

ORDINANCE NO. 23-4

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA, ADDING SECTION 2.04.005 TO THE SANTA CLARITA MUNICIPAL CODE ESTABLISHING BY-DISTRICT ELECTIONS, DEFINING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, AND SCHEDULING ELECTIONS WITHIN THE DISTRICTS

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA, DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Recitals

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Santa Clarita (City) is comprised of five Councilmembers elected to staggered terms in at-large elections; and

WHEREAS the City was sued under the California Voting Rights Act, challenging the City's at-large elections; and

WHEREAS the lawsuit was resolved via a Consent Decree, which requires that the City switch to election of the City Council by districts; and

WHEREAS the City has conducted public hearings and reviewed draft maps as required by the Consent Decree and adopts this ordinance to implement the switch to election of the City Council by districts.

SECTION 2. Section 2.04.005 is hereby added to the Santa Clarita Municipal Code to read as follows:

"2.04.005 COUNCIL ELECTED BY DISTRICT

A. By-District Elections. Pursuant to California Government Code section 34886, members of the City Council shall be elected by district in five (5) single-member districts.

1. Councilmembers shall be elected in the electoral districts established by subdivision B of this Section and subsequently reapportioned as provided by State law. Elections shall take place "by district" as that term is defined in California Government Code section 34871, meaning one Councilmember shall be elected from each district, by the voters of that district alone.
2. A Councilmember elected or appointed to represent a district must reside in that district and be a registered voter in that district, and any candidate for City Council must reside in, and be a registered voter in, the district in which he or she seeks election at the time nomination papers are issued.
3. Termination of residency in a district by a Councilmember shall create a vacancy for that City Council district unless a substitute residence within the

district is declared and established within thirty (30) days after the termination of residency.

4. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Section, each Councilmember in office at the time this Section takes effect shall continue in office until the expiration of the term to which he or she was elected. In the event a vacancy occurs before the expiration of the term of a Councilmember in office at the time this Section takes effect, a person who is appointed or elected by special election to fill such vacancy may reside anywhere within the corporate boundaries of the City. A person appointed or elected to fill such a vacancy shall hold the office in accordance with general law and applicable provisions of the Santa Clarita Municipal Code.
- B. Council Districts and District Elections. All five Councilmembers shall be elected on a “by district” basis from the council districts shown and numbered on the map titled “City of Santa Clarita District Map” attached as Exhibit A, a copy of which shall be on file in the City Clerk’s office. In 2024, and every four years thereafter, the following two Council districts shall be elected by district: District 1 and District 3. In 2026, and every four years thereafter, the following three Council districts shall be elected by district: District 2; District 4; and District 5. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event of a Council vacancy prior to the 2024 election, the City Council shall reconsider this provision in light of the vacancy provisions of the Consent Decree.
- C. Amendment of District Boundaries. Pursuant to Elections Code section 21601, as it may be amended from time to time, the Council shall adjust the boundaries of any or all of the districts following each decennial federal census to ensure that the districts are in compliance with all applicable provisions of law.”

SECTION 3. CEQA. Based upon the whole of the administrative record before it, the City Council hereby finds that a transition from at-large to by-district elections is exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines sections 15061(b)(3) and 15320. Adoption of this ordinance is an organizational and administrative activity of the City, does not have the potential to result in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment, and is therefore not a project for purposes of CEQA.

SECTION 4. Severability. If any section, subsection, subdivision, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, then such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The City Council of the City of Santa Clarita hereby declares they would have adopted this ordinance, and each section, subsection, subdivision, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that anyone or more sections, subsections, subdivisions, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions thereof be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 5. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect thirty days from its passage and adoption.

SECTION 6. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance and shall cause the same to be published as required by law. The City's demographer shall transmit the required data files to the County Registrar of Voters/Elections Official to document the election district boundaries.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 13th day of June 2023.


MAYOR

ATTEST:


CITY CLERK

DATE: 6/20/23

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) ss.
CITY OF SANTA CLARITA)

I, Mary Cusick, City Clerk of the City of Santa Clarita, do hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance No. 23-4 was regularly introduced and placed upon its first reading at a special meeting of the City Council on the 30th day of May 2023. That thereafter, said ordinance was duly passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council on the 13th day of June 2023, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS: Weste, Smyth, Miranda, Gibbs

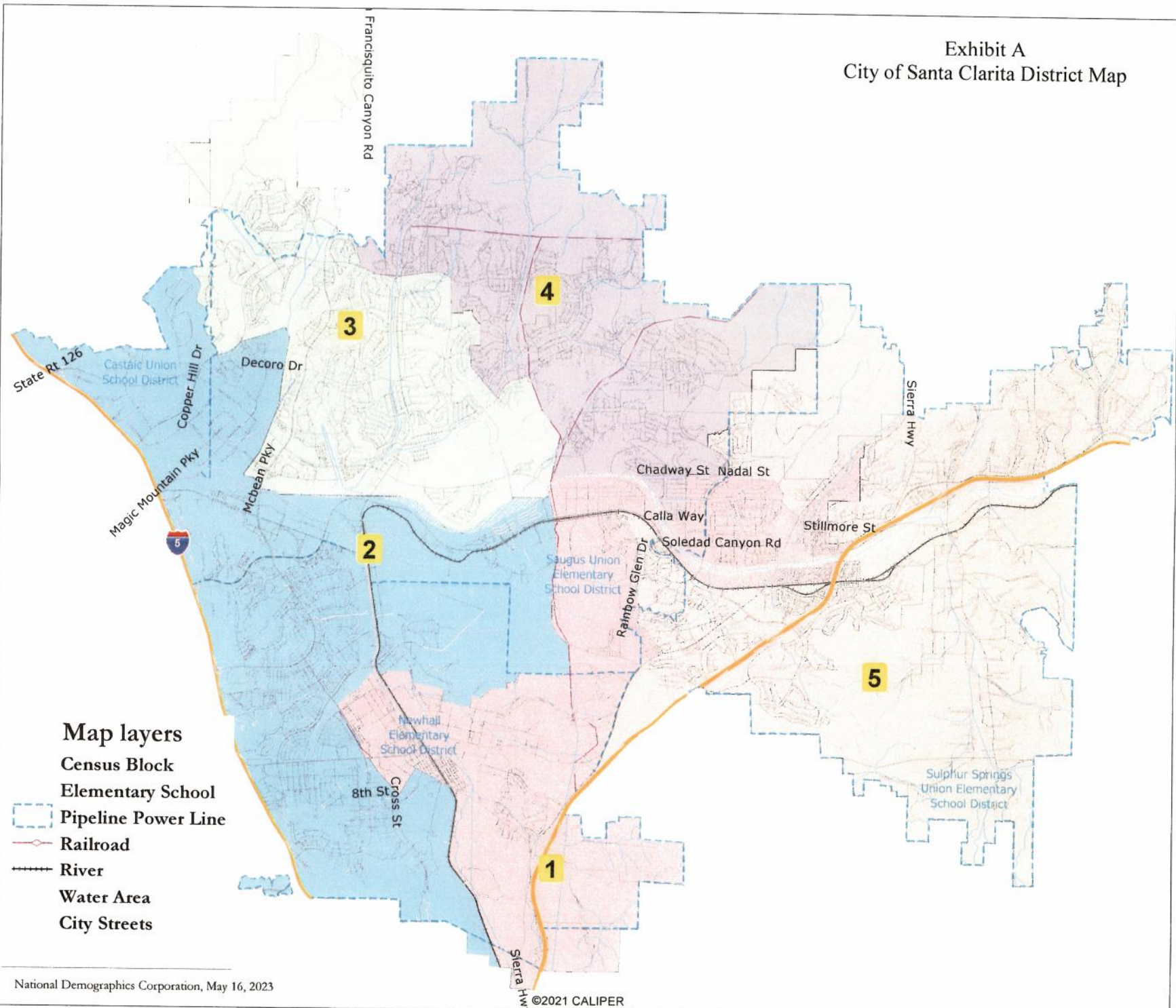
NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS: McLean

ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: None

AND I FURTHER CERTIFY that the foregoing is the original of Ordinance No. 23-4 and was published in The Signal newspaper in accordance with State Law (G.C. 40806).


CITY CLERK

Exhibit A
City of Santa Clarita District Map



Map layers

- Census Block
- Elementary School
- Pipeline Power Line
- Railroad
- River
- Water Area
- City Streets