

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-08-6957

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA DECLARING ITS INTENTION TO TRANSITION FROM AT-LARGE TO BY-DISTRICT ELECTIONS PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS CODE SECTION 10010 AND SETTING FORTH THE PROCESS FOR TRANSITIONING TO DISTRICT ELECTIONS

WHEREAS, City Council members of the City of Signal Hill are currently elected by at-large elections, whereby each member is elected through a city-wide vote; and

WHEREAS, the California Voting Rights Act became law in 2003, and provides a means for attorneys and plaintiffs to seek a change from an agency's at-large election system to a different system, typically a by-district election system, and also allows for the recovery of a plaintiff's attorneys' fees; and

WHEREAS, on June 29, 2026, the City received a certified letter from Kevin Shenkman of the law firm of Shenkman & Hughes, on behalf of his client, the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, asserting that the City's at-large council election system may violate the California Voting Rights Act ("CVRA") and threatened litigation if the City does not voluntarily transition to a district-based election system for electing its council members; and

WHEREAS, the letter received by the City from Mr. Shenkman asked for a response from the City by August 10, 2026, but did not include any evidence to support a claim of a CVRA violation, and the City is not aware of any such evidence at this time and denies that its election system violates the CVRA or any other similar law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has nevertheless determined due to the high cost of litigation, including the potential payment of plaintiff's attorneys' fees, that the public interest is better served by initiating a process for transition to a district-based election system in order to avoid the costs associated with defending a lawsuit under the CVRA; and

WHEREAS, the California Legislature has amended Elections Code Section 10010 to provide a method whereby a jurisdiction may expeditiously transition to a district-based election system and avoid the high cost of litigation under the CVRA; and

WHEREAS, Section 10010 will delay CVRA litigation and cap attorneys' fees associated with a CVRA claim if, within 45 days of receipt of a claim under the CVRA, the City adopts a resolution stating its intention to transition to district-based elections, and within 90 days thereafter (or as otherwise stipulated by the parties), the City adopts an ordinance transitioning to a district-based election system consistent with the intent and purpose of the California Voting Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to declare its intention to adopt an ordinance pursuant to Government Code Section 34886, transitioning from at-large to district-based elections for the next general municipal election, establish specific steps it will undertake to facilitate this transition, and establish an estimated time frame for doing so.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL HEREBY:

Section 1. Recitals

That the recitals set forth above are true and correct.

Section 2. Intent to Transition to District-Based Elections

That the City Council intends to consider adoption of an ordinance, as authorized by Government Code Section 34886, consistent with Elections Code Section 10010, to transition to a district-based election system for use in the City's General Municipal Election for City Council members and directs the City Attorney to inform Mr. Shenkman of the City's intent to transition from an at-large election system to a by-district system by November 9, 2026.

Section 3. Upcoming Actions

That the City Council shall take, or shall cause City staff to take, the following actions, as close as possible to 90 days following the effective date of this Resolution, unless extended as permitted under Elections Code section 10010, taking into consideration time required for public outreach and input, agenda requirements under the Brown Act, the City Council's meeting schedule, and the timeframes established under Elections Code section 10010:

- (a) Conduct public outreach, including to non-English-speaking communities, to explain the districting process and to encourage public participation;
- (b) Before drawing a draft map or maps of the proposed district boundaries, hold at least two public hearings at which the public is invited

to provide input regarding the composition of the districts and to consider district boundaries as provided in Elections Code Section 10010;

(c) After drawing a draft map or maps, publish the draft map(s) and the potential sequence of the district elections, and hold at least two public hearings at which the public is invited to provide input regarding the content of the draft map or maps and the proposed sequence of elections; and

(d) Hold a public hearing at which the City Council will consider and adopt an ordinance establishing district elections, including the adoption of a district boundary map and the sequence of the district elections.

Section 4. Severability

That the City Council declares that, should any provision, section, paragraph, sentence or word of this Resolution be rendered or declared invalid by any final court action in a court of competent jurisdiction or by reason of any preemptive legislation, the remaining provisions, sections, paragraphs, sentences or words of this Resolution as hereby adopted shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 5. Repeal of Conflicting Provisions

That all the provisions heretofore adopted by the City or the City Council that are in conflict with the provisions of this Resolution are hereby repealed.

Section 6. Effective Date

That this Resolution shall take effect upon its adoption.

Section 7. Certification

That the City Clerk shall certify to the passage and adoption of this resolution and enter it into the book of original resolutions.

Section 8. CEQA

That the proposed Resolution is not a "project" pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. Specifically, the Resolution simply states the City Council's intention to transition from at-large to by-district elections, which will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Moreover, under Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, this Resolution is exempt from the requirements of CEQA because it can be seen with certainty that the provisions contained herein would not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council of Signal Hill, California on this 11th day of August 2026.

TINA L. HANSEN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

DARITZA PEREZ, CITY CLERK