

**CITY OF SANTA PAULA
MEMORANDUM**

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jonathan Royas, Management Analyst

Subject: SECOND READING AND ADOPTION 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

Date: March 15, 2023

Agenda Item: 10.D

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt 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".

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.

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.

ANALYSIS:

As required by Elections Code Section 10010, the City was required to hold at least two (2) public hearings prior to the release of draft maps of Council election districts, and two (2) public hearings after their release to solicit public input regarding the content of the draft maps and the proposed sequence of elections. Though not required by the Elections Code, the City also organized community workshops and facilitated community participation on social media and other outlets.

Public Hearings Before Draft Maps

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 going live and outreach coordination initiated. Additionally, the email 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, 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.
- 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

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 After Draft Maps

During the third public hearing held January 18, 2023, 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) for public access and review. At the same City Council meeting when the fourth public hearing took place, an in-depth review of Council's selected course of action was presented and shared with the public during a presentation entitled, "*Why Districting? A Presentation on the Districting Process in Santa Paula, CA.*"

Final City Council District Map

After the fourth public hearing on February 15, 2023, by a 3-2 vote, the City Council approved Map 119, 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.

Map 119 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. A copy of Map 119 is attached as Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 1327. (See Exhibit A.)

At its March 1, 2023 regular meeting, the City Council introduced and waived first reading of Ordinance No. 1327 to add 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. Tonight, Council may conclude its part in the districting process by adopting Ordinance No. 1327.

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. On March 1, 2023, Council adopted a mid-year budget adjustment, allocating an additional \$50,000 to help 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](#)