



Our Local Democracy: District Elections and City Council Size in Anaheim

Analysis of Measure L and Measure M

October 2014

A Message from Ann M. Werboff

Executive Director of Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development (OCCORD)

Founded as a community-labor alliance in 2005, Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development (OCCORD) combines community organizing, civic participation, strategic research and advocacy to engage residents, workers and stakeholders in local government decisions that impact economic opportunity, community health, and overall quality of life. OCCORD's mission includes advocating for policies that promote fair representation and transparency and accountability in local government.

Since 2011, OCCORD has advocated for a district election system in Anaheim. We believe that district elections will improve democracy in Anaheim, reduce the influence of special interests in city politics and bring city government closer to the people it serves.

Objective policy research underpins OCCORD's organizing and advocacy work. Over the past four years, OCCORD has compiled and analyzed data on Anaheim's demographic and economic characteristics, political history, public expenditures, and local government.

This report presents the public and policymakers with a thorough analysis of district elections as a form of municipal government in America and the potential outcomes of implementing district elections in Anaheim. It also includes responses to common arguments against district elections.



For more information on this report, please contact cturner@occord.org.

OCCORD is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to bring workers, families and community partners together to organize and advocate for good jobs, strong neighborhoods and an inclusive democracy in Orange County.

On February 4, 2014, the Anaheim City Council voted to place two measures, Measures L and M, on the ballot for the November 4, 2014 election.

Measure L, entitled “Require City Council Members Be Residents Of And Elected By Districts,” will amend the City Charter to adopt a district elections system for the City Council. A district elections system would (1) establish specific electoral districts within the city; (2) require council members to be elected by the voters of their district; and (3) require city council members to live in the district they represent. Under the current at-large election system, Anaheim’s four city council members may live anywhere within the city limits and the entire electorate votes for each council seat.

Measure M, entitled “Increase City Council Members to Six,” will expand the council size from four representatives plus the mayor to six representatives plus the mayor.

This report compiles the results of extensive nonpartisan research on the principles underlying Measures L and M and on their potential impacts on Anaheim.

Key Findings

By establishing district elections and increasing the size of the city council, Measure L and Measure M will significantly improve democratic representation, accountability, and government efficiency in Anaheim.

District elections will give Anaheim a form of government appropriate for a city of its large size and diversity. District elections will give all residents an elected representative who knows their neighborhood and will stand up for them at City Hall.

- Anaheim is a large and diverse city with an annual budget of over \$1 billion. Today, with a population of more than 340,000, it is the largest city in California to use an at-large system to elect all of its city council members.
- Anaheim is a very diverse city in terms of race and ethnicity, income, family types, age, and neighborhood character. While many small and homogenous towns in the United States function well with an at-large council, larger cities use district elections in order to fully represent the city’s diversity of perspectives in government to make sure that every neighborhood has a voice at City Hall.
- Given this diversity, district elections will make sure that the City Council understands the unique needs of every neighborhood. In the past 20 years, some areas of the city haven’t had any locally based representatives, while other areas have had several.

Districts in Anaheim will improve government in Anaheim by allowing for representative democracy. In a large and diverse city like Anaheim, the at-large system puts people at risk of having no representation.

- District elections embody the principal of representative democracy, a cornerstone of American government. Since Anaheim is so diverse, the current at-large system can lead to uneven representation for large groups of voters because it allows a political majority to choose all the council members, instead of a proportional majority of representatives.
- Although voter turnout is often touted as the solution to uneven representation, the at-large method of electing a city council prevents any significant political minority groups of voters from having a say in decisions that affect them. Even if every voter in the city voted in an at-large election, a political minority could be entirely excluded from local government.

District elections and more representatives make city government more accountable to the people, which improves the distribution of city resources and services.

- Although city council members are currently elected by all Anaheim residents, the candidates and the winning votes tend to come only from certain areas of the city. Thus, they have no incentive to make sure that the needs of citizens in other areas are met. As a result, the distribution of community resources is often inefficient or uneven. In Anaheim, there is evidence that neighborhoods who tend to vote for losing candidates have received less public investment in community resources over the past ten years.
- District elections ensure that someone on the city council is paying attention to every area of the city. District elections in Anaheim will give elected officials the incentive to distribute resources equitably and enable them to respond quickly and efficiently to their constituents.

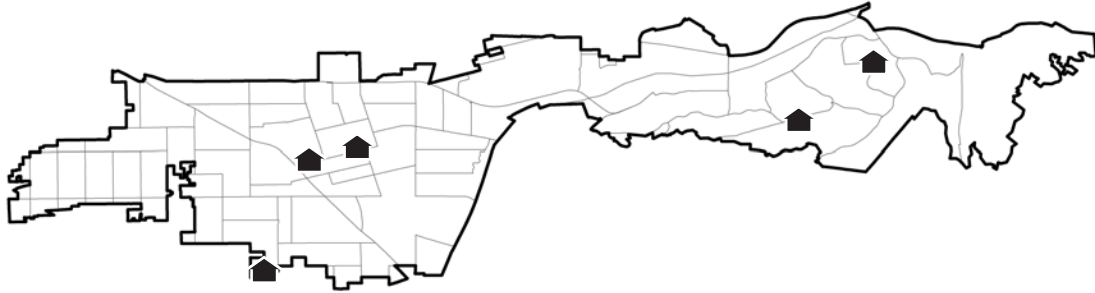
District elections help keep special interests and their influence out of city government and reduce barriers to community-oriented candidates.

- Running a viable campaign in Anaheim costs between \$100,000 and \$350,000, based on data from the last four elections, with most of this money coming from special interest donors and PACs. These hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on mailings and robocalls needed to reach the tens of thousands of voters across Anaheim. Candidates depend on this financial support to run a competitive campaign.
- Due to the smaller size of the electorate per district, district elections will lessen the influence of these donors by enabling community-based candidates to run less expensive campaigns and make it easier for voters to hold their representatives accountable.

What Are District Elections?

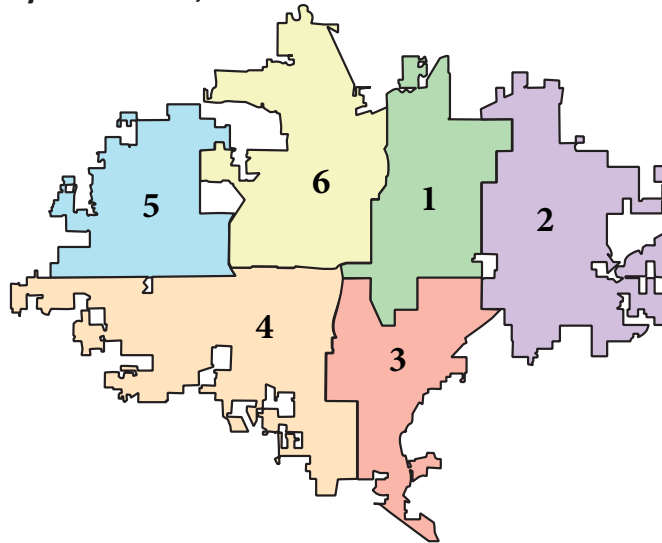
Nearly all cities in the United States are governed by a city or town council, a legislative body with a set number of voting members. Most cities use either an **at-large** or a **districts** system to elect their city council.

At-Large System: City of Anaheim



In an **at-large system**, candidates can live anywhere in the city and citizens can vote for any candidate. Council members do not represent specific neighborhoods nor is it a requirement that city council members live in different parts of the city. In Anaheim, shown above, 2012 council members' residences are marked on the map with a 🏠

District System: City of Wichita, Kansas



In a **district system**, candidates must live within the district they will represent, and they are elected by the voters of that district. For example, in the City of Wichita, Kansas, a city close to Anaheim's population, one council member is elected from each of the city's six districts. These representatives each live within their district.

A Short History of District Elections in the United States

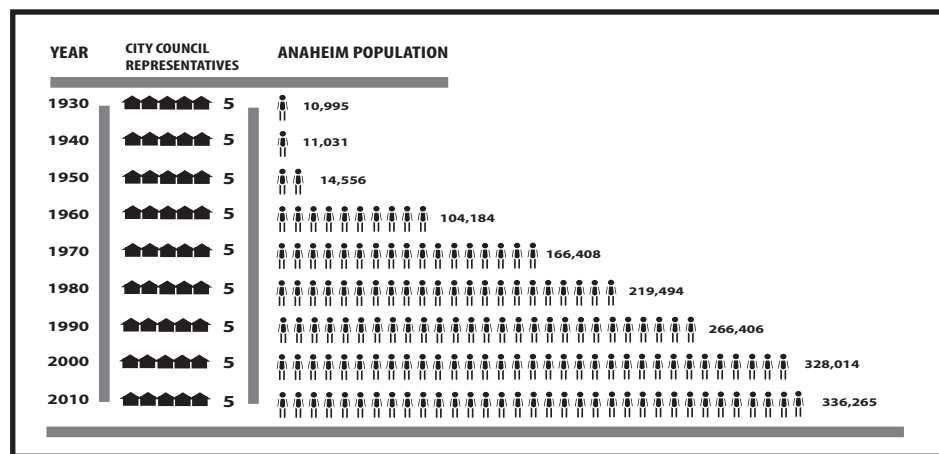
Over the past century, city government in the United States has changed and evolved. During the 1800s, most of the larger cities in the United States adopted district- or ward- based systems to elect local government when they first incorporated as municipalities¹. In the early 1900s, many large United States cities with district systems switched to at-large systems in response to political corruption. At that time, city elections were usually partisan, with political machines using district systems to consolidate power and abuse public office^{2 3}.

In the following decades, widespread political reforms eradicated political machines and eliminated the specific types of corruption in which they had engaged⁴. Most local governments in the U.S. are now nonpartisan, and elected officials are not allowed to use their offices to reward their supporters or donors. By the 1960s and 1970s, most major cities chose to return to a district elections system, as the threats of corruption associated with districts were gone and they were unable to effectively govern themselves through at-large systems^{5 6}. Today, nearly all large cities in the United States use some form of district elections to elect their city councils, while most small cities use at-large elections⁷.

The Current Election System in Anaheim

Since its incorporation in 1844, Anaheim has been governed by a five-member legislative body consisting of four councilmembers and a mayor, all elected at large⁸. The four council members and the mayor hold legislative authority in the city; each has one vote on the city council. The mayor also chairs the city council meetings and is considered the symbolic figurehead of the city. In addition to their power to propose and vote on legislation, the city council is responsible for appointing members to advisory and discretionary city commissions, like the Planning Commission.

The number of representatives for Anaheim's population has remained unchanged throughout the city's history, while the form of election has changed only in slight ways.



Source: U.S. Decennial Census; www.anaheim.net

Elections for Anaheim's city council are staggered every two years, with two councilmembers elected in each even-numbered year, and the mayor elected every four years. Like all California cities, the city council is non-partisan, so mayoral and council candidates don't run as members of a political party and aren't distinguished on the ballot as representing any political party.

City council elections in Anaheim tend to have large fields of candidates. In the past six city council elections, between 7 and 14 candidates ran for two seats, with the top two vote-getters winning seats on the council⁹.

District Elections Are Best System for Large, Diverse Cities

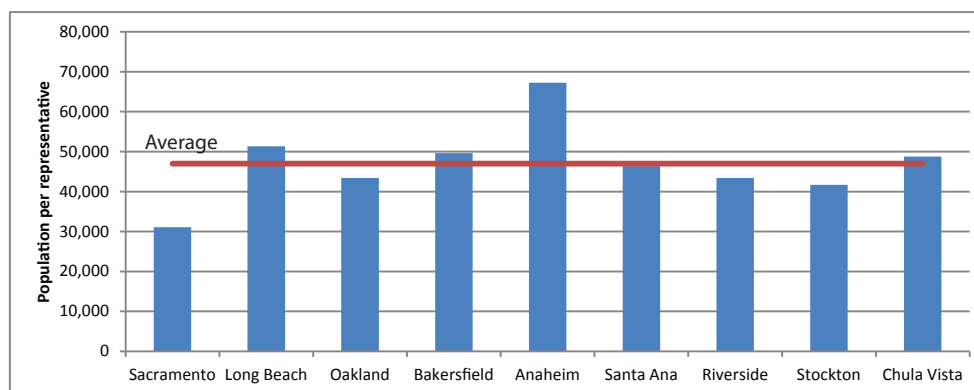
Most Large Cities Use District Elections

Today, most major U.S. cities (those with populations over 300,000) use district elections, while most small cities use at-large systems¹⁰. In California, the nine largest cities all use districts to elect their city council. In terms of population, Anaheim is the largest California city to use an at-large system. Among large and medium sized cities in the state, Anaheim's use of at-large elections is an anomaly¹¹.

City	Population	Type of Council Election	Number of City Representatives	Population per Representative
Los Angeles	3,792,621	Districts	15	252,841
San Diego	1,307,402	Districts	9	145,267
San Jose	945,942	Districts	11	85,995
San Francisco	805,235	Districts	11	73,203
Fresno	494,665	Districts	7	70,666
Sacramento	466,488	Districts	15	31,099
Long Beach	462,257	Districts	9	51,362
Oakland	390,724	Districts	9	43,414
Bakersfield	347,483	Districts	7	49,640
Anaheim	336,265	At-Large	5	67,253
Santa Ana	324,528	Numbered seats	7	46,361
Riverside	303,871	Districts	7	43,410
Stockton	291,707	Numbered seats	7	41,672
Chula Vista	243,916	Districts	5	48,783
Fremont	214,089	At-Large	5	42,818
Irvine	212,375	At-Large	5	42,475
San Bernardino	209,924	Districts	7	29,989
Modesto	201,165	Districts	7	28,738
Oxnard	197,899	At-Large	5	39,580
Fontana	196,069	At-Large	5	39,214

Sources: American Community Survey 2010 (US Census). City websites.

Since there is less variation in government size than there is in city size, very large cities, like Los Angeles, tend to have larger ratios of residents to representatives, while small cities have dramatically smaller ratios. For a city of its size, Anaheim has an unusually high ratio of residents per representative¹². With five voting members of the city council and a population of 340,000, each council member represents about 68,000 constituents. Other California cities around Anaheim's size have ratios that tend to range from 30,000 to 50,000. Specifically, the average ratio for the four next-largest and next-smallest California cities is 44,467 residents per representative.



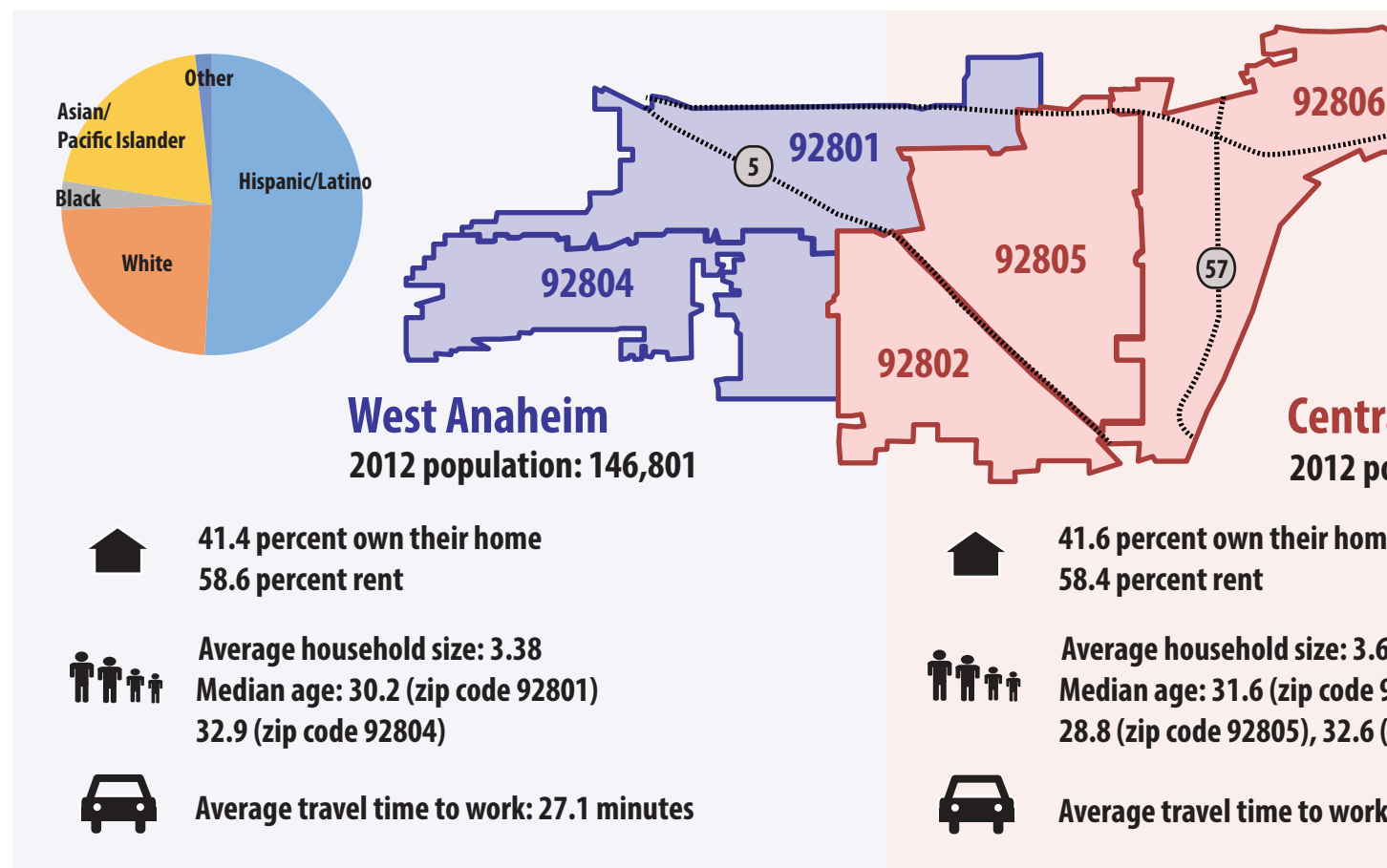
Sources: American Community Survey 2010 (US Census). City websites.

Anaheim's Diversity is Best-Suited for A District System

Anaheim's population has grown increasingly diverse over the past four decades¹³. In addition to racial and ethnic diversity, Anaheim's population is varied in terms of age, family type, income, and religious beliefs¹⁴.

Anaheim is more than 20 miles long, stretching from Cypress in the west all the way to the border with Riverside County in the east. The neighborhoods of the city are as diverse as its population. In East Anaheim and Anaheim hills, residents are generally older, more affluent and more likely to own their home. The average household size is 2.87 people, compared to 3.39 for the whole city¹⁵. The Anaheim Hills neighborhoods are very close to mountains and open space, including the 103 acre Deer Canyon Park Preserve, but this comes with concerns about wildfire safety and longer commute times.

In Central and West Anaheim, residents are younger and more likely to have young children. Over 40 percent of households contain children under the age of 18, compared to around 30 percent of Anaheim Hills households¹⁶. More people in Central and West Anaheim rent their homes and commute times are generally shorter¹⁷. Central and West Anaheim residents enjoy proximity to downtown, commercial districts, and other parts of Orange County, but they also experience greater problems with crime, graffiti, and other issues associated with urban areas. Central Anaheim is home to Anaheim's Resort District, including the famous Disneyland theme park, the Honda Center, and Angel Stadium.

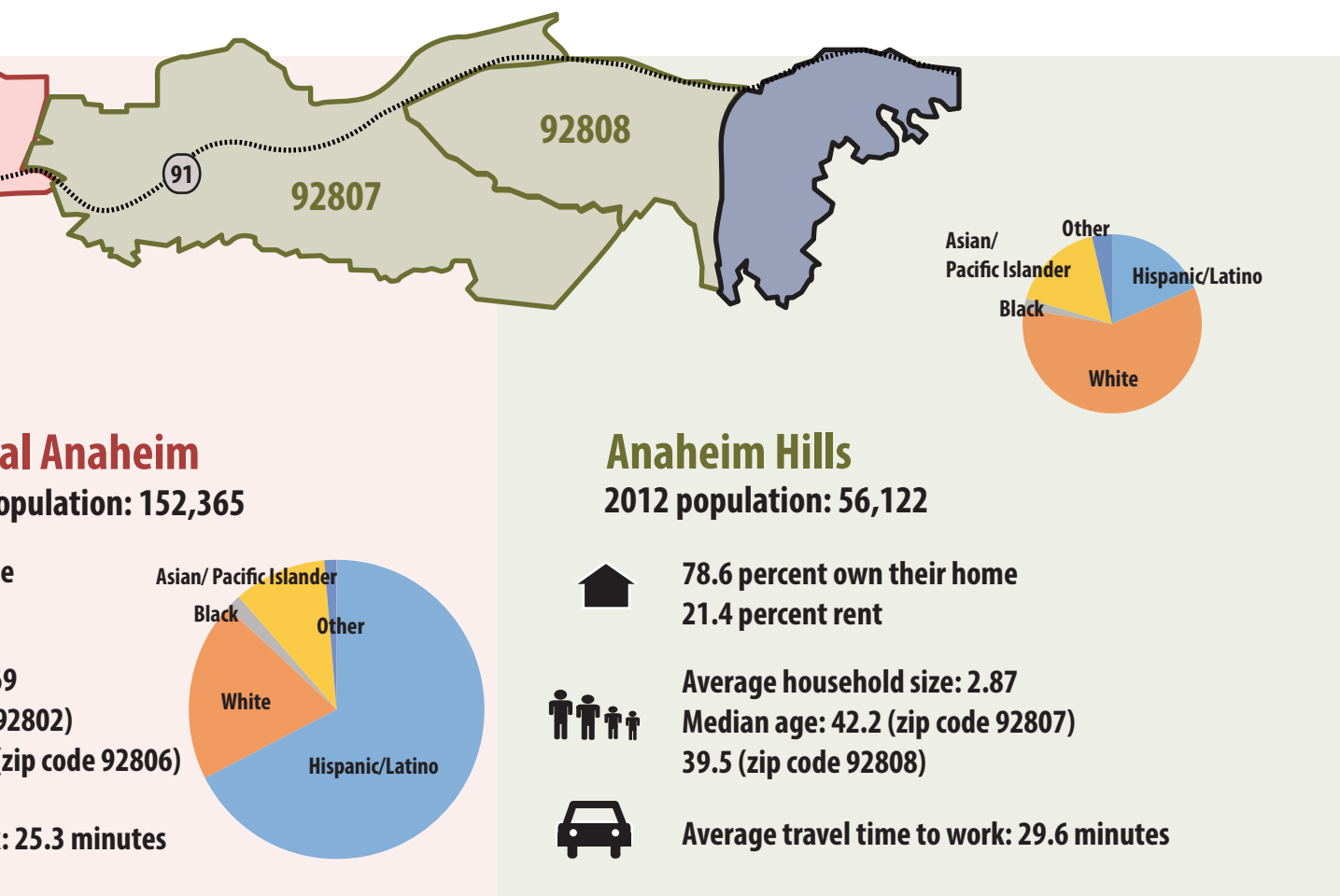


Yet even within these broad sections of Anaheim, further diversity exists. For example, Anaheim Hills is home to small communities of renters, while the foot of Anaheim Hills hosts an industrial and commercial district. Central Anaheim's Colony District features historic single family homes in the middle of downtown. West Anaheim is home to Little Arabia, a commercial district with a concentration of Arab-American businesses, as well as enclaves of Vietnamese, white, and Latino families.

Diversity within a city is a major reason that large and heterogeneous cities choose district elections^{18 19}. Using districts to elect council members ensures that each part of the city has a representative at City Hall who understands the unique needs and concerns of those neighborhoods. Should a local problem arise, like a spike in crime rates or crumbling streets, that district's representative can help direct services to solve that problem.

An at-large mayor ensures a 'whole city' perspective leads the city council

One criticism of district elections is that a district system can cause city council members to lose sight of how issues affect the entire city as a whole. However, nearly all cities that use districts retain an at-large mayor, who can help focus representatives' attention on citywide issues if district concerns become too engrossing²⁰. Anaheim's Measure L provides for this as well.



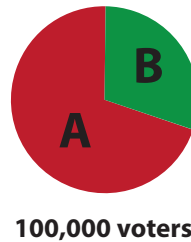
Districts Improve Representation and Good Governance

District elections are overwhelmingly used by large and diverse cities because they enable proportional representation, a cornerstone of American democracy. While the American concept of democracy holds that the majority's votes direct our nation's policy and choose our leader, we also believe that significant minority voices deserve inclusion and representation as well. For this reason, while the President is elected by the vote of the whole country, we also elect Senators from each state and U.S. Representatives from districts within states. These elected officials represent the diversity between states and within states, while the president must be elected by the majority of all voters. As a result, conservative voters in Orange County can elect Republican representatives to speak for them in Congress, despite living in one of the most Democratic-leaning states in the nation.

What constitutes a minority voice in politics varies depending on the area electing representatives. For example, Latino voters are a minority political voice in the United States as a whole, but a majority political voice in the city of Santa Ana²¹. Furthermore, majority and minority roles can change. New minority populations can emerge, and existing political affiliations or demographics can change.

Where significant political diversity occurs within a city, at-large elections can unintentionally disenfranchise large portions of the population^{22 23 24 25}.

As an example, consider a hypothetical city with 100,000 voting citizens and 5 city council seats elected at large. Among this population, 70,000 voters consistently vote for candidates who promote one type of policy ("A" candidates) and the remaining 30,000 voters consistently prefer candidates who promote a different type of policy ("B" candidates).



30,000 voters consistently vote for B candidates.

70,000 voters consistently vote for A candidates.



5 city council seats

In an election, 70,000 votes (70%) go to A candidates.

30,000 votes (30%) go to B candidates.

Election Results



City Council

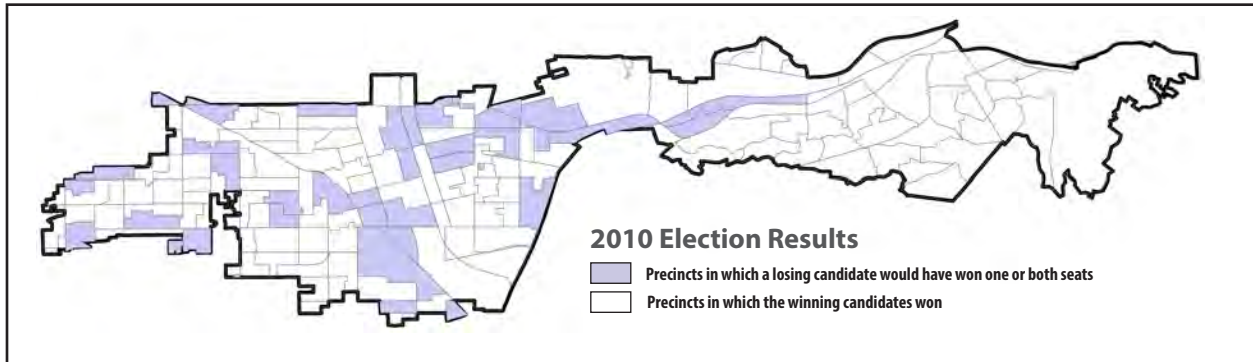


Population

In the city council elections, voting citizens will vote for the candidates who promote the policies they prefer. 70,000 votes will go to A candidates and 30,000 will go to B candidates. All seats will thus be won by A candidates, even though 30,000 voters support B candidates and B policies. **The majority of the population receives not just the majority of representation, but the entirety of it.**

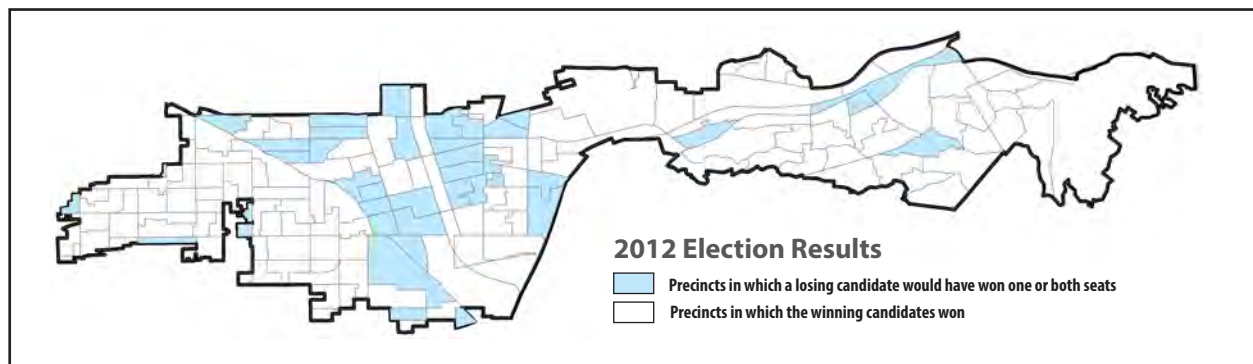
Evidence of Voter Disenfranchisement in Anaheim's At-Large System

This kind of disenfranchisement of minority voters can be measured in Anaheim. Results from past elections show voters in some neighborhoods consistently voting for candidates other than those who win, while other neighborhoods consistently vote for the winners.



Source: Orange County Registrar of Voters, 2010.

In 2010, for example, 133 precincts reported votes in Anaheim's city council election. In 41 of these precincts, representing 30 percent of voters, candidates who lost the at-large election would have won one or both council seats if the election had been held only within that precinct²⁶. Rates of voter turnout in precincts that preferred winning candidates was only negligibly different (less than three percentage points) from precincts that chose losing candidates.



Source: Orange County Registrar of Voters, 2012.

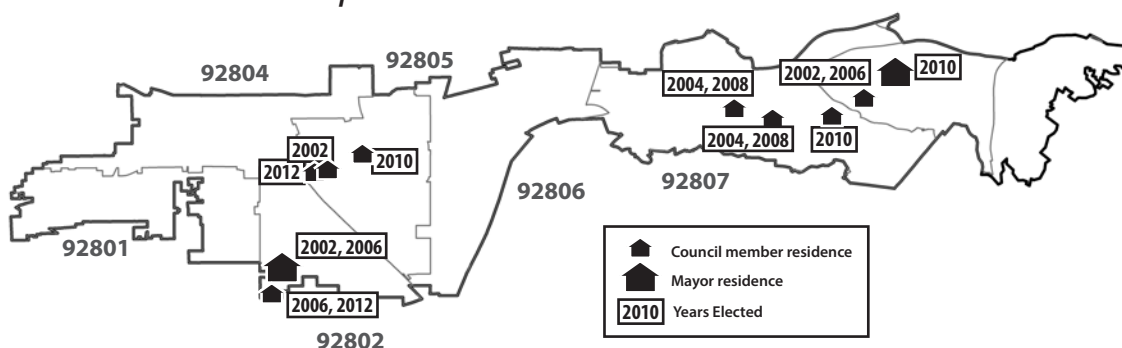
A similar pattern occurred in the 2012 city council election. 44 precincts, representing 24 percent of voters, voted for one or more losing candidates. Many of these precincts were the same ones voting for losing candidates in 2010²⁷.

Voter returns like those shown above indicate two things. First, voters are politically polarized, and this polarization happens on a geographic scale. The interests or priorities of voters in one part of the city are different from those in another area. Second, in an at-large system, polarized voting indicates that a significant and cohesive minority of voters could be disenfranchised. If a large group of voters is consistently voting differently from the majority, yet never successful in electing even a single representative to the City Council, then this significant minority is not being represented. The at-large system is failing to provide representative democracy.

District Elections Incentivize Efficient, Accountable Government

In an at-large system with an unrepresented minority group of voters, the elected officials have no incentive to meet the needs of the minority group. Their re-election is contingent on pleasing the majority or plurality of voters who elected them. Since there are no representatives of the minority group holding elected office and they do not need the support of the minority group of voters, the elected officials don't need to take the viewpoint of the minority group into account. Elected officials may choose to take actions that benefit the minority, but have no obligation or incentive to do so. When budgets are tight or policies are divisive, the at-large system incentivizes these elected officials to make decisions that please their supporters, rather than requiring them to develop solutions that address the needs of the whole city.

Patterns of Uneven Representation in Anaheim



Source: FPPC forms via City of Anaheim

In Anaheim, the city council has been elected from a very narrow geography in the past ten years²⁸. Since 2004, all council members have lived in Anaheim Hills or Central Anaheim. No council members have been elected from West Anaheim's zip codes, despite over 40 percent of the city's population residing in that area²⁹. The council members who reside in Central Anaheim have lived either in the downtown area or in a specific neighborhood in the south of the city. No council members have been elected from the neighborhoods around the resort area, which have some of the greatest population density in the city.

Region	Zip Code	Representatives	Total Terms Served	Zip Code Population
Western Anaheim	92801	0	0	61,500
Central Anaheim	92802	2	4	42,797
Western Anaheim	92804	0	0	85,386
Central Anaheim	92805	3	3	70,267
Central Anaheim	92806	0	0	35,983
Anaheim Hills	92807	3	5	35,999
Anaheim Hills	92808	2	3	20,738

Source: FPPC forms; U.S. Census

Although the city council ostensibly represents all of the city, geographic council majorities have been accused in the past of prioritizing the interests of their neighborhoods of residence. For example, in the early 1990s a three-member council majority from Anaheim Hills voted to allow a controversial development in Central Anaheim, leaving residents and council members in Central Anaheim upset³⁰. Months later, after an election gave Central Anaheim a three member council majority, council members ousted Anaheim Hills planning commissioners in what many said was political retribution³¹. In response, some Anaheim Hills residents threatened secession, as they felt their voices were being ignored at City Hall³².

District elections give each neighborhood its own representative, so the whole city can be governed efficiently and accountably. Instead of fighting over geographic majorities, council members must build consensus among themselves and act together in the best interest of the entire city.

Results of Uneven Representation in Anaheim

Unequal patterns of representation in Anaheim can have material consequences for residents. Although council members do not personally distribute all public funds across the city, they do have authority over the city's budget and their votes are required for its passage. The City of Anaheim spends millions of dollars every year to provide and maintain community resources like parks, libraries, community centers, fire stations, and roads. Compared to other cities in California, particularly those that do not have major publicly-run facilities like the Port of Long Beach, Anaheim has a very large city budget³³.

Although city government tries to equitably distribute resources and meet the needs of all residents, sometimes the city budget isn't allocated evenly. In Anaheim, evidence indicates that uneven representation in city government has correlated with uneven public investment. Over the past ten years, West and Central Anaheim have averaged about one representative for every 50,000 people. Anaheim Hills has had about one representative for every 7,000³⁴. West and Central Anaheim have significantly less park space and fewer libraries and community centers per resident than Anaheim Hills, even though these resources are publicly provided³⁵. And public spending to repair or construct new community resources in the past ten years has also been uneven, according to the City of Anaheim's own figures³⁶.

Uneven representation hasn't only affected West and Central Anaheim. About twenty years before, when Anaheim Hills residents had less representation on the city council, several controversial projects were proposed for the Hills area³⁷. Hills residents were forced to fight long battles with the city to prevent road widenings that they opposed, and the development of a much-desired community center for Anaheim Hills was stalled for several years³⁸.

District Elections Will Lessen the Influence of Special Interests in City Government

The costs of running a competitive campaign for Anaheim's city council are very high. Candidates must reach large numbers of voters spread out over a wide geographic area. In 2012, Anaheim was home to over 150,000 registered voters. Of these, 91,000 cast ballots in the city council race. The two winning candidates earned over 25,000 votes apiece³⁹.

In order to reach large numbers of voters, most competitive campaigns in Anaheim use mass mailings of campaign literature, slate advertisements, and yard signs to get the candidate's name and platform out. A single mailing can cost thousands of dollars. In the past four elections, the top three candidates all spent at least \$30,000 on their campaigns. Most spent over \$100,000, with the top spenders nearing \$300,000⁴⁰.

In addition to the money fundraised and spent by individual candidates, political action committees (also known as PACs) can spend money to influence election outcomes. PACs represent interest groups hoping to influence election outcomes, including business groups like the Chamber of Commerce, labor unions, or neighborhood associations. PACs can make "independent expenditures," that is, paying for campaign communications in support of or opposition to candidates or measures on the ballot. In 2012, PACs spent over \$1 million in independent expenditures to support different candidates for election in Anaheim. Some candidates for Anaheim City Council benefited from more than \$400,000 in independent expenditures from PACs⁴¹.

Some candidates run for election without raising or spending any money, but in the past four elections none of these candidates have won seats or been runners-up⁴². In addition, the candidates who did not raise or personally contribute money to their campaigns did not receive any independent expenditure support from PACs⁴³. Without personal wealth and/or financial support from PACs, candidates cannot run viable campaigns for Anaheim City Council.

District elections help reduce the influence of PACs in local government. As per the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United*, independent expenditures cannot be restricted. However, candidates will become less dependent on outside campaign financing if they do not need to reach hundreds of thousands of voters across a large city. A smaller, less geographically dispersed pool of voters can be reached by a candidate going door-to-door to speak to voters in person⁴⁴.

Academic research suggests that candidates in district election systems may have greater opportunity to meet with potential voters because they only have to focus on one district instead of the entire city⁴⁵. There is also evidence that district systems minimize the amount of financial resources necessary to win and therefore candidates who have minimal financial resources but strong neighborhood support may have better chances of getting elected⁴⁶. In a district system, community-based candidates can more easily run a competitive campaign without needing personal wealth or extensive financial backing from special interests.

Responses to Arguments in Opposition of Measure L

Argument A: If people who feel they lack representation on City Council registered to vote and voted in higher numbers, they would be represented on the City Council⁴⁷

One argument against district elections is that low levels of voter registration and turnout are responsible for majority domination of at-large political systems. This proposed explanation does not address the problem of at-large systems preventing even and proportional representation. Referring again to the hypothetical city described on page 8, where there is a voting minority of 30 percent of voters (roughly approximating Latino voters in Anaheim⁴⁸) and a voting majority of 70 percent, the majority would still hold every single representative seat even if every member of the voting population went to the polls. Thirty percent of the population would still have zero representation (page 8)⁴⁹. While voter registration and turnout are certainly important components in any democracy, they can't solve systematic problems like those caused by the structure of an at-large election system in a heterogeneous city.

Argument B: District elections will create “in-fighting” on the City Council⁵⁰

A common allegation made against district elections is that they will encourage ‘in-fighting’ between district-elected representatives as council members try to direct city resources toward their own neighborhoods to gain voter support⁵¹. However, this argument tacitly states that at-large systems allow council members to ignore certain areas – those with minority voters and no political representation – without facing repercussions from voters. If an at-large system is avoiding ‘in-fighting’ that would occur on a council elected by district, this is because it is failing to represent all of the city’s residents. This disagreement is actually healthy for a democracy because through the process of discussion, deliberation, and compromise, elected officials can determine the best course of action for a municipality.

Under a district system, the city council cannot systematically neglect certain areas of the city. Council members must build consensus and work together to share resources across the city in an equitable manner⁵². This likely won't involve a perfectly even division of City budgeting but rather a negotiation as a group to determine resource allocation that is in the best interests of as many Anaheim residents as possible.

Argument C: Measure L “takes away your voting rights” by restricting voters to voting for one council member (their district representative) instead of voting for all four, “reducing the number of councilmembers representing your interests from 4 to 1.”⁵³

As shown in the example on page 8, only voters who are part of the political majority can be represented in an at-large system if polarized voting is taking place. Measureable voter polarization occurs in Anaheim, as shown on page 9. If you are indeed a member of the political majority, then you do have four council members and a mayor representing your interests at City Hall. But if you are a member of the political minority, then you have zero representatives⁵⁴. The at-large system actually takes away your voting rights.

For members of the political majority, who may feel that they get “more” representation, the current at-large system is problematic: it has the potential to take away majority voting rights as well, and it undermines the validity and strength of local democracy.

-First of all, good representative democracy takes into account all voices, giving precedence to the majority, but also acknowledging and incorporating the perspectives of the minority. Voters who are never able to elect candidates of their choice often feel less buy-in to the political system, are less likely to regard government as legitimate, and are less likely to participate⁵⁵.

-Second, demographic change suggests that the current political majority in Anaheim will soon become a political minority⁵⁶. It is in every voter’s best interest to establish a political system in Anaheim that gives all voices – not just the majority – the opportunity to be represented in city government.

Argument D: Measure L “was forced on Anaheim by out of town special interests and trial lawyers who sued the city.”⁵⁷

In April of 2012, the City of Anaheim was sued by Anaheim residents for an alleged violation of the California Voting Rights Act, which holds that cities may not use at-large election systems should they be shown to limit the ability of protected classes, including racial minorities, to elect the candidates of their choice. All three plaintiffs have lived in the city and been involved in their communities for many years.

Analyses of voting returns in Anaheim indicate that the combination of at-large elections and polarized voting in Anaheim was and is preventing consistent groups of Anaheim residents in certain areas of the city from electing candidates of their choice, as demonstrated on pages 8 and 9 of this report.

Argument E: Measure L “replaces a system that works well for Anaheim with a system used in big cities and Congress.”⁵⁸

Opponents of district elections like to invoke cities like Los Angeles and Chicago as examples of council in-fighting, assuming that these cities’ reputations for corruption, dysfunction, or other social ills will be ascribed to districts⁵⁹. They have also made statements implying that cities with district elections in California are more likely to face budgeting issues⁶⁰. Nearly all large and medium sized cities in California use districts. No evidence exists that suggests that district elections are the contributing factor to budget shortfalls in those cities where both budget shortfalls and districts exists, especially given the myriad of other ways in which these example cities differ from Anaheim. Likewise, assertions that Los Angeles is ‘dysfunctional’⁶¹ and implications that districts are at fault for this undefined dysfunction are not supported by any quantifiable evidence other than the personal perception and opinion of the speaker.

Argument F: In an at-large system, all citizens have an equal vote and the city council is accountable to every voter. A district system would divide the city and take away this accountability⁶².

Instead of dividing the city, district elections make Anaheim more inclusive and allow for representation of all of the city, not just the areas where the majority voters live. As previously described on page 8 and 9, the current at-large system does not give all citizens an equal vote⁶³. Votes of the political minority do not have an impact equal to those of the majority in the current system. Likewise, when the political majority has 100 percent of representation, the city council is accountable only to the majority and has no obligation to meet the needs of the minority. An Anaheim where all citizens have an equal vote and the city council is accountable to every voter is not possible under an at-large system.

Policy Conclusions

If passed, Measure L will amend Anaheim's City Charter to establish a district elections system for choosing City Council members in place of the existing at-large system. The mayor will continue to be elected at large.

Measure M will increase the size of the Anaheim City Council from four seats to six, plus the at-large mayor, for a total of seven representatives.

Measure L will improve democracy in Anaheim by incorporating fair, proportional and geographic representation into local government in place of the existing "winner-take-all" at-large election system.

Measure L will incentivize accountable, equitable, and efficient distribution of city resources by ensuring that all areas of the city have a representative on the city council who understands their neighborhoods and is accountable to their votes.

Measure L will reduce the influence of special interest's campaign donations in city elections by lowering the costs of running a viable campaign for City Council and removing barriers to candidacy for community-based candidates.

Measure L and Measure M together will give Anaheim a form and size of local government that is appropriate for a city of Anaheim's size and diversity.

Measure M will lower the ratio of Anaheim residents to representatives and increase accountability by expanding the size of the city council, enabling council members to better respond to the needs of their constituents.

Together, Measure L and Measure M will improve democratic representation, accountability, and government efficiency in the City of Anaheim.

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Orange County Communities Organized for
Responsible Development
13252 Garden Grove Blvd. Ste. 204
Garden Grove, CA 92843