



## CC Regular Meeting

# AGENDA ITEM REPORT

- Meeting:** CC Regular Meeting - Dec 21 2021
- Title:** City Council Election District Public Hearing #3
- Presented By:** Chris Marcarello, City Manager
- Recommendation:** That the City Council receive information about draft mapping proposals for district-based voting; conduct a public hearing to solicit public testimony regarding the draft maps; provide feedback and suggestions for revisions if appropriate.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On October 21, 2021, the City Council adopted Resolution CC 2021-117 declaring the City of Covina's intent to transition from an at-large Council Member election system to a district-based Council Member election system, outlining specific steps to be undertaken to facilitate the transition and estimating a time frame for action pursuant to Elections Code § 10010. Section 10010 requires a minimum of five public hearings in connection with the establishment of electoral districts. Pursuant to subsection 10010(a)(1), the first two public hearings ("pre-mapping hearings") are for the purpose of receiving input from the public regarding the composition of districts for by-district elections of the City Council. The remaining hearings ("post-mapping hearings") are for the consideration of mapping proposals. This hearing is the first of three post-mapping public hearings.

### BACKGROUND:

The City of Covina ("City") currently elects its City Councilmembers through an "at-large" election system in which each Councilmember can reside anywhere in the City and is elected by the voters of the entire City to provide citywide representation.

On September 7, 2021, the City received a letter dated September 1, 2021, challenging the City's current election method and asserting that the City's at-large election system violates the California Voting Rights Act ("CVRA") and demanding that the City change its at-large voting system to a district-based election system. A district-based election system is generally one in which a city is divided into separate districts, with each district's voters electing a representative from that district, who must also be a resident of the district.

The process for transitioning from at-large voting to district-based voting is prescribed by Section 10010 of the Elections Code. It consists of five public hearings in total, and it must be completed within 90 days of the adoption. On October 21, 2021, the City Council approved Resolution CC 2021-117, which set forth a series of public hearings and a schedule that meets this requirement.

### DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this meeting is for the Council to receive a presentation from its consultants regarding draft mapping proposals based on the public feedback received to date and also regarding thirty (30) draft maps submitted by members of the public. The draft maps submitted by the public and consultants were published seven (7) days in advance of this public hearing and are accessible at the City's District Election website, [mapcovina.org](http://mapcovina.org).

Certain legally required criteria apply to the creation of the districts and must be observed. These are:

- Each council district shall contain a nearly equal population as defined by federal and state law;
- A districting plan shall be drawn in a manner that complies with the Federal Voting Rights Act and the Equal Protection Clause; and
- Each council district shall not be drawn with race as the predominant factor in violation of the principles established by the United State Supreme Court in Shaw v. Reno, 509 U.S. 630 (1993).

Beyond that, state law requires that cities adhere to the following statutory criteria, ranked in order of priority:

- (1) To the extent practicable, council districts shall be geographically contiguous. Areas that meet only at the points of adjoining corners are not contiguous. Areas that are separated by water and not connected by a bridge, tunnel, or regular ferry service are not contiguous.
- (2) To the extent practicable, the geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or—as mentioned above—local community of interest shall be respected in a manner that minimizes its division.
- (3) Council district boundaries should be easily identifiable and understandable by residents. To the extent practicable, council districts shall be bounded by natural and artificial barriers, by streets, or by the boundaries of the city.
- (4) To the extent practicable, and where it does not conflict with the preceding criteria in this subdivision, council districts shall be drawn to encourage geographical compactness in a manner that nearby areas of population are not bypassed in favor of more distant populations.

As for the demographic makeup of the City, the recently released 2020 Census data, as adjusted by the California Statewide Database pursuant to state law, reflect the following pertinent characteristics:

City of Covina	Totals	%
Total Pop. (SWDB 2021)	51,444	
Hispanic Pop.	30,201	58.71%
NH White Pop.	10,075	19.58%
NH Black Pop. (DOJ)	1,977	3.84%
NH Indian Pop. (DOJ)	358	0.70%
NH Asian Pop. (DOJ)	7,997	15.55%
NH Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Pop. (DOJ)	116	0.23%
NH Other Pop. (DOJ)	412	0.80%
NH Other MR Pop. (DOJ)	308	0.60%
CVAP (SWDB 2021)	33,555	
Hispanic CVAP	17,704	52.76%
NH White CVAP	9,170	27.33%
NH Black CVAP	1,488	4.43%
NH Amer. Ind. CVAP	137	0.41%
NH Asian CVAP	4,617	13.76%

NH = Not of Hispanic Origin

MR = Multiracial

CVAP = Citizen Voting Age Population

SWDB = Statewide Database

DOJ = USDOJ/OMB's Aggregation

Following the public hearing, the Council will be asked to provide feedback regarding the proposed maps. It can eliminate proposals from further consideration, request changes to any of the current proposals, request additional proposals, or simply advance the current proposals for further consideration. The next public hearing to receive

and consider further input from the public concerning mapping proposals is scheduled for Tuesday, January 4, 2022. The deadline for the public to submit any additional map options for consideration at the next hearing is December 23, 2021. Any additional maps submitted will be posted on December 28, 2021 (seven days prior to the January 4th public hearing). There is a final hearing scheduled for January 18, 2022, where as proposed, the Council could consider adopting a final map.

The deadline for adoption of a map under Elections Code § 10010 is January 19, 2022.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

At its November 2, 2021 meeting, the City Council appropriated \$150 thousand for expenses related to the transition to a district-based election system.

**CEQA (CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT):**

The action being considered by the Council is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a “project” under Section 15378(b) of CEQA Guidelines. The action involves organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in the direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[Attachment A - Individual Draft Maps - 5 Districts](#)

[Attachment B - Individual Draft Maps - 4 Districts](#)

[Attachment C - Consultant Draft Maps - 5 Districts](#)

[Attachment D - Consultant Draft Maps - 4 Districts](#)

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Marcarello  
City Manager