



Agenda Date: 10/18/2016

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Mark Danaj, City Manager

FROM:

Liza Tamura, City Clerk

Martha Alvarez, Senior Deputy City Clerk

SUBJECT:

Ordinance Establishing New General Municipal Election Dates to be Held in November of Even Years beginning in November 2020, to Meet State Mandates Imposed by California Senate Bill 415 (City Clerk Tamura).

ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 16-0026

RECOMMENDATION:

In accordance with prior City Council direction, staff recommends that the City Council adopt Ordinance No. 16-0026, establishing new General Municipal Election dates to be held in November of even years beginning in November 2020.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The fiscal impacts associated with this item are unknown at this time. Election costs vary based on the number of agencies consolidating in a particular election, number of candidates, number of polling sites, etc. It is possible that election costs could decrease as more jurisdictions are required to consolidate with statewide elections.

BACKGROUND:

As previously reported, the California Voter Participation Rights Act (SB 415) was passed on September 1, 2015. This new legislation prohibits a local government from holding an election on any date other than a statewide election date if doing so in the past has resulted in a significant decrease in voter turnout. This new law will go into effect on January 1, 2018. SB 415 requires cities with insufficient voter turnout to either change their election dates to June or November of even years, or, prior to January 1, 2018, adopt a plan to consolidate its election with the statewide election no later than the November 8, 2022 statewide general election.

The public policy behind SB 415 was to address waning civic engagement in politics as illustrated by declining voter turnout in federal, state, and municipal elections. The legislative analysis asserts that one major contributing factor to low voter turnout - the timing of elections - could be addressed by synchronizing municipal elections with statewide elections. The Public Policy Institute of California surveyed 350 California cities and found that moving municipal elections to coincide with statewide elections could result in a 20-36% boost in voter turnout.

Manhattan Beach's General Municipal Elections are now held in March of odd-numbered years.

On July 19, 2016, the Council adopted a motion to direct staff to draft an ordinance to move the date of its general municipal election to November, starting in 2020. If the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Supervisors) approves the attached ordinance (See discussion below), the change in the date would automatically reduce the terms for the City's elected officials in the next two upcoming general municipal election cycles that commence in March 2017 and March 2019, respectively. Candidates elected in the March 2017 General Municipal Election would serve three years and eight months (with the statewide general election ending on November 3, 2020) instead of the customary four years. Candidates elected in the March 2019 General Municipal Election would likewise serve three years and eight months (with the statewide general election ending on November 8, 2022). Thereafter, starting with the November 3, 2020 election, the City's elected officials would serve four years.

DISCUSSION:

Pursuant to EC Section 1301, the City Council must enact an ordinance to effectuate the change to the City's general municipal election date. Pursuant to Government Code Section 36937, the ordinance becomes effective immediately. However, per Elections Code Sections 1301 and 10403.5, the adopted ordinance becomes operative only upon approval by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board). Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters (Registrar) staff has advised that if the City Council adopts an ordinance to synchronize its general municipal election date with statewide elections, it would evaluate the City's electoral history including the number of candidates and ballot measures to determine whether its current voting system could accommodate the consolidation request and would then present its recommendation to the Supervisors.

Once the ordinance is adopted by City Council, staff will submit the ordinance to the Board for consideration and approval. If the Board approves the ordinance, the ordinance will become operative. Within 30 days of becoming operative, the City Clerk's office will mail notices to all registered voters informing the voters of the change in the election date and the changes of terms of office of City officeholders.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST:

Public outreach will be conducted based on action taken by the City Council and Board. If the City Council adopts Ordinance No. 16-0026 and the Board approves it prior to the March 2017 election, staff will develop a comprehensive outreach strategy to inform the public, as well as prospective candidates, of the reduction in the terms for individuals elected in the March 2017 and March 2019 General Municipal Elections. Staff will nevertheless notify prospective candidates of the potential reduced term, even if the Board delays taking action until after the March 2017 election.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is necessary.

LEGAL REVIEW

The City Attorney has reviewed the draft ordinance and “Approved as to Form.”

Attachment:

1. Draft Ordinance No. 16-0026