

Commonwealth of Virginia  
**COUNTY OF FAIRFAX**

**PRECINCT DESCRIPTION STANDARDS**

Format, Definitions, Naming Conventions, Parameters and Maintenance

Fairfax County operates under the Urban County Executive form of government which is governed by an elected Board of Supervisors. The Board is composed of an elected at large chairman and nine members elected from single-member districts. Virginia law requires (1) that these single-member districts to be of approximately equal population and (2) that the governing body reapportion the representation among the districts following each decennial federal census. The Board of Supervisors last reapportioned its election districts effective June 11, 2001.

Virginia Code §24.2-307 further requires the Board of Supervisors to establish by ordinance as many voting precincts as it deems necessary and to establish one polling place for each precinct subject to the requirements of Virginia Code §§24.2-310 and 24.2-310.1. The governing body may also increase or decrease the number of precincts and alter precinct boundaries subject to the requirements of these laws.

Following adoption by the Board of Supervisors, all election districts, voting precincts and polling places are submitted to the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice for preclearance under Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act.

The official copy of each Fairfax County district and precinct description, as adopted, is maintained in a notebook in the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors. The descriptions contained in this notebook are written in accordance with the following standards:

**Format**

Descriptions begin at the most northwesterly or northerly point of a precinct where two boundary features intersect, then proceed in a clockwise direction along the precinct boundary. The text is written in the following format:

“Beginning at the intersection of AAA [*physical boundary feature - road, stream, easement, etc.*] and BBB [*feature*], thence with BBB in a [*approximate compass direction*] direction to its intersection with CCC, thence with CCC ... thence with XXX [*feature*] in a [*direction*] to its intersection AAA [*first feature listed*], thence with AAA in a [*direction*] direction to its intersection with BBB [*second feature listed*], point of beginning.”

Whenever the identified physical feature is a stream, river, creek or other drainage feature, the text will read “thence with the meanders of [*stream, river, etc.*] ” to indicate that the waterway has many irregular changes in direction along the precinct boundary.

Whenever the identified physical feature is a winding road, irregular corporate boundary or other boundary line with numerous minor changes of direction the text will read “thence with [*road, corporate boundary, etc.*] in a generally [*approximate compass direction*] direction” to indicate that the identified feature has many irregular changes in direction along the precinct boundary.

### **Definitions**

Physical Feature: Any clearly defined and observable natural or constructed object that appears on an official Fairfax County Geographical Information Systems (GIS) map. Physical features include, but are not limited to, primary and secondary roads, water or drainage features, utility easements, railroad tracks, and corporate or political boundaries.

Centerline: A real or imaginary line that is equidistant from the sides of an identified physical feature and that approximates the geographic center of that feature along its entire course.

Intersection: The point at which the centerlines of two physical features meet or cross. As used in precinct descriptions, the term “intersection” will also include the point where the centerlines of two features *would* meet or cross if they occupied the same geographic plane. Examples include features such as roads, streams or railroad tracks which may pass over or under bridges, but do not actually “touch.”

Projection: A straight line continuation of any road, property line or other feature that is used to extend that feature in the same direction to create an intersection with another feature. For example, a road that dead-ends just prior to intersecting a limited-access highway would, of necessity, be projected to an intersection with that highway to form a continuous precinct boundary.

### **Naming Conventions**

The precinct name is established by the Board of Supervisors when the ordinance is adopted to establish the precinct. The precinct number is assigned by the General Registrar when the precinct is entered into the Virginia Voter Registration System (VVRS) database. Numbers for new precincts are assigned consecutively and reserved for each district as follows:

Braddock	100-199	Lee	400-499	Providence	700-799
Hunter Mill	200-299	Mason	500-599	Springfield	800-899
Dranesville	300-399	Mount Vernon	600-699	Sully	900-999

The name of any road, stream, easement or other physical feature used in a precinct description will be the proper name of that feature as it is identified on official Fairfax County GIS maps on the date that the precinct description was adopted.

Whenever a primary road is commonly identified by its route number, the route number will appear in parentheses following the name of the road the first time it is referenced in the precinct description. Examples are: Little River Turnpike (Route 236), the Capital Beltway (I-495) and Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway (Route 50).

Whenever a stream or other drainage feature is named “Run” or “Branch,” the word “stream” will appear in parentheses following the name of the water feature to distinguish it from a road. For example: Maple Branch (stream) and Little Rocky Run (stream) are drainage features, whereas Maple Branch Road and Great Rocky Run are roads.

### **Parameters**

The name and alignment of any road, stream or other physical feature will be the name and alignment of that feature as it existed on official Fairfax County GIS maps on the date that the precinct description was adopted. Subsequent revisions to any precinct description will be so noted and described.

Whenever a road, stream, or other physical feature is used to describe a precinct boundary, it is assumed that the centerline of that road, stream or feature is the dividing line between that precinct and any adjoining precinct, unless otherwise indicated.

Whenever the intersection of two roads consists of multiple travel lanes, access ramps and/or bridges, such as a highway cloverleaf, the geographic center of that intersection will be considered the point at which the two roads intersect.

Whenever a property line is used to describe a precinct boundary, the property and ownership of the property will be described as it existed on the date that the precinct description was adopted. For example: “the east boundary of the Fairfax County Public School property on which Falls Church High School is located.”

Whenever a projection of a roadway or other physical feature is used to complete a section of a precinct boundary, the identified projection is assumed to be a straight line extension of that road or feature continuing in the exact same direction, unless otherwise indicated.

Whenever the corporate boundary of a town or city runs parallel to a road or other feature, the corporate boundary will be used as the precinct boundary description, rather than the road [centerline]. For example: the south corporate boundary of the Town of Herndon runs parallel to the Washington Dulles Access and Toll Road along the northern edge of the road right-of-way, rather than the centerline of the road.

Since 1986, Virginia Code §24.2-305 has required new precincts to have “clearly defined and clearly observable boundaries.” Some Fairfax County precincts that were established prior to 1986 use boundaries that predate the 1986 requirement.

## **Maintenance**

The official copy of each district and precinct description shall be maintained in a notebook in the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors. Identical copies of the notebook are held by the Secretary of the Electoral Board, the General Registrar and the Division of Legislative Services.

Whenever the Board of Supervisors establishes a new precinct, adjusts the boundaries of existing precincts or relocates a polling place, the description pages will be added, amended or replaced, as appropriate, following their adoption. The Secretary of the Electoral Board will be responsible for ensuring that the official copy and other copies of these descriptions are current.

For further information about election districts, voting precincts or polling places, contact:

The Fairfax County Electoral Board  
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 323  
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-0081  
(703) 324-4735  
[elect@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:elect@fairfaxcounty.gov)