

City of Soledad
City Attorney Impartial Analysis

Measure P

In response to receipt of a certified referendum petition signed by registered voters in the City, the Soledad City Council has placed City Ordinance No. 765 on the March 5, 2024, Consolidated Statewide General Primary Election ballot for voter consideration. Ordinance No. 765 establishes a by-district voting plan in the City of Soledad pursuant to provisions of the California Government and Elections Codes. Government Code Section 34871 provides that in a city with a legislative body consisting of five members, such as Soledad, a by-district voting plan may be established with either four or five voting districts.

Approval of Ordinance No. 765 would result in the replacement of the City's current at-large voting system, whereby voters are able to vote for any candidate for a council or the Mayor's seat, with a by-district voting plan containing five districts. Under this voting plan, the City would be divided into five districts in accordance with an approved map, with the registered voters of each district voting only for the candidates residing within their district. The Mayor's position would no longer be elected at-large but would be filled from among the five district council members. This process contrasts with a four-district voting plan where four council members are elected by district and the Mayor's position remains at-large and subject to the votes of residents throughout all four districts.

If Ordinance No. 765 is approved by the voters, implementation of the new five-district plan would be phased, with the first district elections for three council members occurring at the 2024 election. The term of all current council members is not impacted by the transition to by-district elections. If Ordinance No. 765 is not approved, the at-large voting system currently in use in the City will continue until the Council takes some affirmative action to change the City's voting procedures.

There are no direct financial impacts on the City associated with approval or disapproval of Ordinance No. 765.

A "Yes" vote is a vote to approve Ordinance No. 765. If approved, a five-district voting plan will immediately come into effect and will apply to the 2024 general municipal election. All positions on the Council will be elected by district and the Mayor's position will be filled from among the five district council members.

A "No" vote will be a vote against approval of Ordinance No. 765. If Ordinance No. 765 is not approved the existing at-large voting system for council members and the Mayor will remain in effect. It will only be modified if and when the Council decides to take subsequent action.

Measure P would be approved if it receives a simple majority (over 50%) of "Yes" votes.

Dated: December 14, 2023

Michael F. Rodriquez, City Attorney