

## **DRAFT – 2/10/11**

### **Proposal to Citizens Redistricting Commission Sub-Committee**

#### **Re: Educational/Background Meetings versus Input Hearings; Locations, Strategies and Discussion; Supplemental Database Construction**

##### **Types of meetings/hearings:**

For the purpose of the discussion in this document, we are distinguishing between outreach meetings or workshops, versus input hearings.

##### **I. Educational/Background Meetings (formerly known as Outreach)**

Purpose: Designed to let Californians know about the redistricting commission; inform them about how to participate; include 1 hr+ redistricting training on criteria, Voting Rights Act, communities of interest, etc. Not designed for commission to receive input or conduct other business. Each workshop is about 4 hrs long and held on a weeknight or weekend. These workshops would not require attendance by commissioners.

##### **7 suggested locations:**

We suggest a regional approach for these meetings; five should be conducted during mid to end of March to coincide with the opening of the redistricting assistance centers in the following locations:

San Diego  
Los Angeles  
San Bernardino  
Fresno  
Sacramento

Two additional outreach meetings should be in the two locations that were suggested but not funded for redistricting assistance centers:

Los Angeles (northern part)  
Salinas/Watsonville area

An optional 8<sup>th</sup> meeting could be scheduled at the Berkeley site. We are suggesting it as optional because the Redistricting Group at Berkeley Law, which is funded by The James Irvine Foundation, has been conducting trainings here over the past year.

The documentation for selecting these locations is in Appendix I. The map that corresponds to this methodology is labeled Appendix II. These locations were chosen by considering approximately shortest drive time for the largest number of a regions' population. There is an inevitable tradeoff between geography and population density. As you will see in Appendix I, southern Los Angeles County is most accessible to ~22% of California's population whereas Salinas is most convenient for only ~2.7%. However, Monterrey is also a Section 5 county, and this location is close to two other Section 5 counties: Merced and Kings, which makes it a good choice for an educational event.

### Technical staff needed:

From the technical side of scheduling these events, there are some options. At minimum, a redistricting consultant has to be present to conduct the training. There also should be at least one mapper to make a presentation about how lines are drawn and to illustrate the process of drawing community of interest and neighborhood boundaries for submission to the commission. The mapper would demonstrate this on software that is available at the redistricting assistance sites as well as on alternative software (i.e. Google maps). An optional component could be making laptops with redistricting software and mappers available so that attendees that are prepared could create their boundary submissions at the event. The created lines would have to be submitted to the commission through the public input avenues the CRC decides upon.

In advance of these workshops, handouts/work sheets have to be created in collaboration with the outreach consultants. The task specific redistricting information (i.e. examples of how to define a community of interest) will be provided by the technical consultants and formatting etc. by the outreach consultants.

Additional outreach meetings could be scheduled throughout the process as time, demand and budget allow.

## **II Input hearings**

Purpose: Collect requests, data and feed-back from public about where lines should go. Receive community of interest and neighborhood boundary testimony. Receive public testimony about application of other redistricting criteria. Can be jointly held with hearings to conduct other commission business. Hearings should be scheduled to maximize participation by Commission members. It is very important that as many commissioners as possible attend each hearing!

Suggested agenda: a) Educational component (overview of redistricting process and criteria – explain how community of interest and neighborhood boundary testimony should be provided; ~15 minutes); b) Public Input; c) Commission business as necessary. It is recommended that any commission business be conducted after the completion of

public input to allow those wishing to testify predictability about when that portion of the hearing will begin.

Staff needed: Redistricting consultant to provide educational component and answer questions as appropriate; Mapper to digitize geographic testimony (on site 2 hrs before hearing to work with those that come early and bring maps); Note-taker to keep track of variables provided that define community of interest and provide summary of testimony for commissioners at end of hearing.

9 suggested regions in which the appropriate number of hearings can be scheduled:

Please see Appendix III for documentation and demographics of the 9 regions selected and the methodology employed to select them. Appendix IV shows the corresponding map. Here, our approach was not based on the shortest drive time for the largest population of each region but rather we considered geographic regions and commonalities in addition to the commission's desire to reach populations that have not been commonly engaged in the redistricting process. The 9 region approach will facilitate a meeting strategy for all three phases of the process: before the PL94-171 and/or the complete redistricting database are released (approximately mid-March and mid-April respectively), during the line drawing process (mid April to mid July) and after maps have been finalized (late July to August 15<sup>th</sup>). Each region will serve as an organizational unit to schedule the necessary or desired number of hearings. For example, the commission might decide to visit the most northern part of region I in Phase I of the hearings. During Phase II, once the data have been released and accurate maps of shifts in populations can be created, the commission might decide to return to a different location in the region, i.e. where there are likely to be questions about where boundary lines should appropriately fall. This strategy will serve two desired outcomes: one, to reach populations not previously engaged and two, collect data from areas that will likely be affected during line drawing.

We suggest that the specific hearing locations within each region for this process be decided in collaboration with the outreach consultants due to their expertise in selecting appropriate sites for public events that will reach the largest number of attendees.

During Phase I, the educational meetings may be taking place during the same time period.

Statewide Input Hearing:

In addition to the regional approach, at least one input hearing should be scheduled during each phase that focuses specifically on statewide issues so that groups that are working on non-regional plans have a more appropriate forum in which to testify.

### **III. Discussion**

#### More versus less outreach meetings and workshops:

For the educational/background meetings, an important issue is whether there will be adequate time for the outreach consultants to schedule and advertise the events so that there will be a good turn-out of interested parties. It is important to also note that these outreach efforts would be only one component of California's efforts to educate the public about redistricting. Many non-profit and advocacy organizations are holding outreach events to educate and engage the public. Most of these tend to be focused on specific racial and ethnic groups or other communities that have an explicit stake in redistricting. This allows the Commission to focus on more broadly based public outreach. Thus we would not recommend more than 7 (8 if Berkeley is included) outreach events due to the short period of time to draw lines.

#### Quality versus quantity for input hearings:

Given the short timeframe, there is the obvious concern that a push to set up too many hearings and meetings will result in poor planning and attendance. There is also the issue of commissioner fatigue. Once input hearings begin to collect specific feedback on lines, it is likely that hearings will be continued past their anticipated timeframe, and that additional hearings will have to be scheduled. It might be wise for the commission to pace itself in anticipation of many hearings to come. Thus the combined regional/phase approach is recommended, allowing Commissioners to focus on somewhat larger regions but returning multiple times during different phases of the redistricting process.

#### The order of hearings:

Regarding where to go when, we suggest a hybrid approach of following a regional approach that is noticed well in advance, in addition to holding hearings in the areas in which lines are drawn. This approach will facilitate two important aspects of the public input hearings; one, members of the public, communities and advocacy groups can plan ahead and make appropriate arrangements to attend hearings with prepared testimony; and two, it will allow the commission to receive specific public input as decisions are being made on where lines should go, and adjust them accordingly as appropriate.

#### How many Hearings?

To start the process of figuring out how many hearings to schedule, we recommend that the commission engage in a discussion about how many of its members will be available to attend these hearings, and decide what the minimum attendance should be. Even though public input will be captured in transcripts and by other methods, there is no substitute to being present when testimony is provided. It will greatly benefit the decision making process if as many commissioners as possible are privy to the same information, having heard the same testimony.

Generally speaking, we would recommend scheduling one hearing per region well in advance, to take place during each phase, to allow the public time for advance planning. In addition, one statewide hearing should be scheduled in each phase.

Depending on the issues that arise in each region, the commission can then schedule additional hearings as needed during Phase II (mid April to mid July): there may be no additional ones in one area during this phase, but three or more in other areas. It is important to recognize the Section 5 counties and incorporate their locations into the planning process. It is well possible to envision anywhere between twenty and forty regional input hearings during this Phase, but again, this will depend on the factors outlined above.

During Phase III, after the lines are drawn, the commission might consider visiting each region once more in addition to holding a statewide hearing.

#### Specific locations of hearings:

As proposed earlier, the specific locations should be decided upon with input from commissioners. The commission represents many areas of the state of California and the perspective and knowledge of the commissioners has to be incorporated. Once a location has been agreed upon, the outreach consultants should be tasked with finding the appropriate site in which to hold the hearing.

We would recommend changing the locations for each repeated visit to a region; for example, one hearing for Phase II to the Bay Area region might be held in San Francisco while the next one might be in Oakland. This allows the commission to accomplish its desire to reach as many places as possible while collecting input from the public.

#### General discussion of the regional approach:

Dividing the state into regions offers the Commission and the public several advantages. First and foremost it allows the Commission to focus on the unique communities of interest at the same time and how they may interact with each other in a given part of the state. Second, it gives the public advanced knowledge of what the Commission will be focusing on at a particular public hearing so they can tailor their testimony appropriately. Third, it allows hearing sites to be chosen so that the public will have predictability as to the maximum amount of time they may need to travel in order to attend, and other appropriate arrangements can also be made.

It is important to note that the primary criterion in designing these regions was minimizing barriers to public participation. A secondary criterion was drawing regions that would correspond to future redistricting logistics to simplify that process for the Commission. However, the inclusion or exclusion of a county in a particular region is not intended to define or even suggest a community of interest. For example, San Luis Obispo County is oriented to the north in the current Senate plan, east in the

Congressional plan and south in the Assembly plan. The Commission will have to decide what communities do and do not exist and what orientation is appropriate in each plan based on public testimony and all other available data.

Other Opportunities for Public Input:

The outreach centers funded by the James Irvine Foundation will also allow the public opportunities to provide input to the Commission by drawing their own lines for submission.

There are a number of questions to be discussed including whether the Commission believes that the currently funded outreach centers provide the public adequate access to redistricting software. Does the commission want to explore additional funding to add hours or centers at additional locations? Does the commission want to explore additional funding to add an online component?

**IV. Public Input Database Construction:**

All public input should be logged in a timely manner in a database that is supplemental to the redistricting dataset and made available to both the Commission and the public so it can be incorporated in the decision making process as appropriate. It is likely that public input will be received in various ways including:

1. in person at hearings
2. via electronic submission
3. via regular mail
4. in other ways that the commission might make available

Public input will also be received in various formats including:

1. descriptive, verbal
2. digitized in GIS format
3. non-digitized map in paper form
4. written comments without maps

Public input will be submitted:

1. at different points in time
2. for different areas
3. for different units of analysis and coverage

Public input will be submitted with reference to AD, SD, CD and BoE districts respectively:

1. about voting rights act implementation
2. for Communities of Interest
3. for Neighborhoods

4. for City and County splits
5. for general regional approaches
6. for partial and complete districts
7. for partial or complete state coverage
8. for any other criterion including nesting

Our recommendation is to construct a database supplemental to the redistricting dataset in which the submitted data are indexed, digitized and geocoded using the same methodology that is successfully used for census data capture and reporting (including county, place, tract and block identifiers). The geographic data would have attribute data associated, consisting of the variables submitted that define, for example, the communities of interest for the respective area.