



County of Santa Barbara

Citizens Independent Redistricting Commission

Independent Redistricting: Improving the Process

Background and Introduction

In 2018, the voters of Santa Barbara County approved Measure G, which changed the process for the decennial revisions to the districts used to elect members of the Board of Supervisors. Measure G shifted the authority and responsibility for creating districts from the Board itself to a newly mandated Independent Citizens Commission. The first redistricting cycle led by the Commission occurred in 2021 following the 2020 census. It is important for context to note that Santa Barbara County's commission was one of very few operating in California in 2021, particularly at a county-level.

The 2021 redistricting process was, ultimately, successful, with a unanimous vote by the Commission to adopt the final version of a map which will be used to organize elections to the Board of Supervisors in 2022, 2024, 2026, 2028, and 2030. Not surprisingly, as a new approach, there were learning moments and instances where translating the intent of the ordinance authors into real-world operations proved challenging.

The intent of the Commission in preparing and presenting this report was to acknowledge the more significant challenges and to capture and share potential adjustments that could be made to either the governing ordinance or to the operational procedures of future commissions. This report is presented in the spirit of sharing our experience and learning.

It is not within the scope of the current commission to enact any of these suggestions; ultimately, amending the ordinance or changing the bylaws/operating procedures for future commissions lies with others, including the voters in the County themselves. While individual commissioners may have suggested specific strategies for addressing the identified challenges, the Commission as a whole takes no official position on any; we limit ourselves to presenting options for consideration based on our collective experience.

This report is organized into two primary sections. In this first section, we summarize feedback about perceived challenges related to the formation and operation of the Commission during the 2021 cycle and suggested changes that could be considered to improve these issues.

In the second (separate companion document), we share direct responses from a survey collected by the Commission in the first quarter of 2022 as part of our effort to solicit feedback from the public.

Challenges Associated during the 2021 Redistricting Process and Suggested Responses

Forming the Commission.

One of the key areas highlighted by respondents to the survey and by members of the 2021 Commission was the general area of how the Commission is formed, including concerns and recommendations related to 1) process for recruiting applicants to serve on the commission, 2) ensuring that the members of the Commission be representative of the County's population, 3) the process for selecting the actual Commission members, and 4) replacing Commissioners when a vacancy occurs.

The role of the County Election Official in selecting the pool of applicants from which commissioners are drawn was raised by a number of commenters. Concerns included vague direction/criteria for the Election Official to use in evaluating applicants, a perceived lack of transparency about how individuals were selected, and an ultimate pool which made it challenging to create a Commission whose members reflected the diversity of the County's residents.

Potential changes that could be considered included the following:

- Consider making the appointments of each new Commission sooner than the required deadline. This would allow additional time for training, outreach, participation in vendor/contractor selection, etc.
- Consider making the pool larger, increasing the likelihood that the desired level of diversity could be achieved.
- Develop objective scoring/review criteria to guide the work of the Elections Official.
- Consider changing the two-stage selection process and instead select all commissioners by random draw (rather than just initial 5) - or by an impartial panel that can ensure that the demographics balance as much as is possible.
- Consider selecting an "alternate" for each commissioner who could shadow, assist with outreach, and be prepared to step in as a commissioner if needed.
- Determine whether individuals who withdraw (either from the pool or from the Commission itself) are eligible for future consideration as a replacement.
- Clarify the Ordinance's language dealing with the expectation that appointments (initial and replacements) be balanced in terms of demographic diversity and proportional partisan representation. The ordinance should clarify which of these criteria have priority when they cannot both be satisfied due to the characteristics of available candidates.
- Change the term of the commissioners' appointments to eliminate the need for individual commissioners to file personal financial disclosures for ten years following completion of their work.

- Ensure marketing campaign to recruit candidates is broad based and targets citizens from all sectors of the County. Ensure that candidates are well informed of the requirements of the role, including time, outreach expectations, potential disqualifying conflicts, etc.

Commission Operations/Support.

Another theme that appeared in the feedback received by the Commission included concerns and recommendations related to the process/criteria for selecting consultants/contractors.

Potential changes that could be considered include:

- Change the Ordinance's specified selection criteria which apply to businesses contracted to provide services to the Commission (e.g. legal, demography, administrative, marketing/outreach) to not be the same as those used to qualify commissioners.
- In order to ensure transparency of the political preferences of the consultants, consider requiring disclosure of partisan candidate contributions over \$500.00 statewide, in addition to any prohibitions on contributions to candidates or Committees in Santa Barbara.
- Consider requiring (or indicating a preference) that the Outreach/Marketing contractor have a regular Santa Barbara County presence, increasing the potential that they have the relationships to maximize the effectiveness of outreach efforts.

Completing the Work of the Commission.

The final general theme included topics including 1) the public meetings conducted by the Commission, 2) the process for selecting mapping tools, and 3) ensuring effective public outreach.

Suggestions that could be considered include:

- Post public comments as received, or earlier than the required timeline for the meeting agendas.
- Consider allowing a *per diem*, for commissioners' mileage expenses, recognizing their investment of time and energy in meeting with the public and performing their public duties.
- Ensure the Commission has a role in selecting the mapping tools to be used by the public and the Commission. There was a strong feeling that the tools should be selected and introduced much earlier in the process.
- Begin training/public use of the mapping tools earlier in the process/timeline.
- Expand use of the Commission's website, including ensuring that redistricting rules and VRA requirements are posted and explained in easily understood language.
- Encourage the use of non-Commissioners (including remaining pool members) on ad hoc committees and outreach efforts.

Additional Resources and Related Documents

- CIRC Feedback Survey & Responses.pdf (posted separately)
- Santa Barbara County Citizens' Independent Redistricting Commission Ordinance: https://drawsantabarbaracounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CIRC_Ordinance.pdf
- SBC CIRC Bylaws: <https://drawsantabarbaracounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Second-Amended-Restated-Bylaws.pdf>
- Record of 2021 SBC CIRC Meetings (Agendas, Public Comments, etc.)



County of Santa Barbara Citizens Independent Redistricting Commission

CIRC Feedback Survey – Questions and Responses

This document includes the responses received to a survey circulated by the CIRC in early 2022, following the completion of the 2021 Santa Barbara County Redistricting process. The intent of the survey was to collect feedback from members of the general public and from commissioners about their experience with the redistricting process, along with any ideas they have about how that process can be improved in the future.

The commission does not formally endorse or dispute any of the content of the submitted responses, but presents them here in full for the benefit of decision makers related to future redistricting cycles.

What changes (if any) would you suggest to improve the criteria or process by which Commissioners are chosen (or replaced) to serve on the Commission?

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Trosky Comments:

Candidate for commission should be a resident of the county for five years, and demonstrate an ability and willingness to do outreach.

Each commissioner should have an alternate

Commissioners should attend all meetings in person

A commissioner that has resigned must not be able to return

Public comments should be posted for commissioners to review 72 hours, 48hours, 24 hours prior to meeting as well as the day of the meeting. Posting all public comments the day of the meeting was too voluminous to review thoughtfully.

Consultants should not submit maps

Incorrect data required maps to be redrawn thereby confusing and frustrating the public.

Outreach: the marketing consultant should be local and more proactive. There were times when flyers were made available after the hearing occurred. The consultant was not able to supply commissioners with marketing materials.

Calipers mapping was never used by the public or commissioners

What worked well:

- Public virtual attendance,
- no politicians were involved and the commission had the final decision on adopting the map.
- The chair gave public lots of opportunity to participate and comment
- Varied meeting times
- Engagement of the public
- Shalice Tilton's outstanding support to the commission and the process. Her help was essential. She was accessible

What didn't work:

- Group organization packing the meeting with members stating the identical message repeatedly
- Missing public comments in commissioner packets
- Calipers
- Consultant bias
- Redistricting messaging
- Simultaneous redistricting by multiple jurisdictions created public confusion. There needs to be a way to differentiate between state, county, schools, and cities redistricting

Twibell Comments:

Bylaws:

Article 2 - Section 5 Could each commissioner have permission to contact their Supervisor to e-blast the Redistricting website address and notice of upcoming meetings to their constituents?

Article 2-Section 11 A commissioner that has resigned shall not be considered for future vacancies

Turley Comments:

Clarify the role of the election official in selecting the pool. Should the pool be larger? Can recruitment of commissioners happen outside of the existing pool if there are not enough remaining candidates who reflect the makeup of the County?

Determine objective requirements for selection and make them clear to all applicants. Recruit commissioners earlier in the process and do not rush the selection of mapping tools, consultants and legal counsel.

California Elections/Ethics codes - are they too strict? For example, Dr. Murti wasn't comfortable promising she would never lecture on redistricting in the course of her work so it was recommended she step off the commission. This is apparently a common pitfall for commissioners, and it may be valuable to more clearly define what an example of a violation would be so that folks who are political science-adjacent educators aren't immediately disqualified from this work.

Who drafted the application? What would we recommend for changes?

Bradley Comments:

Recruitment of Potential Commissioners: Before the formation of the SBCIRC, mount an aggressive, high-profile recruitment campaign for potential members to obtain the largest and most diverse candidate pool possible. Ensure that potential applicants are well informed of the total time commitment and workload required, and advise them to think carefully about said commitment before applying.

Build a larger and more diverse applicant pool at the outset to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of candidates to select from at the beginning, and to backfill members who resign along the way. A good minimum number would be 100–150 applicants for all five districts.

To improve transparency, publicly post a grid of the starting applicant pool, showing basic qualification data (as represented on applications), and status (e.g., "Commissioner Candidate," "Commissioner selected at random YYYY/MM/DD," "Commissioner appointed YYYY/MM/DD," "Resigned YYYY/MM/DD," "Withdrawn YYYY/MM/DD," etc.).

Morris Comments:

Agree with the suggestion to increase the size of the pool (perhaps to 12 per district rather than nine, and perhaps to add some requirement that the demographics of each sub-pool (or at least the full pool) be more closely aligned to the required demographics outlined in the ordinance).

Voting official (or whoever is given responsibility for narrowing applicant base to the official pool of prospective commissioners needs to be given more specific guidelines to apply in their selection process. "Most qualified" allows for too much subjectivity.

Consider having the entire commission be selected by random draw (rather than just initial 5) - or by a special master or panel who can ensure that the demographics balance as much as is possible given the limits of applicants and the size of the commission.

Clarify that selection criteria which apply to commissioners (e.g. resident of county, registered voter, etc) do not apply to businesses contracted to provide services to the Commission (e.g. legal, demography, administrative, marketing/outreach). Perhaps add a statement of intent/preference for selecting vendors with an existing presence/operation in SBC, but clarify that the primary criteria to be used in selecting vendors include qualification, relevant experience, and price/budget.

Initial commissioner training - and public education- needs to clarify that the role of the commission is, ultimately, to determine the configurations of the final, approved maps. It

should be clearly understood that, while the commission may/should solicit map proposals from as wide a population as possible, the commission itself ultimately has the charge to determine where the lines ultimately are placed. Commissioners are not (nor should be) limited to simply picking from the options submitted by the public or advocacy organizations. Instead, they should apply what they learn through public outreach, public testimony, etc. to select elements of maps such that the final maps represent the best possible compromise and the requirements of county, state, and federal law.

Kaseff Comments:

It would help if the Applicant Pool more closely aligned with the ethnic makeup of the County. The biggest complaint was the lack of Hispanic applicants, increase the outreach to those communities.

Bray Comments:

I appreciate the insightful comments from my fellow commissioners, and find I have little to add. I would like to reiterate, in particular, a few of their recommendations, as well as an additional comment regarding filling a vacancy.

Clarify the role of the election official in selecting the commissioner candidates. Qualifications should be made clear not only to potential candidates, but to the public, so there is complete transparency in this selection. I agree with Comm. Morris in that “most qualified” is neither specific or helpful, and allows too much subjectivity. I also agree with Comm. Bradley in that before the formation of the SBCIRC, the County should mount an aggressive, high-profile recruitment campaign to obtain the largest and most diverse candidate pool possible. Also, I think the number of candidates needs to be increased. I was never certain what drove the original number, but it became a problem as commissioners resigned, in one case passed away, in trying to find a diverse, qualified pool of candidates to fill the vacant positions. The lack of available remaining candidates limited the selection and diversity from which to choose. I also believe that once a person resigns from the commission, for whatever reason, that commissioner should not be eligible for consideration to fill a vacancy.

While the commission’s work and selection process are supposed to be non-partisan, I felt this was not the case when selecting a new candidate for a vacant position. According to the ordinance, the replacement commissioner should be selected to maintain the balance of district representation and political affiliation that existed prior to the vacancy. While I understand the intent was to keep commission membership as proportional as possible to the percentage of voters who are registered with each political party in the County, I thought it limited the choices we had in not being able to select the most qualified candidate, but rather the candidate who had the correct party affiliation.

Finally, I was particularly impressed and pleased with the public participation. I found it extremely helpful in informing and educating the commissioners in a vast arena of topics and concerns.

Rios Comments:

I am thankful for public comment, it allowed me to reflection about the process before, during and after.

I would like to look at the application and ask ourselves what we want to know about our candidates. I would increase promotion about the need for commissioners to allow for more diverse candidates. The great need for translation informed how diverse our communities are. I would also be interested in exploring in more depth who gets to select the pool and how the “most” eligible candidates are selected for the pool. All applicant applications should be made public (not sure if they were). I think the pool needed to be more diverse and reflective of our county population in accordance with the Voting Rights Act.

Be clear on the role of commission, provide more explicit information on how their role is to take what they learned from community feedback and the data.

Additionally, I think outreach is hard but I want to continue to see how we can reach our most marginalized and diverse communities in the county.

STAFF COMMENTS

Ordin Comments:

Creation of the Commission Section. 2-10.9A.040 Consider whether the requirement that no Commissioners or immediate family members may have expended \$500.00 in support of a candidate or been a volunteer staff member in a campaign for eight years preceding the appointment is too restrictive and may exclude otherwise qualified and engaged Santa Barbara citizens. Similarly, the requirement that a Commissioner may not accept any appointments to any County office, board, or commission for four years after appointment may be overly restrictive. And, as already mentioned by one Commissioner, the requirement to continue financial reporting until a new Commission is appointed should be eliminated.

As many have already commented, the county elections official should be required to choose a larger pool of most qualified applicants and the language of Ordinance should explicitly require the county elections official to ensure that the “most Qualified” pool will reflect the county’s diversity, including racial, ethnic, geographic, age, and gender diversity.

Initial Appointments and Appointments upon Vacancy. The current Ordinance requires that appointees be chosen to ensure both the county’s diversity and proportional representation of each political party. The Ordinance currently gives inadequate guidance as to whether diversity or proportional partisan representation has primacy, if a decision has to be made between the two. The Ordinance should be explicit as to whether one value has primacy over the other, or if no one value is intended to have primacy, the Ordinance ought to say that as well.

Operating Rules of the Commission. Section 2-10.9A.050 The requirements for retention of consultants should be set out separately in the Ordinance rather than mimicking the requirements for Commissioners. At a minimum, the requirements that the consultants be residents and voters of the County should be eliminated. In order to ensure transparency of the

political preferences of the consultants, consider requiring disclosure of partisan candidate contributions over \$500.00 statewide, in addition to any prohibitions on contributions to candidates or Committees in Santa Barbara.

Finally, the Ordinance should include a modest *per diem*, including mileage and travel expenses, for the Commissioners, which would emphasize the serious commitment made by the Commissioners and appropriately recognize their investment of time and energy in meeting with the public and performing their public duties.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Transparency

Commissioners should not make last minute changes to the maps

Better public outreach beforehand to more diverse areas.

Choose people without extreme views or a history of involvement in political parties.

Clear up discrepancy between replacements by party or race

Full of admiration for work ethic of Commission and especially your work during the last month. Results seemed fair and not gerrymandered. Really proud of your work & fact our County used this process to redraw supervisor district boundaries.

There was in my opinion, an apparent openness to citizen opinions and comments.

More transparency

Thanks for making this process open and fairly done.

Nonpartisanship

It appeared to be politically biased

Lobbyists should not have been appointed. I have known Mr. Bray for almost 40 years as he has been an employee of several oil companies that operate near my residence. I did see during one meeting that Supervisor Nelson had attempted to speak. At no time should a decision-maker be involved during the public input period. Certain groups were allowed to threaten law suits and then they were given closed sessions.

The Commissioners were too biased. Some were listening to their "advisors" on zoom as they were answering questions. Boundaries were obviously being driven by politics so the commissioners' party could hold their district.

Decisions were made by non-politicians whose sole goal is to get reelected.

Hearing and respecting citizen's concerns on the district maps and for Cheryl Trosky keeping the commissioners honest and keeping it truly a citizens' commission, not a supervisor wish list.

The particular company has a reputation of favoring conservative voters. As they say, it's all in the perception. If a company is perceived as biased even before the process begins, it is almost impossible to earn the trust of the participants. After the process ended, there was quite a bit of information about behind the scenes operations which went on even before the formal process began. I never questioned the process when the supervisors did re-districting. But having a company come in from the outside and start every meeting focusing on what the Republicans have been after for decades created an insurmountable blockade to 'communities of interest'. That phase became meaningless as the process continued.

Get Commissioners who are unbiased or at least try to hide their bias. It was insulting to the intelligence of the public.

The commission should be equally represented by BOTH political parties.

It was a fairly objective commission for the most part. They listened to the people.

In my opinion the board was unequal, as there was a more liberal representative mix.

Have partisan attorneys advising a non-attorney Commission was unwise and should not be repeated in future redistricting.

Stop the domination of special interest groups (CAUSE, chamber of commerce, etc.) in this process. In fact there was violations per the statute was written as to too much involvement of political special interest groups dominating the commissioners and taking away from the general publics common sense and truth approach to the redistricting.

Commissioner Appointment/Replacement:

It should not be allowed that if a person quits and leaves the commission that they are allowed to come back again.

it was way too white and way too old. We need it to be linguistically, socio-economically diverse.

Make the criteria and every step of the selection process public. The non-male non-white applicants I knew of were removed from the list without explanation, which was very concerning.

More transparency about the selection of final pool of candidates. Interviewing all interested candidates to select the final 11, and not choosing any randomly. Adding an interview question about commitment to the commission as well as including ethics and conflict of interest information up front, in the application.

Not sure how to change selection process directed by County Clerk Recorder, which resulted in the initial gender and ethnic imbalance of Commission membership. Needs to be addressed & improved so initial work is not slowed. May involve amending that initial procedure to be more directive about gender and ethnic balance.

The commissioners need to better reflect the diversity of Santa Barbara County. The commission was top heavy with upper middle class white privileged individuals.

There need to be more approved applicants, and the approval process needs to include diversity in its criteria. Also, it might be a good idea to appoint alternates who are available to step in if there are (inevitable) resignations.

These commissioners seemed dedicated and responsible to their duties. The Cuyama Valley did not have a commissioner chosen from applicants, nor were any of the commissioners familiar with the area. It was not until we reached out that we were recognized. Make certain in the future that all areas are served with at least one commissioner who knows the less populated areas.

Expand the pool and keep the pool open for new candidates.

Have the commission reflect the committee

Aside from having a MUCH MORE DIVERSE pool of candidates/applicants, it's critical to have a diverse pool of backup Commissioners - several people cycled off of the Commission, which was concerning from an outsider's perspective (I wasn't sure about the training/catch-up offered to new Commissioners).

It's about the people on the commission, make the draws from a lottery

Less turnover of commissioners. But I think 2030 will be better simply because it won't be the first time the county has an independent redistricting commission.

The initial pool of applicants needed to be much larger - so provide more outreach and/or be less restrictive? Have a MUCH more transparent process in selecting the commissioners at each step.

The selection process was compromised by the first selection (from a hat) of the initial 5 members. Racial/gender/political party equity could never be achieved after this uneven

start. The ratio of registered Democrats to registered Republicans (with independents voting) in this county is close to 2:1. That was never reflected in the panel selection.

There needs to be a "written process" detailing the entire process -- a "Yellow Brick Road" so to speak!

When there was an unexpected open seat, the commission went back and asked the person who had quit the commission to return rather than take a new candidate. That was flat out wrong!

Procedure

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

McClintock Comments

The choice of decision support tools (DistrictR and Maptitude) was made entirely by NDC, without input from the Commission or, for that matter, the public. While this may have been necessary given the constraints imposed by time and money, this process should be more transparent and inclusive. Ideally, one would start the process of choosing a decision support tool very well in advance - even 2 years before the tool is needed - with a budget large enough to build a bespoke tool. This has been done in many spatial planning processes and we shouldn't have to rely on off-the-shelf tools that are inadequate for our purposes. (A good example of a feature that was badly needed included a means by which one could add and update a clear narrative associated with a plan. Or, a means to track the lineage of a plan.) There are dozens of features that we could have used and that would have saved us hours of meeting time had we simply had these at our disposal.

I would like to see more use of the districting tools by commissioners and the general public *in advance of receiving the new census data*. If commissioners are selected earlier, and the tools are chosen and implemented earlier, public workshops should be held where each commissioner (and interested members of the public) can use the tools. That way, when the census data arrive, we can hit the ground running.

Bradley Comments

Procedure: Public Information

Publicly post condensed redistricting rules and VRA requirements: During this redistricting cycle, many members of the public did not fully understand (or disregarded) the basic rules of redistricting derived from the State and federal constitutions, and from the VRA. Public comments frequently revealed ignorance of legal requirements, such as demands for drawing district lines to exclude 'undesirables' and/or to create districts where residents vote the same way, etc. It might help reduce these sorts of false expectations if information and examples were located more prominently on the SPCIRC website, including hypothetical scenarios (such as

drawing to exclude populations) so that the public better understands the legal process, and tying these scenarios to specific constitutional and VRA violations.

Procedure: Meetings

Order of agenda: For agenda items where more public input is anticipated, and/or items with input from out-of-area experts connecting from other time zones, agendize these items earlier in the meeting.

NOTE: This was often done, but sometimes it was overlooked, which required public participants and experts to wait until late hours to give their input, especially during meetings that ran long and late.

Procedure: Ad Hoc Committee Appointees

Expansion of ad hoc committees to include other applicant pool members: Expand some ad hoc committees to include candidates from the applicant pool who are not otherwise seated as commissioners. This will serve as a 'force multiplier' for more laborious tasks, expand the scope, diversity and capabilities of ad hoc committees, and give candidates the opportunity to work with commissioners, both to determine whether they, in fact, still want to serve on the SBCIRC as a prospective replacement, and to give seated commissioners an opportunity to see which candidates would make the most effective replacements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Meetings and Public Comment Process:

Public Comment process was...

4% very difficult
27% somewhat difficult
8% no opinion
38% somewhat easy
23% very easy

In general, it was pretty easy, but the timing was difficult to follow at times.

It really depended -- if it was a popular night, it was EXTREMELY difficult (we all know about the hours-long meetings), but was balanced by the nights where it was no wait to do so

It was so hard to time well with the agenda. I never knew how long the meetings would last and when I would have a chance to give public comment (in person or virtually).

It was well organized, both in person and virtually. The mask mandate made it difficult when speaking in person but the desire to be heard was greater than the temporary discomfort.

Meeting in Solvang, I presented a short paper and gave my verbal communication objecting to Santa Ynez Valley being 'hooked' to Isla Vista Students. Giving comments was pretty easy.

Once I signed up to speak (via Zoom) and never was called. There was no indication or feedback that my request to speak was not received.

Presentation was fairly easy.

Public comment goes no where.....they listen but don't hear

Sometimes meetings went longer than expected; a meeting was declared over, yet my name was called 10 minutes later, according to a peer who stayed tuned and let me know.

The amount of time allowed for individual speakers at certain hearings was extremely short considering the complexity of the issues involved. At least once my previously submitted written comments were not included in the packet of public comments despite being submitted well in advance of the deadline.

The big concern was whether Commissioners got written public comment in advance of meetings.

The only problem I had was waiting an extended period of time to submit my comments.

There were some very long meetings, and waiting for my turn to make public comment was challenging at some points. Having to adjust public comment time (1/2/3 minutes) after writing and rehearsing what I planned to say was also a bit unnerving.

We were not allowed sufficient opportunity to correct latino numbers in maps submission

Written comments were easy once I had the correct email to send the comments. Public speaking virtually was at first difficult. I recognized the procedure after attending two virtual meetings. Internet bandwidth in Cuyama is slow which made long meetings a challenge and sometimes unavailable.

Comments were heard and acknowledged by the committee.

Ease of participation

I appreciated being able to attend virtually!

It was good to be able to give public feedback

Public input process was open and welcomed.

The ability to allow individual citizens to participate. The comments were listened to.

The ability to give public comment in a variety of ways.

The commission was easy for good community input

The commission's flexibility and openness to input from the public, as well as the public's involvement.

The Commissioners were thoughtful and engaged, and really listened to public input.

The open referendum to the Public

Virtual participation

ZOOM meeting were very helpful in public participation

Make all commissioner meetings on zoom for convenience sake.

Timing of Meetings:

The late hour of the meetings made it challenging but I really appreciated the online submission and the ability to participate virtually.

Too many night meetings

Hold meeting during the day not at night

The critical part of the commission's work was rushed at the end of the process and public comment was abridged. It was very difficult to keep up with the late night meetings, new submittals and decisions.

Shorter meetings (even if that means weekly meetings).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION up to the very end!! The actual last selection of maps (with revisions done at the last minute and voted on that day) was ridiculous. I know time was of the essence, but the maps ended up drastically changed from their original intent and the public had no additional opportunities to stop the direction these changes were taking. It was as if all the work done over the past several months was just pushed aside in the interest of getting the maps done on time. Obviously, COVID-19 had an impact on the schedule, but it just felt soooo rushed at the end, and that needs to be prevented in the future!

If you submitted one or more proposed map, which tool did you use to create and submit your entry?

5 used DistrictR (1 very easy, 2 somewhat difficult, 1 very difficult)

1 used a paper map with a spreadsheet (1 somewhat easy)

1 used only a paper map (1 very difficult)

2 additional folks selected "very difficult," and 1 more of each of "somewhat difficult" and "somewhat easy"

Mapping Software:

Despite attending a CIRC workshop where Maptitude was featured and downloading an online tutorial I found it impossible to use on my home computer. I was able to draw maps with DistrictR but it did not include critical information such as updated census data, district boundaries, and minority citizen voting age data. I had to totally redraw my map(s) to incorporate new census data and attempt to correlate my DistrictR map with other maps such as the interactive County Map, etc. that included that data. If you expect ordinary citizens to draw sample maps, all the relevant data should be incorporated into a single easy-to-use mapping tool in a timely fashion. The deadline for submitting maps was too close to the time when final census data was incorporated into the mapping tools, which was later than promised.

Easy but inaccurate

How many tools available to the average S.B. citizen?

If I hadn't worked with other individuals with more map drawing skills, I never would have figured the tool out on my own.

Lost my data. Had to recreate my map twice

The DistrictR and website issue was very confusing. It was hard to tell which maps were which and which were being considered on DistrictR.

Map Labeling & Review:

From what I heard from others, it was difficult to keep track of submitted maps due to changing numbers, etc.

The maps were not controlled very well.

Difficult to go back and forth among multiple maps. Difficult to know exactly where a district border would be located. Actually submitting a comment was fairly easy.

Gradually narrowing down the number of maps was very helpful.

Find software that would allow a resident to view 2 maps at one time on a screen in order to be able to compare the 2 maps.

Trying to follow the potential maps got somewhat confusing at times, though the technology was impressive.

Participation/Outreach

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Twibell Outreach comments:

-Should Media/Outreach Consultant chosen from in-county companies? Would they know more about reaching out to community members?

-Have an outreach plan and time line

Maybe the commissioners that served on this sub-committee could write up an outline that would recommend timing of advertising, types that worked or didn't work, etc.-Application process and deadline needs maximum advertising, tv news, papers, blogs, etc.

I have read more about the Santa Barbara City and Goleta City redistricting in the local paper than I ever read about the county redistricting

I have also seen tv ads where commissioners asked for participation from the public. We did not do that at the county level.

-I like the idea of a mandatory outreach to each city council by a commissioner

-When I looked at the ex-parte communication spreadsheet, I was disappointed in our outreach effort as a group.

When the county advertises for this commission, maybe they should emphasize that point

Ordinance - suggested changes or clarification

Sec 2-10.9.A

4.b - add "or political special interests"

4.d.1. Be a resident of the County of Santa Barbara (for a minimum of five years)

4.e.1 After the application has been screened by the County Election official to make sure they are qualified by the criteria listed in 4.d, then every applicant, thus qualified shall be named to the qualified pool of applicants. The pool would be judged by objective qualifications only.

Therefore I would recommend eliminating 4.e.1 (A) (B) (C) because these are subjective questions and the County Election official could not answer the Board of Supervisors when asked about this part of the process.

Hopefully, there would be a large pool for each district that would be qualified.

4.f.g.h Still have a drawing for the first 5. Then it would be up to these five commissioners to balance the makeup as listed in 4.h.3 (I would add "demonstrated ability to speak to a small group for outreach purpose"

4.j.(C).(3) If a commissioner resigns for any reason they shall not be reassigned to the pool of applicants.

5.h - At each public meeting (or by posting on Redistricting Website, each commission member shall clearly disclosed the sources and summaries of any ex parte communications that they have had concerning the redistricting process.

Bradley Comments

Outreach: Expansion of outreach to include other applicant pool members: [NOTE: this suggestion echoes one of my earlier comments above regarding procedure.] Expand outreach meetings to include candidates from the applicant pool who are not otherwise seated as commissioners. It might be useful to have unseated pool members serve within their districts as liaisons and recruiters to bring more residents to workshops, and to speak actively on behalf of their districts regarding COI's and local demographics, boundaries, etc. This was a largely untapped source.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Which community do you call home (enter the name of your city or unincorporated community; if you live outside of Santa Barbara County, enter the name of your County)

Respondents from Solvang (2), Santa Ynez Valley (4), Santa Maria (4), Santa Barbara (13), Orcutt (3), Montecito (1), Los Alamos (2), Lompoc (5), Goleta (2), Eastern Goleta Valley (1), Cuyama (3), Carpinteria (1) and Buellton (2) were represented, with remainder from unincorporated areas

How did you first learn about the SBC Independent Redistricting process (select all that apply):

21 reported learning about the process through a County/Commission email
5 from social media
9 from a public outreach presentation
11 from a community-based organization or nonprofit communication
5 from a website
13 from a local newspaper article
1 from a radio ad or article
2 from a TV ad or news story
15 from word of mouth or a referral
Other sources: Board of Supervisors hearing, involved in the Measure G process

How did you stay informed about the SBC Independent Redistricting process (select all that apply):

23 attended CIRC meetings in person or virtually
28 subscribed to a County/Commission email newsletter
5 followed us on social media
7 attended a County/Commission outreach presentation
12 subscribed to a community org, nonprofit or association communication
20 visited the website
10 via local newspaper ads or articles
3 via radio ads or articles
2 via TV ads or stories
13 from word of mouth

How did you participate in the SBC Independent Redistricting Process (select all that apply):

- 7 respondents participated as a representative of an organization or group, 27 as individuals, and 13 reported that they did not participate (would be interesting to look at the community breakdown on this response)
- 27 attended CIRC meetings in person or virtually
- 27 submitted public comments in person or virtually
- 4 submitted proposed maps (MT comment: this is interesting - I would have hoped more folks who had submitted maps would have given us feedback! It does appear that 7 folks who drew maps submitted comments - see question below about tools)
- 27 shared information with others
- 12 organized meetings to submit comments and/or maps

Suggested changes public outreach/engagement

My first written public comment was recognized by Megan Turley. She reached out to me based on the comments. Her outreach was incredible. Due to her interest, and willingness to visit New Cuyama to hear our voices, the community organized a meeting that drew 15 participants in person, and more than one written comment to be added to the voices of Cuyama. Because of her outreach, and subsequent visit including Commissioner Glenn Morris, people of the Cuyama Valley were able to agree on a very important issue of district allocation.

Although our community association, the Family Resource Center (in Cuyama) was listed as an organization to contact, no one was contacted

At least one notification sent in the mail to ALL ("active") registered voters explaining what it is and where to find more information. Maybe make a video or other "simplified" depiction of what exactly the Commission does/will do and emphasize how important it is (much like those old "ABC Rocks" cartoons that explained what a Bill is and the process of creating and passing a bill.) Simplify the message and stress its importance ... the impact on each voter's day-to-day life - how important it is to BE INVOLVED!

Expanded public outreach using more types of media.

Get more north county homeowners and business owners involved

Give presentations to each local city council and invite the public to attend. Give presentations in person or via Zoom to non-profit organizations.

Hold breakfast or lunch meetings

I noticed the company had 100s of churches on a contact list. This violates church/state separation. Not everyone attends a church/mosque/synagogue. (statistics show less than 30%). I suggest using public schools where you can outreach to a cross section of the public.

I think the public outreach was successful.

I thought the commission did a good job reaching out to various members of the community.

I'm not sure if/what the marketing consultants did, but a lot of money was dedicated - I'm an actively engaged community member and I only heard about redistricting from Commissioners on KCLU and via a few social media posts.

Important meetings near the end of the process need to be better spaced with more time for public comments and careful analysis of the individual maps.

Language translation (in indigenous languages) as well as Spanish from the very beginning, with all materials, written and spoken. Trainings on how to draw maps with the various tools available.

Longer time to respond....again, make known what the Commission does, is and what is required to be on it.

More publicity through television or radio about the upcoming meetings.

More newspaper and live press Conferences

Seems to have worked quite well. Always the problem of how to engage hard to reach groups. County Recreation Master Plan consultants are developing some innovative ways to connect with these groups. Contact them to learn what they are doing and see what might be useful for Commission.

Start earlier and have organizational workshops for organizations.

Find ways to share what you have learned with all counties in CA and around the nation. Maybe start with state organizations for cities and counties. U.S. needs your expertise.

I did not approve of the company leading the charge on redistricting. Reach out to cities on one person per city. Each city should have one rep- A group of 21 members

What worked well was early well spaced outreach to the various parts of the County. I appreciated that I could attend a workshop here in Solvang, especially during a pandemic.

More outreach

Reach more folks

Final Thoughts... (not already covered above)

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Bradley Comments:

General Comments: This redistricting cycle, as difficult as it was due to pandemic-related delays in obtaining data, combined with the novelty of being one of only a few County-level citizens' redistricting commissions, succeeded in its overall goal of redrawing district lines legally and fairly. Longstanding North County demographic inequalities in representation were addressed, and concessions and compromises were made to accommodate the public's input on district demographics, processes and procedure, boundaries, traffic flow, school districts, etc. It is notable that disparate interests within the County were largely pleased or displeased with the adopted map for entirely different reasons, which is a hallmark of an effective democratic process. If, on the other hand, disparate interests had all been displeased for the same reasons, this would have suggested a systemic failure.

As a Commissioner, I was disturbed by the tenor of some public input, including frequent accusations that we were 'serving special interests' and/or insincere in our efforts to be honest and fair. This reflects a larger, systemic cynicism at work in American politics and discourse today, and it tears at the social fabric of civic engagement and volunteerism needed to make our democracy work. Some public comments and legal threats revealed complainants' beliefs in widely circulated conspiracy narratives, and/or their comments were lifted wholesale from political pundits with monological belief systems. Despite the fact that my fellow commissioners and I came from quite different backgrounds and political sentiments, however, I believe we all did our best to listen to each other, compromise, and cooperate. This spirit of compromise is especially essential within the small-town politics of counties and cities where we live side-by-side.

It has often been observed that "democracy is messy" because of the compromises and debates required to effect change, but democracy still remains the best system by which to govern ourselves. Members of the public who apply for civic positions such as SBCIRC should be prepared to endure some stress, while expecting civility and decency from members of the public with whom they work. This 'line of civility' is crucial to the maintenance and operation of any democracy and, indeed, most members of the public adhere to this line. In fact, I was frequently inspired by many members of the public who consistently showed up at meetings, both online and in-person, to offer excellent suggestions and solutions. Their input was invaluable—even (or especially) when it varied from my own thoughts—and their civility was the norm, not the exception.

In January of 2021, while voting on the appointment of new members of SBCIRC online, a person or persons banged on the front door and walls of my house—presumably to 'send a message.' During another vote, some cars parked in front of my house and honked their horns, then sped off. In short, the 'line of civility' was crossed. As a former school board president, I had encountered mild public confrontations before and accepted it as part of being a volunteer public servant. But my general sense is that things have recently escalated to a point where

some members of the public feel entitled to threaten those who do not represent their interests to the exclusion of all others. Clearly, this is not democracy.

As this SBCIRC body continues to serve out its ten-year obligation, and as we approach future census cycles, it is important that everyone undertake public discourse with a sense of civility and shared benefits. While, for example, heckling and shouting down public comments from persons who hold views different from our own may feel like we're exercising our First Amendment right to free speech, it is simultaneously denying some other audience member's First Amendment right to clearly hear what is being said. It's always okay to disagree, even emotionally, with other members of the public, but we all benefit from taking turns to speak, listening to others' viewpoints, truly considering what is being presented, and then thinking carefully before we speak or act.

Overall, Santa Barbara's SBCIRC process worked. We have new district lines for a growing and changing County. Some old political expectations will need to evolve and adapt. But I feel, overall, that our redistricting process succeeded and should be continued indefinitely.

Kaseff Comments:

I would like to recommend that Commissioners be relieved of their responsibility to the Commission once the final map has been delivered and accepted. My understanding is that we remain on the Commission for the next 10 years and are required to complete financial disclosures annually.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

What worked well?

Beats me...

Collaboration was good

Good organization

I feel the commissioners were quite dedicated to serving the people of Santa Barbara County and their concerns. They were knowledgeable about the laws that must be followed in the redistricting process.

I think the process went well considering the limitations of the pandemic. The Commissioners that served on the committee were excellent during the arduous process of choosing a final map!

I was surprised how well things worked in spite of the many challenges.

The Commission's willingness to travel to the Cuyama Valley and take interest in local input and suggestions.

The Tools were fairly easy to use. Being able to attend virtually was extremely helpful.

What I'm concerned nothing worked

You stayed on track

What could have worked better?

Clear up whether all consultants must be locals and voters

Clerical support was chaotic and unreliable. The demographers made a number of mistakes.

There should be an RFP process for law firms and demographer consultants next time.

Hopefully, rural areas like Cuyama will have access to higher internet speeds by 2030. That will help.

I was very concerned about Commissioners' inability to wear their masks properly, so I only participated virtually. I'm hoping we won't be mid-pandemic in 2030, but Commissions should be held to public health orders.

More information as to what redistricting does, how it operates and why.....what considerations are in the process: representation...

The Commission could have hired a better more impartial consulting staff that could have delivered on their promises without injecting political bias into the process. The consultants repeatedly characterized public comment in a manner that undermined the commission's discretion to evaluate public input objectively. The consultants failed to deliver updated drawing tools on time and submitted their own maps when the commission had promised that the commission would not be drawing the maps. Ultimately the commission did draw its own map with very little opportunity for members of the public to comment on it. Any future commission purporting to not draw its own maps needs to clarify how and when the commission will draw its own map. Although legal constraints were described as all-important to the process, legal counsel's advice regarding adhering to the Voting Rights Act was late and unclear. Any member of the public drawing a map needed that information to be provided earlier and in a clearer manner. Members of the public drawing and submitting maps needed preliminary review and evaluation of those maps well before the deadline for final submittal, so they could make the necessary revisions to their maps to address flaws they were unaware of until staff analyzed the maps (divided districts, unassigned areas, minority population, etc.).

I wish the meeting recording was posted more quickly after the meeting.

Is there any other information that you would like to share with the Commission?

Congratulations on completing a very difficult task under very difficult conditions. You did not adopt the very worst map proposed but you could have adopted a better map that was less disruptive to their entire county and did not purposefully dilute the voting power of students and the residents of Isla Vista by separating the presidential voting cycle from the Supervisorial voting cycle and packing them into a district that minimizes their involvement with County decision-making.

Don't have your minds made up in advance

Good job!

Great job over all.

Great job, well done. Not perfect but close enough. Thank you.

Great job! This first commission made history!

I want to give a "high 5" to the entire team (including the commissioners and their support team) -- a very difficult job well done!

I'd like to know how anybody thought including the far northeast corner of the county that I'd almost all low income Ag with the furthest southeast corner of the county with one of the highest income levels is far. Who do you think that Supervisor is going to listen to and fairly represent? I can confidently say a large portion of the voters out here were disappointed.

Stellar job.

Thank you for your service!!!

Thank you for your work.

Thanks for all of the time and effort the Commission put into this effort as volunteers!