



COUNTY *of* VENTURA

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November 9, 2021

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Public Hearing Regarding the 2021 Supervisorial Redistricting Process; Receive and File a Presentation of Five Draft Alternative Supervisorial District Maps; Provide Direction to Staff and Consultant.

Recommendations:

That your Board:

1. Receive and file a presentation of five draft supervisorial district maps;
2. Conduct a public hearing to receive public comments; and
3. In order to facilitate timely adoption of the final map, direct staff to narrow the total number of maps under consideration for your hearing on November 16, 2021. For example, direct staff to return with no more than two maps for further review and consideration and/or tentative approval in concept pending adoption of a resolution as required by state law.

Background:

The United States Constitution requires a count every ten (10) years of everyone residing in the United States. This census data allows county officials to realign supervisorial districts in their counties, considering shifts in population growth since the last census, and assuring equal representation for their constituents in compliance with the United State Constitution and federal Voting Rights Act ("VRA").

Prior to the 2021 redistricting effort, the State of California enacted changes to its Elections Code through the "Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions Act, commonly referred to as the "Fair MAPS Act", which significantly revised the redistricting process for counties and cities. Among the revisions, the Elections Code has now established and prioritized mapping criteria, established requirements regarding the number and manner of public hearings, and required an online presence to ensure easy public access to all redistricting mapping and information. Finally, the state has established a December 15, 2021 deadline for final approval of the new supervisorial districts map by your Board. Final approval of the new boundaries must be done by adoption of a resolution or ordinance.

On May 18, 2021, your Board reviewed and approved a proposed redistricting process and work program. The work program described the redistricting process, outlined the community outreach program, and described the redistricting schedule as set out in state law. On July 27, 2021, your Board received a more detailed report regarding the planned outreach activities as well as a more detailed public hearing schedule and held a public hearing to invite public comment. On September 21, 2021, your Board held another public hearing, received a report regarding the five community outreach meetings held in late August/early September, and received a summary of all public testimony and comments received prior to that date. On October 19, 2021, your Board held a public hearing where your Board considered draft supervisorial district maps for the first time based on the recently received, final census data.

Discussion:

Summary of October 19, 2021 Hearing and Board Direction:

At your Board's October 19, 2021 hearing, the County's consultant, *Redistricting Partners*, presented four draft redistricting maps for your Board's consideration. The maps were posted on the County's Redistricting website (ventura.org/redistricting) and made available for public review on October 11, 2021. The consultants were guided in the draft map preparation by the requirements of the United States Constitution, the VRA, and the Fair MAPS Act. In addition, they considered the public comments received during prior Board hearings and the five community meetings, as well as via mail, email, and the County Redistricting website.

The four draft maps presented on October 19th could be described as falling into two broad categories. Draft Maps 1 and 2 created two districts where a majority of the citizen voting age population (CVAP) in two of the five districts were majority-minority (majority Latino/Latinx) districts; meaning that at least 50.1% of the citizens old enough to vote in the proposed district were Latino/Latinx. Draft Maps 3 and 4 created a single majority-minority district. As discussed at your October 19th public hearing, Section 2 of the VRA prohibits vote dilution by drawing district boundaries in a way that minimizes or cancels out the voting strength of members of racial or language minority groups in the voting

population. What this means in practical terms is that majority-minority districts should be established where it is necessary to avoid vote dilution. The United States Supreme Court has identified several factors that must be assessed in making this determination: 1) whether the minority group is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority of the voting age population in a single-member district; 2) whether the minority group is politically cohesive; and, 3) whether the majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it – in the absence of special circumstances, such as the minority candidate running unopposed – usually to defeat the minority group’s preferred candidate. Where these conditions exist, then the totality of the circumstances in the jurisdiction is assessed based on numerous factors to determine whether minority voters have less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice.

After much discussion, your Board took action to remove Maps 3 and 4 from further consideration since the maps did not include two majority-minority districts. In addition to the formal action to eliminate Maps 3 and 4 from further consideration, your Board also provided specific direction to staff and the consultant that all future draft maps brought forward for your consideration include two majority-minority districts. Your Board also directed, to the greatest extent possible given the over-arching objectives of creating two majority-minority districts and maintaining a population balance among the districts, that cities be kept whole.

During the public hearing, your Board received public testimony from numerous speakers. The testimony addressed issues surrounding the redistricting process and the draft alternative maps but focused on three primary issues: (1) the need to establish two majority-minority districts; (2) the importance of keeping cities whole; and (3) support for the “Community Map” submitted by the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE). The County has received substantial additional comments since your Board’s October 19th public hearing. Exhibit 1 includes all public comments received since that time and prior to the preparation of this Board Letter. In addition, the County has continued to receive over 60 maps prepared by community members through the on-line *DistrictR* mapping tool. Exhibit 2 includes copies of those map submissions.

Your Board also expressed a number of concepts for the consultant to bear in mind as they develop the next set of draft alternative maps. To the extent possible, given the need to create two majority-minority districts and balance population, Board members stated preferences, in no particular order of priority, that the:

- City of Moorpark be in the same district as the City of Simi Valley
- Community of Saticoy be in the same district as the City of Ventura
- Ojai Valley be in the same district as the City of Ventura
- Channel Islands be in the same district as the ports/Naval Base
- Santa Monica Mountains be in the same district as the City of Thousand Oaks

- County's agricultural community be contained within a single district
- North coast area be in the same district as the City of Ventura
- Camarillo Airport and Camarillo City Hall be in the same district
- City of Port Hueneme be in the same district as the port

In addition to the concepts outlined above, your Board and several speakers recognized the challenge of developing maps that address these often-competing interests and the legal requirements.

Draft Alternative Maps:

As a reminder, in addition to each supervisorial district being substantially equal in total population and complying with the VRA, the Fair MAPS Act also establishes basic criteria and process requirements that your Board must consider in redistricting. Specifically, consideration must be given to the following factors in order of priority:

1. To the extent practicable, supervisorial districts shall be geographically contiguous. Areas that meet only at the points of adjoining corners are not contiguous. Areas that are separated by water and not connected by a bridge or tunnel are not contiguous.
2. To the extent practicable, geographic integrity of any local neighborhoods or local communities of interest shall be respected in a manner that minimizes its division. For purposes of state law, a "community of interest" is a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single supervisorial district for purposes of its effective and fair representation. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.
3. To the extent practicable, geographic integrity of cities and census designated places shall be respected in a manner that minimizes their division.
4. Supervisorial district boundaries should be easily identifiable and understandable by residents and, to the extent practicable, the bounding of districts shall be by natural and artificial barriers, by streets or by boundaries of the county; and
5. To the extent practicable, where it does not conflict with the four factors listed above, 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 Elections Code also prohibits adopting supervisorial district boundaries for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against a political party.

A total of five maps are presented here for review and consideration by your Board and the public. As noted above, on October 19, 2021 your Board directed that only Maps 1 and 2 be carried forward through the redistricting process with refinement based on the bullet points above that were expressed by the Board. *Redistricting Partners* has developed revised maps based upon earlier Maps 1 and 2 which are referred to here as Map 1A and Map 2A. In addition, based upon comments and direction received at your last hearing, three additional maps that were submitted by the public prior to the October 19th hearing have been reviewed and published for your consideration. The five maps for your consideration today are attached as Exhibits 3 through 7. The maps were posted on the County's redistricting website and available for public review on Tuesday, November 2nd.

As directed by your Board, all five maps include two majority-minority districts. The maps, however, differ in how they keep cities as whole as possible and how they address the other objectives expressed by your Board. The Board direction was to keep cities whole to the extent possible. This can be considered in multiple ways. If, for example, the desire is to keep as many of the cities as whole as possible, it will necessarily require that two cities are divided between three districts so that the other cities remain whole. Alternatively, if the desire is to minimize the total number of times each city is divided, it will necessarily require that more cities are divided but each would only be divided twice.

There are some characteristics that are shared among all five draft maps: (1) The City of Oxnard remains split into three districts; and (2) The north coast and Ojai remain in the same district as the City of Ventura.

Provided below is a summary of each draft map in terms of how it may or may not address the preferences expressed by your Board at your last hearing. No map is able to satisfy all of the preferences bulleted above. Please note, the numbering conventions established in the five draft maps differ from those currently in use for the supervisorial districts. The *DistrictR* mapping tool used for the public submittals allows users to utilize any numbering choice that they may wish. Thus, the maps should not be read to assume that the existing numbering represents or is related to the current or proposed district numbering system. For consistency's sake, the following summaries utilize the convention uses by *Redistricting Partners* in the preparation of Maps 1A and 2A, and thus use letters rather than numbers in labeling the districts.

Map #1A - Attached as Exhibit 3

- The City of Camarillo remains whole within District B.
- The City of Moorpark is split into 2 districts (Districts C and D).
 - Western Moorpark in District C.

- Eastern Moorpark in District D.
- The City of Thousand Oaks is split into 3 districts (Districts B, D and E).
 - Eastern Thousand Oaks, Oak Park and Bell Canyon are in District D.
 - Western Thousand Oaks is in District E.
- Saticoy remains within District A.
- Santa Monica Mountains and South Coast are in District E.
- Somis and Santa Rosa Valley are in District C.
- Channel Islands Harbor is in District A.
- Population Deviation = 5.2%

Map #2A – Attached as Exhibit 4

- The City of Camarillo is split into 3 districts (Districts B, C and E).
- The City of Moorpark remains whole within District D.
- The City of Thousand Oaks is kept whole within District B.
- Oak Park remains within District B.
- Bell Canyon is in District D.
- Saticoy remains within District A.
- Santa Monica Mountains and South Coast are in District E.
- Santa Rosa Valley remains within District B.
- Somis is in District C.
- Channel Islands Harbor remains within District E.
- Port of Hueneme and Naval Base Ventura are within same district.
- Population Deviation = 3.0%

Map #3 (“Community Map” submitted by CAUSE, et.al.) – Attached as Exhibit 5

- The City of Camarillo is split into 3 districts (Districts B, C and E).
- The City of Moorpark is split into 2 districts (Districts C and D).
 - Southern and eastern portions of city within District D.
- The City of Thousand Oaks is kept whole within District B.
- Oak Park and Bell Canyon are in District D.
- Saticoy is in District C.
- Santa Monica Mountains and South Coast remain in District B.
- Santa Rosa Valley remains within District B.
- Somis is in District C.
- Channel Islands Harbor is in District A.
- Port of Hueneme and Naval Base Ventura are within same district.
- Population Deviation = 4.6%

Map #4 (map submitted by LULAC, et.al.) – Attached as Exhibit 6

- The City of Camarillo is split into 3 districts (Districts B, C and E).
- The City of Moorpark is split into 2 districts (Districts C and D).
 - Eastern end of city is within District D.
- The City of Thousand Oaks is split into 2 districts (Districts B and D).
 - Eastern end of city is within District D.
- Oak Park and Bell Canyon are in District D.
- Saticoy remains within District A.
- Santa Monica Mountains and South Coast remain in District B.
- Santa Rosa Valley remains within District B.
- Somis is in District C.
- Channel Islands Harbor is in District A.
- Port of Hueneme and Naval Base Ventura are within same district.
- Population Deviation = 3.4%

Map #5 (Map #66742 submitted through *DistrictR*) – Attached as Exhibit 7

- The City of Camarillo is split into 3 districts (Districts B, C and E).
- The City of Moorpark is kept whole within District D.
- The City of Thousand Oaks is kept whole within District B.
- The City of Santa Paula is split into 2 districts (Districts A and C).
 - The western end of city is in District A.
- Oak Park and Bell Canyon remain in District B.
- Saticoy remains within District A.
- Santa Monica Mountains and South Coast remain in District B.
- Santa Rosa Valley remains within District B.
- Somis is in District D.
- Channel Islands Harbor is in District A.
- Port of Hueneme and Naval Base Ventura are within same district.
- Population Deviation = 10.9%

It is important to note that these draft maps are intended to provide your Board and the public alternative approaches to creating a new district map that addresses as many of the preferences/competing interests as possible. None of these maps are specifically recommended by the consultant or County staff, and none of these maps must be ultimately approved by your Board in their current form. They are intended to continue the process of identifying issues, narrowing the choices, and generating specific direction from your Board for the preparation of additional drafts or a final map.

One final note, as it is the only city that is currently split among multiple districts, only the City of Oxnard submitted information regarding its neighborhood boundaries. On November 2nd, the County Executive Office sent a letter to all city leaders seeking input from each city (maps or information) detailing the city's neighborhoods/communities so that the County can consider that information during the redistricting process in hopes of minimizing disruption to communities of interest and local neighborhoods to the extent practicable. Cities were asked to provide that information no later than November 10, 2021. Information has been received from the Cities of Camarillo, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, and Simi Valley and is included in Exhibit 1.

The consultants will review each of the maps at your meeting and be available to answer any questions regarding the maps, as well as associated federal and state law considerations.

Compressed Schedule and Map Adoption Process:

In an effort to further engage with our community stakeholders this item will be heard at both 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm on November 9th. We have also scheduled a hearing for the Board to consider draft maps and/or to consider a final redistricting map on November 16th at 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

State law requires that your Board adopt a final map by a majority vote no later than December 15, 2021. Adoption of a final map, per state law, means the adoption of an ordinance or resolution specifying the new supervisorial district boundaries. Therefore, staff will need time well in advance of December 15th to prepare the written description of the map boundaries to be contained in the resolution for your Board's adoption at a Board meeting before December 15th. In order to have time to prepare the necessary resolution and comply with the map and agenda posting requirements that are unique to the Fair MAPS Act, it would be helpful for your Board to tentatively approve a final map in concept by the end of November so that staff can have two weeks to prepare the necessary resolution containing a written description of the new supervisorial district boundaries. If your Board does not tentatively approve a final map in concept until its December 7th meeting, there will be minimal time to prepare the resolution given the necessary agenda posting requirements. If your Board is unable to reach consensus as to a final map at the November 16th hearing, it may be necessary to schedule a special meeting in the last two weeks of November to allow your Board additional time to deliberate on map revisions and still allow staff adequate time to prepare the required resolution.

Enhanced Community Outreach

Consistent with its commitment to promote public participation in the redistricting process, the County has additionally partnered with the Ventura County Community Foundation's Complete Count Committee to further enhance the outreach efforts that have occurred and to promote additional community input. The coalition of nonprofit organizations whose

outreach efforts have covered COVID-19, Census 2020 and now Redistricting 2021 will seek the perspectives of the region's diverse communities. To date, twelve community-based organizations representing diverse stakeholders throughout the County are assisting with multi-lingual redistricting outreach. Outreach presentations were provided to the groups on November 1, 3 and 5. The groups will utilize the County's outreach toolkit to conduct outreach throughout the County.

Members of the public can continue to provide input on draft maps through the following existing channels: email comments to redistricting@ventura.org; submit communities of interest forms via ventura.org/redistricting/; and submit draft maps via *DistrictR* on ventura.org/redistricting/.

This letter has been reviewed by County Counsel.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please call Scott Powers, CEO Sr. Deputy Executive Officer at 805-677-8761.



m.p. Michael Powers
County Executive Officer

Attachments

- Exhibit 1 – Comments Submitted via E-mail and Website
- Exhibit 2 - Maps Submitted through *DistrictR*
- Exhibit 3 - Draft Alternative Map #1A
- Exhibit 4 - Draft Alternative Map #2A
- Exhibit 5 - Draft Alternative Map #3
- Exhibit 6 - Draft Alternative Map #4
- Exhibit 7 - Draft Alternative Map #5