

City of Santa Rosa – District Elections
Santa Rosa Metro Chamber & Sonoma County Alliance

While the Chamber and Alliance do not necessarily disagree with the concept of district elections in Santa Rosa, this is clearly not the manner in which any city should upend its political structure. Any citizen interested in good governance should be very concerned about this shotgun process that the city is being forced to undertake. We believe the council's intention should be to treat this as an interim measure to ease into district elections and undertake a larger, more disruptive effort after the 2020 Census.

The Santa Rosa Metro Chamber and Sonoma County Alliance endorse these principles for the 2018 City Council districts:

-Cause minimal disruption

We believe that this City Council has been a very effective and collaborative one. The last thing this community needs right now is multiple councilmembers being drawn into the same district and having to worry about politics when the City is facing such a monumental challenge recovering from the recent wildfires. We will have an opportunity in 2020 after the next census to deliberately start from scratch; the best approach under these conditions is to ease into council districts. District elections have been put to the voters before and were roundly rejected, clearly indicating that the electorate does not desire a massive disruption. To achieve minimal disruption, current councilmembers' residences should and must be taken into account when creating districts.

-Leave no citizen without representation

The goal of council districts is to give each community of interest a voice and create an incentive structure in which councilmembers are directly accountable and responsive to a specific community or neighborhood. If the result of 2018 redistricting leaves entire districts without a councilmember, then this effort has failed by definition. We believe that no district should be left "orphaned" after the 2018 elections. The only way to achieve this is to ensure that the 3 districts up for election in 2018 correspond with the councilmembers whose terms end in 2018.

-Have as many districts representing the downtown core as possible

Downtown Santa Rosa is at a critical time in its history. The recent Courthouse Square reunification and efforts to create a Downtown Action Organization require as many council districts as possible to have a direct stake in downtown's future.

-Have Coffey Park and Fountaingrove in separate districts

With the recent devastation in Coffey Park and Fountaingrove we feel it would best serve both communities to be in separate districts. This allows one city council member to focus on each area individually to better support their recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposed map. We believe this map achieves the stated goals of district elections while avoiding massive disruption in this vital time for Council and City unity.