



City Council Staff Report

DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2021
TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT
CITY CLERK DIVISION
DISTRICT: ALL
SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE INPUT FROM THE COMMUNITY
REGARDING THE REDRAWING OF ELECTION DISTRICT
BOUNDARIES

ISSUE

Public Hearing to receive input from the community regarding the redrawing of election district boundaries.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Receive a report from staff on the redistricting process and permissible criteria to be considered to redraw district boundaries; and,
- 2) Conduct public hearings and workshops to receive public input on district boundaries.

BACKGROUND

Every ten years, cities with by-district election systems must use new Census data to review and, if needed, redraw district lines to reflect how local populations have changed. This process, called redistricting, ensures all districts have nearly equal population. The redistricting process for the City of Palmdale must be completed by April 17, 2022.

DISCUSSION

The City adopted its current district boundaries in 2016 based on 2010 U.S. Census data, as required by law. The districts must now be redrawn using the 2020 Census data and in compliance with the Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions (“FAIR MAPS”) Act, which was adopted by the California legislature as AB 849 and took effect January 1, 2020. Under the Act, the council shall draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority (Elections Code 21601(c) for general law cities / 21621(c) for charter cities):

- 1) Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the Voting Rights Act;

- 2) Geographically contiguous;
- 3) Undivided neighborhoods and “communities of interest” (socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together);
- 4) Easily identifiable boundaries;
- 5) Geographic compactness (do not bypass one group of people to get to a more distant group of people); and,
- 6) Shall not favor or discriminate against a political party.

Once the prioritized criteria are met, other traditional districting principles can be considered, such as:

- 1) Minimize the number of voters delayed from voting in 2022 to 2024;
- 2) Respect voters’ choices / continuity in office; and
- 3) Future population growth.

By law, the City must hold at least four public hearings that enable community members to provide input on the drawing of district maps:

- At least one hearing must occur before the city or county draws draft maps;
- At least two hearings must happen after the drawing of draft maps;
- The fourth hearing can happen either before or after the drawing of draft maps; and,
- City or county staff or consultants may hold a public workshop instead of one of the required public redistricting hearings.

To increase the accessibility of these hearings, cities and counties must take the following steps:

- At least one hearing must occur on a Saturday, Sunday, or after 6 p.m. on a weekday;
- If a redistricting hearing is consolidated with another local government meeting, the redistricting hearing portion must begin at a pre-designated time; and,
- Local public redistricting hearings should be made accessible to people with disabilities.

The purpose of this public hearing is to inform the public about the districting process and to hear from the community on what factors should be taken into consideration while creating district boundaries. The public is requested to provide input regarding communities of interest and other local factors that should be considered while drafting district maps. A *community of interest* under the relevant Elections Code for cities (Section 21601(c) / 21621(c)] is “a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.”

Possible features defining community of interest might include, but are not limited to:

- A. School attendance areas;
- B. Natural dividing lines such as major roads, hills, or highways;
- C. Areas around parks and other neighborhood landmarks;
- D. Common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns; and
- E. Shared demographic characteristics, such as:
 - (1) Similar levels of income, education, or linguistic insolation;
 - (2) Languages spoken at home; and,
 - (3) Single-family and multi-family housing unit areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

City Council has appropriated \$150,000 in the FY 2021/2022 mid-year budget adjustments to meet the 2021 Redistricting Program requirements.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal I: Maintain effective public safety and protection for life, property, and the environment.

- C. Use a variety of methods to communicate timely, useful, and trusted information about city programs, services, and policies.

Goal II: Ensure long-term fiscal health of the City and maintain funding for services.

- C. Involve and expand engagement to enhance public oversight and transparency.

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ATTACHMENT

- 1. None