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## Agenda Item 7A - Transition to Districts

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**From** Meghan D Morrissey <mdmorrissey@sbcglobal.net>

**Date** Mon 5/25/2026 7:43 PM

**To** City Council <citycouncil@cityofcapitola.gov>

**Cc** Mike Morrissey <morrisseycapitola@gmail.com>

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to encourage the Council to adopt the governance model consisting of four council districts plus a citywide elected mayor.

Our city is entering a period where collaborative, thoughtful, and unified leadership will be essential. The challenges ahead require governance that encourages consensus-building, long-term planning, and decision-making that reflects the interests of the entire community rather than narrowly focused perspectives. As we work to strengthen the city's financial position, prioritize investments, and manage expenses responsibly, it is increasingly important to have leadership that consistently takes a whole-city view.

An elected mayor would provide the city with one representative chosen by all residents whose responsibility is to consider the needs, priorities, and future of the entire community. A citywide elected mayor can help bring together differing viewpoints, encourage cooperation among council members, and help build broader agreement around important decisions affecting the city's future.

This type of leadership is especially important as the city addresses issues such as:

- long-term financial sustainability,
- infrastructure planning,
- economic vitality,
- regional advocacy,
- and maintaining a strong tourism-based economy.

As a tourism-dependent city, many of the decisions we make affect the community as a whole. Visitor-serving businesses, public spaces, infrastructure, events, and the overall appearance and vitality of the city all contribute to the revenues that support essential city services. Maintaining and growing those revenues requires leadership that looks beyond individual neighborhoods and focuses on the long-term success and attractiveness of the entire city.

At the same time, maintaining district elections for council members preserves neighborhood representation and ensures that residents throughout the city continue to have a direct voice in local government.

The four-district model also creates somewhat larger districts, which may better serve a small city like ours. With only approximately 10,000 residents, five districts can result in very small district populations and encourage overly localized decision-making. In addition, we could face limited candidate pools in such small districts. Larger districts encourage council members to engage with a

broader cross-section of residents and consider the interests of the city more broadly. This structure can help foster collaboration and reduce fragmentation by encouraging representatives to think beyond individual neighborhoods and toward shared community goals.

Most importantly, the type of mayor our city needs is not a divisive political figure, but a consensus builder – someone capable of listening carefully, bringing people together, fostering collaboration among council members, and helping guide the city through difficult decisions with fairness, transparency, and a citywide perspective.

The four-district plus elected mayor model strikes an important balance between neighborhood representation and unified city leadership. It would position our city to work more collaboratively, think more strategically, and make decisions that support the long-term health, stability, and success of the entire community.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,