



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – September 22, 2021

Agenda Item 1

Presentation and Work Session

Presentation on Redistricting Process and Discussion of Redistricting Criteria

Recommended Council Action

Hear the consultant's presentation and review draft resolution regarding redistricting criteria.

Context with Key Issues

With the completion of the 2020 U.S. Census, the population balance of the City's wards must be reviewed and the boundaries redrawn (if needed) to ensure that wards are close to equal in population and meet other requirements. The City has contracted with FLO Analytics to conduct the review and redistricting process and develop ward boundary maps that meet constitutional and statutory requirements as well as any additional criteria established by the City Council. Bloom Planning will assist with community education and engagement on the process on behalf of the City and FLO. The Council will consider and adopt new boundaries in January which will be effective for the November 2022 City Election.

Guidance for redistricting of Takoma Park's wards is provided in the *City Charter*:

City Charter, The Council, Section 301(c): The City of Takoma Park shall be divided into six (6) wards for municipal voting purposes. Each ward shall be compact in form, composed of adjoining territory, and have substantially equal population. The ward boundaries shall be established by ordinance and shall be reviewed after each decennial census. The boundary descriptions of the six (6) wards shall be kept on file for public view at all times in the office of the City Clerk.

City Charter, General Powers of the Council, Section 401(b): Ward Redistricting. To provide for the redistricting of the wards of the City; provided, however, that the number of wards shall be as set forth in this charter, wards shall be as nearly equal in population as is practical and apportioned consistently with the principle of one person/one vote, wards shall be geographically contiguous, ward boundaries shall to the extent practical recognize natural boundaries, and no ward shall be gerrymandered to ensure the election or defeat of any incumbent candidate or potential candidate.

The generally accepted standard for substantially equal populations is that the difference in population between the largest and smallest district (or ward) should not exceed 10%. Additionally, the City should not take any action, intentional or otherwise, that would reduce minority voting power or limit the ability of minority candidates to obtain public office.

As the process unfolds over the next few months, it will be helpful for the consultants and the public to understand what factors will be taken into consideration by the City Council in making a decision on the final ward boundaries. A draft resolution identifying criteria is attached for Council's review.

Two community meetings are planned to inform residents about the process and invite their participation. The first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 21. The second meeting will take place in early December (tentatively, December 2), where residents will provide input in draft maps. The meetings will be streamed and recorded, and, depending on the circumstances, will be held over Zoom or in a hybrid in-person/online setting.

Part of the community engagement will be to invite residents to identify their own communities of interest that they feel should remain together in a ward or should be placed together in a ward. This typically would be a neighborhood or other geographically bound space, but it could be something different. This information will help inform the consultants in developing draft maps.

Additionally, residents and members of the Council will be able to use an interactive map-drawing tool, if they wish, to draw their own maps and submit them for consideration.

Tentative Redistricting Schedule:

Wednesday	September 22, 2021	City Council Meeting - Presentation and Discussion of Redistricting Criteria
Wednesday	September 29, 2021	City Council Meeting – Resolution Adopting Redistricting Criteria
Thursday	October 21, 2021	Community Engagement Meeting #1 – Information about Redistricting and Communities of Interest (7 p.m.)
Wednesday	November 10, 2021	City Council Meeting - Presentation of Preliminary Ward Map Options
Thursday	December 2, 2021	Community Engagement Meeting #2 – Public Review and Comment on Preliminary Ward Map Options (7 p.m.)
Wednesday	January 12, 2022	Public Hearing and Work Session on Proposed Maps
Wednesday	January 19, 2022	First Reading Ordinance Adopting Redistricting Plan
Wednesday	January 26, 2022	Second Reading Ordinance Adopting Redistricting Plan

Council Priority

Engaged, Responsive, and Service-Oriented Government

Environmental Considerations

N/A

Fiscal Considerations

The City Council has budgeted up to \$50,000 for the redistricting process.

Racial Equity Considerations

The 2020 Census reports population by race by Census block, which can be taken into consideration when reviewing redistricting options. With new ward boundaries that align with Census block boundaries and no longer split blocks, as well as updated demographic information, the City will have more accurate ward-level data to use in evaluating racial equity considerations.

Attachments and Links

- Draft resolution establishing redistricting criteria

1 Introduced by:
2

3 CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
4

5 RESOLUTION 2021-
6 ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR THE 2022 REDISTRICTING
7

8 WHEREAS, Takoma Park ward boundaries shall be reviewed after each decennial census to
9 ensure they are in conformance with the constitutional doctrine of one person - one
10 vote, the Voting Rights Act, the *Takoma Park Charter*, and with any other
11 applicable requirements; and
12

13 WHEREAS, the redistricting process is scheduled to conclude in January 2022 with the City
14 Council’s adoption of a redistricting plan; and
15

16 WHEREAS, pursuant to the *Takoma Park Charter*, each ward shall be compact in form,
17 composed of adjoining territory, and have substantially equal population; and
18

19 WHEREAS, the *Takoma Park Charter* further provides that wards shall be as nearly equal in
20 population as is practical and apportioned consistently with the principle of one
21 person - one vote, wards shall be geographically contiguous, ward boundaries shall
22 to the extent practical recognize natural boundaries, and no ward shall be
23 gerrymandered to ensure the election or defeat of any incumbent candidate or
24 potential candidate; and

25 WHEREAS, the standard for “substantially equal population” is that the difference in population
26 between the largest and smallest ward should not exceed 10 percent; and

27 WHEREAS, the City Council seeks to conduct a transparent and data-driven redistricting process
28 that encourages public participation; and
29

30 WHEREAS, the City has contracted with FLO Analytics to conduct the review and redistricting
31 process and develop ward boundary maps that meet constitutional and statutory
32 requirements as well as any additional criteria established by the City Council; and
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34 WHEREAS, Bloom Planning will assist with community education and engagement on the
35 process on behalf of the City and FLO Analytics; and
36

37 WHEREAS, in addition to the required criteria mentioned above, the Council will consider
38 community of interest information and feedback provided by residents during the
39 public engagement process.
40

41 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA
42 PARK establishes the following criteria for its evaluation and selection of a redistricting plan to
43 be adopted in 2022:
44

- 1 1. Each ward shall have substantially equal populations, but in no case shall the difference
2 between the largest and smallest ward populations be more than 10 percent.
3
- 4 2. If practicable considering other criteria, the Council has a goal of reducing the difference
5 between the largest and smallest wards to five percent or less.
6
- 7 3. Wards shall be compact.
8
- 9 4. Wards shall be composed of adjoining territory that is geographically contiguous.
10
- 11 5. Wards shall recognize natural boundaries where practical.
12
- 13 6. No ward shall be gerrymandered to ensure the election or defeat of any incumbent
14 candidate or potential candidate.
15
- 16 7. Using information gathered from residents during the community meetings and other
17 engagement opportunities, ward boundaries may be drawn so as to keep a particular
18 neighborhood or community within one ward as opposed to dividing the neighborhood or
19 community among multiple wards, but only if possible in light of the applicable legal
20 criteria.

21
22 Adopted this _____, 2021.

23
24 Attest: