July 12, 2021

Honorable CA Redistricting Commission
votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov.
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814.

RE: COMMUNITY OF INTEREST FOR THE CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the City of Thousand Oak, I am pleased to provide you with the City’s redistricting priorities and “Community of Interest” comments for your consideration. The City of Thousand Oaks is located in Ventura County between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Counties.

To support the interests of our residents we ask that you keep our community intact and not subdivide us. The City interests align strongly within Ventura County boundaries. We share common economic interests, public services (police, fire) and business industries (biotechnology, agriculture) and issues (water, high wildfire risk and air quality.)

Open Space/ Agriculture

Cities in Ventura County are dedicated to the preservation of open space and natural resources. The City of Thousand Oaks is nestled against the Santa Monica Mountains and features over 15,000 acres of natural publicly owned open space located within the City’s boundaries. In fact, the City prides itself on being surrounded by a “ring of open space” with 150 miles of recreational trails, natural habitat, vegetation and streams.

Ventura County is also known for its agriculture. The region has over 2000 farms comprised of approximately 316,666 acres of agricultural land. Strawberries and lemons are the most valuable crops grown and exported internationally.

Ventura County cities are held in common by the SOAR Initiative or Save Open-Space and Agricultural Resources. SOAR gives citizens in Ventura County the right to vote before development takes place on open space and agricultural lands outside our cities protecting more than 600,000 acres of open space and agricultural land.
Wildfire Risk/Public Safety Power Shut-Offs

The region is prone to dry conditions, high winds and hot temperatures. These weather patterns make cities in Ventura County susceptible to wildfires. CalFire and the State Fire Marshall designates Thousand Oaks as part of the Very High Wildfire Severity Zone. In recent years, two large wildfires have swept through the County. In 2017, the western part of the County was impacted by the Thomas Fire. In 2018, the Woolsey wildfire resulted in a two-day evacuation in Thousand Oaks and even shut down the U.S. 101 freeway. Recently, in January 2021, the Thousand Oaks was affected by the Erbes Fire.

The local investor owned utility has instituted Public Safety Power Shut-offs (PSPS) to preempt wildfires during poor weather conditions. These deenergization events take a few hours and, in some instances, several days. PSPS have led to a variety of disruptions to Ventura Counties cities including local infrastructure operations, school closures, business interruptions and impacts to the medically vulnerable population. As a region, cities are working together with the investor owner utility to mitigate the impacts of the growing number of PSPS events.

Technology Corridor

The U.S. 101 freeway in Ventura County has been known as the tech-corridor of Southern California by Newsweek Magazine and Los Angeles Times. Thousand Oaks has a strong emphasis in biotechnology and is home to major companies including Amgen, Atara Biotherapeutics, Arcutis Biotherapeutics and Capsida Biotherapeutics. Takeda Pharmaceuticals has a global manufacturing and supply chain operation in the City as well.

Throughout the County, high-tech companies are part of the emerging industries in computer software, software design, network equipment, video and sound technology. The tech corridor features U.S. Naval Base Ventura County and the Port of Hueneme that builds its operations on the unique ecosystem of local engineering firms, technology companies, manufacturing firms, specialty database operations and local universities including California State University Channel Islands.

Common Issues and Problems Solving- including Water

The City of Thousand Oaks is also part of larger joint powers authorities and has greater connections and engagements with the agencies and cities in Ventura County in the area of water, sewer, public safety, transportation, planning, energy, wildfire and even in support of military bases.
A prime example that binds our region is the need for imported water resources. The City of Thousand Oaks is 100 percent reliant upon the imported water delivered by the Calleguas Municipal Water District. Roughly three quarters of Ventura County residents rely on water purchased by their retail purveyors from Calleguas’ distribution system. The Calleguas’ water supply is entirely imported from the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta or State Water Project. Ventura County cities have been working closely on identifying local water resources that would help with water delivery as well as conservation efforts to recycle and re-use water to address local needs. It is also important to note that stormwater quality of this region is governed by a Ventura Countywide Stormwater Management Program, which effects local water resources and pollution prevention.

Keeping our community together and intact is critical so we may continue to work toward common solutions and collaboration with both state and federal representatives. Organizations in our region that work together include:

- Ventura County Air Pollution Control District
- Association of Water Agencies Ventura County
- Ventura County Waste Management Board
- Regional Defense Partnership 21
- Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance
- Ventura Regional Sanitation District
- Ventura County Economic Development Association
- Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program

**Different from County/City of Los Angeles**

Looking closely our geography, the City of Thousand Oaks should remain part of Ventura County and should not be integrated into Los Angeles County. The City of Thousand Oaks is master planned community which incorporated over 50 years ago. Thousand Oaks has no common interests with the City of Los Angeles and North Los Angeles County. We differ in density, transportation, service providers, community alliances, economic interests and topography.

The City of Thousand Oaks differs from the San Fernando Valley in distance and density. The San Fernando Valley is considered the suburb of the City of Los Angeles. Thousand Oaks is approximately 20 miles away from the San Fernando Valley. The cities in Conejo Valley (Westlake Village, Agoura Hills, Hidden Hills and Calabasas) may be in proximity to the City but are all serviced entirely by the County of Los Angeles.

City of Thousand Oaks is proud to be the in-season training facility for the Los Angeles Rams- who wanted a quiet community away from an urbanized setting of the SoFi Stadium to focus on training.
Thousand Oaks belongs in Ventura County

As one of the ten cities of Ventura County we share the same common interests, economic and social levels, human/social service providers and programs. Five of the ten cities contract with the Ventura County Sheriff’s Department and six out of the ten cities are serviced by Ventura County Fire District. In addition, a decade ago, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has designated the region as its own Urban Area Security Initiative- or UASI- an area which is susceptible to terrorist attack which they fund to assist in regional prevention efforts.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the City of Thousand Oaks in drawing these vital district maps. Since the last redistricting cycle, the City has benefited from the boundaries drawn for our community. Maintaining these existing boundaries will be suitable to support the needs of our residents for the next decade.

We are grateful for dedication in serving the citizens of the State of California.

Sincerely,

Claudia Bill-dé la Peña
Mayor

cc: Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin
    Senator Henry Stern
    Congresswoman Julia Brownley

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