

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) – FOURTH PUBLIC HEARING

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 December 7, 2021, the Council held the first in a series of public hearings in 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. Thus far, three public hearings have been held, one of which was conducted as a community workshop. This will be the fourth hearing in the series.

BACKGROUND

On October 12, 2021, the Council held a study session at which it reviewed the process and standards for the redistricting of City Council member districts 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)
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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.

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. The Council held this initial public hearing on December 7, 2021. This initial hearing provided the public an opportunity to provide input regarding preferences and criteria for the composition of the revised districts.

Two further public hearings were held following the first drafting of maps, the first hearing on January 25, 2022, and the second, which was held as a community workshop, on February 17, 2022.

The Council is now holding the fourth in the series of required public hearings. At this fourth public hearing, additional draft maps will be presented for discussion. The draft maps may be prepared by staff, by the City's consultants or by members of the public.

An on-line public mapping program has been placed on the City's website, open and available to all. By using that system or by submitting hard copy maps, any member of the public may propose new or revised Council district boundaries. This fourth hearing will provide the public an opportunity to react to and provide input on specific proposed Council boundaries.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

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

December 7, 2021, First Public Hearing to receive community input.

January 25, 2022, Second Public Hearing, to receive community input, receive a demonstration on the mapping tool DistrictR, present initial draft maps submitted by the public, and the Consultant to solicit input and receive feedback.

February 17, 2022, Community Outreach Public Hearing held at the Finley Community Center in both English and Spanish to solicit community input and receive additional draft maps for Council consideration.

ANALYSIS

This is the fourth in a series of public hearings to be held by the City under Elections Code section 21627.1. The purpose of this 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, and to hear public response to specific map proposals.

As we head into this fourth public 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.
- 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 on any and all proposed maps. With this public hearing, the process of redistricting moves into its final stage.

The next steps include a final public hearing to review and adopt a new District map. A full schedule of the redistricting process is set forth in Attachment 1.

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
- Attachment 2 – Draft Map A
- Attachment 3 – Draft Map B
- Attachment 4 – Draft Map C
- Attachment 5 – Walsh Draft Map

CONTACT

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