

Handout

Agenda Item 8H

Date February 8, 2017

District-Based City Elections

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City Manager's Office



(415) 485-3070 (tel:(415) 485-3070)



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The City of San Rafael is changing the way that City Councilmembers are elected. We need your help in deciding where the district boundaries will be drawn.

Currently, all five Councilmembers, including the Mayor, are elected at-large, meaning that all registered voters who reside in San Rafael have the opportunity to vote for all five City Council positions. Under the new district-based election system, four Councilmembers will be elected by district: Councilmembers will be required to live in the district they represent and will be elected only by the registered voters of that district. The Mayor will continue to be elected at-large.

Why is the City of San Rafael transitioning to district elections?

In 2002, the Legislature enacted the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) (Elec. Code §§14025 – 14032), which prohibits California public agencies, including municipal governments, from imposing or applying an at-large election method “that impairs the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or its ability to influence the outcome of an election” (Elec. Code §14027). A protected class is defined by the CVRA as “a class of voters who are members of a race, color, or language minority group, as this class is referenced and defined in the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965”.

In a lawsuit brought pursuant to the CVRA, a plaintiff who establishes a history of “racially polarized voting” under a city’s at-large election system can require a city to change to a district-based election system. This past November 2017, the City received a letter from an attorney, asserting racially-polarized voting in San Rafael. On January 16, 2018, the City Council adopted a resolution outlining its intention to transition from at-large to district-based elections, which included specific steps the City will undertake to facilitate the transition, and an estimated time frame for doing so. The CVRA provides that the City must adopt an ordinance implementing district-based elections within 90 days, or by no later than April 16, 2018.

How are district boundaries created?

Below are criteria for creating districts:

1. Each district must contain a nearly equal population.
2. District borders must be drawn in a manner that complies with the federal, state, and any applicable law.
3. In establishing districts, the City Council may give consideration to the following factors: topography, geography, cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity, compactness of territory, and community of interests.
4. The City Council may also establish other criteria, so long as they do not conflict with federal, state, or applicable law.

How will the composition of the districts be decided?

Before drawing a draft map or maps of the proposed boundaries of the districts, the City Council must hold at least two public hearings over a period of no more than 30 days, where the public will be invited to provide input regarding the composition of the districts.

After all draft maps are drawn, the City must publish and make available for release at least one draft map and, if members of the City Council will be elected in their districts at different times to provide for staggered terms of office, the potential sequence of the elections.

After the draft map or maps are published, the City Council must hold at least two additional hearings over a period of no more than 45 days, where the public will be invited to provide input regarding the content of the draft map or maps and the proposed sequence of elections, if applicable. The first version of a draft map must be published at least seven days before consideration at a hearing. If a draft map is revised at or following a hearing, it must be published and made available to the public for at least seven days before being adopted.

The City Council must hold a fifth public hearing prior to adoption of an ordinance that will establish the boundaries of the four election districts for City Council elections beginning with the November 3, 2020 election.

How can I participate in the decision-making process?

Public Hearings:

The community's input in the development of the voting districts is very important to this process. The City Council will hold two public hearings before maps are developed to get community input on where district boundaries should be drawn. Draft maps will be developed from these public hearings. These public hearings will be held February 5, 2018 and February 20, 2018.

Two additional public hearings will be held to present and take comment on the draft map or maps. These public hearings will take place March 5, 2018 and March 19, 2018.

A final map or maps will go to the City Council for a vote on April 16, 2018.

Website:

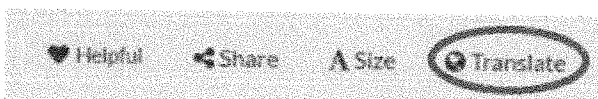
Send your comments to the City here (<https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/contact/>).

How often are the voting districts reviewed?

Districts are reviewed every ten years, following the Census.

Where can I get more information?

Information updates will be posted on this website as the transition process moves forward.



Para traducir esta página a español, seleccione el botón de traducir en el pie de página de esta página

Meetings English

Letter Letter
received (https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2018/01/Attachment-
November 5-11-10-17-Shenkman-letter.pdf)
20, 2017

November PowerPoint
20, 2017 (https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2017/11/CA-District-
Study Elections-Study-Session.pdf)
Session

December Staff report (http://cityofsanrafael.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?
4, 2017 view_id=38&clip_id=1261&meta_id=114817)
City
Council
Meeting, 7
p.m.

December Staff report (http://cityofsanrafael.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?
18, 2017 view_id=38&event_id=878&meta_id=115450)
City
Council
Meeting, 7
p.m.

January Staff report (http://cityofsanrafael.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?
16, 2018 view_id=&event_id=892&meta_id=116903)
City
Council
Meeting, 7
p.m.

February Staff Report
5, 2018 (https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2018/01/5.a-District-
City Elections.pdf)
Council
Meeting, 7
p.m.

PowerPoint

(<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2018/01/City-of-San-Rafael-Public-Hrg-PPT-02-05-2018-002.pdf>)

Canal Alliance, Canal Welcome Center, Alcohol Justice, Youth for Justice, and United Marin Rising Community Meeting PowerPoint presentation

(<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2018/01/District-Elections-PowerPoint-01-13-2018.pdf>) - January 13, 2018.

♥ Helpful

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