

CITY OF BUELLTON
City Council Agenda Staff Report

City Manager Review: SW
Council Agenda Item No.: 5

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Linda Reid, City Clerk

Meeting Date: June 10, 2021

Subject: Public Hearing to Receive Input from the Community Regarding the
Creation of a District-Based Election System

BACKGROUND

On November 8, 2018, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 18-22, declaring its intention to transition from at-large to district-based elections for the City Council commencing with the General Municipal Election in November 2022. Elections Code Section 10010 and Assembly Bill No. 849 (Attachment 2) provides that before any map or maps of the boundaries for the proposed districts are drawn, the City must conduct two (2) Public Hearings over a period of no more than thirty (30) days, at which time the public is invited to provide input regarding the composition of said districts.

Since adoption of the Resolution of Intention, the City has been engaged in outreach efforts to inform the public about district elections and the process associated with developing the council election districts. The Public Hearing Notice for this hearing was published on May 27, 2021 and an article detailing district elections was mailed to all water customers in May 2021. The City's website also has a dedicated page regarding district based elections at <https://cityofbuellton.com/government/district-based-elections/>.

The purpose of this public hearing is to inform the public about the districting process and to hear from the community on what factors should be taken into consideration while creating district boundaries.

The public is requested to provide input regarding communities of interest and other local factors that should be considered while drafting district maps. A *community of interest* is a neighborhood or group that would benefit from being in the same district because of shared interests, views, or characteristics. Possible community features include, but are not limited to:

- A. School attendance areas
- B. Natural dividing lines such as major roads, hills, or highways
- C. Areas around parks and other neighborhood landmarks
- D. Common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns
- E. Shared demographic characteristics, such as:
 - (1) Similar levels of income, education, or linguistic isolation
 - (2) Languages spoken at home
 - (3) Single-family and multi-family housing unit areas

The City must ensure compliance with the following state and federally-mandated criteria:

- Each district shall contain a nearly equal population
- Each district shall be drawn in a manner that complies with the Federal Voting Rights Act
- Each district shall not be drawn with race as the predominate factor in violation of the principles established by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630 (1993), and its progeny

Next Steps

At the July 8, 2021 City Council Meeting, the City Council will conduct Public Hearing #2 to seek public input and provide direction on criteria to be considered while drafting district maps. Following that July 8th hearing, draft district maps and proposed election sequencing will be posted to the City website and available at City Hall on July 9, and those maps (and any possible new or revised maps) will be discussed at Council hearings scheduled for January 27, 2022 and February 24, 2022 before the anticipated introduction of an ordinance on February 24, 2022 with second reading and adoption on March 10, 2022.

At the January 27, 2022 City Council Meeting, the City Council will conduct Public Hearing #3 to seek public input on the content of draft district map(s) and sequence of elections.

On February 24, 2022, the City Council will conduct Public Hearing #4 and will be requested to select a preferred map and direct amendments as necessary.

On February 24, 2022, a public hearing will be held to adopt a preferred district map and to introduce an ordinance to transition to a district-based electoral system.

Second reading and adoption of the ordinance is scheduled to occur on March 10, 2022, and the City Clerk and demographer will then work with the County Elections Division to have the district maps integrated into the countywide voting system. The first district election for the City of Buellton will be held in November 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this public hearing. However, transitioning to district elections will require the City to retain the services of a demographer. The cost of such services will be roughly \$13,750. The amount is currently budgeted.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council conduct a public hearing and receive public input on district boundaries and approve the transition timeline (Attachment 1).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Timeline of Transition

Attachment 2 - Elections Code 10010 and Assembly Bill 849