

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: October 16, 2020

TO: Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso *SMT*
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Council File No. 20-0668
Assignment No. 20-09-0891

SUBJECT: 2020 Redistricting Timeline Update

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles City Charter requires that district boundaries for the City Council and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board be redrawn every ten years following the decennial U.S. Census (Redistricting). The Charter requires that Redistricting be completed by December 31, 2021, but the County Registrar-Recorder had required that the City provide completed City Council and Los Angeles Unified School District boundaries by October 6, 2021.

In a report dated May 27, 2020 (CF 20-0668), the CLA reported that due to possible changes in the release of 2020 Census data and the date of the 2022 State Primary election, there was uncertainty as to when the Redistricting process must be completed in order to comply with the County's deadline. On September 18, 2020, the Governor signed SB 970, moving the 2022 State Primary election to June 2022, providing additional time for completion of City Redistricting Plans. Uncertainty still remains with regard to the release of the 2020 Census data.

Passage of SB 970, however, allows for greater certainty in the Redistricting timeline. The revised Redistricting timeline now allows for Commissions to deliver their Redistricting proposals to Council in June 2021. The Council would approve Redistricting plans in October 2021, with the Charter requiring that the ordinances for the final plans be adopted no later than December 31, 2021. A complete schedule of Redistricting goals and deadlines is available in the Background section of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

None, as this report is for informational purposes only.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles City Charter requires that district boundaries for the City Council and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board be redrawn every ten years following the decennial U.S. Census (Redistricting). The City Council and LAUSD Board are required to establish separate Redistricting Commissions to develop new boundaries for these districts. For

2020, the Charter requires that the Redistricting process be completed no later than December 31, 2021.

On May 27, 2020, the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst released a report detailing the 2020 Redistricting process (Redistricting Process Report). The Redistricting Process Report outlined two potential timelines for Redistricting: one that required completion of the Redistricting Plans to meet deadlines related to a March 2022 Primary Election schedule, and a second that surmised the passage of SB 970 (Umberg) which moves the State primary election in 2022 from March to June, providing additional time for completion of City Redistricting Plans. SB 970 was signed by the Governor on September 18, 2020, moving the date of the next City elections to June 2022.

The original deadline for submitting new district boundaries to the County Registrar-Recorder had been set by the County as no later than October 6, 2021. This was necessary to allow the County to redraw voting precincts in time for a March 2022 Primary election. With the passage of SB 970, the County has more time to complete its work in revising voting precincts. As such, the County has confirmed that the new deadline to submit new City Council and LAUSD district boundaries is December 8, 2021. As the City Council's traditional December Recess would begin mid-December 2021, this new deadline will coincide with the Council's anticipated meeting schedule in 2021.

The only remaining uncertainty in the timeline relates to the release of the 2020 Census data. The Census Bureau's website indicates that Census counts that are used for Redistricting will be released to State and local governments by March 31, 2021. However, numerous delays to the Census data collection process may call this date into question. For example, on October 1, 2020, U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh ruled that data collection must continue through October 31, 2020. Then, on October 13, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the data collection could end immediately, and subsequently the Census Bureau announced that data collection would conclude on October 15, 2020. With data collection not expected to continue beyond October 15, 2020, it is probable that the Census Bureau will still release Census counts by March 31, 2021.

With Redistricting proposals due for delivery to Council in June 2021, any delay in the release of the 2020 Census data beyond the planned date of March 31, 2021 could significantly hinder the City's ability to meet Redistricting deadlines. The Council will be provided an update if the planned release of 2020 Census data is altered by the Census Bureau.


Updated Redistricting Timeline

As a result of the passage of SB 970 and the delays in receiving data from the Census Bureau, the timeline for completing necessary steps in the Redistricting process has been revised from the timeline indicated in the Redistricting Process Report. The following calendar is based on the timeline presented in the Redistricting Process Report, with refinements to recognize additional time allowed for appointing authorities to designate their Commissioners and the passage of SB 970. The following updated schedule highlights the necessary steps to adopt final City Council and LAUSD Board boundaries in a timely manner, assuming that 2020 Census data is delivered by the Census Bureau as expected on March 31, 2021:

July 2020	Staff begin technical preparation (set up offices, etc.)
October 2020	Redistricting Commissioners appointed
November 2020	Commissioners begin to meet
June 2021	Commissions deliver their Redistricting proposals to Council
October 2021	Council adopts Redistricting Plans
December 2021	Council adopts final district ordinances

The Charter requires that the final plans be adopted no later than December 31, 2021. With the Council Winter recess in mind, the last day to adopt an ordinance would be a first read during the first week of December 2021, with time for a second read during the second week of December 2021. Such dates would be reviewed and confirmed once the Council's recess calendar for 2021 is approved.

Staff will monitor developments related to the release of the 2020 Census data and will report with any issues that may emerge.



 Alex Whitehead
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