



Legislation Text

File #: RES. 2021-R084, **Version:** 1

To adopt redistricting criteria and a redistricting schedule 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 in 2021; 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

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;” 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 newly-drawn 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 further believes that it is in the best interests of the citizens of the City of Richmond that the Council adopt the redistricting schedule outlined in the document entitled “2021 Redistricting Schedule for the City of Richmond,” a copy of which is attached to this resolution;

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, wherever possible, preserve communities of interest as defined in section 24.2-304.04 of the Code of the Virginia (1950), as amended.
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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby adopts the redistricting schedule outlined in the document entitled "2021 Redistricting Schedule for the City of Richmond," a copy of which is attached to this resolution.