

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **District Elections – Town of Windsor**

**Windsor, California** – On October 22, 2018, the Town received a letter from Attorney Kevin Shenkman of Shenkman & Hughes, which alleges that voting within the Town is racially polarized, resulting in minority vote dilution and that the Town's at-large elections violate the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 ("CVRA").

A growing number of cities and other public agencies in California are being sued under the CVRA. To date, cities that have decided to challenge these lawsuits have not prevailed in a court of law or have ultimately decided to settle, either prior to or in the midst of litigation brought pursuant to the CVRA. Cities have a statutory obligation to reimburse successful challengers for their attorneys' fees pursuant to the CVRA, including if districts are voluntarily adopted in response to litigation in some cases. Due to the significant costs of defending against these lawsuits, the vast majority of cities have therefore voted to voluntarily transition to district-based elections.

The Town of Windsor currently uses an at-large election system in which all voters in the Town have the opportunity to vote for candidates for all seats on the Town Council. At the Town Council Meeting on December 5, 2018, the Town Council adopted Resolution No. 3492-18 declaring its intent to transition to district-based elections. Following this action, the Town Council continued to receive input from the community expressing concern about proceeding with district-based elections and reviewed its options for responding to Mr. Shenkman's claim that the Town is in violation of the CRVA. At the conclusion of this review, the Town Council confirmed that in order to avoid extremely costly litigation, it intends to proceed with a voluntary transition to a district-based voting system in which the Town will be divided into districts and only the voters in each particular district decide the candidate from that district who will represent that district on the Town Council.

The Town will soon be releasing a schedule for a series of public hearings that will be held to allow for the public to participate in the transition to district-based elections and the formation of district map(s). All residents within the Town are encouraged to participate in these hearings, with Spanish translation of documents and a Spanish interpreter available.

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