



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: County Administrative Office

(831) 454-2100

Subject: Update on the 2021 Redistricting Process

Meeting Date: June 8, 2021

Recommended Action(s):

- 1) Accept and file the report on the 2021 Redistricting Process and general timeline;
- 2) Approve staff recommendation for Public Hearing Schedule;
- 3) Reaffirm the 2001 principles for redistricting to inform 2021 redistricting efforts; and,
- 4) Direct the County Administrative Officer to return on or before the last meeting in August with a proposed Public Outreach Plan including a proposed timeline for public workshops to provide a forum for and to invite public input on the Redistricting of Supervisorial Boundaries.

Executive Summary

On February 23, 2021 the Board accepted a report on the 2021 redistricting process that included redistricting requirements, established an Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC 21), and directed the County Administrative Office to return with an update on the 2021 redistricting process in late May.

This report provides an update on the redistricting process including the delay in receiving census related redistricting data, activities related to establishing the Advisory Redistricting Commission, and provides information for the Board's consideration in identifying a process for completing the 2021 redistricting effort within the required time frames.

Background

Every ten years, local governments use new census data to redraw their district lines to reflect how local populations have changed. Assembly Bill 849 (2019) requires cities and counties to engage communities in the redistricting process by holding public hearings and/or workshops and doing public outreach, including to non-English-speaking communities. Assembly Bill 1276 (2020) established the priority order for criteria used in drawing new district lines. In keeping with AB 849, our office has staffed the first ARC 21 meeting, launched the redistricting website, and begun planning our redistricting and outreach efforts.

Analysis

Update Redistricting Process timeline

The redistricting process and timeline has been impacted due to the extension of the 2020 census deadline in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Census Bureau, responsible for providing Public Law 94-171 (PL 94-171) data for redistricting, announced on February 12, 2021, that the release of PL 94-171 data to the Statewide Database would be delayed to September 30, 2021. Once the data is release to the Statewide Database, the data must be revised to apportion incarcerated persons to their home address, a process that generally takes about 30 days. We are therefore estimating that the redistricting data will be available to Santa Cruz County by mid-to-late October 2021. The deadline for the County to adopt a final map of new district boundaries, based on the PL 94-171 data is December 15, 2021.

Redistricting Preparations in advance of receipt of PL 94-171 Data

Despite the wait for the PL 94-171 data, other redistricting activities have begun in preparation. The County Administrative Office (CAO) has convened an in-house working group comprised of staff from the County Administrative Office, County Counsel (CSL), Information Services Department (ISD) and Geographic Information Services (GIS), and County Clerk-Elections (CLK) to address the technical aspects associated with this project and to develop the timeline required to complete the effort so that the Board can adopt the required ordinance with Supervisorial District boundaries no later than December 15, 2021. Staff from this group have met several times since February to chart the work program and initiate activities necessary for the redistricting process that are independent of the data.

Redistricting Website

ISD created a portal on the County's website for the Redistricting process to keep the public informed of the Redistricting process. Included on this site will be reports to your Board, background on the redistricting process, Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC 21) meeting agendas, links to citizen guides to Redistricting, links to Census data and to the California Statewide Database, maps created by GIS staff to display Census data and relevant district and Census boundaries and plans that may be submitted by ARC 21 and others for the Board's consideration. The website will also serve as a tool for public participation through the submission of online Community of Interest (COI) forms and maps and Public Comment forms.

GIS layer Preparations and Software tools

GIS has begun work to align Census Tabulation Blocks to the County's parcel boundaries. This is required so that no parcels are split by the various Census geographies. GIS staff have identified Esri Redistricting Software as the web-based software to enable ARC 21 and the public to complete and share redistricting plans and will provide training to ARC 21 Commission on the use of this tool. GIS is also reviewing software applications to facilitate the submission of COI forms and maps.

Advisory Redistricting Commission 2021 Convened

With the assistance of County Counsel and the Chief Deputy Clerk, the first ARC 21 meeting was held on May 19, 2021. This was an introductory meeting where the commissioners received a report on this year's redistricting process and requirements. Commissioners requested more information on messaging to the community about the

process which will be provided at the next meeting as part of a draft Public Outreach Plan along with proposed timeline. Through the summer, the ARC is anticipated to meet at least once a month to conduct the business of the Commission and plan for public hearings for consideration of supervisorial district boundary adjustments.

Accept ARC 21 work program and timeline

The proposed Redistricting Timeline, Attachment 1 of this report, would allow ARC 21 and the Board to complete the 2021 redistricting efforts within the required time frames. Some of the future key activities and dates include:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| July - October: | Monthly ARC 21 meetings and regular website updates. Public outreach and engagement via social media and informational sessions about the process. |
| September - Oct: | Public workshops on Communities of Interest |
| October 15-30: | Census data files (PL 94-171) released to counties |
| November - Dec: | Public hearings for consideration and adoption of final District maps |
| December 15: | Deadline for County Board of Supervisors to adopt final map |

Staff recommends that the Board accept the Redistricting Timeline, Attachment 1, to guide the ARC 21 work.

The ARC 21 will have the opportunity to review this timeline at the June 16th meeting. If the ARC members have additional input or recommendations, staff will bring that information back to the Board at the next progress report planned for the end of August.

Approve Board of Supervisors Public Hearing Schedule

This year's redistricting process includes a very short window from when the census data is released, mid-to-late October, to when a final redistricting map must be adopted, December 15th. In addition, law now requires at least four public hearings with at least one before maps are drawn, at least two after draft maps are drawn, and at least one on a Saturday, Sunday, or after 6pm Monday through Friday. Attachment 2 to this report outlines three different public hearing schedule options for the Board meet the requirements of state law and are summarized below.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Option A: | Two public hearings on November 9 th , including one evening public hearing in South County. One public hearing on November 16 th . Final public hearing on December 7 th to adopt final map. |
| Option B: | One evening public hearing on November 9 th in South County. One public hearing on November 16 th . A special meeting to be set and held either November 30 th or December 1 st . Final public hearing on December 7 th to adopt final map. |
| Option C: | One evening public hearing on November 9 th in South County. Public hearings on November 16 th and December 7 th . A special meeting to be set and held either December 14 th or December 15 th to adopt final map. |

Staff recommends Option A as this option builds on the Board's existing meeting schedule and does not require special meetings be added. With final action proposed for the December 7 meeting, it is most time efficient. In the event, additional time is required the Board could add an additional special meeting and still meet the December 15th deadline.

Reaffirm Board of Supervisors Redistricting Principles

Finally, in 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted four principles for consideration during the local redistricting process. These principles were reaffirmed in 2011:

- To the extent possible, the current district boundaries will be preserved.
- The public will have all the opportunities provided by law to participate in the redistricting process, and to provide input to the Board.
- Communities of Interest will be preserved to the extent possible.
- Each Supervisor will have an opportunity to suggest changes to his or her district's boundaries to the extent that such changes are necessary prior to the public hearings to be held on the redistricting plan.

Staff recommends that the Board reaffirm the principles set forth in 2001, to the extent permitted under the new legal requirements as set for under AB 849 and AB 1276.

Financial Impact

At this time, staff is anticipating that the Redistricting effort can be conducted utilizing existing staff and budget appropriations. If additional resources are required, our office will return to your Board at Budget Hearings.

Strategic Plan Element(s)

The 2021 redistricting process, including efforts to encourage public participation, supports all of the County's Strategic Plan goals.

Submitted by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Recommended by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- a Redistricting General Timeline
- b Redistricting Public Hearing Schedule Alternatives