



Fremont City Council

3300 Capitol Avenue
Fremont, CA 94538

SCHEDULED

Meeting: 09/21/21 07:00 PM
Div/Dept: City Manager's Office
Category: Plans, Policies and Studies

STAFF REPORT (ID # 4451)

Sponsors:
DOC ID: 4451

City of Fremont 2021 Redistricting Process - Redistricting Public Hearing #1

Contact Persons:

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Executive Summary: Every ten years, following each federal census, cities that use district-based election systems must review the boundaries of voting districts and re-adopt district boundaries based on current census data to ensure that voting districts remain substantially equal in population and still protect the rights of members of communities of interest to vote for the candidates of their choice. The districts must be redrawn using 2020 census data and be in compliance with the Fair Maps Act, adopted by the California legislature in 2019. The U.S. Census Bureau announced a delay in delivering the data needed for this review until September 30, 2021.

Under the Fair Maps Act, the City is required to hold at least four public hearings that enable community members to provide input on the drawing of district maps, with one of the public hearings required to be held prior to the drawing of any draft maps. The purpose of this first public hearing is to inform the public about the redistricting 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. The City Council must adopt new boundaries for voting districts by April 18, 2022.

BACKGROUND: In 2017, the City began the transition from at-large to by-district elections. The district-based maps were adopted on June 13, 2017 by the City Council with an ordinance approving six new Council districts and a phase-in schedule from 2018-2020. The change from at-large to by-district elections requires the City to conduct a redistricting process every ten years.

On July 13, 2021, Council was provided an informational overview of the redistricting process with a presentation by National Demographics Corporation, Inc., who is assisting the City in managing the redistricting process to ensure overall compliance with data analysis, map creation, website administration, timeline and noticing requirements. This staff report will also explain the requirements of the redistricting process under the Fair Maps Act.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS: Under the redistricting process, districts must be redrawn using 2020 census data and in compliance with the Fair Maps Act, which was adopted by the California legislature as AB 849 and took effect January 1, 2020.

Under the Act, the council shall draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority (Elections Code Section 21601(c)):

1. Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the Voting Rights Act
2. Geographically contiguous
3. Undivided neighborhoods and "communities of interest" (socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together)
4. Easily identifiable boundaries
5. Compact (do not bypass one group of people to get to a more distant group of people)
6. Shall not favor or discriminate against a political party

By law, the City must hold at least four public hearings that enable community members to provide input on the drawing of district maps:

- At least one hearing must occur before the city draws draft maps
- At least two hearings must happen after the drawing of draft maps
- The fourth hearing can happen either before or after the drawing of draft maps
- City staff or consultants may hold a public workshop instead of one of the required public redistricting hearings

To increase the accessibility of these hearings, the City must take the following steps:

- At least one hearing must occur on a Saturday, Sunday, or after 6 p.m. on a weekday
- If a redistricting hearing is consolidated with another local government meeting, the redistricting hearing portion must begin at a pre-designated time
- Local public redistricting hearings should be made accessible to people with disabilities

The purpose of tonight's public hearing, Public Hearing #1, is to inform the public about the redistricting process and to hear from the community on what factors should be taken into consideration while creating district boundaries.

A *community of interest* under the relevant Elections Code for cities (Elections Code Section 21601(c)) 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."

Possible features defining community of interest might 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; and
- E. Shared demographic characteristics, such as:

- (1) Similar levels of income, education, or linguistic insolation;

- (2) Languages spoken at home; and
- (3) Single-family and multi-family housing unit areas.

As the U.S. Census Bureau releases finalized 2020 census data, there will be the opportunity for the public to submit draft maps for review by the City Council. Once available, the City will announce the use of online and paper mapping tools and continue to provide outreach to the community in numerous languages. The City of Fremont will hold Redistricting Public Hearing #2 on December 7, 2021 at 7:15pm.

For a full schedule of Redistricting Public Hearing dates and process updates or information, please visit www.redistrictfremont.org. For questions, please contact, redistrictfremont2021@fremont.gov.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: None required.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

LINKS: None.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Accept a report and presentation on the redistricting process and permissible criteria to be considered to redraw district boundaries.
2. Conduct a public hearing to receive public input on district boundaries.