

**MEETING DATE: 6/26/2017**

**TITLE:**

**Public Hearing to Receive Public Comments and Discuss Potential Council Election Districts**

**FROM:**

Charlie McClendon, City Manager

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the City Council hold a public hearing and receive comments from the public regarding Council election districts; discuss the submitted district maps; and consider selecting maps for further consideration.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City Council was elected under an at-large election system, whereby Council Members are elected by voters of the entire City. On March 8, 2017, the Council adopted a Resolution of Intent to Change Election Systems. Moving to by-district elections would require a Council Member (and all candidates for that position) to reside within a designated district boundary, and each Council Member would be elected only by voters of their respective districts. On April 12, 2017 Council held the first public hearing to receive comments regarding the composition of potential Council election districts prior to draft maps being developed. Information was also made available regarding the on-line mapping feature, which allowed anyone to try their hand at developing district maps. A second public hearing was held on April 26, 2017. Additionally, residents had the opportunity to provide further input on the topic of districts at two "City Hall Comes to You" meetings held on May 11, 2017 at the Sunshine Café and on June 7, 2017 at Cardenas Market. In addition to the on-line mapping tool, people from the community could also submit suggested maps on paper forms. Maps prepared by residents, either on-line or on paper forms, were due by June 9, 2017 and a total of 35 maps were submitted. The demographic consultant contracted by the City to assist with the districting process, National Demographics Corporation (NDC) also prepared three draft map options. All maps prepared, either by residents or by NDC were posted on the City website on June 12, 2017.

**DISCUSSION:**

On March 8, 2017, the Council adopted Resolution 2017-07, adopting line drawing criteria for creating Council district boundaries. The adopted resolution states the following:

## Specification of Criteria to Guide the Establishment of Electoral Districts

- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be established so that the electoral districts are equal in population as defined by law.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall not be gerrymandered in violation of the principles established by the United States Supreme Court in *Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630 (1993), and its progeny.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be established so that the electoral districts do not result in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen to vote on account of race or color as provided in Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall observe communities of interest as identified in public comment or identified by the city council, including, but not limited to rural or urban populations; social interests; agricultural, industrial or service industry interests; residential and commercial areas, the location of city facilities and historical sites, and the like, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be compact, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be created to contain cohesive, contiguous territory, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts may observe topography and geography, such as the existence of mountains, flat land, forest lands, man-made geographical features such as highways, major roadways and canals, etc., as natural divisions between districts, insofar as practicable.
- Unless otherwise required by law, the electoral districts shall be created using whole census blocks, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts may avoid the “pairing” of incumbents in the same electoral district, insofar as this does not conflict with the constitution and laws of the State of California and the United States.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall comply with such other factors which become known during the districting process and are formally adopted by the City Council.

The City held two (2) public hearings prior to the release of draft maps of Council election districts. Council will next hold additional public hearings to solicit public input regarding the content of the draft maps and the proposed sequence of elections. Then an additional public hearing will be held prior to the approval of an ordinance implementing a Council election district map. The schedule for all future public hearings is outlined in a resolution adopted by Council on May 10, 2017 and is attached.

The public hearings already held on April 12, 2017 and April 26, 2017 fulfill the requirement of

California Elections Code Section 10010 that states:

“(1) Before drawing a draft map or maps of the proposed boundaries of the districts, the political subdivision shall hold at least two public hearings over a period of no more than thirty days, at which the public is invited to provide input regarding the composition of the districts.”

Tonight's public hearing will afford people the opportunity to comment on any of the draft maps, including those prepared by NDC or those prepared by people from the community. The Council will also discuss the maps and may choose to narrow the field of maps under consideration.

Future public hearings will be held during regularly scheduled Council meetings on July 26 and August 9. Additionally, in conjunction with the first reading of the ordinance adopting the final map and election schedule, the public will have opportunity to comment on the proposed map at the regular Council meeting on September 13, 2017. Public comment will also be heard at second reading of the ordinance scheduled for the Council meeting on September 27, 2017. Two additional "City Hall Comes to You" meetings have been scheduled to allow further comment from the public. These are scheduled for July 18, 2017 at 5:00 pm in the study session room at City Hall and for August 10, 2017 at 5:00 pm at the Cathedral City Library.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None associated with the public hearing. Council approved a contract award to National Demographics Corporation (NDC) on January 11, 2017 along with a budget amendment of \$25,000 to fund the contract.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Resolutions adopted on March 8, 2017 and May 10, 2017 (2)

Plan List

Draft maps prepared by NDC (3)

Maps prepared by the community and determined by NDC to meet legal criteria.

Draft maps prepared by the community and determined not to meet the legal criteria.