



Office of the Mayor

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CONSENT CALENDAR
March 23, 2021

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín (Author)
Subject: 2021 Alameda County Redistricting Process

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution calling on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to allocate adequate resources and direct the creation of policies to ensure an equitable, inclusive and transparent process for the 2021 Alameda County redistricting process.

BACKGROUND

Every decade, redistricting processes take place across jurisdictions with district elections. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has five districts that need to be redrawn in 2021 to determine how communities are represented on the Board and which communities are divided or consolidated. In order to create a fair and transparent process in which marginalized communities are engaged, the process needs to follow best practices as defined in AB 849 and AB 1276. AB 849, the Fair Maps Act, signed into law in 2019, creates standardized redistricting criteria, including keeping neighborhoods and diverse communities intact, and prohibiting partisan gerrymandering. It also requires cities and counties to hold public meetings and outreach to non-English speaking communities. AB 1276, approved in 2020, builds upon AB 849 by establishing timelines for public input. Both bills were authored by Assemblymember Rob Bonta.

In 2016, Berkeley voters overwhelmingly approved Measure W1, which created an Independent Redistricting Commission. The Commission, comprised of representatives from Berkeley's eight Council districts, five at-large, and 13 alternates, has the sole authority of deciding district boundaries. In previous redistricting cycles since Council districts were established in 1986, redistricting was under the authority of the City Council, which in previous cycles was highly contentious and ended in delays and litigation. The Commission, which recently began this decade's process, was designed to be inclusive and representative of all aspects of the Berkeley community. This model was based on the California Redistricting Commission, established in 2008, which has been regarded as a success story. The City of Oakland has a similar Redistricting Commission.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with adopting this recommendation.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

SUPPORTING FAIR AND TRANSPARENT REDISTRICTING FOR THE ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICTS

WHEREAS, the boundaries of the five Alameda County Supervisorial Districts must be redrawn in 2021 determining how communities are represented on the Board, how communities affiliate to address issues of common interest, and which communities are divided or consolidated; and

WHEREAS, the final maps approved in 2021 will be in place for the next 10 years, and in the past, there have been few requirements that redistricting be fair, transparent, and engage marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors has sought to include local communities through civic engagement such as the successful Alameda County Counts census effort; and

WHEREAS, robust, safe, and inclusive community engagement to develop proposed district maps requires time and resources to ensure digital access, diverse schedules, translation services, meeting schedule notice, and other requirements identified by best practices and AB 849 (Bonta) and AB 1276 (Bonta); and

WHEREAS, two cities in Alameda County—Berkeley and Oakland—and several counties in California have established Independent Redistricting Commissions to ensure a fair and transparent redistricting process, including those in Los Angeles County, Santa Barbara County, San Diego County, and San Francisco County; and

WHEREAS, the timeframe to draw these maps will be compressed due to national issues and the impact of the pandemic on local communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby urges the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to allocate adequate resources and direct the creation of policies to ensure an equitable, inclusive and transparent redistricting process consistent with AB 849 and AB 1276 and the best practice guide of the Asian Americans Advancing Justice–Asian Law Caucus¹. Specifically, we expect that the 2021 Alameda County redistricting process shall be directed towards the following goals:

1. Protects and maintains communities of interest;

¹ Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus. “Guide to Best Practices in Districting.” Available at: <https://www.advancingjustice-alc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Guide-to-Districting-Best-Practices-AAAJ-ALC.pdf>.

2. Includes at least one public hearing regarding the proposed consultant who will develop the proposed map(s);
3. Includes at least one public hearing regarding the proposed outreach plan for the redistricting process;
4. Ensures that the consulting firm and the redistricting process as a whole offers accessible online and in person opportunities to provide input regarding communities of interest, impact of proposed lines, and other comments, questions, concerns, and ideas related to the proposed maps;
5. Includes accessibility approaches that remove physical, technological, language, and other barriers to public participation including work schedules and family commitments;
6. Leverages the trusted messengers and communities of interest infrastructure put in place to ensure a complete census count, including engaging community volunteers²;
7. Includes meetings before and after the maps are created as well as at least two other methods/opportunities for engagement accessible for each of the five districts;
8. Leverages the Municipal Advisory Councils, Interfaith Networks, and other existing network and neighborhood infrastructure to communicate the importance of and opportunity to participate in the redistricting process;
9. Provides adequate funding and personnel to accomplish these goals in partnership with community volunteers; and
10. Provides meeting notices at least two weeks in advance, including notices of Board of Supervisors meetings whenever possible.

² The Alameda County Coalition for Fair Redistricting is eager to work with organizations to help provide community volunteers.