

Town of Apple Valley

NEWS RELEASE

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Public hearing set to discuss by-district voting in Apple Valley

Apple Valley, CA – March 7, 2019: On March 26 the Apple Valley Town Council will hold the first in a series of Public Hearings to discuss switching from at-large to by-district voting.

The members of the Town Council are currently elected through an at-large election system, which means that the electors from the entire Town vote for the council members. In a by-district election system, a council candidate must reside within an election district and is elected by only voters residing within that geographic area.

In recent years, a number of cities in California have been sued under the California Voter's Rights Act (CVRA) of 2002 by plaintiffs alleging that at-large election systems result in "racially polarized" voting. On Jan. 2, the Town received a letter from Kevin Shenkman of Shenkman & Hughes, PC, alleging that the Town's at-large election system diluted the ability of certain protected classes of persons within the Town to elect candidates of their choice based on the CVRA.

"Transitioning to a by-district election system will cost approximately \$60,000, which is significantly less than the millions of dollars a potential lawsuit would cost," said Town Attorney Thomas Rice.

The council declared its intent to transition the Town's voting procedures at a special meeting held on Feb. 15.

The upcoming public hearing is the first of two that will explain the districting process and discuss drawing district boundaries, a process that will require the Town to retain a demographic expert. The second Public Hearing is scheduled for April 9.

Next steps will include publishing draft maps, tentatively set for completion by May 3.

Additional public hearings are tentatively scheduled for May 14 and June 11 to receive input regarding the maps and the proposed sequence of elections. In addition to the formal Public Hearings, four public workshops will be held between April and June to allow for additional public discourse on the process. The Town Council will then consider the ordinance at its July 23 regular meeting.

For a complete schedule of public outreach events or more information on the process of transitioning to by-district elections, visit the Town Clerk's page at www.applevalley.org/services/town-clerk/district-based-elections.

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