

1st Draft

Garden Grove Campaign Reform Initiative

1. Increase council to seven (7) members.
 - a. Mayor-at-large
 - b. Councilmember(s) by district – at least one (1) per zip code
 - c. At least one (1) from south of the freeway
 - d. Must live in the district
 - e. Districts change if population varies by more than 3% of 16.67%
 - f. Pursuant to Gov. Codes 34870 through 34884
2. City pays for statement in sample ballot – 200 words if “Fair Campaign Practices Code” has been signed.
3. Contributors can give as much as candidate will take, but officeholder can't vote on contributor projects if he was given \$250.00 or more.
4. The \$250.00 limit will be in play if officeholder has voted on project within the last six months. If contributor gives \$1,000.00, that divided by \$250.00 equals 4, which would then mean the officeholder couldn't vote on project for four (4) years.

5. At least 80% of expended funds must be raised from the district of the election.
6. City will co-sponsor and televise at least one (1) “Meet the Candidate” night, to be sponsored by an organization that receives no City funds. That format must be agreed to by a majority of the candidates.
7. Signs will have an authorization card signed by owner/lessee/renter (excluding residential) filed with the City. If no signed card, City will remove sign without any notification and charge the committee the cost of removal.
8. City employees can't campaign in uniform or use pictures while in uniform. No campaigning on City time, in conjunction and in compliance with Gov. Codes 3201 through 3209.
9. If a member of council vacates an office, the first runner up would get appointed the seat in that particular district.

NOV 2000

Rethinking Garden Grove's city constitution for the 21st century

When the Founding Fathers sat down in Philadelphia all those years ago, what they created was a miracle: the U.S. Constitution. So perfect is this instrument of government that it has only been amended 27 times.

The point here is that no system of government is so advanced that it cannot be improved.

One of the few concrete proposals to change the government of Garden Grove has recently been put forth by Tony Flores, a mayoral candidate in 2002 and one of the leaders of the West Garden Grove Residents Association.

Flores has been a controversial figure to some. A former Garden Grove policeman, his tireless opposition (his critics might say tiresome) to Mayor Bruce Broadwater — in the political arena and in court — have deprived him of some of the influence we might otherwise enjoy.

In this instance, he is suggesting a major overhaul of the local political structure, one that bears some examination and discussion.

Principal points include these proposals:

- increasing the city council to seven members;
- the mayor would be elected on an at-large basis;
- council members would be elected by district; one per zip code;
- a council member must reside in the district he or she represents;
- at least one council member must be from south of the Garden Grove (22) Freeway.

The idea of electing council members by district is most common in the larger cities of California. Los Angeles, Long Beach and Santa Ana, for instance, have districts or wards.

The upsides are that every region of the city gets some influence, and that campaigning costs may be curbed. The

downside is that the process might tend to divide and Balkanize a city, rather than nurture a sense of community.

The zip codes are a handy but perhaps unwieldy way to create districts. Under the the "one-man one-vote" rule, districts would have to be very close to equality in size, meaning that the districts would likely change after each census, as is the case with higher levels of elected lawmakers.

But if the districts were roughly based on the zip code areas, there were

The upsides are that every region of the city gets some influence. The downside is that the process might tend to divide and balkanize a city rather than unite

be a West Garden Grove district (basically, west of Beach Boulevard), a west central area (northwest of Garden Grove Boulevard and Brookhurst Street), an east central area (northeast of GG and Brookhurst), a southwest district (again, GG and Brookhurst) and a southeast,

There is some merit to these proposals. West Grovers would have that "guaranteed voice" at City Hall. On the other hand, with just one council vote west of Beach, the five other councilman might feel no responsibility at all to court residents on that side of town, unless that had plans of running for mayor.

In addition to the district plan, Flores is suggesting strict limits be placed on

campaign contributions. First off, a candidate who agrees to a "Fair Campaign Practices Code" would have his candidate's statement (up to 200 words) paid for by the city.

Also, councilmen would be prohibited from voting on any project if he or she received over \$250 in campaign funds from a contributor related to the project.

Flores is also suggesting that at least 80 percent of funds expended must be raised from the district in which the election is contested.

Here is a laudable first step toward campaign reform. It's true that money — especially including financing from out of not only the city but in some cases from out of the county, or state, has too much influence in Garden Grove. Most recently, it was hotel developers, but it has also in the past included fireworks manufacturers and some employee organizations.

However, some fine-tuning is in order. The 80 percent in-district limit seems to be unworkable and would tend to attract only candidates who can finance their own campaigns.

Additionally, the "fair campaign code" lacks enforcement power. Who would determine if a candidate violated the pledge? And how would such a violation be treated? What if the "violation" won the mayoral election? How could the city council be expected to "prosecute" the people's choice?

The campaign spending limit is intriguing, though. It does promise a reversal of the influence of big money. It would be interesting to see what the influence of similar laws has been in other cities, counties and states.

Garden Grove's municipal structure isn't broken; but, like the U.S. Constitution, it might be possible to improve it. Campaign reform might be a place to start.

12.30.04

Time for sweeping political reform in Garden Grove election process

Dear Editor,

It has been said that "those of us who forget history, are condemned to repeat it". For those in attendance and others who may have watched the Garden Grove City council meeting on Dec. 21, history indeed repeated itself as an appointment was made to fill the fifth council seat. Just to refresh some memories, in 1998, we faced the same exact issue when a council seat was vacated and the then city council appointed a person who did not run in that election but he was on the planning commission.

However, when that was done in 1998, I suggested a recall or some other action to capture the attention of our city council and the people of this great city in order for this not to happen

again. I was told by many in 1998 that one cannot beat city hall and my concerns fell on deaf ears. Understood. So when the same situation arose after this last election, I placed a 35 page application into the city clerk's office with a request to be appointed to our city council. My reasons for doing so were to make two points crystal clear to my fellow citizens.

Point Number One: While Garden Grove slept in November of 1998, there were only a handful of us in the council chambers trying to wake up others to become involved in changing a process that could happen again, if we continued to stand by and do nothing. If our most recent list of candidates in the November 2004 election were well versed in city politics and the mechan-

ics of the same, this appointment should have been a platform issue for at least one candidate. It was not. Instead, we witnessed a "kinder, gentler" campaign where the majority of the candidates did not want to anger the others, in case of an appointment. (I received this information from our most recent third-highest vote getter). My point? Identify an issue or concern and become involved using facts, documentation and your right to free speech.

Point Number Two: In light of the above, this city is begging for Campaign Reform and here is an overview of my plan to move us in that direction, which consists of three components. 1) Create six districts within our city for six council members and the mayor, of course, would be city wide for a council of seven. With a city population of approximately 170,000, we divide that by six and the districts would contain almost 29,000 people per district. 2) 80 percent of the campaign contributions must come from within the district or, 85 percent of the campaign contributions come from within our city. This is open for further discussion and will be fine tuned. 3) If a council seat becomes vacant in a midterm, the next highest voter getter from within that district shall be appointed to the vacant seat.

I will be only too happy to discuss the above with anyone, anytime and anywhere. As a matter of fact, here is my 24 hour pager number to place my "money" where my mouth is: (714) 294-0302. The above will be on the West Garden Grove Resident's Association agenda for the meeting of Jan 12, at 7 p.m., in an attempt to memorialize history while trying not to condemn ourselves in the future.

Respectfully submitted to my fellow citizens,

Tony Flores
Garden Grove



Time to redevelop our elections in GG?

Dear Editor,

Garden Grove is certainly a city with an abundance of community associations.

The city west has long been represented by the West Garden Grove Residents Association. The city east then banded together and formed the East Garden Grove Residents' Association. A couple of years ago the city central found it necessary to create a Central Garden Grove Neighborhood Association. And last year we saw

residents emerge to form an association representing the Garden Grove Civic Center Community.

There are indeed movements within Garden Grove uniting citizens to oversee and make contributions to the overall quality and development of the city. You will not find such focused community involvement in cities surrounding Garden Grove. For that matter, you will not find as many local communities uniting and forming associations within a city anywhere else

in Orange County.

According to its official web page, Garden Grove has staked claim to the motto "City of Youth and Ambition." Excuse me, but every city has youth and people with ambition. I believe "City of Residents Associations" would be a more accurate and unique description of the city because the sweeping formation of community associations appears to be a phenomenon exclusive to Garden Grove.

Searching the Internet, I could not find another municipality in Orange or Los Angeles County whose residents found the need to form such organizations across all areas of a city. One has to wonder why this occurred to such an extent in Garden Grove.

Is it because the people who live in Garden Grove are simply community-minded? Or it is because the residents of Garden Grove have come to realize they lack representation from City Hall? Garden Grove seems to have a

Please see LETTER page 11

4.28.05

~~Dear Editor,~~
~~This city has a lot of residents,~~
~~and it's a shame that many of them~~
~~don't have a say in how the city is run.~~
~~I think it's time to change the way~~
~~we elect our city council members.~~
~~Maybe we should have districts~~
~~so that people can elect someone~~
~~who represents their area.~~
~~If we can't move it there, what will~~

~~happen at that place?~~
~~Garden Grove could use a good arts~~
~~and culture center. We used to have~~
~~one, but it was destroyed. It's~~
~~quite a drive to get to Huntington~~
~~Beach or Dana Point or Orange~~
~~County.~~
~~Garden Grove~~

Letter on council districts

From LETTER page 4

problem hearing and responding to its communities and neighborhoods.

It's time to change Garden Grove's slate political system and form districts from which residents can elect

councilmembers that are from their immediate community and who are aware of local neighborhood issues and concerns.

Having council members elected from districts will create a City Hall that is responsive to all areas of the city, many of

which have lacked representation for a long time. And a councilmember elected from smaller, localized areas of the city will be held to higher standards of accountability.

The formation of city districts will increase the number of city

GARDEN GROVE JOURNAL/THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2005 11

council members from four to six. A larger city council will make it more difficult for special interests to influence and control our city council. Residents want to take their city back from developers who found they can make an easy fortune in Garden Grove.

Let's face it, in recent years, Garden Grove has not been viewed favorably in the way it

has, and is, currently, handling city redevelopment. One way to change this image and problem is to begin redeveloping our City Hall. Garden Grove should not have to be a city needing residents' associations for a louder voice. Garden Grove should be a city that has its communities heard by City Hall.

Dr. Eugene Zaluzec
Garden Grove

Districts, 7 * On Council Is Proposed

URA pushes for geographic representation in Garden Grove city elections by 2006

By Jim Tortolano
Garden Grove Journal

A proposal to elect city council members by district in Garden Grove is moving forward, a plan which could literally transform the political map of the Big Strawberry.

The new Unified Residents' Associations of Garden Grove began the process last week, when its leaders presented to City Clerk Ruth Smith a notice of intent to circulate a petition to place their proposal on the municipal ballot.

Under the proposal put forth by the URA, the city council – now composed of four members elected for four years and a mayor for two, all of them at large – would be expanded to seven members.

The mayor would still be chosen by the entire city, but the rest of the council would be elected by districts – six in all.

"We think this would provide better representation for the citizens," said Eugene J. Zalusec, one of the three persons listed as initiative "founding authors." Zalusec is chair of the Central Garden Grove Civic Center Community Group.

Others signing were Tony Flores, president of the West Garden Grove Residents Association and Verla Lambert, chair of the

"We think this would provide better representation for the citizens."

Eugene J. Zalusec
URA

would guarantee that each part of the city would be represented and would reduce the cost of campaigning,

The map submitted by the URA proposes these districts:

■ West (District 1): generally West Garden Grove (the portion of the city west of Stanton);

■ Central-Northwest (2): the area north of Garden Grove Boulevard, turning north at Gilbert Street, east at Lampson, then north again at Brookhurst Street;

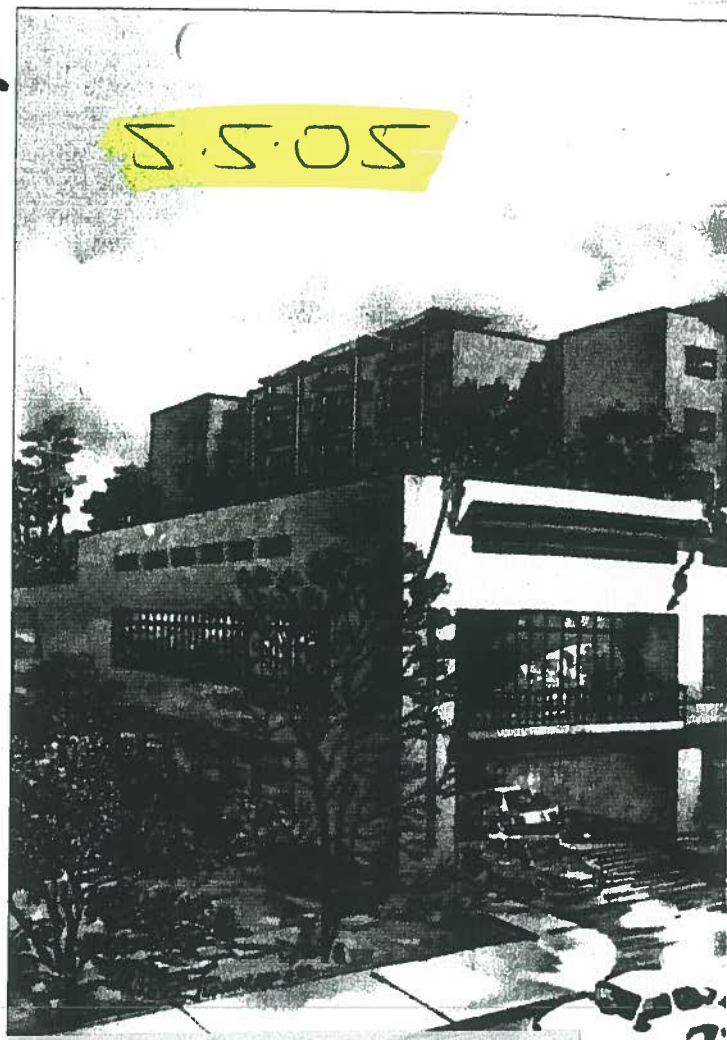
■ Central-Northeast (3): the area generally north of Lampson Avenue between Brookhurst and West streets, except for two "feet" that dip south of Lampson;

■ Central – Southwest (4): the area generally south of Garden Grove Boulevard and (mostly) west of Brookhurst Street, except for a portion where the line runs north on Gilbert Street, then turns

East Garden Grove Residents Association.

The trio argues that the creation of districts would make the city council more responsive to citizens,

Please see COUNCIL page 2



T. F. SONS TR

...they can be made to symbolize critically and fatally wounded victims. The demonstrations will include multi-

Grove County Fire Patrol, District 1. One of the original trucks is on view at the Garden Grove Historical Society on Euclid Street. Af-

really big," Osborne noted. "While we do train for the worst scenarios, we have some of the safest hotels around. They do a

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* Districts, 7 on city council

From DISTRICTS page 1
east on Lampson Avenue to Brookhurst;

■ Central – Southeast (5): the area generally south of Lampson Avenue with Brookurst on the west and West Street and Newhope Street on the east;

■ East (District 6): all of the city east of West Street and Newhope Street lines, except for a portion that jogs west to Euclid Street.

The districts are intended to be roughly equal in size in terms of the number of registered voters;

they do not strictly follow major streets because the districts are composed of precincts, which sometimes cross streets.

According to Zalusec, the next step is for the city attorney to take; within 15 days he must rule on whether he considers the initiative valid. If he does he must assign it a title and summary.

The URA then must garner the signatures of 10 percent of the registered voters in Garden Grove to qualify the measure for the ballot at the next general election in March 2006.

Collecting 15 percent would require that the city council either adopt the ordinance or call a special election.

"We don't want a special election," said Zalusec. "If we win in March 2006, that would create the new structure for the November 2006 election."

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- #1
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- #5
- #6
- #7



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We Believe Editorial

To district or not to district is the question

The shape of the world of local politics in 2006 may well be decided in 2005 with the effort by the new United Residents' Association to revamp the Garden Grove City Council.

The URA is proposing that instead of having five city council members (including the mayor) elected at-large to expand the council to seven members.

The mayor would still be elected citywide, while the other six council members would be elected from geographically-compact districts.

As the proponents of the plan go about the process of seeking to get the measure on the ballot for the March 2006 elections, interested citizens (and office-holders) are discussing the pros and cons of the proposal.

Advocates of the plan argue that an expanded council elected by districts would provide better representation and reduce the cost of campaigning.

Skeptics suggest that such a plan would be divisive and run the risk of electing unqualified people who manage to scrape together a few votes among friends and associates.

The proposal needs further exploration. We at the Journal will be looking into how district systems are

working in cities like Long Beach and Santa Ana, and whether there's been problems solved or created by such a practice.

However, we find certain of the arguments against it somewhat disingenuous. Election by district may well be divisive, but politicians are already running divided campaigns; one in English for Anglo voters and another in Vietnamese for that demographic.

(No one seems to be aiming specifically at the city's large – one-third – Hispanic population).

Ethnic politics are one division already with us; the second divide is financial, lying between the candidate who can raise large sums of money from well-heeled contributors and those who cannot.

As far as the process giving us unqualified councilmen, it would take an optimist of the first water to suggest that the current process has, over its first half-century, somehow avoided that. We've had some pretty silly people on the council; we may have even elected one or two who did not actually live in Garden Grove.

Districting may turn out to be a bad idea or a good one. But it's one aimed at alleviating legitimate concerns, and it deserves serious consideration.

Thursday, July 7, 2005

Initiative divides Garden Grove

Proponents say districts improve representation. Opponents fear less accountability.

By MICHAEL ORDOÑA

The Orange County Register

GARDEN GROVE – A proposed ballot initiative would split Garden Grove into six districts and add two members to the City Council, requiring that voters in each district elect one council member rather than choosing candidates citywide.

"I think you're going to have better access," said one of the initiative's authors, Eugene Zaluzec of the United Residents Associations of Garden Grove. Your council member will "be your neighbor. We'll know that person; we can go to him with questions."

The initiative, which could begin the signature-gathering process in coming weeks, was launched by a group of residents' associations. According to 2004 election statistics from the Registrar of Voters, none of the proposed districts exceeded any other by more than 3.4 percent of votes cast.

Councilman Mark Rosen said dividing the city isn't as simple as the statistics imply: "You have the whole gerrymandering thing - you could get into something like Los Angeles, with racial politics and people playing to their district rather than to the city as a whole."

One of the initiative's provisions is that a council member live in the district he or she represents. If the initiative were in effect today, one district would contain two current council members (Janet Nguyen and Rosen) and three of the proposed districts would not be represented. At least one community activist expressed concern that the proposal, cutting in half both the Little Saigon and Korean business districts, could create serious problems.

"One thing we learned from Los Angeles: Koreatown is split into three different districts, and that's created a lot of agony when trying to get things done," said Joseph Pak of Farmers & Merchants Bank. "Instead of approaching one councilman to get things done, you have to approach three - and they don't always agree."

Nguyen said the real problem would be reduced accountability. "You're representing a smaller constituency," Nguyen said of campaigning only within a district rather than citywide. "The candidate would only be responsible to (one-sixth) of the voters."

Tony Flores, president of the West Garden Grove Residents' Association and another of the measure's authors, said being accountable to a smaller group is a virtue.

"Look at the last few years - all the attention has been given to Harbor Boulevard. The incumbents get the best shot at contribution dollars," said Flores, calling deals such as those that have brought hotels to the Harbor Corridor redevelopment, rather than concerned with the needs of other parts of the city.

Should the initiative pass, Garden Grove would become only the fourth city in the county to be so divided, joining Newport Beach, Santa Ana and Seal Beach. Although the City Council would go to six members from four and each would be voted on only by their respective districts, the mayor's election would remain citywide.

Scott Baugh, who backed a similar initiative almost two years ago that failed in Huntington Beach, said closer representation was a key issue.

"At that time, most of the representation was concentrated" in two areas, said Baugh, now chairman of the Orange County Republican Party. "In a city like Huntington Beach, unless you're backed by a few of the major funders of elections, it's difficult to win - whereas if you're running in a district, you can make up a lot of ground going door-to-door."

"I think it's a very democratic reform," said Garden Grove Councilman Mark Leyes. "Whether we like it or not, Garden Grove has grown up to be a large city. If you can divide it up into smaller blocks, you get more direct - and more effective - representation."

Once the city clerk certifies that the public has been duly notified of the measure's key aspects, supporters can begin to collect the 7,212 signatures, or 10 percent of all registered voters, needed to qualify for the 2006 municipal election. Backers have until Dec. 21 to get the necessary signatures. Should the initiative pass, the first election to be affected would be in 2008.

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Monday, July 11, 2005

Opening Garden Grove government to citizens

Proposal for district election of officials is a good thing, bringing democracy closer

Embracing the sensible idea that the government that governs best is the one closest to the people, we tend to look favorably on city councils whose members represent districts rather than the entire city.

In Orange County, only Santa Ana, Newport Beach and Seal Beach elect members this way, but Garden Grove could become the next one, as community activists begin collecting signatures for a districting initiative that could appear on a 2006 ballot. The rationale is sensible. When council members represent specific neighborhoods, they are more attuned to the goings-on in those neighborhoods, and are more accessible to residents.

Sometimes, council members live clustered in the most affluent neighborhoods of a city and can ignore the problems in other places. Sometimes, say, a poorer neighborhood rarely gets necessary attention.

"It's a good democratic reform, small 'd,' and like it or not the city of Garden Grove is a big city now," said Garden Grove Councilman Mark Leyes, a supporter of the measure. "People deserve to have an accountable and effective government. More council members increase that accountability, and doing it by districts also increases accountability. Here the opponents are incumbent politicians. You know you're onto something good when the special interests and incumbent politicians oppose you."

Mr. Leyes has an interesting point, as the city establishment seems upset by the proposal. Councilman Mark Rosen raises the specter of gerrymandering, but the districting proposal seems to avoid that. It breaks the city into six straightforward, equal pieces. The plan also adds two council members.

In Huntington Beach, a similar initiative failed two years ago, in part because it reduced the number of council members.

A clear problem with at-large districts is that it takes a large amount of money to run citywide races. To raise that money, council candidates often depend on the support of wealthy political interests, such as developers or environmentalists.

District elections, by contrast, increase the chances that true representatives of the neighborhood are elected. District elections also give all neighborhoods a strong advocate on the council and make it harder for a council to impose a controversial project on one particular part of the city.

If any city in Orange County needs fundamental election reform, it is Garden Grove, whose council members have been overly influenced by development interests as they promote one redevelopment plan after another, the latest of which is a plan to build an Indian casino along Harbor Boulevard.

This initiative deserves widespread support.

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