

POLITICS

New San Diego County voting districts approach final approval



The San Diego Union-Tribune

LOG IN



Voters cast ballots as poll workers sanitizes work stations on Nov. 3, 2020 in National City. (Jarrod Valliere / The San Diego Union-Tribune)

The county's independent voting commission meets Thursday and Friday, will identify a final map

BY DEBORAH SULLIVAN BRENNAN

DEC. 1, 2021 1:18 PM PT

San Diego — The San Diego County Independent Redistricting Commission is closing in on final maps that will set the boundaries for supervisorial districts for the next decade.

With two weeks until it is due to finalize new voting districts, the 14-member commission is focusing on two out of more than 14 maps it has considered over the past few months.

It will consider the the maps at meetings this Thursday and Friday, and it will likely decide on a single map on Nov. 9. Then it must submit the final map, along with a detailed report about the new districts, by Dec. 15.

The two key maps show different configurations for North County, South County, coastal and back country districts. However the commission may still draw from the previous maps, numerous variations of the current maps and an additional 14 maps submitted by members of the public.

Commission Chair David Bame said residents who wish to submit comments should plan to do so by Thursday, to ensure their input is considered in redistricting deliberations.

The 14-member independent commission is responsible for adjusting San Diego County's supervisorial district boundaries to accommodate population growth and demographic changes. Unlike previous redistricting efforts, in which elected officials set boundaries for their own jurisdictions, the bipartisan commission will draw the lines based on census data and public input.

The commission has heard from hundreds of speakers on how they identify their communities and which district configurations they support. One of its key mandates is to draw districts in a manner that preserves the power of minority communities to elect candidates they prefer.

Both of the two primary maps under consideration this week would include a southern district comprised of a majority of Latino voters, which would protect that community's ability to elect a preferred candidate.

In one map the district would stretch across the Mexican border to the county boundary, but in the other map it would extend only to Chula Vista.

In either case the Latino population would be about 60 percent, and the citizen voting age population would be over 50 percent, according to census data.

District 1, the county's current southernmost district, is represented by Supervisor Nora Vargas, who is the first Latina on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. Voting data analyzed by Christian Grose, a political science professor at the University of Southern California who is consulting with the commission, shows that the Latino community in the region has been able to elect its preferred candidates in state contests.

The commission must maintain that voting power as it redraws the lines, Bame said.

The maps also offer different options for a North County district.

One map groups northern unincorporated communities — including Fallbrook, Bonsall and Valley Center — with Camp Pendleton, tribal reservations and the State Route 78 communities of Escondido, San Marcos, Vista and Oceanside.

Carlsbad, which also falls into that highway corridor, would not be in that district but in a separate coastal district starting in Coronado.

And in that map, the remainder of the back country and parts of central San Diego would be part of a large eastern district containing the rest of the county's unincorporated land.

The alternate map would place Carlsbad in the same district as the other cities on the State Route 78 corridor. And in that map nearly all of the unincorporated back country in North and East County would fall into one large district.

Under both those scenarios, District 5, in North County, would also have significant Latino representation, with more than 30 percent of the population and more than 25 percent of voting age citizens identified as Latino, according to census data.

Other issues that the commission will consider in its final sessions include whether to include El Cajon in a central San Diego district or in an East County district, and how to draw lines in a manner that concentrates voting power for Asian American Pacific Islander communities in central communities, including Mira Mesa, Claremont and Sorrento Valley.

[POLITICS](#)[LATEST](#)[TOP STORIES](#)[LOCAL](#)[CALIFORNIA](#)[LATINO LIFE](#)[LATINO NEWS](#)[REDISTRICTING](#)

Get Essential San Diego, weekday mornings

Get top headlines from the Union-Tribune in your inbox weekday mornings, including top news, local, sports, business, entertainment and opinion.

[SIGN ME UP](#)

You may occasionally receive promotional content from the San Diego Union-Tribune.