

City of Los Alamitos

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 18, 2022

ITEM NUMBER: 3A

To: Mayor Shelley Hasselbrink & Members of the City Council

Presented By: Windmera Quintanar, MMC, City Clerk

**Subject: Public Hearing to Receive Input from the Community
Regarding the Redrawing of Election District Boundaries**

SUMMARY

Every ten years, cities with by-district election systems must use new census data to review and, if needed, redraw district lines to reflect how local populations have changed. This process, called redistricting, ensures all districts have nearly equal population. The redistricting process for the City of Los Alamitos must be completed by April 17, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Conduct a public hearing to receive public input on district boundaries; and,
2. Receive a report from Staff on the redistricting process and permissible criteria to be considered to redraw district boundaries.

BACKGROUND

The City adopted its current district boundaries on July 30, 2018, based on 2010 census data as required by law. The districts must now be redrawn using the 2020 census data and in compliance with the FAIR MAPS Act, which was adopted by the California legislature as AB 849 and took effect January 1, 2020.

Under the Act, the Council shall draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority (Elections Code 21601(c) for general law cities / 21621(c) for charter cities):

- Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the Voting Rights Act
- Geographically contiguous

- Undivided neighborhoods and “communities of interest” (socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together)
- Easily identifiable boundaries
- Compact (do not bypass one group of people to get to a more distant group of people)
- Shall not favor or discriminate against a political party

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

- Minimize the number of voters delayed from voting in 2022 to 2024
- Respect voters’ choices / continuity in office
- Future population growth

By law, the City must hold at least four public hearings that enable community members to provide input on the drawing of district maps:

- At least one hearing must occur before the city or county draws draft maps
- At least two hearings must happen after the drawing of draft maps
- The fourth hearing can happen either before or after the drawing of draft maps
- City or county staff or consultants may hold a public workshop instead of one of the required public redistricting hearings

To increase the accessibility of these hearings, cities and counties must take the following steps:

- At least one hearing must occur on a Saturday, Sunday, or after 6 p.m. on a weekday
- If a redistricting hearing is consolidated with another local government meeting, the redistricting hearing portion must begin at a pre-designated time
- Local public redistricting hearings should be made accessible to people with disabilities

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this public hearing is to inform the public about the districting process and to hear from the community on what factors should be taken into consideration while creating district boundaries. The public is requested to provide input regarding communities of interest and other local factors that should be considered while drafting district maps.

A community of interest under the relevant Elections Code for cities (Section 21601(c) / 21621(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.”

Possible features defining community of interest might include, but are not limited to:

- School attendance areas;
- Natural dividing lines such as major roads, hills, or highways;
- Areas around parks and other neighborhood landmarks;
- Common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns; and
- Shared demographic characteristics, such as:
 - Similar levels of income, education, or linguistic insolation;
 - Languages spoken at home; and
 - Single-family and multi-family housing unit areas.

Next Steps

On February 7, 2022, the City Council will conduct Public Hearing #2 at a Special meeting to seek additional public input and provide direction on criteria to be considered while drafting district maps. Following that hearing, draft district maps and proposed election sequencing will be posted to the City website and available at City Hall.

Below is the proposed schedule for the Redistricting Process:

Public Hearing 1: Tuesday, January 18, 2022 – 5:30 p.m. (Regular Council Meeting)
Public Hearing 2: Monday, February 7, 2022 – 5:30 p.m. (Special Council Meeting)
Public Hearing 3: Monday, February 28, 2022 – 6:30 p.m. (Regular Council Meeting)
Public Hearing 4: Monday, March 7, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. (Special Council meeting)
Adopt District Maps: Monday, March 21, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. (Regular Council Meeting)

FISCAL IMPACT

Sufficient funds have been budgeted in the Election Expense Account, 10.511.5233.

Submitted by: Windmera Quintanar, MMC, City Clerk
Fiscal Impact Reviewed by: Craig Koehler, Finance Director
Approved by: Chet Simmons, City Manager