

**OCM 12-03 Consider Elimination of Numbered Council Seats**

**Lead Department** Office of the City Manager

**History** 1 year ago None 2 years ago None

**1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?**

This study would consider the pros and cons of eliminating numbered Council seats. Fiscal impacts to the City would be analyzed, as would the pros and cons of election by "ranked-choice" voting. This study was precipitated by the sense that on the part of some Councilmembers, elections could be improved by the elimination of numbered Council seats and the adoption ranked choice voting.

**2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?**

**Section 601. Term and Election.**

Each member of the City Council shall be elected from the City at large at the General Municipal Election for a term of four years. The term shall commence at the first regular meeting in January, at which the City Council shall certify the election results, and shall continue until a successor is elected and qualified.

The office of each member of the Council is a separate elective office to be separately filled at any election.

The person receiving the highest number of all the votes cast for a particular elective office at any election shall be deemed and declared elected to that office.

Each Council seat shall be designated by a number from 1 through 7 and shall be known as "Councilmember Seat Number\_\_\_\_\_." The designation given to each elective office shall be used in all elections, nomination papers, certificates of election, and all other papers pertaining to such office, and to designate the incumbent of such office.

Seats numbered 1, 2, and 3 shall be filled at the General Municipal Election held in 1977 and every fourth year thereafter. Seats numbered 4, 5, 6, and 7 shall be filled at the General Municipal Election held in 1979 and every fourth year thereafter. (Amended effective January 14, 1955, July 8, 1968, December 31, 1975, December 21, 1976, January 17, 1992, November 30, 1995 and November 28, 2007: previously Section 700)

**3. Origin of issue**

**Council Member(s)** Councilmembers Whittum, Meyering, Moylan

**4. Staff effort required to conduct study** Moderate

**Briefly explain the level of staff effort required**

The City Clerk will coordinate research to provide information and analysis regarding costs, impacts and possible benefits to be gained by eliminating numbered Council seats. This portion of the study would require relatively minor staff effort to conduct. The inclusion of consideration of "ranked-choice" voting as a method of electing Councilmembers would require significantly more staff resources to research and prepare informational materials.

**5. Multiple Year Project?** No **Planned Completion Year** 2012

**6. Expected participation involved in the study issue process?**

Does Council need to approve a work plan? No  
Does this issue require review by a Board/Commission? No  
If so, which?  
Is a Council Study Session anticipated? Yes

7. Briefly explain if a budget modification will be required to study this issue

Amount of budget modification required 0

Explanation

8. Briefly explain potential costs of implementing study results, note estimated capital and operating costs, as well as estimated revenue/savings, include dollar amounts

Are there costs of implementation? Yes

Explanation

To implement elimination of numbered Council seats, a charter amendment would be required. A charter amendment added to the next regular municipal election in the City of Sunnyvale (November 5, 2013) would add an estimated \$40,000 to the cost of the election. A charter amendment held during an off-election year for the City would cost significantly more as the City would pay for the measure at the higher "initial issue" rate, rather than at the "additional issue" rate. Should the charter amendment be approved, the County Registrar of Voters would incur one-time costs to process the change in the information management system and this cost would be charged to the City. Aside from the cost of the ballot measure and the initial cost of implementation, no additional on-going costs of administering elections of City Council Members is anticipated at this time.

9. Staff Recommendation

Staff Recommendation None

If 'Support', 'Drop' or 'Defer', explain

Reviewed by

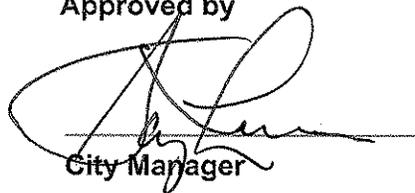


Department Director

1-13-12

Date

Approved by



City Manager

1-16-12

Date