

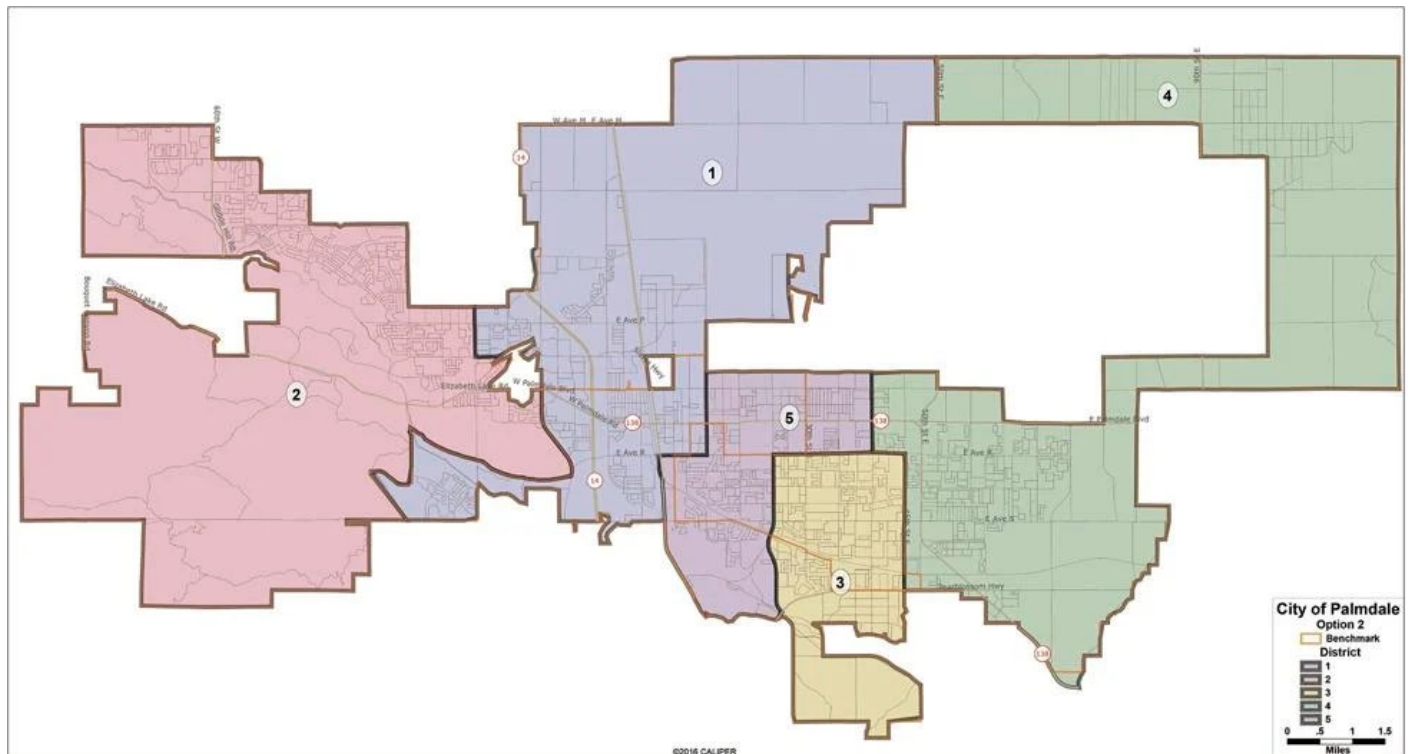
[https://www.avpress.com/news/palmdale-adopting-five-council-districts/article\\_c21da032-a668-11ec-8f5e-2367795aefaa.html](https://www.avpress.com/news/palmdale-adopting-five-council-districts/article_c21da032-a668-11ec-8f5e-2367795aefaa.html)

## Palmdale adopting five Council districts

Mayor's seat will rotate among councilmembers

By ALLISON GATLIN Valley Press Staff Writer

Mar 18, 2022



Palmdale's City Council will change to having its members elected from five districts, as seen in this map, and rotating the mayor's position annually among the members. This removes the mayor being elected directly by the city at-large.

Map courtesy of the City of Palmdale

**PALMDALE** — The City Council, on Wednesday, opted to change its format, moving to Council members elected from five districts, with the mayor's seat rotating annually among the Council.

The change will be in effect for the November election, when the District 3 and District 4 seats and the mayor were already scheduled to term out. This change in format will add the District 5 Council seat to the ballot.

A second public hearing on the matter will be held before the new district map is finalized. The city faces a deadline of April 17 to have new district boundaries approved.

"I love the idea of five districts. I have for a very long time," Councilmember Laura Bettencourt said. "I think that it will help bring balance; I think that it will keep all of the Council people involved and informed on topics that right now maybe we don't have access to."

"I think this is one of the best things that we could do for Palmdale," she said.

Mayor Steve Hofbauer cast the only dissenting vote on the change from a directly elected mayor, stating, "We're going backward."

"This isn't an issue of power," but one of influence in relation to other cities and boards, he said, speaking from Washington, where he is attending a conference. "I have no intention of spending the rest of my life in this seat."

Hofbauer moved to have the matter placed before voters as a measure to change the city charter on the November ballot, but the motion died for lack of a second.

On March 2, the Council declined to ratify the four-district map they selected two weeks earlier as part of the decennial redistricting process and instead instructed staff to contract with a different demographer to draw new maps for consideration with five districts instead of four. This effectively negated months of effort by the public, staff and contracted demographer NDC.



**CALIFORNIA**  
**Allergy & Asthma**

**Dr. Ricardo Tan**  
offers over 20 years  
of experience and  
expertise as  
a nationally recognized  
practitioner in this field.

**44453 16th Street West, Suite 101,  
Lancaster CA 93534**

Compass Demographics was hired to create the five new maps the Council considered, under a provision in the Municipal Code that allows for no-bid contracts for goods and services valued at less than \$30,000.

The five options for maps with five Council districts were posted online, on Friday night, Interim City Manager Ronda Perez said.

Like the four-district maps considered under the redistricting process, the one selected has three districts with a majority Latino citizen voting age population, and a fourth with 49.4% of such population.

All five of the maps considered meet the state and federal election requirements, David Ely of Compass Demographics said.

The format change was supported by most members of the public who spoke at Wednesday's meeting, including several speaking in Spanish through a city interpreter.

A number of them called the change "historic" and a means of ensuring greater representation of minority communities.

"I think it's critical and it's important. There was quite a battle just to get districts in this city," Planning Commissioner V. Jesse Smith said. "The purpose of that was to allow our community the leadership reflect the diversity of our community."

Neither the Council nor the public seemed concerned about the details of the individual maps presented, only that they had five Council districts. Councilmember Juan Carrillo suggested the map that was ultimately selected, and there was no discussion of any of the individual maps themselves.

agatlin@avpress.com

