



Legislation Text

File #: 19-617, **Version:** 1

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SUBJECT: Adoption of Resolutions for Calling a Special Election for March 3, 2020 for the Purpose of Placing Three Ballot Measures Before the Voters to Amend Various Sections of the City of Merced Charter Including Sections 400, 402, 604, and 1051 and Requesting the Merced County Board of Supervisors Consolidate Said Election with the Statewide Primary Election Being Held on the Same Date

REPORT IN BRIEF

Consideration of Resolutions Calling a March 3, 2020 Special Municipal Election for the purpose of placing three measures on the ballot amending sections 400, 402, 604 and 1051 of the City of Merced Charter and requesting the County Board of Supervisors consolidate the City's election with the Statewide Primary Election being held on the same date.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion:

- A. Adopting **Resolution 2019-67**, a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Merced, California, calling a Special Municipal Election to be held on March 3, 2020, for the Purpose of Submitting Three Ballot Measures to Amend Various Sections of the City of Merced Charter to the Electorate; and,
- B. Adopting **Resolution 2019-68**, a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Merced, California, requesting that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Merced, California provide for the consolidation of a Special Municipal Election and Three Ballot Measures with the Statewide Primary Election to be held on March 3, 2020; and,
- C. Approving the form and ballot questions of the City Council sponsored Measures; and,
- D. Directing the City Manager/City Clerk and the City Attorney's Office to execute documents appropriate to carry out the tasks necessary for the Special Municipal Election and to take actions related thereto.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or,
- 2. Approve, subject to other than recommended by staff (identify specific findings and/or conditions amended to be addressed in the motion); or,
- 3. Deny; or,

AUTHORITY

Article XI section 3 of the California Constitution, Charter of the City of Merced, Sections 1001 and 1003(A); and,
California Elections Code Section 1415, 9255, and 10403;and,

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Placing a Ballot Measure on the March 2020 Primary to update the City of Merced Charter.

DISCUSSION

In March, Mayor Murphy requested a review of the City of Merced Charter document for potential updates to be placed on a future ballot. The City Council agreed and appointed a Citizens Advisory Charter Review Committee to take on the charge of the Council to review and make recommendations to the Council on potential updates and changes to the Charter.

The Citizens Advisory Charter Review Committee met over several months and held five meetings to review City Council recommended sections and also reviewed sections suggested by individual members of the committee.

At the regular meeting held on September 3, 2019, the City Council received the Final Report of the Citizens Advisory Charter Review Committee which outlined several recommended updates to the City of Merced Charter that could be placed on the March 2020 Statewide Primary Election.

Council directed staff to prepare the necessary resolutions for calling an election and also directed staff to create a single question for the ballot encompassing the proposed amendments.

At the City Council meeting of October 7, 2019, City Council discussed which items recommended for update by the Citizens Advisory Charter Review Committee could be achieved by ordinance instead of a ballot measure. Council also discussed separating the items into multiple questions instead of a single ballot question that combined all changes. Council directed staff to return to the October 21, 2019 meeting with updated resolutions placing three separate measures on the ballot for voters to decide on potential updates to Charter sections 400, 402 and 604 and 1051. Additionally, Council directed staff to draft ordinances address the remaining items that were included in the original ballot question. The draft ordinances for a Tax Transparency Committee and appointments to the Planning Commission and Recreation and Parks Commission by district will come forward at a future Council meeting.

The resolution calling the election contains the ballot questions and text of the proposed changes. The City Council should determine if the language is clear and adequately informs the voters of the nature of the measure.

The City has consistently recognized a cost savings in previous years by consolidating the General Municipal Election with the Consolidated District Election and the Unified District Election conducted by the Merced County Elections Office. The County has trained staff and volunteers, in addition to the necessary equipment, software, and locations to conduct elections efficiently and economically. Therefore, staff recommends that the City Council call for the Special Municipal Election on March 3, 2020 and consolidate the Special Municipal Election with the Statewide Primary Election on March 3, 2020, per the two resolutions at Attachments 1 and 2.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The Registrar of Voters has provided a rough estimate of between \$12,000 and \$25,000 depending on the number of ballot questions. \$20,000 was placed in the FY 2019/20 Budget.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution 2019-67 (Calling the Election)
2. Resolution 2019-68 (Consolidating the Election)