

# Community Representation Report: Boards and Commissions in the San Diego Region

*A report by the Center on Policy Initiatives*  
August 2018

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Appointed and elected commissions and boards have the power to make decisions that significantly affect the daily lives, opportunities, and future well-being of people living and working throughout the San Diego region. Some of these entities control millions or even billions of dollars in taxpayer funds. Their policy decisions regarding services and programs often directly impact social, economic, and racial equity.

In addition, access to membership on boards and commissions provides a path to other positions in governmental leadership. Therefore, having open and equitable access to board and commission appointments helps build political power for underrepresented communities and long-term community representation at multiple levels.

The purpose of this report is to examine the levels of diversity, inclusion, and community representation on five key boards and commissions, and how successfully they are addressing the needs of underserved communities. Our goal is to present a picture of the 2018 membership and functioning of each of the five decision-making bodies, their responsiveness to the viewpoints of diverse community residents, and how accessible the boards and commissions are to community residents who might seek membership on them.

We sought to answer the following questions about each of the five entities studied:

- What types of decisions does it make and what resources does it control?
- How diverse is the board and how representative of the population it serves?
- How have the levels of diversity and connection to the community affected decision-making?
- How are people selected for membership and what barriers exist that affect diversity?
- How accessible and responsive are the board members to working people and underserved communities?

Two of the five public entities examined in this report are elected boards: the Escondido Union High School District Board and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. Two are appointed: the City of San Diego Planning Commission and the Port Commission of San Diego. One, the Metropolitan Transit System Board, is made up of elected officials from local cities and the County.

## Methodology

The boards and commissions included in this assessment were selected by San Diego Leaders, a San Diego coalition working to empower leaders in underrepresented communities to advance social justice policy agendas and achieve positions of influence. These five boards and commissions vary in size, type and scope of work, geographic representation, and processes for seating members. Therefore, they provide a broad picture of the public leadership landscape in the region. San Diego Leaders sought to understand these five entities in order to help inform its future leadership development work.

The assessment was conducted over a span of five months, from September 2017 to January 2018. We requested interviews with all 38 current members of the five boards and commissions, and were able to conduct in-person or phone interviews with 12 of them. Many of the others, including **all members of the two elected boards**, ignored or refused our repeated requests for interviews.

In addition, we sought to understand the experiences community organizations and advocates have had with the commissioners and board members. We interviewed leaders of community organizations and labor unions that advocate for policy decisions by the five entities, as well as former board/commission members. All interviewees are listed in Appendix A (Board Members/Commissioners) and Appendix B (Other Interviewees). We gleaned additional information from websites and maps, budgetary information, mission statements, and other documents available online.

## Summary of Findings

The 2018 membership of the five elected and appointed boards and commissions studied for this report fails to reflect the rich variety of people, cultures, and experiences that distinguish the San Diego region.

The least representative of their constituencies are the two elected boards, the Escondido Union High School District Board and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. Among the entities studied, the County Board has by far the biggest budget, the highest salaries, and the most impact on the largest number of people's lives. The most diverse and representative board studied is the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) board, whose members are already elected officials as a prerequisite for membership.

In terms of race and ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic background, the decision-making bodies we studied are significantly more homogeneous than the communities they are entrusted to represent. They are disproportionately white, male, and economically secure or advantaged. Few of the incumbents on the boards and commissions have the lived experiences to fully understand and connect with the challenges facing people of color, women, low-wage workers, LGBTQ people, immigrants, and other historically underrepresented people, whether in daily life, workplaces, or interactions with local government entities.

Our research identified structural factors that limited diversity and full representation. These barriers include a strong reliance on informal social networks to secure nominations (Planning and Port commissions), informal preference for professionals from related industries (Planning Commission), and disenfranchisement of large populations who are not US citizens but are directly served by the board (Escondido Union High School District Board). In addition, membership on the boards we studied, except

for the highly paid County Board, is unpaid or includes only token pay for a considerable time commitment, presenting a significant financial barrier to participation by low-income working people.

The experience of our researchers revealed that information about how to contact members of some boards and commissions was not readily available to the general public. Even those who make their contact information public often did not respond, not even to tell us they would not participate in the study. Many of the interviews that we did secure were at least partially due to existing relationships between board/commission members and either CPI staff or third parties who were able to provide personal referrals, indicating the inaccessibility might be even worse for members of the public without such connections.

On a positive note, we found that the Port Commission and the MTS Board have become more diverse in recent years, and that the background and experience of some board members and commissioners has helped them to genuinely listen to testimony from underserved groups and to incorporate those perspectives into their decision-making.

On the whole, our research raises concerns that important policy decisions continue to be made without consideration of diverse viewpoints, which may lead to decisions about public resources and policies that do not benefit, and may cause harm to, members of underrepresented groups and communities.

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# City Of San Diego Planning Commission



## ***What the Commission Does***

The City of San Diego Planning Commission advises the Mayor and City Council on decisions involving development and land use, and has final approval authority on subdivisions and many types of permits. The commission makes recommendations on changes to the City's General Plan and community plans, re-zonings, and related land use matters.<sup>1</sup> The commission also plays a role in the process for prioritizing capital improvements related to land use and development projects in the City budget. Decisions made by this commission influence the lives of many San Diegans, including those who live near industrial zoning areas, need affordable housing, or hope to see local infrastructure projects funded.

## ***Responsiveness to this Study***

Four of the seven current commissioners agreed to be interviewed for this report: Vicki Granowitz, Stephen Haase, Susan Peerson, and James Whalen. The Planning Commission website did not have any contact information available for the commissioners, so we searched the internet to find such information. We also spoke with two former commissioners and three community advocates.

## **2018 Members of San Diego Planning Commission**

<b>Planning Commissioner</b>	<b>Council District and Community of residence</b>	<b>First appointed</b>	<b>Term expires</b>
Douglas Austin	District 3, East Village	2014	2018
<b>Vicki Granowitz</b> ✓	District 3, North Park	2017	2021
<b>Stephen Haase</b> ✓	District 7, Lake Murray	2011	2019
William Hofman	District 1, Carmel Valley	2016	2020
Dennis Otsuji	District 5, Scripps Ranch	2017	2021
<b>Susan Peerson</b> ✓	District 2, Point Loma	2012	2020
<b>James Whalen</b> ✓	District 2, Ocean Beach	2014	2018

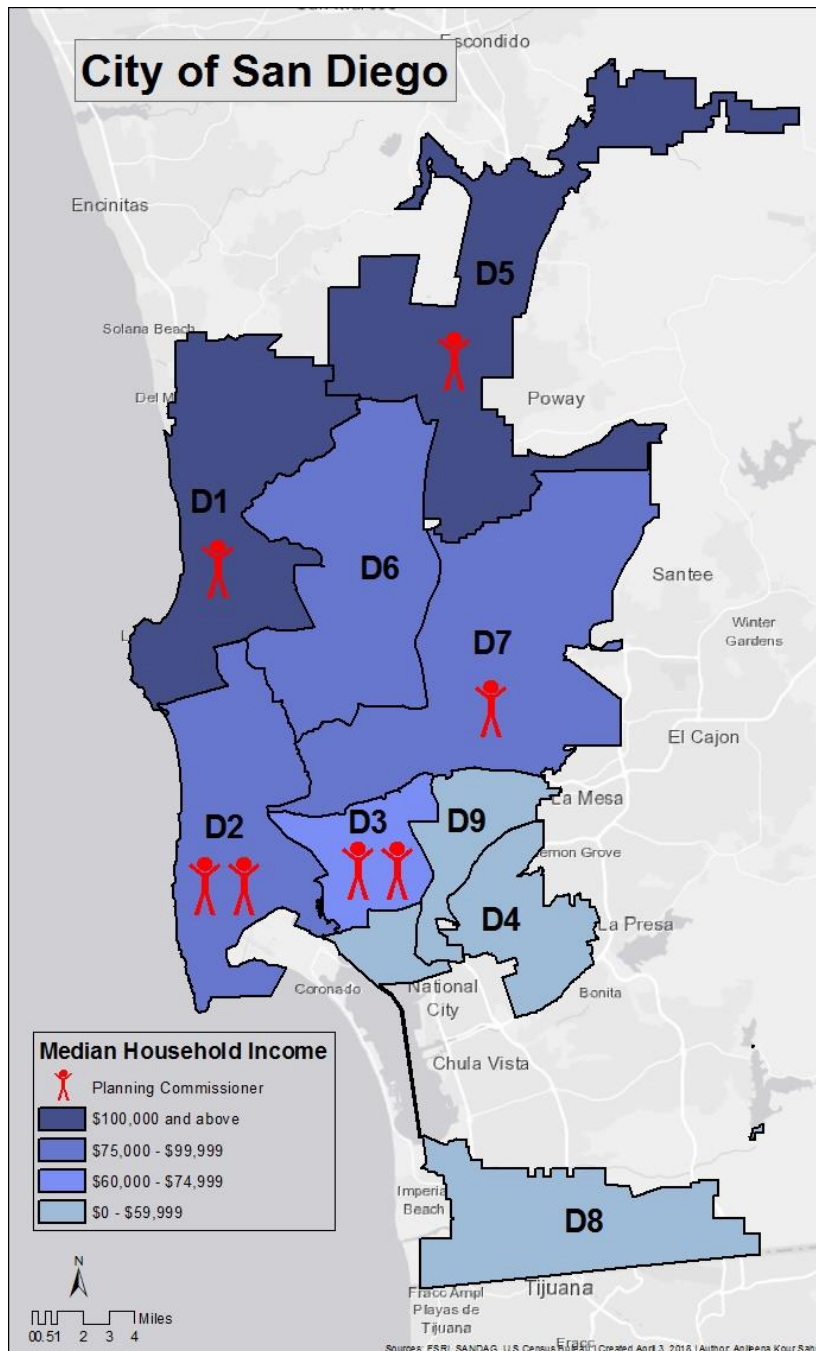
✓ Indicates members who were interviewed

<sup>1</sup> City of San Diego Planning Commission website, "About the Commission," <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning-commission/about>

## Membership

The Planning Commission has seven members, who are appointed to four-year terms by the Mayor of San Diego and confirmed by the City Council. The City charter states that the membership of all commissions and boards "should be diverse and reflect the entire community," and that considering the Council District where appointees live is one way to "help achieve geographical diversity."<sup>2</sup>

However, only five of the nine Council districts are represented on the current Planning Commission, with two commissioners each residing in Districts 2 and 3, and one each in Districts 1, 5, and 7. Districts 4, 6, 8, and 9 are not represented. According to the interviewees, four of the seven commissioners are white males, two are white females, and one is an Asian American male. When asked about diversity on the commission, interviewees also noted that there is one LGBT-identified commissioner, one who identifies as Jewish, and one who identifies as having a disability and being an advocate for disability rights.



## Diversity and Community Representation

The current composition of the Planning Commission lacks diversity in gender and racial/ethnic background, and in their communities of residence.

Geographically, the Council districts represented on the commission are the northern and coastal districts, as well as the district (D3) which includes Downtown, while the southern districts have no representatives on the commission.

The commissioners disproportionately live in neighborhoods with higher median household income. In fact, not one of the nine planning commissioners resides in any of the three council districts with median household incomes below

<sup>2</sup> City of San Diego Council Policy 000-13, "Procedure for Mayor and Council Appointments," [http://docs.sandiego.gov/councilpolicies/cpd\\_000-13.pdf](http://docs.sandiego.gov/councilpolicies/cpd_000-13.pdf)

\$60,000 (districts 4, 8, and 9) and two of them live in the wealthiest districts where median income is above \$100,000 (districts 1 and 5). This lack of representation of lower-income neighborhoods on the Planning Commission suggests that planning decisions may not reflect a lived understanding of the infrastructure and redevelopment needs of poorer communities.

All the commissioners are expected to represent the entire city of San Diego. One commissioner said:  
“Our constituency is the entire city, not just one district. I don’t represent one individual community. I believe our job is to be the voice for the General Plan, to be the keepers of the General Plan, to advocate for its visions from a city-wide perspective.”

Another commissioner echoed:

“You represent the entire community, the entire city. When you’re on the Planning Commission, you don’t represent anyone except for the city at large.”

However, the lack of representation from lower-income districts or low-income backgrounds affects the perspectives brought to decision-making. This was recognized by one Port commissioner we interviewed, who said that while that commission also has only at-large members, his ethnicity and work background inform his consideration of issues impacting historically underrepresented communities.

### ***Career Experience***

The commission is even less diverse in terms of career backgrounds and experience. Six of the seven commissioners have backgrounds in development, and five of them have owned development-related companies, with expertise in areas including landscape architecture, planning, design, and engineering. Although many of the current planning commissioners have experience on community planning groups, only one current commissioner comes from a background of community activism or advocacy.

Many commissioners have extensive planning experience before joining the Planning Commission. One commissioner said she spent the last 25 years doing community organizing and volunteer work. Five out of the six current and former planning commissioners interviewed had served on the board of a community planning group before being appointed to the Planning Commission.

### ***Selection Process Issues***

All seven members of the Planning Commission are appointed by the Mayor, with confirmation by the City Council, for each term they serve. There is a danger the commissioners therefore feel accountable to the Mayor rather than to impacted communities as they consider proposals for development projects. The current Mayor, Kevin Faulconer, has received large campaign donations from developers,<sup>3</sup> and, as mentioned above, most of his appointees to the Planning Commission have development-related backgrounds.

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<sup>3</sup> Jim Tinsky and Joe Yerardi, *inewssource*, "Search San Diego Campaign Contributions," [http://data-old.inewssource.org/campaign-finance/?query=&contribution\\_date=&committee=FAULCONER+FOR+MAYOR+2016&contributor=&contributor\\_employer=&contributor\\_occupation=&q=Search](http://data-old.inewssource.org/campaign-finance/?query=&contribution_date=&committee=FAULCONER+FOR+MAYOR+2016&contributor=&contributor_employer=&contributor_occupation=&q=Search) (most recently accessed April 3, 2018)



Interviews revealed that none of the current commissioners sought out the position; instead, all of them had close ties to someone in a position to recommend them to the mayor for the appointment. That insider system, relying on networks, severely limits the access to the commission for individuals who live or work closely with the communities that need representation. Community advocates have been scarce on the commission and the few appointed in recent years have not been reappointed. A former commissioner recalled being denied a second term "in part because I asked the hard questions and too often argued against the position put forward by the Mayor."

Two community advocates said it would be beneficial for the Planning Commission to have greater diversity of expertise, for instance with members who are tenants, environmental experts, or have other relevant community perspectives.

One barrier to membership is that Planning Commission members are not paid. One commissioner said the position requires between 5 and 20 hours a week, depending on what is on the agenda, the length of materials to read, and how long meetings last. The commission usually meets twice a month.



San Diego Planning Commission meeting, December 2017. L-R: Commissioners Whalen, Otsuji, Peerson, Granowitz, Austin, Hofman, three staff members, Haase

### ***Accessibility to the Public***

Community advocates we interviewed said the commission has overlooked community needs. Meetings that relate to a neighborhood project often are not held in the neighborhood that would be impacted. Meetings are held during daytime work hours, when a majority of the workforce would not be able to attend. Furthermore, although the commissioners interviewed stated that translation services are always available if requested before a meeting, the community advocates interviewed said that in practice, translation services are not made readily available.

The Planning Commission also has more strict rules against communicating with constituents than any of the other boards and commissions featured in this report.<sup>4</sup> This, along with the City's strict disclosure and lobbying rules, leads Planning Commissioners to discourage communication from constituents and to avoid seeking input from the community.

One commissioner said:

"We're not allowed to actually talk to people who have projects before us, outside of public meetings. That's considered ex-parte communication. Because of the Brown Act, open government, transparency issues, everything that we do must be in public."

Another commissioner said the rules ensure fairness:

"The rules of the Planning Commission prohibit any ex-parte communication outside of the hearings. Such communication may influence my ability to be fair and impartial. We do not talk to individuals, communities, or applicants. To ensure a fair and transparent process, these communications should occur in a public fashion, either written or at a public hearing. If ex-parte communication inadvertently occurs, we're required to disclose it at the hearing."

Commissioners base decisions largely on information compiled for them by staff or provided through public testimony. Before the commission votes on a project, there is an opportunity for developers, community planning groups, and members of the public to present their arguments and perspectives at a public meeting. Given the commissioners' racial, geographic, and professional backgrounds, most of them may be more familiar and comfortable with the arguments and concerns of developers than those expressed by members of underserved communities.

"It's difficult for them to understand what the community is saying to them," said a former commissioner. "They're not bad people. They just work in a field where they understand the issues developers face better than those of the community."

## ***Impacts on Decisions***

The current commissioners are frequently "conflicted out" of voting, meaning they are legally restricted from participating in commission decisions, because their connections to developers or other interested parties create potential conflicts of interest. News coverage noted examples of where such conflicts led commissioners Susan Peerson<sup>5</sup> and Douglas Austin to recuse themselves from Planning Commission decisions.<sup>6</sup> As one interviewee put it:

"Too many commissioners end up conflicted out. The way that the ethics and city attorney narrowly defines economic interest makes this difficult. It appears only two commissioners will not be conflicted out on the Mission Valley community plan update. That's a real problem."

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<sup>4</sup> "The Permanent Rules of the Planning Commission," adopted January 29, 2015, states (section 3.2): "it shall be the policy of the Commission to avoid ex parte communication. Contact with applicants, appellants, citizen groups or other parties outside of the noticed hearing is considered ex parte communication." <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/rules-attach1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Dorian Hargrove, *San Diego Reader*, "Potential conflict of interest for planning commissioner whose spouse works at land-use consultant firm?," May 2, 2013, <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/weblogs/news-ticker/2013/may/02/planning-commissioner-sue-peersons-spouse-employe/#>

<sup>6</sup> Matt Potter, *San Diego Reader*, "Manchester gets his man on planning commission," April 28, 2014, <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2014/apr/28/ticker-manchester-gets-his-man-planning-commission/>



At least two projects in 2017 were approved with a bare quorum of four commissioners while three others were recused because of conflicts: the Stone Age Farmacy in Mission Valley and an office complex on Towne Centre Drive.

Not only do direct conflicts of interest sometimes restrict planning commissioners from performing their job, but in other cases their backgrounds and ties to the industry may also influence their perception of testimony and potentially their decisions impacting low-income communities and communities of color.

The commission voted on December 7, 2017, to support the new Pacific Village redevelopment project in Rancho Penasquitos. This redevelopment project, which was subsequently approved by the City Council on March 5, will demolish 332 existing affordable housing units to build more than 600 luxury condos and market-rate apartments. One commissioner said she feared the loss of the affordable apartments could increase homelessness, and several others agreed that San Diego needs more affordable housing. Yet the vote to support the redevelopment was 5-1 with 1 abstention.

A community advocate who engages with the commission on the preservation of affordable housing also said the commissioners' professional ties to developers have colored their decisions to approve other building projects. "They are very much biased towards development, even if it doesn't meet the community plan, the needs of our community," he said. "They're not supposed to be there to rubberstamp whatever the developers want."

## Port of San Diego Board of Port Commissioners



### ***What the Commission Does***

The Port of San Diego is an independent agency created by state law to manage the tidelands along the bay shore of five cities: San Diego, National City, Chula Vista, Coronado, and Imperial Beach.<sup>7</sup> The Port Commission is responsible for protecting and administering San Diego Bay and the surrounding waterfront lands, which is among the most industrialized areas of San Diego. Its mission is to provide “economic vitality and community benefit through a balanced approach to maritime industry, tourism, water and land recreation, environmental stewardship and public safety.”<sup>8</sup>

The Port’s jurisdiction covers 5,408 acres, making it the fourth largest of the 11 ports in California. It includes two maritime cargo terminals, two cruise ship terminals, three shipyards, and 22 public parks. It has about 600 tenants, including 18 hotels and several major industries, with considerable impact on employment and air and water quality.<sup>9</sup> The tidelands are also separated into nine subdivisions, each identified as Port Districts with their own “Precise Plans.”<sup>10</sup>

A majority of the Port’s total revenue comes from rents, fees, and service charges. These include: rent from tenants and for storage space; concession revenues from hotels, marinas, retail centers, restaurants, and parking lot facilities; parking fees and revenue from meters and citations; passenger security fees, wharfage fees, and dockage fees. A majority of Port expenditures are on salaries and wages for personnel, pension and post-employment benefits, and contractual services. In FY 2018, the Port’s total operating budget was about \$223 million dollars.

The Port Commission makes decisions that impact a wide range of concerns including water, land, traffic, and air quality for the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as what industries develop the tidelands space, and how public spaces in the area are used.

<sup>7</sup> California Tidelands: Lands Held in the Public Trust, <https://www.portofsandiego.org/document/about-port-of-san-diego-documents/2196-california-tidelands-land-held-in-public-trust/file.html>

<sup>8</sup> Port of San Diego Overview, <https://www.portofsandiego.org/about-us.html>

<sup>9</sup> Port of San Diego Overview

<sup>10</sup> San Diego Unified Port District, "Port Master Plan," 2017, p. 41, <https://www.portofsandiego.org/document/environment/land-use-planning/4729-port-master-plan-1/file.html>

### ***Responsiveness to this Study***

Four of the seven Port commissioners agreed to be interviewed for this report: Garry Bonelli, Rafael Castellanos, Mike Zucchet, and Robert “Dukie” Valderrama. We also interviewed three former commissioners and staff from two community organizations.

<b>Port Commissioner</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Year Appointed</b>	<b>Term Expiration</b>
<b>Rafael Castellanos</b> ✓ Chair	City of San Diego, District 8	January 2013 January 2017	January 2017 January 2021
<b>Garry J. Bonelli</b> ✓ Vice Chair	City of Coronado	January 2014	January 2018
Ann Moore Secretary	City of Chula Vista	January 2011 January 2015	January 2015 January 2019
Dan Malcolm	City of Imperial Beach	January 2011 January 2015	January 2015 January 2019
Marshall Merrifield	City of San Diego, District 1	January 2013 January 2017	January 2017 January 2021
<b>Robert “Dukie” Valderrama</b> ✓	National City	February 2005 January 2010 January 2017	January 2009 January 2013 January 2021
<b>Michael Zucchet</b> ✓	City of San Diego, District 3	January 2017	January 2019

✓ Indicates members who were interviewed

### ***Membership***

The Port Commission has seven members, each appointed to a four-year term. In an attempt to fairly represent the five cities that are impacted by the tidelands, one commissioner is appointed by each of the city councils of Chula Vista, Coronado, Imperial Beach and National City, and three are appointed by the San Diego City Council. The Port commissioners must be residents of the cities they represent at the time of appointment and throughout the term of office. They are also expected to report back to their respective city councils.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Diversity and Community Representation***

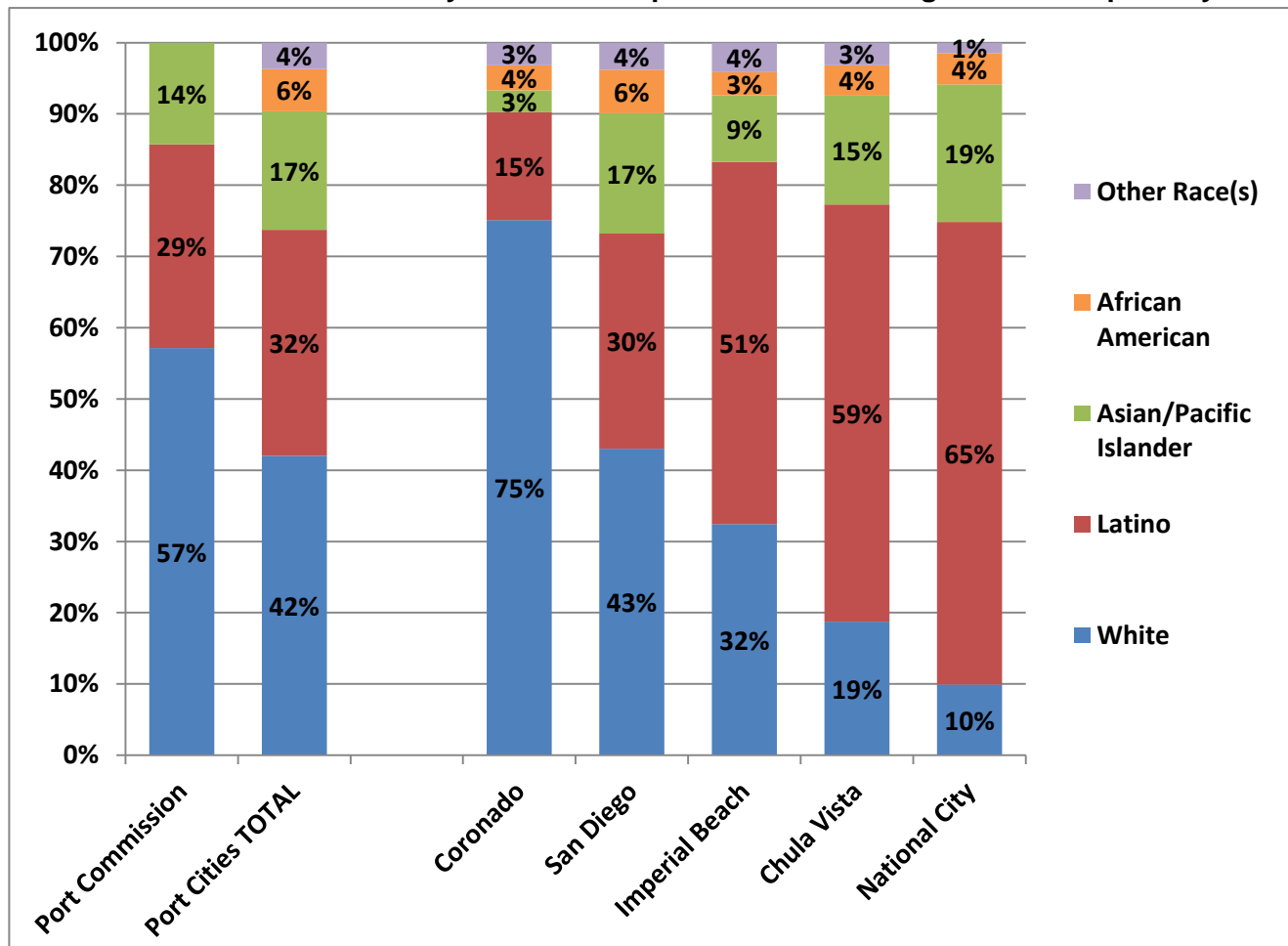
While the current Port Commission is not fully representative of the diverse communities along the tidelands, the changing demographics on the board increasingly reflect the diversity of the nominating cities. The current board includes four White men, two Latino men, and one mixed-Asian woman,

<sup>11</sup> San Diego Unified Port District, "Port Master Plan," 2017, p. 2-3.

according to interviewees. The three commissioners from the City of San Diego live in Districts 1, 3, and 8; only one of them lives within two miles of lands under Port jurisdiction. None of the other commissioners from Imperial Beach, Coronado, National City, or Chula Vista live in or near areas of potential environmental risk from industrial uses of Port-managed lands. However, National City Port Commissioner Valderrama said he has lived and his child attended school near the Port's working waterfront.

The requirement of having one commissioner appointed from each of four cities (Chula Vista, Coronado, Imperial Beach, and National City) and three commissioners from the larger City of San Diego produces geographical diversity, but may not result in racial and gender diversity on the board.

#### Port Commission: Race/Ethnicity of board compared to all cities together and separately



The people of color currently on the Port Commission have been appointed by cities that have majority non-White populations and city councils that reflect this diversity. On the other hand, Imperial Beach is majority Latino but has a city council that appears to be all White, and Imperial Beach's appointee to the Port is also White. Chula Vista and National City also have majority Latino populations,<sup>12</sup> a demographic which is well represented in the National City and Chula Vista city councils. The two Latino Port commissioners represent National City (65% Latino population) and San Diego (30% Latino population), while the one commissioner of Asian descent represents Chula Vista (15% Asian population). The City of San Diego has also grown more racially and ethnically diverse. Currently the non-Hispanic White

<sup>12</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016 5-year American Community Survey, Table B03002: "HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN BY RACE"

population is a minority (43%), while Latinos make up 30%, Asians make up 17%, and African-Americans make up 6% of the population. The San Diego City Council has also grown increasingly diverse, particularly in its representation of Latino/Latinas and Asians.

### ***Career Experience***

Three of the seven current Port commissioners are lawyers with practice areas that include commercial real estate, and two of them have worked with both governmental agencies and developers in processing development projects. The other four commissioners include two business owners, a retired Navy SEAL and Rear Admiral, and one labor union representative.

### ***Selection Process Issues***

The Port Commission is a highly competitive appointment for the City of San Diego seats. Successful candidates usually have a good working relationship with either city councilmembers or labor leaders. One former commissioner said their appointment was blocked the first time they were up for appointment although they had hundreds of letters of support. “Everyone supported me but labor.” Of the other three interviewees who were appointed to City of San Diego seats, two were supported by labor and the third said they had a good working relationship with a number of city councilmembers. One of them, a first-generation college graduate from a working immigrant family, said having mentors and allies was critical to obtaining the appointment.

Port commissioners are not paid, and one commissioner estimated the time required for board duties varies from 5 to 20 hours a week. The board meets monthly.

### ***Accessibility to the Public***

The commissioners interviewed for this report acknowledged the importance of engaging and being accessible to community members and advocacy organizations. For instance, they said several Port commissioners meet with the Environmental Health Coalition and their community leaders on a monthly basis, which represents an improvement in community relations since the 1990s.

In another example, one commissioner said he changed his mind to support expansion of National City's Pepper Park after listening to National City residents and learning that the expansion was a good balance of providing infrastructure for National City's Marina District and increasing park space access for residents.

We also found a commonality in the interviews with the commissioners on the challenge of accountability to the communities affected by their decisions. They generally agreed that being held accountable to their constituency is difficult because the types of decisions made by the Port Commission are not well known. One commissioner suggested increased outreach to constituents may help increase accountability. Two commissioners said the challenge stemmed from being an appointed rather than elected position, with one suggesting that it should not be a political appointment.

## Impacts on Decisions

The current Port Commission is more diverse than in the past and there are signs that this change has made their decision-making more responsive to the community. Interviewees said the Port in recent years has improved its efforts to clean up the bay, hold companies responsible for limiting pollution, and require project developers to hire locally.

A current commissioner explained how his life experience shapes his approach to decision-making, acknowledging the importance of representing communities that have been neglected in the past:

“Because of who I am, my background, my origin, I can relate to a particular set of the constituency that has been historically underrepresented. When making all decisions, I am able to take into account the interests of communities that have never had a voice that reflects or addresses their interests. You can’t make decisions for everyone if you don’t take into consideration the most vulnerable.”

Two commissioners said personal experiences have increased their understanding of environmental issues. One commissioner was exposed to chemicals when working in the gold mining industry and another grew up near the tidelands in National City and has a son with asthma.

Community advocates said the commission is more responsive now than it was 20 years ago to the concerns of the impacted low-income communities of color, although there is still room for improvement. Back in 1998, the San Diego grand jury slammed the Port Commission for a pattern of promoting waterfront

developments while failing to protect against environmental harms.<sup>13</sup> In 1992, the Port had ignored objections from Barrio Logan residents and the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) and started fumigating imported fruit at the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal with methyl bromide, a toxic pesticide. The terminal is less than a mile from Perkins Elementary School, where many of the 900 students began complaining of headaches, nausea, breathing problems, and other effects of methyl bromide exposure. The Port installed an emissions control system that never worked, and then sued the school district and the EHC to make them stop complaining.<sup>14</sup> The Port finally agreed in 1997 to stop the toxic fumigation at the terminal.<sup>15</sup>



<sup>13</sup> Anthony Millican, “Grand jury accuses port of a lack of focus on environmental issues,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, June 18, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Millican, “Fumigation foes dealt a blow in court,” *The San Diego Union Tribune*, June 10, 1997

<sup>15</sup> Mark Arner, “Neighbors elated by victory over port fumigation,” *The San Diego Union Tribune*, July 30, 1997



At that time, an interviewee said, the then-commissioners sometimes questioned the presence of community members, primarily women and children, attending the Port meetings with Spanish translators, and described the translators as a nuisance.

One labor representative we interviewed said the Port Commission still does not provide translation at its meetings, but the commissioners are more accessible than those of many other boards. "We've worked closely with the commissioners," the interviewee said. "I believe they are committed to communities that have higher unemployment and have less access to quality jobs. We can always do better, though."

The 2016 proposal to expand the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal is one example of the Port Commission responding to community input. The initial proposal would have increased cargo traffic passing through the terminal by 600%. In response to a petition signed by more than 500 Barrio Logan residents and a threat by EHC to sue over increased pollution, the proposal was modified to limit the traffic increase to 400%, with additional mitigation measures such as electrifying equipment to limit pollution. Neighborhood residents will be negatively affected by that increase, but it is a reduction from the original proposal.

## Escondido Union High School District Board



Christi Knight,  
Trustee Area 3,  
President



Jon Petersen,  
Trustee Area 5,  
Vice President



Bill Durney,  
Trustee Area 2,  
Clerk



Tina Pope,  
Trustee Area 1,  
Member



Dane White,  
Trustee Area 4,  
Member

### ***What the Board Does***

The Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD) Board of Trustees is the educational policy-making body for the school district. The district includes seven secondary schools in the Escondido region. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the district had nearly 9,600 students and 412 classroom teachers.<sup>16</sup>

The five board members are elected to serve four-year terms.

According to the district website, the board is in charge of nine strategic areas of focus: curriculum and instruction, character-building, school climate, personnel and employee relations, management and administration, fiscal planning, maintenance and operations, facilities planning, and community relations. The primary goal is to: “provide a quality life-long education for all individuals in a safe, harmonious environment. In partnership with the staff, parents, and community, individuals will be guaranteed the opportunity to develop their unique potential.”<sup>17</sup>

The District’s budget is based on its annual action plan, which is prepared by the Superintendent and approved by the board each year. Like most California public school districts, a large majority of EUHSD revenue comes from state funding, although the District does receive some federal and local funds. Similarly, a large majority of expenditures are on personnel costs, including certificated and classified salaries, and employee benefits. The District’s 2016-2017 Estimated Actual Budget indicated \$103 million in spending, which is directed by the Board.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Responsiveness to this Study***

None of the Escondido Union High School District Board members could be reached for this study. All five trustees were contacted through their school district email addresses with requests for interviews, and school district staff also were contacted for help in reaching board members.

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<sup>16</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, “District Directory Information,” [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/district\\_detail.asp?ID2=0612910&details=1](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/district_detail.asp?ID2=0612910&details=1) (last accessed April 3, 2018)

<sup>17</sup> Escondido Union HSD, “Goals for the School District,” adopted March 15, 1994, <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/escondidohigh/DisplayPolicy/139509/0>

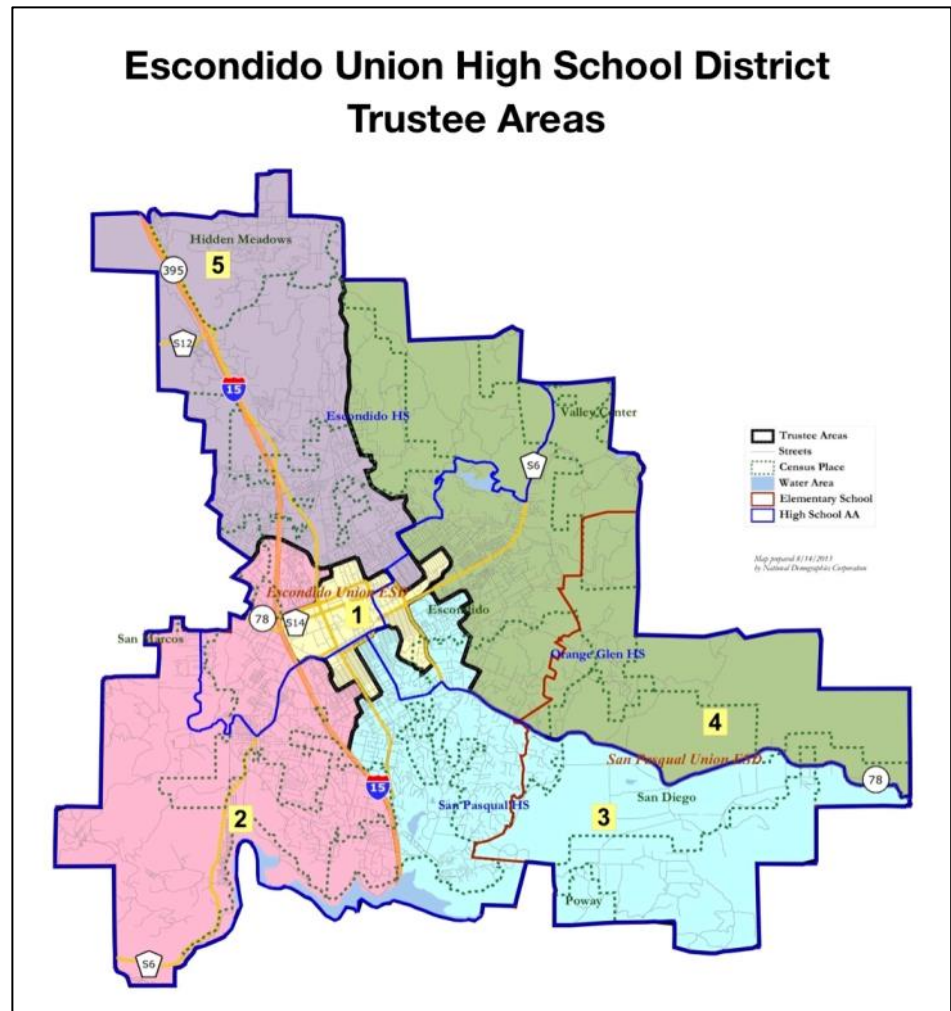
<sup>18</sup> Escondido Union HSD, “2017-2018 Adopted Budget,” accessed through <https://www.euhdsd.org/departments/business-services/finance/budget/>

We did not receive any responses from any board member, despite repeated attempts throughout the five months of this research project. The following assessment is thus based entirely on supplementary research.

### Membership

Each of the five board members is elected by voters who live in a specific geographic area within the district.

The board members are paid \$2,880 a year. In addition, they each receive about \$20,000 in health insurance and retirement benefits.<sup>19</sup>



2018 EUHSD Board Member	Community	Year First elected	Term Expires
Christi Knight, President	Trustee Area 3	2013*	2020
Jon Peterson, Vice President	Trustee Area 5	2002	2018
Bill Durney, Clerk	Trustee Area 2	2014	2018
Tina Pope	Trustee Area 1	2004	2018
Dane White	Trustee Area 4	2016	2020

\* Appointed to fill a vacancy in 2013.

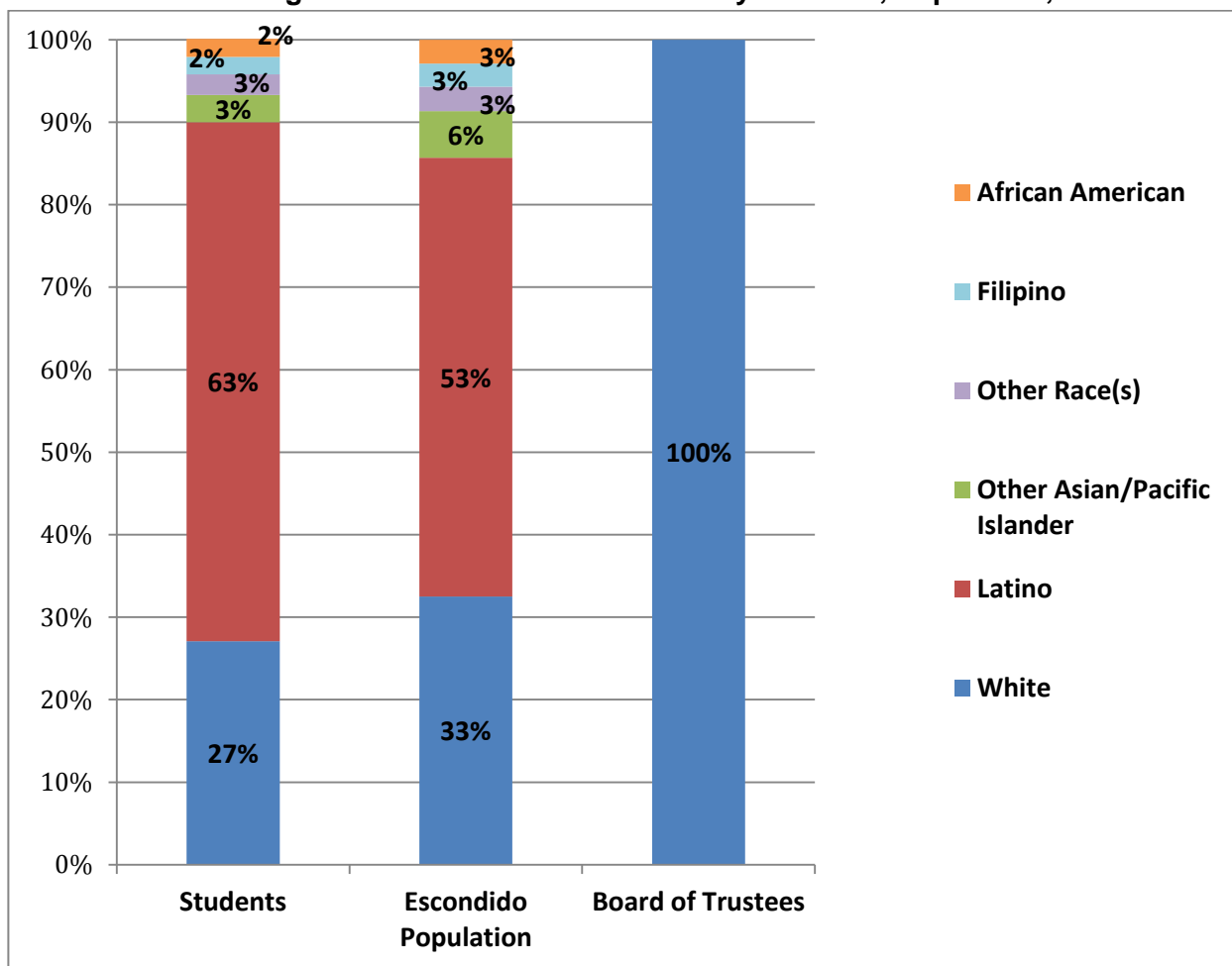
<sup>19</sup> Transparent California, "2016 Salaries For Escondido Union High," <https://transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/2016/school-districts/san-diego/escondido-union-high/>

## Diversity and Community Representation

The current board composition does not reflect the diversity of its student population or the overall city demographics. All five trustees including three women and two men, appear from photos to be White. Since none of them agreed to be interviewed, we were unable to ask about their self identification.<sup>20</sup>

The student population of the district is racially diverse and becoming more so. In the 2016-2017 academic year, a substantial majority (63%) of enrolled students identified as Hispanic/Latino, while 27% identified as White, 3% as Asian, 2% as Black or African American, and 2% as Filipino.<sup>21</sup> Overall in the City of Escondido, 53% of the population identified as Latino, 33% identified as White, 3% as African-American, 3% as Filipino, and 6% as other Asian/Pacific Islander.<sup>22</sup>

**Escondido Union High School District: Race/Ethnicity of Board, Population, and Students**



The District's current demographics are the result of a significant transformation over time. The student body was majority White until 2003 and shifted to 63% Latino majority by 2016. Since the demographics of

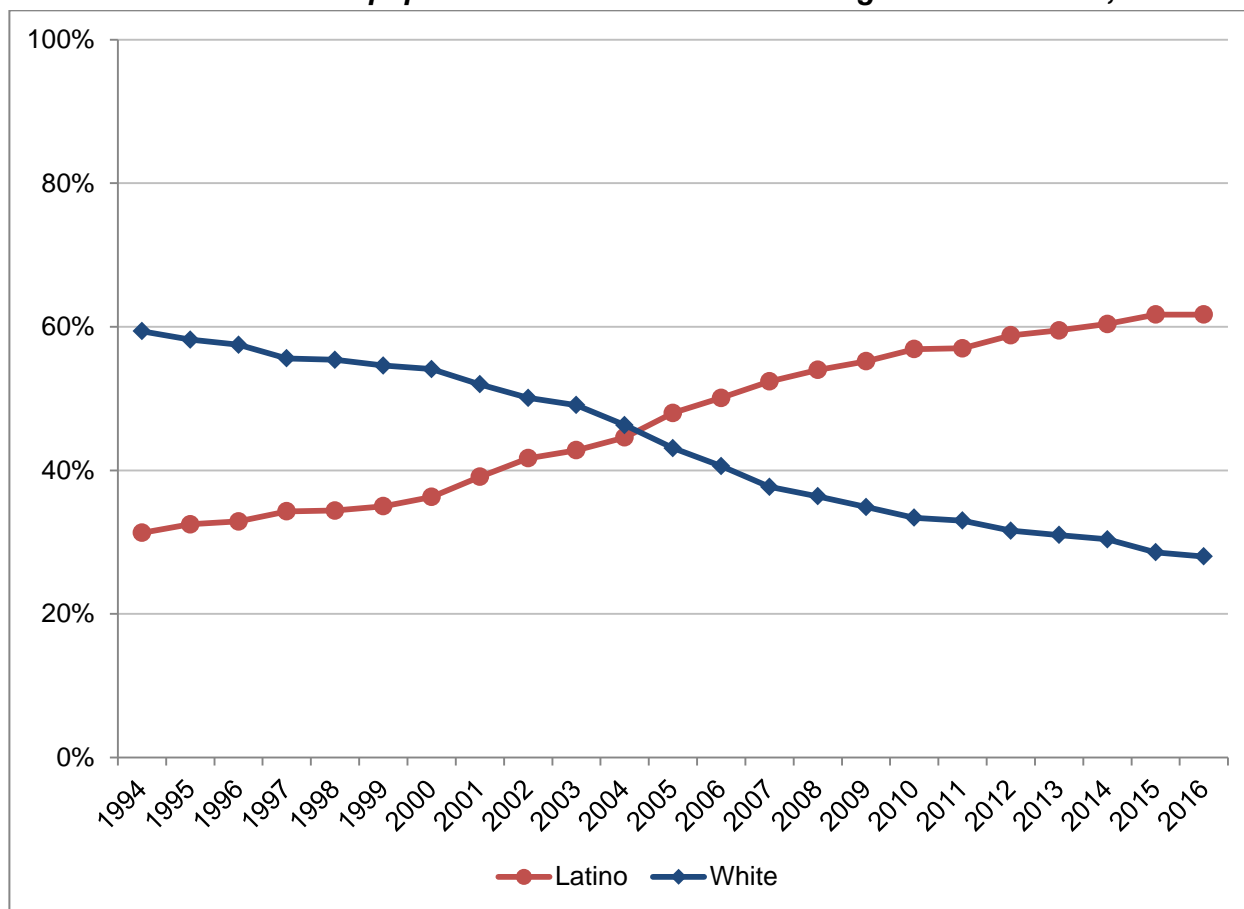
<sup>20</sup> Information was compiled from interviews with local unions and organizations.

<sup>21</sup> Kidsdata.org, "Public School Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity," 2016 data, <http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/36/publicschoolenrollment-race/Bar#fmt=451&loc=1232,368&tf=88&pdist=73&ch=7,11,621,85,10,72,9,73&sort=loc>

<sup>22</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, Table B03002 "HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN BY RACE" & Table CP05 "Comparative Demographic Estimates".

the Board of Trustees have not undergone similar changes over time, the decisions for how the district will serve its Latino majority student body are made by an all-White board.

### ***Latino and White student populations of Escondido Union High School District, 1994-2016***



While the student population has reached 63% Latino and the population of the City of Escondido is 53% Latino, the electorate which selects the school board is, itself, less representative of the Latino population. Although the boundaries of the city and school district are not exactly the same, we note that data from the San Diego County Registrar of Voters indicates that only 27% of registered voters in the City of Escondido are Latino.<sup>23</sup> This is due partly to the fact that 45% of voting age Latinos are not US citizens and thus not eligible to vote in school board elections under current District policies. This is exacerbated by somewhat lower levels of voter registration among Latino voting age US citizens: 65% compared to 85% of non-Latinos.<sup>24</sup> As the current Latino student (under 18) population ages, the share of the Latino population eligible to register to vote will increase, as the Latino population under 18 is 94% US citizens.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> San Diego County Registrar of Voters, “Report of Registration – Latino/Hispanic Voter Totals” as of April 2, 2018. Available at <http://www.sdvote.com/content/rov/en/reportquery.html>

<sup>24</sup> These figures are based on San Diego County Registrar’s estimates of the number of Latino voters in the City of Escondido. This data may underestimate the share of registered voters who are Latino, in which case the difference in registration rates would be smaller.

<sup>25</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016 5-year American Community Survey, Table B05003I: “SEX BY AGE BY NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS (HISPANIC OR LATINO)”

## **Career Experience**

Though a majority of current board trustees cite the fact that they graduated from the district as a qualification for the board, only one of the five has direct experience in the field of education: Peterson was a principal in Valley Center.<sup>26</sup> Knight is the Senior Policy Advisor for County Supervisor Kristin Gaspar<sup>27</sup> and previously worked as a policy advisor for County Supervisor Bill Horn.<sup>28</sup> Durney is the founder and chief executive of an IT business,<sup>29</sup> while Pope works in fundraising for the Palomar Health District and has a history as an active parent volunteer.<sup>30</sup> White's campaign website said he had worked in the construction field and as a manager in substance abuse treatment facilities.<sup>31</sup>

## **Selection Process Issues**

It is common for Escondido Union trustees to run unopposed for re-election. Three of the five current members have won by default, with the elections cancelled for lack of an opponent: Jon Peterson in 2010, Tina Pope in both 2010 and 2014, and Christi Knight both in 2014 and 2016.<sup>32</sup>

As with other boards and commissions, networks appear to play an important role in the membership of this board. When Kurt Marler, a practicing dentist and Trustee of Area 3, resigned from the board in 2013 to lead a Mormon missionary in Peru, the board decided to appoint a replacement despite objections from community members who requested a special election to fill the slot. The applicants included two attorneys and Knight. The board selected Knight, who at the time held an associate degree from MiraCosta College and had been working with County Supervisor Horn for five years.<sup>33</sup>

## **Accessibility to the Public**

The board meets monthly in the evenings, in addition to occasional special meetings. One interviewee who represents a union of district teachers reported very limited access to the board members: "When we reach out to them, they decline to meet with us. I have to go through the superintendent."

He also said the board often makes decisions by approving a *consent calendar*, a term used by many governments for a list of items decided together in a single vote, with no public discussion.

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<sup>26</sup> League of Women Voters, SmartVoter.org, "Full Biography for John Peterson," 2014.

[http://www.smartvoter.org/2014/11/04/ca/sd/vote/petersen\\_j/bio.html](http://www.smartvoter.org/2014/11/04/ca/sd/vote/petersen_j/bio.html)

<sup>27</sup> Supervisor Kristin Gaspar - Third District, homepage, <http://www.supervisorkristingaspar.com/content/d3/home/about/staff.html>

<sup>28</sup> Gary Warth, "Former student rep returns to board," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 27, 2013.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/sdut-christi-knight-escondido-trustee-2013aug27-story.html>

<sup>29</sup> Rancho Computer Networks website, <https://www.ranchocomputers.com/about/>

<sup>30</sup> Tanya Rodrigues, "Children, 'giving back' focus for Pope," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 28, 2004.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-children-giving-back-focus-for-pope-2004sep28-story.html>

<sup>31</sup> Archive of a closed website, <https://www.danemwhite.com>. A LinkedIn page for Dane White in Escondido lists his occupation as House Manager at Sovereign [sic] Health, but staff at Sovereign Health, a treatment facility in Rancho San Diego, said he does not work there. Information on White's Facebook page says only that he is enrolled at Brigham Young University.

<sup>32</sup> Ballotpedia, "Escondido Union High School District elections (2014),"

[https://ballotpedia.org/Escondido\\_Union\\_High\\_School\\_District\\_elections\\_\(2014\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Escondido_Union_High_School_District_elections_(2014))

<sup>33</sup> Christi Knight LinkedIn page, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/christiknight/>



"The problem is, most of the decisions are done on consent calendar," he said. "So I don't know if there are deliberations. When there are items that they're discussing, there should be more deliberations in open forums."



Escondido Union High School District board members at a meeting in 2018, L-R: Petersen, Durney, White, Pope, and Knight

### ***Impacts on Decisions***

The Escondido Union High School District is a diverse urban school district, yet its board has been less willing than those in similar districts to tackle social issues in the interests of students.

For example, the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) board, which is more diverse than the Escondido board, has taken stances on national policy measures and decisions to better serve the students. The San Diego board released a statement supporting immigrant students and passed a resolution urging the White House to preserve the Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA) program, which protects immigrants who were brought to the US as children.

The Sweetwater High School District is another board that has taken actions similar to those in San Diego. The Sweetwater board passed a resolution in 2016 supporting a safe and inclusive district for all students, supporting DACA recipients, and committing to keep schools free of U.S. Border Patrol or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).<sup>34</sup> Following federal threats to DACA this year, the board again stated that

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<sup>34</sup> Sweetwater Union High School District website, "Board of Trustees sign resolution advocating and protecting all students," December 13, 2016. <http://www.sweetwaterschools.org/board-of-trustees-sign-resolution-advocating-and-protecting-all-students/>

students have the right to attend school without the fear of detention and/or deportation. The Sweetwater board includes two Latinos.

However, we could find no record of similar actions by the Escondido board that would reflect the needs and priorities of many of the district's students and families, despite the fact that 63% of the District's students are Latino and 30% of residents of the City of Escondido are immigrants.<sup>35</sup> Those needs are particularly strong in the City of Escondido because of a record of anti-immigrant policy decisions at the municipal level. The Escondido City Council passed an ordinance outlawing the renting of homes to undocumented people.<sup>36</sup> The Escondido Planning Commission also rejected permits to use a former nursing home as a federally-funded shelter for children seeking asylum.<sup>37</sup> The City of Escondido later paid \$550,00 to settle a discrimination lawsuit over the denial of permits.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the Escondido Police department has agreed to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement to transfer detainees into federal custody.<sup>39</sup> Despite operating in a city the *San Diego Union-Tribune* says "has earned a reputation for being tough on unauthorized immigrants",<sup>40</sup> the school board has not gone as far as other local districts in adopting policies to support and protect immigrant students and their families.

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<sup>35</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, Table B05003: SEX BY AGE BY NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS

<sup>36</sup> David Fried, "Escondido council approves illegal immigrant rental ban," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, October 5, 2006.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-escondido-council-approves-illegal-immigrant-2006oct05-story.html>

<sup>37</sup> Jill Replogle, "Escondido planning commission rejects shelter for immigrant children," KPBS Radio News, June 25, 2014.

<http://www.kpbs.org/news/2014/jun/25/escondido-planning-commission-votes-down-shelter-i/>

<sup>38</sup> Doug Porter, "Discrimination lawsuit over rejecting refugee children taps Escondido treasury," *San Diego Free Press*, May 26, 2017. <https://sandiegofreepress.org/2017/05/discrimination-lawsuit-rejecting-refugee-children-taps-escondido-treasury/>

<sup>39</sup> Kristina Davis, "Escondido police agreed to cooperate with immigration authorities, win \$250K federal grant," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 6, 2017. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sd-me-escondido-grant1-story.html>

<sup>40</sup> Kristina Davis, "Escondido police agreed to cooperate with immigration authorities, win \$250K federal grant," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 6, 2017. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sd-me-escondido-grant1-story.html>

## San Diego County Board of Supervisors



Greg Cox  
District 1



Dianne Jacob  
District 2  
Chair



Kristin Gaspar  
District 3  
Vice Chair



Ron Roberts  
District 4



Bill Horn  
District 5

### ***What the Board Does***

The Board of Supervisors, a five-member elected board,<sup>41</sup> is the legislative and executive authority of the County of San Diego, which has a population of 3.3 million people. The board oversees most County departments and programs and approves their budgets, controls, land use in unincorporated areas, and appropriates money for programs to provide safety net and other services for county residents. These programs affect everyone living in the county, especially those who live in unincorporated areas around and between city borders.

The County Board controls the budget for all County operations and programs, which totaled \$5.79 billion in FY 2017-2018.<sup>42</sup> Major program areas in the budget include Public Safety, Capital Program, General Government, Finance, Health and Human Services, Land Use and Environment, and Community Services.

The County Supervisors are among the most highly paid local officials, with salaries roughly double those of San Diego City Councilmembers.<sup>43</sup> Each board member is paid \$172,450 a year, since the Supervisors voted themselves a 12.5% raise in 2017 over community objections.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the Supervisors receive health insurance and retirement benefits averaging about \$69,000 a year as of 2016.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Responsiveness to this Study***

Not one of the five Supervisors agreed to an interview within our five-month study. Repeated attempts were made to contact all of them by email and phone, but three of the supervisors never responded and

<sup>41</sup> County of San Diego, "Board of Supervisors," <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/general/bos.html>

<sup>42</sup> County of San Diego, "County of San Diego: Adopted Operational Plan, Fiscal Years 2017-18 & 2018-19," [https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/auditor/pdf/adoptedplan\\_17-19.pdf](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/auditor/pdf/adoptedplan_17-19.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> California State Controller website, "Government Compensation in California," <http://publicpay.ca.gov/Reports/ElectedOfficials.aspx>

<sup>44</sup> Allison St. John, "Despite Opposition, County Supervisors Vote to Increase Their Salaries," *KPBS Radio News*, January 10, 2017. <http://www.kpbs.org/news/2017/jan/10/despite-opposition-county-supervisors-vote-increas/>

<sup>45</sup> Transparent California, "2016 Salaries for San Diego County," <https://transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/2016/san-diego-county/>

the other two declined to be interviewed. This report's analysis is based on interviews with community groups, labor unions, and one Board of Supervisors staff member who requested anonymity.

### **Membership**

The Supervisors are elected by district to four-year terms. Four of the five current supervisors have been on the board for more than 20 years – at least six terms each. In 2010, voters approved a ballot measure limiting county supervisors to two terms, meaning incumbents each were allowed two *more* terms.

Board Member	Community	Year Elected	Term Expiration
Greg Cox	District 1	1995 (6th term)	2020
Dianne Jacob	District 2, Chair	1992 (7th term)	2020
Kristin Gaspar	District 3, Vice Chair	2017 (1st term)	2020
Ron Roberts	District 4	1995 (6th term)	2018
Bill Horn	District 5	1995 (6th term)	2018



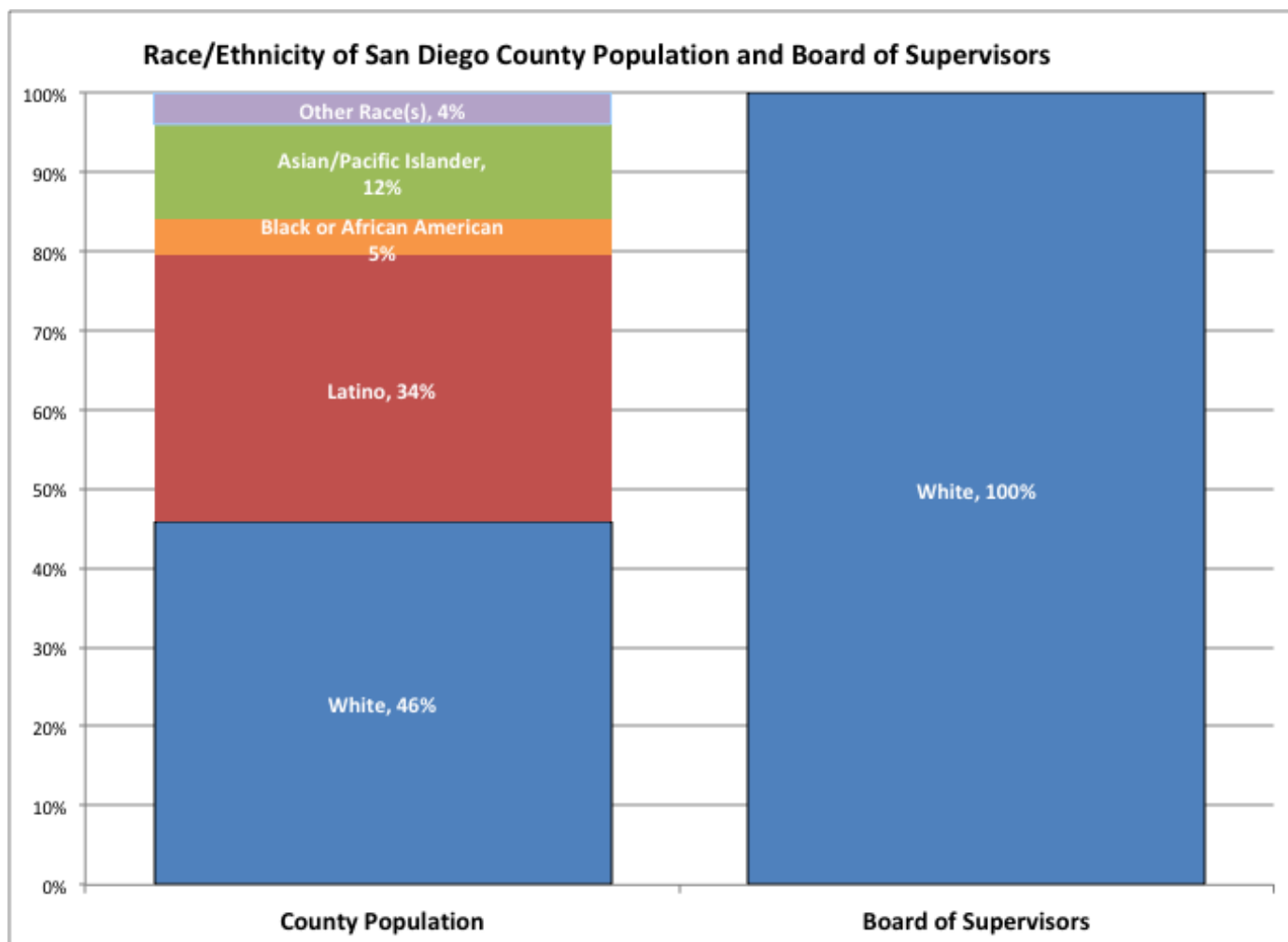
San Diego County Board of Supervisors meeting, February 2018. L-R: Kristin Gaspar, County CAO Helen Robbins-Meyer, Dianne Jacob, Greg Cox, Bill Horn, Ron Roberts

## ***Diversity and Community Representation***

The San Diego County Board is all White, and has been for decades. The current membership of the board includes two women and three men.<sup>46</sup>

While less than half (46%) of the County population is White, the County Board of Supervisors is 100% White.<sup>47</sup>

The board does not reflect the racial and economic demographics of its constituencies, which include Latino, African-American, Asian Pacific Islander American, and other communities



Each of the five supervisors is elected to represent a district of between 600,000 and 631,000 people. Cox represents a variety of multicultural neighborhoods in District 1.<sup>48</sup> In District 2, the largest geographically,

<sup>46</sup> Information was compiled from interviews.

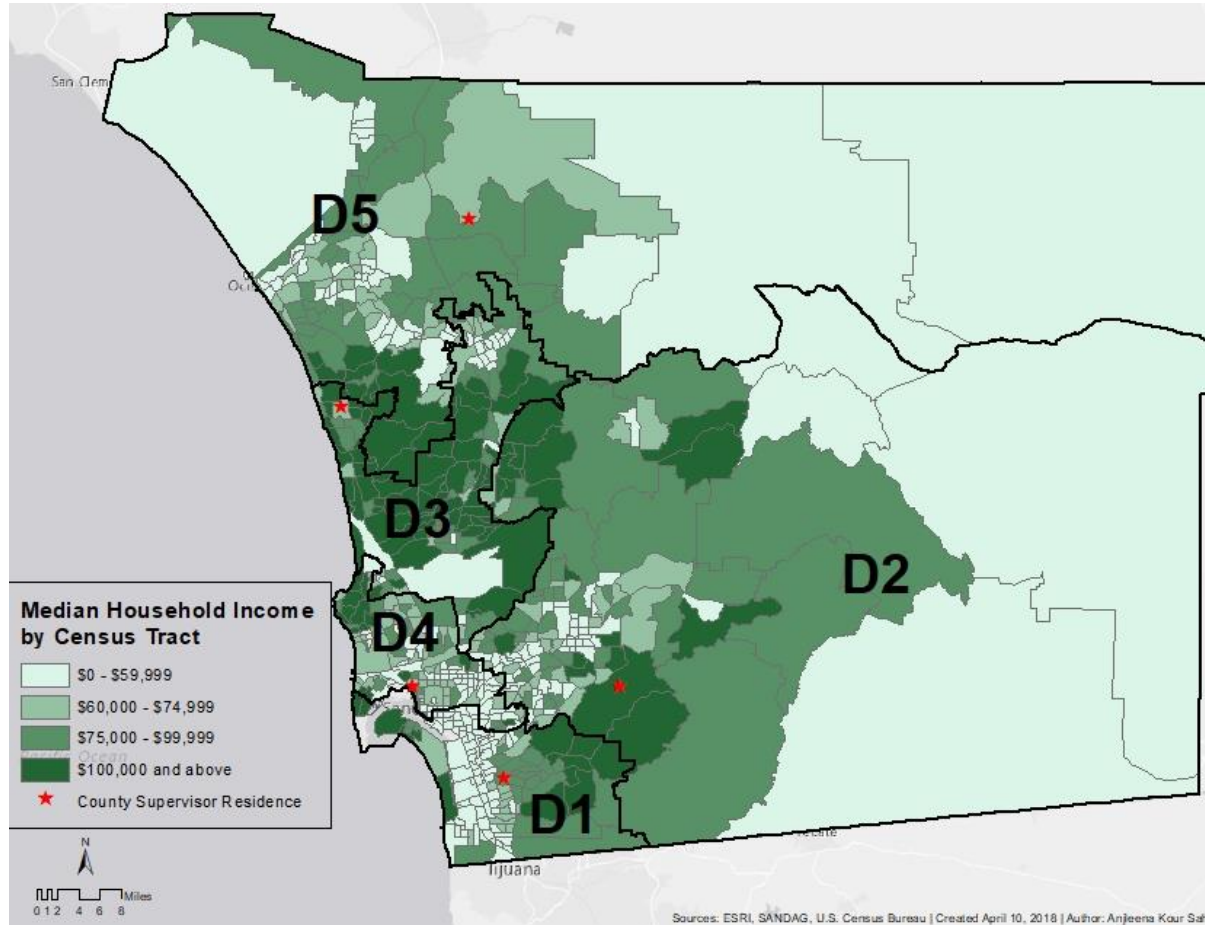
<sup>47</sup> United States Census Bureau, QuickFacts, San Diego County, California 2012-2016

<sup>48</sup> County of San Diego, "Supervisor Greg Cox," <http://www.gregcox.com/content/d1/en/gregcox/bio.html>



Jacob represents East County residents spread out over 2,000 square miles. District 3, where Gaspar was elected in 2017, includes the coastal cities of Encinitas and Del Mar to Escondido. Roberts' District 4 is mostly within the City of San Diego, and Roberts' webpage says it is "considered the most ethnically diverse district."<sup>49</sup> Horn's District 5 has a diverse population and covers 1,800 square miles of North San Diego County, including Camp Pendleton.

### Household income by census tract in San Diego County, and location of Supervisors' residences



### Career Experience

The San Diego County Board has been a career for most of its current members, as all but one have been on the board for almost a quarter-century. All five current supervisors have previous experience in elected office: Cox served as Councilmember and Mayor of Chula Vista;<sup>50</sup> Jacob was a Jamul-Dulzura Union School District Board Member for 17 years,<sup>51</sup> and was Chief of Staff for Supervisor George Bailey<sup>52</sup>;

<sup>49</sup> County of San Diego, "San Diego County Board of Supervisors - Fourth District Profile," <http://www.ronroberts.com/content/d4/en/about/profile.html>

<sup>50</sup> County of San Diego, "Supervisor Greg Cox," <http://www.gregcox.com/content/d1/en/gregcox/bio.html>

<sup>51</sup> County of San Diego, "Dianne Jacob, County Supervisor," <http://www.diannejacob.com/content/d2/home/about/her-story.html>

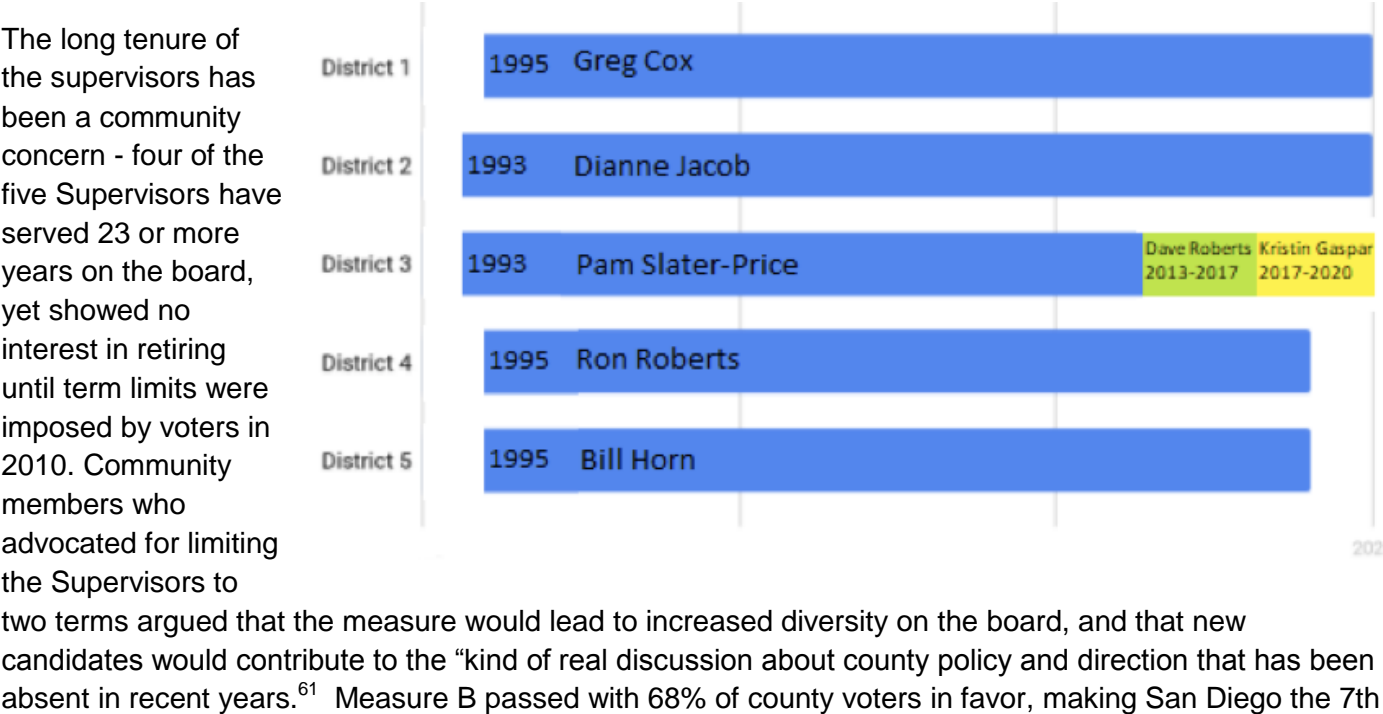
<sup>52</sup> Anne Krueger, "East County's elder statesman," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 14, 2009. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-1sz14bailey22514-east-countys-elder-statesman-2009mar14-htmlstory.html>



Gaspar was a Councilmember and Mayor of Encinitas<sup>53</sup>; Roberts was chairperson of the City of San Diego Planning Commission and was a City Councilmember;<sup>54</sup> and Horn served as an Escondido Union High School District Board Member for 3 years.<sup>55</sup>

While the County Board is elected from the five different geographic districts, the board’s socio-economic backgrounds are not representative of the County as a whole. Jacob’s family are ranch landowners in eastern San Diego.<sup>56</sup> Cox owned businesses in the private sector.<sup>57</sup> Gaspar was Chief Financial Officer of her physical therapy company.<sup>58</sup> Horn owns a business and a farm.<sup>59</sup> Roberts was managing partner at an architecture firm.<sup>60</sup> The Supervisors’ backgrounds are not representative of the occupational distribution of county residents, many of whom work for hourly wages in service industries.

**Selection Process Issues**



<sup>53</sup> County of San Diego, “Supervisor Kristin Gaspar,” [http://www.supervisorkristingaspar.com/content/d3/home/about/supervisor\\_gaspar.html](http://www.supervisorkristingaspar.com/content/d3/home/about/supervisor_gaspar.html)

<sup>54</sup> Smart Voter, “Full Biography for Ron Roberts,” June 8, 2010. [http://www.smartvoter.org/2010/06/08/ca/sd/vote/roberts\\_r/bio.html](http://www.smartvoter.org/2010/06/08/ca/sd/vote/roberts_r/bio.html)

<sup>55</sup> County of San Diego, “Supervisor Bill Horn-District 5, About Bill Horn” <http://www.billhorn.com/content/d5/index/about/bill-horn.html>

<sup>56</sup> County of San Diego, “Dianne Jacob, County Supervisor,” <http://www.diannejacob.com/content/d2/home/about/her-story.html>

<sup>57</sup> County of San Diego, “Supervisor Greg Cox,” <http://www.gregcox.com/content/d1/en/gregcox/bio.html>

<sup>58</sup> County of San Diego, “Supervisor Kristin Gaspar,” [http://www.supervisorkristingaspar.com/content/d3/home/about/supervisor\\_gaspar.html](http://www.supervisorkristingaspar.com/content/d3/home/about/supervisor_gaspar.html)

<sup>59</sup> County of San Diego, “Supervisor Bill Horn- District 5, State of the County Speech,” February 10, 2015. <http://www.billhorn.com/content/d5/index/news/news-stories/state-of-the-county.html>

<sup>60</sup> Smart Voter, “Full Biography for Ron Roberts,” June 8, 2010. [http://www.smartvoter.org/2010/06/08/ca/sd/vote/roberts\\_r/bio.html](http://www.smartvoter.org/2010/06/08/ca/sd/vote/roberts_r/bio.html)

<sup>61</sup> Ballotpedia, “San Diego County Supervisor Term Limits, Measure B (June 2010),” [https://ballotpedia.org/San\\_Diego\\_County\\_Supervisor\\_Term\\_Limits\\_Measure\\_B\\_\(June\\_2010\)](https://ballotpedia.org/San_Diego_County_Supervisor_Term_Limits_Measure_B_(June_2010))

county in California to impose term limits on supervisors. Since this was not retroactive, Supervisors Cox, Jacob, Roberts and Horn are still serving on the board. Gaspar was the first supervisor to beat an incumbent in 32 years.<sup>62</sup> The rest of the supervisors will have served for more than 23 years when they are finally legally required to step down.

### ***Accessibility to the Public***

Interviewees noted a lack of access to the board meetings due to transportation challenges and the fact that the meetings are scheduled during regular work hours on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. The board held special night hearings on the County budget in 2016 and 2017, so that working people could attend, but will not do so in 2018. At a board meeting in February, Supervisor Bill Horn, who cannot run for reelection because of the term limits, said he opposed having an after-hours hearing because it was inconvenient for him.

"If you're a concerned citizen ... you could make the time to come down here to testify," Horn said. "I don't want to sit here at night."<sup>63</sup>

Interviewees also said the Supervisors have not been receptive to meetings with nonprofits, faith-based organizations, unions, and community groups outside the regular board meetings.

### ***Impacts on Decisions***

While some supervisors cite blue-collar origins, the interviewees reported that the supervisors' policies have not reflected policy priorities of working families, individuals of color, and marginalized communities. Research studies,<sup>64,65</sup> media investigations,<sup>66</sup> and grand jury reports have criticized the County for its record on addressing homelessness, veteran's services, restorative justice, affordable housing, mental health programs, refugee and immigrant assistance, and access to County services such as CalFresh, MediCal, and Calworks.<sup>67</sup>

For example, according to research by the Center on Policy Initiatives, these last three programs have continued to be under-enrolled for many years. The under-enrollment has meant that eligible county residents have missed out on about \$714 million a year in assistance that would have been available from state and federally-funded programs. If these critical social services had been used, it would have meant the creation of \$905 million in economic activity and about 6,450 new jobs in the county.<sup>68</sup> For a county

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<sup>62</sup> County of San Diego, "Supervisor Kristin Gaspar."

<sup>63</sup> Jeff McDonald, "County decides against evening meeting on budget. 'I don't want to sit here at night,' Horn said," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, February 13, 2018. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/politics/sd-me-night-meetings-20180213-story.html>

<sup>64</sup> Open Society Foundations, "P100 Costly Home Searches—Where's the Fraud?" 2014. <http://www.pilpca.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/P100-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> Food Research and Action Center, "SNAP Access in Urban America," 2011. <http://voiceofsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/4d472673a130d.pdf.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> Rose Institute of State and Local Government, "Comparing San Diego County Services: A Twelve-County Analysis," February 2010. [http://voiceofsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/app/pdf/girardfoundation\\_finalreport\\_022010.pdf](http://voiceofsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/app/pdf/girardfoundation_finalreport_022010.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Center on Policy Initiatives, "The Economic Costs of San Diego County's Ongoing Safety Net Failure," 2015. [https://www.cpisandiego.org/reports/safety\\_net\\_failure/](https://www.cpisandiego.org/reports/safety_net_failure/)

<sup>68</sup> CPI, "The Economic Costs of San Diego County's Ongoing Safety Net Failure."

with areas of high poverty in San Diego, El Cajon, Vista and Escondido, this aid would have been beneficial in alleviating economic hardships.

The County Board's budget priorities often have been out of step with the needs identified by community organizations. In the budget for fiscal year 2016, sixty-one percent of spending approved by the board went for the Sheriff's Department, jails, and other parts of the criminal justice system. Community services received only 2% of the budget.

The County has continued to stockpile cash reserves, supposedly for a "rainy day." Even during the Great Recession, during FY 2008 to FY 2009, while many county residents were out of work and in need of services, the County socked away nearly \$35 million in additional reserves rather than spending to assist hard-hit households. At the end of FY2016, San Diego County was holding almost \$3 billion in fund balances, far more than needed for financial security, including \$1.7 billion in unrestricted funds.<sup>69</sup> This is disproportionate to other counties in California and greatly exceeds recommendations by non-partisan experts in public finance.<sup>70</sup>

While a third of working age families in San Diego County have incomes too low to meet basic living expenses without assistance,<sup>71</sup> the Supervisors approved a raise for themselves to a salary that is more than 5 times as much as the countywide median annual earnings.

Yet despite their fulltime positions, the supervisors spend little time on developing the County budget. Instead of holding detailed budget hearings, they usually rely heavily on the non-elected Chief Administrative Officer Helen Robbins-Meyers to decide which programs to prioritize and to present a budget to the board for approval. By comparison, in the City of San Diego, each council member submits a budget memo detailing their own priorities. The Mayor develops a proposed budget, which is then analyzed by the Independent Budget Analyst's office, and is then the subject of multiple City Council meetings which discuss the details of budgets for each City department. Only after all of these opportunities for public input and detailed analysis by multiple stakeholders is the City budget approved.

Interviewees said the board has been unreceptive to community input, reflected by the policy priorities that are out of touch with most people in the county. For example, all five Supervisors opposed Proposition 47, a 2014 state ballot initiative that reduced penalties for some crimes, while voters in the County approved it by a 56% to 44% margin.

Supervisor Horn, who has ties to developers in North County, in 2015 refused to recuse himself from voting to approve a major proposed development, Lilac Hills Ranch, despite a conflict of interest. The infrastructure development of the massive project would have greatly increased the value of an adjacent 33-acre ranch owned by Horn. After the state Fair Political Practices Commission ruled that Horn could not

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<sup>69</sup> Center on Policy Initiatives, "Summary of San Diego County fund balances 2017 report,"

<https://www.cpisandiego.org/reports/summary-san-diego-county-fund-balances-2017-report/>

<sup>70</sup> Government Finance Officers Association, "GFOA Best Practice: Determining the Appropriate Level of Unrestricted Fund Balance in the General Fund (CAAFR, Budget) (2015)." <http://www.gfoa.org/sites/default/files/AppropriateLevelFundBalance.pdf>

<sup>71</sup> Center on Policy Initiatives, *Making Ends Meet in San Diego County*, 2017. <https://www.cpisandiego.org/reports/making-ends-meet-2/>

provide the deciding vote on Lilac Hills, the developers tried a ballot initiative. County voters overwhelmingly rejected the development, 63% voting against it.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Maya Srikrishnan, "Lilac Hills Ranch is still alive," *Voice of San Diego*, April 27, 2017.  
<https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/land-use/lilac-hills-ranch-is-still-alive/>

## Metropolitan Transit System Board of Directors



Georgette Gomez  
San Diego City Council  
Chair of MTS



Mona Rios  
National City Council  
Vice-Chair of MTS



David Alvarez  
San Diego City  
Council



David Arambula  
Lemon Grove  
City Council



Lorie Bragg  
Imperial Beach  
City Council



Jim Cunningham  
Poway City  
Council



Myrtle Cole  
San Diego City  
Council



Mike Diaz  
Chula Vista City  
Council



Kevin Faulconer  
Mayor, City of  
San Diego



Bob McClellan  
El Cajon City  
Council



Ronn Hall  
Santee City  
Council



Guy McWhirter  
La Mesa City  
Council



Ron Robert  
Board of Supervisors  
County of San Diego



Mary Casillas Salas  
Mayor, Chula Vista



Bill Sandke  
Coronado City Council

### ***What the Board Does***

The Board of Directors for the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) serves as the decision-making board for both the San Diego Transit Corporation and San Diego Trolley, Inc.<sup>73</sup> The board oversees the major public transit services in 10 cities and unincorporated areas of San Diego County, including operation of 95 bus routes and three trolley lines running on 53 miles of railway. MTS services provide about 300,000 passenger trips every weekday, with a total of about 88 million rides in fiscal year 2017. MTS also regulates and licenses taxis and other private passenger transportation services within seven of the cities.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Metropolitan Transit System website, "Board Members," <https://www.sdmts.com/about-mts-organization-charts/board-directors>

<sup>74</sup> Metropolitan Transit System website, "About MTS," <https://www.sdmts.com/about-mts>

The MTS Board controls an annual operating budget of \$278 million, of which \$96 million comes from fares. MTS also is funded by various federal, state, and local transportation taxes and sales taxes.<sup>75</sup>

### ***Responsiveness to this Study***

Only four of the 15 MTS Board members were available for interviews: Georgette Gomez, Mary Salas, Mona Rios, and David Arambula. The other 11 board members all were contacted through email; five did not respond at all, two said they did not have time, three discussed scheduling interviews but could not find time, and one declined to participate, citing fear that information from the study would be used "to embarrass the MTS organization." We also interviewed leaders of community groups about their work with the board.

### ***Membership***

The membership of the MTS Board is drawn from among elected officials of governments within the Metropolitan Transit District. The board consists of: the Mayor and three Council members of the City of San Diego (currently from Council Districts 4, 8, and 9); the Mayor and one Council member from Chula Vista, and one member each from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and the city councils of Coronado, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Poway, and Santee.<sup>76</sup>

All board members have four-year terms. There are no term limits for the MTS Board, although the table below identifies two board members who will reach term limits in their city or county position prior to the end of their MTS term.

The structure of the MTS Board changed during the course of research for this study. A state law (AB 805) passed in 2017 to reorganize the troubled San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and also made changes to the MTS Board. Among other changes, it required that the MTS Board include the San Diego mayor and two members from Chula Vista, so Mayor Kevin Faulconer replaced San Diego Councilmember Lori Zapf and Chula Vista City Councilmember Mike Diaz joined the board. Since Faulconer and Diaz were not board members until January, they were not asked for interviews.

Most importantly, the new law also required that the board chair be a member of the board rather than an at-large resident of the community. San Diego City Councilmember Georgette Gomez, who joined the MTS Board in January 2017, was unanimously chosen by her board colleagues for a two-year term as chair that began in January 2018. Gomez replaced Harry Mathis, a retired San Diego councilmember who had chaired MTS for 12 years.

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<sup>75</sup> Metropolitan Transit System website, "About MTS"

<sup>76</sup> Metropolitan Transit System website, "About MTS"



<b>MTS Board Member</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Year Appointed</b>
David Alvarez	San Diego, City Council District 8	2012
<b>David Arambula</b> ✓	Lemon Grove, City Council	2017
Lorie Bragg	Imperial Beach, City Council	2012
Myrtle Cole	San Diego, City Council District 4	2013
Jim Cunningham	Poway, City Council	2009
Mike Diaz	Chula Vista, City Council	2018
Kevin Faulconer	San Diego, Mayor	2018
<b>Georgette Gomez</b> ✓	San Diego, City Council District 9	2017
Ronn Hall	Santee, City Council	2017
Bob McClellan	El Cajon, City Council	2008
Guy McWhirter	La Mesa, City Council	2015
Ron Roberts	County, Board of Supervisors	1989
<b>Mona Rios</b> ✓	National City, City Council	2011
<b>Mary Salas</b> ✓	Chula Vista, Mayor	2013
Bill Sandke	Coronado, City Council	2017

✓ Indicates members who were interviewed

### ***Diversity and Community Representation***

The MTS Board has become more representative of the county's racial and ethnic diversity in recent years, although it lags in gender equity. Only five of the 15 current members are women.

Regarding race and ethnicity, the make-up of the current MTS Board slightly overrepresents the White and Latino populations of the region defined as the MTS service area, is consistent with the African-American population, and underrepresents the Asian/Pacific Islander population.<sup>77</sup> Eight (53%) of the 15 members are White, including seven White men.

<sup>77</sup> Title VI Triennial Program Update for Metropolitan Transit System and North County Transit District, page 6. SANDAG, June 2015. [https://www.sdmts.com/sites/default/files/JUNE18-15.16.AttB\\_.FY15TitleVITriennialProgramUpdateforMTSandNCTD.pdf](https://www.sdmts.com/sites/default/files/JUNE18-15.16.AttB_.FY15TitleVITriennialProgramUpdateforMTSandNCTD.pdf)

Several interviewees noted that the board should have more diversity to be representative of the communities with the greatest need for public transportation, rather than simply the general population.

The four board members who agreed to interviews for this study all identified as Mexican-American or Hispanic. All four also said they grew up in working class households.

As reported in local news media, the selection of Georgette Gomez as Chair was a significant shift for MTS: "She is a woman, an LGBTQ leader, a Latina, and she represents City Heights, which has historically been underserved. She also made her name in local politics as an environmental activist in a tense standoff with the city's business interests."<sup>78</sup>

### ***Career Experience***

By definition, all members of the MTS Board are elected officials of local cities or the county. Several interviewees noted that the board members are not regular riders of public transit, so they may have trouble understanding the issues faced by the people they serve unless they actively seek out conversations with transit users.

### ***Selection Process Issues***

The selection of MTS Board members is up to the city council and/or mayor of each city, so there is no voting constituency to which they are directly accountable on transit issues, interviewees said. In the case of some smaller cities, the selection is essentially made by the mayor and can be biased by political considerations, one interviewee said.

And selection is limited to those who have been elected to a city council or the County Board, as required by state law. As one MTS Board member said:

"Places like El Cajon have a strong Chaldean community, but you can't have that representation on the MTS Board if there's none on the city council. Proportionally, you'd think you'd see more Asians, more African Americans... but if the city council doesn't reflect (community diversity), then you definitely won't see it on the MTS Board."

MTS pays each board member \$150 per meeting, including subcommittee meetings. Especially since they must be elected officials, the stipend is probably not a significant factor in encouraging or discouraging a diverse board.

### ***Accessibility to the Public***

The monthly MTS Board meetings always are on Thursday mornings, which makes it difficult for many working people to attend. The meetings are at the 12th and Imperial Transit Center on the east side of

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<sup>78</sup> Andrew Keatts, "Sign of the Times: Progressive Gomez Takes over at Stodgy MTS," *Voice of San Diego*, January 18, 2018. <https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/government/sign-times-progressive-gomez-takes-stodgy-mts/>

downtown. Time is allotted at the meetings for members of the public to make 3-minute statements, but one board member expressed concern that people who make the effort to address the board are not always respected:

“What I witness is the lack of attention that’s paid to members (of the public) that come up and speak. Not listening. Playing on your phone instead of listening to testimony of people coming forward. Snarky comments under their breath – that really annoys me. (I see some board members) viewing the public as a nuisance as opposed to individuals that have a right to express their opinions.”

A community advocate agreed that MTS lacks working groups or other mechanisms for public input on policy – other than the brief testimony at monthly meetings – so “there’s no opportunity to give meaningful feedback.”

One interviewee recalled that one of the White male board members responded to Spanish-speaking constituents at a meeting by saying “Well, we speak English in this country.”

The change in MTS leadership in January 2018 has improved accessibility, because the previous chair, Harry Mathis, had no contact information available to the public. Our researchers were unable to reach him. Contact information for Gomez, the new chair, is readily available on her page of the City of San Diego website.



Some of the MTS board members listening to testimony at a board meeting in February 2018.

## ***Impacts on Decisions***

Community advocates said the MTS Board in past years has failed to prioritize the needs of low-income riders. For example, they said the board has denied proposals for adequate discounts on bus passes. One interviewee said:

"Youth passes are \$36 per month. For a family with several children that is way too high, it's unaffordable. I hear about families struggling between paying the electricity bill and (buying) bus passes."

MTS monthly passes cost \$72 for adults, \$36 for youth aged 18 and under, and \$18 for people with disabilities and seniors aged 60 and up.<sup>79</sup>

One advocate said MTS also has failed to adequately inform the public or seek community input on reviews of whether the agency equitably serves minority, low income, and limited-English populations, as required by the Civil Rights Act. As a recipient of federal funds, MTS must:

- Ensure equal levels and quality of transportation services regardless of race, color, or national origin.
- Avoid disproportionately causing social, economic, health, or environmental impacts on minority and low-income populations.
- Promote participation by "all affected populations in transportation decision-making."
- Ensure that people with limited English can access programs and activities of the agency.<sup>80</sup>

Many MTS policy decisions are strongly influenced by staff, especially Chief Executive Officer Paul Jablonski, several board members and advocates said. One member said the board previously served mostly as a rubberstamp for the CEO but is now raising more challenges, such as countering his resistance to electric buses. Jablonski, a White man who has been CEO since 2003, is paid about \$540,000 a year in salary and benefits, which is \$85,000 more than even the County of San Diego's top administrator receives.<sup>81</sup>

As the diversity of the board is gradually improving, advocates said there have been signs of increased attention to the needs of low-income communities. One Latina board member said her personal background played a role, for instance, in a decision against a budget proposal to reduce bus routes in low-income areas.

Board members and community advocates alike pointed to the Transit Optimization Plan, a review of bus services designed to increase ridership, as an example of MTS paying greater attention to community concerns. Hundreds of people came to a series of workshops and provided input on needed enhancements of bus routes, they said. In January 2018, MTS began to implement the resulting changes,

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<sup>79</sup> Metropolitan Transit System website, "Fares & Passes," <https://www.sdmts.com/fares-passes>

<sup>80</sup> Federal Transit Administration, "San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Title VI Compliance Review Final Report," December 2012. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/san-diego-mts-title-vi-compliance>

<sup>81</sup> Figures are as of 2016. Transparent California, "2016 Salaries for San Diego Metropolitan Transit System," <https://transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/san-diego-metropolitan-transit-system/>

which will add \$2 million in services, increase the frequency of some routes and shorten some travel times.

Along with enthusiasm about the fresh leadership provided by Gomez, interviewees expressed optimism that the MTS Board will be able to improve the equity of its services because passage of AB 805 gave MTS the ability to raise revenue directly through taxes, rather than relying on allocations of tax revenue from SANDAG. They said the potential funding increase could speed the shift to environmentally responsible electric buses, expand bus services focus on students, reduce fares, or pass other policies to increase ridership and get more people to stop using cars.

## Conclusion

The examination of boards and commissions studied and described in this report demonstrates a serious deficiency in the diversity and representation on decision-making bodies in the San Diego region. The membership on the five entities we studied tends to be disproportionately White, male, economically advantaged, and professionally or politically connected to the established power structure. For the most part, historically underrepresented communities continue to be underrepresented.

The results of this deficiency appear to include a track record of decisions and practices that do not meet the needs of underprivileged, working-class, and racially/ethnically diverse communities. In addition, membership on appointed commissions and local level elected boards provides an important pathway to higher elected office, so barriers that block access to membership for the full range of community residents also are contributing to a lack of diversity throughout higher levels of government.

The two elected boards included in our study – the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and the Escondido Union High School District Board – have considerable power to make decisions that greatly impact the lives of their constituents. In the most stark finding of this study, both of those boards are completely White, while the White residents have become a numerical minority among the constituencies they serve. People of color make up 54% of the population of San Diego County and 73% of the Escondido school district student population, yet they have zero representation on the governing boards.<sup>82</sup>

The multiple factors affecting the candidacy pools and elections for these and other local boards require much more attention. Until those core issues can be resolved, new policies and practices may be able to improve the consideration of perspectives from underrepresented communities.

Diversity and accessibility vary on the two appointed commissions we studied – the City of San Diego Planning Commission and the Port of San Diego Board of Port Commissioners. Both are appointed by the relevant city councils and mayors. The Planning Commission in particular is dominated by people with professional connections to the industry it regulates, in this case the real estate development industry.

While we found a profound lack of diversity on the two elected boards studied, it's interesting that the membership of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Board is the most representative of the community it serves. The MTS Board is made up of elected officials from city councils, plus one member of the County Board. Although it was beyond the scope of our research to determine whether diversity is improving on those elected councils or whether people of color serving on city councils are more likely to choose or be selected for duty on the transit board, it appears likely that both factors are playing some role.

This study raises concerns that policy decisions on many issues in the San Diego region may be made without due consideration of the perspectives and challenges familiar to people of color, women, low-wage workers, LGBTQ people, immigrants, and other disadvantaged segments of the population. In addition to

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<sup>82</sup> If any members of these two boards have non-White identities that are not apparent, we were unable to discover that because they all declined our requests for interviews.



a lack of equitable representation on the boards and commissions, advocates for those underrepresented communities reported barriers facing constituents who seek to have their voices heard.

We have examined only five of dozens of boards and commissions whose decision-making processes affect life in the San Diego region. More thorough and wide-reaching investigation is needed into the varied and complex arrangements for determining who makes public policy decisions and whether they incorporate the viewpoints and needs of the people they are entrusted to serve. In 2018, the San Diego area continues to deny equitable representation on public boards and commissions to historically underprivileged communities.

## Appendices

Appendix A: Board Members/Commissioners

Appendix B: Other Interviewees

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Board Members/Commissioners

Appendix D: Interview Questions for Organizations

Appendix E: Geographic Jurisdiction - City of San Diego Planning Commission

Appendix F: Geographic Jurisdiction - Port of San Diego

Appendix G: Geographic Jurisdiction - Escondido Union High School District

Appendix H: Geographic Jurisdiction - San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Appendix I: Geographic Jurisdiction - San Diego County, Board of Supervisors

Appendix J: MTS weighted vote

## Appendix A: Board Members and Commissioners

**\*\*bolded names mean they were interviewed for this report**

<u>Planning Commission</u> <b>Stephen Haase</b> <b>Susan Peerson</b> <b>Vicki Granowitz</b> <b>James Whalen</b> Douglas Austin William Hofman Dennis Otsuji  <u>Port Commission</u> <b>Rafael Castellanos</b> <b>Garry J. Bonelli</b> <b>Michael Zucchet</b> <b>Robert "Dukie" Valderrama</b> Ann Moore Dan Malcolm Marshall Merrifield  <u>Escondido Union High School District</u> Christi Knight Jon Petersen Bill Durney Tina Pope Dane White	<u>MTS Board</u> <b>Georgette Gomez</b> <b>Mary Salas</b> <b>Mona Rios</b> <b>David Arambula</b> Ron Roberts Guy McWhirter Ronn Hall David Alvarez Myrtle Cole Bob McClellan Bill Sandke Lorie Bragg Jim Cunningham Kevin Faulconer Mike Diaz  <u>Board of Supervisors</u> Kristin Gaspar Bill Horn Greg Cox Dianne Jacobs Ron Roberts
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## Appendix B: Other Interviewees

### Past Commissioners

Laurie Black, Port  
Steve Padilla, Port  
Scott Peters, Port  
Eric Naslund, Planning  
Theresa Quiroz, Planning

### Organizations

Employee Rights Center  
Environmental Health Coalition  
City Councilmember Georgette Gomez (former staffer with Environmental Health Coalition)  
Mid-City CAN  
SEIU Local 221  
United Taxi Workers of San Diego  
San Diego Organizing Project  
Save PQ Village Team  
Escondido Secondary Teachers Association  
IBEW Local 569  
UNITE HERE Local 30

## Appendix C: Interview Questions for Board Members/Commissioners

1. Demographics:
  - a. What gender do you identify as?
  - b. Do you identify as part of the LGBTQ community? Would you say that you are an ally of the LGBTQ community?
  - c. What race and/or ethnicities to you identify with? Please feel free to state more than one.
  - d. Did you grow up in a two-parent household?
  - e. Are you originally from San Diego County? What neighborhood(s) did you primarily grow up in?
  - f. How would you describe the socio-economic status of the household you grew up in?
  - g. Can you describe what each of your parents did for a living during your teenage years? Can you describe the level of educational attainment, of each of your parents?
  - h. Were you or your parents born in another country? Which country/countries?
  - i. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - j. How old were you when you first got appointed and what year? How long have you been serving for?
2. Who would you describe as your allies or mentors that helped you get on to this board/commission? Can you explain a little bit about who they are, and how they helped you?
3. How would you briefly describe your experiences working with your constituents, before you were elected/appointed to this position? Can you describe some of the experiences that led you here?
4. Based on your experiences working with your constituency, how would you describe the community you represent?
  - a. In your tenure as a board member/commissioner, would you say that you've taken steps to hear from diverse voices in your constituency? Can you describe what steps you've taken?
  - b. Can you describe a specific instance when you heard input from constituents and it changed your position on an issue before the board/commission?
5. At first glance, would you say that the composition of your board is reflective of its constituency?
  - a. Would you say that you consider a lack of diversity in this board/commission's composition to be a problem? Can you explain why or why not you believe this is important?
  - b. What sorts of challenges do you feel this board/commission faces in representing and understanding diversity/equity?
6. Can you give an example of a time when your personal history or background helped to inform you in making an important decision on a matter before your board/commission?
7. What would you describe as your board's/commission's major challenges when it comes to being accessible to a diverse constituency?
8. Has your board/commission taken steps to become more accessible to your constituency? For example, offering translation services and/or childcare services, hosting community meetings at different times, or working with organizations that are trusted in the community?

- a. Which of those things would you say you were a part of? Were any of those changes you initiated? Have you seen any positive results because of your efforts?
9. Do you have a vision of how the decisions your board/commission make can promote equity in your community?
10. Can you also describe some of the concrete goals you are hoping to achieve in your time as a \_\_\_\_\_?
11. If you were to take on the goal of promotion of equity through the decision-making of your board/commission, what challenges would you face or anticipate?

*Non-priority Questions (if there's time):*

12. More generally, as a board member/commissioner, what decisions have been the most difficult to make?
13. Based on your experiences, would you say this is a board/commission that effectively carries out its mission? What strengths would you identify, and what would you say are potential areas for improvement?
14. What would you recommend to people who are interested in learning more about your board? What resources would you recommend?



## Appendix D: Interview Questions for Organizations

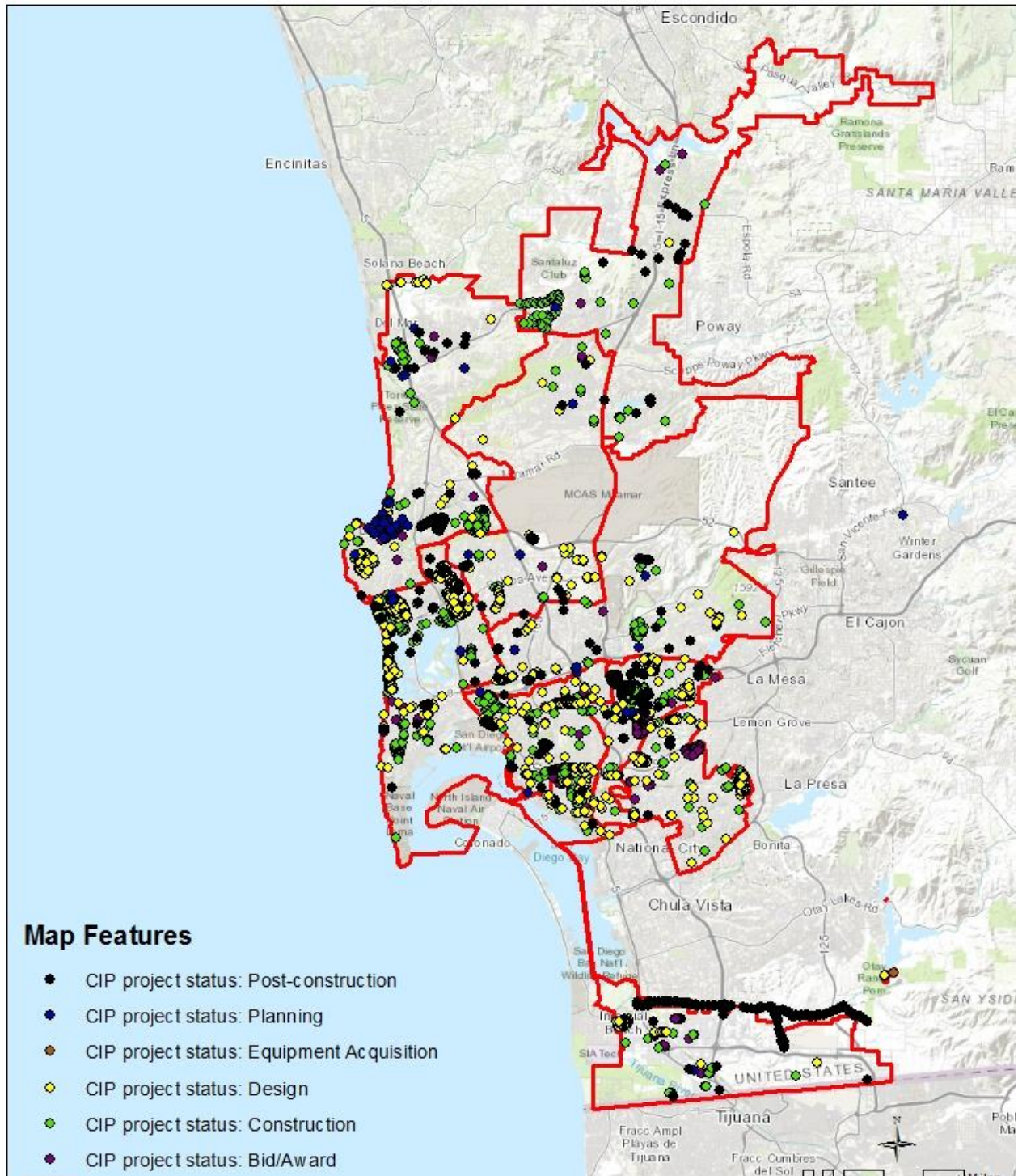
1. What is your experience with this board/commission?
2. What kinds of decisions do you need from the board? What policies are you trying to move? (to understand authority of board)
  - a. Decisions that influence money?
  - b. Decisions that influence policy? (affect/create policy?)
  - c. Are they advisory vs. final/binding decisions
    - i. If advisory, is the status quo that their recommendation is always approved or not
3. Which social equity issues does this board/commission impact and how? Explaining equity
  - a. Examples of past and current policies that affect equity
  - b. Opportunities for future policies that can go through this board/commission
4. How do you influence this board/commission? What wins have you had? Please provide examples. If you feel like you don't have influence, what do you feel are barriers to that? What are your strategies?
5. Is this a board that carries out its mission based on your experience? Explain.
6. How accessible is the board/commission to the community members you work with? (think of translation, access to members and meetings)
7. How representative is the board/commission to the constituents you work with?
8. What commissioners align with your values (past and current)?
  - a. Who can you connect us with for an interview to learn more?

### *Non-priority Questions (if there's time):*

9. Who else is interested in the issues related to this board/commission?
10. Are you familiar if they have staff assigned to support the board/commission?
  - a. If so, list position(s) of staff that influence the board/commission.

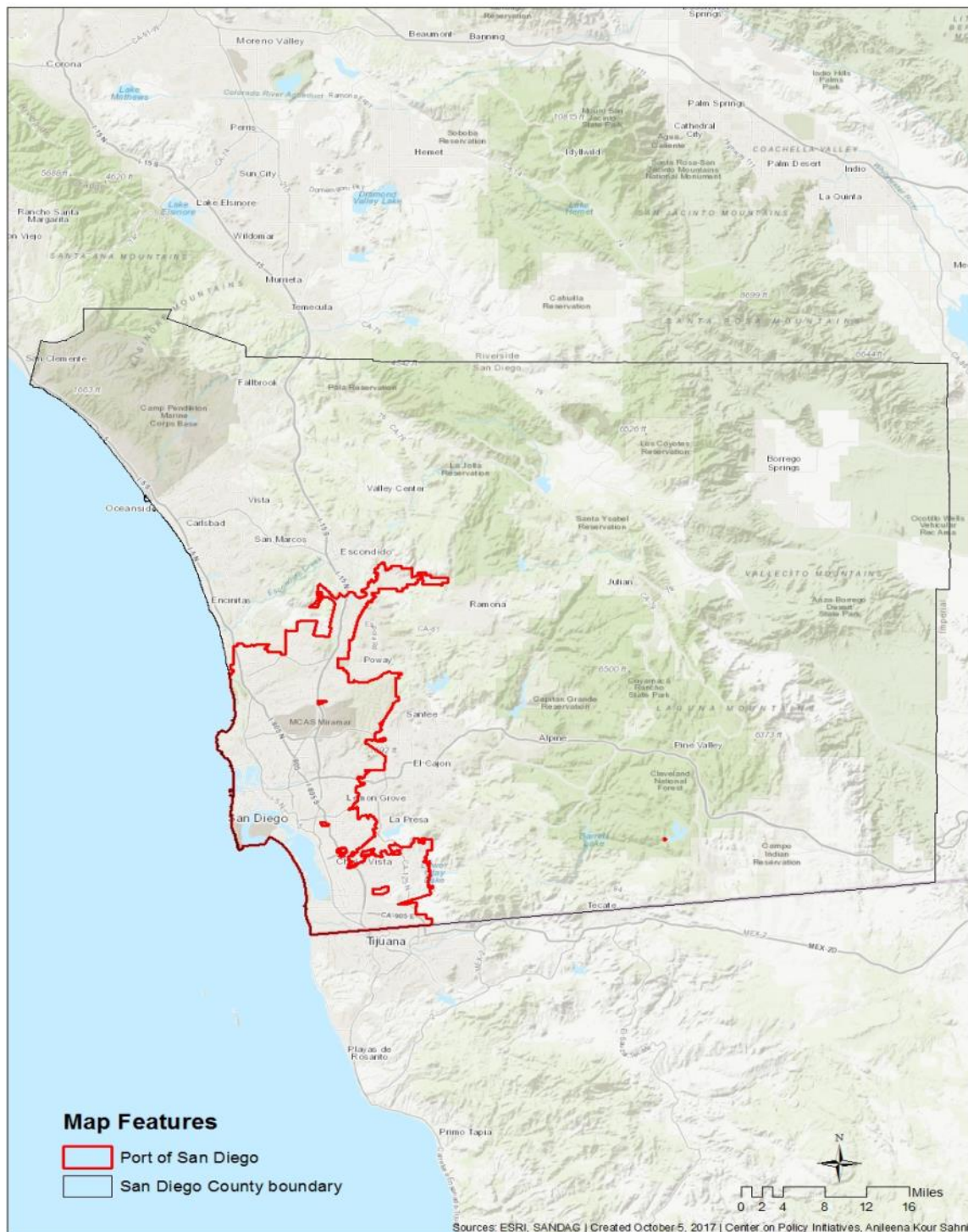
## Appendix E: Geographic Jurisdiction

### City of San Diego Planning Commission



## Appendix F: Geographic Jurisdiction

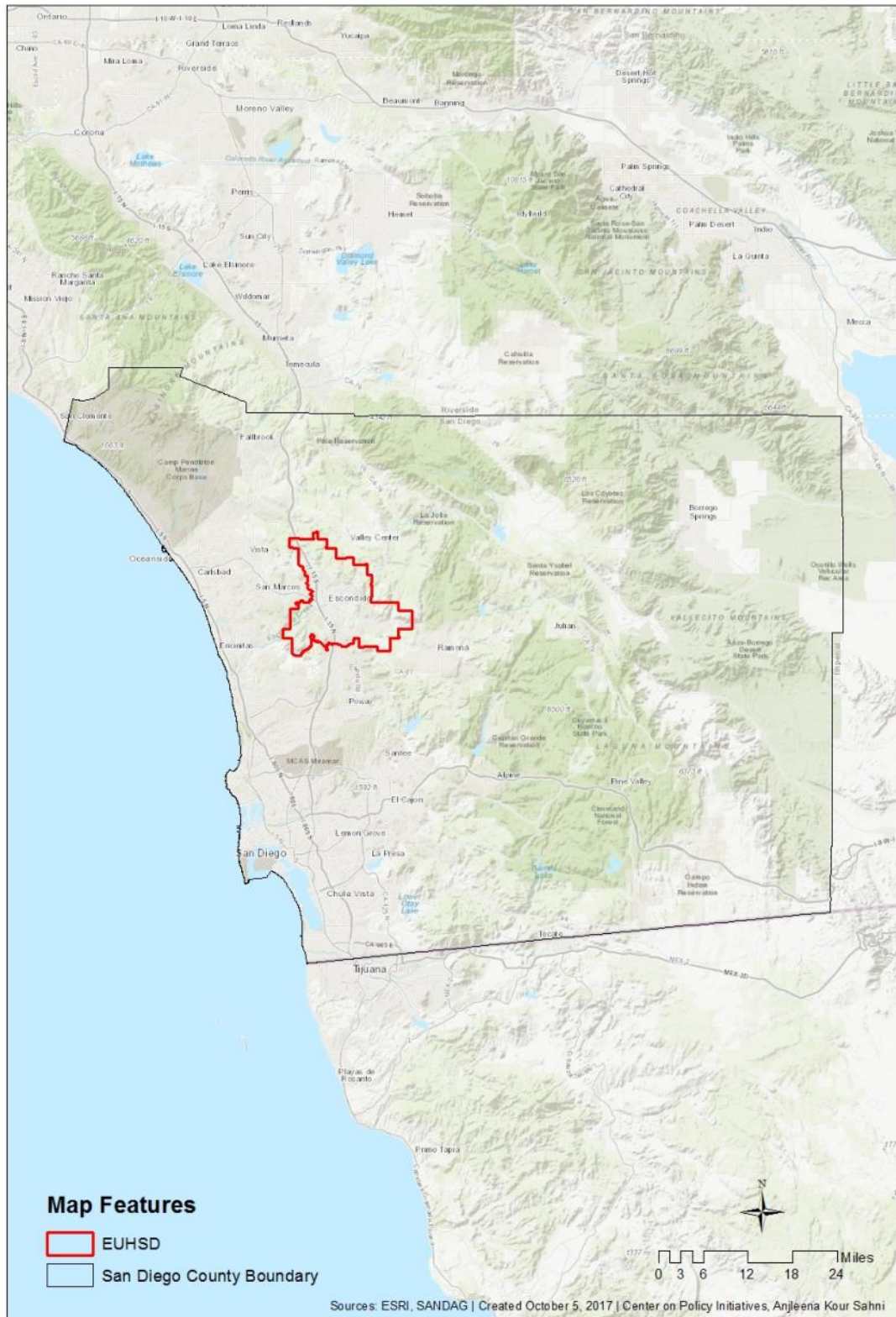
### Port of San Diego





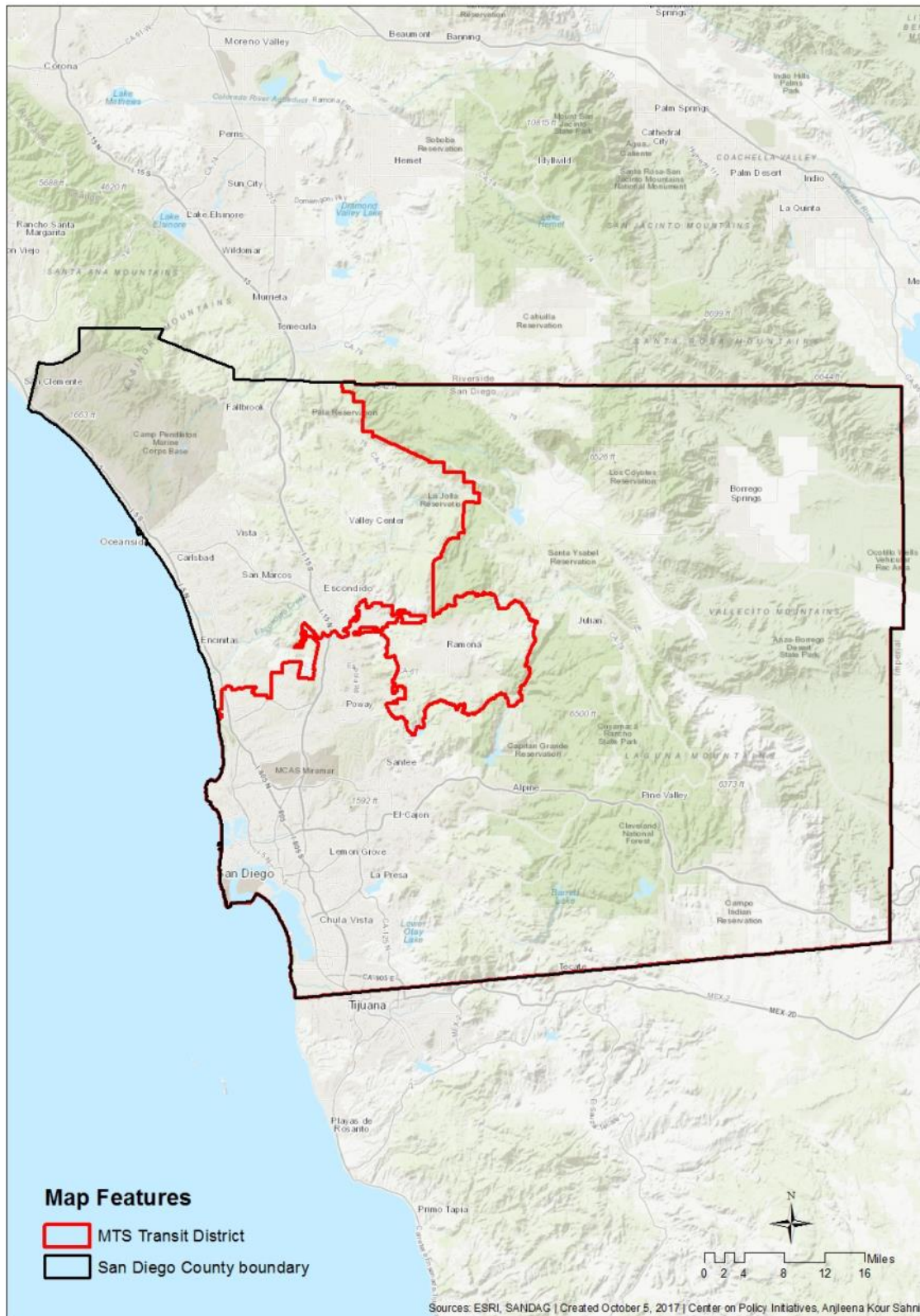
## Appendix G: Geographic Jurisdiction

### Escondido Union High School District



## Appendix H: Geographic Jurisdiction

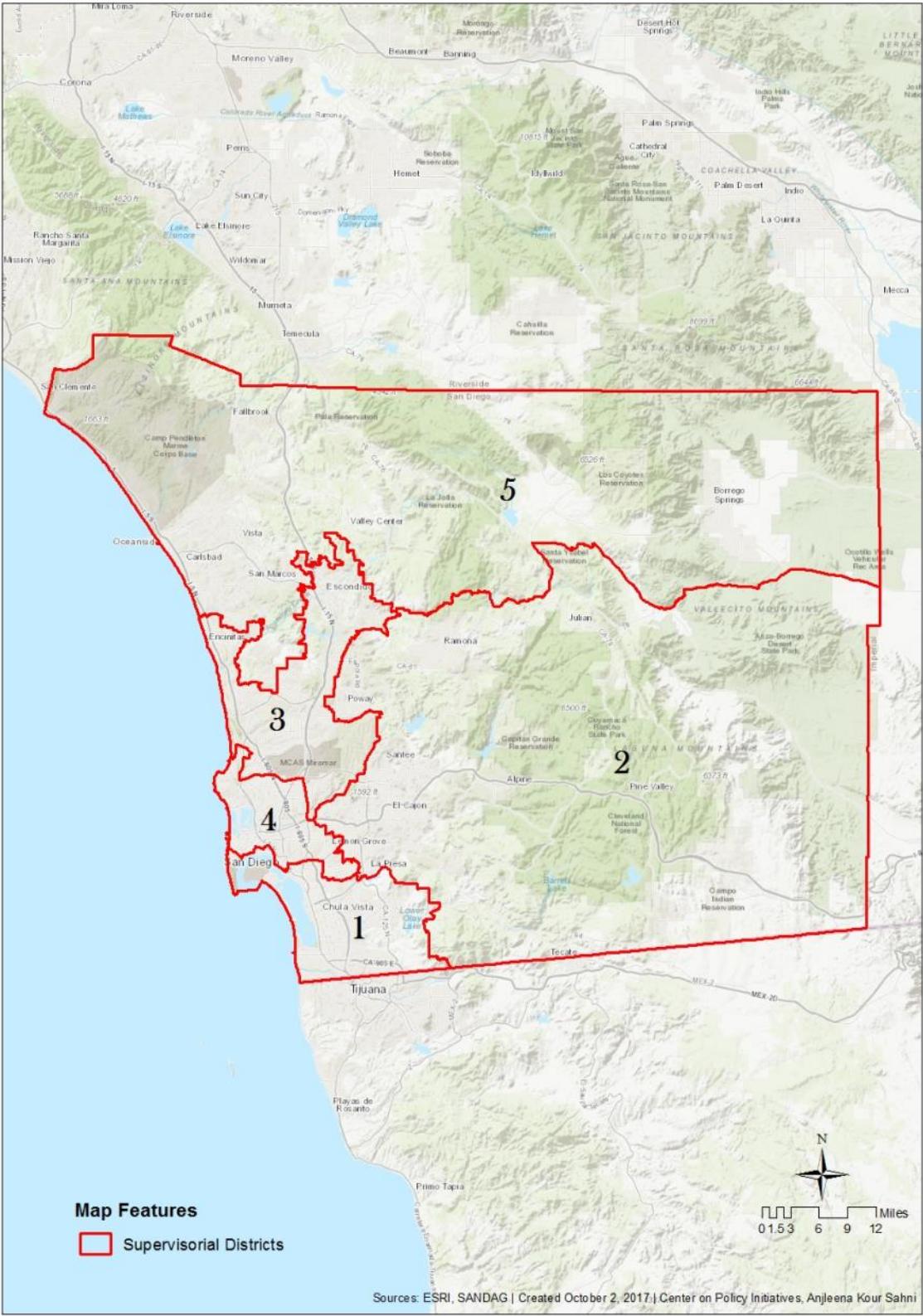
### San Diego Metropolitan Transit System





Appendix I: Geographic Jurisdiction

San Diego County, Board of Supervisors





## Appendix J: MTS WEIGHTED VOTE

Effective January 1, 2018, California Assembly Bill (AB) 805 impacts MTS's legislation:

1. The public chairperson position is eliminated. The 15<sup>th</sup> board seat goes to the City of Chula Vista.
2. The MTS voting procedure allows for a quorum of at least 8 board members, and then only a majority of those present is required for board action.
3. A "skilled labor" requirement is added to contracts more than \$1,000,000.
4. MTS has authority to impose a sales tax in MTS jurisdiction.

In order to comply with Public Utilities Code sections 120000, et. seq., the Board of Directors approved a revised weighted voting process, on November 9, 2017.<sup>18</sup> The representation requirements for this board aims to ensure proportional representation based on population in each municipality; a weighted vote does not allocate the same amount of influence to each seat.

Procedurally, a quorum is a majority of the 15 members of the board, and then all official acts require a majority the members present at the meeting.<sup>19</sup> At least three municipalities must contribute to the fifty-one percent (51%) vote in favor of an official act. In the absence of the weighted majority, the original decision remains.

The weighted vote is recalculated on July 1<sup>st</sup> every year, and current values are attributed as:

City of San Diego	50
County of San Diego	14
Chula Vista	14
El Cajon	5
National City	3
La Mesa	3
Santee	3
Poway	3
Imperial Beach	2
Lemon Grove	2
Coronado	1
TOTAL	100

Representatives from the San Diego City Council have the only majority, with four members, 12.5 votes each. Although this allows for a stronger voice representing the City of San Diego, these members constitute less than one-third of the full board. If San Diego City Council members gain votes from two other cities, like Coronado and Santee, a small handful of jurisdictions could have significant impacts on a decision affecting transit throughout the County.