

2011 Decennial Supervisorial Redistricting

County of Los Angeles

May 9, 2011 West Hollywood Park

Third District Community Outreach Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Self-introductions were made.

- **Mr. Martin Zimmerman, Chief Executive Office (CEO), welcomed all in attendance which included members of the community, Boundary Review Committee Members, staff from the Chief Executive Office, County Counsel, Board Offices and the Executive Office. He encouraged input from community members on the redistricting process.**
- **Mr. Zimmerman referenced the two maps posted on the side wall, one depicting the entire County with the five current districts, and one focused on the 3rd District, noting that areas in yellow are unincorporated.**

2. Purpose of Meeting

- **Every 10 years after the Census count, the Board of Supervisors oversees a redistricting process to assure as equal representation as possible for all residents within each supervisorial district. This meeting is to inform community members about the redistricting process, why it is important and how redistricting may affect their community.**
- **In addition to providing the community with information about the redistricting process, the Board-appointed Boundary Review Committee also wants to solicit input from the community.**

3. What is Redistricting and Why is it Important?

a. What are the Key Objectives?

Mr. Zimmerman reported the following statistics:

- **At the latest Census count, the County of Los Angeles has 9.8 million people, making it the most populous county in the United States.**
- **Its current budget is \$23.3 billion dollars.**
- **It has approximately 100,000 employees, making it the largest local employer.**

- There are 88 incorporated Cities within the County of Los Angeles and between 120 and 140 individual unincorporated areas. Municipal services are by-in-large provided by each City, with the County providing certain regional services. However, within the unincorporated areas, the County is both the municipal government as well as the regional government. Well over half of the cities contract with the County for services that can be more conveniently provided by the County.
- The Board is also responsible for public policy and funding decisions that impact the lives of County residents, such as public hospitals and health care centers, law enforcement (Sheriff, District Attorney), restaurant inspections, social services (Children and Family Services), water quality, County roads, parks and libraries, and a host of major cultural resources.
- Every ten years, the United States attempts to count every person in the country through a process called the Decennial Census. It is mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. The latest Census was conducted on April 1, 2010, and provides a snapshot of how many people there are and where they live.

He reported under the “Total Population Comparison: 2000 to 2010”

- The 2001 Benchmark Plan was based on the population count from the 2000 Census indicating the population of the 5 Districts based on the lines that were in affect before they redistricted. The total deviation among the 5 Districts was 6.45%, indicating how the Districts had grown out of balance over the decade.
- The Plan adopted in 2001 brought the deviation down to 1.40% by approving certain boundary adjustments.
- Under the 2011 Benchmark Plan (boundary lines from 2001, but using 2010 Census figures), there is a total deviation of 9.97%.
- Once we know how many people there are and where they live in the County of Los Angeles, we need to attempt to divide the population as evenly as possible into five supervisorial districts for the County of Los Angeles. Adjusting the boundaries is called “redistricting.”
- Mr. Zimmerman referenced the recent statewide elections which resulted in an independent citizens’ commission responsible for redistricting at the State level. The California redistricting process is for the State’s Congressional districts, Senate districts, Assembly districts, and the Board of Equalization districts.

b. What are the Legal Aspects of Redistricting?

Ms. Nancy Takade, County Counsel reported the following:

- **“One Person, One Vote” under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution talks about the equality of representation which for our purposes means making everyone’s vote count. The proposed redistricting plans must comply with requirements of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution and with the mandate of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. That is the main message for redistricting not only from a legal level but from a policy level as well. These community meetings will be taking place across the County, in each Supervisorial District in an effort to reach out and inform residents about the redistricting process.**
- **In addition to federal law, there are other laws governing redistricting. There is also the California Election Code, which controls the timeline for the redistricting process. Finally, the County Charter, our local constitution, provides that the County of Los Angeles shall have a Board of Supervisors consisting of five members and five districts. Additionally, there are court decisions which interpret these laws. It should be noted that in order to change the number of districts, a vote by the people is required to change the number of supervisorial districts. Furthermore, a 2/3 vote by the Board of Supervisors is required to change the Supervisorial District lines.**
- **Achieving a perfect balance among the five districts may not be possible in reality due the numerous factors involved with redistricting, such as; geography, compactness, respect for political consideration and ethnic backgrounds, city lines etc...**
- **At the end of the process there will be two public hearings to consider the recommendation of the Boundary Review Committee. This is another opportunity for the public to provide input.**

4. How Will the Process Unfold?

Mr. Zimmerman reported the following:

- **The Board of Supervisors established the Boundary Review Committee in November 2010 to solicit public input and recommend a redistricting plan to the Board. The Committee is made up of two members and two alternates nominated by each Supervisor and approved by the full Board.**

- A Public Access Plan was established to ensure wide participation by the public for this process.
- The 2011 redistricting timeline was provided in a handout.

5. How Can You Get Involved?

Mr. Zimmerman reported the following:

- The Board of Supervisors has approved a Public Access Plan to promote public participation in the redistricting process and ensure the widest practicable participation and dissemination of pertinent redistricting information.
- Individuals and/or community groups are encouraged to participate in the redistricting process. Meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes will be updated on a regular basis on the redistricting website and will be publicized in media press releases as well as all those who wish to be added to the mailing list.
- Members of the public are encouraged to attend the Boundary Review Committee meetings as well as the community outreach meetings. Information regarding meeting schedules is located on the County's Redistricting website: www.redistricting.lacounty.gov.

The following dates are the scheduled Boundary Review Committee meetings.

- Wednesday, May 18, 2011
 - Location TBD
- Wednesday, June 1, 2011
 - Board of Supervisors Hearing Room 381B, 3:00 to 6:00
- Meetings in June TBD based on need
- Wednesday, July 13, 2011
 - Board of Supervisors Hearing Room 381B, 3:00 to 6:00

- Mr. Zimmerman noted that the Boundary Review Committee may revise its scheduled meetings as needed. The updated Boundary Review Committee meeting schedule can be found at the County's Redistricting Website: www.redistricting.lacounty.gov
- All meetings are held at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.
- The County of Los Angeles is providing free web-based redistricting software to allow the public to develop and submit redistricting plans for consideration by the Boundary Review Committee. The software went live on April 22, 2011. The redistricting mapping application can be found at the County's Redistricting Website: www.redistricting.lacounty.gov

The County has arranged four webinar training sessions to train the public how to use the redistricting mapping software to create and submit a redistricting plan. Although the webinar sessions have all been completed, there is a step-by-step recorded webinar version for public review that can be found at the County's Redistricting Website: www.redistricting.lacounty.gov

Please note: The last day to submit a proposed redistricting plan is Thursday June 2, 2011 at 11:59 p.m. Thus far, two plans have been submitted. All public input will be considered through June and at the hearings before the Board of Supervisors.

6. Public Comment

During the presentation, several members of the public posed questions.

- Member of the Public

Have there been any objections regarding the accuracy of the Census?

Having worked closely with the Census, Mr. Zimmerman noted that the 2010 Census was extraordinarily rigorous and the Census Bureau made every effort to conduct a complete count. There are some efforts by other jurisdictions to challenge this count; however, it is difficult to challenge the Census.

- Member of the Public

What is a "protected class," and who are they?

Nancy Takade of County Counsel stated that a protected class includes an ethnic or language minority group. To make a showing of a violation under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, the persons alleging the violation will have to show that they are members of a “protected class,” and have less opportunities than others to elect the candidate of their choice.

- **Member of the public**

Where does the Boundary Review Committee hold their meetings?

Martin Zimmerman stated: All Boundary Review Committee meetings are held at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

- **Member of the public**

What are the two plans that were submitted?

Mr. Zimmerman gave a general characterization of the plans submitted:

- 1. The Minority Empowerment Plan, submitted by Alan Chan, would result in 1.5 million people in Los Angeles County changing Districts, as well as many cities. It would consolidate most of the San Gabriel Valley in the 1st District. The Districts most impacted by this plan would be Districts 1, 5 and 4. District 3 would not have much change.**
- 2. There are even larger demographics changes within the second plan. This plan was just posted and the information has not been fully reviewed.**

All plans submitted will go before the Boundary Review Committee for full analysis and there will be a full report and disclosure of all information. This will go before the Board of Supervisors in June and include all information submitted from each plan such as population distribution, ethnic percentages and socio-economic information.

- **Member of the public**

How much will it cost each District to do the redistricting?

Most of the work is being done by existing County staff. There are some experts that have been hired (e.g., demographics); however the cost is not significant.

- **Member of the Public**

Who has the responsibility to make the final decision on boundaries?

Mr. Zimmerman responded that the Board of Supervisors has the responsibility to make that final decision and adopt the boundaries.

- **West Hollywood City Councilwoman Abbe Land spoke as a constituent for the City and stressed the importance of redistricting for the 3rd District. There are many cities within the 3rd District that have a lot of commonalities. The cities often work together, have common interest, and like the current Supervisor; they want to remain in the 3rd District. She emphasized that the current boundaries have proven beneficial for all, and that keeping the District whole is in the best interests of the cities, whoever the Supervisor is.**

Opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee:

- **Sybil Zaden – Lives in the City of West Hollywood and belongs to neighborhood watch. She agrees with Councilmember Land and wishes no changes.**
- **Andy Pavali – From Agoura Hills; believes District 3 is challenged in terms of boundary changes, because Ventura borders the Westside and the Pacific Ocean borders on the south. The 3rd District includes unique geographic features like the Santa Monica Mountains. The mountains go from one end to the other end, all the way to the Westside. As stated by Ms. Land, the 3rd District includes unincorporated areas and many cities, some of which contract with the County. The Supervisor is extremely important. 3rd District residents are extremely happy with the Supervisor.**
- **Stan Treitel – Lived in the Hancock Park area, here to represent the Orthodox Jewish Community, which is spread out over a number of areas: Beverly/Fairfax, Hancock Park, Pico/Robertson, Beverlywood, some parts of Beverly Hills and Valley Village in North Hollywood, and currently represented by Zev Yaroslavsky. Would like to keep the areas in one district. Many members of this community abide by Jewish law, and the Supervisor is very aware of these issues. The community has its own ambulance and a network which was created due to the assistance of Zev Yaroslavsky.**
- **Toby Keeler – Thanked the commission, asked to speak on behalf of the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation. She read a 4-page letter to be submitted to the BRC. The Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation with 6,000 owners is the largest and most venerable non-partisan homeowners' coalition in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA). The Federation has a strong track record in bringing together stakeholders to improve the quality of life in the Santa Monica Mountains and protect the legacy of the mountains and**

coastal environment. As a resident of old Topanga and since incorporation in 1991, we have proclaimed our city to be the getaway to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation area, which also included Hidden Hills, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, Malibu, Topanga and areas of the unincorporated LA County. We reside in the unique mountainous rural urban interface that includes Federal and State parklands and other publicly owned open spaces of the Santa Monica Mountains. Our communities understand that parks, creeks and beaches are a major economic engine for the area with over 30 million visitors each year. The communities of interest include Santa Monica Bay to the South, Ventura County line to the West and North, and the City of Los Angeles to the East (San Fernando Valley and the greater Westside Communities of the 3rd District of Los Angeles County). The Federation wants to keep the 3rd District as it is.

- Ken Mazur – Member of the Topanga community. He indicated that the communities that are found in the 3rd District are heavily involved in the mountains. The environmental threats are the same in many of the cities in the 3rd District. The bay is impacted from runoff and the Valley residents commute through the mountains to the Westside. In addition, the community is very diverse economically, ethnically, and in terms of religions. In conclusion, he read in the endorsement of the head of Topanga Animal Rescue wanting to keep the 3rd District as it is.
- Sofia Gelman – As an immigrant from Russia, was thankful to the City for taking special care of the elderly and the homeless and to the County for social services. She would like to keep 3rd District together.
- Dorothy Reik – Resident of Topanga Canyon since 1971; read her letter of testimony and submitted letters from the Topanga Town Council signed by The Topanga Association Fellowship Community, Topanga Watership Community Canyon, and the Topanga Animal Rescue. Topanga is bound together by many things. It includes many civic organizations. The community has built many buildings and recreation halls, and has its own newspaper, post office, Zip Code, and Fire Station. It will be getting a new County library and two small shopping centers. Many work at home, and have artistic pursuits. Topanga Canyon residents have spent 15 years battling developers and urge the Committee to keep the community together and maintain the current boundaries of the 3rd Supervisorial District.
- Barry Johnson – Representing the Studio City Neighborhood Council and the Studio City Residence Association. He indicated that 3rd District is about 8,000 people over the ideal benchmark for 2011 and opposed Studio City being included in the 8,000 that could be reduced from the 3rd District. He indicated detaching Studio City from the 3rd District would detach the community from all the commonalities it has

established with have San Fernando Valley and Santa Monica Mountains. Every 10 years, redistricting, whether it is the County or State, tries to link the area with the City. He said the area's issues are not connected with the City; they are in the Valley, along Ventura Boulevard and towards the Santa Monica Mountains.

Commissioner Acebo asked Mr. Johnson: Why do you think you are more aligned towards the western portion of the 3rd District vs. going east towards the City?

Mr. Johnson mentioned traffic and issues raised when the Valley tried to become its own city. He said Studio City does not identify with the eastside of the mountain, but rather as part of the Valley.

- Pat McNeal – A resident of Topanga for over 32 years, and veteran of many redistricting plans. She is very active with many organizations, won women of the year for the 3rd District, and currently working as a volunteer as the Red Cross. In the 1993 fires, a chaotic situation prompted a small group of Topanga Canyon residents to become a non-profit organization call the Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP). It has over 200 volunteers and has worked with many other volunteer groups. Historically, major fires have occurred and many buildings have burned (the worst was the Malibu/Topanga fire). The Santa Monica Mountains communities work together with the 3rd District. The fires, flooding and mudslides are constant threats in this environment. There is a 50-member ham radio group called the TCEP Disaster Radio Team. They have worked together with government partners to develop an emergency response plan and exercises. The TCEP Team provides verifiable updated information for the Topanga community and surrounding communities and works 24/7. Eighteen years in the making, it is important to keep this working group together. She stressed that the Santa Monicas should stay as they are because the working relationships cannot be redone overnight.
- Yola Dore signed up but did not speak.
- Jeanne Dobrin – Currently a 90 year old Santa Monica Mountains resident, who was also previously a 34 year resident of West Hollywood. She said she knows that the people working on the redistricting will have to gerrymander the borders partly due to topography, but hopes it is done for balance and not for political reasons. As an animal lover, she said she hopes redistricting does not stop the “Adopt A Pet” program of the County. She also added that the County has a fabulous Sheriff's Department and a wonderful Board of Supervisors.

- **Victor Omelcsenko** – LA County resident; thanked the County for bringing the meeting to this location. He referenced the ideal district population (1,963,721), noting that the deviation for 3rd District is less than one-half of one percent from the ideal. Accordingly, he asked that the 3rd district be kept together as it is now.
- **Eugene Levin** – Resident of the 3rd District; represents the Russian American population; President of Soviet Jewish immigrants. He expressed the common interests of others in attendance: keep the 3rd District together (residents of West Hollywood and parts of San Fernando Valley). He also supported continuance of the many services received from the County.
- **Joe Cislowski** – Thanked the people who attended; would like to keep the 3rd District together. He also thanked the Committee for allowing submission of materials and noted he will be submitting something in writing.

Member of the public

In the final version that the Board will vote on, how much deviation is allowed? And, given that the 3rd District has very low deviation from the ideal population, does it need to change?

Martin Zimmerman stated that an argument can be made that you could do better than a total deviation of 10% in a County as large as LA and with so many “movable pieces” (e.g., cities and unincorporated communities). In the case of the 3rd District, someone could well make the case that there is no compelling need to change the 3rd District. Ms. Takade pointed out however, that the Committee will have to look at the information as a whole, rather than only specific districts.

List of Attendees from the County

1st District – Commissioner Steve Reyes, Commissioner Louisa Ollague

3rd District – Commissioner Kevin Acebo, Commissioner Terry Freidman, Deputy Flora Gil Krisiloff, Susan P. Nissman, Alisa B. Katz

5th District – Commissioner Allen Hoffenblum

Chief Executive Office – Martin Zimmerman, Gerardo Ramirez

County Counsel – Nancy Takade, Truc Moore

Executive Office – George Britton, Emma De Jesus, Narek Artonian, Mireya Rivera