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The process had both a technical and a community input component completed in tandem to define and create the best recommendation for creating the district boundaries to place on the November 2016 ballot. The technical process required the formation of nearly equal districts based on population (ideally within 5 percent from smallest to largest). However, secondary factors also played a major role including: topography, geography, cohesiveness, contiguity, compactness, integrity of territory, communities of interest and significant and sensitive land uses.

Community participation was vital and served to ensure proper formation of the districts. An assortment of materials, meetings and other social media communication tools were utilized to inform and engage the public throughout the technical process. The community participation element involved two rounds of public workshops, opportunities for interested individuals to meet directly with Compass Demographics (the demographer hired to assist the City with this process) to provide direct input on boundary lines and several public hearings at City Council meetings.

**How were the voter districts created?**

The City of Costa Mesa is proposing to change from the City's current at-large elections to geographically defined district elections. The objective of the Voter Districts Formation process is to ensure compliance with the California Voting Rights Act and ensure minority votes are not diluted. The City will place a ballot measure before the voters in November 2016 to consider a district-based election system map. The ballot will include a six-district map recommended by the City Council. If the map is approved, beginning with the November 2018 elections, the council will be comprised of six council members elected by voters residing in their district and a mayor elected directly by all Costa Mesa voters, regardless of district.

**Why is the voting process changing?**

In a district-based election, voters elect a single representative from within their district to represent them on the City Council. The intent of district-based elections is to provide opportunity for geographic and demographic representation based on each district's constituents with similar goals and concerns as others in their respective geographic area. District elections allow City Council representation across defined geographic sections of the City, providing opportunities for representation in communities that may not have previously had a Council Member serve from their neighborhood.

**What are district-based elections?**

The Voting Rights Act is federal legislation adopted in the 1960s protecting the rights of all citizens to participate in the voting process. This legislation has provisions ensuring underrepresented groups have equal opportunities for voting and representation. The California Voting Rights Act has additional provisions with the purpose of ensuring equal access to voting and representation. All City activities used to create these newly formed voter districts followed and complied with both the spirit and letter of the law, including those laid out by both the federal and state Voting Rights Acts.

**What is the Voting Rights Act and why is it important?**

**Answers About the Costa Mesa Voter Districts Formation**



# Costa Mesa Voter Districts Formation

The City of Costa Mesa has initiated a process that will change the way the community elects its future leaders from the current at-large elections to geographically defined district elections. On Tuesday, November 8, Costa Mesa residents will vote on this new process known as the District Based Election System. The objective of the District Based Election System is to ensure compliance with California Voting Rights Act protecting the rights of all citizens, including underrepresented groups, to participate in the voting process.

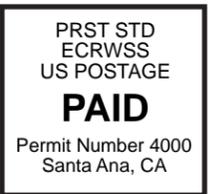
Community participation was vital for proper formation of the districts. Beginning in May 2016, the City engaged in a public process to identify district boundaries based on a technical process that considered population, communities of interest, cohesiveness, continuity, integrity and compactness of territory, topography and geography. As part of the community outreach effort, a series of community meetings and public hearings were held to gather public feedback. Four proposed maps were developed and refined as part of the public involvement process. On July 12, 2016, the City Council reviewed and approved a six-district based map that voters will consider during the November election as well as the actual text for the ballot measure.

If the District Based Election System is approved by voters at the November 2016 election, residents in the City of Costa Mesa will have the opportunity to vote for residing Council Member candidates who run in the district in which they live. In accordance with the City's existing municipal code, once elected, these City Council Members may serve up to two, four-year terms and provide direct representation of the unique population, issues and challenges found within the district they represent. Additionally, voters will elect a Mayor by citywide vote for up to two, two-year terms. Should it pass, the District Based Election System will begin to take effect in the 2018 election.

**Measure EE**



**City of Costa Mesa**  
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 Costa Mesa, CA 92628-1200  
**Measure EE**

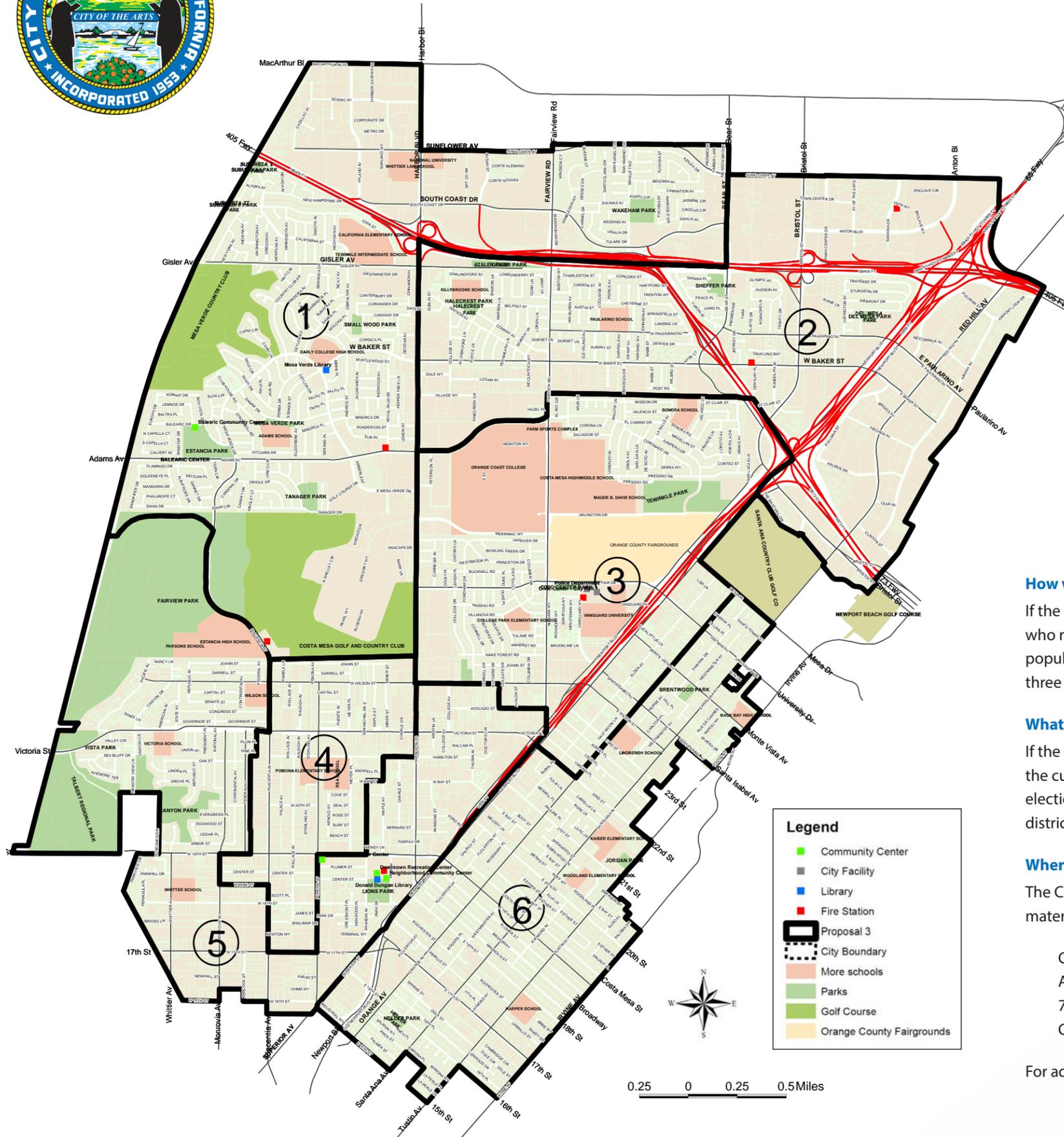


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# Proposed Council Voter Districts

Measure EE



## What is a community of interest?

A community of interest is any distinctive area within the City that has a definable group of people, unique geography or some other distinguishable feature or characteristic that would be undesirable to divide in the creation of voting districts. Some of these may have been clearly established and others were defined as a result of the process. This distinction required strong community input to ensure communities of interest were maintained together.

## Who approved the final districts?

Following community meetings, public input and public hearings, the consultant team hired to complete the technical study, Compass Demographics, provided a written report that City staff used to provide the City Council with a recommendation. Ultimately, the City Council voted to approve the voter districts map and only that one map will be placed on the November 2016 ballot for the Costa Mesa voters to consider. The City Council also determined that the measure should include a directly elected mayor.

## When will these new districts take effect?

If City voters adopt the November 2016 ballot measure, the new voter districts will immediately take effect. However, the first election to be held using these newly formed districts would occur in November 2018. Councilmembers will serve out their current terms.

## What will happen to existing council members if the districts go into effect?

Current Council Members will serve the remainder of the term to which they were elected and will continue to serve at-large regardless of where they live. Once a current Councilmember's seat is up for re-election, that seat will be subject to by-district election depending on the order in which districts are selected to vote.

## How will creating voting districts affect me?

If the ballot measure passes, beginning in 2018, residents in the City of Costa Mesa will have the opportunity to vote for candidates who run in the district in which they live. Once elected, these City Council Members will provide direct representation of the unique population, issues and challenges found within each of the districts. If the six-district map that will be placed on the ballot passes, three district seats will be on the November 2018 ballot and the remaining district seats will appear on the 2020 ballot.

## What if the district-based elections and corresponding six district map measure is not approved?

If the measure is defeated, it is possible that litigation will ensue. If that happens, while the court considers the potential proceedings, the current at-large election system will remain in place. The November 2016 ballot will contain only one measure to establish district elections which includes only the recommended six-district map. If voters defeat the measure, then both the question regarding district-based elections as well as the recommended map are defeated.

## Where can I get additional information?

The City has a project webpage at [www.costamesaca.gov](http://www.costamesaca.gov) under Voting District Formation where you can download all project materials. You can also email comments or questions to [districtelections@costamesaca.gov](mailto:districtelections@costamesaca.gov) or via direct mail to:

City of Costa Mesa  
 Attn: Brenda Green, City Clerk  
 77 Fair Drive  
 Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

For additional information, please call (714) 754-5225.

