



City of Long Beach

Working Together to Serve

Office of the City Attorney

Memorandum

DATE: August 11, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Charles Parkin, City Attorney
Amy Webber, Deputy City Attorney

SUBJECT: Participation in Citywide Redistricting Process

With the passage of Measure DDD in 2018 (Charter section 2500 et seq.), Long Beach undertook a new process for the redrawing of City Council district boundaries. Unlike the former process which was conducted by City staff and determined by the City Council, the current process is intended to be independent of Mayor and City Council control. The Independent Redistricting Commission (the "Commission"), consisting of 13 commissioners, and two alternates, was selected using a rigorous qualification and vetting process described in Charter section 2504. The Commission has been meeting actively since the beginning of the year, and since the beginning of the summer, has been meeting in each Council district, as required by Charter section 2507(b), to receive public testimony on communities of interest in each district. The next phase, in the fall, will focus on the drawing of district maps.

Because of the newness of the process, some questions have arisen regarding what involvement current Councilmembers may have in the redistricting process. Below are some questions and answers to address these concerns.

1. To what extent may Councilmembers participate in hearings and in the process?

Councilmembers, Council staff and the Mayor and the Mayor's staff do not have an official role in redistricting under the new Charter section; however, they may participate as individual residents. This includes attending hearings and meetings, and providing public testimony at public comment in their individual, private capacities and not as Councilmembers.. Charter section 2506(c) specifically prohibits the Commission from considering the place of residence of any individual, including any incumbent or political candidate, in the creation of a map.

2. May Councilmembers communicate with members of the Commission outside of a public meeting?

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Charter section 2507(d) prohibits the Commission from receiving communications, written or oral, about redistricting matters from anyone, except at a public meeting or through the process established for accepting written public comment. Commission bylaws require commissioners to disclose any such communications received outside of a public meeting. The Commission receives public testimony at each of their meetings, much as the Council does, both verbally and in writing. Councilmembers may submit comments in the established process, as discussed above in question 1.

3. May Councilmembers hold public meetings to inform constituents of the process and to encourage participation?

In coordination with City Manager redistricting staff, Council districts may hold informational and outreach meetings to inform residents of participation and opportunities to provide input. They may also facilitate distribution of information on background, meetings, hearings, schedules, etc. to interested constituents. This should be done solely for informational and outreach purposes, and should not be billed as any official participation in the redistricting process.

The Commission website contains resources which may be helpful in responding to these issues. Deputy City Manager Kevin Jackson can also provide information and assistance.

ARW

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cc: Michael J. Mais, Assistant City Attorney
Thomas B. Modica, City Manager
Independent Redistricting Commission