

Agenda Report

July 19, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: City Clerk

**SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION REGARDING
ADDITIONAL GOALS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE
REDISTRICTING TASK FORCE TO PRIORITIZE ONCE ALL LEGAL
CRITERIA ARE MET**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

- (1) Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(3), the General Rule that CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment;
- (2) Receive the information provided in this report; and
- (3) Provide direction to the City's Redistricting Task Force on any additional goals or considerations that might be prioritized when contemplating adjustments to Council District boundaries once all legal criteria and required redistricting principles are met.

BACKGROUND:

Following each decennial census, and in compliance with applicable laws and the City Charter, the City of Pasadena utilizes census data and conducts a redistricting process to equalize the populations residing within each of the seven Council Districts. City Charter Section 1201 states: "The City Council shall, by ordinance, establish seven districts which shall be used for all elections of Councilmembers. Said districts shall be as nearly equal in population as practicable and such redistricting shall be in compliance with applicable laws."

On March 15, 2021, following the 2020 Decennial Census, the City Council received a report from the City Clerk and City Attorney on the administrative process and legal framework regarding redistricting (Attachment A). In the weeks following, the City Council established a 12-member Redistricting Task Force composed of Pasadena residents to examine population changes and recommend a redistricting plan to the City Council for consideration.

In addition, the City Council, following a Request for Proposals (RFP) process and recommendation from the Redistricting Task Force, hired a professional redistricting consultant, National Demographics Corporation (NDC), to assist and provide technical guidance to the Task Force and public throughout the redistricting process. Working with the consultant, and utilizing public input, the charge of the Task Force is to follow federal, state, and City Charter requirements when considering population shifts and coming to consensus on a recommended plan. The City Council will receive the plan, either accept the plan as submitted or modify as necessary, and ultimately adopt the final redistricting plan by ordinance.

COVID-19 – Impacts to Census Data Release

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the timeline and typical process for redistricting. Under normal circumstances, the City would have already received population counts ahead the work of the Task Force. Instead, due to significant delays with the data caused by the pandemic, the work plan has been adjusted to begin community engagement prior to the release of data. Currently, the City is conducting seven identical community workshops in each Council district on the redistricting process. The focus of each community workshop is to highlight the delays caused by COVID-19, explain the process of and reasons for redistricting, and encourage community members to define and map out communities of interest in the City.

The following chart highlights the COVID-19 impacts and illustrates the compressed timeline that the current redistricting process is having to operate under:

Description	Planned Schedule	COVID-19 Schedule
Completion of Census 2020	July 31, 2020	October 15, 2020
Census to release official population data	March 31, 2021	Mid/Late August 2021
California to release official redistricting data	April/May 2021	Late September 2021
Legal deadline for map adoption	December 15, 2021	December 15, 2021
First election with new map	June 7, 2022	June 7, 2022

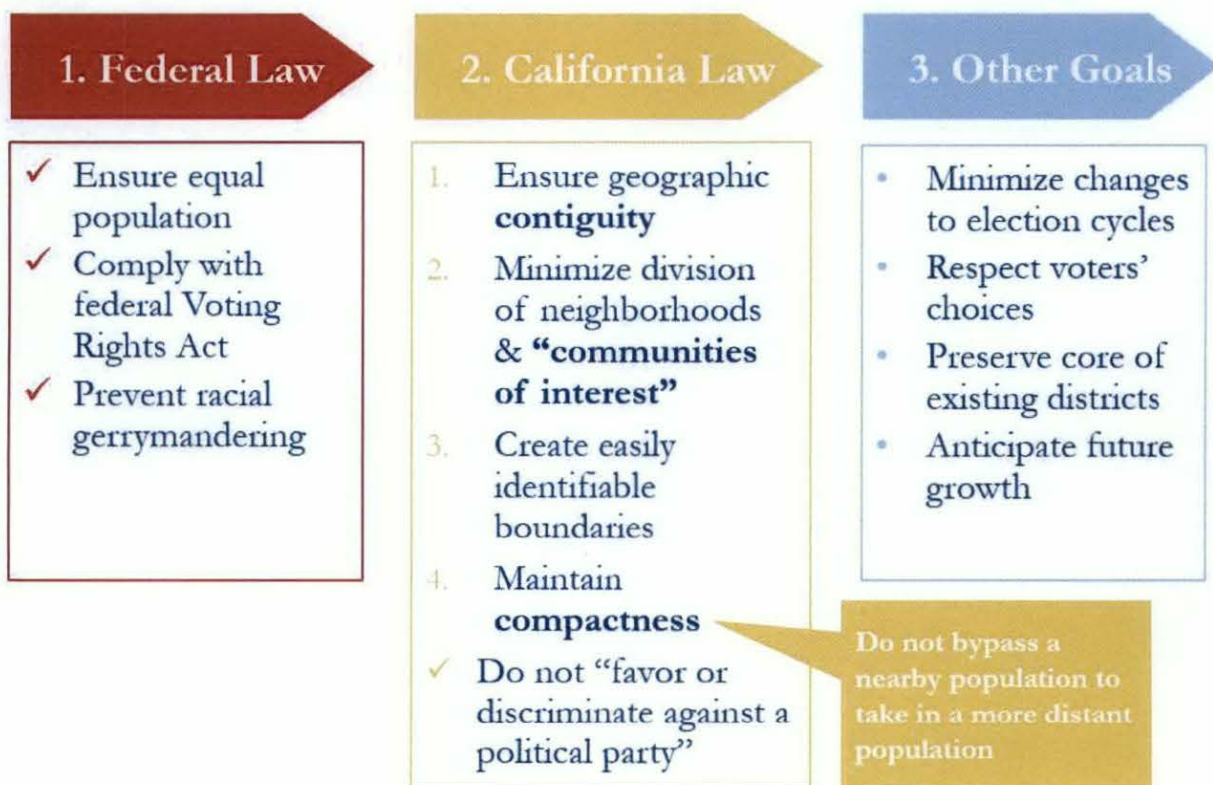
As illustrated above, preliminary population data is not expected until mid to late August, and final redistricting data for Pasadena is scheduled for release in mid to late September. The one factor that has not changed is the December 15, 2021 deadline to complete redistricting and adopt any changes to Council District boundaries. This deadline is mandated by Government Code and is based on the need to legally identify and establish the Council District boundaries by ordinance in order to conduct City

Council elections in Districts 3, 5, and 7 that are scheduled for the upcoming June 7, 2022 City Primary Municipal Election.

Redistricting Task Force

The City's Redistricting Task Force is currently in the pre-mapping stage of the redistricting effort, focused on education, training, and understanding the parameters that govern the process. The Task Force has held four formal meetings, as well as participated/observed in five of the seven identical community workshops designed to provide the public with information on the redistricting process and solicit community of interest information.

The chart below was prepared by National Demographics Corporation. This chart illustrates the legally required criteria for redistricting that must be considered in accordance with Federal and State laws, and also provides some of the alternative and optional criteria that the local governing body might consider:



As noted in the chart, modifications to Council District boundaries will need to comply with Federal laws first and foremost, and then comply with the provisions of the FAIR MAPS Act (as adopted by the California Assembly Bill 849 that took effect January 1, 2021). Following, is the criteria listed in order of priority (Attachment B - Elections Code Section 21621(c) for Charter Cities):

1. Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the Voting Rights Act
2. Ensure geographically contiguous boundaries of the district
3. Limit divisions of neighborhoods and “communities of interest” (socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together)
4. Create identifiable boundaries
5. Maintain compactness (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

Only when the legal criteria are met can other districting goals and priorities be considered, such as:

1. Minimize the number of voters delayed from voting in 2022 to 2024
2. Respect voters' choices/continuity in office
3. Preserve core of existing districts
4. Take into account future population growth

Prior Goals and Considerations for Redistricting in Pasadena

In prior redistricting efforts, the City Council has discussed and provided direction on redistricting goals and considerations specific to Pasadena that the appointed Task Force would utilize when recommending a plan for consideration. Much of this prior direction is now incorporated in current federal and state requirements, including protection of minority voting rights and minimizing division of neighborhoods and communities of interest. However, issues such as recognizable boundaries and specific landmarks in the City have also been referenced in the past (the Arroyo Seco and Rose Bowl area), as well as utilizing Colorado Boulevard as a central point for all the districts to connect.

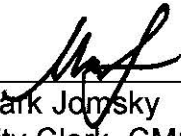
Regarding Colorado Boulevard, and as indicated on the adopted redistricting plans of 1982, 1992, 2002, and 2012 (Attachment C), each Council District has consistently been mapped to include a portion of Colorado and maintain a connection to the commercial corridor. This prior practice continues to be a talking point at current Task Force meetings and community workshops (whether the City should continue to maintain Colorado Boulevard as an element of commonality).

It would be beneficial to know if the City Council is prepared to direct the Task Force in that regard (to maintain that connection as much as possible or if such a connection is no longer an area of importance), as well as to provide any other points of emphasis that the Task Force should consider as it moves forward in the process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This report is provided to receive direction from the City Council. There is no fiscal impact anticipated as part of this agenda item.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Jonsky
City Clerk, CMC

Attachment A – March 15, 2021 Agenda Report on Administrative Process and Legal Framework

Attachment B – Elections Code Section 21621 for Charter Cities

Attachment C – Final Redistricting Maps – 1982, 1992, 2002, and 2012

Attachment D – 2021 Redistricting Schedule