



City of San Mateo
2021 District Elections
Community Outreach Meetings



**REPRESENT
SAN MATEO**

Welcome

Agenda

Things we will cover:

- Background on City transitioning to district elections
- California Voting Rights Act
- What is Districting
- Traditional Districting/Redistricting Principles
- Districting Timeline
- Communities of Interest
- Map Tool Demonstration
- Public Testimony on Communities of Interest
- Public Hearing Schedule

Background

- May 24, 2021, City receives demand from an attorney letter alleging current at-large Council election system violates California Voting Rights Act (CVRA)
- June 21, 2021, Council adopts resolution of intent to transition to by-district elections
- July 19, 2021, Council approved transition schedule, with goal to complete process by Nov. 15, 2021
- Aug. 23, 2021, Council to host first of five public hearings on the process
- First by-district City Council elections would be in November 2022

What is the CVRA?

The California Voting Rights Act is a state law that prohibits the use of At Large Election Systems in local government if there is Racially Polarized Voting.

“At Large” is defined as anything other than a system in which an elected official lives in a district, and is only elected by members of that district.

“Racially Polarized Voting” is defined as differences in voting patterns which can be shown to be correlated to race, religion, national origin, or membership in any other protected class.

What is the CVRA?

The California Voting Rights Act takes the principles of the Federal Voting Rights Act and expands it regarding districted elections in two key ways:

While Federal law uses “majority minority” districts as a standard for vulnerability, the CVRA only requires “ability to influence.”

The CVRA requires that plaintiffs get full reimbursement for legal fees associated with any successful challenge.

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While Federal law uses “majority minority” districts as a standard for vulnerability, the CVRA only requires “ability to influence.”

The CVRA requires that plaintiffs get full reimbursement for legal fees associated with any successful challenge. ***These can be lessened or eliminated if the district follows a strict and prompt process for districting.***

What is Districting

Definition

Districting is the initial process of creating election district boundaries.

These boundaries determine:

- Eligibility to run for office – must live within boundaries to qualify for election.
- Who votes in the election – only voters within the district vote for their councilmember.

What is Districting

Definition

Districting is the initial process of creating election district boundaries.

These boundaries do not determine:

- How the city decides to govern. The city can still work to achieve goals that benefit the city as a whole rather than the interests of any single district.
- How services or relationships between the city and the public are managed.

Traditional Districting Principles

Preventing a District from becoming a Gerrymander

There are a number of criteria that have been used nationally and upheld by courts.

- Relatively equal size - people, not citizens
- Contiguous – districts should not hop/jump
- Maintain “*communities of interest*”
- Follow city/county/local government lines
- Keep districts compact – appearance/function

Traditional Districting Principles

Drawing New City Council Lines for Fair Representation

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Communities of Interest

Bringing like people together for representation

Communities of interest are the building blocks of districts.

A community of interest includes ethnic and language minorities and other groups.

- Subjective
- Open-ended to be as inclusive as possible

Examples of Voting Rights Act Communities

- Latinos
- Asians
- African Americans

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While communities of interest may include race, it cannot be the *predominant factor* in drawing district boundaries.

Communities of Interest

Bringing like people together for representation

- Historical communities
- Economic interests
- Racial composition
- Ethnic Areas
- Cultural amenities
- Religious facilities
- Immigrant communities
- Languages spoken
- Geographic features
- Neighborhoods
- Economic opportunity zones
- Tourism Areas
- School districts
- Outdoor recreation areas
- Communities defined by natural resource features
- Downtown / Urban
- Rural or Agricultural
- Homeowner or Renters
- Creative arts communities
- Media markets
- *Many, many more*

What is NOT a Community of Interest

Preventing a Districting from becoming a Gerrymander

The Fair Maps Act explicitly prohibits these groups from being considered as communities of interest

- Political party affiliation
- Incumbents
- Political candidates

It also is hard, in districting to truly consider:

- *Groups of similarly minded people who do not share a similar geographic location.*
- *Communities of Interest that are city-wide.*

Communities of Interest

Three Critical Questions in Defining YOUR Community

Communities can be best described by answering these three questions:

- Does the community have a shared culture, characteristics or bond?
- Is the community geographic in nature? Is the community able to be mapped?
- What is the community's relationship with the jurisdiction being districted? How is it affected by the policy decisions made by the elected officials?

Is this a Community of Interest?

A group of renters who live downtown testifies to the City Council.

Would this be considered a *Community of Interest*?

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Would this be considered a *Community of Interest*?

YES! This group of residents can easily to be mapped in a distinct area AND they share a common policy interest, which can be addressed through legislation or public services.

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Should the City Council prioritize this historical town when drawing their maps?

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Should the City Council prioritize this historical town when drawing their maps?

YES! Historical communities are recognized as a community of interest and should be considered when drawing maps.

Is this a Community of Interest?

A group of dog-owners, living in the suburbs banded together to push their local elected officials to put in a dog water fountain in their dog park.

Would their City Council consider this a community of interest?

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YES! This is a group of people in a shared geographic location who have similar needs for public services.

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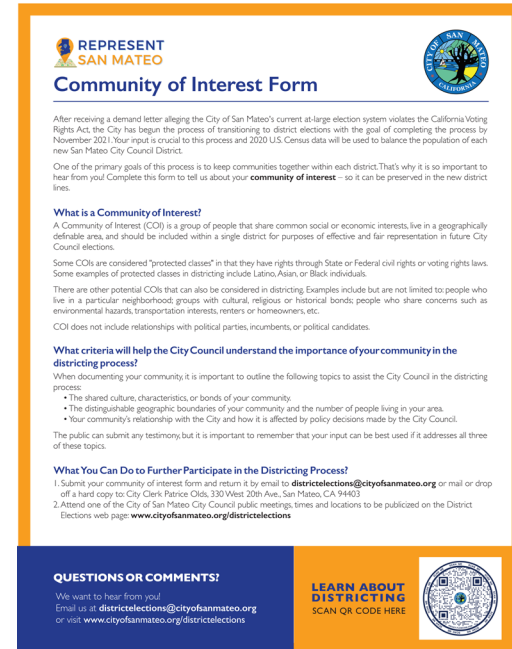
Is this a Community of Interest?

NO! It is important that a community of interest is distinct enough to draw on a map. This group overlaps throughout the entire state, and it is unlikely that a governing agency has any say over these issues.


Community of Interest Forms

Submitting Your COI Form

- Input can be provided in community workshops, public hearings or using the City's Community of Interest Form.
- You can find these on the website as a part of overall community engagement strategy.



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Community of Interest Form

After receiving a demand letter alleging the City of San Mateo's current at-large election system violates the California Voting Rights Act, the City has begun the process of transitioning to district elections with the goal of completing the process by November 2021. Your input is crucial to this process and 2020 U.S. Census data will be used to balance the population of each new San Mateo City Council District.

One of the primary goals of this process is to keep communities together within each district. That's why it is so important to hear from you! Complete this form to tell us about your **community of interest** – so it can be preserved in the new district lines.

What is a Community of Interest?
A Community of Interest (COI) is a group of people that share common social or economic interests, live in a geographically definable area, and should be included within a single district for purposes of effective and fair representation in future City Council elections.

Some COIs are considered "protected classes" in that they have rights through State or Federal civil rights or voting rights laws. Some examples of protected classes in districting include Latino, Asian, or Black individuals.

There are other potential COIs that can also be considered in districting. Examples include but are not limited to people who live in a particular neighborhood; groups with cultural, religious or historical bonds; people who share concerns such as environmental hazards, transportation interests, renters or homeowners, etc.

COI does not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.

What criteria will help the City Council understand the importance of your community in the districting process?
When documenting your community, it is important to outline the following topics to assist the City Council in the districting process:

- The shared culture, characteristics, or bonds of your community.
- The distinguishable geographic boundaries of your community and the number of people living in your area.
- Your community's relationship with the City and how it is affected by policy decisions made by the City Council.

The public can submit any testimony, but it is important to remember that your input can be best used if it addresses all three of these topics.

What You Can Do to Further Participate in the Districting Process?

1. Submit your community of interest form and return it by email to districtelections@cityofsanmateo.org or mail or drop off a hard copy to City Clerk Patrice Olds, 330 West 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403.
2. Attend one of the City of San Mateo City Council public meetings, times and locations to be publicized on the District Elections web page: www.cityofsanmateo.org/districtelections

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS!
We want to hear from you!
Email us at districtelections@cityofsanmateo.org
or visit www.cityofsanmateo.org/districtelections

**LEARN ABOUT
DISTRICTING**
SCAN QR CODE HERE



Map Submissions

Online Map Submissions will be available in the coming month on DistrictR – an online mapping platform that the City will be using.

Two types of expected input:

- Community of Interest Forms & Maps (Now – End of Process)
- District Plans Based on 2020 Data (Release of Data – Final Adoption)

Communities of Interest

Drawing YOUR Communities of Interest

The City of San Mateo will be using DistrictR as a public mapping tool to allow residents to draw their own Communities of Interest.



You draw the lines.

<https://districtr.org/california>

City of San Mateo City Council

Timeline for Upcoming Outreach Meetings & Community Workshops

Virtual Public Hearings:

6:00 PM via Zoom

August 23 at 6PM

September 13 at 6PM

September 30 at 6PM

October 14 at 6PM

November 1 at 7:30 PM

In- Person Community Workshops:

August 21 10AM: Main Library Oak Room

August 21 2PM: King Center (Spanish)

September 25 2PM: Main Library Oak Room

October 2 9:30AM: Congregational Church of San Mateo

October 2 2 PM: Senior Center

City of San Mateo Districting Website

www.cityofsanmateo.org/districtelections



**REDISTRICTING
PARTNERS**