



DISTRICT ELECTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

What is the City of Brentwood's current election system?

- The City of Brentwood uses an at-large election system that allows all registered voters in the City to elect Council Members and the Mayor.

What are district elections?

- For Brentwood, the City would be divided into four separate districts, and only the voters that live within each district get to elect a City Council Member from that district.
- The Mayor would continue to be elected at-large.

Why is the City of Brentwood considering going from at-large to district elections?

The City has received a letter alleging that its at-large council member electoral system violates the California Voting Rights Act "CVRA." This type of letter is the first step a party must take to later bring a CVRA lawsuit against a City. While the City is confident that its current electoral system does not run afoul of the CVRA or any other provision of law, the City Council has determined that the public interest would be best served by considering the transition to a district-based electoral system because:

- the CVRA clearly favors district elections, making it very difficult to prevail in a CVRA lawsuit;
- of the extraordinary cost of defending a CVRA lawsuit;
- the risk of losing such a lawsuit would require the City to pay the prevailing plaintiffs' attorneys' fees and potentially having district maps drawn by a superior court judge or his or her designee; and
- there is a \$30,000 limit on the City's liability for a plaintiff's costs and attorneys' fees, if the City follows the CVRA's requirements for going to a district election system.

What are the criteria for creating election districts?

The criteria for creating districts include:

- Districts must be contiguous
- Districts should be nearly equal in population
- Other criteria that may be used include respecting communities of interest and neighborhoods, and following natural and man-made geography and topography

How will the election district boundaries be decided?

- The City Council will take comments from residents and interested community groups at two public hearings to understand the community's view of where district boundaries should be drawn.

How will the election district boundaries be decided? (continued)

- The City Council will then define the criteria they want a demographer to use in creating one or more proposed district maps. The demographer’s goal will be to draw map options that meet the criteria, and that takes into account comments from the community as prioritized by the City Council.
- The draft maps will be presented for public comment and review at two additional City Council public hearings.
- At those hearings, the City Council will provide further direction to the demographer, who will revise the map or maps, which will then go before the City Council for a final vote.

How can I participate in the decision-making process?

- You and your neighbors are encouraged to attend the public hearings (see meeting schedule below) as the community’s input in developing the voting districts is very important to this process.

Anticipated Meeting Schedule:

- **Monday, February 11, 2019 and Monday, March 11, 2019**
1st and 2nd public hearing before maps are developed to get community input on where district boundaries should be drawn. Draft maps will be developed from these public hearings.
- **Wednesday, April 3, 2019 and Wednesday May 1, 2019.**
Public hearing to present and take comment on the draft map or maps.
- **June 25, 2019**
The City Council will introduce an ordinance approving the final map and district boundaries.
- **July 9, 2019**
The City Council will consider adopting the ordinance.

All meetings will be held at the City Council Chambers, 150 City Park Way, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Check the City’s website for individual meeting materials. These meetings will also be streamed live at www.brentwoodca.gov

Once voting districts are established, how often are their boundaries reviewed?

- The voting districts will be reviewed every ten years following the Census.
- The next Census will be conducted in 2020, so the voting districts will be reviewed after the Census counts are released, and revised as necessary. The district revisions are anticipated to occur sometime in 2021.

Additional Questions? Please Contact Us!

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