



June 15, 2021

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Honorable Board of Supervisors
Marin County Civic Center
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RE: Informational presentation regarding (1) legal and policy criteria governing redistricting, and (2) demographics of existing supervisorial districts based on most recent official estimates

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION: Accept report.

Introduction

At your May 25 Board meeting, in which staff and consultants introduced the 2021 supervisorial redistricting process for the County of Marin, your Board provided direction to staff to begin forming an ad hoc working group; develop an outreach program and a public redistricting website; develop online mapping tools for the public to define “communities of interest” within the County; and to plan four public hearings to consider adoption of a final map by December 15, 2021 – including consideration of an evening and a weekend meeting.

Today’s informational presentation provides additional detail regarding the legal and policy criteria governing redistricting, and the demographics of existing supervisorial districts based on the most recent estimates by the County’s demographic consultant.

Background

The United States Constitution requires a count every 10 years of everyone residing in the country. Information from the Census is used to help determine where to locate schools, roads, hospitals, and other facilities; making decisions regarding business growth and housing needs; and geographically defining state legislative districts, which initiates a “redistricting” process that begins in the year following a Census.

Census data also allow county officials to realign supervisorial districts, taking into account shifts in population growth since the last Census and assuring equal representation in compliance with the constitutional “one person, one-vote” principle and the Voting Rights Act. Generally speaking, each supervisorial district must be “substantially equal” in the number of residents. Every ten years, district lines must be redrawn to ensure each district is even in size.

Recent Law Changes, Late Census Data Complicate Process

As we outlined May 25, recent legislation mandating more public hearings and specific, more extensive outreach strategies (see AB 849 (2019) and AB 1276 (2020)) has increased the complexity of the 2021 supervisorial redistricting process for all California counties.

In addition, 2020 Census data will be received much later than in prior redistricting efforts (anticipated October 2021 instead of March) due largely to extended Census response deadlines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this significant delay and the new process requirements, a final map is still required to be approved by your Board no later than December 15, 2021.

2021 Redistricting Criteria and *Estimated* Demographics

The County's demographic consultant has produced estimated demographics for the County of Marin. With this estimated data in hand, Mr. Chris Skinnell of Nielsen-Merksamer will today provide an introduction in further detail to the 2021 redistricting criteria based on the most recent estimates. Mr. Skinnell's presentation is included as Attachment B to this staff report, as is the project calendar as Attachment A.

In short, the demographic estimates result in a projected underpopulation of District 4, largely by adjusting for San Quentin State Prison populations as required by statute, with a total population deviation slightly under the 10 percent maximum deviation allowed. As expected, some changes will likely be required to balance the underpopulation in D4 relative to slight overpopulation in Districts 2, 3 and 5. D4 is approximately 3,448 residents short of an ideal population of 49,511 (or 6.96 percent).

Ad Hoc Working Group

Staff are working to form an ad hoc advisory committee, a group consisting of public members to advise staff and consultants throughout the supervisorial redistricting process. Invitations have been issued to members of the Marin County Elections Advisory Committee and the Community Development Block Grant Priority Setting Committee with the goal of up to ten (10) public members who must be a County resident and registered to vote in Marin, and must not have a conflict of interest (which includes being an elected official of the County or a family member, staff member, or paid campaign staff of an elected County official). This ad hoc working group will:

- Serve as a policy sounding board to project staff and consultants;
- Review potential map alternatives;
- Provide feedback regarding outreach efforts; and
- Serve as a community champion to raise awareness of the County's redistricting initiative.

We are planning to have the ad hoc working group formed in coming weeks.

County Website, Outreach and Online Mapping Tools

We are also planning to have the County's 2021 redistricting website available to the public shortly as we develop our outreach strategy. The website will include a tentative calendar and outline of the redistricting process; procedures for public testimony; redistricting criteria; meeting notices; agendas and minutes; demographic data; draft plans; and online submission of public comments. The website will also serve as a hub for our outreach efforts, which will include social media and direct contact to interests throughout the county.

The website will include a link to online public mapping tools, which are under construction and expected to be available in July. These tools will help facilitate public input to help to identify communities of interest in the County.

While planning and process development are under way, today's informational report is intended to provide more detail regarding the legal and policy criteria governing redistricting, and to review the demographics of existing supervisorial districts based on most recent official estimates for your Board and for the public.

Other than accepting the informational update and providing any feedback to staff and consultants, there are no action items associated with today's report. Your Board provided direction May 25 to initiate the County's 2021 redistricting effort.

Equity Impact

Marin has historically been a slow-growth county with relatively small population changes. Preliminary review with our experts indicates that current boundaries are likely to meet all requirements that protect minority voting rights.

To support the public process, we are bringing together a diverse ad hoc working group to ensure a thorough process, in concert with County staff and contracted legal and demographic expertise, to ensure equal representation in compliance with the constitutional "one person, one-vote" principle and the Voting Rights Act.

Fiscal Impact

None associated with this informational report. Staff will continue to report back to your Board as the 2021 redistricting process takes shape in the coming weeks and months at key intervals.

Submitted by:



Daniel Eilerman
Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed by:



Matthew Hymel
County Administrator

Attachments: Attachment A – Tentative Calendar
Attachment B – Presentation