



City of Richmond

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Legislation Text

File #: RES. 2022-R017, **Version:** 1

To propose for public comment a redistricting plan for the 2021 decennial redistricting of Council and School Board election districts.

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 following release of the 2020 Census; and

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

WHEREAS, the United States Constitution, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Code of Virginia 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, section 24.2-129(B) of the Code of the Virginia (1950), as amended, 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 redistricting plan and general notice of opportunity for public comment on the proposed redistricting plan; and

WHEREAS, section 24.2-129(B) of the Code of the Virginia (1950), as amended, further provides that the Council also shall 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;” and

WHEREAS, section 24.2-129(B) of the Code of the Virginia (1950), as amended, 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;” and

WHEREAS, as section 24.2-129(B) of the Code of the Virginia (1950), as amended, also mandates that the 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 proposed new 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; and

WHEREAS, the Council has developed a redistricting plan based on input provided to the Council during the public map drawing process and subsequent deliberations of the Council as shown on the map entitled “Demonstration Map 2C, 3/2/22,” a copy of which is attached to this resolution, with the population and demographic data for such map as shown on the document entitled “Demonstration Map 2C,” a copy of which is attached to this resolution, and further believes that such map adheres to the redistricting criteria that Council adopted by Resolution No. 2021-R084, adopted December 21, 2021, as amended by Resolution No. 2022-R005, adopted February 14, 2022;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby proposes for public consideration and comment proposed Demonstration Map 2C for the 2021 decennial redistricting of Council and School Board election districts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with the redistricting schedule the Council adopted by Resolution No. 2021-R084, adopted December 21, 2021, as amended by Resolution No. 2022-R005, adopted February 14, 2022, the public comment period shall begin on March 8, 2022, the Council intends to conduct a public information and engagement meeting on Demonstration Map 2C (or any other proposed plans offered by members of the general public) on April 11, 2022; and the public comment period shall continue thereafter until April 25, 2022, after which date the Council will hold its final public hearing on redistricting, adopt a final redistricting plan for the 2021 decennial redistricting of Council and School Board election districts, and publish notice of said adopted plan in accordance with Virginia law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with the final redistricting plan for the 2021 decennial redistricting of Council and School Board election districts adopted by the Council, the Council intends to introduce such ordinances amending the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, as may be necessary to adopt the modified election district boundaries, precinct boundaries, and polling places to implement such final redistricting plan.