



# CITY OF SAN MATEO

City Hall  
330 W. 20th Avenue  
San Mateo CA 94403  
[www.cityofsantamateo.org](http://www.cityofsantamateo.org)

## Agenda Report

---

Agenda Number: 1

Section Name: {{section.name}}

File ID: {{item.tracking\_number}}

---

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Drew Corbett, City Manager  
**PREPARED BY:** Office of the City Clerk  
**MEETING DATE:** September 30, 2021  
**SUBJECT:**

Transition to District-Based Elections for Council Members - Public Hearing #3

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive a third presentation from staff and the City's consulting demographer regarding the process and criteria for establishing Council district boundaries for by-district elections, hold the first of two public hearings to receive public input regarding the initial draft maps of five districts, and provide specific direction for development of a revised set of draft maps.

**BACKGROUND:**

On August 23 and September 13, 2021, the City Council held the first and second of five public hearings required for the City's transition to by-district elections. Public hearings #1 and #2 were held prior to any draft maps being drawn and covered the composition and number of districts, form of government under consideration, charter amendment considerations, and the public input process. At its September 13 hearing, the Council provided direction to begin drawing draft maps for a by-district election system comprised of five districts and a rotational mayor.

Based on public input and Council feedback, the City's demographer has prepared three draft maps for review. This public hearing #3 on September 30 is to receive feedback on this first set of draft maps, and provide direction to the demographer on any revisions to be considered. An updated set of draft maps will then be discussed at public hearing #4 on October 14, during which the Council will be asked for final direction on the preferred map and direction on election sequencing. On November 1, 2021, the Council will hold public hearing #5 to consider introduction of an ordinance approving the official district map.

In accordance with Elections Code 10010, the City published on its website the draft maps submitted by its demographer 7 days prior to this hearing, along with the potential sequence of elections. Any updated draft maps will also be published 7 days in advance of the next public hearing.

**Map Drawing Criteria**

In creating the district boundaries, the City must ensure compliance with the following state and federally mandated criteria:

1. Each council district shall contain a nearly equal population; and
2. Each council district shall be drawn in a manner that complies with the Federal Voting Rights Act, and the Constitutions of the United States and California (e.g., race cannot be the predominant factor).

In addition to the above, under Elections Code Section 21621(c), certain criteria must be used to establish the boundaries of the council districts including the following, in order of priority:

3. Geographic contiguity
4. To the extent practical, maintain neighborhoods and local communities of interest (such as cultural or historical bonds, common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents or political candidates.)
5. Boundaries that are easily identifiable and understandable to residents (e.g., geographical and topographical features such as rivers and creeks, or other physical barriers such as railroads or major streets.)
6. Geographic compactness is encouraged.

### **Considerations on Drawing the Draft Maps**

The demographer has drawn and evaluated these draft maps to ensure compliance with the above criteria. The City is using the latest 2020 Census data provided by the Statewide Database with the state prison population reallocated, as required under the Fair Maps Act. These maps use the underlying Census tract geography to establish the boundaries of individual City Council districts. In drawing these maps, every care was taken to honor neighborhoods and communities of interest. However, please note that sometimes Census blocks do not perfectly align with known neighborhood boundaries or streets. Some census blocks follow natural geographic boundaries, such as a turn in a creek, which may be why some notches or boundary lines do not precisely follow neighborhood borders or roads.

Furthermore, each City Council map plan must be below 10% total deviations between the largest to smallest district by population. Deviation is calculated by first determining the ideal population for each district. In San Mateo's case, the ideal population is 21,161 residents per district. The total deviation is determined by adding together the deviations of the largest and smallest districts from that ideal population size. For example, if your largest district is 5% larger than the ideal population and the smallest district is 3% smaller than the ideal population, then the total deviation is 8%. As achieving near population equality between districts is the first criteria that must be met, some known neighborhoods will be split between districts.

Further explanation of the public input and analysis that went in to drafting each of these three draft maps are included as attachments to this report. Draft Map 1 is outlined in Attachments 1 and 2. Draft Map 2 is outlined in Attachments 3 and 4. Draft Map 3 is outlined in Attachments 5 and 6.

Part of this process is to encourage public input and Council discussion by providing several different distinct maps to consider. After taking public testimony, Council is asked to provide feedback on the preferred draft map(s) and any changes to be made. The demographer will take that direction and refine the proposed map(s), which will be considered during public hearing #4 on October 14.

### **Future Hearings on Sequencing**

The Council will consider introduction of an ordinance that approves the final district map during a regular meeting on November 1, 2021. Under State law, the City is required to include the potential sequencing of district elections when publishing draft maps.

For the purposes of this legal requirement, the following option is presented. Elections for Districts A, B and C could be held in November 2022, and for Districts D and E, elections could be held in November 2024. Please note this potential sequencing is very preliminary, that in these draft maps the districts have been randomly assigned letters, and the sequencing may change before a district map is approved by the City Council. Further direction on sequencing will be requested during a future public hearing.

### **Public Input**

The City has been actively collecting public input on this process through a robust multilingual outreach campaign that includes print and digital materials, in-person workshops, pop-up activities, and these virtual public hearings. Input collected includes Communities of Interest (COI) form submissions on paper and online, hand-drawn and digital map submissions through the online tool DistrictR, as well as general public comments. The first of three in-person workshops

on map drawing was held Saturday, September 25, shortly after publication of this report. Following this hearing, two additional in-person workshops are being held on October 2.

As of September 23, the City has received 114 COI forms, 12 COI paper maps, and 27 online submissions through DistrictR's COI tool. According to the demographer, this is a significant amount of input as compared to other agencies they work with in California. All public input is available for review on the City's website [www.cityofsanmateo.org/districtelections](http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/districtelections). Input collected since the last public hearing is included as Attachments 7, 8 and 9.

### **Specific Direction on Maps**

The City Council is being asked to provide specific direction at this public hearing on:

- Any map(s) that should not be considered
- Which is the preferred map(s)
- Are there specific geographic features to be followed
- Any direction on boundary adjustments

Based on Council's direction the demographer can return to public hearing #4 with a revised set of draft map(s) for further review.

### **BUDGET IMPACT:**

At its June 21, 2021 meeting, the City Council appropriated \$150,000 to underwrite costs associated with moving to District elections.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

This public hearing is not a project subject to CEQA, because it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).)

### **NOTICE PROVIDED**

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Att 1 – Draft Map – Plan 1  
Att 2 – Draft Map – Plan 1 Report  
Att 3 – Draft Map – Plan 2  
Att 4 – Draft Map – Plan 2 Report  
Att 5 – Draft Map – Plan 3  
Att 6 – Draft Map – Plan 3 Report  
Att 7 – Public Comment – COI Online Map Submissions  
Att 8 – Public Comment – COI Hardcopy Submissions  
Att 9 – Public Comment – COI Map Drawing Submissions

### **STAFF CONTACT**

Patrice Olds, City Clerk  
[polds@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:polds@cityofsanmateo.org)  
(650) 522-7042

Samantha Weigel, Communications Manager  
[sweigel@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:sweigel@cityofsanmateo.org)  
(650) 522-7005

Prasanna Rasiah, City Attorney  
[prasiah@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:prasiah@cityofsanmateo.org)  
(650) 522-7020

Drew Corbett, City Manager  
[dcorbett@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:dcorbett@cityofsanmateo.org)  
(650) 522-7000