



**CITY OF ELK GROVE  
CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

**AGENDA TITLE:** A public hearing to receive input regarding the composition of election districts for transitioning to by-district (district-based) City Councilmember elections consistent with Elections Code section 10010

**MEETING DATE:** September 25, 2019

**PREPARED BY/  
DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Jason Lindgren, City Clerk

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Receive input from the public and City Council regarding the composition of election districts for transitioning to by-district (district-based) City Councilmember elections.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The City of Elk Grove currently has a “from-district” election method for its four Councilmembers, with a directly elected Mayor. Under this method, the Councilmembers must live within a designated district to be eligible to run for office for that district, with the voters of the entire city eligible to vote for each of the four Councilmembers, regardless of districts. The City’s Mayor is also elected directly by the voters of the entire city, but the Mayor may live in any district. Councilmembers serve for staggered four-year terms, and the Mayor serves a two year term.

The current from-district map was developed through public outreach conducted after the 2010 decennial census (Attachment 1). In developing the current district map, the City retained a professional demographer and engaged the community through outreach workshops from May to June of 2011, which generated 28 maps for consideration. The current district map was adopted by Resolution No. 2011-142 on July 13, 2011.

On August 28, 2019, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2019-191 expressing its intent to transition to a by-district (district-based) system of election for its four City Councilmembers consistent with Elections Code section 10010 (Attachment 2). Pursuant to section 10010, the city must hold at least two public hearings over a period of not more than 30 days, at which the public is invited to provide input regarding the composition of the proposed districts. Following those public hearings, and after all proposed maps are drawn, the City will need to hold at least two additional hearings over a 45-day period to provide input on the proposed maps, and prior to a vote to adopt or reject an ordinance establishing district-based elections. The City may adopt such ordinance without submitting the ordinance to the voters for approval. (Gov. Code § 34886)

**ANALYSIS:**

The first public hearing was held September 11, 2019 to invite public input regarding the composition of the districts. Eleven speakers provided comment at the public hearing: four speakers supported keeping a from-district system of election and seven speakers voiced support for a by-district system of election. Regarding input on the composition of election districts, a speaker in support of the from-district system of election noted a highly diversified representation of people in the current District 2, and a desire to preserve the rural lifestyle of Elk Grove. Speakers supporting by-district systems of election provided input on the composition of election districts voicing support to use the existing district map, to use existing census data (and to not wait for the 2020 census data), and to consider inclusion of more council seats.

The public hearing of September 25, 2019 is the second public hearing to invite public input regarding the composition of the districts. Staff recommends that the City Council open the public hearing and receive input from the public and the City Council as to the composition of the district maps.

In order to meet the time-frames set forth by state statute, staff has tentatively scheduled additional public hearings for the 2019 regularly scheduled meetings of October 9 and October 23, 2019, all subject to direction and input from the City Council. Additional public hearings may be necessary.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

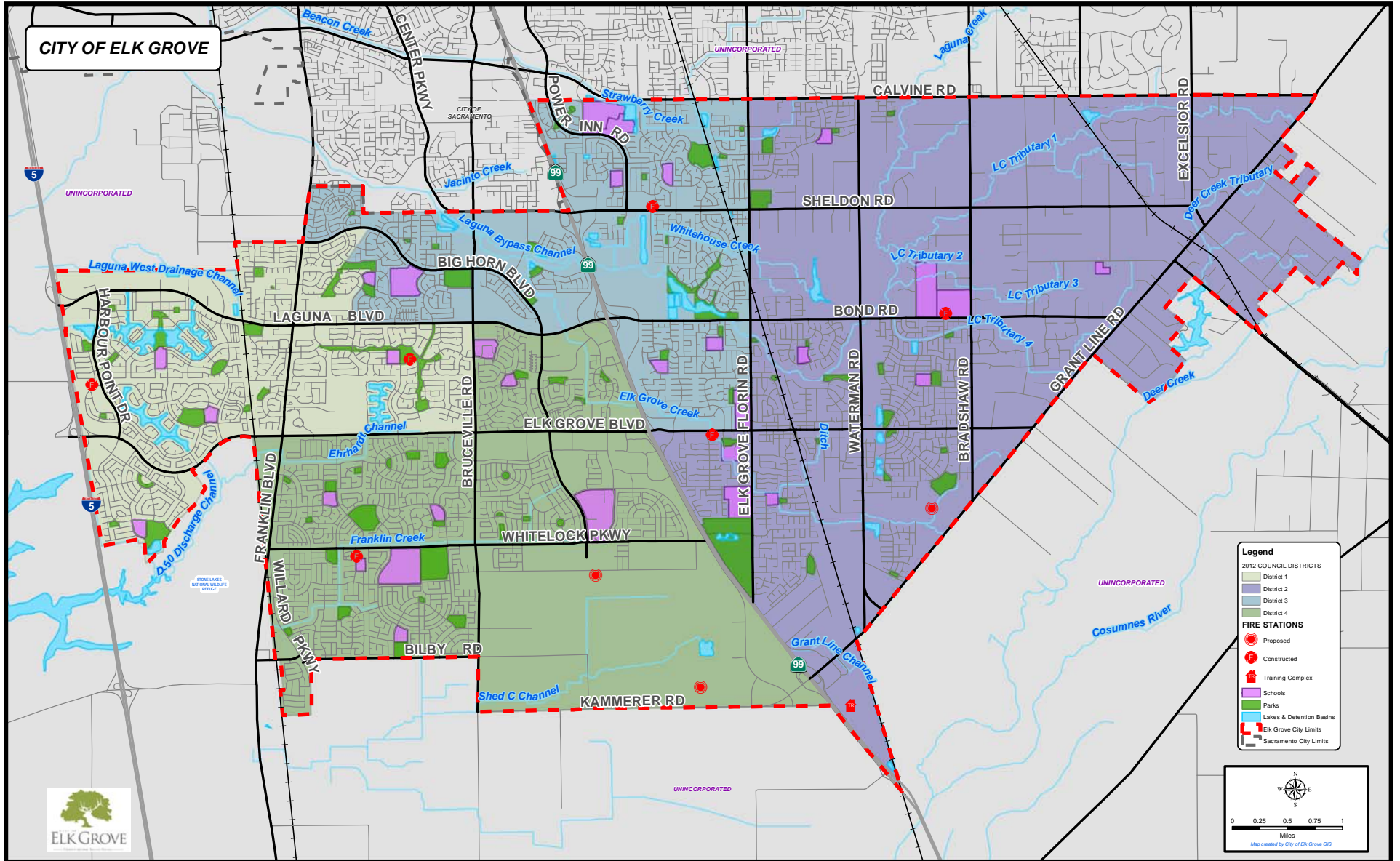
Demographer services to assist with the public hearing processes to transition to a by-district system of election were authorized in an amount not to exceed \$40,000 on August 28, 2019 by Resolution No. 2019-192.

If the City transitions to a by-district method of election, staff anticipates future election costs will increase by an estimated \$42,500, for a total estimated election cost for November 2020 of \$181,000, based on the current registered voter count of 95,000. Attachment 3 provides a review of election costs comparing by-district and from-district councilmember elections (with a directly elected mayor). The Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections Office released estimates of the November 2020 fees, and the finalized cost guide is expected to publish in spring 2020, which serves as the basis for the election budget submittal by the Office of the City Clerk for Fiscal Year 2020-21.

If the City Council ultimately adopts an ordinance moving to a by-district method of election, the City may also be liable for statutory costs to the prospective plaintiffs of up to an additional \$30,000 (as adjusted by inflation). The matter of those costs is dependent upon the City Council's future action on the decision whether to transition to a by-district election method following the public hearing process; therefore, such costs will be addressed at a later date as necessary.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Current from-district map
2. Resolution No. 2019-191 - Intent to Transition to By-District Elections
3. Cost Comparisons of by- and from-district systems of election



## RESOLUTION NO. 2019-191

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ELK GROVE  
DECLARING ITS INTENT TO TRANSITION TO BY-DISTRICT (DISTRICT-BASED)  
CITY COUNCILMEMBER ELECTIONS CONSISTENT WITH  
ELECTIONS CODE SECTION 10010**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Elk Grove ("City") is a general law city and currently has a "from-district" election method whereby four members of the City Council are required to reside within designated districts of the City, with voters of the entire City electing these four members of the City Council, which election method is considered an "at-large method of election" under Elections Code section 14026; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has an elected Mayor, pursuant to Government Code section 34902, whereby the Mayor is directly elected on a citywide basis by the voters of the entire City for a two-year term; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 15, 2019, the City received a letter by certified mail from the law firm of Shenkman & Hughes, P.C. asserting that the City's at-large City Council electoral system violates the California Voting Rights Act ("CVRA") and threatening litigation against the City if the City does not voluntarily change its at-large system of electing City Councilmembers; and

**WHEREAS**, Government Code section 34886 authorizes the City to adopt an ordinance to change to a by-district system without submitting the ordinance to the voters for approval; and

**WHEREAS**, while the City Council feels that the City's current system of election is consistent with applicable law, including, without limitation, the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (Elections Code sections 14025, *et seq.*) given the risk and costs of potential litigation over the City's election method, and other considerations of the City Council, the City Council intends to transition to a by-district (district-based) method of election whereby four members of the City Council would be elected by voters of an identified district within the City alone, all in furtherance of the purposes of the California Voting Rights Act of 2001; and

**WHEREAS**, the City intends to retain an elected mayor, who shall remain elected on a citywide basis by the voters of the entire City for a two-year term.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The City Council hereby expresses its intent to transition to a by-district (district-based) system of election for its four City Councilmembers, as set forth herein; and
- 2) The City Council intends to commence the process for drawing of district maps for district boundaries consistent with the procedures set forth at Elections Code section 10010, including the holding of public hearings and meetings as required by Elections Code section 10010 and/or other

applicable law; the estimated time frame to facilitate this transition to a by-district (district-based) election method is ninety (90) days from the date of passage of this resolution, which estimated time frame is subject to revision; and

- 3) The City Council directs the City Manager to retain the services of a qualified demographic consultant to assist in the development of districts maps; and
- 4) Following the development of district maps, the City Council intends to adopt an ordinance transitioning to a by-district (district-based) election method, pursuant to Elections Code section 10010 and Government Code section 34886, utilizing the district maps developed through the district mapping process; and
- 5) The City intends by the ordinance transitioning to a by-district (district-based) election method to retain the position of a directly elected mayor as an office elected on a citywide basis by the voters of the entire City for a two-year term.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the City Council of the City of Elk Grove this 28<sup>th</sup> day of August 2019

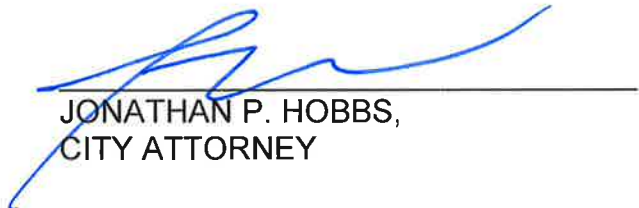


STEVE LY, MAYOR of the  
CITY OF ELK GROVE

ATTEST:

  
JASON LINDGREN, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
JONATHAN P. HOBBS,  
CITY ATTORNEY

**CERTIFICATION**  
**ELK GROVE CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 2019-191**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA        )  
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO    )        **ss**  
CITY OF ELK GROVE         )

*I, Jason Lindgren, City Clerk of the City of Elk Grove, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, approved, and adopted by the City Council of the City of Elk Grove at a regular meeting of said Council held on August 28, 2019 by the following vote:*

**AYES:**        **COUNCILMEMBERS:**    *Ly, Hume, Detrick, Nguyen, Suen*

**NOES:**       **COUNCILMEMBERS:**    *None*

**ABSTAIN:**   **COUNCILMEMBERS:**    *None*

**ABSENT:**    **COUNCILMEMBERS:**    *None*

  
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**Jason Lindgren, City Clerk**  
**City of Elk Grove, California**

Comparison of “From” and “By” District General Election Costs<sup>A</sup>

	Set-Up Fee per Contest	First contest (Mayor)	Additional Contests	Total	Cost Difference
<p><b>Current “From” district General Municipal Election Cost Model</b></p> <p>Mayor plus two districts per election – all voted at large = one ballot for all voters</p>	<b>\$ 1,887.00</b>	<p>\$ 1.2295 / registered voter</p> <hr/> <p>95,000<sup>B</sup> x \$1.2295</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>\$ 116,802.50</b></p>	<p>\$ 0.1035 / registered voter Two subsequent contests</p> <hr/> <p>95,000 x \$0.1035 x 2 subsequent contests</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>\$ 19,665.00</b></p>	<b>\$ 138,354.50</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<p><b>“By” district General Election Cost Model</b></p> <p>Mayor plus two districts per election – one at large contest plus two additional “by” district contests = three separate ballots for three different voter groups</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 1,887.00 x 3 contests</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>\$ 5,661.00</b></p>	<p>\$ 1.2295 / registered voter</p> <hr/> <p>95,000<sup>B</sup> x \$1.2295</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>\$ 116,802.50</b></p>	<p>\$ 1.2295/ registered voter Two additional contests</p> <p><i>District 1 or 2 (alternating elections)</i> 23,750<sup>D</sup> x \$1.2295 = <b>\$ 29,200.625</b></p> <p><i>District 3 or 4 (alternating elections)</i> 23,750<sup>D</sup> x \$1.2295= <b>\$ 29,200.625</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>\$ 58,401.25</b></p>	<b>\$ 180,864.75</b>	<i>Increase of</i> <b>\$ 42,510.25</b>

- A. Based on the Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections Proposed Fees and Charges for 2020 Elections
- B. Assumptions use a Registered Voter population of 95,000.
- C. Individual contest multiplier of 1.2295 per voter; multiplier of 0.1035 per voter for subsequent contests with same voter base.
- D. Assumption that the district maps utilized would approximately divide the registered voter count evenly (95,000÷4=23,750).

Running a measure (City-sponsored) and/or initiative/referendum/recall (voter-sponsored) under either the “from” or “by” district model has a cost of \$9,832.50 (a measure is considered a subsequent contest voted citywide (95,000 x 0.1035)).