



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 21-0854, Version: 1

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Adopt a Long-term Advocacy Position (LAP) Related to the County of Santa Clara Supervisorial Districts that Represent the City of San Jose

BACKGROUND

At the August 10, 2021 meeting, Council expressed interest in adopting a long-term advocacy position related to the County of Santa Clara supervisorial districts that represent the City of San Jose.

Every 10 years, after the U.S. Census, all jurisdictions with district-based elections must redraw their district boundaries. The County of Santa Clara redraws supervisorial district boundaries, taking into account population changes reflected in the decennial Census. Redistricting is based on the idea of fair presentation and determines which neighborhoods and communities are grouped together into supervisorial district for purposes of electing a County Supervisor.

At the August 10 meeting, Council adopted a new long-term advocacy position (Council Policy 7.0 - Long-term Advocacy Positions - Planning and Management, F. Miscellaneous (8)):

“Advocate for Sunnyvale’s communities of interest during the county, state, special district and other local public agencies, and congressional redistricting process to support efforts that encourage one Legislative representative for each elective office that represents the residents of Sunnyvale. Advocate for Sunnyvale’s communities of interest during the county redistricting process to support efforts that encourage county representatives from at least two supervisorial districts.”

This report presents a Legislative Advocacy Position (LAP) for Council’s approval, which enables City advocacy on the County of Santa Clara’s redistricting process that represents the City of San Jose.

EXISTING POLICY

Council Policy 7.4.14, Legislative Advocacy Positions
Council Policy 7.0 F (8)

There is no existing City policy related to the County redistricting for neighboring jurisdictions.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a “project” within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378 (a) as it has no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

DISCUSSION

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara established the 2021 Advisory Redistricting Commission to conduct public hearings to receive input regarding the drawing of supervisorial district boundaries in compliance with state and federal law. The Commission will provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the placement of the supervisorial district boundaries.

To the extent practicable, the Board of Supervisors uses the following criteria when drawing district lines:

1. geographically contiguous districts (each supervisorial district should share a common border with the next),
2. the geographic integrity of local neighborhoods or communities shall be respected in a manner that minimizes its division,
3. geographic integrity of a city shall be respected in a manner that minimizes its division,
4. easily identifiable boundaries that follow natural or artificial barriers (rivers, streets, highways, rail lines, etc.), and
5. lines shall be drawn to encourage geographic compactness.

As the largest city in the County of Santa Clara, portions of San Jose are currently included in all five County supervisorial districts. As the second largest city in the County of Santa Clara, portions of Sunnyvale are currently included in two County supervisorial districts. This representation will influence how effectively a community is represented in county government.

The City does not have a policy position allowing advocacy regarding the County redistricting process for neighboring jurisdictions such as San Jose. To support this topic, a new long-term advocacy position such as the following would need to be adopted by Council:

“Urge the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to draw supervisorial districts as a numerical representation of the City of San Jose’s population so that the number of County supervisors representing San Jose does not exceed three County supervisors.”

Adoption of such a policy would allow the Mayor and staff to take a position on County of Santa Clara supervisorial districts that represent the City of San Jose.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact as a result of action taken by this report.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, Sunnyvale Public Library and Department of Public Safety. In addition, the agenda and report are available at the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff makes no recommendation. Upon approval of the consent calendar, Council approves a new long-term advocacy position as presented:

“Urge the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to draw supervisorial districts as a numerical representation of the City of San Jose’s population so that the number of County supervisors representing San Jose does not exceed three County supervisors.”

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