



**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Kristine Schmidt, Assistant City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Ballot Measure to Increase Mayoral Term to Four Years

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider a recommendation from the Public Engagement Commission to place a measure on the ballot for the November 2020 General Municipal Election asking the voters to decide whether to increase the Mayor's term of office from 2 years to 4 years.

**BACKGROUND:**

A measure was included on the 2016 November General Municipal Election to determine whether the Goleta Mayor should be a directly elected position and to determine the length of the Mayoral term. The ballot measure language was as follows:

“Measure C:  
Shall the electors elect a Mayor and four city councilmembers? Yes/No  
Shall the term of office of Mayor be two years? Yes/No  
Shall the term of office of Mayor be four years? Yes/No”

Measure C passed, establishing the directly elected position of Mayor starting with the November 2018 election. The majority of voters approved the directly elected mayor with a term of two years (59.57%) while 62.12% of the voters said “No” to a four-year term.

On May 16, 2017, the City Council approved Resolution No. 17-18 establishing the Public Engagement Commission (PEC), an advisory board with the purpose of increasing public engagement in City governance. The PEC was established pursuant to a settlement agreement with the District Elections Committee. One of the assigned goals for the PEC was to explore whether the directly elected mayor's term should be increased to four (4) years. According to staff reports from that time, the rationale for considering changing the term of the elected Mayor from two years to four years was that with a two-year term the Mayor would need to be constantly in campaign mode and would not be able to be as focused on governance.

The PEC waited on making a decision on this question until after the voters had had the opportunity to directly elect a Mayor in November 2018. In the interim, the PEC asked

that a question about mayoral term be part of the already-planned comprehensive community survey. The 2018 Community Survey was completed, and the results were presented to the City Council on September 18, 2018. A random sample of 451 residents completed the survey between July 26 and August 13, 2018. When asked whether the Mayor should serve a 2-year term or a 4-year term, 49% favored a 4-year mayoral term and 44% preferred a 2-year term. An additional 8% of respondents were unsure or preferred not to answer.

Pursuant to California Government Code § 34900, in order for the length of the term to be changed, the City Council would need to place a measure on the ballot. At its meeting of November 13, 2019, the PEC recommended to Council that it place a measure on the November 2020 General Municipal Election asking the voters to decide whether to increase the Mayor's term of office from 2 years to 4 years. The staff report and minutes for that meeting are provided as Attachment 1 and 2 to this report.

Themes discussed in favor of this recommendation included the time commitment, the personal out-of-pocket expense (e.g., for filing candidate papers), the fundraising burden, and the distraction from important governance issues required to run a campaign every two years. Members expressed that they felt that a 4-year term was consistent with the goal of lowering barriers for people to run for office and encouraging fuller participation in government, and that the current 2-year term "self-selects" candidates who can afford the time and money to run every two years. Also cited were learning curve issues, such as new elected officials being relatively inexperienced the first year and the most seasoned and effective at the end of their term. Other reasons included saving the expense of administering an additional ballot question every other year and providing more stability/continuity of governance. One commission member noted, in opposition to the recommendation, that voters had already been asked the question twice (once at incorporation and once in 2016) and could be irritated at being asked again; and that, with a 4-year term, voters might need to live with a Mayor that they did not like for a longer time.

Should Council wish to proceed with adding a ballot measure for November 2020, staff recommends that Council direct staff to return with draft ballot language for its consideration. The PEC emphasized that good ballot language would be important, as some felt that the language of Measure C in 2016 was confusing to voters.


**Reviewed By:**

  
Kristine Schmidt  
Assistant City Manager

**Legal Review By:**

  
Michael Jenkins  
City Attorney

**Approved By:**

  
Michelle Greene  
City Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. November 13, 2019, Public Engagement Commission Report - Increase Mayoral Term to Four Years
2. November 13, 2019, Public Engagement Commission Approved Meeting Minutes

## **ATTACHMENT 1:**

November 13, 2019, Public Engagement Commission Report - Increase Mayoral Term to Four Years



**TO:** Chair and Members of the Public Engagement Commission

**FROM:** Kristine Schmidt, Assistant City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Increase Mayoral Term to Four Years

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Public Engagement Commission make a recommendation to the City Council about whether to place a measure on the November 2020 General Municipal Election asking the voters to decide whether to increase the Mayor's term of office from 2 years to 4 years.

**BACKGROUND:**

On May 16, 2017, the City Council approved Resolution No. 17-18 establishing the Public Engagement Commission (PEC) as an advisory board with the purpose of increasing public engagement in City governance. One of the assigned goals for the PEC was to explore whether the directly elected mayor's term should be increased from two to four years.

Previously, a measure was included on the 2016 November General Municipal Election to determine whether the Goleta Mayor should be a directly elected position and to determine the length of the Mayoral term, either a two- or four-year term. The ballot measure language was as follows:

Measure C:

Shall the electors elect a Mayor and four city councilmembers? Yes/No

Shall the term of office of Mayor be two years? Yes/No

Shall the term of office of Mayor be four years? Yes/No

Measure C passed in 2016, establishing the directly elected position of Mayor starting with the November 2018 election. The majority of voters (59.57%) approved a term of two years. The majority of the voters (62.12%) said "No" to a four-year term.

The question of changing the term of the elected Mayor from two years to four years, arose again during negotiation of the settlement agreement with the former District Elections Committee. The rationale for a change was that under a two-year term the Mayor would need to be constantly in campaign mode, with a potentially significant commitment of time and money, and would not be able to be as focused on

governance. A secondary reason would be cost savings, because each seat or measure placed on the ballot increases the City's share of the cost of the election.

Pursuant to California Government Code § 34900 et seq., in order for the length of the term to be changed, the City Council would have to place a measure on the ballot again. It is the charge of the PEC to advise them about whether to do that.

Initially, the PEC discussed surveying members of the public on their interest in revisiting the question. Rather than conduct a standalone survey that would not necessarily be statistically valid, the PEC asked that the question about mayoral term be part of the already-planned comprehensive community survey that was conducted by staff in 2018. The Commission would then have the opportunity to review the results before deciding whether to make a recommendation to the City Council to submit a ballot measure for the 2020 election.

Further, on June 13, 2018, the PEC decided not to move forward with consideration of this matter. Members stated that it felt premature, as a mayor had not even yet been directly elected under the two-year term. Some felt that the rationale for moving to 4 years was not well developed. Since it was not critical that a decision be made, consideration of the issue was tabled.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Staff is bringing this issue back to the PEC because, from a timing standpoint, the PEC would need to make a recommendation to Council now if a ballot measure is to be considered for November 2020 General Municipal Election.

Since the last time the PEC considered this issue, the 2018 Community Survey was completed, and the results were presented to the City Council on September 18, 2018. A random sample of 451 residents completed the survey between July 26 and August 13, 2018. When asked whether the Mayor should serve a 2-year term or a 4-year term, 48.4% favored a 4-year mayoral term and 43.6% preferred a 2-year term. An additional 8% of respondents were unsure or preferred not to answer.

Following today's discussion, staff would like to advise the City Council either 1) that it is the PEC's recommendation that the Council place a measure on the November 2020 General Municipal Election asking the voters to decide whether to increase the Mayor's term of office from 2 years to 4 years, or 2) that it is the PEC's recommendation that Council not place such a measure on the ballot. This would fully conclude the PEC's responsibilities related to this goal.

#### **Reviewed By:**

  
Kristy Schmidt  
Assistant City Manager

## **ATTACHMENT 2:**

November 13, 2019, Public Engagement Commission Approved Meeting Minutes



**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, November 13, 2019**

6:00 PM  
City Hall  
130 Cremona Drive, Suite B  
Goleta, California

***Members of the Public Engagement Commission***

Pedro Paz, Chair  
Sherri Bliss, Vice Chair  
Vinesh Manian, Commissioner  
Barbara Massey, Commissioner  
Beth Schneider, Commissioner  
Silvia Uribe, Commissioner  
Rey Ybarra, Commissioner

Kristine Schmidt, Assistant City  
Manager  
Kelly Hoover, Community  
Relations Manager/PIO  
Deborah S. Lopez, City Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Paz called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION**

PRESENT: Chair Paz, Vice Chair Bliss, Commissioners Massey, Schneider and Manian

ABSENT: Commissioners Uribe and Ybarra

**PUBLIC FORUM**

None

## **A. PRESENTATION**

### **A.1 Introduction of Community Relations Manager/PIO Kelly Hoover**

#### Introduction of Community Relations Manager/PIO Kelly Hoover

Staff Speaker:

Kristy Schmidt, Assistant City Manager, introduced Kelly Hoover, Community Relations Manager/PIO.

### **A.2 Spanish Engagement Partnership**

Receive a presentation from Isla Vista Youth Projects (IVYP) Executive Director Lori Lander Goodman on the new Spanish Engagement Partnership between IVYP and the City of Goleta.

#### Spanish Engagement Partnership

Staff Speaker:

Kelly Hoover, Community Relations Manager/PIO

Public Speakers:

Lori Goodman, Executive Director, Isla Vista Youth Project provided a presentation to the Public Engagement Commission titled "Isla Vista Youth Projects - Goleta Partnership" dated November 13, 2019 (presentation on file).

The Public Engagement Commission Received the Presentation.

### **A.3 Census 2020 Efforts**

Receive a report from Committee Chair Pedro Paz regarding Santa Barbara County's Complete Count Committee Efforts, followed by a report from Community Relations Manager/PIO Kelly Hoover on the City of Goleta's Census 2020 efforts.

#### Census 2020 Efforts

Speaker:

Pedro Paz provided a presentation to the Public Engagement Commission titled "Complete Count Committee Work," dated November 13, 2019 (presentation on file).



Staff Speaker:

Kelly Hoover, Community Relations Manager/PIO provided a presentation to the Public Engagement Commission titled "Make Goleta Count," dated November 13, 2019 (presentation on file).

The Public Engagement Commission Received the Presentation.

## **B. CONSENT CALENDAR**

### **B.1 Approval of the Public Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2019**

Approve the Public Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2019.

Approval of the Public Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2019

MOTION: Commissioners Massey/Schneider to approve the Public Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2019.

VOTE: Motion approved by the following voice vote: Ayes: Chair Paz , Vice Chair Bliss, Commissioners Massey, Schneider and Manian. Noes: None. Absent: Commissions Uribe and Ybarra.

## **C. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM**

### **C.1 New Zoning Ordinance: Public Noticing Requirements**

Provide input to the City Council regarding:

1. The reliance on mailed notice for citywide projects in the City of Goleta; and
2. The appropriateness of providing newspaper notice in lieu of mailed notice for projects that would require more than 1,000 mailed notices.

New Zoning Ordinance - Public Noticing Requirements

Staff Speakers:

Anne Wells, Advance Planning Manager

Public Speakers:

George Relles, spoke in support of spending money on mailed notices for larger projects. Mr. Relles suggested automatically opting in people for emailed noticed and allow users to opt out as a way to ensure the email notices reach as many

people as possible. Mr. Relles commented that he does not consider a small ad buried in a newspaper as a notice. Mr. Relles urged the use of electronic noticing.

The Public Engagement Commission provided direction to staff.

## **C.2 Increase Mayoral Term to Four Years**

That the Public Engagement Commission make a recommendation to the City Council about whether to place a measure on the November 2020 General Municipal Election asking the voters to decide whether to increase the Mayor's term of office from 2 years to 4 years.

### **Increase Mayoral Terms to Four Years**

Staff Speaker:

Kristy Schmidt, Assistant City Manager

Public Speaker:

George Relles stated support for a four year Mayoral term. Mr. Relles noted the expense of a Mayor running a campaign every two years to the candidate and the tax payers. Mr. Relles concluded that having a new Mayor every two years may cause continuity problems.

MOTION: Commissioners Schneider/Manian to recommend to the City Council that they offer the voters of Goleta the opportunity to consider a four year term for the Mayor and work to clarify language on the measure.

VOTE: Motion approved by the following voice vote: Ayes: Chair Paz, Vice Chair Bliss, Commissioners Schneider and Manian. Noes: Commissioner Massey. Absent: Commissions Uribe and Ybarra.

## **C.3 Selection of Meeting Dates for 2020**

1. Cancel the Wednesday, December 18, 2019 meeting; and

2. Approve calendar for 2020 Public Engagement Commission meetings.

### **Selection of Meeting Dates for 2020**

Staff Speaker:

Kelly Hoover, Community Relations Manager/PIO

MOTION: Commissioners Massey/Schneider to 1. Cancel the Wednesday, December 18, 2019 meeting; and 2. Approve calendar for 2020 Public Engagement Commission meetings.

VOTE: Motion approved by the following voice vote: Ayes: Chair Paz ,  
Vice Chair Bliss, Commissioners Massey, Schneider and Manian.  
Noes: None. Absent: Commissions Uribe and Ybarra.

**D. ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNED AT 7:52 P.M.

GOLETA PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION