

**CITY OF SANTA PAULA  
MEMORANDUM**

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jonathan Royas, Management Analyst

Subject: PUBLIC HEARING AND INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 1327, ADDING SECTION 30.07 TO CHAPTER 30 OF TITLE III OF THE SANTA PAULA MUNICIPAL CODE ESTABLISHING BY-DISTRICT ELECTIONS, DEFINING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, AND SCHEDULING ELECTIONS WITHIN THE DISTRICTS; AND CONSIDERATION OF CITYWIDE GOVERNANCE POLICY

Date: March 1, 2023

Agenda Item: 11.A

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Introduce and waive first reading of Ordinance No. 1327, entitled "AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA PAULA, CALIFORNIA, ADDING SECTION 30.07 TO CHAPTER 30 OF TITLE III OF THE SANTA PAULA MUNICIPAL CODE ESTABLISHING BY-DISTRICT ELECTIONS, DEFINING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, AND SCHEDULING ELECTIONS WITHIN THE DISTRICTS";
2. Conduct a public hearing to consider adopting the proposed Ordinance at the City Council's regular meeting;
3. Direct the City Clerk to publish a summary of the proposed Ordinance five (5) days before the meeting it is to be adopted and 15 days thereafter; and
4. Review and provide feedback to staff on a possible Citywide Governance Policy Resolution.

**Presented by:** Jonathan Royas, Management Analyst

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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. An in-depth review of Council's selected course of action was presented and shared with the public on February 15, 2023 during a presentation entitled, "*Why Districting? A Presentation on the*

## *Districting Process in Santa Paula, CA."*

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 was required to 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.

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.
- Distribution of 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 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 four 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 which 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, based on input that evening.

On February 15, 2023, City Council held a fourth public hearing whereby Council reviewed and discussed draft focus maps of proposed districts. The City and NDC 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. After careful review and analysis by NDC, three (3) of the submitted draft maps (Maps 117, 118 and 119) met the requirements of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) and one (1) map, Map 116, did not as it was not a contiguous map. As a result, ten (10) maps met the requirements of the CVRA and were provided to Council for consideration. Each of the proposed maps were also posted on the City's Districting webpage ([www.drawsantapaula.org](http://www.drawsantapaula.org)) for public access and review.

At the February 15, 2023, public hearing, City Council heard testimony from the public, weighed in on a final map selection, provided their preferred election sequence years for each district, and directed staff to prepare the attached ordinance establishing five districts for

election of five City Councilmembers to be implemented in November, 2024, utilizing Map 119 (Exhibit A).

### **ANALYSIS:**

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 that third public hearing, the community was encouraged once again to submit draft maps for Council's consideration by February 1, 2023 at 6:30pm. Lastly, on February 15, 2023 (the fourth public hearing), members of the community provided public comment to Council on their preferred maps.

### **State and Federally Mandated Map Criteria**

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.

### **Final City Council District Map**

At the fourth public hearing on February 15, 2023, by a 3-2 vote, the City Council agreed to approve Map 119 (Exhibit A), providing for five (5) districts. Council also agreed that the elections for Districts 1 and 5 will occur at the general municipal election in November of 2024 and the election for Districts 2, 3, and 4 will occur at the general municipal election of 2026.

The City Council has legally received sufficient public input through the above referenced process. The next step to effectuate the change from at-large to by-district elections is to introduce the attached ordinance (Exhibit A).

The proposed Council district map was prepared in accordance with all applicable law, including provisions of the California Voting Rights Act, the Federal Voting Rights Act and Santa Paula City Council Resolution No. 7393, indicating its intent to change the election system from at-large to by-district elections.

### **Consideration of a City-wide Governance Policy**

Throughout the districting process, staff researched several other cities who have gone through the transition from at-large elections to by-district elections to gather pertinent information which might be relevant to Santa Paula. During that research, staff came across several cities who upon adoption of a change to by-district elections, introduced a resolution related to city-wide governance matters associated with the transition. Below, staff has provided key statements from those cities' city-wide governance policies.

- "Regardless of Districts, the City Council will govern for the entire Santa Paula community."
- "Council recognizes that our administrative structure and service delivery systems, data, and programs are structure based on a citywide governance structure."
- "Council will govern for the whole City, not by Council District...we value our citywide framework."
- "Maintain a citywide perspective, while being mindful of our districts."

As an example, staff has taken the liberty to prepare and provide a draft policy based upon research. Exhibit B is provided as a draft resolution establishing a city-wide governance policy for elected officials. Should Council wish to pursue such a resolution, staff could receive feedback this evening and return during the second reading and final adoption of Ordinance No. 1327 with a finalized resolution. Doing so would honor the change to district-based elections while also recognizing a commitment to governing the entire city in a fair and equitable manner.

#### **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. The City Council may choose to not adopt the ordinance and maintain its current at-large election system. This is not recommended unless Council is prepared to defend any potential action filed pursuant to the CVRA. As shared with Council during this process, to date, no jurisdiction has prevailed on the merits of a CVRA action and fees and costs associated with litigation generally exceed \$2 million; or
2. Take other action related to this item.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

[Exhibit A - Ordinance No. 1327.pdf](#)

