

**CITY OF SANTA PAULA  
MEMORANDUM**

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jonathan Royas, Management Analyst

Subject: DISTRICTING – FOURTH PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE INPUT FROM THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY REGARDING DRAFT MAPS OF ELECTION DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, COUNCIL SELECTION OF FINAL MAP, AND ELECTION SEQUENCING

Date: February 15, 2023

Agenda Item: 11.A

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Receive an updated presentation from staff and Dr. Justin Levitt of National Demographic Corporation (NDC), regarding draft maps for City Council voting districts, to be implemented in November, 2024;
2. Conduct a public hearing to receive public input on a district map selection;
3. Make a final draft map selection;
4. Designate election years for each district; and
5. Direct staff to prepare an ordinance that adopts the selected final draft map and sets forth the election years for each district.

**Presented by:** Jonathan Royas, Management Analyst  
Dr. Justin Levitt, NDC

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**BACKGROUND:**

On February 22, 2022, the City received a letter from attorney Jason Dominguez on behalf of "a large segment of the population and on behalf of Laura Espinosa" demanding an end to the at-large Council election system.

In response to that letter, on April 6, 2022, the City Council discussed its options and unanimously adopted Resolution No. 7393, indicating its intent to change the election system from at-large to by-district elections. Given the litigation risk and associated financial impact on the City, the City Council directed staff to move the Districting process forward. The criteria to comply with all legal requirements to establish council district boundaries was discussed in the earlier presentation this evening.

On May 4, 2022, Council provided staff direction to work with the City's existing public relations firm and to utilize our contract with BB&K law firm to select a qualified demographer. Through that process, National Demographics Corporation (NDC), was selected.

As required by Elections Code Section 10010, the City will hold at least two (2) public hearings and a community workshop prior to the release of draft maps of Council election districts, followed by a community workshop and two additional Council 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 that provides for district elections, approves the Council-selected map, and sets forth the steps to implement district elections.

On August 3, 2022, Council held its first public hearing whereby Dr. Daniel Phillips, from NDC, shared with Council and the public a presentation on the Districting process to solicit input on the neighborhoods and communities of interest in the City.

On August 17, 2022, Council held its second public hearing whereby Council received an updated presentation from staff and NDC regarding the process for developing options for City Council voting districts; provided staff and NDC direction regarding any optional criteria Council wanted to consider in the development of voting district options; and conducted a public hearing to receive public input on district boundaries.

### **Community Outreach**

The City and consultant team of NDC and Tripepi Smith kicked off the Districting process the week of June 3, 2022 with the website [www.drawsantapaula.org](http://www.drawsantapaula.org) going live and outreach coordination initiated. Additionally, the email [districting@spcity.org](mailto:districting@spcity.org) was also set up to begin receiving communications from the public in one central location. As a result, the City leveraged a full array of outreach platforms to connect with the public.

To date, the City has reached the community through the following:

- Email and/or phone contact with nearly 120 community leaders, organizations, residents and media contacts to proactively outreach to key stakeholders with districting related information.
- Rollout of the districting website, [DrawSantaPaula.org](http://DrawSantaPaula.org), where extensive resources are available for the public to learn about the districting process, access all meeting materials and meeting information, draw maps based upon their understanding of communities of interest and submit them for consideration by City Council.
- Distributed an online neighborhood survey to develop a list of neighborhoods and "communities of interest" – [DrawSantaPaula.org/Neighborhood-Survey](http://DrawSantaPaula.org/Neighborhood-Survey)
- 33 social media posts in English and Spanish published across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Nextdoor from July 1, 2022 – February 7, 2023.
- Six flyers in English and Spanish to promote upcoming community meetings.
- Four press releases in English and Spanish distributed to the City's media contacts.
- Six Channel 10 advertisements to promote upcoming community meetings.
- Four community meetings to discuss the Districting process and gather public input on neighborhoods and "communities of interest."
- Publication of a mapping tool in English and Spanish in the Santa Paula Times to solicit draft maps.

It is important to note all materials, social media posts, community workshops, and activities related to the Districting process were conducted in both English and Spanish to maximize our public engagement.

In addition, the City hosted four community workshops to educate and engage the community on the Districting process and demonstrate how to use the map drawing tools provided by the consultant team. Below are the details of the four workshops.

**September 14, 2022 @ 6:00PM**

Santa Paula Cultural Arts Building @ The Santa Paula Community Center  
530 W Main Street, Santa Paula, CA 93060

**October 6, 2022 @ 6:00PM**

Recorded Virtual Community Workshop via Zoom is available at [www.drawsantapaula.org](http://www.drawsantapaula.org)

**December 1, 2022 @ 6:00PM**

Church of Guadalupe  
427 N Oak Street, Santa Paula, CA 93060

**January 21, 2023 @ 10:00AM**

Santa Paula Youth Center  
431 N 13th St., Santa Paula, CA 93060

**Public Hearings**

In accordance with the FAIR MAPS Act, City Council has held three public hearings to inform the public about the Districting process and to hear from the community on what factors should be taken into consideration when creating City Council district boundaries.

During the January 18, 2023 public hearing, City Council reviewed and discussed draft maps of proposed districts that were submitted by members of the community. After receiving public testimony, the Council narrowed the list of draft maps under consideration from fourteen (14) to six (6) focus maps, those being Maps 101, 102, 104, 105, 108, and 113. In addition, Council provided feedback and direction to staff and NDC to make modifications to Map 113 and create a new map (Map 115 - Exhibit C) based on input that evening.

**ANALYSIS:**

**Districting Rules and Goals**

The community was encouraged to submit proposed maps for the January 18, 2023 public hearing for Council's initial consideration and discussion, which included maps and feedback on "communities of interest." After the third public hearing, the community was encouraged once again to submit draft maps for consideration by February 1, 2023 at 6:30pm.

Public comment received on this process since January 18, 2023 is included as Exhibit A for Council's review.

**State and Federally Mandated Map Criteria**

A "community of interest" is a neighborhood or group that would benefit from being in the same district because of shared interests, views, or characteristics. Possible community features include, but are not limited to:

- School attendance areas;
- Natural dividing lines such as major roads, waterways, train tracks, 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.

Additionally, the City must ensure compliance with the following state and federally-mandated criteria:

#### Federal

- Each district shall contain a nearly equal population.
- Each district shall be drawn in a manner that complies with the Federal Voting Rights Act.
- Each district shall not be drawn with race as the predominant factor in violation of the principles established by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630 (1993), and its progeny.

#### State

- Each district shall be contiguous.
- Each district should avoid dividing neighborhoods and communities of interest.
- Each district should be bordered by easily identifiable boundaries such as major roads or rivers. Each district should be compact.
- Districts shall not be drawn to favor or disfavor a political party.

It should also be noted, in addition to the legal criteria, City Council may choose to adopt optional criteria to be used in the development of the districts. Optional criteria varies by community--some direct that specific criteria be used in addition to the legal criteria, while others use only the legal criteria. Examples of provided optional criteria that have been used in other communities are as follows:

- The boundaries of the districts may consider avoiding pairing two or more incumbents in a single district, insofar as this does not conflict with the constitution and laws of the State of California and the United States.
- To maintain a longer-term population balance, districts known to be areas of higher than-average population growth following districting may be under-populated within the population deviation amounts allowed by law.

The boundaries of the districts may comply with such other factors which become known during the districting process and are formally adopted by the City Council.

### **Final Draft City Council District Maps**

The City and the consultant team accepted additional draft maps from the public for this fourth public hearing up until February 1, 2023. Prior to the February 1, 2023 deadline, a total of four (4) draft maps (Maps 116, 117, 118 and 119) were submitted by the public (Exhibit B). After careful review and analysis by NDC, three (3) of the submitted draft maps (Maps 117, 118 and

119) meet the requirements of the CVRA described above, and one (1) map, Map 116, does not as it is not a contiguous map.

As a result, ten (10) total maps meet the requirements of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) as described above and are attached as Exhibit C for Council's consideration. Exhibit C contains the (6) focus maps, those being Maps 101, 102, 104, 105, 108, and 113. In addition, Council provided feedback and direction to staff and NDC to make modifications to Map 113 and as a result created Map 115, based on input from Council on January 18, 2023. In addition, newly submitted Maps 117, 118 and 119 are available for consideration. Each of the proposed maps have been posted on the City's Districting webpage for public access and review ([www.drawsantapaula.org](http://www.drawsantapaula.org)).

Staff and the demographer are requesting the City Council hold a public hearing, take testimony from the public and select its preferred map, designate their preferred election sequence years for each district, and direct staff to prepare a proposed ordinance establishing five districts for election of five City Councilmembers to be implemented in November, 2024. Following this first election, the City Council will be compromised of roughly half its members elected by district and the rest of its members elected City-wide. The change to district boundaries will not affect the terms of any incumbents.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This item is not a goal or objective within City Council's two-year Strategic Plan.

#### **FISCAL IMPACTS:**

The City is spending approximately \$100,000 on the two consulting firms assisting the City with this highly specialized districting process. On May 4, 2022, Council set aside \$50,000 for anticipated expenses. Staff will be coming to Council with a mid-year budget adjustment request for an additional \$50,000 to complete the districting process.

#### **OPTIONS:**

In addition to Staff's recommendation, City Council has the following options available for consideration:

1. Narrow down the pool of potential final maps for adoption and postpone introduction of an ordinance until a final map has been selected.
2. Take other action related to this item.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

[Exhibit A - Public Comment.pdf](#)

[Exhibit B - Newly Submitted Maps.pdf](#)

[Exhibit C - Maps for Final Selection.pdf](#)