



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Office of Gerrie Schipske
Councilwoman, Fifth District
Memorandum

R-24

Date: November 17, 2009

To: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

From: Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District 

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM: Municipal Election Cycle**

BACKGROUND

Creating the best opportunity for Long Beach residents to participate in municipal elections is an informal charge of the Long Beach City Council and a formal charge of the Long Beach City Clerk. Different formats have been discussed, as have the timing of Long Beach municipal elections.

The City election cycles are arranged according to Section 1901 of the City Charter:

The primary and general municipal elections for elective officers of the City shall be held in even numbered years, on the second Tuesday in April and the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June, respectively, and candidates elected to office shall assume such office on the third Tuesday in July and serve until election and qualification of their successors.

In the 2000 presidential election, seventy-one percent of registered California voters participated. In the 2008 presidential election, that number rose to seventy-eight percent. The lowest turnout percentage for a general election was 50.6% in November 2002. In June 2006, the voter turnout was 33.6%, and that was a record low for a statewide primary held in June. In comparison, voter turnout in the June 2006 city-wide election was 28.8%. Before that, in June 2002, voter-turn out was 23.4%

Between special elections, statewide elections and municipal elections, voters are expressing fatigue at the frequency of elections. In addition, the cost of conducting elections in alignment with the State should be explored for any possible savings.

Consolidation with County and alignment with state, combined with the in-house expertise of the Office of the Long Beach City Clerk, would allow us to continue conducting municipal elections that meet the needs and concerns of residents while at the same time increasing voter turn-out.

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RECOMMENDATION

Respectfully request the convening of the Charter Amendment Committee to discuss and consider establishing an even-year/odd-year June-November election cycle.