

Communication from Public

Name: George Ortega

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Comments for Public Posting: I am glad Council is inviting input on the issue of redistricting (gerrymandering). Last year before the elections various council members commented on reform in response to the scandal: the leaked tape of a meeting between union officials, and 3 council members. They said council only needed to increase the number of council seats and by increasing representation that would minimize gerrymandering. I said then, the number of representatives has nothing to do with gerrymandering. I have looked at this issue for decades, and have always felt there was a mathematical/geometrical way of dealing with this. A few years back I came upon a solution. You had to have a way of comparing the shape of a proposed district from another. The characteristics of any shape is the area and the length of its perimeter. The ratio between these two measures of a shape are generally unique to that shape. There can be different shapes with the same ratio but they would be equally placed on the scale of being good or bad respecting gerrymandering. The City has an opportunity to lead the way. Right now with the divisiveness of the country, no one would experiment with this. There is an unequal percentage in party registration in the City of LA. The Republicans are not competitive in elections. They have a better chance of winning Mayor than a majority of the council seats. As last election proved being white, rich, and maybe a nice guy isn't enough to beat a black, experienced political woman, who has an actual platform with goals to make us better. The ratio of the shape is the square root of the area, divided by the length of the perimeter. It measures the efficiency of the shape. The circle has the highest number: 0.2821. The square is 0.25. An equilateral triangle is 0.1443. Between a circle and a square you could have a many sided shape but it couldn't deviate much from a circle or a square. Between a square and an equilateral triangle you have most rectangles, some triangles, oblong shapes, and some shallow zig-zag lines. Beyond the equilateral triangle you're talking about long rectangles and triangles, appendages, arms, and deep zig-zags: a square zig-zag will triple the length of the perimeter of a shape. A square with a square zig-zag would go from a ratio of 0.25 to 0.833. This process penalizes picking blocks or lots for the voters you want, instead of picking the community you want to represent. I am preparing a package to send the council members

that will explain more and offer graphics to illustrate what I have been sharing. There are multiple ways of applying this method of redistricting once you decide what is your minimum number for the shape ratio that any proposed district would have to meet: along with everything else. One could divide districts as currently done without any respect for zip codes or neighborhood lines. Or use the neighborhood lines to get the majority of the population requirement using one minimum shape ratio standard then divide one neighborhood between two districts with possibly a stricter standard for the ratio so as to make it more likely that the line was not cunningly made.