

CITY OF SANTA PAULA
CITY CLERK

January 30, 2023

JAN 30 2023

Mayor Andy Sobel and Councilmembers
City of Santa Paula
970 Ventura St
Santa Paula, CA 93060
Dear Mayor Sobel:

RECEIVED

We request you add an agenda item, specifically a noticed public hearing, to an upcoming Council meeting to discuss reconsideration of the Council's decision to create City Council Districts, which takes away the right to vote from residents and was done without public input.

We note that the City has hired a consultant and spent over \$100,000 creating the proposed districts, held various poorly attended forums, yet solicited no input from the public on whether to create districts.

The consultant claims to have solicited public input on the creation of proposed district maps from community groups throughout the city. However, your consultant neglected to contact any service clubs such as Rotary, Oddfellows, Optimists, America In Bloom, sports organizations or the school district board, all of whom do a great deal of work volunteering and supporting activities for all residents of the City. We have verified that their so-called contact with other groups was limited to a phone call notifying them about an upcoming meeting.

Clearly, the perception is that the City Council isn't interested in what the public thinks. The 1/18/23 City Council agenda included a number of letters, maps and notes from people who do not want districts that were never even mentioned at the Council meeting and completely disregarded by the City Council and its consultant. In fact, there were more letters and emails than the comments received at the so-called forums. It is time to rectify this situation in fairness to all Santa Paula residents.

We, the signators below, ask that you promptly schedule a noticed public hearing on an upcoming Council agenda to discuss this issue so that residents will have an opportunity to share their concerns with you in a format where the Council will be able to respond, rather than continuing to foster divisiveness in the City.

We look forward to your affirmative response to this request.

Yours truly,

See attached signatory page

Letter to Mayor Sobel - January 30, 2023

Ginger Gherardi

Name: Ginger Gherardi

Richard Rudman

Name: Richard Rudman

Kay Wilson-Bolton KWB

DocuSigned by:

Name: Kay Wilson-Bolton

Rey Frutos

DocuSigned by:

Name: Rey Frutos

Mary Deines

DocuSigned by:

Name: Mary Deines

Walt Adair

Name: Walt Adair

Chris Wilson

Name: Chris Wilson

Linda Wilkinson

Name: Linda Wilkinson

Susan Wilkinson

Name: Susan Wilkinson

Gerald Olivas

Name: Gerald Olivas

Maryarette Olivas

Name: Maryarette Olivas

Maria McLaughlin

Name: Maria McLaughlin

Alicia Ferreira

Name: Alicia Ferreira

John McLaughlin

Name: JOHN McLaughlin

Ron Merson

Name: RON MERSON

Deborah A. Johnson

Name: DEBORAH A. JOHNSON

Billy Herrera

DocuSigned by:

Name: Billy Herrera

Connie Tushla

3456D827095342A

Name: Connie Tushla

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____



City Districting Submission

4 messages

Austin Auger

Tue, Jan 31, 2023 at 9:32 AM

To: districting@spcity.org

Hello,

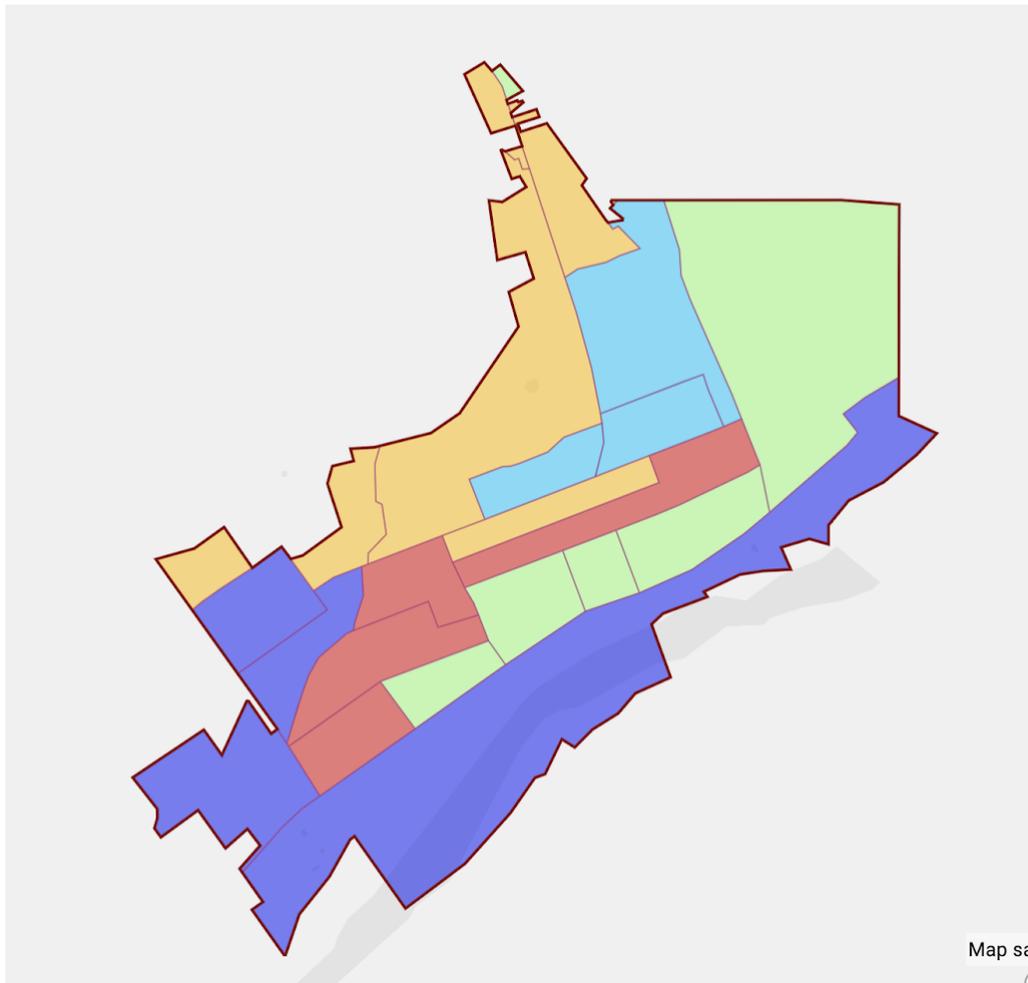
My name is Austin Auger and I had submitted my districting idea for Santa Paula via a share link from 'Dave's Redistricting' (<https://davesredistricting.org/join/a715a7e5-b32a-42fb-8f7f-f903a42d6fae>) but I haven't seen it appear yet on the city's website for review. Perhaps it just takes time to update the site, but just wanted to ensure that my submission made it in before the cutoff date/time.

Thank you kindly for your time.

Cheers,

--

-Austin Auger-



Jonathan Royas

Tue, Jan 31, 2023 at 9:00 PM

To: Austin Auger

Cc: Districting Districting <districting@spcity.org>

Good evening Mr. Auger,

Your map has been received. Maps which meet the legal requirements will be posted to the website after the deadline on February 1 before the public hearing.

Have a good evening.

Be well,

Jonathan

On Jan 31, 2023, at 9:32 AM, Austin Auger

wrote:

Hello,

My name is Austin Auger and I had submitted my districting idea for Santa Paula via a share link from 'Dave's Redistricting' (<https://davesredistricting.org/join/a715a7e5-b32a-42fb-8f7f-f903a42d6fae>) but I haven't seen it appear yet on the city's website for review. Perhaps it just takes time to update the site, but just wanted to ensure that my submission made it in before the cutoff date/time.

Thank you kindly for your time.

Cheers,

--

-Austin Auger-

<Screenshot 2023-01-31 at 9.31.48 AM.png>

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Douglas Johnson

Tue, Jan 31, 2023 at 9:12 PM

To: Austin Auger

Cc: districting@spcity.org

Yes this map has been received and is being processed for posting. One thing that you may want to address, however, is the two non-contiguous parts of the map (as you can see from the colors on the map, the green and yellow districts are not contiguous). We recognize there is a bug in the DRA system where the analytics screen does not correctly classify contiguous and non-contiguous maps, but thankfully contiguity is easily determined simply by looking at the map. If you wish to adjust the map so that those two districts are contiguous, the City would welcome that amended submission as long as it arrives by the 6:30pm deadline on Feb. 1.

And thank you for your interest in this important process for the city!

- Douglas Johnson

NDC

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Douglas Johnson

National Demographics Corporation

Douglas Johnson

Mon, Feb 6, 2023 at 7:18 AM

To: Jonathan Royas

Justin Levitt

FYI - Mr Auger's response:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Austin Auger**

Date: Wed, Feb 1, 2023 at 3:45 PM

Subject: Re: City Districting Submission

To: Douglas Johnson

Hello Mr. Johnson,

Thank you for your response and analytical review of my districting map and suggestions.

I wrestled myself with conceptualizing this map draw up, as the key to this indeed relied upon the definition of "contiguous." On one hand, you can take contiguous to mean it blatantly like you are interpreting here with like places/colors needing to be in like packages and touching. On the other hand, I took contiguous to mean the touching of all 'census tracts,' which in this case all of the districts represent contiguous census tracts and are of balanced populations under that 10% threshold.

So now I am curious, does the actual law stipulate districting continuity based upon physical location, or by the census tracts that that location actually resides in? 🤔

With this all said, the ambiguity that I am left in currently, and with time not on my side, I think I'd like to just keep my map drawn up as it is please.

I thank you again kindly for you time and help that you are providing to our city here!

Kind Regards,

--

-Austin Auger-

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]



My opinion about the proposed districts in Santa Paula

2 messages

Karen Karayan

Wed, Feb 8, 2023 at 8:58 AM

To: districting@spcity.org

Cc: cityclerk@spcity.org, Dan Singer

Good Morning,

I am still not quite sure why our small community needs to go to districting...we have such a mix population in all neighborhoods.

Anyway, I am in favor of #104 proposal.

Respectfully,

Karen Heath-Karayan

Karen Karayan

Kylie Sun

Wed, Feb 8, 2023 at 9:57 AM

To: Karen Karayan

Cc: districting@spcity.org, cityclerk@spcity.org, Dan Singer

Received, thank you.

[Quoted text hidden]



Fwd: City Council Meeting

1 message

Jonathan Royas

To: Districting Districting <districting@spcity.org>

Sun, Feb 12, 2023 at 10:11 PM

From: Laura Staben

Sent: Friday, February 10, 2023 3:50 PM

To: Andy Sobel; Dan Singer; Jenny Crosswhite;

; Carlos Juarez

Subject: City Council Meeting

Santa Paula City Council,

I am a City Business owner and have resided in Santa Paula for more than 70 years. I love Santa Paula and I'm upset with what is happening to divide us. Please consider what I am writing to you about.

I am against dividing our city into districting. In our recent School Board Member election under divided districting, I was denied my right to vote for an excellent, experienced Board Member up for re-election. I approve of an At Large Voting system that has worked for years in Santa Paula.

Thank you for your attention

Laura Staben

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FW: DISTRICT VOTING

1 message

Jonathan Royas

Tue, Feb 14, 2023 at 12:44 PM

To: Districting Districting <districting@spcity.org>

From: David Romney**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2023 8:17 AM**To:** Andy Sobel ; Jenny Crosswhite ; Carlos JuarezDan Singer Pedro A. Chavez ; Leslie Cornejo
James Mason Julie Latshaw**Subject:** DISTRICT VOTING

Re: District Voting

Councilmembers – Yogi Berra got it right. This is déjà vu all over again.

Over twenty years ago Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee threatened to sue the City of Santa Paula based on the 1964 Civil Rights Act and legislation enacted pursuant to that Act. The City Council refused to comply then and won. Since the California Voting Rights Act is just more of the same the City Council should refuse now and fight to win. And, of most significance, it is worth the fight.

Here's why: Since 1964 a Civil Rights grievance industry has endeavored to use the Act as a second Constitution to undermine our original one. The aim is to flip “E Pluribus Unum” (out of many, one) to the opposite where the lens for governance focuses on neighborhood turf fights rather than the greatest good for the greatest number of people. What is more, the entire premise for District Voting is wrong and un-American. In Santa Paula minorities are the majority. It is preposterous to think the majority of “minorities” must be protected from themselves by providing for neighborhood districts in a town as small and cohesive as Santa Paula. It is also preposterous to think that citizens of the United States see the world at large through the perspective of skin color or country of origin. Yet that is what is sought to be advanced under the name of more “due process” than is due. What is more, the city council will be ceding its jurisdiction to un-elected litigant organizations the jurisdiction that, in fact, rightfully belongs to the residents of the City of Santa Paula currently represented by, and thought to be protected by, the City Council.

Don't do it.

Best,

David T. Romney
ROMNEY LAW OFFICES, A.P.C.

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FW: Public comment for 2.15 city council meeting

1 message

Jonathan Royas <jroyas@spcity.org>
To: Districting Districting <districting@spcity.org>

Tue, Feb 14, 2023 at 3:59 PM

From: Christina Eilar
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 3:01 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Public comment for 2.15 city council meeting

Mayor Sobel and Councilmembers,

Please proceed with the distracting process for future city council elections as planned and as transparently as possible. In light of recent discussion about community input and the variety of opinions represented in the mapping process, I would encourage the council to ask NDC to formally present the comments they have received as emails or at the meetings from members of the public. In the final months of this decision, I encourage the council to increase their efforts

to solicit feedback from the community as much as possible, but not further delay the process when there have been months of opportunity for residents to engage with the discussion.

Thank you for the thoughtful and balanced response to the previous hearings, and I support the council's strategy to make this decision on an elimination basis. As the focus maps are under discussion please consider the feedback from the CAUSE efforts and their sincere attempt to make sure the residents of the Las Piedras Park neighborhood and other areas of town are represented fairly as large populations of Santa Paula in the maps.

Thank you,

Christina Eilar

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FW: Item 11A: Districting

1 message

Jonathan Royas

Tue, Feb 14, 2023 at 3:59 PM

To: Districting Districting <districting@spcity.org>

From: Nidia Bello
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 3:00 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Item 11A: Districting

Hi,

I am submitting this letter to be added to the record and for council members.

thank you,

--

Nidia Bello (she/her/ella)

Santa Paula Policy Advocate

| | |

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 **Districting CAUSE Letter.pdf**
305K



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Monse Garcia-Jimenez

Fabiola Gomez

Odette Moran Lopez

Wendy Santamaria

Daniel Segura

Policy Advocates

Nidia Bello

Erica Diaz-Cervantes

Kristian Nunez

Sofi Magallon

Maria Navarro

Frank Rodriguez

February 14, 2023

RE: Item 11A: 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

Dear Mayor Sobel and Councilmembers,

Thank you for providing members of the public with the opportunity to engage in Santa Paula's redistricting process. With more than 20 years of advocacy and community engagement regarding voting rights and redistricting, CAUSE has participated in district mapping efforts at the city, school board, county, state and federal levels throughout Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. We work to ensure fair representation and political voice of underserved communities such as people of color, immigrants, renters, working class families, and young people, while maintaining the integrity of neighborhood communities of interest based on the experience of local residents.

In the City of Santa Paula's redistricting process, **CAUSE is particularly focused on ensuring the fair representation and neighborhood integrity of Santa Paula's two largest Latino communities: The Piedras Park neighborhood and renters concentrated in the center of the city.** Our map creates two districts with strong representation for people of color centered in the Piedras Park neighborhood and a central renter neighborhood, with 81.20% citizen voting age population for all minority groups (CVAP) in the Piedras Park district, and 82.39% in the central renter neighborhood. We consider any maps with a total minority CVAP below 80% to be diluting the vote of people of color. **CAUSE is submitting map 119** in partnership with Latino Townhall and members of the community, which we believe reflects the ideal district boundaries to ensure fair representation for all communities that provides a voice for thousands of Latino residents, renters, and low-income working class families.

District 1 is the Piedras Park neighborhood. This is a historic neighborhood that is home to generational households of farmworkers, where many homes have been expanded to accommodate their growing families. Say Rd is used as a boundary between the historic working class neighborhood and the Oaks. Main Street is used as the southern boundary for The Piedras park neighborhood,



connecting families to the Main street shopping center that is often frequented by Piedras Park Residents to shop and run errands like going to the Main Street coin laundry. E Pleasant St. is used as a northern district boundary where homes below E Pleasant St are smaller, including condos and apartments whereas above Pleasant St, homes are closer to the hillside and single family homes.

District 2 includes the Hills and Oaks neighborhoods. This includes some of the more affluent neighborhoods in the city with unique custom features like hills, curving streets without sidewalks and cul-de-sacs that keep each neighborhood enclosed. Similar to the hillside, the Oaks neighborhood is home to professors, lawyers and doctors, where many homes are custom built with unique architecture.

District 3 groups the Harvest Development to the city through the Telegraph/Main Street corridor, which is how residents living in the Harvest neighborhood commute through the city. This creates a district of the new housing in the city, including the Harvest development and the planned affordable housing development near Telegraph Rd. This district keeps homes near the Santa Clara River together and connects them with neighborhoods along 12th street, 10th Street, Palm Avenue and Peck Road, which are all prone to flooding and water runoff. Homes on the other side of the 126 freeway and Harvest have the shared experience of feeling disconnected from the city. Key landmarks frequented by residents living in this district includes Harding Park, Grace Thille Elementary School, Veterans Memorial Park, City Hall, Isbell Middle School and the Superior Market shopping center.

District 4 is the city's main renter district, grouping together high density apartment complexes and farmworker public housing. The largest renter population is concentrated in the center of the city, specifically between Santa Paula street and the 126 freeway. This compact renter district includes affordable housing created by the Cabrillo Economic Development like the Vista Hermosa apartment complex behind the McDonalds, and the Rodney Fernandez apartment complex near Santa Barbara street and Dean Dr. Many working families like farmworkers rent condos, mobile homes or apartments in this area, often living with multiple families. Farmworkers and working families that live in apartment complexes face unique issues such as overcrowding, limited parking, rising rents and habitability issues.



District 5 is home to large employers like Calavo, Sunkist and the U.S. Post Office. This district is composed of single and multi-family homes and mobile home parks. There are working class renters as well as retired homeowners. This neighborhood has a majority working class Latino population, some recent migrant farmworkers that rent mobile homes or apartments as well as established working class Latinos and retirees. A Prominent street that can be used as a boundary between the westside of town and the compact renter areas is Steckle drive. To the east of Steckel Drive there are many apartment complexes and to the west there are more spaced out family homes.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to continuing to engage in the districting process. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Nidia Bello
CAUSE Policy Advocate

Guadalupe Guardian
Executive Director- Suns Pyramid Cultural Education and Healing Center, Santa Paula Resident

Cynthia Salas
Santa Paula Latino Town Hall President

Mireille Vargas
CAUSE Board Member, Santa Paula Resident

Christina Eilar
Santa Paula Resident

Laura Espinosa
Former Vice Mayor = City of Santa Paula, Immediate Past President - Santa Paula Latino Town Hall