



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 17, 2016

## **LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST RANCHO CUCAMONGA WHILE CITY COUNCIL WAS IN PROCESS OF EVALUATION OF CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS**

**Rancho Cucamonga, CA** - City Attorney, James Markman announced during the City Council meeting last evening a formal lawsuit has been filed against the City of Rancho Cucamonga by three law firms on behalf of a plaintiff Southwest Voter Registration Project on an item on the City Council Agenda for the March 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting titled: *“Presentation Regarding the California Voting Rights Act, and Consideration of a Resolution Adopting Line Drawing Criteria for Creating Council District Boundaries,”* the Agenda was publicly posted on Thursday, March 10, 2016. City officials received the lawsuit on Monday, March 14, 2016.

After the official statement from the City Attorney, consultant NDC continued with its presentation providing information regarding the California Voting Rights Act, the anticipated process the City is required by law to follow and shared standard criteria used for developing Council District maps throughout the state of California. The City has contracted with NDC to host a website [www.MyRC.life](http://www.MyRC.life) where residents can gain information regarding the California Voting Rights Act and how they can participate and provide input to the Council District map process.

The City Council then voted to establish the map criteria for establishing Council Districts and proceed with the necessary process to take this item to the voters of Rancho Cucamonga at the November 2016 Election.

The City will hold Public Hearing meetings as required by law, during regular City Council meetings to obtain community input in development of a District map, information and schedule for meetings, process can be found at [www.MyRC.life](http://www.MyRC.life).

Based on this case being active litigation, the City Attorney will be the point of contact for inquiries at [CouncilDistrictsInfo@CityofRC.us](mailto:CouncilDistrictsInfo@CityofRC.us); City staff are unable to provide comment.

**For background and informational purposes, the following timeline is provided:**

**December 23, 2015** - the City of Rancho Cucamonga received a letter from the Law offices of Shenkman and Hughes citing the author's belief the city is in violation of the California Voter Rights Act and urging the City of Rancho Cucamonga to voluntarily change its at-large system of electing council members. Otherwise the firm indicated it would be "be forced to seek judicial relief." The law firm's contention with our city, and many other California city's current election processes, is that at large elections dilutes the voting power of Latino residents. Their proposed solution is to create council districts. The Malibu based Law Firm has sent similar demand letters to cities and governing boards across the state over the last several years; and has taken several agencies to court regarding this claim.

**January 6, 2016** – Closed Session City Council had item on Agenda and was advised by staff and City Attorney of the matter.

**January 20, 2016** – Closed Session City Council Agenda item; Council received additional advisement from City Attorney regarding this matter. Placed item on next Council meeting for public discussion/disclosure.

**February 17, 2016** - City Council meeting - City Attorney James Markman provided an overview in public session of the potential litigation, and reported that the City Council directed staff to move forward with putting the matter in front of the public for discussion; and would have a presentation at the March 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

**March 14, 2016** – City served with Summons Filed March 10, 2016 in Superior Court of California, County of San Bernardino.

**March 16, 2016** – Public Hearing; City Council Meeting - Council may adopt resolution setting criteria to guide the drawing of draft maps.

**March 25, 2016** - Consultant's Draft Maps (and any public maps received before this date) published on project website [www.MyRC.life](http://www.MyRC.life) .

**April 4, 2016** - Deadline for public to submit initial map ideas.

**April 6, 2016 7:00 pm** - 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing; City Council Meeting. Council reviews draft map and gives direction on tests / revisions.

**April 20, 2016 7:00 pm** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing; City Council Meeting.

**May 4, 2016 7:00 pm** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Public Hearing; City Council Meeting.

**May (TBD), 2016** - City Council to adopt a final plan and call for November election. Council may adopt a final map or request additional tests / revisions.

**November 8, 2016** - Election Day

*This schedule is subject to change. Please check back as additional meetings may be added and/or the dates of these meetings may change.*