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City Approves District-Based Elections 2016

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Friday, September 25, 2015

9/28/15 Update: Copy of the complaint (<http://www.ci.garden-grove.ca.us/city-files/montoya-vs-gg-summons-complaint.pdf>) and the final settlement documents (<http://www.ci.garden-grove.ca.us/city-files/montoya-vs-gg-stipulation-for-settlement%20after-mediation-fully-executed.pdf>) in the Montoya litigation.

Following tonight's special meeting of the Garden Grove City Council, the City announced that a settlement had been reached in a lawsuit brought against the City in July asserting that the City's current "at-large" method of electing City Council members violates the California Voting Rights Act. Pursuant to the settlement, a stipulated judgment will be entered requiring the City to replace the current at-large election process with a by-district election process for all five city council seats, commencing in 2016. After 2016, the Mayor will no longer be directly elected, but, instead, will be appointed by the rest of the City Council, similar to the system used in many other Orange County cities.

The lawsuit, filed by Garden Grove resident Rickk Montoya, sought a court order mandating that the City implement district-based elections in accordance with the California Voting Rights Act. The California Voting Rights Act prohibits public agencies from imposing an at-large method of election "that impairs the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or its ability to influence the outcome of an election."

Montoya's lawsuit claimed that Garden Grove residents of Latino background were denied effective political participation in Garden Grove City Council elections.

Pursuant to the settlement, five, non-overlapping, geographically-defined electoral districts will be drawn, and the City Council will consist of one member who resides within, and is nominated and elected by voters within, each of those five districts. The Electoral District Map will be designed in accordance with the California Government and Elections Codes.

The City will retain a demographics firm to assist in developing the district maps. The City will hold a series of community meetings and public hearings to obtain community input before finalizing the district maps.

In establishing districts, the City Council may take into account topography, geography, cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity, and compactness of areas, as well as community interests of the district. The size of the districts must be as nearly equal in population as is reasonably possible.

In November 2016, three seats of the Garden Grove City Council will be up for election. Another two seats will be up for election in 2018. Which three district seats will be up for election in 2016 will be determined in conjunction with the map drawing process. All five City Council members elected under the new by-district system will serve four-year terms.

Currently within Orange County, the City of Seal Beach employs the most similar 5-district electoral system in which the Mayor is appointed by the City Council. The majority of Orange County cities also have appointed Mayors instead of at-large Mayoral elections.

The settlement also includes a payment of \$290,000 for the plaintiff's costs and attorney fees.

This news release is offered in three other languages:

Spanish translation (<http://www.ci.garden-grove.ca.us/city-files/montoya%20settlement%20district%20elections%202015%20final%20spanish.pdf>)

Korean translation (<http://www.ci.garden-grove.ca.us/city-files/montoya%20settlement%20district%20elections%20%281%29.pdf>)

Vietnamese translation (http://www.ci.garden-grove.ca.us/city-files/montoya%20settlement%20district%20elections%202015_vi-us.pdf)

Mission

The mission of the City of Garden Grove is to provide responsible leadership and quality services as we promote safety, cultural harmony, and life enrichment.

Vision

The vision of Garden Grove is to be a safe, attractive, and economically vibrant city with an informed and involved public. We are a diverse community that promotes our unique attributes and preserves our residential character.

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Hours:

Monday through Thursday
7:30am-5:30pm

Alternating Fridays
7:30am-5:00pm

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<p>We will be live-tweeting the event on December 11 #act16</p>		
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