



# CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



August 5, 2025

## ITEM TITLE

Campaign Contributions: Consider Revisions to Municipal Code Chapter 2.52 Regarding Various Provisions of the Campaign Contribution Ordinance

**Report Number:** 25-0195

**Location:** No specific geographic location

**Department:** City Clerk & City Attorney

**G.C. § 84308 Regulations Apply:** No

**Environmental Notice:** The activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines. Therefore, pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) no environmental review is required.

## Recommended Action

Place an ordinance on first reading to make comprehensive updates to the Chula Vista Campaign Contribution Ordinance, Municipal Code Chapter 2.52, including contribution limits, sources of contributions, time period for accepting contributions, rules for outstanding loans and debt, complaint processing, and removing duplicative provisions. **(First Reading)**

## SUMMARY

Adoption of the ordinance would make comprehensive amendments to the City’s Campaign Contribution Ordinance including changes to contribution limits, allowable sources of contributions, the time period for accepting contributions, rules for outstanding debt, complaint processing, and removing duplicative provisions. The proposed ordinance is based on past direction from the City Council, recommendations by the City Attorney and City Clerk, and direction from the City Council at its May 13, 2025 meeting.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines because it will not result in a physical change in the environment. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the activity is not subject to CEQA.

## **BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

The Board of Ethics heard a presentation on the substantial elements of the proposed ordinance on 4/16/2025.

## **DISCUSSION**

In accordance with City Charter section 905, it is the City's policy to avoid the potential for undue or improper influence over Elected Officials resulting from excessive campaign contributions. In furtherance of that purpose, the City Council is required to adopt reasonable regulations related to campaign contributions to be contained in the Municipal Code.

The City's campaign contribution ordinance aims to prevent corruption, ensure transparency, promote fairness, encourage accountability, foster public trust, and promote ethical behavior in the political process. In 1989, the City adopted Chula Vista Municipal Code Chapter 2.52 "Campaign Contributions," in compliance with the City's Charter requirements (Campaign Contribution Ordinance).

On May 13, 2025, the City Attorney and City Clerk presented the City Council with draft provisions based on past City Council direction. At the meeting, there was a consensus of a majority of the City Council to make revisions as follows:

1. Set the contribution limit for City Council district seats at \$800 per person
2. Set the contribution limit for Citywide seats (i.e., the Mayor and City Attorney) at \$1,200 per person
3. Make no changes to the existing limits for contributions from Political Party Committees
4. Allow contributions from "Organizations," as that term is currently defined Municipal Code
5. Make no changes to the existing limits for loans a candidate may make to their own campaign
6. Require loans and debts to be repaid within 12 months of the election
7. Increase the penalty for intentionally filing a false complaint to \$2,500

The ordinance with previous recommendations and incorporation of the City Council's May 13, 2025 direction is now being presented for consideration to be placed on first reading.

## **DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT**

Staff has reviewed the decision contemplated by this action and has determined that it is not site-specific and consequently, the real property holdings of the City Councilmembers do not create a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code § 87100, et seq.).

Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any City Councilmember, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

## **CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no current-year fiscal impact.

## **ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no ongoing fiscal impact

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed changes to CVMC 2.52 in redline format
2. Ordinance Amending CVMC 2.52

*Staff Contacts: Marco Verdugo, City Attorney and Kerry Bigelow, City Clerk*