



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Winners Announced for First Web-based Public Redistricting Contest Held in Philadelphia

458 registered FixPhillyDistricts.com users created over 1,200 plans. 31 plans submitted for judging, prizes, and a chance to be published in local news media.

Philadelphia, PA, September 7, 2011 – On August 5, [Azavea](#), a geospatial analysis (GIS) software development company announced the launch of FixPhillyDistricts.com (<http://fixphillydistricts.com/>), the first online public redistricting competition ever held in Philadelphia. The contest, the result of efforts led by [NewsWorks](#), the [Philadelphia Daily News](#), [Philly.com](#), the [Penn Project for Civic Engagement](#), and Azavea, ended on Sunday, August 28 at 11:59pm ET. Citizens from all over the country and as far away as North Carolina created over 1,200 plans. 72 legally valid plans were submitted to online leaderboards while 31 plans were submitted for judging. Judges, Executive Director of News and Civic Dialogue Chris Satullo of WHYY radio, Editorial Page Editor Sandy Shea of the Philadelphia Daily News, Doron Taussig of Philly.com's *It's Our Money*, and Robert Cheetham and Abby Fretz of Azavea, have announced the winners:

1. John Attanasio – Overall Competition Winner
2. Cris Aguilar – Equipopulation Category Winner
3. Frederic Murphy - Compactness Category Winner
4. Steve Horton – Ward Splits Category Winner
5. Gary Zielonis – Honorable Mention
6. Bonan Li - Honorable Mention
7. Andy Toy (Asian Pacific Americans for Progress team) - Honorable Mention

The top scoring plan will receive a \$500 cash prize. The 3 category winners will receive Amazon Kindles. All winners will receive a chance to present their plans before City Council in an upcoming public hearing.

The main goals of the contest were to:

- Enable the public to learn about the redistricting process
- Encourage civic engagement in the redistricting effort by providing tools for the public to draw their own valid council district plans.



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- Demonstrate that a non-partisan and open, public process based upon objective criteria can produce fair, legal council districts in Philadelphia.

Participants took these goals to heart and produced, as individuals or as teams, varied multitude of plans. While some of the winners had clearly had some experience with redistricting activities, the majority of the plans came from regular citizens, most of whom have no background in redistricting or geographic information systems (GIS). FixPhillyDistricts.com automatically calculated contiguity, compactness, equipopulation, and demographics statistics as users built their plans, which made it easier for people to use the system. FixPhillyDistricts.com was powered by DistrictBuilder (<http://www.azavea.com/districtbuilder>), the open source software Azavea developed in collaboration with leading redistricting experts at the Public Mapping Project (<http://publicmapping.org/>). DistrictBuilder has already supported public redistricting efforts for the states of Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, Arizona and Virginia.

Along with their plans, participants submitted narratives that explained their motivations and thinking. Participants' concerns ranged from trying to avoid splitting racial and ethnic communities, to respecting natural boundaries, and making districts more compact. John Attanasio, overall winner, explains, "While focusing on minimizing ward splits ... I also sought to avoid splitting racial and ethnic communities. My plan thus has one district with a majority Hispanic voting age population. It also has four districts with a majority Black voting age population." Cris Aguilar, Equipopulation category winner, states that in drawing his plan, he "has sought to preserve the geographic integrity of neighborhoods while respecting natural boundaries, such as major arteries, creeks and the Schuylkill River ... and make most districts more compact."

The Fix Philly District partners are thrilled by the level of enthusiasm and public participation that the contest generated, especially in the middle of August amidst vacations, an East Coast earthquake and a hurricane. Philadelphia has some of the most convoluted city council districts in the country according to the results of nation-wide redistricting research that Azavea conducted in 2006 and 2010 (<http://www.azavea.com/research/company-research/>). Poorly drawn districts lead to poor representation of constituent interests and damage the basic fabric of democracy. An initiative like FixPhillyDistricts.com and other similar contests nation-wide demonstrate that not only are citizens interested in the redistricting process, they are sufficiently invested and motivated to spend many hours drawing high quality plans that would pass legal muster in any city.

For images and narratives of the winning plans, visit: <http://fixphillydistricts.com/winners.html>



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About Azavea - Azavea is an award-winning geospatial analysis (GIS) software development firm specializing in the creation of location-based web and mobile software as well as geospatial analysis services. Azavea is a [certified B Corporation](#) that applies geographic data and technology to promote the emergence of more [dynamic, vibrant, and sustainable communities](#). Each of Azavea's projects, products and pro bono engagements showcases this commitment. For more information, <http://www.azavea.com>.

About NewsWorks - NewsWorks is the online home of WHY? News and its growing network of journalism partners. This public media service covers the Philadelphia region, Delaware and South Jersey, with a focus on regional issues, neighborhoods, health and science, and arts. For more information, <http://www.newsworks.org/>

About Penn Project for Civic Engagement - The Penn Project for Civic Engagement develops, implements and facilitates public deliberations on important policy issues. We bring stakeholders together to identify and act on problems in their community, business or organization. Our structured dialogues unite stakeholder values with expert knowledge and leadership to produce momentum for real solutions. For more information, <http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pcel/programs/ppce>

About Philadelphia Daily News - <http://phillydailynews.newspaperdirect.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>

About Philly.com - <http://www.philly.com/>

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