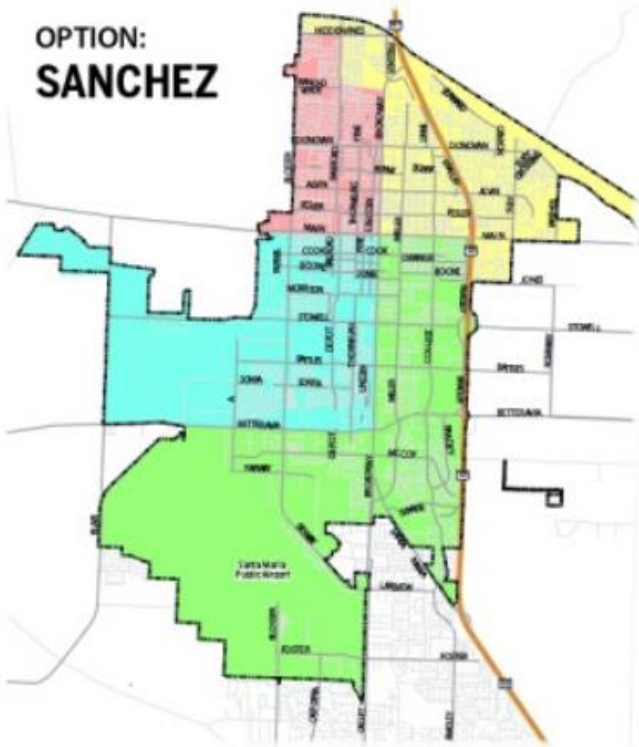
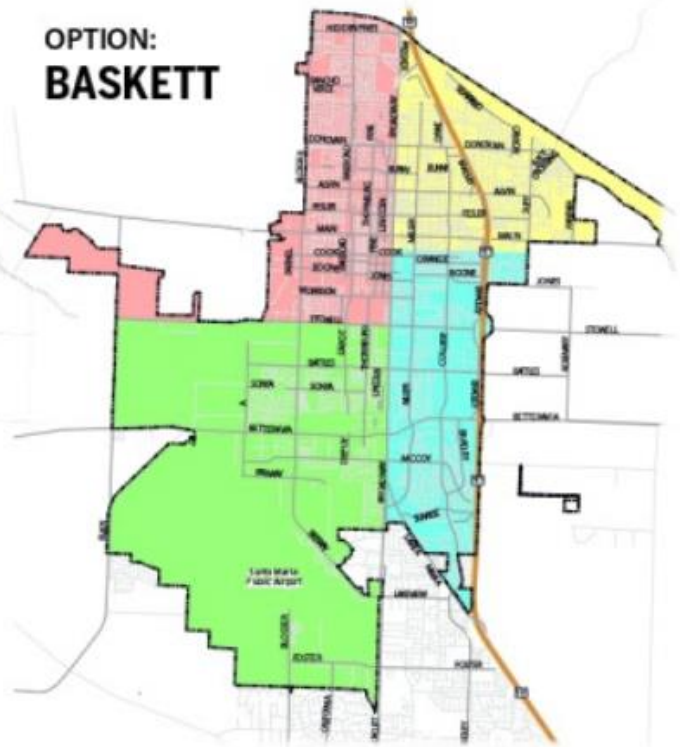


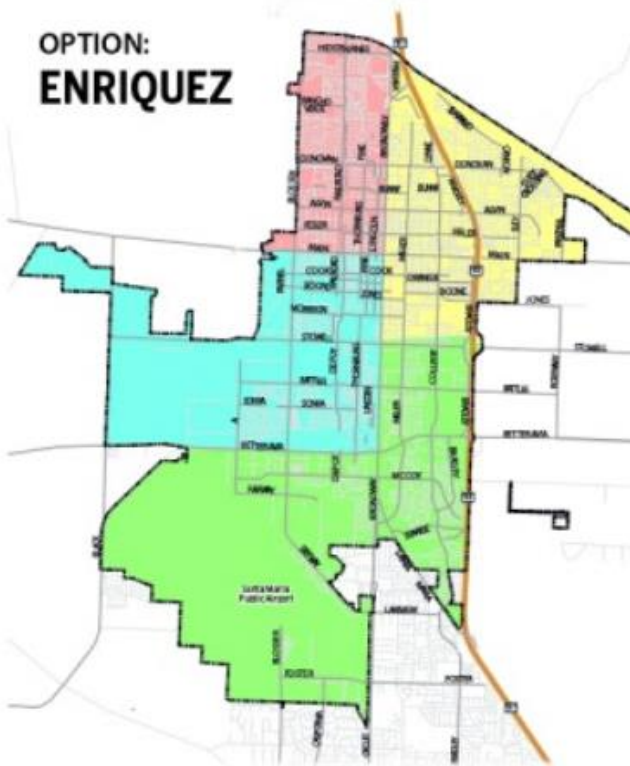
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SANCHEZ**



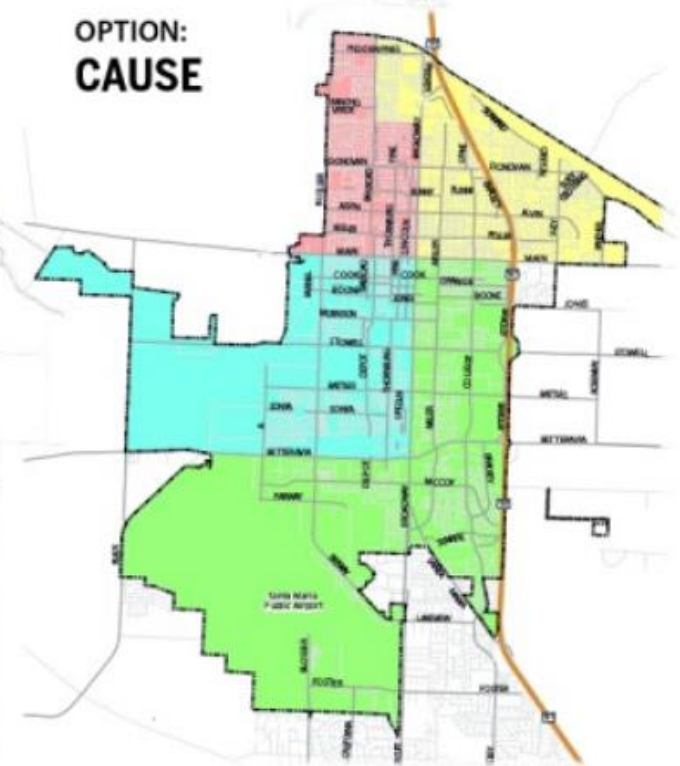
**OPTION:
BASKETT**



**OPTION:
ENRIQUEZ**

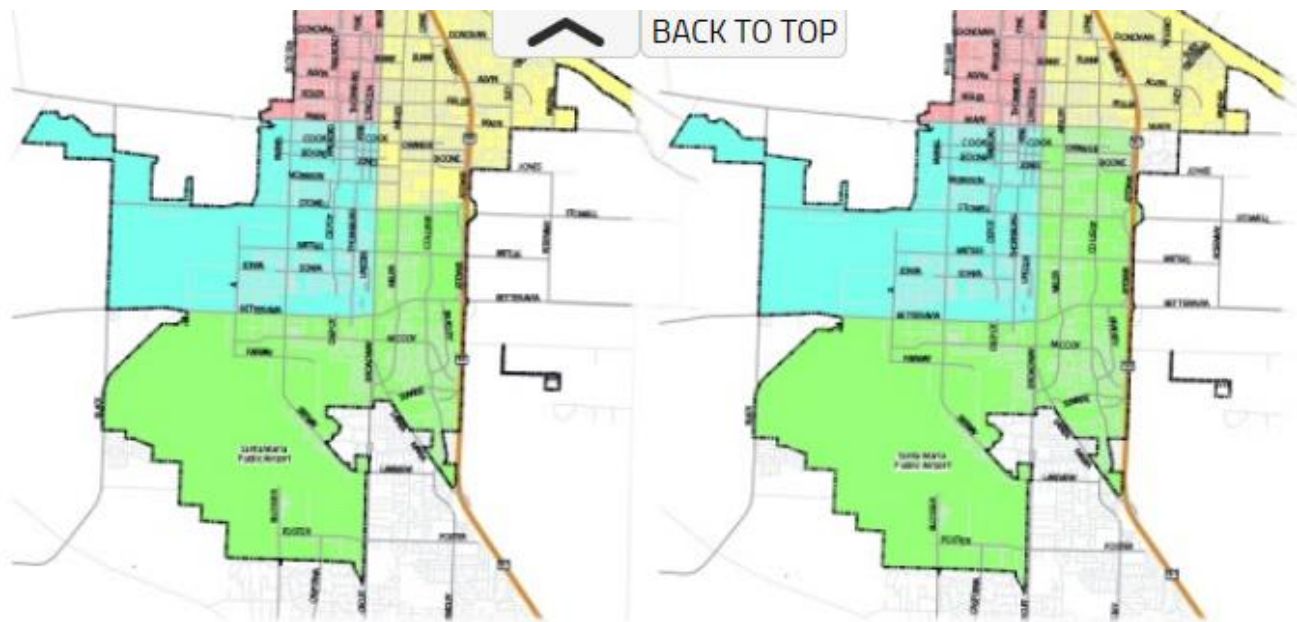


**OPTION:
CAUSE**



LEN WOOD, S

Community figures Hector Sanchez, Dave Baskett, Hazel Davelos of CAUSE and George Enriquez offered ideas for possible voting districts for Santa Maria city government.



LEN WOOD, STAFF

Community figures Hector Sanchez, Dave Baskett, Hazel Davelos of CAUSE and George Enriquez offered ideas for possible voting districts for Santa Maria city government.

Santa Maria wants your district ideas

Next public hearing on issue set for Thursday

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The city of Santa Maria will host the second public hearing in its process of creating a by-district City Council election system Thursday, and council members still have a lot of decisions left to make, so public input will be important.

"We are inviting the public to participate in the process, and the public is encouraged to draw and submit proposed district maps," said Mark van de Kamp, city spokesman.

The public can bring their map suggestions to Thursday's pub-

lic hearing, which will start at 5:30 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Building, 313 West Tunnell St.

Map suggestions also can be submitted to Chief Deputy City Clerk Rhonda M. Garietz at City Hall.

"We are interested to know the public's thoughts on how they should be drawn, taking in the following factors: equal population per district; the ethnic makeup; current neighborhoods; geography; and we may also consider other factors submitted by the public," van de Kamp said.

Please see **DISTRICTS**, Page A7

Draw a map

The Santa Maria Times has provided a map template on Page A7 of today's edition for your convenience. Please sketch out your idea for new city election districts using the template and based on the listed requirements. You can drop them off at the Santa Maria Times office, 3200 Skyway Drive, take a photo of your map and share it at www.facebook.com/santamariatimes, via Twitter @santamariatimes, or email it to janderson@leecentralcoastnews.com. You can also bring your map to Thursday's public hearing.

Draw your ideas drop them off at our office, 3200 Skyway Drive; or take a photo and share it with us on www.facebook.com/santamariatimes or Twitter @SantaMariaTimes, or you can email it to JAnderson@leecentralcoastnews.com. Learn more about the redistricting process by visiting the city's website, www.cityof-santamaria.org.

Districts

From A1

The city has not made any decisions or provided any direction to residents on how districts could be drawn or on how many districts there can or cannot be.

At the last public hearing March 7, the City Council heard suggestions from the public including creating five districts and having the mayor's position mayor's seat at-large. The second option would allow the entire city to vote for its mayor.

The Santa Maria City Council decided to change how it conducts its elections after Hector Sanchez, who unsuccessfully made a bid for one of two open council seats last year, via a letter sent by Santa Barbara-based attorney Jason Dominguez, threatened to take the city to court claiming the Nov. 8 election was racially "polarized" and violated the California Voting Rights Act.

Sanchez was one of six candidates vying for the two seats. With the city's at-large voting system, the two highest vote winners — Mike Cordero and Michael Moats — won the two open seats.

Sanchez told the Santa Maria Times that he would like to see the city divided into four districts and have an at-large mayoral seat.

"If you look at the oldest and natural intersection at Main and Broadway, that's an easy starting point; this would allow each council member to own, so to speak, one side of each major business street," he said.

He said using the city's downtown intersection as a starting point would keep "communities intact as well as having the each council area responsible for the major corridors of business within Santa Maria."

Offering a different perspective, David Baskett, a member of the Santa Maria Public Airport Board of Directors and a local businessman, also advocates for four districts but said the lines should be drawn differently.

Baskett, in a suggested map submitted to the Santa Maria Times, divides the city in half along Broadway but unlike Sanchez, divides the western part of the city at Stowell Road and the eastern part of the city at Main Street.

He said he did this, in part, because he expects the population in the southwest corner of the city to "grow at a higher rate than others."



FRANK COWAN, CONTRIBUTOR

Hector Sanchez, shown in February, believes each Santa Maria voting district should have responsibility for a business area.

Hazel Davalos, community organizing director at the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), said she also thinks the city should start districting at Main Street and Broadway.

"Most Santa Maria residents intuitively think of the city as divided into northwest, southwest, northeast and southeast quadrants, divided along Main and Broadway, the city's main boulevards. After drawing these basic lines, the districts had to be adjusted to be roughly equal population," Davalos said.

"With over half of eligible voters in the city being Latino, a fair map will have two of four districts with majority Latino voters. These natural districts lie in the northwest and southwest quadrants," she added.

The city of Santa Maria hired demography and election consulting firm National Demographics Corporations (NDC) to assist in the election district process. NDC worked with the city of Santa Barbara in 2015 to create its new by-district election system.

"The demographer will come up with a working draft map. There could be a draft map or maps. We will see what the demographer comes up with based on his experience and on the community input. We will see what the council thinks of that and may give further direction," van de Kamp said.

City leaders are aiming to com-

plete the process in May — if they don't, Sanchez can take the city to court. Though they are trying to complete the process as soon as possible, city officials said they have not decided how many voting districts the city will have.

"The council will be making its mind up along the way," van de Kamp said. "It is difficult to put a date on when the council will decide on the number of districts, because it is fluid. The council may say 'we like this,' or 'we don't like this.' The public can say the same thing. Through the process, we will get there," van de Kamp said.

The city will publish drafts of the map or maps NDC creates as soon as they are completed. The next public hearing — by law, the city has to conduct five in total — will be 6 p.m. April 20 at Edwards Community Center, 809 Panther Drive.

The fourth hearing will be at the Minami Center on May 2. The fifth hearing will be at the Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center on May 16.

"We are trying to be out in the community. To give people better access. Going to them instead of making them come to us all the time," said Assistant City Manager Jason Stilwell, explaining the meeting locations.

Logan B. Anderson covers city government in Santa Maria for Lee Central Coast Newspapers. Follow him on Twitter: @LoganBAnderson.

How would you draw election district boundaries?

The city of Santa Maria is seeking the public's help in creating four City Council election districts. Once done, Santa Marians will elect their City Council representatives from within the districts.

At 5:30 p.m. March 30 at the Veterans Memorial Building, 313 W. Tunnell St., city leaders will hold a public hearing to gather the community's input on how the districts should be configured.

Use the map to draw your election district ideas.

- Some things to keep in mind:
- The city is looking to create four districts;
 - Each district has to have an equal number of people in it – the city's population is at about 100,000;
 - The districts cannot dilute the votes of ethnic minorities;
 - They should be compact, and consider communities of interest.

Bring your map with you to Thursday's public hearing to share your ideas, and or share them with us by dropping them off at our office, 3200 Skyway Drive; or take a photo and share it with us on www.facebook.com/santamariatimes or Twitter @SantaMariaTimes, or you can email it to JAnderson@leececentralcoastnews.com

Learn more about the redistricting process by visiting the city's website, www.cityofsantamaria.org.

Latino Citizen of Voting Age Population

Latinos are a citywide slim majority of eligible voters (measured by CVAP) at 50.2 percent and are most heavily concentrated in the northwest part of the city.

There are no neighborhoods with large and concentrated enough Asian-American populations to impact the drawing of district lines.

The same is true for African-Americans.

Be aware that geographically large census blocks on this map can be misleading. For example, the "75% to 100% Latino CVAP" red block at the south end of the city has only 1 resident. What drives determinations of legal districting maps are the smaller, heavily populated, census blocks.



Draw your map here



Total Population Map



Quadrants marked with dark blue contain between 6,201-11,500 residents each.

Total population map generated from United States Census 2010. <http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap/>

