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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 2, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE TO ADJUST THE BOUNDARIES FOR THE CORA KELLY, MOUNT VERNON, GEORGE WASHINGTON, LEE CENTER AND LYLES CROUCH ELECTION PRECINCTS

ISSUE: Consideration of an ordinance to adjust the boundaries for The Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon, George Washington, Lee Center and Lyles Crouch election precincts.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council introduce the ordinance (Attachment 1); pass it on first reading, and schedule it for public hearing, second reading and final passage on Saturday, May 14.

BACKGROUND: On April 12, staff gave City Council an overview of actions that must or may be taken as a result of redistricting related to the 2010 U.S. Census. Among the changes that were discussed were modifications to some electoral precinct boundaries.

The Alexandria Electoral Board, which is comprised of three bipartisan members who are appointed by the Alexandria Circuit Court for staggered three-year terms, is responsible for making recommendations to City Council concerning changes in precinct boundaries and the establishment of new precincts. City Council has the statutory authority to make these changes.

In making its recommendations to Council, the Alexandria Electoral Board is primarily concerned with ensuring that precincts conform to legal requirements, are of manageable size, and have suitable voting facilities. After reviewing the General Assembly's redistricting legislation (which was based on the 2010 Census results), and looking ahead to the 2012 Presidential Election, the Board carefully considered each of the City's precincts noting the current number of registered voters, in-person turnout statistics from the 2008 Presidential Elections, the size of the voting facility, and any likely residential development within the precinct.

As a result of its review, the Board identified two precincts that are in need of change—Cora Kelly and Lee Center. These are the two precincts in the City with the largest numbers of registered voters, and two of the three largest precincts with the largest turnout in the most recent presidential election (presidential elections result in greater turnout than other elections). Furthermore, there is potential for substantial growth in both of these precincts (due to development in Potomac Yard and the Eisenhower Valley) in future years.

DISCUSSION: On April 28, 2011, the Alexandria Electoral Board voted to recommend that City Council reduce the number of voters in the Cora Kelly and Lee Center precincts by adjusting the precinct boundaries for these precincts and three others that are adjacent to them: Mount Vernon, George Washington, and Lyles Crouch, effective with the August 23 General Assembly Primary Election.

As shown on the attached maps (Attachments 2 and 3), boundary changes will result in the following transfers of voters:

- Some voters will be moved from Cora Kelly to Mount Vernon and George Washington; a smaller number will be moved from Mount Vernon to Cora Kelly; and an even smaller number will be moved from Mount Vernon to George Washington. This will result in 1,055 fewer voters in Cora Kelly; an increase of 157 voters in Mount Vernon; and an increase of 898 voters in George Washington; and
- 1,190 voters will be moved from Lee Center to Lyles Crouch.

Although these adjustments are not required by law, the Alexandria Electoral Board believes it is necessary to make these adjustments to serve voters more efficiently and better manage the 2012 Presidential Election. The Board recommends immediate action to address the growth that has occurred in the existing precincts and to accommodate future growth.

BENEFITS OF PROPOSED CHANGES: The changes in precinct boundaries, if adopted, offer the following benefits:

Cora Kelly/Mount Vernon/George Washington Precinct Boundary Change:

1. The total numbers of registered voters in the Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon and George Washington precincts will be better balanced, and Cora Kelly and Mount Vernon will be able to accommodate some of the anticipated residential growth from Potomac Yard;
2. This will allow for fuller use of the George Washington polling facility, which is the school's large "mini-gym" next to the rear parking lot; and
3. Most of the voters affected will live closer to their polling place.

Lee Center/Lyles Crouch Precinct Boundary Change:

1. This change will make fuller use of the Lyles Crouch polling facility, which is the large gym near the school's main entrance;
2. It will eliminate the need for any current Lee Center voters to cross over Route 1 near the Beltway to get to their polling place; and
3. It will allow Lee Center to accommodate anticipated residential growth in the Eisenhower Avenue area.

Attachment 4 is a chart which reflects the specific changes at the five precincts and the resulting projected impact on 2012 Presidential-year voter turnout.

These changes will not affect the City's School Board boundaries or the proposed State House or Senate boundaries. In addition, the recommended adjustments to precinct lines follow "clearly observable boundaries" (in this case—named streets) as required by State law.

If City Council approves this ordinance, the United States Justice Department will also need to approve this request pursuant to the federal Voting Rights Act. The City Attorney will prepare the submission for the Justice Department. In addition, after the City has received Justice Department approval, the Electoral Board will send notification by first class mail to all affected voters.

OUTREACH AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Before bringing its recommendations to City Council, the Alexandria Electoral Board conducted extensive outreach to stakeholders, including neighborhood associations and community organizations, providing them with information links, maps of possible precinct changes, and invitations to two public meetings (April 12 and April 28) in which the precinct plans were discussed and finalized (see Attachment 5 for a list of the groups contacted). Details of the proposals have been posted on the City's web site, and information was shared via press releases and social media. The initial feedback from the public has been favorable. There have been a few technical questions, but no expressed opposition to the plan, and most people have offered their clear support.

FISCAL IMPACT: It will cost approximately \$4,000 to send notifications to all the affected voters and to prepare other materials announcing these changes. This can be accommodated within the budget for the Office of Voter Registration and Elections.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Proposed Ordinance

Attachment 2: Map of Proposed Cora Kelly/Mount Vernon/George Washington Precinct Boundary Changes

Attachment 3: Map of Proposed Lee Center/Lyles Crouch Precinct Boundary Change

Attachment 4: Chart Reflecting Proposed Precinct Changes and Impact on 2012 Turnout

Attachment 5: Groups Contacted in Public Outreach

STAFF:

Donald E. Ledwig Secretary, Alexandria Electoral Board

Peter Newbould, Chairman, Alexandria Electoral Board

Bruce Brown, Vice Chair, Alexandria Electoral Board

Tom Parkins, General Registrar

Anna Leider, Deputy Registrar

Eric Spicer, Elections Administrator

James Banks, City Attorney

Bernard Caton, Legislative Director

Introduction and first reading:	5/10/11
Public hearing:	5/14/11
Second reading and enactment:	5/14/11

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE

Title

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 2-2-13 (MAP OF ELECTION DISTRICTS AND VOTING PLACES) by adjusting the precinct boundaries for the Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon, George Washington, Lee Center and Lyles Crouch Precincts, and to make conforming amendments to "The Official Map of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Designating Election Districts and Voting Places," adopted by Section 2-2-13 (MAP OF ELECTION DISTRICTS AND VOTING PLACES), all of Chapter 2 (ELECTIONS), Title 2 (GENERAL GOVERNMENT) of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

Summary

The proposed ordinance adjusts the precinct boundaries for the Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon, George Washington, Lee Center and Lyles Crouch Precincts.

Sponsor

City of Alexandria Electoral Board

Staff

Tom Parkins, Registrar of Voters
Anna Leider, Deputy Registrar
James L. Bank, Jr., City Attorney

Authority

§ 2.01, Alexandria City Charter

Estimated Costs of Implementation

None

Attachments in Addition to Proposed Ordinance and its Attachments (if any)

None

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THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That "The Official Map of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Designating Election Districts and Voting Places," adopted by 2-2-13 (MAP OF ELECTION DISTRICTS AND VOTING PLACES) is hereby amended as shown on Exhibits 1 and 2, attached hereto and incorporated fully by reference, to reflect the adjusting of precinct boundaries for the Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon, George Washington, Lee Center and Lyles Crouch precincts, such adjustments being hereby adopted, approved and incorporated.

Section 2. That the general registrar of voters be, and he hereby is, directed to record the foregoing amendments on the said map.

Section 3. That this ordinance shall become effective upon the date and at the time of its final passage; provided, however, that the changes in the Election Districts and voting places herein made shall not be implemented until the changes are first submitted to the Attorney General of the United States and no objection is interposed within 60 days of the submission, as required pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended.

WILLIAM D. EUILLE
Mayor

Attachment

Introduction: 5/10/11
First Reading: 5/10/11
Publication:
Public Hearing:
Second Reading:
Final Passage:



Proposed Changes to Mt. Vernon, Cora Kelly and GW Precincts



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Legend

- Polling Place
- Proposed Precincts
- Existing Precincts
- City Boundary
- Rail Lines
- Streams
- Surface Water
- City of Alexandria

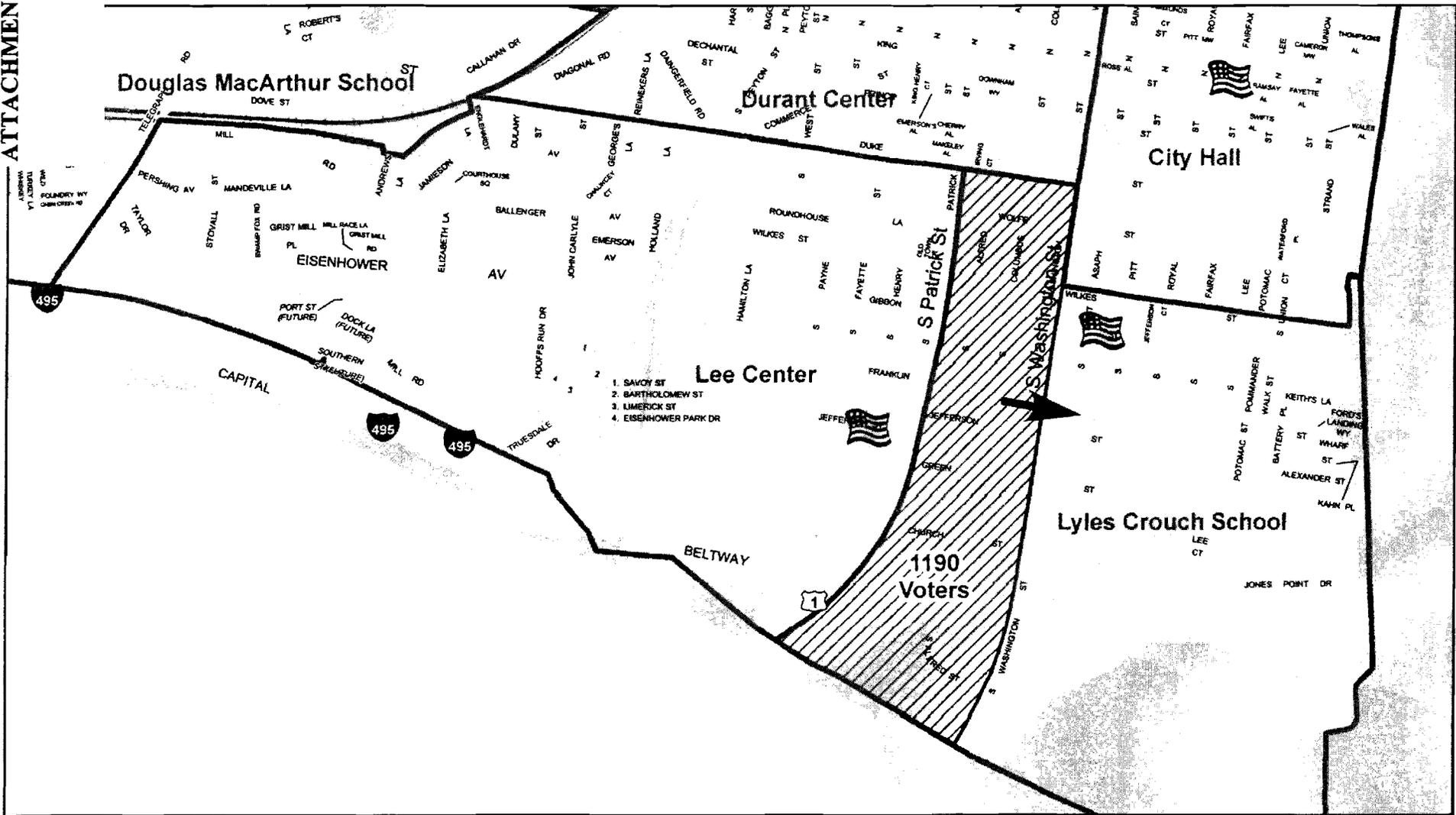
This map was produced by the GIS Division of the Department of Planning and Zoning, City of Alexandria, Virginia

Current and proposed voting precincts were drawn by members of the Alexandria Voting Redistriction Office.

Mapping Standards:
Coordinate System - NAD83 State Plane Virginia North
Projection - Lambert Conformal Conic
Map Units - Feet

Map Produced
04-11-2011
V1

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Proposed Changes to Lee Center and Lyles Crouch Precincts



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1:14,000



Legend

- Polling Place
- City Boundary
- Rail Lines
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- Proposed Precincts
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ATTACHMENT 4

Chart Reflecting Proposed Precinct Changes and Projected Impact on 2012 Turnout

Cora Kelly/Mount Vernon/George Washington Boundary Changes				
Precinct	Current Registration (Active)	Proposed Registration (Active)	2008 Presidential Turnout	2012 Projected Turnout
Cora Kelly	4,760	3,705	2,919	2,272
Mount Vernon	3,803	3,960	2,474	2,576
GW	2,568	3,466	1,809	2,442

Lee Center/Lyles Crouch Boundary Changes				
Precinct	Current Registration (Active)	Proposed Registration (Active)	2008 Presidential Turnout	2012 Projected Turnout
Lee Center	4,584	3,394	2,593	1,921
Lyles Crouch	2,378	3,568	1,553	2,330

Groups Contacted in Public Outreach

Civic Associations

- Del Ray Citizens Association
- Mount Jefferson Civic Association
- Sunnyside/Lenox Place Civic Association
- Arlandria Civic Association
- Lynhaven Citizens Association
- Old Town Civic Association
- Southwest Quadrant Civic Association

Other Community Groups

- Alexandria Democratic Committee
- Alexandria Republican City Committee
- Alexandria League of Women Voters
- Alexandria NAACP
- Departmental Progressive Club
- Northern Virginia Urban League
- Alexandria Black and Hispanic Concerned Women
- Bienvenidos
- Tenants and Workers United
- Alexandria Human Rights Commission

Mayor Euille and Members of City Council,

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5-14-11

My name is Tom Parkins and I serve as the General Registrar of Voters for the City of Alexandria. I am appearing here today on behalf of the bipartisan Alexandria Electoral Board in support of this ordinance.

The Electoral Board unanimously recommends these precinct boundaries changes in order to be better prepared for the 2012 Presidential Election. Recent and projected population growth in the Cora Kelly and Lee Center Precincts make size adjustments critical to our efforts to efficiently conduct voting in these two areas of the City.

This ordinance shifts groups of voters in Cora Kelly and Lee Center to neighboring smaller-sized precincts that can accommodate higher numbers. In addition, the Electoral Board has redrawn the precincts in such a way that nearly all transferred voters are closer to, or have easier access to their newly-assigned polling places.

The Electoral Board has directed an extensive outreach campaign to notify political stakeholders, neighborhood groups and civic associations of the proposed changes. The Board conducted its own public hearing on the proposed changes on the evening of April 28. The response to all of these outreach efforts has been positive.

If Council passes this ordinance, the City Attorney will submit the changes to the United States Justice Department's Voting Rights section for preclearance. The affected voters will receive a new voter card as well as notification highlighting the change to their polling location at least 15 days prior to the August 23 Primary, as election law mandates.

On behalf of the Electoral Board, I want to thank City staff who have facilitated these efforts, and City Council for consideration and attention to this matter.

ORDINANCE NO. 4719

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 2-2-13 (MAP OF ELECTION DISTRICTS AND VOTING PLACES) by adjusting the precinct boundaries for the Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon, George Washington, Lee Center and Lyles Crouch Precincts, and to make conforming amendments to “The Official Map of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Designating Election Districts and Voting Places,” adopted by Section 2-2-13 (MAP OF ELECTION DISTRICTS AND VOTING PLACES), all of Chapter 2 (ELECTIONS), Title 2 (GENERAL GOVERNMENT) of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

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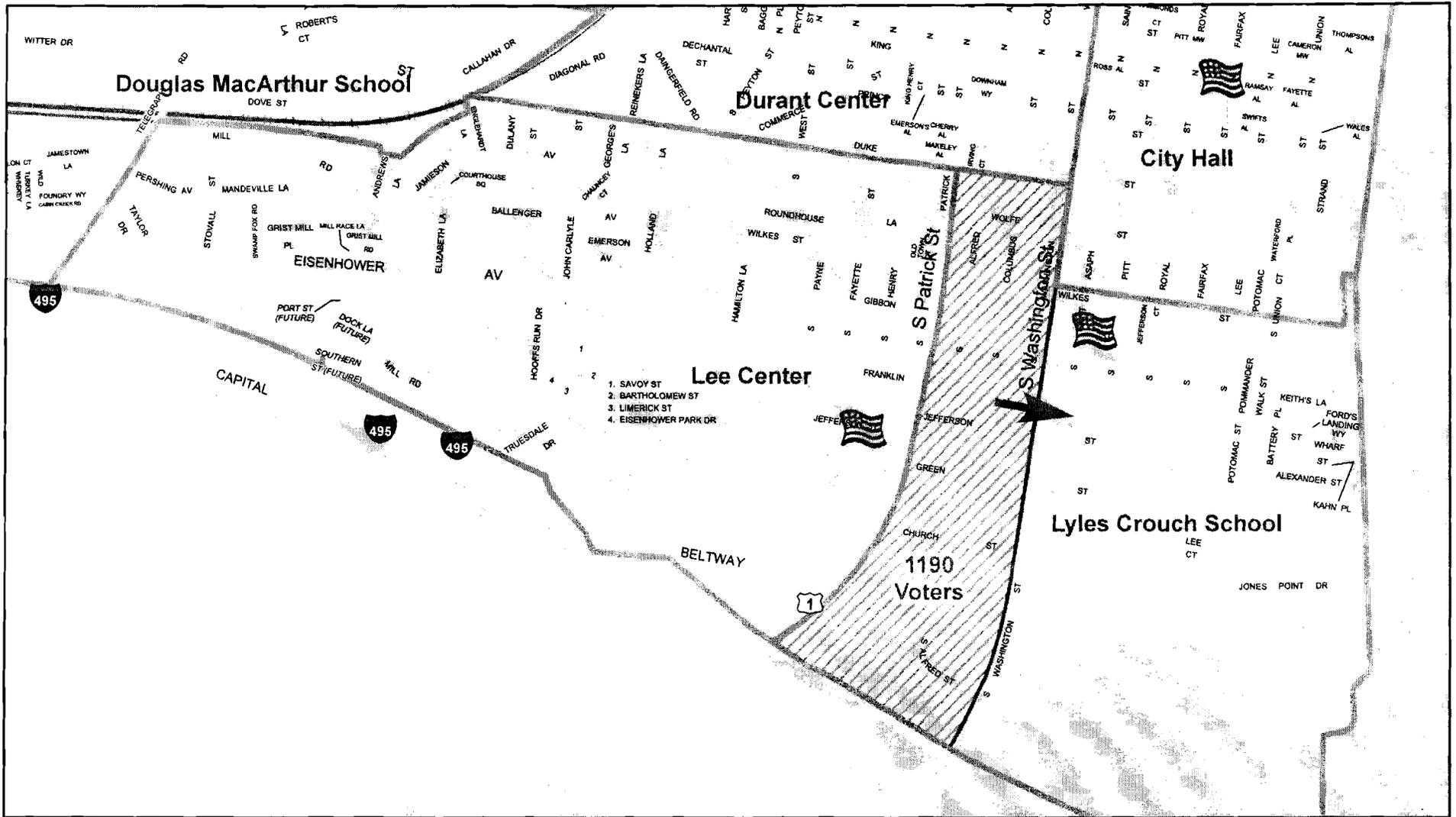
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WILLIAM D. EUILLE
Mayor

Attachment

Final Passage: May 14, 2011



1. SAVOY ST
2. BARTHOLOMEW ST
3. LIMERICK ST
4. EISENHOWER PARK DR

Proposed Changes to Lee Center and Lyles Crouch Precincts



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Feet

1:14,000



Legend



Polling Place

--- City Boundary

— Rail Lines

Streams

Surface Water

City of Alexandria



Proposed Precincts



Existing Precincts

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