

Navajo County, Arizona

Redistricting to Equalize Populations

An Overview of the Process

February 22, 2011



The consultants

- Two firms will serve as legal and process consultants to Navajo County and its Redistricting Committee
- Federal Compliance Consulting LLC, Potomac, Maryland
 - Bruce L. Adelson, Esq., CEO
- Research Advisory Services, Inc., Phoenix, Arizona
 - Tony Sissons, President



DOJ Expert Bruce Adelson

- Former U. S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division senior attorney
- Team leader for review of all Arizona redistricting submissions in 2000
- Bruce Adelson will:
 - Examine Navajo County's Section 5 files
 - Advise on strategy to avoid retrogression
 - Provide an "Insider" view of new DOJ regulations and procedures
 - Advise on the content of Navajo County's application for DOJ preclearance



Redistricting Expert Tony Sissons

- Has managed 17 successful city and county redistricting processes
- Of those 17 plans:
 - All were precleared by the U. S. Department of Justice on first submission
 - None were ever challenged in court
- Tony Sissons will:
 - Provide technical and procedural assistance to Navajo County staff and Redistricting Committee

Why does Navajo County have to redistrict?

- ★ U. S. Constitution, under the principle of “one person, one vote” requires that the districts from which we elect representatives be equal in population
- ★ We must redistrict after every decennial census and whenever there is a change in the number of districts or change in the size of the jurisdiction



Population Issues

- Official state estimate of Navajo County population in 2009: 115,420 persons
- Increase of 18.4% since 2000
- Ideal district size (estimate):
 - Supervisor and Community College Districts -- 23,084 persons
- Population measurement includes all persons, regardless of age, eligibility to vote, or citizenship



Population Variance

- ★ In the past, district populations could vary as much as 10% without explanation
- ★ Federal court decision in a 2004 Georgia case may have reduced the allowable variance (*Larios v. Cox*)
- ★ Block-level redistricting allows flexibility to achieve small variance



Race and Ethnicity Issues

- To comply with the federal Voting Rights Act, Navajo County must draw new districts that have “neither the purpose, nor the effect, of diluting the voting strength of racial, origin, or language minority populations”
- To avoid “retrogression” in minority voting strength, we have to understand the “benchmark” minority proportions that DOJ will be using.



Race and Ethnicity Issues

- ★ DOJ looks at the minority proportions that exist today (2010 Census) in the most recently precleared districts, not at the proportions that existed when the districts were drawn
- ★ We won't know those exact proportions until the 2010 Census data arrives in March, 2011



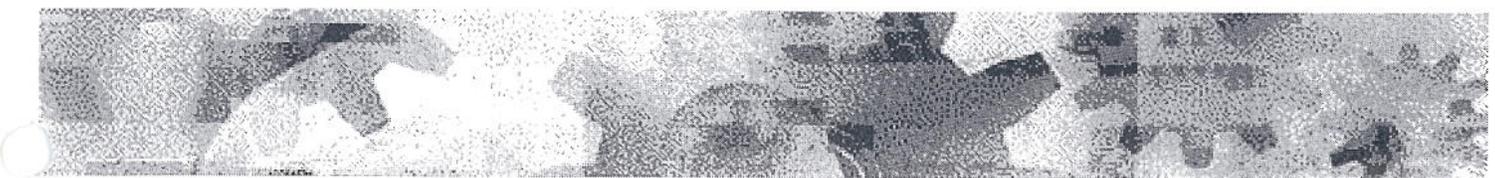
Race and Ethnicity Issues

- In 2000, voting-age minority proportions were:
 - District I – 95.9%
 - District II – 84.4%
 - District III – 36.7%
 - District IV – 13.3%
 - District V – 55.7%
- Three of the districts were “minority-majority”.
- Will population shifts during the decade cause District V to have lost its minority-majority status? The 2010 Census will tell



Redistricting Principles

- As a result of laws and court cases, certain common “district design” rules have evolved
- In some circumstances, these rules can conflict with each other
- It is up to the Board of Supervisors to prioritize how they want the “districting principles” applied
- The discussion and adoption of those priorities should be in a public session



Common Redistricting Principles -- New districts should:

- Be substantially equal in population
- Not harm minority voting rights

Then always “to the extent practicable”

- Be compact
- Be contiguous
- Preserve communities of interest
- Respect political subdivisions



Less Common Principles --

- Districts should preserve the cores of prior districts
- Districts should (or should not) be drawn to protect incumbent elected officials
- Districts should be politically competitive
- Districts should not split existing voting precincts or Census Tracts
- District boundaries should use visible geographic features



The Public Involvement Process

- The courts and DOJ want this to be an assertively public process
- The public record should clearly demonstrate that Navajo County paid attention to its residents and did not just “give lip-service” to public input



Preliminary Studies

- Examine, map and document the physical and demographic makeup of Navajo County
- Examine County records and Section 5 files to get a complete picture of the County's preclearance history
- Catalog recent state, county and city election results at the precinct level
 - Voter turnout
 - Race or Ethnicity of candidates
 - Winners' vote margins



When the Census Data Arrives

- Determine the population, race and ethnicity values in the current districts
- Determine the size of population shifts necessary to equalize districts
- Determine the minority race proportions in each current district
- Determine the permissible population movements necessary to equalize district populations without diminishing minority voting strength
- Examine the magnitude and extent of any racially-polarized voting



Outreach to Community Leaders

- **Talk with key community leaders**
 - Explain the process
 - Determine their expectations
 - Encourage their participation and leadership
- **Develop a contact list of people and organizations suggested by key leaders**



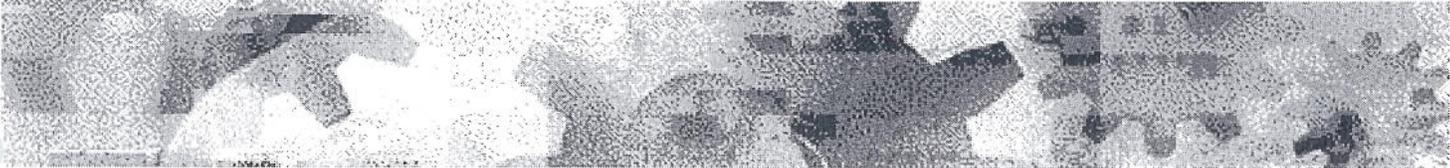
Prepare Public Information Materials

- Maps illustrating topics examined in the preliminary studies
- Information handouts or booklets describing various aspects of the redistricting process
- Citizen Redistricting Kits
 - Printed booklet of instructions, data and foldout base-maps
 - Interactive redistricting map on the Internet



Initial meetings with Supervisors

- **Formal “Work-study” session with elected officials**
 - Discuss process, legal setting, roles, responsibilities
 - Discuss “districting principles”
 - Obtain Supervisors’ direction on priority ranking of districting principles
- **Individual Meetings with Board Members and staffs**
 - Obtain input on possible or preferred configurations of districts



First Round Resident Workshops

- **Public meetings, one in each current district**
 - 30 minutes to view exhibits, socialize
 - Short presentation on scope, purpose, process, timelines, legal issues
 - Stress that no maps have been drawn yet
 - that the request for input is genuine
 - Invite citizens to draw their perceptions of “communities of interest” important to them on tracing paper laid over County maps



Draw and Publish Alternate Plans

- Analyze plans and community-of-interest maps submitted by citizens
- Prepare 3 or 4 alternate plans, based on:
 - Themes or suggestions from elected officials
 - Recurrent themes heard from public meeting participants
 - Maps of districts or communities of interest submitted by citizens
- Publish proposed alternate plans



Second Round Resident Workshops

- **Public meetings, one in each current district**
 - 30 minutes to view exhibits, socialize
 - Short formal presentation
 - Describe features of each plan
 - Stress the extent to which plans incorporate ideas gathered in various public-input settings
 - Describe ways for citizens to register their views, or choices of plans or plan features
- **Redistricting Committee and staff answer questions**



Prepare and Publish Final Plan

- Consultants will prepare final versions of plans requested by the Redistricting Committee for consideration by the Board of Supervisors
- Plans displayed on County's website and in newspaper ads
- Public invited to send in comments and to attend the plan adoption meeting



Adoption of Plan

- Consultants, Redistricting Committee and staff present plans to Board of Supervisors at a meeting held specifically for that purpose
- Consultant team's preclearance expert examines the adopted plan for compliance with new DOJ Section 5 regulations
- Consultants prepare files and exhibits needed for the preclearance application.



Overview of Participant Roles

- ★ **Tony Sissons, Research Advisory Services**
 - ★ GIS computer analysis
 - ★ Research on demography and electoral behavior
 - ★ Drawing district maps
 - ★ Advice to Redistricting Committee on managing the public process
 - ★ Attendance at some public meetings
 - ★ Preparation of maps and exhibits needed for the Section 5 preclearance application



Overview of Participant Roles

- **Bruce Adelson, Federal Compliance Consulting LLC**
 - Examination of Navajo County's prior Section 5 preclearance activity
 - Examination of Constitutional and Voting Rights issues when the Census data arrives
 - Guidance on possible boundary adjustments to balance populations without causing retrogression
 - Examination of final plans as they are to be recommended to the Board of Supervisors by the Redistricting Committee
 - Review and advice on the content of the preclearance application



Overview of Participant Roles

- Navajo County Board of Supervisors
 - Sharing their views and preferences in individual meetings with the consultants
 - Participating in a public work-study session to examine and prioritize redistricting principles (district design criteria)
 - Giving instructions to the Redistricting Committee
 - Receiving plan recommendations from the Redistricting Committee
- Adopting final plans



Overview of Participant Roles

- **Navajo County Redistricting Committee**
 - Hosting both rounds of public meetings
 - Serving as the eyes and ears of the Board of Supervisors
 - Instructing the consultants on district design issues reflecting the Committee's interpretation of public input
 - Reviewing plans prepared at their request
 - Recommending plans to the Board of Supervisors



Overview of Participant Roles

- Navajo County Staff
 - The role of “stage manager” throughout
 - Administrative support for the process
 - Preparing necessary resolutions and official process documents



Consultant Contact Information

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