



Legislation Text

File #: 2021, **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:

8:45 A.M. Public Hearing on the 2021 County Redistricting Process

Recommended Action:

Conduct a public hearing to receive and consider draft redistricting maps recommended by the Advisory Redistricting Commission.

Executive Summary:

The Advisory Redistricting Commission has recommended draft maps for the Board's consideration today. The draft maps represent high-level themes from public testimony and comments and are the culmination of many hours of meetings, community engagement and learning about the redistricting process. After hearing feedback on map modifications, the County's redistricting consultant and demographer, National Demographics Corporation (NDC), will produce a revised set of maps for the next public hearing on November 16, 2021. On December 7, 2021 the Board will conduct a final public hearing to introduce the proposed ordinance to amend Sonoma County Code Section 1-8 to revise the boundaries of supervisorial districts. On December 14, the Board will consider ordinance adoption. The final date for ordinance adoption is December 15, 2021.

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 Section 21500 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. In addition to those mandates, Elections Code Section 21500(c) requires the supervisorial district boundaries to use the following criteria as set forth in order of priority:

1. To the extent practicable, supervisorial districts shall be geographically contiguous.
2. To the extent practicable, the geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest shall be respected in a manner that minimizes division.
3. To the extent practicable, the geographic integrity of a city or census designated place shall be respected in a manner that minimizes its division.
4. Supervisorial district boundaries should be easily identifiable and understandable by residents. To the extent practicable, supervisorial districts shall be bounded by natural and artificial barriers, by streets, or by the boundaries of the county.
5. To the extent practicable, supervisorial districts shall be drawn to encourage geographical compactness

in a manner that nearby areas of population are not bypassed in favor of more distant populations.

The 2020 Census data is significantly delayed this year due to the pandemic. While the initial federal data was released on August 12, the official California data was released September 20, 2021. 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.

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 assisted the County with seeking and collecting input from underrepresented communities in the County, including Latinx, Asian, Black and Native communities. Over the course of six weeks, Mr. Hernandez has conducted 13 focus group sessions, 16 group/radio presentations, 3 town halls and 2 map drawing parties, with a total of 518 individuals participating in these events. A summary of Mr. Hernandez's work is available in **Attachment 1**.

Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC)

On February 23, 2021, your Board authorized the creation of an Advisory Redistricting Commission to advise the Board with redrawing supervisorial district boundaries. The appointment of Eric Koenigshofer to fill a District 5 commissioner seat vacated in late August was made by your Board on October 19, 2021. The commission has 19 members and will have met eight times by today's meeting.

A special equity-focused commission meeting was held on September 13, 2021, which included a panel of six speakers who presented their knowledge and personal experience in the county. Engaged to be the facilitator at that meeting and to work with the ARC's equity ad hoc, Dr. Rosa Perez memorialized the historical context provided by the panel at the September meeting (**Attachment 2**).

At their October 18, 2021 meeting, the Advisory Redistricting Commission adopted a set of equity principles (**Attachment 3**) that they agreed to prioritize, within the context and limits of redistricting laws and criteria, in their discussion and consideration of maps to recommend to your Board. It is the sincere hope of the ARC that the experiences shared at the equity meeting and that these principles become part of the equity building blocks of the County moving forward. County Counsel will continue to work with the Office of Equity and other County departments to meet the Board's equity priorities in a manner that complies with federal and state laws.

Draft Maps

The Advisory Redistricting Commission's most recent public meetings were held on October 18, 22, and 25, the primary objective of which was to arrive at recommended draft maps for your Board's deliberation and consideration. The ARC carefully considered public input, their knowledge of the community, the impact/rebuild from recent wildfires, and historical and equity considerations as they refined the draft maps. The draft maps represent high-level themes from public testimony and comments and are the culmination of many hours of meetings, engagement and learning about the redistricting process.

The ARC's recommended maps are before your Board today for initial consideration. (Note: The recommended draft maps will not be posted until November 1, 2021, due to the timeline to produce maps and the submission deadline for Board items).

After receiving feedback on map modifications, the County’s redistricting consultant and demographer, National Demographics Corporation (NDC), will produce a revised set of maps for the next public hearing on November 16, 2021.

On December 7, 2021, a final public hearing will be conducted to introduce an ordinance to amend Sonoma County Code, Section 1-8, to update the supervisorial district boundaries; the ordinance will be considered for final adoption on consent calendar on December 14, 2021. As always, the public is welcome to provide their feedback at these upcoming meetings or to submit their ideas to Redistricting2021@sonoma-county.org <<mailto:Redistricting2021@sonoma-county.org>>.

The County thanks the Advisory Redistricting Commissioners for their service, insight and energy over the past six months.

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

Date	Public Meeting
June 8	<i>Board appointed 14 commissioners</i>
June 28	ARC meeting #1: redistricting overview, tools overview
July 20	<i>Board expanded the ARC from 15 to 19 members and appointed remaining 5 commissioners</i>
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 19	<i>Board filled vacant District 5 commissioner seat</i>
October 22	ARC meeting #7: focus maps
October 25	ARC meeting #8: focus maps
November 2	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #3. Receive ARC’s recommended maps; direction on map modifications
November 16	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #4. Identify preferred map; direction on map modifications
December 7	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #5. Introduce ordinance
December 14	Final ordinance adoption on consent calendar
December 15	Deadline to adopt maps

Prior Board Actions:

10/5/21 Conducted a public hearing to receive an update on the 2021 redistricting process and 2020 Census data

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:

1-Hernandez Consultant summary

2-Dr. Rosa Perez's summary of 9/13/21 Advisory Redistricting Commission equity panel discussion

3-Advisory Redistricting Commission equity principles

4-Advisory Redistricting Commission's recommended draft maps

The recommended draft maps will not be posted until November 1, 2021, due to the timeline to produce maps and the submission deadline for Board items.

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

None