

## Written Comments - District Elections Public Hearing - April 27, 2021

### *Ahmed Rafi:*

I just wanted to provide my thoughts about districts formation for election in Lakewood. It is a long time overdue thing. Glad to see there is some diversity taking place now in the council, administration, and commissions of the city of Lakewood. But there is still a long way to go.

Regarding the boundaries of the district, the city needs to ensure equitable representation of the people and voters. Some demographics have been overlooked for a long time especially in the eastern part of the city. We need to do surveys and use the most updated demographic information for proper, equitable, and democratic representation. It needs to be done with full transparency.

### *Marisa Perez:*

I write in support of the City moving from at-large elections to district elections – this is long overdue in a diverse city such as Lakewood.

I ask that the City Council create a district for East Lakewood residents. East Lakewood has lacked representation and this portion of our city is defined as a “Community of Interest” in accordance with the CVRA

Latinos are 30% of Lakewood’s population and almost 30% of the voters – yet there is no Latino/a on City Council.

I believe there are other physical features of Lakewood that should be included in drawing the districts. I suggest that you keep the residents of the Bellflower Unified School District together. You could follow the Bellflower USD lines or the feeder elementary schools that serve Mayfair High School.

I urge the City Council to keep on schedule as best and possible and adopt an ordinance/map no later than December 15, 2021 and implementation no later than the June 2022 municipal election.

Thank you for your leadership for our City.

### *Maricela Cervantes*

I support the move by the City of Lakewood to move toward district elections for the city council. It is time for our city to modernize its government structures to be more democratic and responsive to the contemporary needs of its residents. This is difficult to achieve with the current at-large system.

Our community is diverse, yet it is one of the last local governments in the area that has not elected a Latino to its governing board. While Latinos are not a monolith, and are racially diverse, 30% of voters in our community identify as Latino. It is my hope that through district council elections a Latino can be elected, for the first-time, to our council.

I have lived in this area my entire life; representation matters to me and my family.

While I do not live in the East Lakewood area, I recognize this as an important community of interest with a concentration of Latino voters. I believe the needs of this area would be best served by a designated representative on the council.

Further, as an educator, I support school boundaries informing communities of interest in Lakewood. Schools are centers of community. I think the position of the city to collaborate with the school districts would be strengthened if there was a designated council representative for an area of the city that is part of a particular school district.

Lastly, I urge you to consider all the ways you engage the community on this important issue and add new ones to involve more people. As a resident, I assure you, there is room to build a stronger sense of community here. The pandemic has shown us all how important a strong sense of community is for our collective well-being.

### *Kathryn Marshall*

The following is submitted for tonight's public hearing regarding council voting districts. Thank you.

A community of interest in the City is the residential area bounded by South Street on the north, Carson Street on the south, Palo Verde Avenue on the west and the San Gabriel River on the east. The areas of common interest include: Mae Boyer Park, the West San Gabriel River Parkway Nature Trail, branch library access and being in the same school district.

### *Cassandra Chase*

I write in support of the City moving from at-large elections to district elections. I ask that the City Council create a district for my neighbors in East Lakewood. East Lakewood has lacked representation for years and this portion of our city could be defined as a “Community of Interest” in accordance with the CVRA.

I also urge the City Council to keep on the schedule provided and adopt an ordinance/map no later than December 15, 2021 and implement this change no later than the June 2022 municipal election.