



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: March 24, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Setting Geographic Boundaries For District Elections

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Receive a report from Doug Johnson, President of National Demographics Corporation, regarding the results of the City public outreach efforts related to district elections and drawing geographic boundaries for electoral districts;
- B. Hold a public hearing pursuant to California Elections Code Section 10010 to consider a proposal to establish district boundaries;
- C. Provide direction to the City Attorney and the City Administrator on establishing electoral district boundaries; and
- D. Consider adoption of A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Establishing Single Member Districts for the Election of Councilmembers.

DISCUSSION:

Since April 29, 2014, the City Council has been actively considering the merits of proposing by-district elections (hereinafter "district elections") to Santa Barbara's electorate. Under a by-district election system, as considered, the Mayor would continue to be elected at-large, but the City would be divided into six geographic districts for City Councilmember elections, with each district electing one Councilmember.

In October 2014, Council directed staff to prepare a ballot measure for the Council Election in November 2015, with district elections commencing, if approved by voters, in November 2017. As envisioned in that process, an independent commission would be formed to draw the geographical boundaries of the six initial council districts.

However, the City was also being sued to compel district elections in *Banales, et al. v. City of Santa Barbara*, SBSC Case No.1468167. Due to a subsequent ruling of the judge in that case, and a proposed legal settlement, district elections will now begin with the November 2015 ballot, leaving a very short window for making decisions regarding geographic boundaries of six new electoral districts. On February 3, 2015, Council

approved an expedited public outreach process to collect as much public input as possible within a short period of time, and approved engaging National Demographics Corporation (NDC) to create district input tools and compile the results.

The City held the first Civic Engagement meeting and public hearing on districting on Saturday, February 28, 2015, at the Faulkner Gallery to review the issue of district elections and kick off the public input process. The more than 100 attendees received an introduction to the following three ways that members of the public could provide input on the district boundaries:

- Weigh in on 3 example maps created by NDC;
- Use an online tool to draw and submit an alternative map; and/or
- Use pen-and-paper to draw and submit an alternative map.

These tools were made available on the City's web site over the following two weeks, with additional outreach to the public to encourage their use. The response from the public was strong. More than 135 members of the public created user accounts for the online tool, and more than 16 alternative maps were submitted, including an additional map from the plaintiffs in the related litigation. Email comments and other informal input were also accepted by staff and forwarded to NDC. Public input received has been consolidated and posted on the City's website throughout the process.

The results of the public input during the first weeks of the input process were presented at a second Civic Engagement Workshop and public hearing at 6:00 p.m. on March 18, 2015, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. The public was given an opportunity to comment on these results and provide additional input at that meeting.

This is the third public hearing on this matter. The results from the two Civic Engagement Workshops, the online public input tools, and other public input received during this process will be presented to Council by NDC, and the public will have another opportunity to provide additional comment on districting before the decision setting district boundaries is made. The Council will need to make decisions about district boundaries so that this can be presented to the judge in the court case by the end of the day on Monday, March 30, 2015. A special City Council meeting has been scheduled for Monday, March 30th at 4:00 p.m. to allow additional consideration, if necessary.

Note: A written report from National Demographics Corporations on the results of the public outreach effort will be available for public review in the City Clerk's Office and on the City website at http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/vote/district_elections.asp or by Clicking [Here](#).

SUBMITTED BY: Kristine Schmidt, Director of Administrative Services

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office