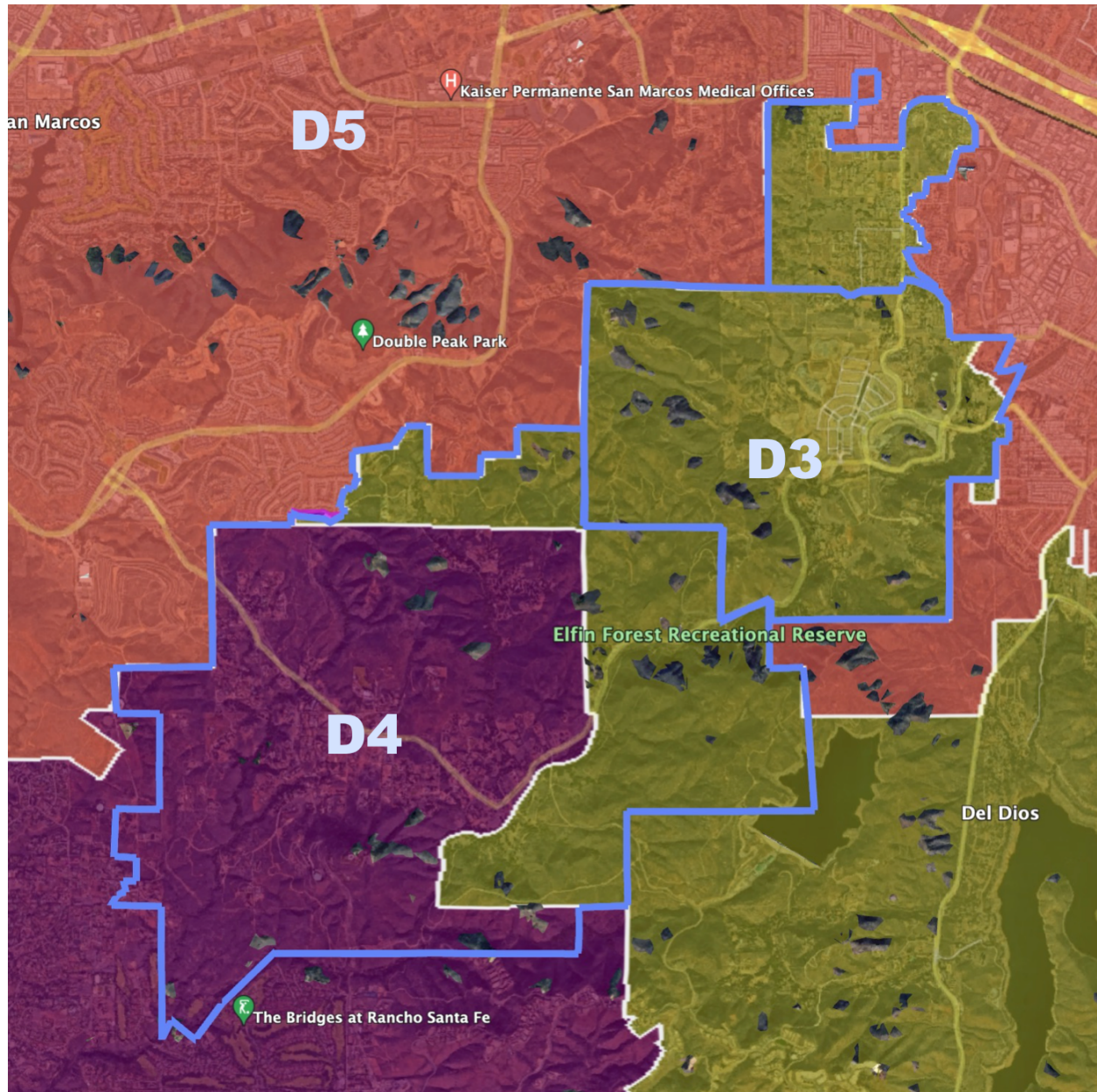
Map 13a v.2-4

- Consolidate our community (blue boundary).
- Shift community into District 4 which already has a substantial portion of Elfin Forest.
- If infeasible, move the community into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from east county District 3.



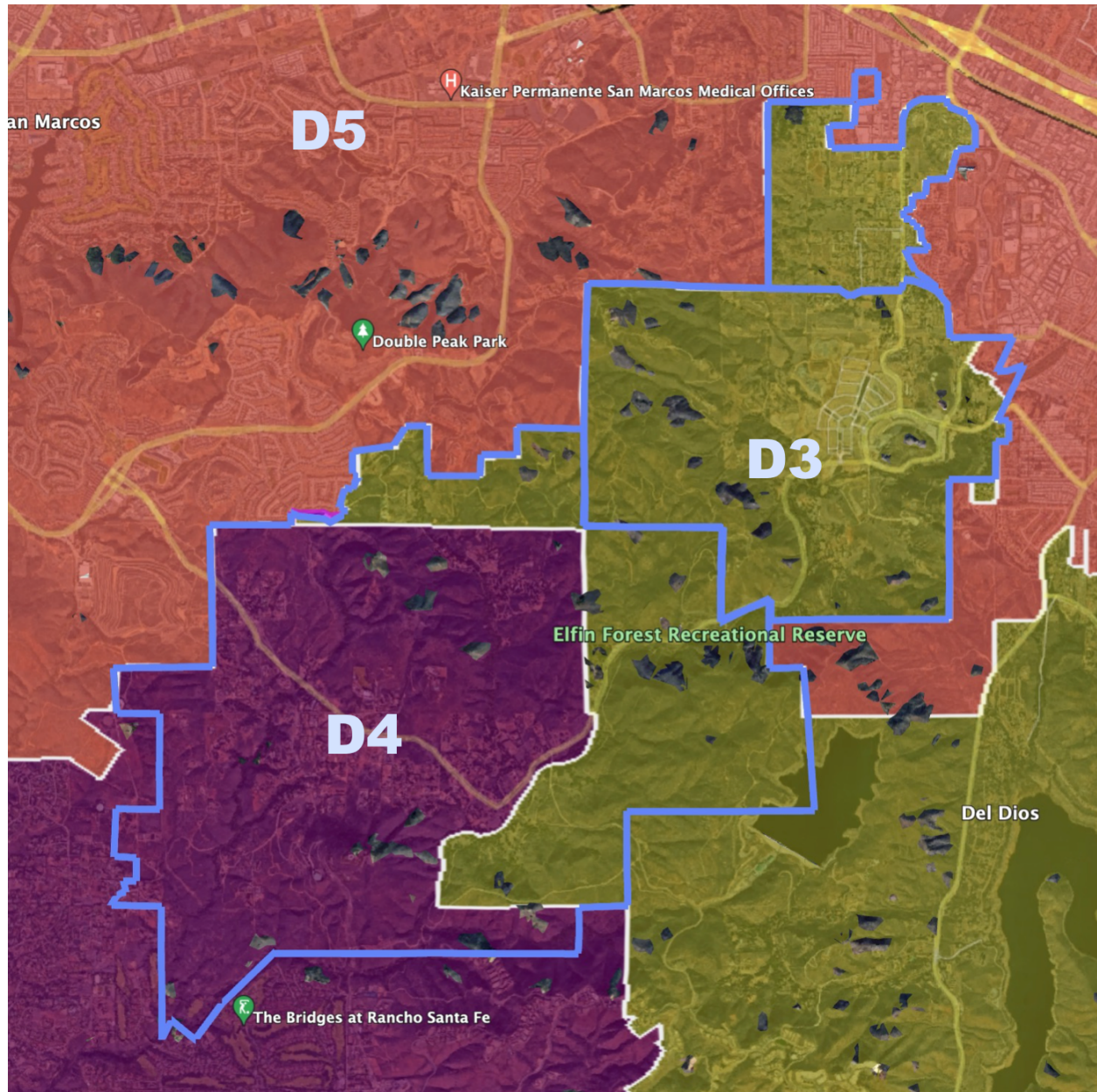
Map 13a v.5

- Consolidate our community (blue boundary).
- Shift community into District 4 which already has a substantial portion in District 4. This would place most of the San Dieguito Planning Area into D4.
- If infeasible, move all into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from east county District 3.



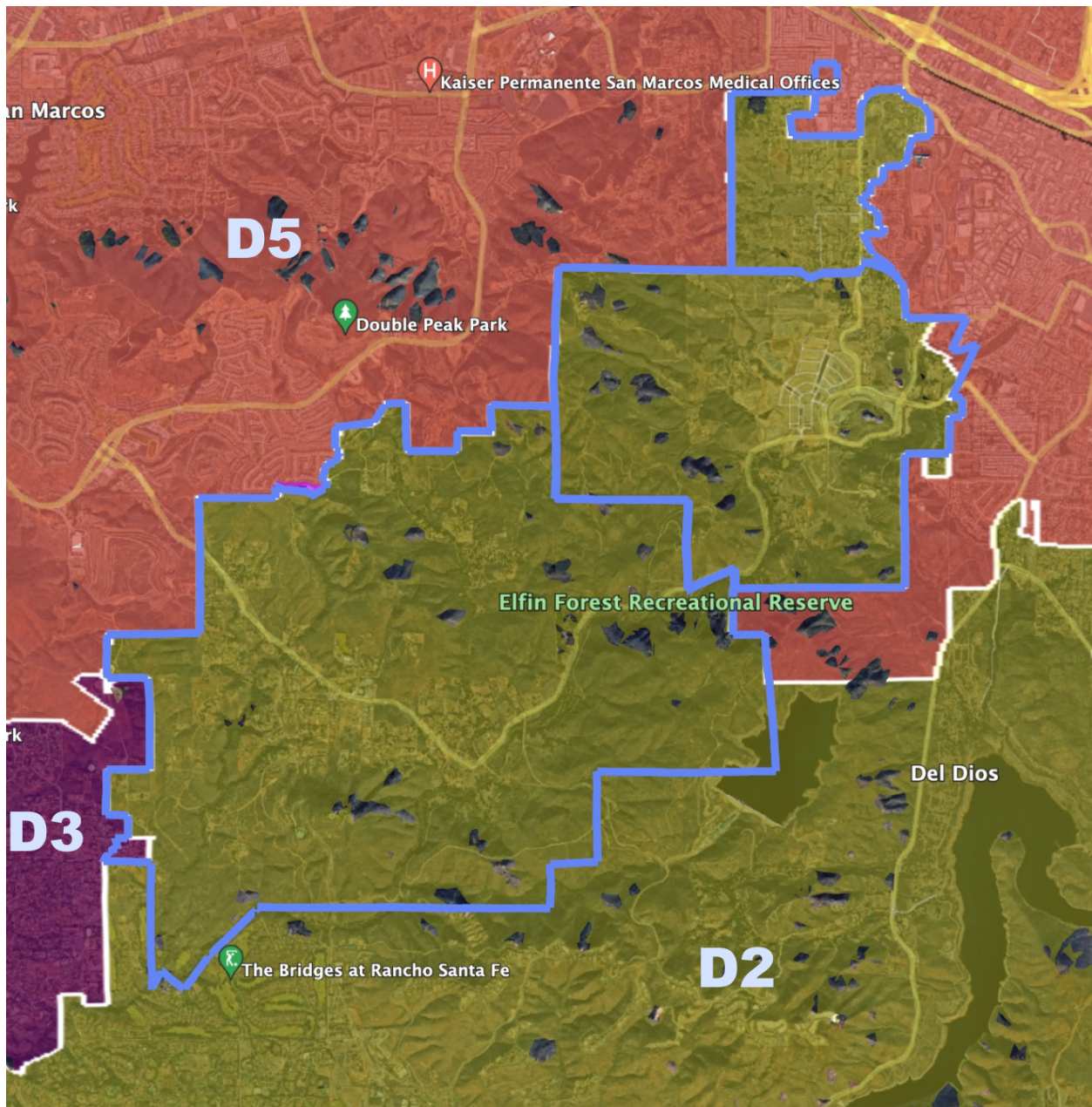
Map 13a v.6 (similar to v.5)

- Consolidate our community (blue boundary).
- Shift community into District 4 (coastal) which already has a substantial portion in District 4.
- If infeasible, move all into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from east county District 3.



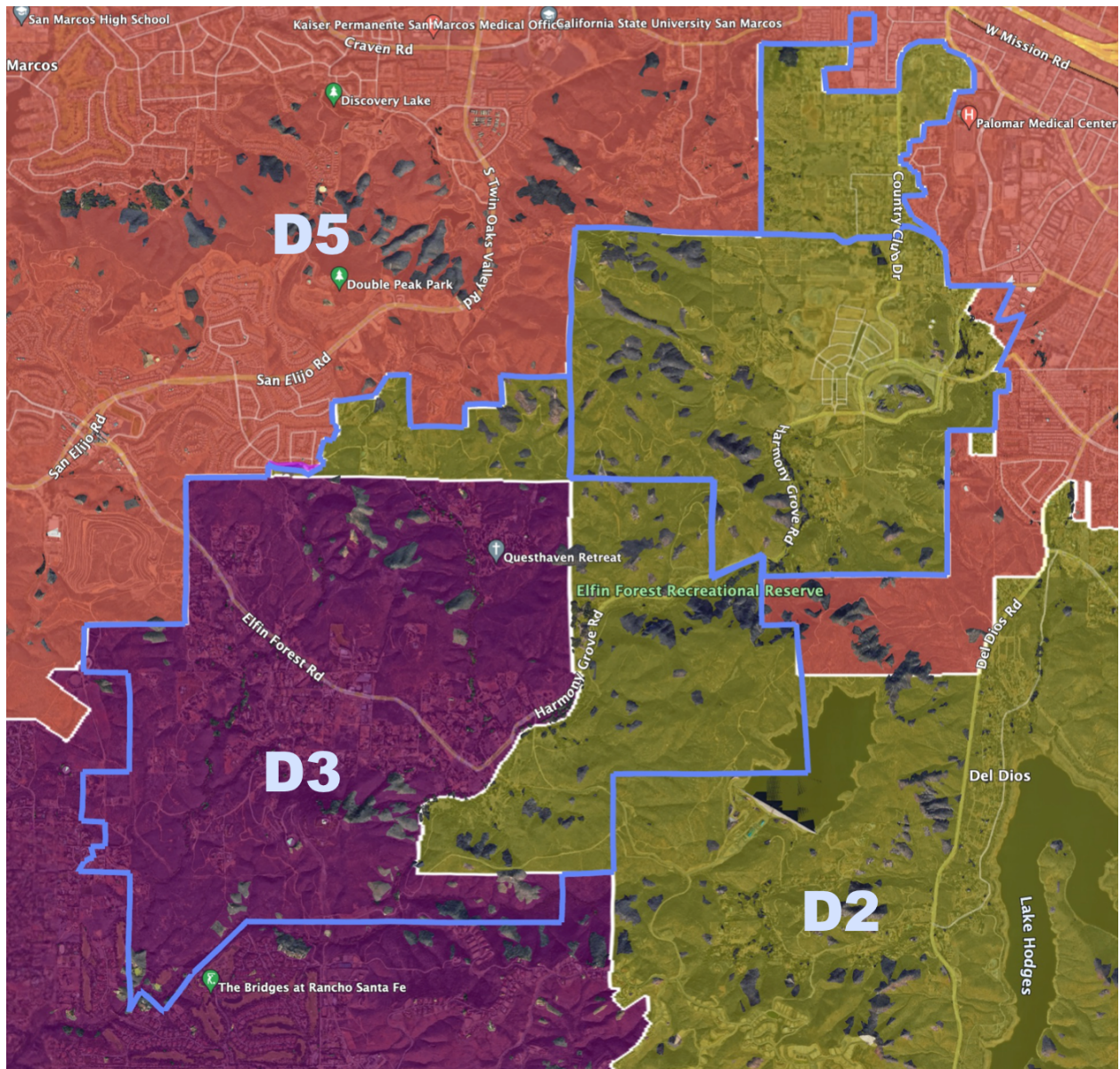
Map 14 v.1

- Consolidate our community (blue boundary).
- Shift community into District 3 (coastal).
- Alternatively, move all into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from District 2 (east county).



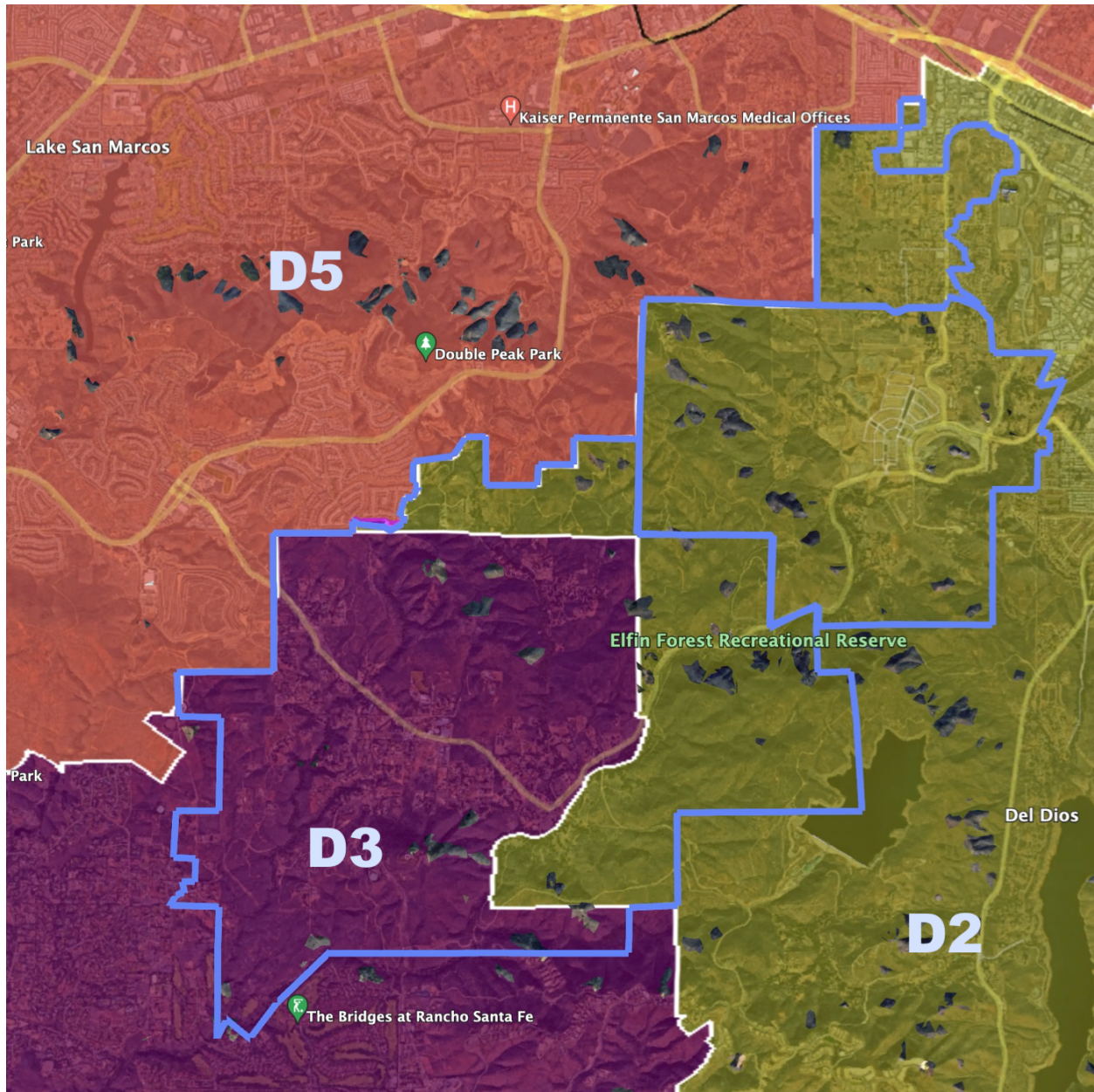
Map 14 v.2

- Consolidate our community (blue boundary).
- Shift community into District 3 which already has a substantial portion in it.
- If infeasible, move all into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from District 2 (east county).



Map 14 v.3

- Consolidate our community (blue boundary).
- Shift community into District 3 which already has a substantial portion of our community in it.
- If infeasible, move all into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from District 2 (east county).



Map 14 v.4

- Consolidate our community (blue boundary).
- Shift community into District 3 which already has a substantial portion of our community in it.
- If infeasible, move all into District 5 (north county).
- Remove from District 2 (east county).

