



AGENDA REPORT

DATE: February 18, 2020

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Stefan T. Chatwin, City Manager 

SUBJECT: Public Hearing; and Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance 2020-02 Amending Chapter 2A of the Fairfield Municipal Code Providing for the Election of Six Members of the City Council by Districts and the Election of the Mayor City-Wide, Establishing the Boundaries and Identification Number of Each District, and Establishing the Election Order of Each District

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Hold public hearing; provide second reading and adopt ordinance.

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Pursuant to Elections Code Section 10010, the City conducted four public hearings on October 1, 2019, October 15, 2019, December 17, 2019 and January 21, 2020 to receive public input regarding the City's transition from at-large to by-district elections for the members of the City Council, the time frame for this transition, the composition of potential Council election district boundaries, and other matters related to the election of members of the City Council. The next step in the transition to effectuate the change from at-large to by-district elections is to hold a public hearing and consider adoption of the attached ordinance.

DISCUSSION

Over the last several years, cities, school districts and community college districts throughout the state of California have been transitioning from at-large to by-district elections to comply with the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (CVRA) or to avoid litigation. On September 17, 2019, the City Council authorized the transition of the city's election system from at-large to by-district.

The City Council held four public hearings to receive feedback from the public on the composition of the district boundaries, election sequence and overall transition to district elections. At all four hearings, the professional demographer, National Demographics Corporation (NDC) provided an overview of the CVRA, the mapping process and the transition to district elections.

Additionally, two community meetings were held on October 16, 2019 and November 9, 2019. This allowed for further public input and the opportunity for community members to draw and submit their own maps. To date, the City of Fairfield received a total of three draft maps from the public, as well as two draft maps from NDC. All draft maps were published between the second and third public hearing as required by State law. The City Council considered maps at the third and fourth public hearings.

At the Fourth Public Hearing on January 21, 2020, by an unanimous vote, the City Council agreed to approve map 103, providing for six districts. They also agreed that the elections for Districts 2, 4, and 6 will occur at the general municipal election in November of 2020 and that the election for Districts 1, 3, and 5 will occur at the general municipal election of 2022. District 5 will elect a Councilmember in 2020 for a 2 year term to transition from a five-member to a seven-member council, and thereafter, all members will service staggered 4 year terms. The City Council will continue to have a Mayor who is elected by a city wide election of eligible voters residing in the City of Fairfield.

The City Council received sufficient public input through the above-referenced process and the next step to effectuate the change from at-large to by-district elections is to introduce the attached ordinance. The proposed Council district

maps were prepared in accordance with all applicable law, including provisions of the California Voting Rights Act, the Federal Voting Rights Act and Fairfield City Council Resolution No. 2019-218 providing criteria for the transition to by-district elections.

This ordinance was introduced at the regular City Council meeting on February 4, 2020. It is therefore recommended that the City Council adopt the attached ordinance.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no specific fiscal impact associated with the proposed recommendation. New State law provides for the transition of at-large to by-district elections via the ordinance process. Costs for the City’s general municipal election are budgeted in the City’s operating budget every two years based on an estimate received from the Solano County Registrar of Voters.

CITY COUNCIL WORKPLAN

<i>Community Safety</i>	<i>Community Infrastructure</i>	<i>Quality of Life</i>
<i>Financial and Operational Sustainability</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>	<i>Travis Air Force Base</i>

City Council Goal this item supports:
Financial and Operational Sustainability

Project:
#2A.2 Bi-annual City Council Election

PUBLIC CONTACT/ADVISORY BODY RECOMMENDATION

Extensive public outreach was conducted to seek the community’s input on the composition of maps, election sequence and all matters related to by-district elections for members of the City Council. Public hearing notices were published in the Daily Republic newspaper and translated in Spanish and Tagalog. A full schedule of events, associated documents and draft maps have been circulated across all city media outlets and sent to various community groups. A summary of Ordinance 2020-02 was published in the Daily Republic on February 7, 2020.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION

The City Council may choose to not adopt the ordinance and maintain its current at-large election system and defend any potential action filed pursuant to the CVRA. As set forth above, to date, no jurisdiction has prevailed on the merits of a CVRA action and fees and costs associated with litigation generally exceed \$1 million.

STAFF CONTACT

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COORDINATED WITH

City Attorney’s Office

ATTACHMENTS:

**Final District Map
Proposed Ordinance**

REVIEWERS:

Reviewer	Action	Date
Alexander, Amber	Approved	2/5/2020 - 8:12 AM