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December 17, 2020

Los Angeles City Council 2021 Redistricting Commission
redistricting.lacity@lacity.org

Subject: Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association 2021 Redistricting Recommendations for Sherman Oaks and the San Fernando Valley

Dear Commissioners,

Sherman Oaks is a united 73,000-person community on the southern border of the San Fernando Valley at the Sepulveda Pass. Sherman Oaks is also the most vulnerable Valley community during redistricting. It sits on a portion of the Valley boundary where council districts historically cross the hill into the Valley. The Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association (SOHA) represents about 2,400 Sherman Oaks families. **We are very concerned about what could happen to our community during 2021 redistricting.**



In 2001 redistricting, Sherman Oaks was split between two council districts – CD2 to the north and CD5 to the south. In 2011 redistricting, our community asked to be restored into one single district and this mostly happened. But doing so unfortunately made us an appendage to gerrymandered over-the-hill district CD4 and disconnected us from all our adjacent and natural communities of interest. We are asking the 2021 Redistricting Commission’s help to equitably rectify this situation.

We reviewed what happened in 2011 redistricting to better understand what could happen in 2021. We studied the 2001 and 2011 redistricting commission reports and relevant Council File 11-0187-S3 information. We learned that the Valley unfairly ended up with two districts shared over the hill with the rest of the city instead of a single potentially Valley-majority shared district. We also learned that Valley district populations were unfairly balanced to the rest of the city, losing the Valley’s two over-the-hill districts about 28,000 residents that they deserved. We want to ensure such outcomes do not repeat in 2021.

SOHA proposes two critical goals that eliminate the inequities suffered by Sherman Oaks and the Valley during 2011 redistricting and give us our equitable fair share. We recommend the 2021 Redistricting Commission adopt these critical goals and build them into the redistricting process.

- ***Single Shared District Goal*** – The Valley and Westside share only one single compact council district and that district is fully contiguous in the Valley and includes the entire Sherman Oaks community.
- ***Fair Population Balance Goal*** – The average population of all full Valley districts equals the average population of all 15 council districts.

If these two goals had been adopted in 2011 redistricting, the Valley would have had five full districts and one single over-the-hill shared Council District 5. This district, comprising Sherman Oaks, Encino, and other adjacent communities of interest, would have had a 62 percent Valley-majority population in 2011 and an opportunity for the district to elect its own Valley-based councilmember.

We ask for this opportunity in 2021 redistricting – a single over-the-hill shared district and equitable balancing of the Valley’s population. We know this is simply the right and fair thing to do, even though it means Sherman Oaks must again sadly change districts. The 2011 commission restored Sherman Oaks into a single council district which greatly strengthened our community. We now ask the 2021 commission to reconnect us with our adjacent communities of interest.

SOHA is also concerned about when we might learn how many 2021 districts the Valley deserves. As 2020 census data won’t be available until at least early April 2021, no one will know the Valley’s fair share of the city’s population until then. The Valley share increased slightly based on the 2010 census and will probably change again. Once 2020 census data is available, we offer a simple tool to quickly determine the Valley’s fair share of districts. We call this the **2021 Valley Magic Number** because it accurately predicts the overall fate of Sherman Oaks and the Valley during 2021 redistricting. The magic number tells us the number of full Valley districts and the fair portion of Valley residents in over-the-hill shared districts.

Valley’s Deserved Fair Share of 2021 Council Districts	
$\frac{2021 \text{ Valley Population}}{2021 \text{ Total City Population}}$	$\times 15 \text{ Council Districts} = 2021 \text{ Valley Magic Number}$

We urge the commission to publicize this number, or the data to determine it, as quickly as possible after 2020 census data is available. It will give the public critical knowledge to help them during outreach.

The attached *SOHA Detailed Review and Recommendations for 2021 City Council Redistricting* provides further information and rationale for our recommended goals. We will be glad to answer any questions about our 2021 redistricting recommendations and have a short presentation that we would be honored to give to the 2021 Redistricting Commission via Zoom. We plan to submit further comments and recommendations as the redistricting process progresses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Bob Anderson
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Attached: *SOHA Detailed Review and Recommendations for 2021 City Council Redistricting*

cc: Councilmember Nithya Raman (CD4), Jessica Salans (CD4 Co-Chief of Staff), Councilmember Paul Koretz (CD5), Joan Pelico (CD5 Chief of Staff), Councilmember Paul Krekorian (CD2), Karo Torossian (CD2 Chief of Staff), Council President Nury Martinez (CD6), Ackley Padilla (CD6 Chief of Staff), Jeffrey Hartsough (President, Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council), Tammy Scher (Chair, Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce), Leslie Elkan (President, Village at Sherman Oaks Business Improvement District)

SOHA Detailed Review and Recommendations for 2021 City Council Redistricting

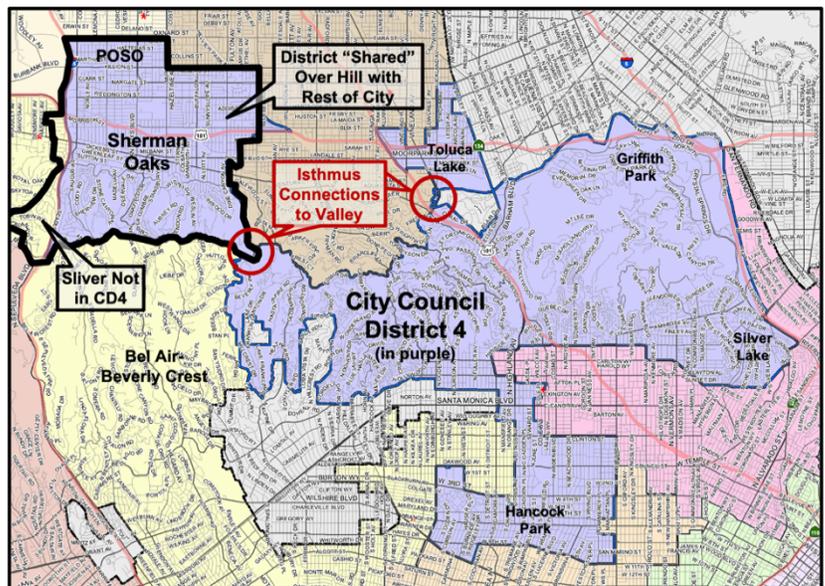
The Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association recommends the City Council Redistricting Commission adopt two critical goals to ensure Sherman Oaks and the Valley receive their fair share in 2021 redistricting.

- Single Shared District Goal – The Valley and Westside share only one single compact council district and that district is fully contiguous in the Valley and includes the entire Sherman Oaks community.
- Fair Population Balance Goal – The average population of all full Valley districts equals the average population of all 15 council districts.

These goals are consistent with the city’s foundational redistricting elements that specify districts must: (1) be as equal in population as practicable; (2) be drawn in conformance with state and federal law; (3) keep neighborhoods and communities intact to the extent feasible; (4) utilize natural boundaries or street lines to the extent feasible; and (5) be geographically compact to the extent feasible.

What Happened in 2011 Redistricting?

SOHA reviewed 2011 redistricting to better understand what could and should happen in 2021. In 2011, SOHA requested that Sherman Oaks be entirely in a single district and this mostly happened. Unfortunately, we also became an appendage to Council District 4. Some call CD4 the most convoluted and gerrymandered district in the city’s history. As shown in *Map 1*, the district extends from Sherman Oaks to Griffith Park, Silver Lake, and Hancock Park. CD4 included most of Sherman Oaks including POSO, Part of Sherman Oaks, added by council action in July 2009 (council file 08-2758). However, CD4 did not include the sliver of Sherman Oaks west of the 405.



Map 1. Council District 4 Is the Most Gerrymandered in LA

Sherman Oaks was gerrymandered to CD4 with a tiny “isthmus” connection between our community and the Westside. Toluca Lake was connected to CD4 with another isthmus. Isthmus connections create a perception of contiguity where it doesn’t really exist. Sherman Oaks was also not contiguous with Toluca Lake in CD4. Worse yet, we were disconnected on all four sides from our adjacent natural communities of interest. An example is the adjacent Bel Air-Beverly Crest community where Sherman Oaks shares strong communities of interest concerning Metro’s Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project and traffic. CD4 also failed the geographically compact redistricting requirement. CD4 is not the appropriate home for Sherman Oaks.

Valley Should Have Had Single Shared District in 2011 Redistricting

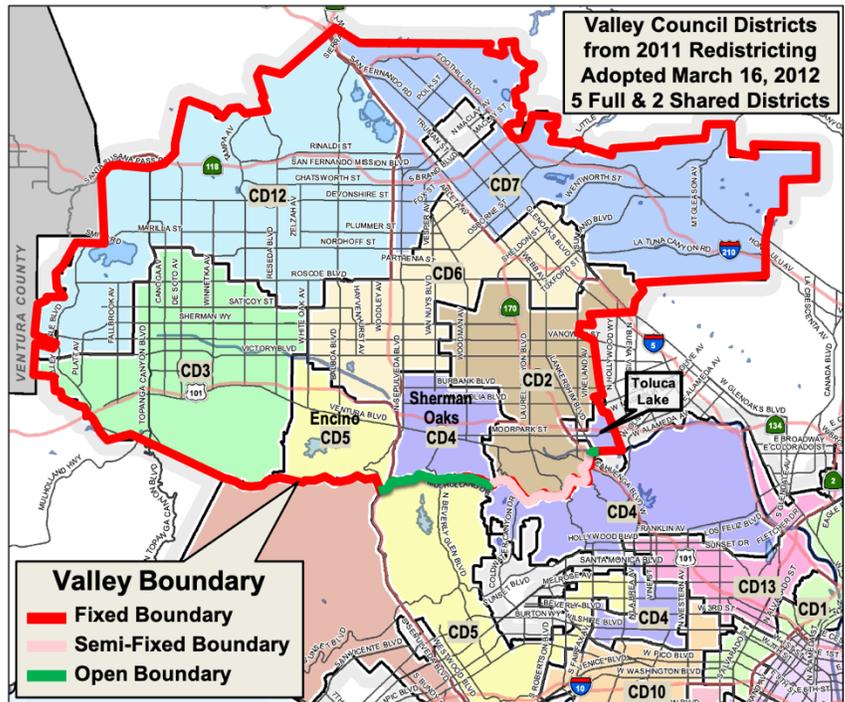
In 2011, Sherman Oaks should have become part of a single contiguous Valley district shared over the hill with the Westside. SOHA understands that redistricting council district boundaries is horribly complex and akin to a geographically, politically, and mathematically constrained jigsaw puzzle. LA’s council districts had become significantly unbalanced in the decade between 2001 redistricting and 2011. Some districts gained as much as 8 percent in population, while others lost at much as 5 percent. At the same time, the total city population increased only 2.7 percent – not huge growth over a decade. But these imbalances slightly increased the proportion of population in the Valley. This increase was enough to allow a single Valley district shared over the hill with the Westside. Unfortunately, it did not happen.

Map 2 shows the Valley’s council districts from 2011 redistricting. The Valley had seven council districts. Five are full districts entirely within the Valley boundary (CD2, CD3, CD6, CD7, and CD12). Two are shared districts that cross over the hill (CD4 and CD5). Sherman Oaks and Toluca Lake are in CD4 (purple on map). Encino is in CD5 (yellow on map).

The red, pink, and green lines show the Valley boundary. Mostly the boundary is red and fixed. A district cannot cross the red boundary because it is adjacent to a different city or county or blocked by uninhabited mountains.

The pink semi-fixed boundary is on the south side of CD2 along Mulholland Drive. CD2 has historically been a Valley council district that has not crossed over the hill. The pink semi-fixed boundary tends to act like a red fixed boundary.

The green open boundary runs along Mulholland Drive south of Sherman Oaks, with another small section south of Toluca Lake. Sherman Oaks’ entire southern boundary is green and open. For two decades, Sherman Oaks or a major part of it has been in a district that crosses over the hill. This is why we are so vulnerable and concerned during 2021 redistricting.

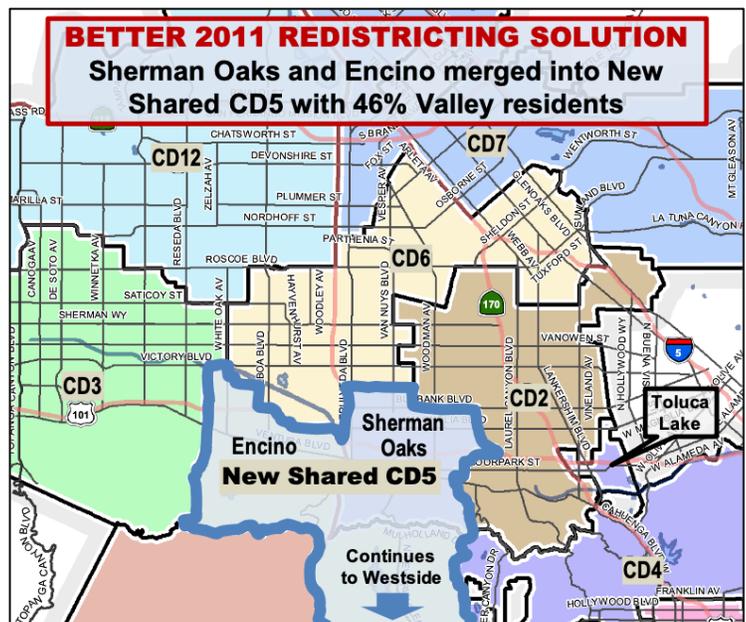


Map 2. Impenetrable Valley Boundary Is Sherman Oaks Vulnerability

Sherman Oaks and Valley Deserved Better Solution in 2011 Redistricting

In 2011, the Valley should have had only one single shared district extending from the Valley over the Sepulveda Pass to the Westside, instead of two smaller shared districts that both crossed over the pass (CD4 and CD5). In addition, CD4 had two separate geographic locations in the Valley – Sherman Oaks and Toluca Lake – that were not contiguous within the Valley. All this diminished each district’s power in the City Council. It also disconnected natural and adjacent communities of interest.

Map 3 illustrates what could have happened in 2011 redistricting. Sherman Oaks and Encino could have been merged into a single shared district, necessarily CD5 due to geographic constraints. This New Shared CD5 would have had a 46 percent Valley population. If Toluca Lake had also desired to merge into CD2, the New Shared CD5 population would have been about 126,000 residents – a 51 percent Valley majority. This is a better solution, but not the ultimate solution that we describe later in this document.



Map 3. Sherman Oaks and Valley Could Have Had This Better Valley-Majority Redistricting Solution in 2011

SOHA’s First Proposed Goal – Single Shared District

Our first proposed goal ensures that Valley has only a single shared district that is itself contiguous within the Valley, preventing a non-contiguous split as occurred with Sherman Oaks and Toluca Lake in 2011. It further ensures that the entire Sherman Oaks community is in one single council district.

- Single Shared District Goal – The Valley and Westside share only one single compact council district and that district is fully contiguous in the Valley and includes the entire Sherman Oaks community.

This goal fairly and equitably fulfills both the physical compactness and contiguity redistricting requirements. It also maintains connections with natural and adjacent communities of interest. Most importantly, it eliminates any taint of any actual or perceived district gerrymandering as occurred in 2011.

Valley Over-the-Hill Shared Districts Also Shortchanged in 2011 Redistricting

In 2011 redistricting, district populations were adjusted within 2.5 percent above or below each other. This “wobble room” or deviation is fair if used properly to maintain communities of interest, but unfair if it creates detrimental unintended consequences. That happened in 2011 redistricting and the Valley’s shared districts CD4 and CD5 together lost about 28,000 residents that they deserved.

It’s easy to determine how many districts the Valley deserved in 2011. The Valley population was 1,419,833 and the overall city population was 3,792,711 (*Final City Council Adopted Data*, March 16, 2012). The Valley simply deserves its fair proportion of the city’s 15 council districts.

Valley’s Deserved Fair Share of 2011 Council Districts

$$\frac{\text{Valley Population } 1,419,833}{\text{Total City Population } 3,792,711} \times 15 \text{ Council Districts} = 5.62 \text{ Valley Districts}$$

Having 5.62 Valley districts is a very meaningful number. The “5” means the Valley deserves 5 full districts. The “.62” means the Valley deserves an additional 62 percent of a district. This 62 percent can be in one or more shared districts. In 2011 redistricting, the 62 percent was split between CD4 and CD5. Together, they should have had 62 percent Valley population. Sherman Oaks had 28 percent CD4 population and Toluca Lake had another 5 percent. Encino had 18 percent CD5 population. These all add to only 51 percent, not the deserved 62 percent. CD4 and CD5 together were shortchanged by 11 percent – about 28,000 residents.

Table 1 illustrates how this happened. It lists district populations in 2011 redistricting from most populous to least populous district (*Final City Council Adopted Data*, March 16, 2012). The portion of each district’s population in the Valley is also listed. The seven Valley districts shown in bold are noted as either full or shared districts.

The five full Valley districts are all above average population (above the red line). The average population of these districts is 2.3 percent above that of all 15 districts citywide. This doesn’t sound like much, but 2.3 percent of five full districts is about 28,000 residents – exactly the same number that CD4 and CD5 together lost. The Valley’s five huge districts simply squeezed out the Valley’s two shared districts. That was not fair.

The Valley’s five full districts should have had the same average population as all 15 districts citywide. It is not difficult to do. The 2001 redistricting commission did it. The 2001 average population of all five full Valley districts was 0.08 percent less than the citywide average.

Table 1. Valley’s Five Huge Full Districts Squeezed Out Valley’s Two Shared Districts

Councilmember	Population	In Valley
CD7 Rodriguez (full)	259,254	259,254
CD12 Lee (full)	259,073	259,073
CD6 Martinez (full)	259,070	259,070
CD3 Blumenfield (full)	259,045	259,045
CD10 Ridley-Thomas	256,962	0
CD2 Krekorian (full)	Above Average 256,804	256,804
CD5 Koretz (shared)	Below Average 253,692	43,981
CD11 Bonin	251,931	0
CD15 Buscaino	251,432	0
CD4 Raman (shared)	248,326	82,606
CD1 Cedillo	248,134	0
CD14 de León	247,883	0
CD13 O’Farrell	247,862	0
CD8 Harris-Dawson	246,691	0
CD9 Price	246,552	0
Total	3,792,711	1,419,833

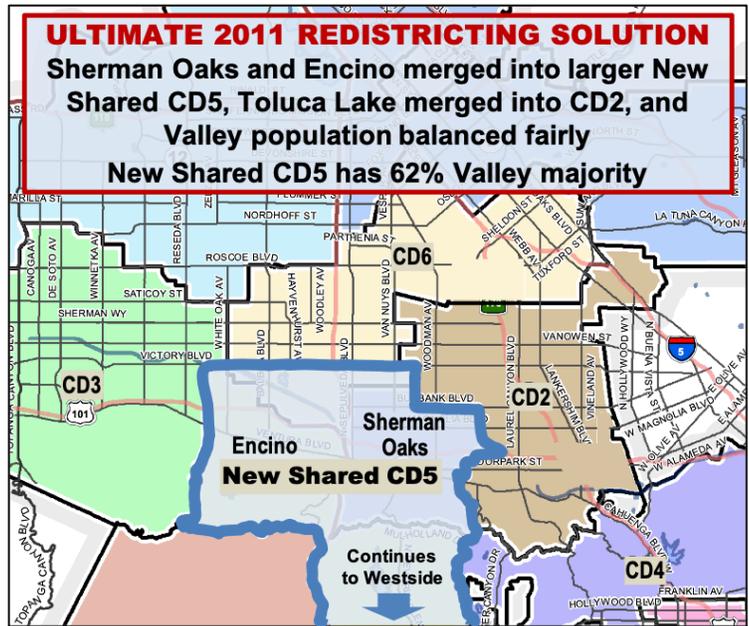
Sherman Oaks and Valley Should Have Had Ultimate Solution in 2011 Redistricting

In 2011 redistricting, in addition to the Valley having only one single shared district over the hill, that single shared district should have had significantly more Valley population – about 28,000 more. This would have happened if Valley district populations had been fairly and properly balanced to the rest of the city.

Map 4 illustrates what this type of solution might have looked like in 2011 redistricting. We already explained how Sherman Oaks and Encino should have merged into one single shared district called the New Shared CD5. Toluca Lake could also have naturally merged into CD2. We recommended our first proposed goal to accomplish these actions.

We now further improve these merged districts by fairly balancing the Valley's full district populations to what they should have been. This is the ultimate solution that should have occurred in 2011 redistricting.

As a result, New Shared CD5 would have gained an additional 28,000 residents. The district would have grown a bit into adjacent communities, such as Lake Balboa, Van Nuys, or Studio City, to accommodate the added population. New Shared CD5 would have become one single, compact, and contiguous shared district with a Valley population of about 154,000 residents – a 62 percent Valley-majority population. New Shared CD5 is the district that the Valley should have had in 2011.



Map 4. Sherman Oaks and Valley Should Have Had This Ultimate Redistricting Solution in 2011

SOHA's Second Proposed Goal – Fair Population Balance

Our second proposed goal ensures that Valley district populations are fairly balanced against the rest of the city to eliminate the unbalanced situation that occurred in 2011. The goal simply requires the average population of all full Valley districts in 2021 redistricting to equal the overall city average district population. This is not hard and was accomplished by the 2001 commission.

- **Fair Population Balance Goal** – The average population of all full Valley districts equals the average population of all 15 council districts.

This goal gives the Valley a fair share of population in its districts and fulfills the redistricting population equality requirement. Since the goal applies only to the overall average population of all full Valley districts, it does not constrain the 2021 commission's ability to adjust individual district populations within the Valley using available population wiggle room. This goal leads to a stronger and well-deserved Valley position in the city council. It even gives the Valley a fair chance to elect another Valley-based councilmember.

SOHA recommends that the 2021 Redistricting Commission adopt both of our proposed goals – the Single Shared District Goal and Fair Population Balance Goal – and incorporate them into the redistricting process.

What Could Happen in 2021 Redistricting

As in 2011 redistricting, public outreach in 2021 redistricting will begin months before 2020 census data is available. This gives communities the opportunity to communicate their concerns and desires to the commission before initial redistricting maps are drawn. It also heightens the importance of communities understanding what happened in 2011 redistricting, predicting what could happen in 2021, and conveying what should happen to ensure fairness and equality. These are challenges for the commission and public.

We offer a tool to help predict the overall fate of Sherman Oaks and the Valley. We call it the **2021 Valley Magic Number** and it's simply the number of districts that the Valley deserves based on overall population.

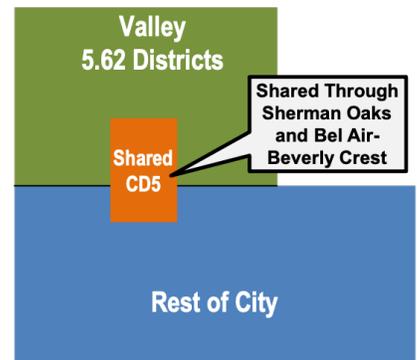
Valley's Deserved Fair Share of 2021 Council Districts

$$\frac{\text{2021 Valley Population}}{\text{2021 Total City Population}} \times 15 \text{ Council Districts} = \text{2021 Valley Magic Number}$$

The Valley Magic Number in 2011 redistricting was 5.62 districts. This meant the Valley deserved five full districts and an additional 62 percent of a shared district or districts. The Valley Magic Number was 5.2 to 5.3 in 2001 redistricting. SOHA feels the 2021 Valley Magic Number should be between 5.20 and 6.00 districts, unless there are some very drastic populations unbalances uncovered in the 2020 census.

SOHA recommends that the commission provide the 2021 Valley Magic Number, or the data needed to calculate it, as quickly as possible after 2020 census data is available. The number provides many insights to the commission and the public. It will be invaluable in understanding the district split between the Valley and rest of the city.

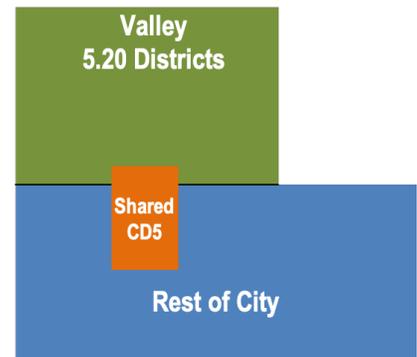
If the 2021 Valley Magic Number is 5.62 as it was for 2011 redistricting and both of SOHA's proposed critical goals are adopted, the Valley would have the single Shared CD5 district that it deserved in 2011 redistricting. *Pictorial 1* depicts the Valley, rest of the city, and Shared CD5 as simple blocks and shows how they interact. With a 2021 Valley Magic Number of 5.62, the Valley would have five full districts and Shared CD5 would have a 62 percent Valley majority, as shown by the orange block.



Pictorial 1. If Magic Number Same 5.62 Districts as 2011

The 2021 Valley Magic Number could very possibly be higher or lower than 5.62, depending on census results. No one will know until after census data is available in early April 2021. It should not take long to determine the magic number and the overall proportion of Valley districts.

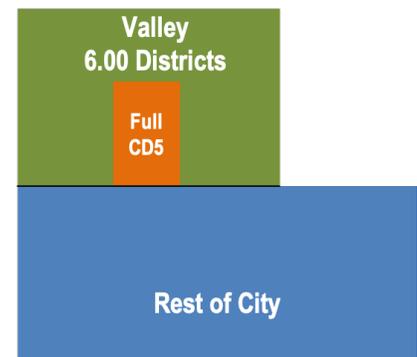
If the 2021 magic number is as low as 5.20, as depicted in *Pictorial 2*, the Valley would still have five full districts, but Shared CD5 district would only have 20 percent Valley population. This would probably accommodate the entire Encino community (which was 18 percent in 2011) but would not also accommodate the entire Sherman Oaks community (28 percent in 2011) or Toluca Lake (5 percent in 2011).



Pictorial 2. If Magic Number Is Lower at 5.20 Districts

The magic number would have to be at least 5.45 for Shared CD5 to completely accommodate both Sherman Oaks and Encino. There is a good chance it could be that high. If the magic number is 5.51 or higher, the Valley has a majority population in Shared CD5.

If the 2021 Valley Magic Number is 6.00, the Valley would truly deserve six full districts and no shared district, as depicted in *Pictorial 3*. This is not highly probable, but a somewhat lower magic number is. For example, if the 2021 magic number is 5.80, Shared CD5 would have an 80 percent Valley majority.



Pictorial 3. If Magic Number Is Higher at 6.00 Districts

Thank You!

For further information, please contact Bob Anderson, Chair, SOHA Redistricting Committee at BobHillsideOrdinance@roadrunner.com or (213) 364-7470.