

City of Garden Grove

INTER-DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

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| To: | Scott C. Stiles | From: | Maria Stipe |
| Dept.: | City Manager | Dept.: | City Manager |
| Subject: | Consideration of proposed voting district maps for the formation of six Council Districts and Public Hearing to receive public input on district boundaries. <i>(Action Item)</i> | Date: | 4/12/2016 |

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to provide proposed voting district maps for the formation of six council districts for City Council consideration and to hold a Public Hearing to receive public input on district boundaries.

BACKGROUND

On September 25, 2015, the City Council approved a settlement in a lawsuit brought against the City asserting the City's current "at-large" method of electing City Council members violates the California Voting Rights Act. Pursuant to the settlement the City was required to replace the current at-large election process with a by-district election process beginning in 2016. Although the settlement initially called for five districts and elimination of an at-large mayor's election, the court allowed an intervention action by the Central Garden Grove Neighborhood Association, which challenged the elimination of the directly elected Mayor. Subsequently, on January 26, 2016, the City Council approved a new settlement in which a stipulated judgement was entered requiring the City to replace the current at-large election process with six Council districts, and preserve an at-large elected Mayor.

In October 2015, the City Council approved an agreement with Compass Demographics to direct the process of creating districts. In coordination with Mr. David Ely of Compass Demographics, a community participation plan was developed to gather public input on voting district boundaries and to facilitate the development of preliminary district map proposals. Following approval of the new settlement in January 2016, focus centered on gathering public input on district boundaries that reflect six council districts.

In accordance with the community participation plan, outreach efforts included, but were not limited to the following elements:

Outreach

The City established a dedicated webpage containing all notices and information on the district elections mapping process with information in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese. An email address specific to voting district formation communications - districtelections@garden-grove.org was also established.

Additionally, City staff provided information to the public on the district mapping process through the City's social media accounts, press releases, posting notices in the City's regular posting locations, flyer distribution on public counters and at public meetings, listings on the City's events calendar, information in the City water bill inserts, emails to local community groups and residents, a Channel 3 news segment, a study session at the November 24, 2015, City Council meeting, a Public Hearing at the January 26, 2016, City Council Meeting, and an update at the March 22, 2016, City Council Meeting.

Round 1 Outreach

Public input began with a series of meetings for interested stakeholders with demographics mapping expert Mr. David Ely from Compass Demographics. Mr. Ely held eleven (11) individual and small group meetings from November 30 – December 4, 2015, generally from 10:00 am to 9:00 pm. Mr. Ely discussed how equal population districts might be distributed, using a Garden Grove map with United States 2010 Census population figures by Census block groups to facilitate stakeholder efforts and input regarding communities of interest. He provided data tables to accompany sample discussion maps to convey demographic information expressed in percentages, including voting age population by ethnicity, Spanish and Asian surname registered voters and Spanish and Asian surname voter turnout. Interpreters for individual meetings were offered upon request.

Following the small group meetings with key stakeholders, public input continued with three community meetings, at various locations in the City on different days and times to accommodate the public. Each meeting had the same agenda. The meetings began with an educational presentation to inform the public about voting districts and the process for initial formation of district boundaries. The group then separated into small groups led by outreach facilitators to elicit participants' ideas about communities of interest, connections, barriers, divisions and sample maps. Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese translators were provided at all of the community meetings.

Round 2 Outreach

The second round of the voting districts formation process began in January 2016 with nine Meet the Expert individual and small group meetings with Mr. Ely, generally held between 10:00 am to 9:00 pm. Additionally, four community meetings were held in March to allow input on sample district map proposals and on public map submissions. The meetings were held in different parts of the community and at different locations and times to accommodate the public (i.e., Buena Clinton Family Resource Center, Community Meeting Center, GGUSD Maintenance Facility Meeting Room, and Garden Grove Sports & Recreation Center Meeting Room).

The meetings and analysis from January to March focused on further identifying functional geography, neighborhoods, and communities of interest; refining district boundaries and identifying areas of compromise among various maps in order to develop the best options for fair and functional representation of the various communities in the City.

The community meetings began with an open house that allowed attendees to speak informally with the Mr. Ely and City staff to view four sample proposals and two public submittals, which were displayed in large size formats. The meetings then convened with a brief description of each sample proposal and public submittal, followed by a "town hall" opportunity for people to comment and ask questions regarding the maps. Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese translators were available at each meeting.

DISCUSSION

The debate and public input received from the various forms of community outreach may be summarized as follows:

Communities of Interest — Several large communities of interest were discussed extensively with geographic definitions based primarily on City boundaries, Beach Blvd, Garden Grove Blvd, Euclid St and the 22 freeway. Although these communities are not strictly defined they can be generally described as follows:

West Garden Grove - The area to the west of Stanton city boundary and Beach Boulevard.

South Garden Grove - Often referred to as Little Saigon, this area is primarily south of the 22 freeway and west of Euclid Street, with related areas extending somewhat north and east.

Central Garden Grove - An extensive area with many smaller communities that are not well defined, this area is generally north of Garden Grove Boulevard and west of Euclid Street. Within this area there was significant discussion of both divisions and connections along Magnolia, Gilbert, and Brookhurst Streets and Lampson and Chapman Avenues.

East Garden Grove - The area to the east of Euclid Street with both connections and divisions along Harbor Blvd, Garden Grove Boulevard and the 22 Freeway. This community can be divided into two somewhat distinct smaller communities generally located to the northwest and southeast.

Areas of Agreement — There was general consensus on a number of important considerations. Three citywide considerations discussed extensively were the use of major streets rather than residential streets to form district boundaries, the distribution of high schools so that no district has more than one, and the inclusion of portions of the Railway right-of-way in a majority of districts. In addition there was general consensus on the most appropriate formation of districts in East and West Garden Grove; that there should be one district primarily located in West Garden Grove with adjacent areas to reach sufficient district population, and that there should be two districts east of Euclid including one primarily southeast of Garden Grove Boulevard and Haster Street.

Areas of Disagreement — There were a number of issues discussed in which there were competing priorities or differences of opinion. Citywide considerations included the acceptable level of population deviation, the acceptable distances between communities within a single district, and the appropriate consideration of ethnicity in defining communities of interest. These, and other considerations led to differences of opinion regarding the formation of three districts in Central and South Garden Grove.

Public Submittals

Throughout the district formation process, members of the public were able to submit maps for consideration to Mr. Ely, or work with him to create a map for consideration. Numerous maps were considered in this manner, including the

sample maps that Mr. Ely made available to the public, maps that were discussed by authors or proponents at the public meetings, and maps that were not pursued by their authors. By the end of the second round of public meetings, there were two map concepts that met legal requirements and where the author requested continued consideration. Mr. Ely describes these proposals as follows:

Public Submission 1 reflects all of the consensus considerations and geography described above and it includes districts in East and West Garden Grove reflecting this. The remaining districts include two districts in South Garden Grove extending north to include significant Asian population communities, and one district in the northern portion of Central Garden Grove.

Public Submission 2D also reflects the consensus regarding principles and districts in East and West Garden Grove. The remaining districts include one district in South Garden Grove, and two districts mostly to the north of Garden Grove Boulevard, divided along Brookhurst or Gilbert Streets.

Final Proposals

Three final district map proposals are provided for City Council consideration (Attachment 1). These proposals consist of the two public map submittals described above and a new consultant map, Sample 6E.

Sample 6E also reflects the consensus regarding principles and districts in East and West Garden Grove. The remaining districts include one district in South Garden Grove, one district along Garden Grove Boulevard including similar communities both north and south of the business district with significant Asian populations, and one district located primarily north of Lampson Avenue or east of Brookhurst Street. This map is a compromise between competing priorities in the public submissions, as well as reflecting a somewhat more urban community associated with the business district.

All of the proposals maintain the general logic of the initial sample maps but have some significant modifications to reflect issues raised during testimony at the public meetings.

Conclusion

There are clear differences on the proposed maps and there are innumerable iterations possible for each map. The City Council should adopt an ordinance to establish voting districts and should direct staff to return with an enabling ordinance that reflects voting district boundaries as selected. After the boundaries are determined, the City Council must then confirm or consider renumbering the districts. Four of the six electoral districts will be electing a new City Council member in 2016. Of the four City Council members, one will be elected for an initial term of two years, and three others to a regular term of four years. This allows for three districts to be up for election at the same time in 2018. Additionally, the settlement stipulates that one of the four districts elected this year, must be one with the highest proportion of Latinos by citizen-voting-age population. One Council member will be chosen from each district only by the voters residing in that district. The remaining Council member will be a directly elected Mayor serving a term of two years. The Mayor will be a voting member of the City Council, and will have the additional powers currently provided by State law or as may be later established by ordinance. Elections will continue to be staggered so that three Council members and the mayor will be selected at each election commencing in 2018.

In establishing the boundaries of the districts, the City Council must create districts that are generally equal in population and may give consideration the factors such as:

- Topography,
- Geography,
- Cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity, and compactness of territory,
- Community of interest of the districts.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no additional financial impact. The City Council previously approved \$50,000 for expert consultant costs.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

- Discuss voting district formation and voting district proposal maps;
- Hold a Public Hearing to receive public input on district boundaries;
- Direct staff to prepare an implementing ordinance for the preferred voting district boundaries and map; and
- Discuss which four districts will be up for election in 2016.

ATTACHMENTS:

| Description | Upload Date | Type | File Name |
|--|--------------------|-------------|--|
| <u>Attachment 1: Proposed Voting District Maps and Data Sets</u> | 4/5/2016 | Cover Memo | Attachment_1._District_Map_Proposals.pdf |
| <u>Attachment 2: Sample Voting District Maps and Data Sets</u> | 4/5/2016 | Cover Memo | Attachment_2._Sample_District_Maps.pdf |