



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

PUBLIC HEARINGS AGENDA ITEM NO. B.1

DATE: September 30, 2021

TO: City Council

FROM: Stephen Fischer, City Attorney, (805) 385-7483, stephen.fischer@oxnard.org

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Regarding Redistricting of City Council Districts

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council conduct a public hearing to:

1. Receive a report on the redistricting process for City Council districts and the criteria to be considered in revising district boundaries; and
2. Receive a report on the final adjusted census numbers of each existing City Council district; and
3. Receive a presentation regarding public mapping tool for drawing City Council district maps.

BACKGROUND

Every ten years, cities with by-district elections are required to use new census data to review and redraw district lines to reflect population changes. This process, called redistricting, ensures that all districts within a city have nearly an equal number of people residing within each district and meets the other provisions of state law.

Although the City recently went through the districting process with the creation of City Council districts in 2018, these Council districts reflected the population totals from the 2010 census. Under state law, public entities with elections in November 2022 have until April 17, 2022 in which to adopt district maps that reflect the changes in population indicated in the 2020 census (as modified by the State of California to reflect the original residency of persons incarcerated in California's prisons).

As part of the redistricting process, the City is required to hold at least four public hearings or workshops, with at least one of these public hearings or workshops held before any of the new district maps are drawn. The City Council held the first public hearing regarding redistricting on July 29, 2021.

ANALYSIS

The purpose of tonight's public hearing is to provide the public with an overview of the redistricting process, provide the final adjusted population numbers for each of the existing City Council districts, and to receive a presentation on the public mapping tools that will be available to members of the public to draw draft City Council district maps for consideration by the City Council.

As it relates to the redistricting process, under recently adopted state laws (AB 849 and AB 1276), when the City Council goes through the redistricting process, the Council is required to draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority:

1. Substantially equal in population for each of the districts.

2. Complies with the U.S. Constitution, the California Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act.
3. Geographically contiguous.
4. Minimize the division of local neighborhoods and local communities of interest. (The law defines a “community of interest” as a population that shares common social or economic interests.)
5. Create district boundaries that residents can easily identify and understand. (These would include natural or artificial barriers such as streets, highways, rivers or rail lines, or the boundaries of the city.)
6. Districts that are compact in size.
7. District boundaries that are not adopted to favor or discriminate against a political party. (Elections Code Section 21601.)

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

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

The calculation of the population for each City Council district is based upon the U.S. Census data, as modified by the State of California to reflect the original residency of persons incarcerated in California’s prisons. As of the publication date of the agenda for the September 30, 2021 City Council meeting, the City’s demographer had not completed processing the data released by the State of California on September 20, 2021. Based upon the official Census data, the City of Oxnard has an official population of 202,063. Once the final California-adjusted numbers for the City as a whole, including the prison population data, are calculated, then a determination can be made regarding the ideal size of each district and the adjustments in population that will be necessary to meet the maximum 10 percent deviation in population between the largest district and the smallest district. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld a deviation of 10 percent in population between the size of the largest populated district and the smallest populated districts. (Harris v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission (2016) 136 S.Ct. 1301, 194 L.Ed.2d 497.)

It is anticipated that the City’s demographer will have its database updated in time for the September 30, 2021 public hearing. Kristen Parks of National Demographics Corporation will provide an overview of the Maptitude Online Redistricting -- a powerful online mapping tool that can be used to draw revised district maps. Once this mapping tool is released, the public can use this tool to submit district maps. As with the 2017/2018 districting process in Oxnard, members of the public will also have the opportunity to draw proposed redistricting maps for submittal to the City Council for its consideration using a paper mapping system that does not require computer access.

The public is also invited to provide input regarding communities of interest and other local factors that should be considered while drafting revised district maps. A community of interest under the relevant Elections Code section relating to cities (Section 21601(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.” Examples of possible features defining a community of interest could include (without limitation):

1. School attendance areas;
2. Natural dividing lines such as major roads, hills, or highways;
3. Areas around parks and other neighborhood landmarks;
4. Common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns; and
5. Shared demographic characteristics, such as similar levels of income, education, or linguistic isolation; languages spoken at home; or single-family and multi-family housing unit areas.

NEXT STEPS

The City Council held the first public hearing regarding redistricting on July 29, 2021. Tonight’s public hearing will be the second public hearing on redistricting. Subsequent public hearings are scheduled for:

1. Third public hearing -- Monday, December 6 at 6:00 p.m.
2. Fourth public hearing -- Saturday, January 22 at 10:00 a.m.

3. Fifth public hearing -- Thursday, February 24 at 6:00 p.m.

Based upon this schedule, the City Council will consider the final adoption of the Council district map at the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, March 15, 2022. The legal deadline for the City to adopt a new map is April 17, 2022, with the first election with the new map to occur on November 8, 2022.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This agenda item is a routine operational item or does not relate to the five strategic priorities adopted by City Council on March 16, 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact.

COMMITTEE OUTCOME

This item did not originate in Committee.

Prepared by: Kenneth Rozell, Chief Assistant City Attorney, Jason Zaragoza, Deputy City Attorney

ATTACHMENTS

1. PowerPoint Second Public Hearing