

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 6/7/01
Department Name: County Administrator's Office
Department No.: 012
Agenda Date: 6/19/01
Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 2 Hours
Continued Item: YES
If Yes, date from: 12/12/00; 2/27/01, 4/24/01

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael F. Brown
County Administrator

STAFF CONTACT: Jim Laponis
Deputy County Administrator, 568-3404

Shirley Moore
Administrative Analyst, 568-3107

SUBJECT: County Redistricting Process - Update

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Receive and approve staff report summarizing comments received during 11 Redistricting Community Workshops, and 5 additional presentations made to governmental and community organizations;
- B. Determine whether or not to include federal prison count in the Redistricting Process;
- C. Authorize the Chair to sign letter to U.S. Census Bureau identifying error in Census block numbering which resulted in 2724 people in the UCSB unincorporated area to be counted in the City of Santa Barbara, and use corrected numbers for the purpose of redistricting;
- D. Provide direction to staff as appropriate regarding the actual drawing of boundary lines;
- E. Set "time certain" for redistricting hearing dates of July 23, July 24, August 7, 14, 21 as identified in staff report of April 24, 2001

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

These recommendations are primarily aligned with Goal #1: An Efficient Government Able to Respond Effectively to the needs of the Community

Executive Summary and Discussion:

Background:

At our initial redistricting hearing of December 12, 2000, staff presented the Board with a general outline of the laws pertaining to redistricting, criteria to be used in redistricting efforts and drawing boundaries, definition of terms, a general timeline, an overview of GIS redistricting software as a critical tool, and some preliminary ideas on how to effectively involve the public in the process.

At a subsequent hearing on February 27, 2001, the Board gave specific direction about how to proceed with the redistricting process and established a more definitive timeline, including hearing dates for the Board to be actively engaged in the process, hear proposals, and ultimately to adopt a redistricting ordinance by August 21, 2001 (2nd reading)

On April 24, 2001, staff provided a report updating the Board on efforts to-date regarding community involvement and use of citizens' packets, web-page, information line, as well as providing an updated timeline of events and a breakdown of Census Data.

Current Status and Results of Community Workshops:

Staff has held 11 community workshops (8 English and 3 Spanish language) and has given 5 presentations to government officials and community organizations. Approximately 300 people attended these meetings. Detailed minutes of the Community Workshops are included as "Attachment A". Comments listed are ones that were echoed by more than one individual, and are documented here to identify the general themes heard in the workshops.

There was significantly more interest and concern in North County than on the South Coast. Approximately 70% of the participants were from the North County. Issues raised at North County meetings strongly suggest that North County residents feel under-represented. For this reason, comments are grouped by "North County" and "South County". Comments made at North County workshops include the following:

1. There should be 2 South Coast districts; and 3 North County districts, to better reflect the needs of North County, and also to take into consideration the growth that is occurring in North County.
2. The "power struggle" has benefited the South County; how will the Supervisors decide how to balance the districts?
3. The problem is that 50% of the population is in North County; and 50% is in South County, and one district must straddle the mountains and be the political point of friction.
4. As with the proposed city of Goleta, North County is considering a split of the County into two counties. This may be a very good idea. (expressed by both North and South County)

5. The 3rd District is too large, geographically, and cannot possibly balance rural and urban interests and therefore should only encompass one of these interests (this was expressed in both North and South County workshops).
6. Isla Vista should NOT be in the same district as Santa Ynez. These two communities have nothing in common. The Isla Vista vote cancels out the Santa Ynez vote; hence Santa Ynez concerns are not addressed.
7. The 3rd district should include Lompoc, and put Isla Vista in another district.
8. Lompoc and Santa Ynez should be in the same district; they have a lot in common.
9. Mission Hills and Mesa Oaks should be in the same district as Lompoc. Currently, Lompoc is in the 4th district; Mission Hills and Mesa Oaks are in the 3rd district.
10. Since the City of Santa Maria already has 77,423 residents and is continuing to grow, it should comprise one district.
11. All the City Council members in Santa Maria stated that they want Santa Maria in one district.
12. Guadalupe and Santa Maria should be in one district. (If this were to occur, the population of a district combining the totality of the two cities and joining unincorporated area would be 83,621.)
13. The southern part of Santa Maria, which includes the Orcutt School District (Population of 3,586), should be in the same district as Orcutt. Right now, it is in the 5th district; while Orcutt is in the 4th district. This southern part of Santa Maria was considered to have more in common with Orcutt, and thus part of their “community of interest”. (See Attachment B: County Counsel memorandum identifying “communities of interest”)
14. Keep all the districts as equal in population as possible.
15. There should be no more than 1% deviation between districts.
16. The 1st and 5th districts should be Hispanic majority.
17. Concern was expressed that Orcutt and Guadalupe appear to be undercounted. (see below for process of recertifying Census data).
18. There was great interest on whether or not the prison population would be counted. Some want it counted; others do not. But everyone agreed that decision needs to be made before boundary lines are drawn. (See Attachment C: County Counsel memorandum regarding inclusion/exclusion of prison population)
19. There was concern expressed about UCSB and Vandenberg AFB people voting and being counted, since they are transitory.
20. Cuyama should be in the 5th district; south of Cuyama should go to the 4th district.

Comments made at South County workshops include:

1. Isla Vista is a cohesive community; keep it in one district.
2. Like the Hispanic community, Isla Vista is diverse, but sees itself as a community of interest.
3. Isla Vista has been historically disenfranchised when it comes to representation by County Supervisors.

4. Isla Vista and Goleta will not be in the same city, but should be in the same district because most issues affecting these areas are the same. Putting them into two districts will further divide them.
5. More important than political lines is the urban limit line. Isla Vista is urban. The rural areas are very different. These two should be divided into two separate districts.
6. There is agricultural land west of Isla Vista which should be part of the district that has agricultural lands in the north. Isla Vista should be in a south coast district.
7. The 3rd District has too many competing interests. It should be smaller, more compact.
8. Rural areas with large tracts of land, but low population, are one community of interest and should be in one district, even though that district would be of a lower population than urban areas.
9. Keep rural areas together, and urban areas together (expressed by both North and South Coast residents)
10. Have the supervisors given any indication as to what they want to see, especially as between agricultural versus environmental interests?
11. Draw lines more north and south, and thus reconfigure populations into new district lines. This puts Cuyama in the first district.
12. It is not necessary to keep the proposed city of Goleta in one district. In fact, it might be more advantageous to be split into two districts, so that it could be represented by two supervisors. But what are the ramifications in services if the new city is split between districts?
13. A better mix of lower and higher income persons in the 2nd district is desirable.
14. Can there be more than five districts to balance out North and South County (this was expressed by both North and South County). (Gov. Code section 25000(a) requires 5 districts.)
15. Is there any legal requirement for continuity of district lines from one redistricting period to another, or can districts be completely redrawn and changed after each census? (both North and South County) (We have found no law on the subject of continuity of district lines and therefore believe there is no such requirement.)
16. How important of a role does the Hispanic population have in the redistricting process?
17. Some people were offended that the Census even broke down race and ethnicity as categories. “We are all Americans”, and it is demeaning to separate us out by race and ethnicity. (voiced by both North and South County). (See Attachment C: County Counsel memorandum regarding race/ethnicity/community of interests)

Next Steps/Board Action:

Now that community workshops have been held and comments provided, it is recommended that the Board consider the following actions:

- a) Determine whether to include the prison population for purposes of redistricting. Concern on whether to include population of the prison was expressed in community workshops. In addition, County Counsel has provided a memorandum to the Board with pertinent information. Staff recommends that the Board make a decision today, prior to preparation of redistricting proposals, so that it is clear what population number is to be used. If the Board does not take action, the prison population will be included in the total count. If the Board determines to exclude the prison population (approximately 3000 people), that

number would be excluded from the total County population of 399,347, so that the County population for purposes of redistricting would be about 396,347.

- b) Sign the attached letter documenting intent to use corrected Census numbers with regard to UCSB and the Airport block numbers being swapped (the Santa Barbara City Council is also writing a letter supporting the use of the corrected numbers for redistricting);
- c) Determine “time certain” on each of the redistricting hearing dates of July 23, July 24, August 7, August 14, and August 21;
- d) Provide direction on development of redistricting proposals/drawing of boundary lines. The Board has several options, such as:
 1. Each Board member take community comments, and work individually with our GIS Specialist to put each Board member’s proposed plan into GIS, for public testimony and comment on July 23;
 2. Prioritize to staff the Board’s view of the more important elements of the community comments, and direct staff to prepare 3 or 4 proposals for public testimony and comment on July 23;
 3. Do nothing and await community redistricting proposals to be heard on July 23.

It is expected that all proposals will be heard by the Board on July 23. This includes any Board and/or staff proposals if so directed by the Board, as well as proposals brought forth by the community. Several organizations are working with our GIS specialist to put their proposals into GIS and will be prepared to present their proposals to the Board. Currently, staff expects about 12 proposals to be presented by various organizations. This is a special hearing on a Monday and is expected to take 4 hours. Staff is seeking Board direction on what time this meeting should begin.

Staff has set aside 3 hours on each of the regular board hearing dates of July 24, August 7, 14, and 21 to discuss redistricting. Staff’s suggestion is that all proposals be heard at the special hearing of July 23; deliberations and discussions of the various proposals be conducted on July 24 and August 7; and a first reading of an ordinance establishing new boundary lines be made on August 14; second reading and adoption on August 21. Although the Board legally has until October 31 to finalize the redistricting effort, practically speaking, it must occur in the timeframe indicated. If this date is not met, it could affect the elections process of redrawing precinct lines in time for the March primaries.

Other Pertinent Information About the Census:

In June, 2001, the Census Bureau will begin a three month process of releasing Household and Group Quarters data on a state-by-state basis. California is expected to receive data in the August timeframe. It is at this time that the Census Bureau begins a “Count Question Resolution Program”, whereby corrections to the Census data can be made, and Census numbers re-certified. There are three criteria under which Census numbers can be corrected:

1. An error is found in the numbering of Census blocks (such as what staff discovered with the Airport/UCSB tracts).
2. Group Quarters Housing (such as dormitories, senior citizens homes, etc) is located in the wrong tract or block;

3. People were enumerated, but incorrectly allocated to a neighboring jurisdiction. There are several reasons why this may occur. One reason might be that a new housing tract was built, people were enumerated, but their addresses were erroneously tied to a different census block or tract. Errors can also occur with Post Office Box addresses. In these cases, the Census Bureau will investigate, validate the correction, and re-certify the Census. Note: There will not be a net increase of population; only a re-allocation based on placing enumerated individuals in the proper Census block.

Mandates and Service Levels:

Federal and State Law require that redistricting occur consistent with Census 2000 population and demographic data which was released on March 29, 2001. The Board of Supervisors has the responsibility to complete the redistricting process in accordance with the timeframe identified.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

There is currently \$100,000 allocated and approved by the Board for use in the Redistricting Process.

Special Instruction:

Return signed copy of letter to the U.S. Census (Attachment D) to Shirley Moore.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Detailed List of Community Workshop Comments

Attachment B: County Counsel Office Memorandum, June 1, 2001, Topic: "Communities of Interest"

Attachment C: County Counsel Office Memorandum, May 15, 2001, Topic: "Prison Population"

Attachment D: Letter to U.S. Census Bureau documenting error in Census Tract Numbers

CC: Clare Macdonald, County Counsel
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