

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK REDISTRICTING AFTER THE 2020 CENSUS

City Charter

Pursuant to Section 301(c) of the City Charter:

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.

2011 Redistricting Task Force

The Council's practice has been to establish a Redistricting Task Force to develop and evaluate alternatives which are then presented as recommendations to the City Council. Changes to ward boundaries are accomplished by Council adoption of a two-reading ordinance.

The resolution adopted in 2011 to establish a Redistricting Task Force included the following resolved clause:

1. A Redistricting Task Force is established to recommend to the City Council how best to ensure that City wards are apportioned as equal in population as possible in order to ensure the principle of one-person, one-vote. The Redistricting Task Force shall apply the 2010 Takoma Park Census block data to:
 - Examine the distribution of population in the current six City wards to determine if there is an equal distribution across the wards;
 - Recommend to the City Council whether or not a redistricting plan should be implemented; and
 - Provide at least two options for changing the ward boundaries, if a redistricting plan is recommended.
2. In reviewing the distribution of population across the wards and in its recommendations for redistricting, the Task Force shall ensure that:
 - Wards shall be as nearly equal in population as is possible in order to ensure the principle of one-person, one-vote;
 - Wards are geographically contiguous and compact in form.
 - Ward boundaries recognize natural boundaries to the extent practical; and
 - No ward is gerrymandered to ensure the election or defeat of any incumbent or potential candidate.

3. In addition to the above required considerations, the Task Force should also consider commonality of social and economic interests, preservation of the cores of existing wards, geographic compactness of the wards, and respect for neighborhoods and neighborhood associations.

4. The membership of the 2011 Redistricting Task Force shall include up to nine Takoma Park residents, one member to be recommended by each member of the City Council, including the Mayor, one member recommended by the Board of Elections to represent the Board, and one at-large member.

Time Frame

The next election is scheduled for November 2022. Any changes to ward boundaries should be made well in advance to allow time to inform voters and potential candidates of any changes to ward boundaries. Staff recommends that any boundary changes be adopted by the end of 2021 but, in any case, no later than March of 2022 if they are to be effective for the November election.

Budget and Staff Capacity

Due to limited staff capacity, funds for a consultant may be needed.