

East Radford Polling place addition; FAQs

These Frequently asked questions are representative of some questions we have received.

If you have any other questions about how all of this will work, please call or visit the Office of Elections. We are available in the Courthouse at 619 2nd St. our phone is 731-3639, or e-mail the Director of Elections at tracy.howard@radfordva.gov

How many registered voters are in each precinct?

As of Sept 10, 2018;

West precinct: 2590

Central Precinct: 2224

East Precinct: 5051

How many of these are students?

We don't know.

The Commonwealth does not keep statistics on occupation, or status as a student. What we do know is Radford's East precinct is among the largest in the Commonwealth, and getting bigger.

Is this going to be a University only precinct?

No. The proposed Precinct would strive to maintain the current ratios of all Radford City voting segments.

Why do you register people who are just going to leave?

The Commonwealth tells us we have to. In 2009 the General Assembly removed all registration related qualifications regarding students, transients, the homeless, etc. Federal Case law and Virginia Law now mandates that a student has his or her choice of domicile for voting purposes. As long as they only vote once in any election. Many people are choosing to make Radford their hometown.

It is our job to make sure any registered voter who wants to vote, gets to vote, without undue hindrance or interference. Long lines and hours waiting are undue hindrances. We are making our precincts more equal in size, and therefore trying to making voting in Radford a better experience for all voters.

Why must this be done right now?

A couple of legal reasons and we are up against a deadline.

The East precinct has been beyond a legal threshold of more than 4000 registered voters since 2016. When that number is reached a second voting machine/ballot tabulator must be available for use in high turnout elections like the Presidential. Our Elections services vendor loaned Radford this tabulator in 2016, but as the registration rolls increase Radford must now purchase the counting machine. (Code of Virginia §24.2-627)

When the turnout of voters in any precinct reaches 4000, the locality is required to split the precinct. We expect to reach that number in 2020. (Code of Virginia §24.2-307)

However, due to impending census and redistricting, we are prohibited from making any changes beginning February 1, 2019, until May 15, of 2021. (Code of Virginia §24.2-309.2)

Why not move some voters to the Central precinct?

After discussion the Electoral Board and Director of Elections considered that a short sighted solution. Even moving 1000 voters from East to Central, would not alleviate the City of its responsibility to purchase new equipment.

We further could not justify adding hundreds more vehicle trips in and out of the already congested Firehouse parking lot.

We could not justify knowing it would be a temporary fix. Why compound the confusion of hundreds voters being changed now, only to have to reorganize again in a couple of years.

We hope this additional Precinct will last as long as the Current precincts have. This is the first time in more than 45 years Radford has made any precinct boundary adjustments.

What will this cost?

A single voting machine/tabulator costs \$8500.

There will be the need for a few laptops to use as poll books, LAN box and cables, some equipment boxes, and ancillaries. We are asking the City to budget around \$12,000 in FY2020 for the initial setup and running costs. As always, the Elections Office will search for the least expensive alternatives and expect to utilize state contracts for the best prices we can get.

However, we will not trade cheap for your right to vote. Good elections are not free, and a bad election is very expensive.

Doesn't the State pay for this stuff?

No.

§24.2 of the Code of Virginia mandates the costs of Elections be borne by the locality. We will however petition the Department of Elections to utilize their state contracts on all equipment and mailing costs, keeping Radford's investment as reasonable as possible.

Who makes this decision?

Ultimately Virginia law mandates this to the Local Governing body. The Director of Elections and the court Appointed Electoral Board, has input and has recommended this division.

How will the recommended changes affect me?

If you live North and East of Tyler Avenue, including:

Entirety of Tyler Avenue odd numbered addresses,

High Meadows,

Haven Heights,

Auburn Avenue Any address higher than 760 to the Montgomery County line,

College park,

RU Campus proper, any of the "dark side",

Mill Village,

E. Main Street from the 900 block east,

you will receive a new Voter Information Card from the Elections Office informing you of the change.

You will have a new polling place that is closer to your home, and hopefully more convenient to you. You should notice shorter lines and drastically reduced wait times.

If you live south and west of Tyler Avenue,

You will still vote at the Recreation Center and should notice shorter lines and a much less crowded Election day.

If you live in the West and normally vote at Carter Street, or in the Central and normally vote at the firehouse, you should see no changes at all.

I have a better idea! How can I Participate?

City Council will ask the City Attorney to write the proposed changes into a “Draft Ordinance”.

The “Draft Ordinance” will be available for the Citizens of Radford.

City Council must advertise the “draft Ordinance” and hold a Public Hearing.

The Public Hearing will take place at a regularly scheduled Council Meeting.

City Council will take into consideration the public’s comments and may make changes based on public input, to create a final draft.

Once the final vote has been taken, the changes will go into effect and the Elections Office will begin the notification process. All notifications must be done well before the next scheduled Election.