



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

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Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, May 04, 2021

Discussion

SUBJECT:

CONSIDER DEMOGRAPHER PROPOSALS FOR THE REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS RESULTING FROM THE 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS; AND, CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF AN AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE TO REVIEW CITY COUNCIL REDISTRICTING ISSUES (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

On August 4, 2020, the City Council adopted Ordinance 20-008, establishing by-district voting for City Council seats in the City of Carson, at a noticed public hearing.

The 2020 City Council elections were held by district, with District 1 (Council Member Hilton) and District 3 (Council Member Hicks) up for reelection. Council Districts 2 (Mayor Pro Tem Dear) and 4 (now-Mayor Davis-Holmes) were designed to remain at-large districts until the current terms for those districts expire in 2022. However, with the election of Mayor Davis-Holmes to the Mayor's seat, the District 4 seat is now open, and the Council has approved placing that seat on a November, 2021 special election ballot.

Under the terms of the lawsuit and Settlement Agreement with the Southwest Voters Registration Education Project ("SVREP"), which was the impetus for the City to consider district elections, any election conducted after 2020 must be a District election and not at-large in order to conform to the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (CVRA). Therefore, the election will be held as a district-only election for District 4.

Concurrently, cities and other local governments that are divided into districts or divisions are required to review their current district boundaries and redistrict based on the new population figures from the U.S. Census. The City now must review the adequacy of the adopted districts in light of demographic and population changes in Carson shown in the 2020 United States Census. In March, 2021, the City issued an RFP for a demographer to conduct the update and four proposals were received by the April 22, 2021 deadline.

The process for reviewing and redrawing new district boundaries must still follow Section 10010 et. seq. of the California Elections Code, with two public hearings seeking input from the community on "communities of interest" conducted prior to any maps being posted for public review, and such maps being posted on the City's website at least seven days

before the City Council would consider them. There will be a time lag between the two halves of this process: ordinarily, preliminary Census data sufficient to undertake redistricting would be released in March of the year following the Census to allow the review and update to occur in the spring. However, the Biden Administration in February announced that the data would not be released until late September because of problems finalizing the Census this year, in part due to the pandemic and in part due to changes sought by the previous administration.

It is anticipated that the initial public hearings will be conducted in June, 2021, well ahead of the receipt of the updated data from the Census, and the revised maps would be available for public review later in the fall for adoption before the April, 2022 deadline for the November, 2022 elections. The November, 2021 Special Election for the District 4 seat will be conducted using the currently adopted map since the potential new map will not have been produced prior to the commencement of the election process.

Mayor Davis-Homes has recommended that the City Council appoint an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to review the redistricting issues, including a review of the four demographer proposals and to make their own recommendation of demographer to the full City Council.

II. RECOMMENDATION

1. CONSIDER the report and the four demographer proposals; and
2. RATIFY the Mayor's nominations to an Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Council Redistricting Issues

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

The California Constitution mandates that "to the extent possible, [districts] must preserve the geographic integrity of cities, counties, neighborhoods and communities of interest" and be contiguous. Further, the state constitution requires that Districts must also "encourage compactness." The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that "the Equal Protection Clause [of the United States Constitution] demands no less than substantially equal state legislative representation for all citizens, of all places as well as all races." According to the website [All About Redistricting](#), "it has become accepted that a [redistricting] plan will be constitutionally suspect if the largest and smallest districts [within a state or jurisdiction] are more than 10 percent apart."

Cities and other local governments that are divided into districts or divisions are required to review their current district boundaries and redistrict based on the new population figures

from the U.S. Census.

The City of Carson adopted an electoral district map for its four City Council members (Mayor elected at-large) in 2020, in time to be used in the 2020 City Council elections. The City is now beginning to review the adequacy of the adopted districts against new data from the 2020 United States Census, though the data itself will not be available until September. Public hearings could be conducted in June and the analysis of new data would be in September-October, followed by the publication and presentation of draft maps.

In March, 2021, the City issued an RFP for a demographer to conduct the update and four proposals were received by the April 22, 2021 deadline.

The proposers were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Contract Amount</u>	<u>Average Score</u>
GEOInovo Mapping Solutions	Murrieta, CA	\$47,000	2.67
Cooperative Strategies	Irvine, CA	\$20,000	3.23
Bear Demographics	Toluca Lake, CA	\$29,000	3.70
National Demographics Corp	Glendale, CA	\$45,250	4.16

The proposals were scored on the basis of five factors, equally weighted at 20% each: Experience, Ability to Meet the Project Schedule, Approach, Cost of Project, and the Overall Proposal.

NDC was the demographer that produced the final adopted map for the Carson City Council for its 2020 election, and scored highest in the RFP on experience, approach and overall proposal, in large part because of their familiarity with the community from working on the currently-adopted maps and working in other similar-sized communities, but had the second-highest fee, at \$45,250.

Bear Demographics demonstrated significant experience at the statewide level and with much larger cities, such as the City of Los Angeles, and was the only proposal to prominently feature a law firm as part of the project team.

Cooperative Strategies' experience appears to be largely in school districts, but was also the lowest cost proposal. If the City had a high degree of confidence that the changes in demographics as a result of the 2020 Census were unlikely to require a change in the recently adopted map (i.e. no new district maps), the fee would be even lower.

GEOInovo is a sophisticated ESRI partner and presented examples of much more complex analysis of demographics and voting patterns than the City saw in the adoption of the 2020 maps, but also seems to mostly work for school districts and was the highest-cost proposal, too.

Review of Demographic Changes

Part of the review by any of the demographers would be to examine the current redistricting database and analyze changes in total population and changes in Citizens of Voting Age Population (CVAP) in the protected classes (Black, Latino, Asian-American, and Asian/Pacific Islander) both city-wide and by district.

The consultant would determine if overall population growth or decline in any specific district has created “unbalanced” districts (i.e. the difference between the smallest district and the largest district is greater than 10%), and analyze if any of the demographic or population changes have resulted in any constitutionally-suspect districts with either “packing” or “cracking” demographic groups among the currently adopted districts.

As with the preparation of the original maps, the demographer will participate in two public hearings in June or as soon thereafter, and then create paper and PDF maps and Excel-based files of at least three updated district maps based on 2020 Census Bureau Data anticipated to be released by September 30, 2021. There would be a number of public hearings after draft maps are produced and are being considered, up to the public hearing where one is considered for adoption. The demographer would then create a SHAPE file for the final approved map for use by the City Clerk, the City’s GIS Department, and the County Registrar of Voters.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Proposal from National Demographics Corporation (Pgs. 5-43)
2. Proposal from Bear Demographics (Pgs. 44-78)
3. Proposal from Cooperative Strategies (Pgs. 79-102)
4. Proposal from GEOInivo Solutions (Pgs. 103-123)

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