AGENDA ITEM: Item No. 5

 MEETING DATE: \_\_August 19, 2021\_\_

DEPARTMENT: Administration

**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**SUBJECT:**

Public Hearing to Receive Input from the Community Regarding Redrawing of Election District Boundaries.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council (1) receive a report from staff and/or consultants on the redistricting process and permissible criterion to be considered to redraw district boundaries; (2) conduct a public hearing to receive public input on District boundaries.

**BACKGROUND:**

Every ten years, cities with a by-district election system must use new census data to review and, if needed, redraw district lines to reflect how populations have changed. The process is called redistricting. The process is designed to ensure that all districts in a city have as nearly equal population as is possible.

The City of Parlier has been in four districts with an at-large, elected mayor for a very long time and adheres to this redistricting process every ten years as required. It last examined the need to change the boundaries of districts based on the 2010 census all as required by law. Districts must now be reexamined and, potentially redrawn using the 2010 census data. Additionally, there is a new enactment, the Fair Maps Act adopted by the California Legislature as AB 849 which took effect January 1, 2020.

Under the Act the Council is required to draw and adopt boundaries using the following criteria in the listed order of priority. (Elections Code §21601(c)).

1. Comply with the federal requirements of equal population and the Voting Rights Act.

2. Geographically contiguous districts are required.

3. Undivided neighborhoods and “communities of interest” (socio-economic geographic areas) that should be kept together.

4. Easily identifiable boundaries.

5. Districts are required to be “compact”, (do not by-pass one group of people to get to a more distant group of people).

6. Shall not favor or discriminate against a political party.

Once the prioritized criteria are met, other traditional districting principals can be considered such as:

1. Minimize the number of voters delayed from voting in 2022 to 2024.

2. Respect voters’ choice/continuity in office.

3. Future population growth.

By law the City must hold at least four public hearings that enable community members to provide input on the drawing of district maps. At least one hearing must occur before the City draws draft maps. Two must occur after the drawing of draft maps and a fourth hearing can happen either before or after the drawing of the draft maps. The City can hold a public workshop instead of one of the required redistricting hearings.

The purpose of this hearing is to inform the public about the districting process and to hear from the community on what factors should be taken into consideration while creating district boundaries. The public is requested to provide input regarding communities of interest and other local factors that should be considered while drafting district maps. A “community of interest” under the relevant Elections Code (§21601(c)/21621(c)) is a “population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single district for the purpose of its effective and fair representation”.

Possible defining communities of interest might include, but are not limited to:

1. School attendance areas.

2. Natural dividing lines such as major roads, hills, or highways.

3. Areas around parks and other neighborhood landmarks.

4. Common issues, neighborhood activities, or legislative/election concerns.

5. Shared demographic characteristics such as similar levels of income, education or linguistic isolation; languages spoken at home; and single-family and multi-family housing unit areas.

The State of California adjusts the U.S. Census data which was only released on August 12 to include State prisoner population adjusted counts.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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Prepared by:

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