



Legislation Text

File #: 21-408, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

REDISTRICTING PROCESS USING THE OFFICIAL 2020 CENSUS DATA

DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE/CITY CLERK DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: BRENDA GREEN

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RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Receive and discuss the official 2020 Census data (State-Adjusted), the redistricting process and permissible criteria to be considered to evaluate district boundaries.
2. Conduct a public hearing to receive public input.

BACKGROUND:

Every ten years, cities with by-district election systems must use 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 nearly equal populations. The redistricting process for the City of Costa Mesa must be completed by April 17, 2022.

On April 6, 2021, the City Council selected National Demographics Corporation (NDC) for the demographics analysis of census data and to engage the public in the redistricting process.

In November 2016, Ordinance 16-05 was approved by the voters which amended the City's method of electing members to the City Council commencing in November 2018. Pursuant to the approved Ordinance the City is currently divided into 6 geographic districts, with a Mayor elected by voters citywide. The districts must now be evaluated 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 council shall draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority (Elections Code 21601(c) for general law cities):

1. Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the federal Voting Rights Act
2. Geographically contiguous
3. Undivided neighborhoods and "communities of interest" (socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together)
4. Easily identifiable boundaries

5. 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 above prioritized criteria are met, other traditional districting principles may be considered, such as:

1. Minimize the number of voters delayed from voting due to a change of their district
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 redistricting process. The process involves the following requirements:

- One hearing must occur before the City draws draft maps (10/19/2021)
- Two hearings must happen after the drawing of draft maps (11/16/21 & 2/15/22)
- Hearing to discuss and select final map, introduction of Ordinance (2/15/2022)
- Second reading and final adoption of map (3/1/2022)

ANALYSIS:

At the conclusion of each United States Census process, the City must conduct a process to analyze population data in order to evaluate district boundaries to ensure that districts are substantially equal in population. The California Voting Rights Act has additional provisions with the purpose of ensuring equal access to voting and representation.

The purpose of this public hearing is to inform the public on the 2020 Census data. Also to discuss the redistricting process and to hear from the community on what factors should be taken into consideration while evaluating 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 21601(c) / 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.”

Possible features defining community of interest might include, but are not limited to:

- A. School attendance areas;
- B. Natural dividing lines such as major roads, hills, or highways;
- C. Areas around parks and other neighborhood landmarks;
- D. Common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns; and
- E. Shared demographic characteristics, such as:
 - (1) Similar levels of income, education, or linguistic isolation;
 - (2) Languages spoken at home; and
 - (3) Single-family and multi-family housing unit areas.

The next steps are to conduct public workshops to seek public input on suggested criteria for consideration on drafting district maps. The following dates are scheduled:

- Saturday, October 23, 2021, 10:00 a.m. at the Norma Hertzog Community Center
- Wednesday, December 1, 2021, 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Community Room
- Saturday, January 8, 2022, 10:00 a.m. Location TBD.

Also, attached is the tentative timeline for the redistricting process.

In addition, the City has a dedicated webpage that includes online mapping tools and an Interactive Review Map. The draft district maps will also be posted on the webpage at [Redistrict Costa Mesa](https://redistrictcostamesa.org/)
<<https://redistrictcostamesa.org/>>

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may discuss and take other action related to this item.

FISCAL REVIEW:

The City Clerk's budget includes sufficient funding to cover the estimated redistricting cost of \$80,000.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report and approved it as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

This item is administrative in nature.

CONCLUSION:

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