Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: August 27, 2026

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Fifth Public Hearing To Receive Community Input and Adopt an Ordinance Transitioning to District-Based Elections

Recommended Action: 1) Conduct a **time-certain duly noticed public hearing at 6:15 PM** to receive community input; and 2) Adopt an ordinance of the City of Capitola amending Chapter 2.04 of Title 2 of the Capitola Municipal Code to provide for the election of City Council Members by four districts with an elected mayor; establish district boundaries and election order for each district; and make other amendments.

Background: On April 30, 2026, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 4482, outlining its intention to transition from at-large to district elections, specific steps it will undertake to facilitate the transition, and an estimated timeframe for doing so.

On May 14, 2026, the City Council received an informational presentation about the topic of districting. On May 28, 2026, and June 11, 2026, the City Council held public hearings, at which the public was invited to provide input regarding the composition of the districts. On June 11, 2026, the City Council provided direction to compose maps containing four districts, with a Citywide elected Mayor to serve a two-year term beginning in 2028.

On June 17, 2026, the City released three draft boundary maps on the City website for community consideration. On June 20, 2026, the City held a public outreach meeting to solicit further community input on the proposed maps. At a public hearing held on June 25, 2026, at 6:15 PM, the public was invited to provide further input regarding the content of the draft maps that had been released at least seven (7) days before the meeting. At a public hearing held on July 23, 2026, the public was invited to provide further input regarding the content of the draft maps that had been released at least seven (7) days before the meeting and the City Council selected Map No. 412 to be included in the draft ordinance, and selected District 3 to be included on the ballot in 2028.

The purpose of the August 27th public hearing is to adopt the proposed ordinance transitioning the City to district-based elections. All draft maps and the accompanying population and demographic data are available on the City's website: https://www.cityofcapitola.gov/1001/District-Based-Elections

Discussion: Tonight's public hearing completes the five public hearings required by Elections Code Section 10010. At the public hearing on June 11, 2026, the City Council provided direction to draft an ordinance that would establish an elected mayor with four city council member districts. Further, the City Council also directed the ordinance be drafted so that the elected mayor would have a 2-year term and be first elected at the November 2028 general municipal election. On July 23rd, the Council selected Map 412 and determined that the sequencing for the election of city council members must follow this pattern:

2028	Elected Mayor + District 3
2030	Elected Mayor + Districts 1, 2, 4

This sequencing may be rebalanced after adoption of the ordinance pursuant to Government Code Section 34906, if the City Council so chooses.

Public Outreach: The transition to districts requires significant public outreach, and staff has initiated efforts to make sure that the public is informed throughout the process.

- Staff created and maintained a dedicated webpage for district elections. The website is updated with all information, documents (like staff reports/presentations from Council meetings), and a section with meeting video footage and a brief summary of actions taken: https://www.cityofcapitola.gov/1001/District-Based-Elections
    - A subpage is available for access to the public mapping tool provided by NDC, including access to the printable PDF map for public use: https://www.cityofcapitola.gov/1006/Draw-a-Map
    - A subpage is available for access to map submissions received from the public and the demographer: https://www.cityofcapitola.gov/1009/Map-Submissions
    - The City's entire website is translatable into multiple languages, ensuring accessibility for non-English speaking residents.
    - Staff developed four frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents: one for general district questions, one specifically tailored to the discussion about number of districts and the differences between an at-large mayor and rotating mayor, one for questions received in May, and one for questions received in June.
- Staff created a dedicated email address where members of the public can submit questions, comments, or send maps: districts@cityofcapitola.gov
- Staff created a web form where members of the public can submit questions about the transition to districts. A link to the web form is available on the City's webpage: https://www.cityofcapitola.gov/1008/Submit-Questions-Comments
- Staff sent out two mailers to residences in Capitola. The mailers included information about opportunities for input, meeting dates, and how to participate in both English and Spanish.
- To date, the City has discussed the topic of districting eight times and received the following public input:
    - April 23rd City Council Meeting: 2 emails, 4 speakers
    - April 30th City Council Meeting: 8 emails, 8 speakers
    - May 14th City Council Meeting: 1 email, 3 speakers
    - May 28th City Council Meeting: 7 emails, 5 speakers
    - June 11th Public Outreach Meeting/Q&A Session: approximately 25 attendees
    - June 11th City Council Meeting: 16 emails, 7 speakers
    - June 20th Public Outreach Meeting: 6 attendees
    - June 25th City Council Meeting: 2 emails, 7 speakers
    - July 23rd City Council Meeting: 6 emails, 1 speaker

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

Attachments:

1. Ordinance

Alignment with 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Priority: Accountable Government

Report Prepared By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Reviewed By: Marc Tran, City Attorney

Approved By: Jessica Kahn, Acting City Manager