



# City of Carpinteria

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## COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT December 13, 2021

### **ITEM FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION**

City Council District Mapping, Second Pre-Map Hearing: Presentation around the principles of districting, opportunity for pre-map public input on communities of interest and city districts. Presentation from the public of any maps identifying communities, discussion of preferences of neighborhoods, geographic or other features that should be considered in drawing of public plans.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Action Item   X   ; Non-Action Item   

Receive the staff presentation, open the public hearing and receive public comment, close the public hearing and schedule the next meeting.

Sample Motion: I move to receive and file the presentation and public comments received to date.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is the second of five public meetings required as a part of the City's process for drawing City Council district maps, which will culminate with the scheduled adoption of the Council Districts Map by the City Council in March 2022. The purpose of this second meeting is to receive public input on communities of interest and districts and to review additional information important to the process of drawing public plans for Council consideration. Pursuant the City's schedule for drawing and adopting district maps for the November 2022 municipal election, this matter will be considered at regular City Council meetings in January, February and March.

Information about the Carpinteria City Council Districting process can be accessed through the City website home page here: [www.carpinteriaca.gov](http://www.carpinteriaca.gov) or by contacting the City at (805) 684-5405.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Election Systems**

Most public agencies in California conduct elections for their governing board in one of two formats: at-large or district-based. In the at-large election system, the governing board members are elected by vote of the entire populace of the jurisdiction and each voter may cast one vote for each open seat. In the district-based system, the jurisdiction is divided into separate districts and each voter may cast a vote only for a candidate seeking election to the seat that represents the district he or she resides within. Since its incorporation in 1965, the City of Carpinteria ("City") has utilized an at-large elections system for City Council elections. The five members of the City Council are elected to four-year, overlapping terms; elections are held every even-numbered year. The mayor and vice mayor are selected by their fellow Council members and customarily serve four-year terms.

### **The Notice of Violation**

On July 3, 2017, the City received a Notice of Violation of California Voting Rights Act (the "Notice") from attorney Robert Goodman on behalf of residents Jatzibe Sandoval and Frank Gonzalez ("Prospective Plaintiffs").

At the Council's July 31, 2017 meeting, the Council received a report on the California Voting Rights Act ("CVRA") and the Notice and heard public comment on potentially transitioning to district-based elections. A majority of those commenting spoke in favor of instituting a district-based election system. At its meeting of August 14, 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 5743, declaring its intention to transition from at-large to district-based elections by November of 2022.

On August 14<sup>th</sup> of 2017 the City Council executed a Conditional Settlement Agreement and Release providing that per the adoption of Resolution No. 5743 the Prospective Plaintiffs should not bring suit against the City prior to Nov 9, 2022 for any cause of action related to the City's electoral system.

### **Mapping Process**

In April 2019, the City Council approved by resolution the formation of a District Elections Ad hoc Committee (Committee), on which Councilmembers Alarcon and Clark have been assigned. The City subsequently entered into a consultant services agreement in October of 2019 with Redistricting Partners to assist the City with the process of drawing district boundaries. A primary purpose of the Committee's work included developing a plan to gain public input consistent with the CVRA on communities of interest and drawing a map. The Committee has now concluded its work with the last meeting being held on October 20, 2021.

To date, the City Council has held meetings on this matter on July 31, 2017; August 14, 2017; April 8, 2019; June 28, 2021; July 26, 2021; November 8, 2021. District Mapping

public workshops were held Monday, September 20th at 5:30; Wednesday, September 22 at noon; and Sunday September 26 at 2:00 p.m. The workshops were conducted to allow for both in person and remote testimony via the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

## **DISCUSSION**

With direction from the City Council Ad hoc Committee and support from the City's consultant, the City has established information and tools to inform and assist the public in participating in the City Council's process for preparing Council District Maps consistent with the state law. This includes:

1. Creating a District Elections Website
2. Holding meetings and workshops on the District Mapping process and Communities of Interest.
3. Making District Mapping Tools available

This is the second of two meetings planned in advance of City Council meetings where public maps will be reviewed. The two pre-map meetings are intended to provide an opportunity to continue the process of informing and educating the public about how to participate in public map drawing. The City has made two processes available, digital map drawing via a portal on the City's District Mapping website and hardcopy maps mailed to each household. Materials were mailed beginning the week of November 8. As of December 7, 2021 the City has received a total of 95 completed maps that address districts or communities of interest.

City staff has compiled answers to frequently asked questions and will address these for the benefit of the City Council and public.

## **POLICY CONSISTENCY**

It is the goal of the District Elections Ad-Hoc Committee as well as that of the City to adhere to the Federal and State Voting Rights Act during this transition to district-based council elections.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

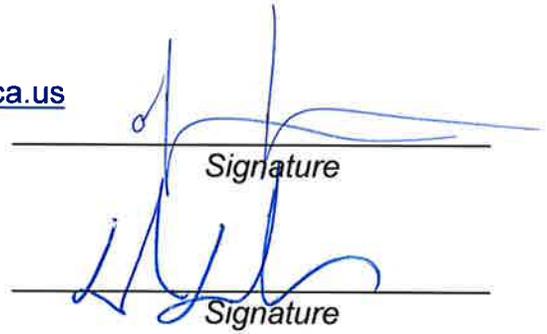
Cost associated with this work includes a consultant service agreement, which is a part of projected expenses included in the adopted Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget.

## **LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

The City Attorney's Office is supporting the District Mapping process and will be available to answer questions concerning this matter.

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Signature

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