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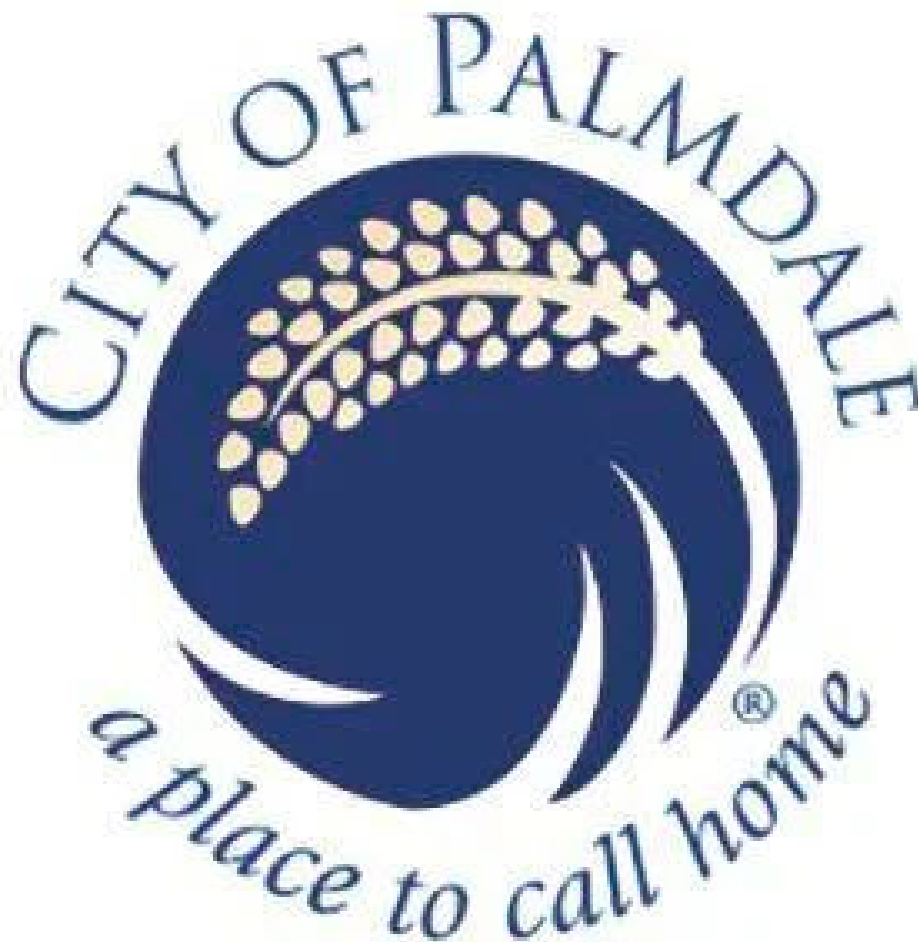
FEATURED

City is likely to OK five-district plan

Mayor's position would rotate between members

By ALLISON GATLIN Valley Press Staff Writer

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PALMDALE — The City Council is expected to formalize the change in its format to five Council districts, with the mayor's position rotating among them, on Wednesday.

The agenda for Wednesday's City Council meeting includes a public hearing for the ordinance making the change to the city's Municipal Code.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 38300 Sierra Highway. Members of the public may also participate via Zoom at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86722465619?pwd=TEt0ekFHb0k3Y1JtSkRiem5OMGM2QT09>

This change, enacted by the Council, on March 16, will eliminate the current format of four Council members elected by residents only in their districts, and the mayor directly elected by residents citywide. Instead, all five Council members will be elected only by residents in the district that they represent. The mayor's position will rotate among the Council members each year.

Mayor Steve Hofbauer cast the only dissenting vote in the manner, at that time.

This is the second public hearing for the issue. The city faces an April 17 deadline to finalize the district maps.

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.

The change in how Palmdale residents are represented on the Council came about at the final hour of the decennial redistricting process, which began, last year, with the Council creation of a Redistricting Advisory Commission, and a series of public workshops and hearings to collect input on how the four Council districts should be drawn, using data from the 2020 Census.



The Council rejected the Commission's recommendations, and chose a four-district map drawn by contracted demographer NDC, on Feb. 16.

Then, on March 2, the Council declined to ratify the four-district map they selected, two weeks earlier, 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.

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.

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.

The format change was supported by most members of the public who spoke at the March 16 meeting.

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.

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