



City Council Agenda Report

Meeting Date: August 28, 2024

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Subject: Hold Public Hearing No. 3 to receive a presentation from the City's consulting demographer, Redistricting Partners, to discuss and provide further directions as to the development of district boundaries and the presentation of the first draft district maps for the City of Los Altos; solicit public input on the maps and on the order of elections of the five new districts.

COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

- Business Communities
- Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- Environmental Sustainability
- Housing
- Neighborhood Safety Infrastructure
- General Government

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a third presentation from the City's consulting demographer, Redistricting Partners, regarding the process and criteria for establishing City Council district boundaries for by-district elections, hold the first of two required public hearings to receive public input regarding the initial draft maps of five districts prepared by Redistricting Partners, obtain direction from the City Council regarding the development of a revised set of draft maps; and, consider the order of elections of the five new districts in the spirit of the CVRA with three (3) on the ballot in November 2026 and two (2) on the ballot in 2028.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to hold this meeting as the City has already retained the services of outside legal counsel and a demographer to assist in the transition to district-based elections.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not applicable

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PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

On April 18, 2024, the City received a Notice of Violation of the California Voting Rights Act ("CVRA"). The letter asserts that the City is in violation of the CVRA because the City's councilmember elections are at-large as opposed to by district and there exist racial polarization and vote dilution. On May 28, 2024, the City Council adopted a resolution declaring its intent to transition to a district-based electoral system commencing in November of 2026.

On June 11 and July 13, 2024, the City Council held the first and second of five public hearings required for the City's transition to by-district elections. Public hearings nos. 1 and 2 were held prior to any draft maps being drawn. Redistricting Partners, the City's retained demographer, made presentations at both public hearings regarding the CVRA. Those presentations covered the composition and number of districts, as well as the public input process. Members of the public provided input at both hearings regarding various communities of interest in and the various attributes of the City of Los Altos. At its July 13th hearing, the City Council, with public input, provided direction to begin drawing draft maps for a by-district election system comprised of five districts and a rotational mayor.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Based on public input and City Council feedback at the June 11th and July 13th meetings, the City's consulting demographer, Redistricting Partners, prepared three draft maps for review, which were posted on the City's website on August 21, 2024. This public hearing no. 3 is to receive public and City Council feedback on this first set of draft maps and provide direction to Redistricting Partners on any proposed revisions to be considered or new maps to be drawn. Again, the maps can be revised, or new maps drawn.

In addition to the drawing and consideration of maps, the City Council also must determine the order of elections – that is, which two districts will be on the ballot in November of 2026, and which three districts will be on the ballot in November of 2028, as City Council terms are staggered under state law. The City Council's decision on the order of elections must be made "in the spirit of the CVRA."

An updated set of draft maps will then be discussed at public hearing no. 4 on September 24, 2024. Any and all new draft maps will be posted on the City's website by September 17, 2024. At the fourth hearing on September 24, the City Council again will hear public feedback on the map drafts and the order of elections. The City Council also may provide additional feedback on the draft maps, or ask for new draft maps, for the next hearing on October 8, 2024.

At the fifth hearing on October 8, 2024, the City Council may select a map and also the order of elections, that is, which two (2) districts will be on the November 2026 ballot, and which three (3) districts will be on the ballot in November of 2028. If it does, it will pass an ordinance that defines both the boundaries of the five new districts and the order of elections. Alternatively, the City Council might also decide that more work is necessary and provide additional direction for revised maps at an additional future hearing, which again will be posted at least seven (7) days prior to that next hearing.¹

¹ The requirement that there be five hearings is a minimum and not a maximum.

The City has and will continue to conduct an extensive community outreach effort to solicit feedback and input on the draft maps.

In accordance with Elections Code Section 10010, the City published on its website the draft maps prepared by Redistricting Partners seven (7) days prior to this hearing. Any updated draft maps will also be published seven (7) days in advance of any future public hearing.

Considerations in Drawing Draft Maps

Redistricting Partners has drawn and evaluated these draft maps to ensure compliance with all pertinent state and federal law map drawing criteria. The City is using the latest 2020 Census data provided by the Statewide Database with the state prison population reallocated, as required under the Fair Maps Act. These maps use the underlying Census tract geography to establish the boundaries of individual City Council districts. In drawing these maps, every care was taken to honor neighborhoods and communities of interest. Furthermore, each City Council map is below 10% total deviations between the largest to smallest district by population. Further explanation of the public input and analysis that went in to drafting each of these three draft maps will be provided by Redistricting Partners at public hearing no. 3.

Public Outreach

Throughout the process of the transition to district elections, the City is implementing a robust effort to encourage participation and inclusivity as a part of the process. After the August 28, 2024 Council meeting, the City will begin a robust community outreach effort to solicit feedback on the draft maps. Some of the outreach events already scheduled include:

- September 3 – Presentation to community group Los Altos Residents
- September 4 – Presentation to Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs
- September 5 – Table at Downtown Farmers’ Market
- September 6 – Presentation to Los Altos Community Coalition
- September 9 – Table at Woodland Library
- September 10 – Table at Main Library
- September 12 – Table at Downtown Farmers’ Market
- September 14 – Community Workshop, 11:30 a.m. Los Altos Community Center
- September 16 – Community Workshop, 6:30 p.m. Grant Park Multipurpose Room
- September 18 – Table at Main Library
- September 19 – Presentation to Los Altos Rotary
- September 19 – Table at Downtown Farmers’ Market

In addition, staff is working to schedule tabling events at Lucky Supermarket, Whole Foods and the Loyola Corners Post Office.

The results of this community outreach effort will be presented to the Council on September 24, 2024 at public meeting number 4. The fifth public meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2024 and will be when the Council adopts the final map unless it decides to continue the process.

The City is also providing multiple ways for the public to submit feedback through in-person and online formats such as map drawing, fillable Communities of Interest forms, submission of public comment. Members of the public are encouraged to regularly visit the City's districting webpage at:

<https://www.losaltosca.gov/cityclerk/page/district-based-elections>.

Members of the public can access all meeting materials as well as provide input on the districting process and draft maps via the City's website.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Map A
2. Draft Map B
3. Draft Map C