



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Carlos Camacho, Legislative Analyst
Purpose: To receive testimony/final action - vote expected
Keywords: #BOE; #EarlyVotingCenters

AGENDA ITEM #12
January 18, 2022
Public Hearing/Action

SUBJECT

Resolution Supporting the Establishment of an Additional Early Voting Center in the County

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The County Council will hold a public hearing and consider action on a resolution indicating their support for the establishment of a 14th early voting center at the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- On April 9, 2021, the State of Maryland enacted House Bill 745 requiring Montgomery County to establish 13 early voting centers, based on the number of registered voters in the County. The legislation also allows for the establishment of an additional early voting center if “the local board and the governing body of the county agree to establish an additional early voting center” and “the State Board approves the establishment.”
- On September 14, 2021, the County Council and the County Executive sent a letter to the Montgomery County Board of Elections expressing their support for the establishment of an early voting center at the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center to act as the County’s 14th early voting center.
- On September 20, 2021, the Montgomery County Board of Elections voted to recommend the use of 13 early voting centers and the use of the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center as an additional (14th) early voting center, subject to County approval.
- On December 16, 2021, the Maryland State Board of Elections approved the County’s proposed 13 early voting centers but deferred approval of the establishment of an optional 14th early voting center until the County formally agrees with the Montgomery County Board of Election’s recommendation.
- The State Board signaled their intention to revisit this issue at the next Board meeting on January 27, 2022.

This report contains:

- Draft Resolution ©1-2
- Letter to Montgomery County Board of Elections Supporting Establishment of 14th Early Voting Center ©3-5

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Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: January 11, 2022
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: County Council

SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of Establishing an Additional Early Voting Center in Montgomery County

Background

1. On April 9, 2021, the State of Maryland enacted House Bill 745, which adjusts the voter registration-based requirements for the number of early voting centers in each county and modifies provisions that govern: (1) the criteria used to determine the location of early voting centers and (2) the process for establishing an optional, additional early voting center in a county. According to House Bill 745, Montgomery County is required to establish 13 early voting centers, based on the number of registered voters in the County. The legislation also allows for the establishment of an additional early voting center if “the local board and the governing body of the county agree to establish an additional early voting center” and “the State Board approves the establishment.” Prior to the passage of House Bill 745, Montgomery County had established 11 early voting centers for the administration of the 2020 General Election.
2. On September 14, 2021, The County Council and the County Executive sent a letter to the Montgomery County Board of Elections expressing their support for the establishment of an early voting center at the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center to act as the County’s 14th early voting center. The letter also expressed support to the designation of the White Oak Community Recreation Center and the Nancy H. Dacek North Potomac Community Recreation Center to act as the additional 12th and 13th early voting centers, as required by state law.
3. On September 20, 2021, The Montgomery County Board of Elections voted to recommend the use of 13 early voting centers and the use of the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center as an additional early voting center, subject to County approval.
4. On December 16, 2021 the Maryland State Board of Elections met to discuss and approve changes to the County’s early voting centers. The State Board approved the use of the White Oak Community Recreation Center and the Dacek Community Recreation Center as additional early voting centers, as well as a change to use the social hall instead of the

gymnasium at the Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center. The State Board was unable to approve the establishment of the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center as the County's 14th early voting center stating that the County had not agreed with the Local Board of Election's recommendation. The State Board had no opposition and stated that they would be inclined to agree with the establishment of a 14th early voting center at Bauer Drive but stated that the County must first agree with the Local Board's recommendation prior to receiving approval from the State Board. The State Board signaled their intention to revisit this issue at the next Board meeting on January 27, 2022.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The County Council supports the Montgomery County Board of Election's recommendation to establish a 14th early voting center at the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council

Marc Elrich, County Executive



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

September 14, 2021

Montgomery County Board of Elections
18753 North Frederick Avenue, Suite 210,
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Dear Members of the Board of Elections,

We are writing in strong support of an early voting site at the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center on 14625 Bauer Drive in Rockville, Maryland. The Board of Elections is currently considering making the White Oak Community Recreation Center and the Dacek Community Recreation Center early voting sites for the 2022 elections, and we understand that the Board is also reviewing the possibility of adding Bauer Drive as an early voting site. There will be a public hearing on September 18 and the Board may take a vote on early voting site selection on September 20. Montgomery County currently has 11 early voting sites. By law, the Board is required to add two sites for the 2022 elections to bring the total to 13, and may add a 14th site “if the local board and the governing body of the county agree to establish an additional early voting center.” In 2015, when the Board was considering several venues as early voting sites, Councilmembers Nancy Navarro and Sidney Katz shared their support for Bauer Drive, citing the need for increased access to more residents. We support the designation of Bauer Drive as an early voting center in addition to the White Oak Community Recreation Center and the Dacek Community Recreation Center, for the following reasons:

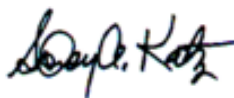
- Making Bauer Drive an early voting site is consistent with the changed demographic landscape of our county that shows significant growth in this part of the county. These demographic changes are reflected in the May 18th 2021 briefing of the Council on demographic trends in the county, by staff from the Montgomery Planning Research and Strategic Projects Division.
- This would be consistent with our racial equity and social justice goals in reaching out to our diverse population. Specifically, the population of Earle B. Wood Middle School on Bauer Drive, shows the increased diversity of the community. The student population is 44.5 percent Latino, 13.0 percent African American and 11.2 percent Asian, with 25.4 percent White.
- Designating Bauer Drive as an early voting site would also provide expanded opportunities for residents in surrounding communities like Wheaton and Leisure World to vote in the coming elections.
- The review of the Bauer Drive site shows that it is a prime location with access to public transit, one that can accommodate needed equipment and spacious enough to allow the implementation of necessary COVID-related protocols.

- Also, having early voting sites at Bauer Drive and White Oak would help to alleviate wait times on Election Day at polling places along Route 28 and Route 29 that your staff previously identified:
- Data concerning peak wait times for the 2018 General Election Day showed four different polling places in precincts bordering Route 28 (Norbeck Road) with peak wait times exceeding the 30- minute national maximum standard, and two additional nearby Rockville polling places with peak waiting times exceeding 60 minutes.
 - The same data showed five different polling places in precincts along the Route 29 (Columbia Pike) corridor with peak wait times exceeding the 30-minute national maximum standard, with three additional precincts along Route 29 exceeding 60 minutes.
 - The Brennan Center for Justice has advocated using early voting sites to help shorten Election Day lines.

We understand that there will be a need for additional funds to stand up Bauer Drive as an early voting center, and commit to ensuring that the appropriate resources and supports necessary to implement this laudable initiative are available. We look forward to collaborating with you to install 14 early voting sites for 2022 in Montgomery County.



Marc Elrich, County Executive



Sidney Katz, Councilmember, District 3



Tom Hucker, Council President



Nancy Navarro, Councilmember, District 4



Gabe Albornoz, Council Vice President



Evan Glass, Councilmember, At Large



Andrew Friedson, Councilmember, District 1



Will Jawando, Councilmember, At Large



Craig Rice, Councilmember, District 2



Hans Riemer, Councilmember, At Large

CC:

Marc Elrich, County Executive

Rich Madaleno, Chief Administrative Officer

Marlene Michaelson, Council Staff Director

Craig Howard, Council Staff Deputy Director

Ken Hartman-Espada, Director of Strategic Partnerships

Alysoun McLaughlin, Deputy Election Director

Carlos Camacho, Council Staff