## REVISED STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** |  | **Name:** | Erica Newman |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2022-0122 & 2022-0123 | **Date:** |  |

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

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| ***Proposed Substitute Ordinance 2022-0122.2 would implement the district court redistricting committee’s amendment to the districting plan, passed out of committee on April 6, 2022, with a “Do Pass” recommendation. The Ordinance was amended in committee with a verbal amendment to insert March 7, 2022 as the date the redistricting committee approved the amendments to the District Court District Map.*** |

**SUBJECT**

Proposed Ordinance 2022-0122 would implement the district court redistricting committee’s amendment to the districting plan and would amend Ordinance 8935, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 2.68.070.

Proposed Ordinance 2022-0123 would authorize changes to the King County District Court electoral district boundaries to conform to the 2022 precinct changes.

**SUMMARY**

Proposed Ordinance 2022-0122 would implement changes to the King County District Court Districting Plan. On March 7, 2022, the county’s District Court Redistricting Committee met to review the county’s District Court Districting Plan as required by state statute and county code. At the meeting, the committee considered and unanimously approved the amendments to the District Court District Map on March 7, 2022, that would include voters from the City of Pacific that reside in Pierce County.

Proposed Ordinance 2022-0123 would authorize changes to the King County District Court, Southeast electoral district to include the City of Pacific, including the part of the city that is in Pierce County, as council adoption of amendments districting plan is required under state law and King County Code.[[1]](#footnote-1) The changes to the Southeast electoral district are reflected in the attachments to the proposed ordinance.

In November 2021, the County Council adopted Ordinance 19358 which authorized District Court to provide services to the City of Pacific under the interlocal agreement (ILA) beginning in January 2022. The ILA is valid for five years (2022-2026), starting January 1, 2022, with an option for two automatic four-year extensions (2027-2030 and 2031-2034).

According to RCW 3.38.040, the County Council is required to act before May 1, 2022, to allow time for the ordinance to go into effect prior to candidate filing, which begins on May 16, 2022.

**BACKGROUND**

The District Court is the County’s court of “limited jurisdiction” and has responsibility for traffic infractions, certain civil matters, and misdemeanor criminal offenses in the County’s unincorporated areas. Cities that do not have municipal courts contract with the court to provide those services. The District Court is also the venue for the adjudication of “state” offenses (violations of state statue in the county or when the arresting agency is the Washington State Patrol or other state law enforcement agency). District Court also manages the King County Community Courts.

The requirements and structure of the District Court are established in state statute, county code, and are governed by court rules. Generally, state law allows the local county legislative authority the flexibility in the development of the court’s jurisdictional structure. King County’s structure is contained in the County’s District Court District Plan which appears in King County Code Chapter 2.68. The adopted District Court District Plan establishes as policy that the county is a unified, countywide district court. However, the County has also adopted the statutory option of creating electoral districts that divide the county into smaller areas to allow for a more “local” election of judges without affecting a unified approach to the administration of the court.

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As required under state law, the District Court Districting Committee approved the amendments to the District Court District Map on March 7, 2022. According to RCW 3.38.040, the County Council is required to act before May 1, 2022.

**ANALYSIS**

**Proposed Ordinance 2022-0122.** The proposed ordinance would codify the changes adopted by the District Court Redistricting Committee on March 7, 2022. If adopted, the City of Pacific residents that reside in Pierce County and receive municipal court services from King County, would be eligible to participate in the election of “their” city judges, otherwise these residents would not have an electoral voice in choosing judicial officers.

**Proposed Ordinance 2022-0123.** The current District Court District Plan has four electoral districts each with an assigned number of judges. Each district contains a listing of the voter precincts within its geographic boundaries. With the annual changes in County voter precincts, the District Court District Plan must also be changed. Under Washington State Law and King County Code the adjustment or alteration of voting precincts are required on an annual basis.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Department of Elections’ Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Section has prepared Proposed Ordinance 2022-0123 as a companion to Proposed Ordinance 2022-0122. As electoral districts are described by the voting precincts they contain, any alterations made to voting precincts requires a companion ordinance reflecting those changes. These changes are administrative in nature, as the actual geographic boundaries of the District Court electoral districts have not changed but are statutorily required. The Elections staff reports that the costs of making these revisions are fully funded as part of the adopted Department of Elections budget.

In April 2022, Pierce County Council is scheduled to adopt Proposed Ordinance 2022-23, which will adjust the boundaries of Pierce County District Court pursuant to the recommendations of the District Court Districting Committee.

**Timing.** According to RCW 3.38.040, the County Council is required to adopt amendments before May 1, 2022. If the Committee of the Whole takes action at its April 6th meeting and the Council takes action at its April 19th meeting, that would allow time for the ordinance to go into effect prior to candidate filing, which begins on May 16, 2022.

1. RCW 3.38.040 and K.C.C. 1.12.010 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. RCW 29A.16.040-050 and KCC Chapter 1.12 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)