

LA JOLLA LIGHT

La Jolla cityhood petition drive ends with 'well over' 7,000 signatures

The Association for the City of La Jolla now has until Dec. 15 to submit the petitions for validation before the next steps in the process can begin



Signs were placed around La Jolla encouraging people to sign a petition supporting potential cityhood. (Mark Munoz)

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A six-month signature-gathering drive that is a key step toward La Jolla potentially detaching from San Diego and forming its own city ended Dec. 1 with the Association for the City of La Jolla reporting that it exceeded its goal of 7,000 signatures.

It now has until Sunday, Dec. 15, to submit the petitions to the San Diego County registrar of voters office and the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCO, which helps guide communities seeking to incorporate.

As part of the required cityhood process, the association [began collecting petition signatures](#) June 1, needing support from at least 25% of La Jolla registered voters for the effort to continue.

Based on the number of registered voters with full-time residency in La Jolla, the number of valid signatures needed is 6,536. Association members were looking to gather at least 7,000 as a buffer should some later be deemed invalid after being submitted.

Association board member Sharon Wampler told the *La Jolla Light* that “we are at well over 7,000 signatures, approaching 8,000. It’s been really inspiring to see the community rally in support of this.”

Group President Trace Wilson said he is “super proud of the team working tirelessly for six months and thrilled with the community response.”

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The organization's effort for La Jolla to become a city began with private meetings in 2021 and continued with public forums and a financial feasibility analysis that has been underway since September 2022.

More than a year ago, the association said initial numbers in a [draft of the feasibility report](#) by [Richard Berkson](#) of urban economics company [Berkson Associates](#) looked promising, without providing specifics. A final draft has not been released. Wilson said the analysis will not be considered final until it is submitted to LAFCO.

What's next

If the group's petition passes LAFCO review, the next series of steps can begin.

Among them are submitting the feasibility study and LAFCO's consideration of the formal cityhood proposal. That analysis is expected to take nine to 12 months.

If LAFCO approves the proposal, the plan would go to public voting in which a majority both of La Jollans and the rest of San Diego would need to support La Jolla's secession. The association hopes to have the initiative on the ballot in 2026.

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“We are going to be reaching out to the community for donations at all levels,” said Wilson, who added that donations can be made on the association website, cityoflajolla.org.

The organization already raised \$60,000 in donations for Berkson’s financial analysis.

Given that the majority of San Diego residents also would need to vote for La Jolla’s detachment, the association is looking to raise an additional \$175,000 to hire a political strategist to help promote the idea throughout San Diego.

“Right now, the polls are stacked against La Jolla,” Wilson said of a poll the association took over the summer that indicated support from about 40% of the 400 people surveyed.

The proposed city’s boundaries largely align with the 92037 ZIP code, stretching north-south from Del Mar to Pacific Beach and east-west from Interstate 5 to the ocean, excluding UC San Diego and Scripps Memorial Hospital. ♦

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