

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 25, 2024

PREPARED BY: Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk

REQUEST: PALM DESERT REDISTRICTING 2023: ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING CITY COUNCIL ELECTION DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND SCHEDULING ELECTIONS WITHIN THE DISTRICTS AND INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE ELIMINATING USE OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt Ordinance No. 1406 entitled, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING SECTION 2.38.040 OF THE PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE RELATED TO BY-DISTRICT ELECTIONS, DEFINING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, AND SCHEDULING ELECTIONS WITHIN THE DISTRICTS."
2. Introduce an Ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, REPEALING SECTION 2.38.050 OF CHAPTER 2.38 ("GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS") OF TITLE 2 ("ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL") OF THE PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE TO IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE RANKED CHOICE VOTING FOR THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL."

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On June 22, 2023, the City Council unanimously directed staff to take the necessary steps to transition to five single-member districts prior to the November 2024 Election and to eliminate use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in future elections.

In accordance with the FAIR MAPS Act, as amended, the City facilitated two map drawing workshops, three community workshops, and five public hearings. A total of six draft maps were submitted by the public and three draft maps were submitted by the City's demographer. On November 16, 2023, the City Council held a public hearing and considered all submitted maps and selected Map 109 as a focus map for further consideration.

On December 14, 2023, "Map 109 Renumbered" was presented by staff to ensure that the sequence of elections resulted in the districts being up for election in numerical order (such as Districts 1, 2, and 3 being up for election in November 2024 and Districts 4 and 5 in November 2026). Following the public hearing, the City Council reaffirmed its preference for "Map 109 Renumbered."

On January 11, 2024, City staff presented “Map 109 Renumbered B” noting that it was modified to correct the District 3 street alignment so that the boundaries follow Cook Street and El Dorado Drive rather than the interior streets of the Lakes Country Club. Following the public hearing, the City Council unanimously adopted “Map 109 Renumbered B” and introduced Ordinance No. 1406 defining district boundaries and scheduling elections within the districts.

It is important to note that the four members of City Council elected to the current District 2 (based on the map approved in 2022) will continue to serve as representatives of said district until their term expiration. In November 2024, Districts 1, 2, and 3 will be up for election and those elected will then serve as Councilmembers of the newly established districts. In November 2026, Districts 4 and 5 will go up for election and at that point those elected will represent said districts and the transition to five single-member districts will be complete.

NEXT STEPS:

Upon approval of the ordinance establishing district boundaries and scheduling elections, City staff will notify and provide implementation files to the Riverside County Registrar of Voters. At the February 15, 2024, City Council meeting, City staff will submit a Summary Report on Redistricting Outreach and as required by Elections Code 21130(f), a report that explains the basis on which the City Council made its decision in achieving compliance with the redistricting requirements and criteria.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by William Priest and the City Attorney’s Office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this action.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Ordinance No. 1406 – Establish District Boundaries and Schedule Elections
2. Draft Ordinance – Rescinding Use of Ranked Choice Voting