



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0968, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Yvonne Shu 565-1739, Christel Querijero 565-7071

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

9:00 A.M. Public Hearing on the 2021 County Redistricting Process

Recommended Action:

Conduct a public hearing to receive an update on the 2021 redistricting process and 2020 Census data

Executive Summary:

The County's redistricting process has begun. Six public meetings have occurred prior to today's meeting, and public input and draft maps are starting to come in. This is in anticipation of the availability of the official California census data, expected in late September. Draft maps will be based on both the census data and public input received by October 15; district boundaries must be approved by December 15, 2021. This item will update the Board on redistricting activity to date. The County's redistricting consultant will provide a verbal update on the 2020 California census data, as the data were not available in time to be incorporated into this summary.

Discussion:

Every 10 years, the United States Census Bureau conducts a nationwide census to enumerate the country's population. The Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the California Elections Code mandate that the Board of Supervisors adjust supervisorial district boundaries within the County to reflect the new census data and to keep supervisorial districts substantially equal in population. The 2020 Census data is significantly delayed this year due to the pandemic. While the initial federal data was released on August 12th, the official California data had not been released at the time of this writing. The California Elections Code prescribes extensive communications ahead of the adoption of new district boundaries that reflect the 2020 Census data; these boundaries must be approved no later than December 15, 2021.

Redistricting Consultant

On February 11, 2021, a competitive bid process, or request for proposal, was released for redistricting services. An evaluation committee comprised of three County staff evaluated five submissions in accordance with County procurement policy. National Demographics Corporation (NDC) was selected to support the County throughout the redistricting process based on the following main criteria: 1) demonstrated ability to perform the services described; 2) experience, qualifications and expertise; 3) quality of work as verified by references; 4) cost relative to the scope of services; and 5) demonstrated history of providing similar services to comparable entities.

NDC's contract, with total costs not to exceed \$120,000, includes the following main elements in its scope: providing redistricting training and support to the County's Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC); preparation and facilitation of eight virtual meetings; provision and facilitation of mapping tools; communications support as needed through their partner firm, Tripepi-Smith; and assurance that the County is adhering to the requirements outlined in the California Elections Code (sections 21500-21509) and the principles outlined in the California FAIR MAPS of 2019 (Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions Act). The County selected the most robust suite of tools offered by NDC to solicit public input, which includes two tools for deeper exploration of demographic data (i.e., Interactive Review Map, Story Map), paper maps, and two mapping tools (i.e., DistrictR, Caliper Maptitude).

Website

The County established separate [English <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Policy-Grants-and-Special-Projects/2021-Redistricting/>](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Policy-Grants-and-Special-Projects/2021-Redistricting/) and [Spanish <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Policy-Grants-and-Special-Projects/2021-Redistribucion/>](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Policy-Grants-and-Special-Projects/2021-Redistribucion/) websites for the redistricting effort. Per California Elections Code, section 21508(g), the County's redistricting website must be maintained for at least 10 years after the adoption of new supervisorial district boundaries. The websites require frequent updates, which also means frequent requests of the County's Information Systems Department (ISD). Most website content requires translation service through outside contractors. For example, video tutorials for two of the mapping tools, which were available only in English, now have Spanish voiceovers and subtitles. Every update is made twice - in English and Spanish, and includes recordings of ARC meetings, meeting materials, and redistricting flyers. Once draft maps are produced, they will also be posted on the websites.

Outreach

NDC's partner firm, Tripepi-Smith, has supported the outreach effort by writing content for social media posts, creating flyers, and creating two short videos on redistricting and mapping tools. They also fully support the logistics of the ARC meetings. In addition, they did an initial round of telephone calls to local organizations to gather interest in receiving redistricting information, resulting in a "subscribed" email list and even an interview of the ARC Vice Chair on KBBF's program, Líderes del Futuro.

The County's Communications team has supported the redistricting effort by posting regularly on various social media, providing recording support during the ARC meetings, updating and creating flyers and other collateral, and coordinating a redistricting town hall. "Boosted" social media posts, at an extra cost, ensure that those posts are at the top of a viewer's list; these sponsored posts have been used prior to the particular meetings, such as the September 1st meeting focused on training. Additionally, the Communications team has helped to place radio ads on local radio stations and to place redistricting videos in grocery stores that cater to the County's Latinx population.

Many ARC commissioners are making presentations and spreading the word on redistricting through their networks and communities. Staff is supporting them with printed materials and has created packets that include flyers, maps, community of interest information, and pre-stamped postcards. Staff also provides talking points and slides as needed, and appreciates the generosity of the commissioners' time and energy.

The County has also produced and placed redistricting signage on Sonoma County Transit buses for the months of September and October.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, County staff monitors and responds to the redistricting2021@sonoma-county.org <<mailto:redistricting2021@sonoma-county.org>> email box, which is where all input, maps, requests, questions and complaints are sent.

Community Engagement

At the beginning of September 2021, the County enlisted Herman G. Hernandez, in a not-to-exceed contract amount of \$35,000, to provide local community engagement services. Specifically, Mr. Hernandez is assisting the County with seeking and collecting input from underrepresented communities in the County, including Latinx, Asian, Black and Native communities. Several providers were considered, but Mr. Hernandez was selected for his position as a locally known and trusted community leader with deep connections in the community, stemming in part from his experience conducting community engagement during the rollout of PG&E's public safety power shut-offs.

This period before draft maps are produced in late October is a critical time to collect public input, and Mr. Hernandez, has already successfully solicited feedback from several community groups and individuals during the first two weeks of his engagement. Mr. Hernandez's engagement plan includes the following elements:

- 5 in-person/virtual community meeting presentations
- 3 virtual map presentation vision/listening sessions
- 3 to 6 focus groups virtual meetings
- 2 park or food park mapping parties

For each community engagement meeting, Mr. Hernandez will prepare and submit a written summary of the comments to the County weekly. Mr. Hernandez will also prepare a final Redistricting Community Input Report that synthesizes and summarizes the ideas, comments, and concerns expressed by the public throughout the community engagement meetings.

Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC)

On February 23, 2021, your Board authorized the creation of a 15-member Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC) to advise the Board with redrawing supervisorial district boundaries, comprised of two appointees per district and five at-large appointees. On June 8, 2021, your Board appointed 14 commissioners, following a four-week application period. On July 20, 2021, your Board increased the commission size from 15 to 19 members and filled the remaining five seats. A commissioner stipend of \$100 for each half day of meetings was established on April 20, 2021.

The ARC's first meeting was on June 28, 2021, before the then unknown expansion of the ARC that was on approved in July 20th.

ARC Engagement Ad Hoc

At their July 26, 2021 meeting, the ARC established an Engagement Ad Hoc to focus on how best to reach underrepresented communities. The Engagement Ad Hoc is comprised of four commissioners and has met three times as of this writing. The group is also providing input to and providing assistance as needed to Mr. Hernandez. Staff coordinates and provides support to this ad hoc.

ARC Equity Ad Hoc

At their August 23, 2021 meeting, the ARC established an Equity Ad Hoc to draft a set of equity principles, and

the ARC added another full commission meeting to their calendar on September 13, 2021 to receive input from the whole commission about the Ad Hoc’s draft equity principles. The meeting also included a panel of six speakers who presented their knowledge and personal experience of their history in the County, at the request of Equity Ad Hoc.

The September 13, 2021 ARC meeting allowed the ARC the opportunity to discuss in an open and public meeting the primary importance of equity in its redistricting duties. Dr. Rosa Perez was engaged as a facilitator for the equity meeting. Her contract, in a not to exceed amount of \$10,000, includes her participation in the Equity Ad Hoc meetings and a summary report to memorialize the historical context provided by the panel at the ARC’s equity meeting on September 13, 2021.

The Equity Ad Hoc is comprised of five commissioners and will have met three times by today’s meeting. Staff coordinates and provides support to this ad hoc.

Public Input and Redistricting Public Meetings

The County is going well beyond the minimum requirement of four public hearings - through creation of the ARC, using different methods of outreach, and having a variety of mapping tools available - to increase awareness of the redistricting process and to solicit input. Public testimony is a critical part of the redistricting process and is essential for conveying local concerns or issues. Input is especially useful when it can be associated with specific neighborhoods and described with geographic markers or places - ultimately, the input needs to be located on a map. Public input on communities of interest, overlapping sets of groups that share common social and economic interests, is insight that cannot be gleaned from the Census data alone. It is more straightforward to front-load and integrate public input into the initial draft maps, and conversely more challenging to devise draft maps and justify them after the fact. Additionally, the timing constraint presented by the delay in Census data makes it even more important to have public input before draft maps are produced. Public input and maps received by October 15th will feed into the creation of draft maps, which will be produced by NDC for the ARC and the public’s consideration.

Two full commission meetings and a town hall were added to the original calendar, at the request of various stakeholders. County support, including ISD, County Counsel, and Communications has been needed at each of these meetings to date. Clerk of the Board support is needed for noticing of all of the public hearings.

This table is a summary of past and future redistricting public meetings:

Date	Public Meeting
June 8	Board appointed 14 commissioners
June 28	ARC meeting #1: redistricting overview, tools overview
July 20	Board expanded the ARC from 15 to 19 members and appointed remaining 5 commissioners
July 26	ARC meeting #2: redistricting overview, tools overview, input
August 23	ARC meeting #3 / Hearing #1: redistricting overview, tools overview, input
September 1 (added)	ARC meeting #4 - training
September 13 (added)	ARC meeting #5 - equity

September 15 (added)	Redistricting town hall
October 5	Board of Supervisors (with ARC) / Hearing #2
October 18	ARC meeting #6: draft maps
October 22	ARC meeting #7: focus maps
October 25	ARC meeting #8: focus maps
November 2	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #3
November 16	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #4
December 7	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #5
December 14	Adopt ordinance by consent
December 15	Deadline to adopt maps

Prior Board Actions:

7/20/21 Expanded the number of members of the Sonoma County Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC) from 15 to 19; appointed the remaining five commissioners; and authorized the use of \$53,800 from contingency funds for stipend expenditures for the additional members of the ARC, development of English and Spanish videos that explain the redistricting process and tools, and a 20% contingency for future miscellaneous expenses that may be incurred in connection with the redistricting effort

7/13/21 Moved to continue the ARC agenda item of approving the 15th member to July 20, 2021, and directed staff to return with a resolution amending the ARC, increasing the commission size from 15 to 19 members and filling the remaining five seats with people whose applications were previously received

6/8/21 Appointed 14 members of the ARC; authorized the use of \$20,000 from contingency funds for stipend expenditures

4/20/21 Adopted resolution establishing a stipend for ARC members; authorized the use of \$40,000 from contingency funds for media production and placement costs for public outreach; authorized the execution of a contract for redistricting services for an estimated contract value of \$120,000

2/23/21 Adopted resolution establishing the Sonoma County Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC); directed staff to solicit interest in serving on the ARC; authorized the use of \$130,000 from contingency funds to procure specialized redistricting facilitation and training services, interactive mapping technology, and unanticipated translation and interpretation services to support the redistricting process.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

To date, \$243,800 in contingencies have been requested and approved by your Board in support of the redistricting effort. These contingencies will be fully expended by the end of the project.

- **7/20/21:** Board authorized the use of \$53,800 from contingency funds for stipend expenditures for the additional members of the ARC, development of English and Spanish videos that explain the redistricting process and tools, and a 20% contingency for future miscellaneous expenses that may be incurred in connection with the redistricting effort
- **6/8/21:** Board authorized the use of \$20,000 from contingency funds for stipend expenditures

- 4/20/21: Board authorized the use of \$40,000 from contingency funds for media production and placement costs for public outreach
- 2/23/21: Board authorized \$130,000 from contingency funds to procure specialized redistricting facilitation and training services, interactive mapping technology, and unanticipated translation and interpretation services to support the redistricting process

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

None

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None