



Staff Report

File #: 22-0022

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 01/05/2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: City Manager's Office - City Clerk

SUBJECT:

Public Hearing to review and receive feedback on the redrawing of Council Member District boundaries.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Every ten years upon the release of the decennial census data, the City of Corona must redraw its five (5) City Council districts based on the new census data and criteria set forth in state law. Conducting the public hearings will fulfill the requirements needed so that the districts are redrawn and are substantially equal in population as required by the United States Constitution. Substantially equal has generally been defined by the U.S. Supreme Court as meaning districts exhibit no more than a 10% deviation between the least populated and greatest populated district.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Receive a report from staff and the City's redistricting consultant on the redistricting process and permissible criteria to be considered to redraw district boundaries.
- b. Conduct a public hearing to receive input on district boundaries, communities of interest, and other preferences for the drawing of revised Council districts.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

Pursuant to Election Code Section 21601, cities with by-district election systems are required to redraw their district boundary maps after each decennial Census to ensure compliance with the California and federal Voting Rights Acts. The process to complete the redistricting requires a minimum of four public hearings and dedicated public outreach to ensure minority populations and communities of interest are aware of the redistricting effort and are provided with options to participate.

ANALYSIS:

Every 10 years, cities with by-district election systems must use the new census data to review and, if needed, redraw district lines to reflect how local populations have changed. This process, called redistricting, ensures all districts have a nearly equal population. The redistricting process for the City of Corona must be completed by April 17, 2022.

The City adopted its current district boundaries in 2016, with the passage of Measure N, which authorized the transition to districts process. The map approved with Measure N was drawn based on 2010 census data as required by law. The districts must now be redrawn using the 2020 census data and in compliance with the FAIR MAPS Act, which was adopted by the California legislature as AB 849 and took effect January 1, 2020.

Under the Act, the City Council shall draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority (Elections Code 21601(c)):

1. Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the Voting Rights Act.
2. Be geographically contiguous.
3. Undivided neighborhoods and "communities of interest" (socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together).
4. Display easily identifiable boundaries.
5. Be compact (do not bypass one group of people to get to a more distant group of people).
6. Shall not favor or discriminate against a political party.

Once the prioritized criteria are met, other traditional districting principles can be considered, such as:

1. Minimize the number of voters currently scheduled to vote in 2022 which, as a result of redistricting, would move some voters to districts not scheduled until 2024, resulting in a 6-year gap in their opportunity to participate in Council elections.
2. Respect voters' choices/continuity in office.
3. Future population growth.

By law, the City must hold at least four public hearings that enable community members to provide input on the drawing of district maps:

- At least one hearing must occur before the city or county draws draft maps.
- At least two hearings must happen after the drawing of draft maps.
- The fourth hearing can happen either before or after the drawing of draft maps.
- City or county staff or consultants may hold a public workshop instead of one of the required public redistricting hearings.

To increase the accessibility of these hearings, cities and counties must take the following steps:

- At least one hearing must occur on a Saturday, Sunday, or after 6:00 p.m. on a weekday.

- If a redistricting hearing is consolidated with another local government meeting, the redistricting hearing must be begin at a pre-designated time.
- Local public redistricting hearings must be made accessible for people with disabilities.

The purpose of this public hearing is to inform the public about the redistricting process and to hear from the community about factors that should be taken into consideration while creating district boundaries. The public is requested to provide input regarding communities of interest and other local factors that should be considered while drafting district maps. A community of interest under the relevant Elections Code for cities (Section 21621(c) is, "a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation."

First Public Hearing	January 5, 2022	First hearing, will review redistricting basics with City Council
Second Public Hearing	February 2, 2022	First review of draft maps, discuss and take feedback from Council and Public.
Third Public Hearing	February 16, 2022	Review revised maps, discuss and take feedback from Council and public. Ideally Council will select final map for up/down vote at the March meeting.
Fourth Public Hearing	March 2, 2022	Introduce final map for approval . If Council asks for any changes, then map must go to next meeting for introduction.
Fifth Public Hearing (if necessary)	TBD	Council will vote on final map if necessary.

Community Engagement

The City Clerk's Office and Broadcast Team will work on a Community Outreach Plan to include the following activities:

Public messaging via social media, City's website, Inner Circle News, press releases, and other public communications, in English and Spanish, including:

- Social media engagement via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
- Dedicated redistricting webpage on City's website for information, updates, calendars, and maps
- Targeted information to various outlets and groups, including non-profits, churches and schools
- Public notices posted at City facilities and published in the Sentinel
- Display advertisements on Channel 29 on Time Warner Spectrum and Channel 99 on AT&T

and YouTube video streaming

Online Interactive Tools:

- Updated online interactive mapping tool
 - Allows the public to draw and submit their own maps for analysis and consideration.
- Written public comment via email at CityClerk@Coronaca.gov

Next Steps

Following this hearing, the City's redistricting consultant will draft district maps for consideration at Public Hearings 2, 3, and 4. Prior to the hearings, the draft maps will be posted to the City website and available at City Hall.

The dates for the remaining public hearings to consider draft maps, are scheduled for Wednesday, February 2, 2022, Wednesday, February 16, 2022, and Wednesday, March 2, 2022, respectively. At these hearings the City Council may also discuss adjusting the sequencing of district elections so as to balance the number of officers on the ballot at any given election. Any changes to the current sequencing of district elections would be made part of the final ordinance adopting the revised district boundaries. If no change to the sequencing is required, the final ordinance would focus solely on approving the revised district boundaries.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this request.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the common sense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action merely requires electronic filing of campaign statements, and there is no possibility that this project will have a significant effect on the environment.

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