

Raina Allan

From: Stephen Johnson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 2:48 PM
To: City Council
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Districts and Mayor

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February 7, 2025

Healdsburg City Council
City of Healdsburg
401 Grove Street
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Dear Healdsburg City Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the decision to implement a five-district system for voting in Healdsburg. I believe this approach will help ensure fair and effective representation for all residents, while providing an opportunity for diverse communities within our city to have a stronger voice in local government.

The five-district system will allow for more focused and equitable representation, enabling elected officials to better address the specific needs of each district. This will foster greater accountability and ensure that all areas of Healdsburg are properly represented, especially as our community continues to grow and evolve. Any more than five would make the districts too small.

Also, as Healdsburg transitions to district elections, it is crucial that we focus our efforts on establishing fair and equitable districts, rather than diverting attention to the unnecessary distraction of a generally elected mayor. At first glance, the idea of a directly elected mayor may seem appealing, but it fundamentally misses the mark for what our city needs at this pivotal moment. With its relatively small population and diverse neighborhoods, Healdsburg is better served by a collaborative council model where leadership rotates, and decisions are made collectively. A single, directly elected mayor risks consolidating too much power in one individual, potentially giving disproportionate influence on certain groups or neighborhoods. This would undermine the principles of equity and shared governance that district elections are designed to promote. Moreover, the time and resources spent debating this issue detracts from the critical work of defining district boundaries.

The shift to district elections is a significant change, and it must be handled with precision and care. Our focus should be on creating districts that reflect the unique makeup of our community, ensuring that all neighborhoods have an equitable voice in local governance. A generally elected mayor does not address the core challenges we face. It will not improve representation, nor will it enhance governance. Instead, it risks creating unnecessary division and distraction at a time when unity and focus are most needed. Let's stay focused on our priorities: equitable representation through well-designed districts. This is the work that will truly strengthen Healdsburg's future.

Thank you for your consideration of these important decisions. I look forward to the positive impact this change will have on Healdsburg and its residents.

Sincerely,
Steve Johnson

