

VOTING DISTRICTS SETTLEMENT

Frequently Asked Questions

How does this settlement affect Escondido voters?

Under the settlement, Escondido will be divided into four districts with each district to be represented by a Council member living within that district. The Mayor will continue to represent the entire City.

Who will determine the districts?

The districts will be determined by an independent, non-partisan Redistricting Commission consisting of 7 members. The members will be chosen by a selection panel of retired San Diego County judges.

Can the districts be changed?

Districts may be re-drawn every 10 years.

How soon will this take affect?

The first Independent Redistricting Commission must be chosen by September 1, 2013 and the proposed districts must be drafted and approved at least four months before the November 2014 election. The first elections under the new system will occur in 2014.

How will the districts be chosen?

The districts will be chosen according to legal requirements in the United States Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act and shall have reasonably equal populations. Districts are to be geographically contiguous, and encourage geographic compactness. As required by law, they will respect the geographic neighborhoods and communities of interest, including any racial, ethnic, or language minorities. District boundaries will be created in a process involving significant public input, including several public hearings.

What did this agreement cost?

The City will reimburse Plaintiff's attorney fees and costs of \$385,000. In addition to the City's in-house legal costs, the City has spent approximately \$200,000 in defending the case and preparing the settlement.

Why did the City agree to this settlement?

The California Voting Rights Act makes an "at-large" voting system very difficult to have in a diverse community, so more and more cities and special districts are moving to a district election based system. In addition, by resolving this matter without a lengthy litigation process, the City is saving millions of dollars in litigation costs. Getting this litigation out of the way will enable the City to continue focusing on economic development and job creation – the issues that matter to all Escondido residents.