



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT
PUBLIC HEARINGS
AGENDA ITEM NO. L.1

DATE: July 29, 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. (15/20/20) - **Time Certain 7:00 PM.**

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 to redraw City Council district boundaries; and
2. Receive public input regarding the composition of one or more Council districts.
(Presentation will be live upon consultant's request.)

BACKGROUND

Following each federal decennial census, cities with by-district elections are required to use that 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.

Council districts are a very recent addition in the City of Oxnard. From the City's incorporation in 1903 until 2016, members of the City Council were elected on an at-large basis. The City Council adopted the existing Council districts on March 6, 2018, after an extended public process that included six public hearings and a community workshop. The public process also included the City Council's consideration of 39 qualifying maps submitted by the public that met the basic qualifications for a district map (number of districts, contiguous district boundaries, and population balanced).

Although the City recently went through the districting process, the Council districts created in 2018 reflected the population totals from the 2010 census. Under state law, public entities with elections in November 2022 have until April 17, 2022, 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).

The City's redistricting process is a standalone process that is not connected to the redistricting that will occur at a state level (including for Congressional, Assembly, and state Senate districts) or at the County level (for the Supervisorial districts). The City's process will only address any necessary rebalancing of the Council district boundaries that will now occur once a decade after the U.S. Census.

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; and
2. Future population growth.

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. Among other statutory requirements, at least one hearing must occur on a Saturday, Sunday, or after 6 p.m. on a weekday.

ANALYSIS

The City has contracted with National Demographics Corporation, the demographer that assisted in the City's prior districting process.

The purpose of tonight’s public hearing is to inform the public about the upcoming redistricting process and to receive input regarding the composition of one or more Council districts.

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.

The public will have additional opportunities to provide input on the redistricting process through the use of the Maptitude Online Redistricting -- an online mapping tool that can be used to draw revised district maps. It is anticipated that this tool will be available by the end of August. 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.

Staff recommends that the City Council conduct additional public hearings on redistricting as follows:

1. Second public hearing -- Thursday, September 30 at 6:00 p.m.
2. Third public hearing -- Monday, December 6 at 6:00 p.m.
3. Fourth public hearing -- Saturday, January 22 at 10:00 a.m.
4. Fifth public hearing -- Thursday, February 24 at 6:00 p.m.

Based upon this schedule, the City Council would consider the final adoption of the Council district map at the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, March 15, 2021.

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

The agreement with National Demographics Corporation is for a not-to-exceed amount of \$50,000.

COMMITTEE OUTCOME

This item did not originate in Committee.

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. PH1 Redistricting Intro 7-2-21 KP
2. 20190AB849_91