



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES F. PARAION, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Introduction and First Reading. Consideration. Passage on first reading of an ordinance to adjust the precinct boundaries to correspond to the 2020 Census and Virginia Supreme Court drawn House of Delegates District Boundaries.

ISSUE: Consideration of an ordinance to adjust the precinct boundaries of precinct 201- Naomi L Brooks, 204 - Blessed Sacrament Church, 205 - Douglas MacArthur School and 206 - Chinquapin Center as legally required to correspond to the Virginia Supreme Court drawn House of Delegates district boundaries.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council pass on first reading and set for public hearing, second reading and final passage on February 12, 2022, an ordinance (Attachment 1) to adjust the Naomi L. Brooks, Blessed Sacrament Church, Chinquapin Center and G.W. Masonic Temple precincts to correspond to the new House of Delegates district lines as required by law.

BACKGROUND: On December 28, 2021, The Virginia Supreme Court finalized the map for Congressional, House of Delegates, and State Senate districts. The proposed ordinance updates the City of Alexandria precinct map to reflect the new House of Delegates lines ordered by the Supreme Court to eliminate split precincts.

On February 1, 2022, the Virginia Department of Elections announced that all Congressional, State Senate, and House of Delegates redistricting work needs to be completed in the statewide voter registration system by March 21, 2022. This means that the City must codify the new precinct lines and receive a Certification of No Objection (the "Certification") from the Office of Attorney General of Virginia before that date. The General Registrar for the City cannot begin updating the system until the City's ordinance is implemented, and the ordinance cannot be implemented until the City receives the Certification per the Voting Rights Act of Virginia.

DISCUSSION: The boundaries of four precincts are impacted by the new House of Delegates districts. They are the Naomi L. Brooks, Blessed Sacrament Church, Chinquapin Center and George Washington Masonic

Temple precincts. Under Virginia law, each precinct must be wholly contained within a single congressional district, State Senate district, and House of Delegates district (§ 24.2-307). The new precinct lines will affect 574 registered voters by assigning them a different polling place than they had in 2021. These precinct line adjustments do not change any voter's Congressional, State Senate, or House of Delegates representation.

Because Alexandria School Board members are elected in districts, the City must also ensure school board districts are compact and contiguous and substantially equal in population, among other considerations as required by the Voting Rights Act of Virginia. The City has completed preliminary analysis of Alexandria School Board election districts and will begin public engagement and communication on potential adjustments this month. In March, a proposed ordinance adjusting Alexandria School Board election districts to maintain equal representation across the districts as constitutionally and statutorily required will be brought to City Council for consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT: The affected voters will need to be notified of the precinct change. The cost to produce and mail these notifications is minimal.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Ordinance Cover Sheet
2. Proposed Ordinance
3. Exhibit 1 to Ordinance: Alexandria Voting Districts, map produced February 2, 2022
4. Exhibit 2 to Ordinance: Alexandria Voting Districts, map as of November 2021 elections

STAFF:

Laura B. Triggs, Deputy City Manager
Joanna Anderson, City Attorney
Angela Maniglia Turner, General Registrar
Shawn Lassiter, Assistant City Attorney
Members of the Alexandria Electoral Board