



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

PUBLIC HEARINGS AGENDA ITEM NO. F.1

DATE: December 6, 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 (15/30/30)

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council conduct a public hearing regarding the redistricting process for City Council districts and receive a presentation on the online and paper mapping tools that are available to encourage public participation in the City's redistricting process.

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.

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 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).

The City's redistricting process is a standalone process that is not connected to the redistricting that will occur at the 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, streets 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 minimizing the number of voters delayed from voting from 2022 to 2024; respecting voters' choices/continuity in office; and 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. At least one hearing must occur on a Saturday, Sunday, or after 6 p.m. on a weekday. If a redistricting hearing is held as part of a regular City Council meeting, the redistricting hearing portion must begin at a designated time. In addition, local public redistricting hearings are required to be made accessible to people with disabilities.

The City Council previously held two public hearings on redistricting on July 29, 2021 and September 30, 2021.

ANALYSIS

The purpose of tonight's public hearing is to inform the public about the redistricting process and provide a presentation on the online and paper mapping tools that are now available on the City's redistricting webpage (<https://www.oxnard.org/redistricting>). The mapping tools were released online on November 22, 2021, with subsequent public outreach to inform the public that these mapping tools are now available.

The online mapping tool (DRA 2020) is a web-based application to create, view, analyze, and share redistricting maps. DRA 2020 includes demographic data from the 2020 census, the 2019 five-year estimate of CVAP (Citizen Voting Age by Race and Ethnicity) based upon the American Community Survey, and extensive election data. The City's demographer has created map templates for the public to use to draw proposed district boundaries for the City's six Council districts. The City's redistricting webpage includes specific instructions, including a user guide, to explain how to use this online tool.

The paper map tools allows residents and interested parties to hand draw maps using a paper map that is included on the City's website with specific population information for designated areas of the City. Alternatively, residents and interested parties may submit maps created using the Excel supplement available on the City's website. Using an Excel spreadsheet, interested parties can assign each area on the map to one of the six Council districts by referencing the ID numbers shown on the map. Submitted papers maps will be reviewed by the City's demographer and will then posted on the City's website for review by the public.

The paper mapping tools are available in both English and Spanish.

After tonight's public hearing, four additional redistricting public hearings have been scheduled. The dates of these public hearings are as follows:

- Public Hearing #4: Thursday, January 6, 2022
- Public Hearing #5: Saturday, January 22, 2022
- Public Hearing #6: Tuesday, February 1, 2022
- Public Hearing #7: Wednesday, February 16, 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 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. Redistricting Public Hearing Presentation_ 12-6-21