



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Fourth Public Hearing Regarding the Composition of Council Districts Related to the City's Proposed Transition to District-Based Councilmember Elections

1. Introduction of Ordinance Establishing Council District Boundaries and Scheduling Elections Within the Districts, Subject to Voter Approval of a Ballot Measure to Amend the City Charter to Change the City's Electoral System from an At-Large System to a By-District System with a Directly Elected Mayor and Six Council Districts
2. Motion Directing Staff Regarding Preparation of Draft District Maps

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Public Hearing

Approved for October 10, 2023 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has initiated the process to transition from its at-large council election system to council districts. This matter is the fourth public hearing to solicit public input on the council districts. In accordance with legal requirements, the City has also undertaken an extensive public outreach process, including public hearings, public workshops, pop-up events, press releases, social media and advertising.

Thirty-nine (39) draft maps have been submitted by members of the public or the City's demographer; of those, four are not population balanced. The Council should take public input and discuss whether to identify a district map for adoption (subject to voter approval of the map and necessary charter amendments), identify two to three maps, if possible, for discussion at a future hearing, request the demographer to make modifications to one or more existing draft maps for future discussion, take an alternative action, or take no action. If the Council introduces the ordinance or provides direction regarding the narrowing or modification of maps, the City Attorney's Office will also present the draft Charter amendments to implement the transition to a directly elected Mayor and Council district electoral system, along with other requested charter amendments including amendments relating to Council compensation, City contracts and other miscellaneous changes.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Improve Operations and Efficiency of City Government: Establishing City Council districts may improve operations and efficiencies by improving constituent services as councilmembers will have more day-to-day interaction with the residents and issues affecting particular neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council conduct the fourth public hearing pertaining to the composition of council districts related to the City's proposed transition to district-based elections and (i) identify a district map for adoption (subject to voter approval of the map and necessary charter amendments), (ii) identify a number of focus maps, such as two to three maps, for discussion at a future hearing, (iii) request the demographer to make modifications to one or more existing draft maps for future discussion, (iv) take an alternative action, or (v) take no action.

BACKGROUND

On May 2, 2023, the Council adopted Resolution No. 23-55 declaring its intent to initiate the process to transition from at-large to district-based councilmember elections pursuant to Elections Code section 10010. The Council directed staff to commence the process to transition to council districts by way of amendment to the City Charter, to include a proposal to transition to six council districts and a directly elected mayor who would be a voting member of the Council. The Council adopted Resolution No. 23-89 on June 13, 2023, revising the timeline set forth in Resolution No. 23-55. This hearing is the fourth public hearing the Council will hold regarding the composition of council districts.

ANALYSIS

Public Hearing

Pursuant to Elections Code section 10010, the Council is required to hold at least four public hearings. The City held its first three public hearings on June 13, 2023, July 11, 2023 and August 15, 2023.

In addition to this public hearing, public hearings are scheduled for October 24, 2023 and, if necessary, November 7, 2023. The principal purpose of this fourth public hearing is for the City's demographer, National Demographics Corporation (NDC), to provide an overview of the maps submitted by members of the public and those prepared by NDC, including those submitted by the second map submittal deadline of September 28, 2023.

District Criteria

In accordance with Elections Code section 21601, the Council must draw districts that satisfy the following criteria:

- Council districts must be substantially equal in population based on the total population of residents of the city as determined by the most recent census with adjustments mandated by the State of California.

- Council district boundaries must comply with the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the federal Voting Rights Act.
- The Council shall adopt district boundaries using the following criteria as set forth in the following order of priority:
 - (i) To the extent practicable, council districts shall be geographically contiguous.
 - (ii) To the extent practicable, the geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest shall be respected in a manner that minimizes its division. A “community of interest” is a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.
 - (iii) 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.
 - (iv) To the extent practicable, and where it does not conflict with the preceding criteria, 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.
- The Council must not draw district boundaries for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against a political party.

Draft District Maps

There are currently 39 draft maps that have been submitted to the City or prepared by the City’s hired demographer. Of the 39 maps, four are not population-balanced. The draft maps are attached as Exhibit 1 and can also be viewed using an Interactive Review Map available at <https://mapglendale.org/draft-maps/>. NDC will provide a review during the public hearing.

Sequencing of Districting Elections

Elections Code § 10010 contains provisions governing the sequencing of elections in the new districts:

- 1) The draft districting plans made available during the second round of public hearings include a “potential” sequencing of elections for each draft plan as required by Elections Code section 10010(a)(2).
- 2) Elections Code section 10010(b) specifies two criteria for “consideration” in setting the sequencing. Those criteria are “consideration to the purposes of the California Voting Rights Act” and “tak[ing] into account the preferences expressed by members of the districts.” The sequencing of elections published with the draft plans, however, is only proposed sequencing. The sequencing of elections in the districts of the finally adopted new districting plan is at the discretion of the Council. In addition to the considerations required by Section 10010(b), cities commonly consider:

a. Completion of the terms of incumbents elected at-large. For example, a councilmember whose term ends in 2028 serves out the full four-year term even if that member resides in the same district as an incumbent whose term ends in 2026 and that district is placed on the 2026 ballot.

b. Scheduling elections in a particular district based on the expiration of the term of office of the incumbent who resides in the district. For example, a district in which an incumbent resides with a term ending in 2026 could be placed on the ballot in 2026. A district in which two incumbents reside with respective terms ending in 2026 and in 2028 could be placed on the ballot in 2026 or 2028. If in 2028, the incumbent with a term ending in 2026 would be out of office after the 2026 elections, but he or she could run again in 2028 for the district seat in which he or she resides.

c. If the district seat were placed on the ballot in 2026, an incumbent with the term ending in 2028 would serve out the full four-year at-large term to which elected, and then could seek election in 2028 for the district seat. Alternatively, that incumbent could run for the district seat in 2026 and, if elected, resign from the at-large seat on the City Council, creating a vacancy to be filled in accordance with the city's laws.

d. Scheduling elections in a district in which no current incumbent resides at the earlier election cycle consistent with maintaining the appropriate number of Council Members.

As noted in a prior report, these iterations aside, with an expanded Council, it would appear that three district seats for four-year terms would be up for election in 2026, along with a two-year seat. In 2028, three four-year district seats would be up for election, and then three four-year seats would be up for election every two years after that, assuming no vacancies.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

The City has conducted an extensive public outreach process. In addition to five public hearings to date, the City has held 14 public workshops and six pop-ups. The City has utilized social media, advertising, and press releases. The outreach has been in multiple languages – English, Armenian, Spanish, Korean, and Tagalog. A website dedicated to the districting effort, which includes the draft maps and pertinent updates, has been established at <https://mapglendale.org>. Between June 1, 2023 and October 4, 2023, there have been 15,000 new users and 91,000 in event count. An event is a user's specific action on the site, such as clicking a button, playing a video, or submitting a form. The public comments received through the various fora, including comments provided at workshops and sent to the website, are included in Exhibit 2.

Although the deadline to submit draft maps has expired, residents and stakeholders are welcome to submit public comments on the process by sending a direct email to

mapglendale@glendaleca.gov, and/or submitting feedback through the contact form on MapGlendale.org.

Community Outreach Efforts Include:

- Digital and print materials translated English with Armenian, Korean, Spanish and Tagalog
- Five public hearings
- Fourteen community workshops (12 in-person, 2 virtual)
- Six Pop up events
- Table at Council in Your Neighborhood, June 20
- Cruise Night, July 15
- Vardavar Festival, July 16
- National Night Out, August 1
- Summer Concerts, August 25
- Touch-a-Truck, September 16
- Glendale Youth Alliance to distribute outreach materials to over 120 Glendale bakeries and grocery stores
- Promoting workshops and outreach across 8 libraries/center and 6 parks
- Public Works Banner on Verdugo Rd. Bridge (July –October 2023)
- Direct phone calls to over 70 community benefit partners to provide input and uplift outreach efforts

Digital Outreach Efforts Include:

- Rollout of MapGlendale.org website (mobile and web accessibility available in language)
- Animated Explainer Video in English with Armenian, Korean, Spanish and Tagalog captions (6 Videos)
- Press Releases to local and regional media (4 sent)
- Outreach Newsletter Blast to 31,000 people (7 sent)
- Extensive social media engagement, posts, stories and event reminders across all platforms (45 posts)
- Targeted emails to community benefit partners to provide input, uplift outreach efforts
- Dedicated email address mapglendale@glendaleca.gov with 24-48hr response rate
- Created a social media toolkit
- (<https://bit.ly/MapGlendaleToolkit>)
- Digital ads on Google and Meta

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

This activity involves organizational and administrative activities of the government

related to election procedures and eligibility requirements, and such internal procedural and eligibility changes have no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. As such, this action is not a “project” subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) 14 Cal. Code Regs § 15378.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Council can conduct the public hearing, select a map and proposed election sequence and introduce the ordinance.
2. The Council can conduct the public hearing and provide direction to identify a subset of focus maps, such as 2 or 3 maps, for future discussion.
3. The Council can conduct the public hearing and provide direction to modify one or more of the existing draft maps for future consideration.
4. The Council can conduct the public hearing and direct staff with a combination of Alternatives 2 and 3 above.
5. The Council can decide to take no further action.
6. The Council can select an alternative not identified by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

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Approved by:

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EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Maps
2. Public Comments