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Two Districts – One Santa Clara

Santa Clara's Community Initiated "Measure A" Gives Voters More Say, Increases Diversity, and Geographic Inclusion

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (May 7, 2018) – Santa Clara voters have the opportunity to vote on "Measure A," a community solution established by residents to update the way future Council Members would be elected. Aimed at enhancing candidate representation with geographic and diverse inclusiveness on the Council, Santa Clarans will cast their vote on creating two districts, each of which would be represented by three Council Members, on June 5.

"Measure A is a community driven, grassroots effort that was created through community meetings and public input from residents, community groups and election experts," said Mayor Lisa Gillmor.

The resident-based Santa Clara Charter Review Committee, composed of 13 Santa Clara voters, spent extensive time reviewing and examining different voting models and after robust discussion and public engagement, determined that the Santa Clara solution, Measure A, would help people throughout Santa Clara's geographic boundaries and diverse backgrounds get elected to public office in the City. On March 6, 2018, the City Council, unanimously (6-0-1) agreed with the Charter Committee, and voted to place Measure A on the June ballot. The City established two committees, composed of volunteer city residents, who solicited and received input from hundreds of residents through 16 public hearings, as well as online platforms, sponsored by the City.

"The City of Santa Clara currently elects its Council Members from the entire City at large and each candidate must designate which numbered seat they are running for," said City Attorney Brian Doyle. "If the ballot measure is approved by the voters, there would be two districts, with three Council Members representing each district, and, when available in Santa Clara County, all elected officers would be elected using the single transferrable voter method of ranked choice voting."

In addition to establishing two representative district established by a community group, when the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters is able, voters would select candidates in order of choice, using a type of ballot called "ranked choice voting." After the Registrar of Voters has updated the voting facilities, the single transferable method of ranked choice voting would be implemented: allowing voters the opportunity to rank candidates in order of preference.



“Several major cities utilize this type of voting method, including San Francisco and Oakland,” said Acting City Clerk, Jennifer Yamaguma. “However, ranked choice voting relies on the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters (ROV) having the necessary technology properly implemented; therefore, Santa Clara will wait until the ROV has the proper assurances in place and public education has been completed prior to applying to local elections.”

If approved, candidates will be required to reside within the district they are running in and only voters residing in the district can vote on candidates within their given district. El Camino Real would become the general boundary between the two proposed districts, the details of which are scheduled to be finalized by the City Council at the May 22, 2018, City Council meeting.

Currently, City Council members are elected in a voting format called “at-large voting” by numbered seat in which members are elected by the city’s entire voting population, rather than voters in specific parts of the city. In the current system, candidates are elected for numbered seats and serve staggered, four-year terms.

To find out more about Measure A and the June 5 Special Election, visit the City’s website at SantaClaraCa.gov/MeasureA, and attend or watch the upcoming City Council meeting on May 8.

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About the City of Santa Clara:

Located at the heart of Silicon Valley about 45 miles south of San Francisco, the City of Santa Clara truly is “The Center of What’s Possible.” Incorporated in 1852, Santa Clara covers an area of 19.3 square miles with a population of 120,000. Santa Clara is home to an extraordinary array of high-tech companies, including Applied Materials, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Nvidia, Oracle, and Ericsson. The City of Santa Clara is also home to Santa Clara University, California’s Great America Theme Park, and Levi’s® Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers and Super Bowl 50. For more information, visit www.SantaClaraCA.gov.