



City of Covina to Launch District Formation Process with First Public Hearing on November 2 October 27, 2021

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Covina, CA – 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 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.

While the City believes its current election system is consistent with the law and does not violate state or federal voting rights, the cost of litigation to defend the at-large system, coupled with the track record of other public agencies that have fought similar challenges, poses a significant financial and legal risk to the City. Due to these risks, on October 21, 2021, the Covina City Council adopted Resolution CC 2021-117, declaring its intent to transition to district-based elections beginning in the upcoming June 2022 election cycle.

The City of Covina is not unique in this situation. Agencies throughout the State have received similar demand letters prompting a shift from at-large to district-based elections. Locally, the cities of West Covina, San Dimas, Glendora and Duarte have engaged in similar processes and statewide, it has been reported that over three hundred (300) public agencies have made this transition.

The City of Covina is beginning the district formation process to create voting districts to elect City Councilmembers. The City has kicked off the district formation process with a new dedicated district formation website: MapCovina.org. The new website includes background information on the move to district elections, the schedule of upcoming meetings, and frequently asked questions.

Beginning in 2022, voters will vote for one City Councilmember who lives in their district instead of voting for all City Councilmembers in current “at-large” citywide elections. Covina’s districting process will determine representation on the City Council for Covina community members moving forward.

The switch to district-based elections is a process that many cities in California are undergoing to meet the standards of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) of 2001. The CVRA gave more robust legal backing to minority groups in California who have expressed that “at-large” elections have diluted their voting rights.

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Covina invites residents to participate in the district formation process to ensure district lines respect neighborhoods, history, and geographical elements. The City Council is hosting its first of five Public Hearings on November 2, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. The first Public Hearing will provide background information on the districting process and inform community members on how they can get involved.

Beyond the first Public Hearing, community members are encouraged to participate throughout the entire districting process:

Tuesday, November 2, 2021, at 7:30 PM - Public Hearing #1 - CVRA overview; mapping process

Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 7:30 PM - Public Hearing #2 - CVRA overview; mapping process

***Tuesday, December 14, 2021** - Final deadline to submit maps for consideration for Public Hearing #3

Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 7:30 PM - Public Hearing #3 - Map presentation, discussion of election sequence

***Tuesday, December 23, 2021** - Final deadline to submit maps for consideration for Public Hearing #4

Tuesday, January 4, 2022, at 7:30 PM - Public Hearing #4 - Map presentation; introduction/first reading of ordinance to adopt district map/election sequence

Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 7:30 PM - Public Hearing #5 - Second reading of Ordinance to adopt district map/election sequence

Once maps are submitted, the City's consultants will review each map for compliance. All draft maps submitted by the deadlines will be posted on the districting website seven days prior to the Public Hearing. The City Council will receive all maps submitted by the public.

Instead of residents being limited to saying they support or oppose a City-prepared ordinance or resolution, they can draw a map for City Council to consider for adoption. Once mapping tools become available, residents can draw the borders of their neighborhood, a proposed Council district or sketch an entire citywide map.

To sign up for updates and information about the districting process and future public meetings, please visit MapCovina.org or email districting@covinaca.gov.

For the latest updates, please visit the City's website and social media accounts or contact us at (626) 384-5410.

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