



City Council Agenda Item Staff Report

CITY OF SAN BRUNO

DATE: June 7, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Jovan D. Grogan, City Manager

SUBJECT: Provide Additional Direction Regarding Potential November 2022 Ballot Measures Regarding the Elected Mayor System and Enact Term Limits to the Elected Mayor and Council Offices

BACKGROUND:

The City Council previously directed staff to draft materials for two ballot measures for the November 2022 general election.

1. Establish a system whereby voters would elect five councilmembers, who would then select a mayor from amongst themselves annually. This measure would change the current system in which voters elect four councilmembers to four-year terms and directly elect a Mayor for a two-year term. If adopted, it would also require increasing the number of districts from four to five at a later date.
2. Establish term limits of no more than three consecutive terms for councilmembers elected in November 2022 and thereafter, with no limit on the total number of terms served. Both measures would repeal existing ordinances.

Pursuant to City Council direction, staff is prepared to develop separate staff reports, resolutions, and ordinances so the measures can appear on the ballot separately. An affirmative vote of at least three councilmembers is required to place each measure on the ballot, and each would require a majority vote of the people to adopt.

After conducting a poll of likely voters, the City's consultants have recommended that consideration be given to combining these two measures into one "election reform" measure, should the City Council desire to move forward with both items. The purpose of this staff report is to provide the City Council with proposed ballot language for each measure separately, as well as for one combined measure, so the City Council can provide staff with additional direction. As noted in prior meetings, three affirmative votes of the City Council will be required to place any of these measures on the ballot.

DISCUSSION:

For the ballot measure regarding term limits only, the language could read as follows:

“For terms starting after the effective date of this election, shall councilmembers be limited to three consecutive four-year terms, and the elected Mayor limited to three consecutive two-year terms, with no limit on the total number of terms served?”

For the ballot measure regarding the mayor selection process only, the language could read as follows:

“Shall the number of city council districts be expanded from four to five, with the mayor chosen annually by the council from among its members, rather than being separately elected every two years?”

If the two ballot measures were to be combined, the language could read as follows:

“To reform local elections, shall: 1) councilmembers be limited to three consecutive four-year terms, and the elected Mayor limited to three consecutive two-year terms, with no limit on the total number of terms served; and shall 2) the number of city council districts be expanded from four to five, with the mayor chosen annually by the council from among its members, rather than being separately elected every two years?”

Once the City Council provides direction regarding whether to place separate measures or a combined measure on the ballot, staff can prepare the appropriate documents for final City Council approval at a subsequent meeting. The deadline for submitting ballot measures to the County is August 12.

FISCAL IMPACT:

On March 9, 2022, the County elections office provided staff with an estimated range of \$93,000-\$112,000 for the upcoming municipal election plus one ballot measure. The County estimated that each additional ballot measure would add approximately \$10,000 to the cost of the election. Combining the two proposed ballot measures would result in a savings of approximately \$10,000. Additionally, the City would incur costs to convert from 4 to 5 council districts for the November 2024 election should the ballot measure to change the mayor selection process be approved on the November 2022 ballot. The cost to convert from 4 to 5 council districts is estimated to be a one-time cost of \$60,000 – \$80,000, which could be offset overtime by saving from conducting a mayoral election every 2 years. The specific savings from conducting a mayoral election every 2 years vs. holding an election for a 5th councilmember every 4 years could not be at the time of this report.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Request additional information before deciding whether to place the measures on the ballot separately or together;
2. Direct staff to discontinue work on one or more of the ballot measures.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide Additional Direction Regarding Potential November 2022 Ballot Measures to Establish a Rotational Mayor System and Term Limits

ATTACHMENTS:

None.