

INTRODUCED:

A RESOLUTION No. 2021-RX-XX

As Amended

To adopt redistricting criteria for the 2021 decennial redistricting of Council and School Board election districts.

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Patrons — All Members of Council

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Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney
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PUBLIC HEARING: October XX, 2021 AT X P.M.

WHEREAS, article VII, section 5 of the Constitution of Virginia provides that the governing bodies of all localities within the Commonwealth of Virginia, whose members are elected by district, may change the boundaries of districts and shall reapportion the representation in the governing body among the districts, as provided by law, every ten years;
and

WHEREAS, the Council last conducted such redistricting in 2011 and, as required by article VII, section 5 of the Constitution of Virginia, the Council must redistrict the nine City Council and School Board election districts in 2021; and

WHEREAS, as indicated by the 2020 United States Census, the population within the City of Richmond has increased since 2010; and

AYES: _____ NOES: _____ ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: OCT XX 2021

REJECTED:

STRICKEN:
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WHEREAS, the United States Constitution, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Virginia Code require that each voting district within a locality be equal in population in furtherance of the "one person, one vote" standard; and

WHEREAS, in order to comply with the requirements of the United States Constitution, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Constitution of Virginia and other applicable federal and state laws, the Council is of the opinion that any redistricting plan adopted by the Council should adhere to certain traditional redistricting criteria; and

WHEREAS, §24.2-129B of the Virginia Code provides that prior to enacting or seeking to administer a new redistricting plan, the Council shall cause to be published on the official website for the locality the proposed covered practice and general notice of opportunity for public comment on the proposed covered practice.

WHEREAS, §24.2-129B of the Virginia Code further provides that the City Council shall also publicize the notice through press releases and such other media as will best serve the public, and "that such notice shall be made at least 45 days in advance of the last date prescribed in the notice for public comment."

WHEREAS, §24.2-129B of the Virginia Code also provides that "[p]ublic comment shall be accepted for a period of no fewer than 30 days" and that "[d]uring this period, the governing body shall afford interested persons an opportunity to submit data, views, and arguments in writing by mail, fax, or email, or through an online public comment forum on the official website for the locality if one has been established."

WHEREAS, §24.2-129B of the Virginia Code also provides that Council "shall conduct at least one public hearing during this 30-day period to receive public comment on the [newly-drawn redistricting plan]", the Council will conduct at least one public hearing in order to gather input from citizens concerning the newly-drawn Council redistricting plan; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is in the best interests of the citizens of the City of Richmond that any redistricting plan adopted by the Council, wherever possible, avoid splits of

voting precincts between Council, School Board, state legislative and congressional election districts; maximize voter convenience and the effective administration of elections; preserve communities of interest; and consolidate smaller voting precincts so that the number of registered voters in each precinct is at least the statewide average of XXXX.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby adopts the following redistricting criteria for the 2021 decennial redistricting of Council and School Board election districts:

1. The 2021 Council redistricting plan shall fully comply with all relevant federal and state laws with regard to the protection of voting rights.
2. The 2021 Council redistricting plan should, to the extent feasible, avoid splits of voting precincts between the Council, School Board, state legislative and congressional election districts.
3. The 2021 Council redistricting plan should, to the extent feasible, maximize voter convenience and the effective administration of elections.
4. The 2021 Council redistricting plan should preserve wherever possible communities of interest as defined in §24.2-304.4 of the Code of Virginia.
5. The 2021 redistricting plan should, if possible, consolidate smaller voting precincts so that the number of registered voters in each precinct is at least the statewide average of XXXX.

Commented [GH1]: If the Virginia Redistricting Commission fails to enact new state legislative and congressional districts, or the Virginia General Assembly fails to approve any such plans adopted by the Commission, the matter will then go to the Virginia Supreme Court for resolution. The timing of any such judicial proceedings is unknown. Thus, this language is fine for now, but we may need to adjust precinct boundaries once the legislative and congressional lines are known.