



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-1087, **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. Fifth Public Hearing to Introduce, Waive Reading and Adopt an Ordinance to Revise Sonoma County Supervisorial District Boundaries Based on the 2020 Federal Census Data

Recommended Action:

Conduct a final public hearing to introduce, waive reading and adopt an ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Adopting Revised Supervisorial District Boundaries for All of the Supervisorial Districts of the County, Repealing Sonoma County Code Section 1-8, and Directing County Staff to Maintain for At Least Ten Years the County's Redistricting Website to Continue to Inform the Public About the Redistricting Process and the Revised Boundaries."

Executive Summary:

Over the course of many months, the Sonoma County Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC) engaged in considerable public outreach, held public meetings and public hearings to develop recommendations about the communities of interest and district boundaries throughout Sonoma County. The ARC submitted a draft map that maintained equal population balance, maintained each of its identified communities of interest, and to the extent practicable, attempted to minimize division of cities. However, the ARC acknowledged the Board of Supervisors may have additional edits to the map to consider additional public comment and continue to comply with federal and state laws. After the ARC dissolved, the Board continued to receive a significant amount of public comment. At the fourth public hearing on November 16, 2021, the Board majority selected the map recommended by the ARC as their preferred draft map to maintain each of the ARC's identified communities of interest. In addition, the Board directed staff to make some additional boundary adjustments to continue to implement public input, consider additional communities of interest, to make boundaries easily identifiable and understandable by residents and comply with federal and state laws. On November 29, 2021, the Board held a special meeting to discuss and consider additional changes to the preferred draft map to consider all of the public input that has been received, and to comply with federal and state laws.

Today a final map will be presented based on all of the public input, Board direction and the requirements to comply with federal and state laws. If the Board majority agrees on the map, the Board may introduce, waive reading and adopt the ordinance. If the Board has additional minor changes to the map, the final map will be posted on the County's Redistricting website on December 7, 2021 and the ordinance will be finally adopted on December 14 on consent calendar. 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 United States Constitution, California Constitution, the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the California Fair Maps Act (Elections Code Section 21500 et seq.) mandate that the Board of Supervisors adjust supervisorial district boundaries within the County to reflect the new census data in compliance with those federal and state laws. Those mandates include a requirement that the supervisorial districts be 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. Where not in conflict with the preceding criteria listed above and 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.

ARC's Public Outreach and Communities of Interest

Following several months of public outreach, public meetings and public hearings, the ARC identified the following communities of interest as defined in Elections Code Section 21500(c)(2) because it determined that these are populations that share common social or economic interests that should be included within a single supervisorial district for purposes of effective and fair representation:

- a. Roseland has recently been annexed to the City of Santa Rosa and shares socioeconomic characteristics with Moorland; both areas represent a community of interest that should be included within a single supervisorial district that includes portions of the downtown area of Santa Rosa, for purposes of effective and fair representation;
- b. Coastal communities share common interests and should remain within one supervisorial district for the purposes of effective and fair representation;
- c. Russian River communities share common social and economic interests and should remain within one supervisorial district for purposes of effective and fair representation;
- d. Coffey Park-Larkfield-Mark West-Wikiup community shares common interests and should remain within one supervisorial district for purposes of effective and fair representation; and
- e. The Springs area (Eldridge, Feters Hot Springs, Agua Caliente, Boyes Hot Springs) share common interests and should remain within one supervisorial district for purposes of effective and fair representation.

In addition to maintaining each of those communities of interest within a single supervisorial district, the ARC had attempted to minimize division of cities to the extent practicable in its recommended map. However, at its final meeting on October 25, 2021, the ARC acknowledged that additional edits to the map may be needed as the Board considers additional public comment and continues to ensure compliance with federal and state laws. The ARC voted unanimously to support the map that maintained its identified communities of interest,

particularly the Moorland-Roseland-Southwest Santa Rosa-Portions of Downtown Santa Rosa community of interest in a single supervisorial district for the purposes of effective and fair representation. After the ARC dissolved, the County continued to receive hundreds of emails from residents who had not participated in the ARC's meetings.

At the fourth public hearing on November 16, 2021, the Board considered five maps: the map recommended by the Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC) at the November 2, 2021 public hearing, the current supervisorial district map, and three additional maps produced since the November 2 public hearing. The Board majority supported the ARC-recommended map as their preferred draft map, with additional requested boundary adjustments and consideration of other communities of interest. The Board continued to receive a significant amount of additional public comment throughout the County.

Another community of interest was identified in subsequent public comment: the community within the Bennett Valley Area Plan share common interests and should remain within one supervisorial district for purposes of effective and fair representation. However, as discussed at the November 16, 2021 public hearing, maintaining this Bennett Valley community of interest, in addition to the other communities of interest, would create an unequal population division with an exceptionally high population in District 1. To continue to comply with the federal and state laws, additional boundary adjustments would need to be made.

Also at the November 16 public hearing, the Board provided direction on exploring modifications to the ARC-recommended map, including boundary adjustments to ensure that the revised supervisorial district maps meet the California Fair Map Act criteria to be easily identifiable and understandable by residents to the extent practicable. Comments included, among others:

- Maintain the current boundary between districts 1 and 4 in the Mark West watershed
- Examine Petaluma dairy belt area close to Sebastopol
- Further discuss broader Rohnert Park area
- Consider area along Guerneville-Olivet-Piner-Eastside Roads if district 5 needs more population
- Examine Forestville perimeters
- Examine line south of Sebastopol along Highway 116

Staff held a feedback session focused on the Rohnert Park area on November 22, after receiving Board direction on November 16. This session was quickly organized so that feedback could be collected before November 29 workshop, which was also scheduled based on Board direction on November 16. At the November 22 feedback session, City of Rohnert Park residents continued to express dismay at the ARC's recommended map, and some continued to advocate for the Rohnert Park City boundaries to be included with portions of the City of Santa Rosa. When asked about Sonoma State University, several participants indicated that the university should be part of the same supervisorial district as Rohnert Park. Residents of Canon Manor shared that the premise of development in the area was based on the concept of no through roads through the development; they didn't feel that Canon Manor should be in the same district as Rohnert Park.

Workshop

At the November 16 public hearing, the Board requested a special meeting on November 29, 2021, to

continue to discuss modifications to their preferred map, with National Demographics Corporation (NDC) facilitating adjustments during the meeting. Three draft maps that used the ARC-recommended map as a foundation and which incorporated both public and supervisor input received during and in the week following the November 16 meeting, were presented at the start of the meeting. These maps were a starting point for the Board discussion and deliberation as they honed in on a map to refine for eventual adoption in December.

These draft maps continue to maintain equal population, comply with the US Constitution, the federal Voting Rights Act, and the California Constitution. During the November 29, 2021 workshop, the Board continued to suggest revisions to comply with the California Fair Map Act's order of priorities as set forth in Elections Code Section 21500. The Board continues to consider public input throughout the process. Deliberations made during the meeting resulted in adjustments to one of the draft maps in compliance with the federal laws and the California Fair Maps Act (**Attachment 1**).

Multiple attempts to minimize division of cities in prior versions of the revised supervisorial district boundaries had been previously made. However, federal law and the California Fair Maps Act require the County to maintain equal population between the supervisorial districts, comply with the US Constitution, the federal Voting Rights Act and the California Constitution, maintain geographic contiguity and to the extent practicable, include communities of interest in a single supervisorial district for fair and effective representation. Only after those criteria have been met, then the next order of priority is to draw the supervisorial districts, to the extent practicable, to minimize division of cities.

Timeline

Because a public hearing is required by statute before a map can be approved, if the Board agrees on the map presented at today's meeting, the ordinance to approve the final supervisorial districts map could be both introduced and adopted (**Attachment 2**). Should the Board request additional, minor changes, final adoption of the map and ordinance would occur on December 14 on consent calendar. The new district boundaries must be approved no later than December 15, 2021.

The public may continue to submit feedback to Redistricting2021@sonoma-county.org <<mailto:Redistricting2021@sonoma-county.org>>.

This table is a summary of the redistricting public meetings held by the County:

Date	Public Meeting
June 28	ARC meeting #1: redistricting overview, tools overview
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
September 20	<i>Official California redistricting data released</i>

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. Receive ARC's recommended maps; direction on map modifications
November 4	Last day to receive input for next revision of maps
November 9 (subject to change)	Next set of maps posted
November 16	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #4. Identify preferred map; direction on map modifications
November 22	Feedback session - Rohnert Park area
November 29	Special Board Meeting/Workshop
November 30 (subject to change)	Final map posted
December 7	Board of Supervisors / Hearing #5 . Introduce and adopt ordinance
December 14	If needed, final adoption of ordinance on consent calendar
December 15	Deadline to adopt maps

Next Steps

In compliance with Elections Code Section 21508(g), the Board directs County staff to maintain the County of Sonoma's Redistricting website at

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Policy-Grants-and-Special-Projects/2021-Redistricting/> for at least 10 years after the adoption of new supervisorial district boundaries. The Board directs the County Administrator, or her designee, to prepare a written description of the Revised Sonoma County Supervisorial District Boundaries and post the written description on the County's Redistricting website. In addition, the web page shall include, or link to, all of the following information:

1. A general explanation of the redistricting process for the county, in English, Spanish and any other applicable languages.
2. The procedures for a member of the public to testify during a public hearing or to submit written testimony directly to the board, in English, Spanish and any other applicable languages.
3. A calendar listing of all redistricting public hearing and workshop dates.
4. The notice and agenda for each public hearing and workshop.
5. The recording or written summary of each public hearing and workshop.
6. Each draft map considered by the board at a public hearing.
7. The adopted final map of supervisorial district boundaries.
8. "Applicable languages" means any language in which ballots are required to be provided in the county pursuant to Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. Section 10503).

Prior Board Actions:

11/29/21 Conducted a public workshop to discuss and consider modifications to the Board-preferred draft

map

11/16/21 Conducted a public hearing to identify a preferred draft map

11/2/21 Conducted a public hearing to receive and consider a draft redistricting map recommended by the Advisory Redistricting Commission

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:

Attachments

- 1 - Proposed Revised Sonoma County Supervisorial District Boundaries
- 2 - Revised Supervisorial District Boundaries Ordinance

Background Map Information

- A - Current Supervisorial District Boundaries with Demographics
- B - ARC Recommended Map with Demographics
- C - ARC Rev 1 Map with Demographics

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None