

Executive Summary

This Executive Report is intended to capture the process from an administrative perspective and provide a roadmap and/or reference tool for future California Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) administrations. It is unlikely that future Commission will have the same challenges experienced by the 2020 Commission, such as a global pandemic, delayed Census data, civil unrest over the Presidential election, California Governor recall election, and ambiguity on the Commissions deadlines to complete its maps. Even with these challenges, the Commission was able to conduct a thorough statewide outreach campaign, garner statewide public participation and input virtually, adjust plans to the changing deadlines, and fulfill its duty to "conduct an open and transparent process enabling full public consideration of and comment on the drawing of district lines." The Commission submitted the approved final maps and certified them with the Secretary of State timely on December 27, 2021.

I was initially hired as the Deputy Executive Director and worked closely with the Executive Director who had also served as Executive Director for the 2010 Commission. He had a wealth of knowledge and historical insight from his experience with the first Commission in 2010. In my first days we mapped out the entire redistricting cycle from start to finish and included outreach activities, which were not done by the 2010 Commission. This exercise was particularly inciteful to ensure staffing, contracts, and logistics were in place well ahead of the planned activities. The Census delays extended the map completion date from the original date of August 15 to December 27, 2021. However, the final determination of the deadline didn't come until after the Commission requested clarification from the California Supreme Court in August of 2021. On September 22, 2021, the California Supreme Court directed the Commission to release its preliminary statewide maps for congressional, State Senatorial, Assembly, and Board of Equalization districts for public display and comment no later than November 15, 2021, and to approve and certify its final maps to the Secretary of State no later than December 27, 2021. Along the way the Commission had to adjust its timelines and the planned activities while continuing to move forward.

Key to the success of this administration was its ability to understand what needed to be done, what the Commissioners wanted to be done, and what could be done through the normal State channels. It is a thin line and caused friction along the way. One of the areas that caused the most challenges was the latter, what can be done. Though the Commission is independent in drawing of the district maps, it still must adhere to state government policies unless specifically exempted by statute. Other than for hiring practices, the Commission does not have language that exempts them from other state requirements, policies, or procedures. This was challenging as most, thirteen of the fourteen commissioners, were unfamiliar with California State Government policies and procedures. They did not understand how the State operated, what could be done, how it needed to be done, or how long it would take to get it done. In many instances, I found myself trying to temper the expectations of the Commission and explained the timeframes or other limitations in getting things done through these channels. By the time we had completed the contracting process for post-map legal services in December 2021, Commissioners had a much better understanding of the process. In some instances, what was requested and what was done was not exactly how they had envisioned it. Fortunately, we (staff) were able to find creative ways to meet the needs of the Commissions' requests. One prime example is how we created an online appointment system for COI input meetings. The public was able to go to our website, fill out a Google form with the time slot when they could provide their input during a scheduled meeting rather than

waiting on hold for hours, and we connected them to the virtual meeting during the selected time block. It didn't have all the bells and whistles, but it worked. The database was another example where we were creative in collecting real time input into our database. Our Outreach team worked with our database team to create a form, similar to the appointment form, that allowed the public to provide input that would be processed into the database on a more real-time basis. In 2010, much of the input had to be collected on paper, then manually entered into the database. This solution not only allowed the public to provide the input into our database, but also allowed the Commissioners to review the input and reference it when drawing lines.

One of the biggest administrative challenges we faced was the budget process. Not so much the tracking of expenditures, but the fact that what the Commission did was not like other state agencies and in the normal timeframes, it created challenges. For example, the normal state budget categories and codes available through the Fi\$cal system did not fit the Commission's work. Staff had to select available categories and codes to process the work, thus the expenditure reports did not list the information in categories directly associated to the Commission's work nor how the administration reported the information to the Commission. Throughout my term I stated to the Commission that we were a square peg in a round hole as it related to the way things are normally done by other State entities. Other agencies have very specific and tailored reports that make it easy to find information for reference and tracking purposes. The Commission does not have specific reports that provide line-item information for the various categories. In working with the Department of General Services budget and accounting staff, they too shared that they struggled to find information from the multitude of different reports. For example, they had to pull information from different reports into a spreadsheet to provide the Commission staffs payroll amounts including the benefits costs. They had a report that referenced the employee salaries and two separate reports for the benefits costs. Another factor in this process was that the reports were usually about two months in arrears, so they did not reflect the actual expenditures to date. Throughout the process the administrative and budget staff created spreadsheets that tracked the wages and estimated benefits costs to have a more real time tracking mechanism for the payroll expenditures. These spreadsheets were also used to create estimated expenditure projections for fund requests and were also pivotal in projecting Covid/Census Delay expenditures. Benefits amounts fluctuated per employee per month, but a percentage amount was used across the board for estimate purposes. Due to the issue with the reports reference above, final reconciliation of actual payroll amounts didn't occur until December 2022. Fortunately, the spreadsheets created by the Commission's staff were within a couple of thousand dollars from the actuals for most months. The other challenge here was that the Commission had to request funds throughout the process. Though the Commission did receive allocation of funds through the 2019 Budget Act, and the two subsequent years, the Commission had to request the funds to be released at different points in the process and provide detailed projections to the Department of Finance. This required a formal letter be sent to the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) for their review. For each request we had to provide details on where the funds would be spent. In a normal year, this would not have been much of an issue, however this Commission, in part due to COVID-19 and Census Data Delays, had to pivot and changed things that required additional funds. Based on these changes we had to revise the projections and request additional funds several times throughout the process.

Setting up a State entity from the ground up was a major undertaking. Though the State Auditors assisted in some minimal framework to process per diem/payroll and travel expense reimbursement,

they did not actually set up the programs needed or hire staff. Staffing needs to be considered early to help set up the following programs: Budgets and Accounting, Human Resources/Personnel, Contracts, and Procurement. In the future, the hiring of some staff for these programs could be done by the State Auditors for subsequent approval by the Commission when it is fully seated. For this iteration, the State Auditors was able to hire an individual with experience from the first Commission to help establish communications with agencies that provided support to the Commission for the respective programs listed above. In addition, the State Auditor can begin the recruitment of executive level positions, more specifically, the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Outreach Director, and Communications Director. The Commission was fully seated by July 2020, but these key positions were not hired until October, November, and December of 2020. We had great support from other departments throughout the process, but it was very challenging in the beginning. When we reached out to departments the first questions were, "Who are you?" and the second question was, "Are you a State Agency?" It seems rather amusing now, but at the time the staff had to reference the State Constitution and Government Codes of the Commission to explain. Staff had to understand and explain how various State processes generally work and how this Commission, though a state entity, did not fit the normal processes. The nature of the Commission's work and the timeframes in which it has to complete the work does not align with how the State typically does things. I would say that by mid-February 2021, all the agencies we interacted with were fully aware of who we were and worked with us to find solutions or work arounds to ensure things got done for the Commission while adhering to appropriate laws, policies, and procedures. The Department of General Services was the primary agency that provided support to the Commission for HR, Contracting, and Budgeting/Accounting services from the beginning to when the last staff offboards.

This report is organized by the following programs that were established for this iteration of the Commission and will include information, observations, and recommendations relative to that program. The illustration below shows all the programs and how some are directly connected to another program. However, as a small entity, there are many points where multiple programs intersect and are dependent on the others.



- **Administration/Procurement** – General administration activities, Human Resources, hiring/firing, contracts, purchasing,
- **Budgets** – budget appropriations, budget change proposals, Commission budgeting by categories, contracting and tracking invoices, expenditures, accounting activities including Fi\$cal

entries, working with Department of Finance and Joint Legislative Budget Committee, Department of General Services, State Controller's Office,

- **Communications** – public relations activities, marketing materials, website
- **Outreach** – developing educational redistricting materials, working with outreach partners, scheduling community of interest (COI) activities, language access, engaging with Californians throughout the state.
- **Data Management** – database development, working with Statewide Database (SWDB) on collection of COI input, database reports, and post-map access to the data.
- **Legal** – Bagley-Keene Public Meetings Act, Legal Services contracts, litigation, liaison with Attorney General's Office, legal support to the Commission.

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Administration and Procurement

The general administration of the Commission can be described as ensuring the Commission had in place all the tools, resources, and services needed to perform their mandate of drawing the California district lines. This included the day-to-day functions, recruiting and hiring of staff, operational equipment and services, and contracting with vendors, including line drawers and legal services. In addition, the administration ensured the Commission adhered to appropriate policies required of State entities, the Bagley-Keene Public Meetings Act, and providing other support functions to the Commission and Commissioners.

Executive Director

As I look back from this experience, I recognize that it is fundamental for any future Executive Director to have a strong understanding of the State's administrative, budget, and legislative processes and practices to ensure the success of the Commission. Due to the fast pace and short timeframes, there is no time to learn on the job for someone not familiar with the State. As it is, thirteen of the fourteen Commissioners were not familiar with how the State operates and grew very frustrated with the processes. The Executive Director must also understand the Commission's personality. I cannot speak for the 2010 Commission, but for the 2020 Commission they were very much a Type A personality that was involved in all aspects of the Commission's work. This may have started as a necessity when the responsibilities were transferred from CSA, but they stayed involved in all activities. This can be seen by the number of subcommittees created throughout the process. This Commission was also very intentional on establishing and maintaining their independence to make decisions and did not accept when their independence was challenged. As such, my approach as the Executive Director was to work through the subcommittees to present information for the Commission to consider and decide on rather than recommending any action as the Executive Director. This was a more collaborative approach that was much better received by the Commission. Each future Commission will have its own personality and it will be important for the Executive Director to recognize the best approach to use.

Because I transitioned into the Executive Director role two months into the process and just moved forward with the Commission's work, but there was no time to clearly discuss expectations. This would have been helpful for both me and the Commissioners. Given this was only the second iteration of the Commission and how things changed due to Covid-19 and Census Data Delays, the expectations would have changed. Although there were some misunderstandings on deliverables, I was able to provide the Commission what they asked for, not always how they envisioned it, but nonetheless meeting their needs. One example was the completion of the final report on the maps. It was my understanding that in 2010 the commissioners wrote the entire final report on the maps. Thus, it was a surprise to me and the staff that the Commission expected the staff to help write parts of the report, specifically the district descriptions for all the districts. To further complicate matters, there was an expectation that the line drawers would also be helping in this effort. This is an area that will need to be clarified in the future to avoid the last-minute confusion. Ultimately, our outreach team did a phenomenal job in writing the district descriptions in collaboration with the Final Report Subcommittee, line drawers, and our legal team.

The previous Executive Director had an established relationship with our contacts from the Legislature from his previous term in 2010. He introduced me to them and we met with them regularly to discuss where the Commission was going and more importantly what funding was going to be needed

for the various activities. When I became the new Executive Director, I reached out to them to let them know I would be their new contact. This is a relationship that was very helpful and supportive of the Commission in its request for augmentation of funds in mid-2021. They were instrumental in helping prepare us for the type of questions that would come from both DOF and JLBC for the May 2021 Revise budget request. As a result, we received the full allocation of the funds we requested. Our relationship and interaction with the Legislative contacts changed and became a bit more distant because of Legal Affairs Committee meeting where a community group questioned their participation. In addition, there were insinuations made from a news outlet about their interaction with the Commission that required them to distance themselves to avoid any future misperceptions. We reestablished more ongoing budget related communications with them after the completion of the maps. I believe the fact that there were no legal challenges to the Commission's final maps also helped to reestablish communications.

Deputy Executive Director

The Deputy Executive Director was a new position created by the 2020 Commission. It did take some time establish the executive level positions as other executive level positions were already in place. The Deputy Executive Director (DED) role was to assist the Executive Director as needed and directed. It was implied that the Deputy Executive Director would be involved in the administration of the Commission but was not clear as to what extent. Given my extensive outreach and education background in State service, I was tasked by the Executive Director to develop an outreach plan, that included a timeline, staffing needs, and budget projections for the entirety of the outreach process, which included the completions of the maps. I worked closely with the Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee to draft the Strategic Outreach Plan and presented it to the Commission for review and formal approval. Given the uncertainty of when the Census data would be available, the dates for the proposed activities and the final map completion dates were adjusted as necessary and the document served more as a general guide of the activities to be completed and the proposed outcomes. Once the Commission approved the plan, the Deputy Executive Director worked closely with the Executive Director to cost out all the activities associated with the Strategic Outreach Plan. The original projected costs included in person meetings, but due to Covid there were no in person meetings with the public, and instead held virtual meetings that still allowed for public comment via a call-in feature. Also, due to Census delays, the overall timeframes were extended far beyond what was originally planned. The statutory due date for the final maps was August 15th, but due to the delays the final maps due date was extended to December 27, 2021. Due to uncertainty on how to calculate the due date for the final maps, the Commission asked the California Supreme Court to provide a decision that was rendered in September 2021.

The DED was also asked to investigate the possibility of issuing grants to community-based organizations (CBO). The DED and the Outreach Manager worked closely with the Grants Subcommittee to figure out how this could be done since the Commission did not have specific statutory authority to do so. The Commission did consider contracting with CBO's as an options but was not able to pass a motion to move forward in February 2021. This may be an area that future commissions may want to consider looking into. The documents prepared by the DED and Outreach Manager and discussion by the Grants Subcommittee can be found in the February 2021 meetings handouts, video, and transcripts.

Through December 2020 and January 2021, the Executive Director and DED collaborated to plan out a complete [timeline](#) from start to finish and filled in all the pieces and parts needed for the entire process. This included identifying when staff were needed for planned or proposed activities, what contracts had to be in place and by when; timeframes for different phases of the redistricting process and the Commissions' statutory deadlines; and based on what the 2010 Commission had done, what the various meeting types would look like. This exercise proved to be invaluable for me as the Deputy ED to be able to take the reins as new Executive Director in February 2021 and know what had to be done for the remainder of the Commissions timeline and work activities.

California State Auditor

As the Commissioners were being selected by the California State Auditor's Office (CSA), CSA was also responsible for helping to set up the Commissions infrastructure. In fact, they received specific Commission allocated funds for this effort. Funds were used to purchase office equipment, computers, contract with vendors for Commission meetings, and hired a retired annuitant (RA) to help with these activities. The RA had been a member of the 2010 Commission administrative team and had a wealth of knowledge to help in the set-up of the new Commission. CSA secured the Commissions office space located on the second floor of the Department of Rehabilitation building, 721 Capitol Mall. The main suite, Suite 260, served as office space for staff and also as a space for the videographers to set up and host the Commission meetings. The other smaller suite, Suite 250, was set up for Legal staff. Due to Covid-19 impacts, most of the Commission's meetings were virtual and allowed for videographers to set up and leave their equipment in Suite 260 for the meetings. CSA used the 2010's staffing information as the base to purchase appropriate equipment and computers. Due to Covid-19 impacts, office space needs for staffing were very different from 2010 as most of the staff worked remotely. Once the full Commission was seated, they used the open space in Suite 260 to host meetings, both virtual and limited in-person meetings. The Commission also conducted its Executive staff level virtual interviews from Suite 260. CSA also contracted with vendors to help the Commission with their initial meetings. They contracted and paid for the videographer, ASL, and transcriptions services until the Commission was fully seated and able to enter into contracts on its own. The RA was instrumental in this effort, and subsequently was hired by the Executive Director into a full time Commission position as the Deputy Administrator. This position was essential to the Commission from an institutional knowledge perspective and made for a smooth transition from CSA to the Commission.

Once the Commission was fully seated and CSA deemed it fully functional, it transitioned the administrative responsibilities to the Commission. The term fully functional has been a topic of much discussion by the Commissioners and will likely lead to a combined or negotiated definition of what is "fully functional" for future commissions. It is important to note that the 2020 Commission was made up of 14 Commissioners, 13 of which had never worked for the State and were unfamiliar with administrative functions and processes. Although there may have been some information or training provided by CSA, it is unfair and unrealistic to expect the Commission to take on the administrative responsibilities of a state entity and draw the lines for California. There was somewhat of a blueprint from the 2010 Commission, however, much of how things were done changed in the ten years between commissions. Not to mention that this Commission was impacted by a global pandemic that limited their ability to meet in person. One of the biggest changes was the implementation of the Fi\$cal system to process payment and other transactions. This require someone to enter all transactions into a system and identify the transaction type before being able to process. Another change that impacted the

Commission was that many of the staff from other agencies who had worked with the 2010 Commission had moved on and there was no institutional knowledge about the Commission. In a sense, the 2020 Commission was starting from scratch. CSA assisted the commission in the recruitment of Executive level staff however the interviewing and hiring was left to the Commission. The RA assisted the Commission in coordinating this effort, including scheduling interviews and processing the necessary paperwork for onboarding the Executive Level staff. As part of the transition from CSA, the Commission was now responsible for the processing of reimbursement travel expenses claims and the Commissioner's per diems. Had it not been for the RA, who subsequently was hired as the Deputy Administrator, the Commission would have had a tremendous void in processing these items. Despite, the RA, there were still issues with processing reimbursements and per diems as the administrator did not have the appropriate authorities to process these items. This required the Deputy Administrator to request the assistance from the Department of General Services accounting folks to authorize and serve as second level reviewers of transactions in the Fi\$cal systems. When additional staff was hired to do the accounting, we were able to do the second level approvals in-house and process transactions more timely.

Contracting

Contracting was an area that caused much confusion and discussion by the Commission. Because only one of the fourteen Commissioners had experience in State services, there was just not enough time available for them to gain a full understanding of the process. Once they were fully seated, they did receive an overview presentation and subsequent information as they reviewed and approved contracts. Even though the varying types of contracts took a while to implement, the Commission was able to get most contracts in place faster than most other agencies. This is in part because our Deputy Administrator was able to work closely and establish a good rapport with DGS Office of Legal Services (OLS) who does the review of our contracts to ensure adherence to State requirements. The early conversations when he had explaining who the Commission was and the short timeframes we had to complete the maps really helped DGS-OLS understand our needs to expedite contracts with the allowable framework of each type of contract used. Our Deputy Administrator was the primary person working on putting together all of the Commission's contracts from start to finish. After approval from the Commission to move forward with a contract, they did require budget information forms to be completed by the Budget Officer, appropriate signatures (Executive Director, Budget Officer, and Deputy Administrator) on the forms to process through DGS-OLS. Once approved by DGS-OLS it would go to the vendor for signature and our Accounting Administrator would process the contract into the Fi\$cal system. The Deputy Administrator created chart for [Request for Proposals \(RFPs\) and contract](#) to that shows the timeframes for the different types of contracts. In addition, we created a document for our larger contracts that shows the actual timeframes and activities for completing each of those contracts.



Timeline of Line
Drawer RFP.pdf



Timeline of VRA
Counsel RFP.pdf



Timeline of
Videography RFP.pdf



Timeline of
Outreach Contracts.

Due to Covid and Census Data Delays we did have to in most cases, amend contracts to extend the time and augment funds to cover the extended timeframes. This was challenging since we did not have a

clear date of when the final maps would be due, so staff had to project as best they could with the information available. This required the Deputy Administrator, Budget Officer, and the Accounting Assistant to work closely to track contract end dates, balance of the contracts, and contract invoices respectively. Due of the nature of the Commission's work, the bulk of the contracts activities and invoicing were during the line drawing phase, with the line drawers, VRA legal team, and meeting services team all submitting invoices at the same time. Unfortunately, because we only had one person to enter information into the Fi\$cal system, it did create a bottleneck for processing of payments. It all worked out and payments were made, but it is important to note that ALL activities ramp up when the Commission is into the line drawing phase. It may be necessary for future Commission Administrations to consider hiring additional staff with Fi\$cal experience for a short period of time. This is where RA would be optimal given the short timeframe.

Procurement

Procurement, different from contracting, was an essential part of the administration of this commission. Although long term and large amount vendors were secured via a contract, we had smaller vendors that we did not contract with that provided invoices to processed for payments. Some of the administrative services needed by the Commission were acquired this way, for example, Nationbuilder, our website platform was procured for specific timeframes as subscriptions service. Though we made every effort to contract, their service platform did not allow for contracting and it was all done online. This was a new challenge, not likely encountered by the 2010 Commission. Many new tools and services were only available through online subscriptions and did not fit into the typical formal contracts/agreements. Early on, due to the Commission immediate needs and tight timeframes, some of these subscription services were acquired and paid for by staff. Those expenses were later submitted by staff for reimbursed through travel expense claims (TEC). When the Commission successfully was able to obtain a credit card, payments were transferred and paid directly by the Commission when possible. We requested that our Legal staff look into our ability to use the CRC credit card for these types of purchases and they found that we could do so. In addition to the Nationbuilder, other services included Esry, Airtable, social media tools, and recruitment tools. CSA had purchased many office supplies anticipating staff to be in the office and the Commission meeting in-person and with the public. We did not have large purchases of office supplies throughout the process. One of our larger purchases for supplies was for our Outreach Leads to provide them supplies for possible in-person meetings. We were able to use the credit card to purchase those supplies from different vendors. Rather than going through a local Sacramento vendor and shipping the supplies to staff from Sacramento, we identified certified small businesses in staff's respective city and had the vendor ship the supplies to them. It was much more efficient and cost effective. I would strongly recommend that future commission acquire a credit card as early in the process to be able to purchase supplies and secure services. Though staff can acquire these types of supplies and services, the reimbursement of TECs can be very slow and can create a hardship for them. From a processing of payments perspective, it is also much more expeditions to pay these types of vendors using the Commission credit card rather than the normal channel that may take up to 45 days from the day the information is entered into the Fi\$cal system. Had we gone the normal route, we would likely have had many of the services canceled. In addition, we only had to process a single payment to the credit card company, rather having to process multiple payment in Fi\$cal for each of the vendors. Although we did need receipts/invoices for all the transactions, the monthly statements allowed us to reconcile expenditures timelier as reports from the DGS were always two or three months after the fact.

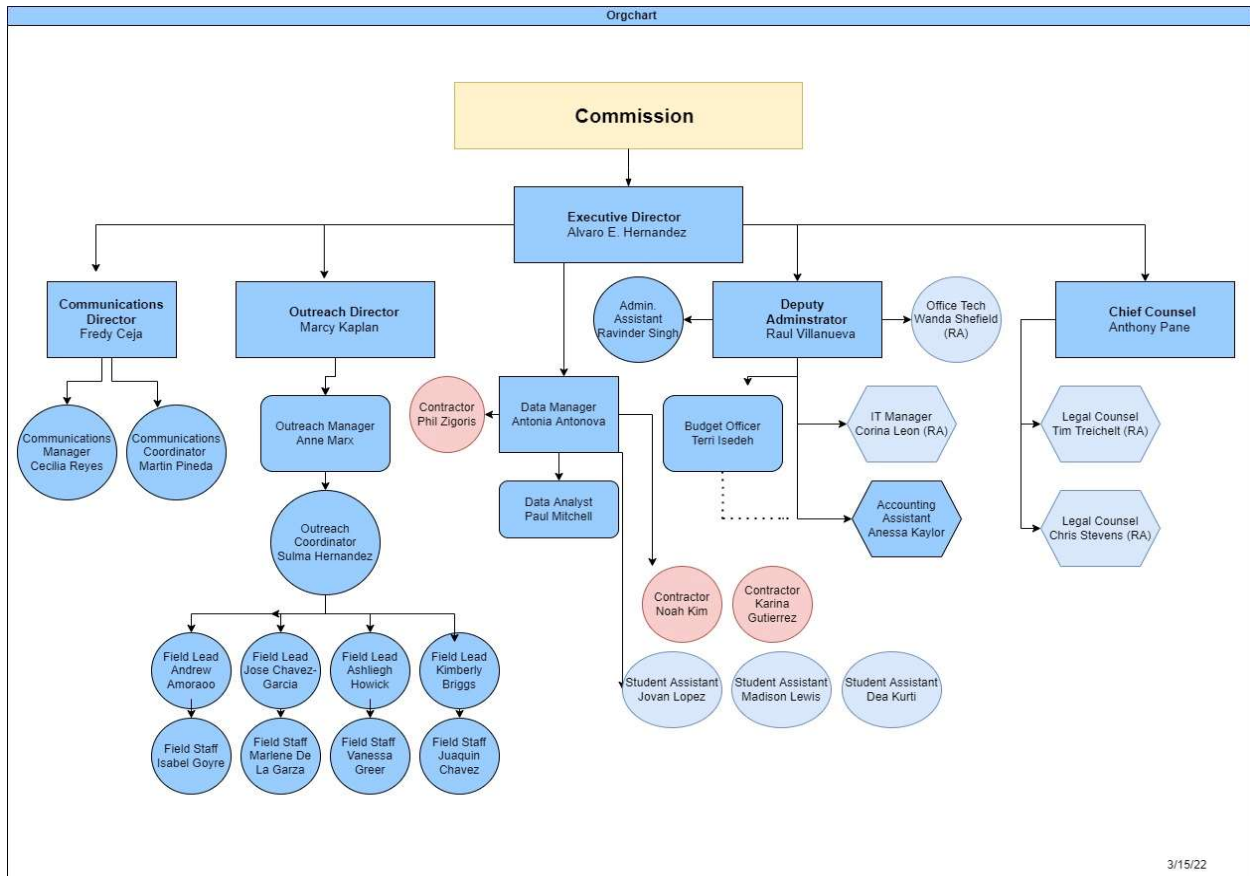
Internal Communications System

The Commission's internal communications system was a carry-over from the 2010 Commission. Google was used as the communications tool and a file storage system. It was free and allowed for adding staff as they came on board. However, there was a limit on the number of emails allowed to maintain the free version. As staff were on-boarded they were given a Google email to use for CRC business. The 2020 Commission exceeded the number of staff hired by the 2010 Commission, so we didn't have enough emails available for all staff. Rather than moving to the next level of a paid Google account, we had some of the newer staff create separate Google email accounts for themselves, for free of course, for them to conduct CRC business and to ensure there was no commingling of the CRC business emails with their personal emails. After the Commission completed the final maps in January 2022, we migrated away from Google to Office 365 that is supported by the Department of Technology. The Office 365 has more capacity for emails accounts and provides file storage needed by the Commission. The draw back with the Office 365 is that there is licensing cost every couple of years. There needs to be funding allocated for this tool in the years leading up to the 2030 Commission. The goal is that the new Office 365 communication system will carry over to the 2030 Commission to ensure a smooth transition.

2020 CRC Organizational Chart

The following 2020 CRC Organizational Chart is a final reflection of what staff were [hired and their reporting relationship to the Executive Director and the Commission. This org chart differs from the previous commission largely due to outreach activities this Commission undertook that the 2010 did not. The timing of the onboarding of outreach staff was scheduled to coincide with outreach activities. Due to the delay in Census data, the overall hiring of staff was delayed by approximately four to five months.

2020 Executive Director's Report Alvaro E. Hernandez



Staff Hiring

All hiring of staff is approved by the Commission as required by Government Code Section 8253(a)(5). It requires a special vote of nine or more affirmative votes including at least three votes of members registered from each of the two largest parties and three votes from members who are not registered with either of the two largest political parties in California.

The 2020 Commission created 2-person subcommittees to conduct the screening of the Executive Director, Chief Counsel, and Communications Director applicants. The entire Commission then participated in the interview and selection process of the executive level staff. Different from the 2010 Commission, the 2020 Commission created a Deputy Executive Director position. This classification was not included in the carryover from the 2010, so it required the Commission to go through the HR process to request DGS create a new position/classification before the hire could be made. This process took about two months to complete. Also, different from 2010, the California State Auditor instead of the Secretary of State was involved in the recruitment of executive level staff as the Commission was not fully functional during that timeframe. It is important to note, that though the job announcements and duty statements for the executive level staff were quite robust in their duties, they fell short in capturing all the different responsibilities that they eventually took on. Some, outside the scope of their designated duties, but necessary given the limited staff, short timeframes, and moving target dates to perform those functions.

As was the case for the 2010 Commission, the 2020 Commission encountered challenges that delayed hirings because unlike other state agencies, the Commission is exempt from the civil service

requirement of Article VII of the California Constitution. It allows the Commission to hire and terminate staff with a "super majority" vote. This allows the Commission to react to the changing needs for staff or the release of staff. The challenge was more in explaining this to the Department of General Services HR staff who was unfamiliar with the Commission and its exemption from civil service requirements. This will likely be a challenge for future commissions as there is a nine year gap between commissions and staff turnover at the DGS HR and other state agencies will create knowledge voids as it relates to the staffing authority of the Commission. In an effort to mitigate this issue in the future, we have created a document to address these issues for DGS HR to retain for future reference. One of the major changes was that the 2020 Commission created new and different positions from the 2010 Commission. This in part due to the Commission now taking on the responsibilities to do outreach activities. Whereas for the 2010 Commission, they had external entities conduct outreach independent of the Commission.

The resignation of the Executive Director four months into his appointment and the subsequent dismissal of the Chief Counsel, both in February 2021, left the Commission with huge gaps. Fortunately, for the Executive Director positions, the Commission had the forethought to create the Deputy Executive Director position, which assumed the interim role immediately and ultimately was approved by the Commission as the Executive Director in late-February 2021. For the Chief Counsel vacancy, the Commission had to revise and repost the job announcement and conduct interviews while an ongoing retired annuitant took on additional responsibilities during that time. Three months later, in mid-May 2021, the new Chief Counsel was on-boarded as many activities were already in progress.

The process for hiring non-executive staff required the Executive Director, other Directors, and the Deputy Administrator to identify the tasks, develop duty statements and the job announcements, and conduct recruitment statewide. For all staff positions we conducted extensive recruitment, including posting the job announcement through the State's CalCareers portal, with external stakeholders, on social media platforms, and other available outlets. The executive staff conducted interviews and then made hiring recommendations to the Finance and Administration Subcommittee. The subcommittee would review the candidates' applications and approve the recommendation during a commission meeting. The Commission would then vote to approve the recommended candidate. Names of the candidates were not disclosed at the time of the vote to allow the candidate to give appropriate notice to their employer if they were approved for hire by the Commission. Once they were officially on board, the candidates name would be announced, and they would be introduced to the Commission at a subsequent meeting. Due to the large push of the State Census outreach and activities, the Commission benefited from a candidate pool of Census staff. Most of the outreach staff had been involved with the State Census and brought their outreach knowledge, experience, and contacts to the Commission. Outreach staff were able to jump right into the Commission's outreach activities and pivot when necessary as they had done with the Census.

Commission Programs

Unlike other State entities that have been around for countless years, this is only the second iteration of the Citizens Redistricting Commission. However, based on the two iterations, I have identified the following programs based on their activities. This is not to say that future commission can't add more programs, but this is to at least establish the baseline programs.



- **Administration/Procurement** – General administration activities, Human Resources, hiring/firing, contracts, purchasing,
- **Budgets** – budget appropriations, budget change proposals, Commission budgeting by categories, contracting and tracking invoices, expenditures, accounting activities including Fi\$cal entries, working with Department of Finance and Joint Legislative Budget Committee, Department of General Services, State Controller's Office,
- **Communications** – public relations activities, marketing materials, website
- **Outreach** – developing educational redistricting materials, working with outreach partners, scheduling community of interest (COI) activities, language access, engaging with Californians throughout the state
- **Data Management** – database development, working with Statewide Database (SWDB) on collection of COI input, database reports, and post-map access to the data
- **Legal** – Bagley-Keene Public Meetings Act, Legal Services contracts, litigation, liaison with Attorney General's Office, legal support to the Commission.

Staff Training

At our first All-Staff meeting after the outreach staff was hired, I dedicated most of the meeting to promoting TEAM (Together WE Achieve More). It does seem a bit cheesy, but I felt this was an important step to bring everyone together to outline the process, specific activities/workloads, and address the need for everyone to be flexible to adjusting timelines and workloads as needed. I further emphasized that this Commission was only the second time it had convened and that given all that was going on around us, we were embarking on a historical journey. I likened our journey to that of the fictional superhero team from the Marvel Comics, the Avengers. Like the Avengers, we all have our own superhero powers, but collectively we can accomplish great things and overcome any obstacles. The key was to work together. We covered our common vision of provide the Commissioners support in all areas to ensure they can draw the lines. We covered the objectives including timelines, milestones, and processes to capture the information. Not only did this team help the Commission meet its statutory requirements to complete the maps, but they were also creative in finding ways to meet the requests of the Commission in the short timeframes available. For being such a small team, relative to the other state agencies, our team had great output and many accomplishments.

Bagley Keene Public Meetings Act Training

Formal Bagley-Keene training was provided to the Commissioners early in their tenure, however, questions continued to arise through May of 2021. When the new Chief Counsel on-boarded in May 2021, I requested that he provide more detailed training to the Commission. The Chief Counsel reviewed a presentation outlining the law and training with tangible and related examples to the Commission at a business meeting. In addition, he reached out to each Commissioner to review the information and answer specific questions they may have had. This provided to be an invaluable approach that provided the Commissioners with a very clear understanding of the Bagley-Keene requirements. We took same approach with staff and provided the presentation at an all-staff meeting then allowed staff to follow up with Chief Counsel with any subsequent questions.

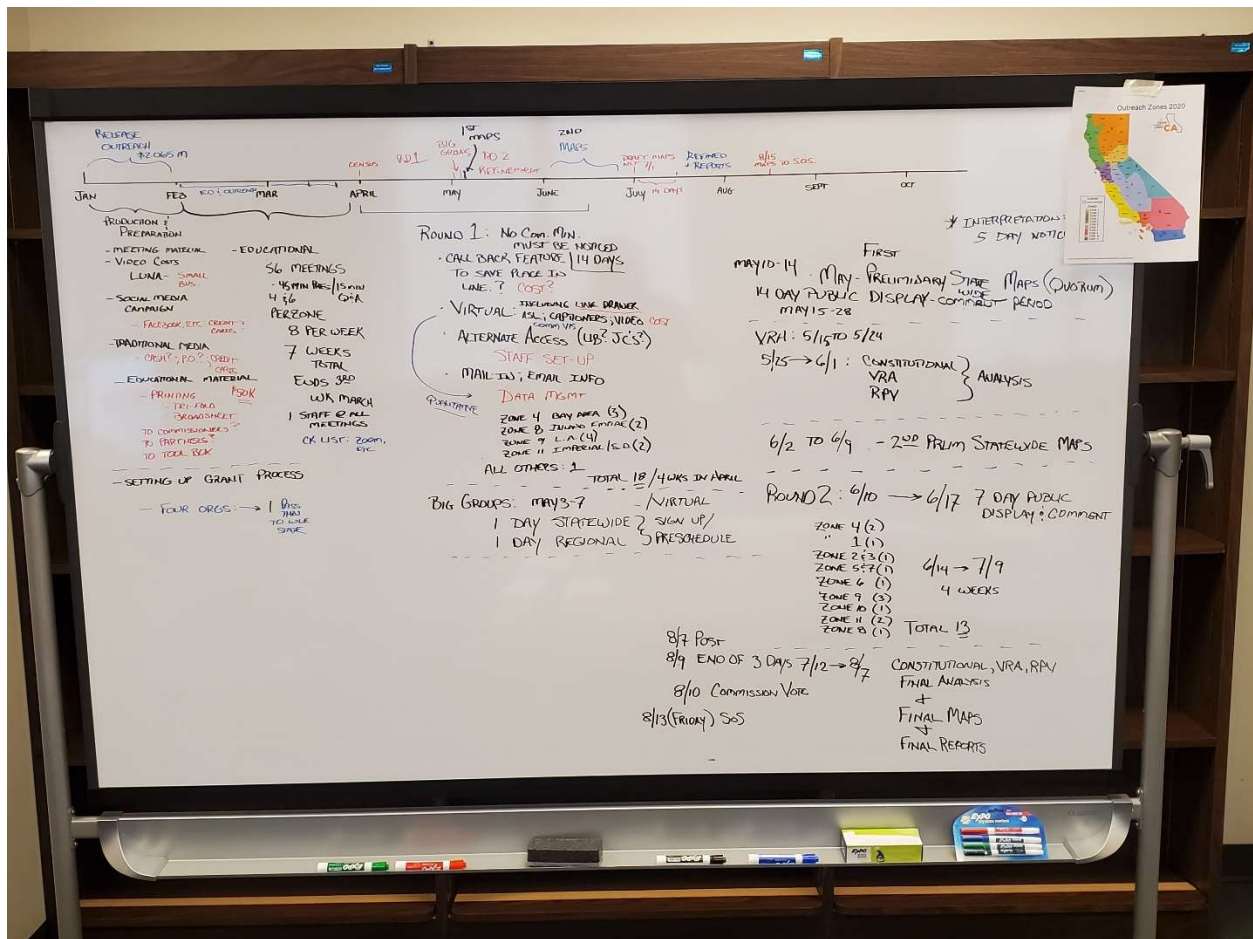
It is imperative that Commissioners and staff have a clear understanding of the Bagley-Keene Public Meetings Act requirements to avoid potential issues or the perception of improper meetings. The two big issue this Commission experience were related to the educational presentations conducted by Commissioners and meetings held by subcommittees. These two issued were part of a lawsuit filed against the Commission in **September/October 2021**.

Establishing a complete timeline

Through December 2020 and January 2021, the Executive Director and DED collaborated to plan out a complete [timeline](#) from start to finish and filled in all the pieces and parts needed for the entire process. This included identifying when staff were needed for planned or proposed activities, what contracts had to be in place and by when; timeframes for different phases of the redistricting process and the Commissions' statutory deadlines; and based on what the 2010 Commission had done, what the various meeting types would look like. This exercise proved to be invaluable for me to be able to take the reins as new Executive Director in February 2021 and know what had to be done for the remainder of the Commissions timeline and work activities. Covid-19 and Census Data Delays created changes to the timeline and how the commission could meet and had to adjust the timeline several times. The Deputy Administrator and I regularly reviewed and updated the timeline and the activities to ensure we had in place what the commission needed beyond what was originally planned. Many of the contracts had to be extended, hiring was delayed, and budget had to be augmented to accommodate for the changes. All of which was communicated to the Commission for their input and approval.

Though the Commission discussed timelines and created a plan, it would be extremely beneficial to review the administrative timeline we created on the whiteboard (see below) during a meeting to help the Commission understand the timeframes for contracting, hiring staff, and planning for the different phases of the outreach activities. Because of Covid-19 and Census Data Delays, the timeline and the activities changed a few times. Even though we did not have in-person COI input meeting, we did plan for those activities and needed to find venue well in advance.

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We worked with the Line Drawer Subcommittee to create timelines based on the expected due date of the final maps. We worked backwards from the projected final due dates and identified statutory timeframes for posting of final maps, draft maps, and when the line drawing would begin to make sure the Commission had sufficient time allotted for these activities. At one point we had three different timeframe scenarios based on the differing due dates. We were able to use this information to adjust our administrative timeline for contracting and hiring of staff.

Administrative Activities

The Deputy Administrator was responsible for all of the administrative activities and helping set up the infrastructure for the Commission. He was the retired annuitant that started with CSA and was later hired on by the Commission. For a period while with CSA, he was the primary staff person for the commission and wore multiple hats, including HR support (recruitment, setting up interviews, hiring paperwork with DGS HR), accounting (processing per diems), budgeting, contracting, and everything else needed by the Commission. He was involved in providing the Commission with training on state processes. Though the Deputy Administrator had the knowledge and experience in these areas, there was just too much that needed to be done and not enough staff to help. Also, the fact that 13 of the 14 commissioners were unfamiliar with State processes that the Deputy Administrator had to follow and adhere to created tension between the Deputy Administrator and the Commission. Despite the tension, the Deputy Administrator was able to process the necessary paperwork to get staff onboard, process commissioner per diems, and prepare contracts. The Deputy Administrator was the primary or initial

person to contact other state agencies for assistance or services. In fact, he was the one who had to explain to them who the Commission was and what it was that they were doing. Although challenging in the beginning, he was able to build good working relationships with these agencies and identified specific contacts for other staff to reach out to when necessary. The accounting assistant that was later hired to do the processing of per diems and other payments in Fi\$cal could have been brought onboard by CSA and transitioned to the Commission when it was fully seated. This would have freed up the Deputy Administrator to focus on HR and contracting early on. The Deputy Administrator and I spoke daily to discuss plans, follow-up on outstanding issues, staffing, and anything else that would come up. His experience and institutional knowledge from the 2010 Commission was great, but more invaluable was his ability to look outside the box to find solutions to problems not encountered by the previous Commission. For example, when we were looking to do outreach contracts, he researched and found the most efficient way for the Commission to contract with vendors throughout the State and was able to have the contracts in place within a very short two-to-three-week timeframe. He championed the Commission to use small business contracts and subsequently the Commission was recognized for it by DGS. As mentioned earlier, I had worked with the previous Executive Director to set up a timeline of specific activities that needed to be in place for the commission to draw the lines. The Deputy Administrator and I regularly reviewed and updated the timeline and the activities. Covid-19 and Census Data Delays created changes to the timeline and how the commission could meet so we had many conversations on how to adjust our timeline and the activities identified. Once administrative staff were hired, he worked closely with them to ensure they understood their responsibilities, provided training/guidance as necessary, and shared information and documents he had developed for the different workloads.

This Administrative Assistant position was previously classified as Commission Secretary but was change to allow for flexibility in the duties to be performed. Like many of the other staff, the administrative assistant took on more than what was originally planned or listed on the duty statement. The Administrative Assistant was the front office staff that took calls, checked the Voter First Act email box; picked up our mail, sent meeting notices to Commissioners, organized meeting set up, and kept track meeting attendance. He also helped set up the Concur application and assisted Commissioners and staff with travel arrangements. He was very efficient and took on more tasks as needed. He provided support for all staff and assisted the outreach staff during COI input meetings. This may also be one of those positions that can be filled by CSA to help the Commission in its transition to being fully staffed. I would also take some of the burden off the Commissioners that likely was thrust upon them to do when CSA handed over the keys.

Retired Annuitants

The use of retired annuitants (RAs) is an area that could also be established by CSA to help in the transition to fully functional. We had two carry over retired annuitants from the 2010 Commission's off years that assisted early on with the Commissions accounting activities. The Commission did have two retired annuitants with experience from the 2010 Commission assist in the early stages and another that was hired to assist with meetings. One of the two with experience from 2010 was hired as the Deputy Administrator and the other Legal retired annuitant stepped in to assist the Commission when the first Chief Counsel was dismissed. An additional retired annuitant was hired around November 2020 to assist the commission with their IT needs, specifically with the laptops and network connections. When the

new Chief Counsel was hired, he hired two retired annuitants with legal background to assist with the Legal workloads.

The only drawback with RAs is that they typically have limited amount time they can work and given the volume of work during the different phases, they would have reached their limit early. Fortunately because of the impacts of Covid-19 those limits were suspended and they were able to work more hours than previously expected.

Grants

One component of the Outreach, Engagement, and Activation Strategy was to partner with organizations that are connected with various audiences and can help the Commission in its outreach. A grant funding process could leverage trusted community partners across the state to educate and activate Californians to participate in the redistricting process.

Grant funding is an opportunity for the Commission to further reach communities who may face barriers to participation, including accessibility, limited knowledge of the redistricting process, language access or other factors. Funding will support activities including education and training with the goal of supporting individuals to provide public input to the Commission about their communities. A grantmaking structure is yet to be determined but the Commission and staff are working on establishing a grant process that includes guidelines and criteria for funding. After considerable time and effort to look at how the Commission could do grants, it was ultimately decided the Commission would not go in this direction. Two key factors that impeded the progress of CRC awarding grants were, there is no statutory authority for CRC to award grants, and the second was the possible conflict of interests with many of the Commissioners ties to non-profit organizations.

The Communications and Outreach Directors presented a plan that was ultimately approved by the Commission to utilize these outreach funds to conduct an outreach media campaign. It will be challenging for future commission to issue grants unless there is specific statutory authority granted to the commission. I also think it will be in the Commission's best interested to have a third party to award the grants to avoid any conflict of interest issues.

Line Drawing & Visualization

The Commission created a subcommittee to oversee the contracting of the line drawing team and used what information/recommendations were provided by the 2010 Commission as a resource to avoid any of the issues encountered by them. One specific task identified was the note taking during COI meetings and thus the 2020 Commission included language in the contract. However, this did not happen as planned. The line drawer staff was not able to capture the full details of the input provided by the public so our outreach team took notes. They provided a verbal recap at the end of each of the COI input and then sent their notes to the Line drawers.

The Commission also implemented the concept of visualizations rather than referencing any maps as draft maps. This was to avoid confusion as they were required to complete "draft maps" within a certain timeframe. The visualizations in the this virtual environment worked well and allowed for public input throughout the visualization process. Again, our outreach staff was involved in capturing the public input to share with the line drawers.

Closing Operations

In late December 2020, the executive staff met to plan out the entire redistricting cycle from on-boarding to off-boarding. In February and March of 2021, the Commission discussed an organizational chart that reflected staffing needs for the Commission through January or February of 2022. At the time we did not have confirmation on when the Census data would be available to the Commission, thus we planned for possible final map due dates in January or February 2022 for the district maps. As a result of the delay in Census data, hiring of outreach staff was delayed. Once a date was provided by the Census on when the data would be available, staffing needs were assessed again and we began recruiting in April and hired outreach staff in late May 2021. We also began recruiting for the data management team needs later than anticipated. There was some ambiguity as to when the final maps would be due so in August 2021, the Commission requested the California Supreme Court to clarify the final due date for the maps. The Supreme Court concluded that December 27, 2021, would be the due date for the district maps to be delivered to the Secretary of State. This required an adjustment to how long we would have staff on board since the original projections of January or February 2022 were no longer valid. Outreach and support activities that the outreach staff had done since May were essentially concluded after December 27th. Some data management activities continued beyond January in preparations for possible litigation which did not happen. The off-boarding of outreach staff and some communication staff was completed by January 2022. Other administrative functions continue through December 2022 as part of final reporting and closing operations. The Commission vacated the Suite 260 and coordinated the transfer of office equipment to other agencies or to state surplus. Because the Commission was able to get funding for some activities, including a staff person, for the years leading up to the next Commission, the offboarding plans changed and some staff may stay on until the end of June 2023. The remaining staff will be housed in Suite 250 and it is our hope that funding will be approved to maintain that office space until the next Commission is seated.

Final Budget Report to the Legislature

The 2021 Budget bill, SB 112 2021, specified in the appropriation for the commission:

"The Citizens Redistricting Commission shall submit a report on its expenditures to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee and the Department of Finance and post the report on the commission's internet website by June 30, 2023. The report shall include (a) actual costs on the commission's operations, including salaries, benefits, lease space, per diem, and other costs related to the operation of the commission before the adoption of the final set of maps; (b) actual costs incurred after the adoption of the final set of maps; and (c) actual costs due to the delay of United States Census data and impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic."

A similar report completed by the 2010 commission was later used by the legislature as the basis for the 2019 appropriation for the commission as adjusted by the cumulative change in the California Consumer Price Index. Staff used the 2010 Report format to completed a draft report that includes the requested information from the budget bill SB 112. The remaining staff will be work with the Finance and Administration Subcommittee to finalize the report for submission.

Budget

The Budget process for the Commission is very different from other agencies in that there are [budget allocations](#) that cover multiple years then is subject to the Legislature for future funding. Also different is that the Commission must formally request the release of the allocated funds periodically from DOF and JLBC. It is my hope that this exercise changes now that the Commission has been through two cycles and has a much better understanding of its needs. Although future Commission will encounter different challenges, it is unlikely that Covid-19 type of impacts will happen again.

The Budget Officer position with this Commission is different from other agencies in that it was only one person, whereas other agencies have a whole unit dedicated to budget activities. I note this because this role required a much more hands-on approach, but the amount of work was still the same. Our first Budget Officer was hired by the previous Executive Director in January 2021 because he had worked with him during the 2010 Commission timeframe. He was with the Department of Finance (DOF) and understood the budgeting from the DOF side of things. His knowledge of how DOF worked was instrumental in the Commission's effort to augment the budget due to Covid-19 and Census Data Delays. His spreadsheets for projecting staff salary/benefits expenditures were helpful, but very complicated and hard to follow for the Finance and Administration Subcommittee. He also did not create a method to track actual expenses for other activities, including contracts, and relied on DGS reports that were 2 to 3 months in arrears. This created confusion and uncertainty of what funds were available for the Commission to use as changes to the timeline and activities continued. He was not able to transition his DOF mindset to meet the needs of the Commission's fast pace and changing environment and returned to DOF in October 2021. I hired on a new Budget Officer whom I had worked with before and provided a clear expectation of what we needed to have in place to track expenditures and reports that we needed to provide the Commission. Both the Deputy Administrator and I helped her create some simple to follow [spreadsheets](#). In addition, she worked closer with DGS Budgets and Accounting staff to request more detailed accounting reports that were not previously requested. She was able to establish more real time reports and provide clear spreadsheets to explain the Commission's financial status with the Finance and Administration Subcommittee. In hindsight, although the high-level understanding of DOF budgeting process was helpful, what the Commission needed more was someone who could keep track of expenditures and create simple reports. I also want to note that because of how the allocation of funds for the Commission is done, it requires much more involved reports to track what expenses are paid from the specific appropriations. None of which are in standard reports or formats available from DGS accounting. Our Budget Officer and other Administrative Staff had to create our own report from multiple reports provided by DGS. The reports from DGS are generated from the entries into the Fi\$cal system, which was not in place for the 2010 Commission. Because to Commissions work activities are different from other more standard activities of other state agencies, the categories available in Fi\$cal don't always reflect the Commission's activities clearly. This impacted where the transaction was reported in DGS reports. Our new Budget Officer worked closely with DGS to identify the reports where these transactions can be found, and it is a goal to have better reports from DGS in the future. For future Commission it will be important to have the Budget Officer and the Accounting Assistant work closely from the beginning to identify payment categories to be used for the different types of vendors, invoices, payments so that DGS reports are more streamlined from the beginning.

The Budget Officer worked with the Executive Director and the Finance and Administration Subcommittee to create summary reports and project the Commission's funding needs throughout the

process. Spreadsheets were created to track the expenditures and estimate future expenditures based on the planned activities. As referenced above, Covid-19 and Census Data Delays changed how the Commission could meet and extended timeframes for many activities. Not only did the moving target create challenges from a budget perspective, but the fact the Commission had to request the release of funds from DOF and JLBC added to the challenge. Most requests were answered with follow-up questions and requests for detailed information on the projected expenditures. The back and forth became an unexpected workload for the Budget Officer. In the end, most of the funds were released, but later than was expected. It is important that future Budget Officer's create good working relationships with DOF and JLBC to help expedite the release of funds.

The [budget summary reports](#) created provide high level information based on specific budget components, including the large contracts for the Commission. The more detailed information was provided to the Finance and Administration Subcommittee for review and discussion. In addition to tracking these components, the Budget Officer and I created a [Legislature Report Spreadsheet](#), an extensive spreadsheet with various categories that roll up into the aforementioned components that will reflect the three year timeline of the budget allocations. It will also show what activities took place and the timeframe in which those activities occurred. This will be helpful in identifying specific activities the Commission is required to report to the Legislature. The Commission is required to provide the Legislature with a final budget report that identifies expenditures for specific activities so they can use a baseline for appropriations of the next Commission, in this case for the 2030 Commission.

In July 2022, with the input of the Budget Officer and Audit Subcommittee, I conducted a [PowerPoint presentation](#) to the Commission that illustrated the appropriations, budget, and expenditures from July 2020 through June of 2022. This presentation and the Legislative Report Spreadsheet will provide the supporting information for the Final Report to the Legislature. The report covers a three year timeframe that includes post-map information, but the key focus from the Legislature's perspective is the cost to create the final maps. Typically that would be through August 15, but due to Covid-19 and Census Data Delays the timeframe was through December 27, 2021.

The Accounting Assistant was the primary staff person entering information into the Fi\$cal system. As mentioned earlier, the Commissions' workload is different from other agencies and the category codes available within Fi\$cal don't always fit the services performed by the vendors. The account assistant had to select the closest category code to process the invoices for payments. In some cases this was through trial and error. She would select a category then would receive error communications and she would have to try again selecting a different category. Though she had experience with Fi\$cal, things were different from her previous department. Will need more than one person to process PO's and invoices, especially when the Commission is in full gear. They need to be very familiar with Fi\$cal. It may be necessary to have one person focus solely on processing TECs. They are so time consuming and tedious.

Data Management

The Data Management Subcommittee conducted research to find a product that would meet the needs of the Commission's need to capture COI input. The 2010 Commission collected input at public Commission meeting then had staff manually enter the data into an Excel spreadsheet. Due to Covid-19 the 2020 Commission mostly met virtually from the beginning of their term and given the uncertainty of when Covid restrictions would change the Commission had to look at hosting virtual COI input meetings

and capturing the input from the public. The goal was to exceed the amount of input that was received by the 2010 Commission. The 2020 Commission wanted to make sure they had a database to capture the input and also be able to pull reports they could use in drawing the lines. The Commission budgeted funds to develop or purchase a database. The Subcommittee learned of a group that helped government entities with the data needs and reached out the USDR. They had knowledge of products and also had the talent to build a database for the Commission. After researching the options, they recommended an online database product call AirTable. It was a database system that could capture the data needed and also provide reports for the Commissioners as needed. However, as is the case with many products that were looked at, it needed to be adapted to the Commission work. USDR provided the technical expertise to make modifications to the database, and we ultimately hired one of their staff to provide technical and consulting services on the database. The consultant was able to adapt the AirTable to the commissions needs and worked closely with the Data Manager when she was hired. One of the bigger challenges encountered was getting the data collected by the Statewide Database from their system to ours. They had many security concerns and would not transfer the data until those concerns were put to rest. Though AirTable had security measures built into the database the fact that SWDB was unfamiliar with the product and with USDR was the cause of their concerns. Once the consultant and our Data Manager began the more technical conversations, the issue were resolved. Rather than the Commission going into the SWDB system, they (SWDB) would transfer the data, including GIS files, into a third-party storage (AWS) and the data manager could access the data from there to ingest into the AirTable database. Another concern that was addressed was regarding personal identifying information (PII) that was stored in the SWDB. The workaround was that any of the data that was transferred into the AWS system from SWDB would not contain PII. Fields that included any PII were not included in the transfer into the AWS system. The Data Manager did take additional precautions to review the fields received to redact any PII that may have been included.

Outreach

When the Deputy Executive Director was named Executive Director, that created a vacancy in the Deputy Executive Director position. After consultation with staff and Commissioners, as the new Executive Director, I decided that the need for an Outreach Director was greater given we were at the beginning stages of outreach. From an HR perspective, only the title changed and the position that was established remained the same. Our Outreach Manager, Marcy Kaplan, who had come over from the Census, interviewed and was selected by the Commission. Her experience from the Census, working with community organizations, and understanding of the Commission's goal to conduct robust outreach to Californians helped the Commission meet its goals. She conducted interviews for her outreach team and received approval from the Commission to bring them onboard. Most of which had also worked with the Census in different regions. We hired outreach staff to do outreach, but they ended up doing much more when it came to the various types of meetings. As part of COVID related adjustment, we conducted all of the Community of Interest meetings via ZOOM, and staff had to create a Google sign-up sheet, work with the videographers and line drawers to identify the callers and take notes of the callers COI. The Outreach Director and her staff were instrumental in adjusting to changes and pivoting as needed. For example, the Outreach Director and the Outreach Leads helped draft the district descriptions that were used for the final maps report. For more information on outreach activities go to [Outreach Final Report](#) prepared by the Outreach Director.

Communications

The Communications Director was among the first executive hires by the Commission in early November 2020. An argument can be made that the Communication Director is needed much earlier to assist the Commission in the recruitment of executive level staff. Although CSA assisted in the recruitment effort and actually hired a firm, it may have been more beneficial bringing someone into this position to help promote the Commission and recruit for the executive level positions. Early on, the Commission did not have a presence on various social media platforms or even their own website. Potentially bringing the Communication Director on sooner, could have benefited the Commission in reaching out further to more diverse pool of candidates. How much sooner will depend on when the Commission is fully seated. The Communication Director, Fredy Ceja, brought a wealth of experience from working for a legislative member in a similar capacity. He helped establish this Commission's digital footprint on social media platforms and distinguish it from the 2010 Commission with its branding. He was also responsible for creating this Commission's new website from the ground up using Nationbuilder. This task was outside or his scope of duties, but necessary. In addition to bringing the Communications Director onboard sooner, it will be advisable for the Communications Director to bring onboard three to more staff to assist in all the different media platforms and tasks. For more information on communication activities see [Communications Final Report](#) prepared by the Communications Director.

Legal

As mentioned earlier, the first Chief Counsel was dismissed in February 2021, and our new Chief Counsel came on board on May 2021. This all transpired when the Commission was in the process of selecting an outside legal firm and required the Commission to seek the assistance of the Attorney General's Office. Had the Commission been on the original timeframe of the maps due by August 15, it is very likely there would not have been sufficient time to find a replacement and the Commission would have had to continue to work with the AG's Office or the retired annuitant would have had to assume the role. Fortunately, it worked out and the Commission was successful in finding the right replacement. The area where the Commission needed the most support and clarity was in regard to the Bagley-Keene Public Meetings Act. The new Chief Counsel had the experience working for other boards and/or commissions. As part of his onboarding, I provided a recap of the issues related to Bagley-Keene, status of the hiring of the legal firm, and general information to make his transition as seamless as possible. I requested that he provide Bagley-Keene training to the Commissioners and then to the staff. Although we had received information from the RA on Bagley-Keene, it was not an actual training. Rather it was more of summary of what the law stated without examples or scenarios to help understand better. The new Chief Counsel's approach for the Commission was to provide a training during a public meeting with examples and discussions. He then also to reach out to each Commissioner to discuss any specific questions or scenarios they may have had for specific activities they were involved in that were not discussed in the open meeting. This was also a way for him to build a rapport with each commissioner and set the tone for their interaction thereafter. It was also important to have him participate in committee and subcommittee meetings, chair/vice chair check-in meetings, staff meetings, and meetings with the line drawers to ensure compliance with applicable laws. We were able to discuss possible legal issues and solutions to then discuss with the full Commission at a business meeting in open or closed session as necessary. The new Chief Counsel provide an understanding of the law and alternatives/options for the Commission to consider, which was a contrast with the previous Chief Counsel and the RA that didn't. I

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highly recommend that Chief Counsel's for future commission have extensive experience working with other boards or commissions to ensure adherence to Bagley-Keene.

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