



City of Santa Barbara
Mayor & Council Office

Memorandum

DATE: April 17, 2014

TO: James L. Armstrong, City Administrator

FROM: Mayor Helene Schneider and Councilmember Bendy White *Bendy White*

SUBJECT: Ballot Measure for Hybrid At-Large/District Elections

- Summary of Information to be Presented to the City Council

Receive a report on the possibility of Council proposing a ballot measure to create hybrid at-large/district elections. Refer the matter for further consideration and review to be completed in time to allow this charter amendment to be placed on the November 2014 statewide general election ballot.

- Statement of Specific Action the Council will be Asked to Take

We propose that the Council place a ballot measure on the November 2014 statewide general election ballot to create an at-large/district hybrid election system for Santa Barbara. We would propose that four members of the Council be elected from geographically-defined districts. Two members of the Council and the Mayor would be elected at-large. By framing a charter amendment proposal in this manner, the community would be able to express its support or opposition to the concept of district elections.

We think this issue is timely given the community debate currently underway concerning the propriety and wisdom of district elections. Unlike a pure geographical district system, our proposal assures that each City resident would have a majority of the Council who consider that resident to be a constituent, i.e., the district representative, the Mayor and the two at large Councilmembers.

There are many pros and cons to district election systems which should be debated publicly.

- Statement of the Reasons Why it is Appropriate and Within the Jurisdiction of the Council to Consider this Subject Matter and to Take the Requested Action

The Council is authorized by the California Elections Code to propose charter amendments. We believe it is appropriate for the Council to lead this public debate.

cc: Mayor and Council
Ariel Calonne, City Attorney