



City of Loma Linda Staff Report

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT MEETING OF OCTOBER 11, 2022

Approved/Continued/Denied

By City Council

Date: _____

TO: City Council

FROM: Aleks R. Giragosian, Special Counsel

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Regarding the Composition of Draft District Maps and Sequence of Elections

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council conduct a third public hearing to seek public input on the composition of the draft district maps and sequence of elections under Elections Code section 10010.

ANALYSIS

Background

The City of Loma Linda is considering a potential transition to a district-based election system under Elections Code section 10010. The City Council conducted the first and second public hearings on August 9, 2022 and September 6, 2022, respectively. The first two public hearings sought residents' input on "communities of interest" and the composition of districts.

Residents were also instructed on the process to submit draft maps using either paper maps or Dave's Redistricting App (DRA), an online map drawing tool to easily draw neighborhoods or communities of interest. To date, the City received nine draft maps submitted by the public. The City's demographer, National Demographics Corporation, also submitted three for the City Council's consideration.

On October 11, 2022, the City Council will conduct a third public hearing to seek public input on the composition of the draft district maps and sequence of elections. The City Council will be asked to select a preferred map and direct amendments as necessary. Draft maps under consideration at this third public hearing were published online for public review and evaluation at least 7 days in advance of the hearing.

Reviewing Draft Maps

In evaluating maps, the City Council must ensure that any recommended map contains districts that are substantially equal in population, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census, and that it complies with the United States Constitution and federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 (“VRA”). The City’s demographer will segregate those maps that fail to satisfy these elements.

The City Council must also consider the following factors in the following order of priority in recommending a map:

- Geographic contiguity;
- Geographic integrity;
- Geographic familiarity; and
- Geographic compactness.

Geographic contiguity means the boundaries share common borders. Boundaries that meet only at the points of adjoining corners are not contiguous.

Geographic integrity means that, to the extent practicable, the integrity of a local neighborhood or community of interest is respected in a manner that minimizes its division. A “community of interest” 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. Communities of interest do not include relationships with:

- political parties,
- incumbents, or
- political candidates.

The districts may include relationships based on the following non-exclusive list of factors:

- zoning designations,
- school attendance areas,
- common neighborhood issues or legislative concerns,
- areas around public spaces or other neighborhood landmarks, or
- shared demographic characteristics.

Geographic familiarity means that the district boundaries should be easily identifiable and understandable by residents. To the extent practicable, council districts should be bounded by natural and artificial barriers, by streets, or by the boundaries of the city.

Geographic compactness ensures that nearby areas of population are not bypassed in favor of more distant populations.

Next Steps

On October 25, 2022, the City Council will conduct a fourth public hearing to potentially adopt a preferred district map and to consider whether to adopt an ordinance to transition to a district-based electoral system. If the City Council desires additional time to decide, it may schedule a fifth public hearing for November 8, 2022.

PUBLIC NOTICING AND OUTREACH

The City created drawlomalinda.org, a website dedicated to the City's consideration of district-based elections. The webpage includes the following:

- an explanation of the CVRA and the districting process;
- A schedule of public hearings and map submission deadlines;
- A gallery of draft maps;
- An explanation of and link to the resources available to draft a district map;
- Responses to frequently asked questions;
- Resources regarding the CVRA and the districting process; and
- Contact information.

A link to drawlomalinda.org is prominently displayed on the City's homepage.

On August 25, 2022, the City mailed flyers to each utility billing address in the City, informing residence of the districting process, the schedule of public hearings, the map submission deadlines, and the drawlomalinda.org website.

The City Manager contacted community groups, including the City's various committees, to inform them of the districting process.

Public hearing notices identifying the four public hearing dates for this district-election process were published in English and Spanish in the Sun Newspaper on July 31, 2022. Public hearing notices were also posted at four public locations within the City of Loma Linda on July 27, 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT

There will be significant staff and City Attorney time needed to transition to a district-based electoral system due to the need to conduct multiple public hearings. The City can also expect to incur costs related to the demographer and public outreach.

CONCLUSION

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Reviewed/Approved by: T. Jarb Thajpejr, City Manager