

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: SUE GALLAGHER, CITY ATTORNEY
STEPHANIE WILLIAMS, CITY CLERK
SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING – REDISTRICTING OF CITY COUNCIL
DISTRICTS (FAIR MAPS ACT) – FIRST OF FOUR PUBLIC
HEARINGS

AGENDA ACTION: PUBLIC HEARING

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the City Attorney and City Clerk that the Council hold a public hearing to receive input from the community regarding the composition of voting districts for the district-based election of Council members, in accordance with Elections Code section 21627.1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 12, 2021, the Council held a study session reviewing the process for the decennial review of City Council Member district boundaries. Cities with district-based elections are required to update (“redistrict”) the district boundaries every ten years, following the receipt of updated population data from each federal decennial census. Santa Rosa is required to redistrict the Council district boundaries prior to the next City Council election in 2022.

The Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions (FAIR MAPS) Act requires cities and counties to engage communities in the redistricting process. The process must include at least four public hearings, one of which may be conducted as a community workshop. This will be the first of those four public forums.

BACKGROUND

On October 12, 2021, the City Council held a study session at which it reviewed the process and standards for the redistricting of City Council member district boundaries under the California Voting Rights Act and the Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions (FAIR MAPS) Act.

REDISTRICTING OF CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS (FAIR MAPS ACT)

PAGE 2 OF 3

Pursuant to Elections Code section 21627.1, of the FAIR MAPS Act, the City Council is required to hold four public hearings in connection with the redistricting of electoral districts for City Council. One of those hearings may be held as a community workshop. This is the first of the four public forums. A full schedule of the public forums is set forth in Attachment 1.

Pursuant to Elections Code section 21627.1, one of the four required public hearings must be held *before* any map or maps of the boundaries of the updated voting districts are drawn. This initial public hearing provides the public an opportunity to provide input regarding preferences and criteria for the composition of the revised districts.

The remaining public hearings will be held *after* proposed maps are drawn. Those hearings will provide the public an opportunity to react to, and to provide input on specific proposed district boundary lines.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

October 12, 2021, Council study session to discuss the redistricting process.

ANALYSIS

This is the first of a series of four public hearings to be held by the City under Elections Code section 21627.1. The purpose of this initial public hearing is to further inform the public about the redistricting process, to hear from residents on factors they believe should be taken into consideration when creating the updated Council districts, including general or specific suggestions for the drawing of district boundary lines.

As we head into this first hearing, it is helpful to keep in mind that state and federal law set forth certain standards and criteria for redistricting. These include:

- Council districts shall be substantially equal in population.
- The redistricting plan must comply with the U.S. and California Constitutions, the Federal Voting Rights Act and state law.
- To the extent practicable, districts shall be geographically contiguous.
- To the extent practicable, the integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest shall be respected.
- District boundaries should be easily identifiable and understandable by residents.

REDISTRICTING OF CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS (FAIR MAPS ACT)

PAGE 3 OF 3

- To the extent practicable, districts should be drawn to encourage geographical compactness.
- District lines must not be drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against a political party.

The community is encouraged to provide input on some or all of these factors, and to suggest other criteria it feels are important. With this public hearing, the formal process of redistricting will begin.

The next steps will be the drawing of draft maps, further public outreach and additional opportunities and avenues for community participation and engagement.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Timeline for Redistricting Process

CONTACT

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