

SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF INDIANA

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Lake County Precinct Consolidation Explanation and Findings Summary

Effective July 1, 2018, and as a requirement issued by P.L.210-2018 (HEA 1383-2018), as codified in IC 3-6-5.2-10, the Indiana Secretary of State shall, not later than August 1, 2018, determine the following for counties having a population of more than four hundred thousand (400,000), but less than seven hundred thousand (700,000) (Ind. Code 3-6-5.2-1):

- (1) Which precincts within the county had fewer than six hundred (600) active voters (as defined in IC 3-11-18.1-2) as of November 1, 2017;
- (2) Whether compliance with the precinct boundary standards set forth in IC 3-11-1.5-4 or IC 3-11-1.5-5 would prevent the combination of a precinct described in subdivision (1) with one or more adjoining precincts; and
- (3) The potential savings in the administration of elections resulting from the combination of precincts under this section.

Furthermore, the Indiana Secretary of State shall issue an order to consolidate precincts within the county that is consistent with these standards and shall file the order with the Lake County Board of Elections and Registration and the Indiana Election Division. Consistent with the requirements of statute, the order must do the following:

- (1) Realize savings for the county; and
- (2) Not impose unreasonable obstacles on the ability of the voters of the county to vote at the polls.

The General Assembly has worked over the course of multiple sessions to craft a precinct consolidation solution with both Lake County major political parties. While those discussions resulted in establishing the 600 active voter threshold, ultimately, consolidation agreements between both parties were unsuccessful. Seeing no prospects for changing this path and reaching the end goal of consolidation, which both county political parties and municipal leadership have supported, the legislature sought to advance these discussions to a successful resolution. As a result, and in the event the county party leadership were unable to submit a negotiated plan to the Indiana Election Commission (Commission) by the June 30, 2018 deadline. In the event of a Commission impasse, the legislature saw fit to assign the ultimate responsibility for precinct consolidation to the Indiana Secretary of State.

On June 22, 2018, Lake County Republicans submitted their suggested precinct consolidation plan (hereinafter referred to as the “suggested Lake County precinct consolidation plan” or “suggested plan”). The research of Lake County Republicans was substantial and included over 700 pages of materials. We commend them for providing extremely detailed and helpful information.

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Once these responsibilities were imposed on the Indiana Secretary of State on July 1, 2018, the Secretary issued a call for public comments, recommendations and plans. The Secretary issued a due date of July 13, 2018 for these comments. The 25 public comments received included support and objections to the legislative mandate, as well as comments regarding public transit recommendations. At least one request was made for an extension of time, which was not feasible in light of the limited time for the Secretary to complete research and issue the plan.

During and after the public comment period, at the request of municipal, Republican and Democrat county leadership, the Secretary or her staff hosted several calls and meetings. The result of those meetings included general comments on what those particular stakeholders would like to see in the consolidation. Some of those comments included demographic considerations and explanations as to why plans were not submitted since the inception of the legislative mandate.

Upon receiving the plan, the Secretary commissioned work by 39 Degrees North and Baker Tilly, the Secretary's election project management firm, with nearly two decades of experience in working with the office. 39 Degrees North is the Secretary's GIS partner and the provider for Who Are Your Elected Officials, a service unique throughout the United States. The work of the partners was substantial and extremely valuable.

39 Degrees North was tasked with investigating, correcting and or validating all GIS components of the suggested Lake County precinct consolidation plan. Baker Tilly was tasked with performing analysis for all non-GIS components. There were tens of thousands of qualitative and quantitative data points. In addition, the partners began by scanning and digitizing all 700 pages of the suggested plan. Each partner investigated, corrected and validated the metrics used in the suggested plan.

The following narrative is designed to assist in understanding this process and the rationale in crafting the order under the requirements of IC 3-6-5.2-10.

Report Validation:

The suggested Lake County precinct consolidation plan included a Cover Letter, Table of Contents, Narrative, Graphic 1, Graphic 2, Consolidation Report, Exhibit A, Exhibit B, and Exhibit C. Additionally, the authors of the suggested plan provided updated Payroll 2016 documentation since some pages were scanned together. These documents were reviewed and extracted into an inventory tracker to identify quantitative and qualitative information and logged for further validation. The data from all documents was manually recreated and compared to identify any data gaps and logged for further validation.

The suggested Lake County precinct consolidation plan calculated the average of 2016 active voters, per precinct. The averages of the 2016 active voter data source by city and town, identified in Graphics 1 and 2, originated from a source different than Exhibit A, since the averages from both documents do not substantially match, but some minor discrepancies were noted. This could represent a difference between data due to voter status changes resulting from the 2016 General Election and statewide voter list maintenance.

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The suggested Lake County precinct consolidation plan proposes to combine some of the 523 existing precincts. 241 precincts were not included in the suggested plan. The authors of the suggested plan explained that all precincts with 600 or more active voters had been omitted. Of the 241 precincts not included in the suggested plan, 62 precincts were found to have less than 600 active voters, thereby making them eligible for potential consolidation. However, in light of the limited information and time available to consider further consolidation of these precincts, the Order is limited to those consolidations with documentation included in the suggested plan. A “consolidation” may consolidate two or more existing precincts into a single consolidated precinct. Under the suggested plan and according to the available data, the current precincts would be consolidated into 170 precincts.

Cost Savings (See Attachment D):

Attachment D includes payroll and rent and was manually recreated. The amount of \$690 was used by the authors of the suggested plan as the average cost of payroll and rent for all precincts and was obtained and validated from Exhibit B of the suggested plan.

The formula used to validate the potential savings for one and four years is as follows:

Step 1: Multiply \$690 by number of current precincts

Step 2: Multiply \$690 by the number of consolidated precincts

Step 3: Subtract the product of Step 1 from the product of Step 2

Result: Total cost savings per election year;

Therefore, the total cost savings per year and multiply by six elections (conducted over four years). This equals the total cost savings over four years.

The suggested plan realizes a potential savings of \$117,300.00 per year and \$703,800 for the four year cycle, since there are six elections. It should be noted the savings would be greater depending on the number of precincts involved in special elections over the course of the next four years.

Voting Location Travel Distance Study (See Attachment F and I):

Indiana Code 3-6-5.2-10 Section (b)(2) provides that the consolidation not impose unreasonable obstacles on the ability of the voters of the county to vote at the polls. The 170 precinct consolidations were analyzed to determine the amount of precincts that have a voting location change by comparing the voting location listed on each IEC-8 of the suggested plan, as summarized in Exhibit C, with the list of 2018 voting locations available to the public on the Lake County [website](#). 94 precinct consolidations were identified to have a potential voting location change and 76 precinct consolidations (44%) would not have a potential voting location change. Out of the 94 precinct consolidations that were identified to have a potential voting location change, there are 114 potential voting location changes because some precincts have more than one consolidation.

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The weighted mean center population points were provided by 39 Degrees North for all precinct consolidation voting locations with a voting location change referenced in the suggested plan. The weighted mean center points were derived from census block information. Baker Tilly calculated the distance between the weighted mean center points and the voting location distances using Google Maps:

- The distance from the weighted mean center population point to the new voting location;
- The distance from the weighted mean center population point to the second consolidated voting location;
- The distance from the weighted mean center population point to the third consolidated voting location (if applicable);
- The distance between the potential future voting location and the second consolidated voting location; and
- The distance between the potential future voting location and the third consolidated voting location (if applicable).

The average distance from any prior voting location to the new voting location across all precinct consolidations in the suggested plan is 1.002 miles. The minimum and maximum distance between each precinct consolidation's prior voting location to the new voting location both decrease, on average, across all location changes.

With two exceptions, the new voting location moves closer to the weighted mean center population point when compared with the weighted mean center population point and the previous voting location for all of the precinct consolidations in the suggested plan. The two precinct consolidation exceptions are as follows:

- SJT-08: 3 miles is the difference from the prior voting location to the new voting location for the SJT-06 consolidated precinct. The new voting location is 0.3 miles farther from the weighted mean center distance to the SJT-06 consolidated voting location and has moved to other side of the weighted mean center population point. The weighted mean center point is now central in relation to the prior voting location and the new voting location.
- HO-22: 3.6 miles is the difference from the prior voting location to the new voting location for the HO-17 consolidated precinct. The new voting location is 0.8 miles farther from the weighted mean center than the HO-17 consolidated voting location and has moved to the other side of the weighted mean center population point. The weighted mean center point is now central in relation to the prior voting location and the new voting location. The new voting location is on the other side of park property, including Gordon & Faith Greiner Nature Preserve, Bur Oak Woods, Robinson Park, Hobart Woodland Trail, Glenwood Park, and Brookview Park.

Public Transit Study (See Attachment F and I):

Each city, town and township website was accessed and 36 public transit maps were downloaded, georeferenced and digitized to apply transit routes as an overlay to new and old voting locations.

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From spatial analysis, it was determined that 119 of the proposed 288 voting locations (41%) fall within a quarter mile from these public transit corridors. Similarly, 45 out of the 94 weighted mean center population points (48%) fall within a quarter mile of these public transit routes.

Voter to Representative Proportion Analysis (See Attachment J):

The authors of the suggested plan confirmed that the proposed precinct consolidations would not result in any change to the number of city or town council seats, which is fixed by Indiana state law or municipal ordinance. The authors also confirmed that the suggested plan was not intended to result in consolidated precincts which cross the boundaries of municipalities or their council districts. The suggested plan is modified as incorporated into this order to eliminate one instance (G3-11 Consolidation Report Validation) where a typographical error indicated that a consolidated precinct would cross a city boundary line.

The ratio of each representative to active and all voters was calculated for each city, town and township, independent of the suggested plan. These calculations were analyzed to determine voter to representative increases or decreases when comparing the November 1, 2017 and July 11, 2018 Indiana Statewide Voter Registration datasets.

In most city, towns or townships, there was an increase in the ratio of active voters to each representative, with small variances. In the following four units of local government, there was a decrease in the ratio of active voters to each representative.

- Cedar Creek Township (-778);
- East Chicago (-7);
- Lake Station (-13); and
- West Creek Townships (-533).

Demographics Study (See Attachment B and C):

Demographics from the 2010 census data were incorporated and correlated to the data of both existing precincts and precincts under the suggested plan. This data was then analyzed with respect to several demographic factors. Aggregate population data from the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) survey was also considered in the development of this plan to identify population migration resulting in the increase or decrease of population in several large municipalities since 2010.

The result of this analysis indicates that there would be no demographic change (such as dilution or compaction of minority populations resulting from the suggested plan) within any city, town or township since no proposed consolidated precincts cross any city, town or township boundaries.