ORDINANCE NO. _________

AN ORDINANCE TO PERMIT THE SELECTION OF THREE (3) MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FROM DESIGNATED DISTRICTS, TO BE REFERRED TO AS REGIONAL DISTRICTS THAT OVERLAP WARD BOUNDARIES AS A MEANS OF REPURPOSING THE THREE (3) CURRENT AT-LARGE POSITIONS; TO CALL AN ELECTION DURING THE 2022 GENERAL ELECTION ON THE ISSUE OF WHETHER TO UTILIZE REGIONAL DISTRICTS AS A MEANS OF REPURPOSING THE CURRENT THREE (3) AT-LARGE DISTRICTS; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND, FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, as a result of the FUTURE-Little Rock process, it was decided to expand the membership of the Little Rock Board of Directors (“the Board of Directors”) from seven (7) members elected At-Large, to eleven (11) members with a directly elected Mayor, three (3) members elected At-Large, and seven (7) members elected from Wards; and,

WHEREAS, in 2019 ARK. ACTS 1875 the Arkansas General Assembly granted municipalities the authority to modify this procedure so that instead of Directors elected at-large, a municipality may identify a larger Designated District, referred to here as a Regional Position, which can overlap the boundaries of various Wards; and,

WHEREAS, the Governance Structure Study Group created pursuant to Little Rock, Ark., Resolution 14,902 (December 3, 2018) has recommended the creation of three (3) Regional Positions as a means of repurpose the current three (3) At-Large Positions; and,

WHEREAS, it is believed that this type of election would be beneficial to the City of Little Rock, Arkansas (“the City”), and would make election to the Board of Directors more readily available to a greater number of people.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS:

Section 1. The provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to approval by a majority of the electors voting on the issue during the General Election to be held on November 3, 2024.

Section 2. The effective date for candidates who have been elected to fill a Regional Position shall be January 1, 2024, but successful candidates for a Regional Position shall first take office on January 1, 2025.

Section 3. The purpose of this ordinance is to implement certain recommendations on the structure of municipal government recommended by the Governance Structure Study Group created pursuant to Little Rock, Ark., Resolution No. 14,902 (December 3, 2018), and submitted on October 23, 2019.
Section 4. Definitions. For purposes of this ordinance, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

At-Large Position refers to a position on the Little Rock Board of Directors for which the candidate is an elector and resides within the City of Little Rock, Arkansas, and every elector is eligible to vote on a candidate who seeks such a position.

Regional District refers to the geographic boundaries of a Regional Position which may include portions of the geographic boundaries of one (1) or more Wards.

Regional Position refers to a position on the Little Rock Board of Directors elected from a Regional District; to be eligible to seek election an elector resides within the boundaries of such a District, and only those electors who reside within the geographic boundaries of a Regional District are eligible to vote for a candidate.

Section 5. Repurposing of Current At-Large Positions. Effective January 1, 2025, At-Large Position 8, At-Large Position 9, and At-Large Position 10 shall be repurposed when members of the Board of Directors elected from Regional Position 8, Regional Position 9, and Regional Position 10, take their seats. Regional Position 8, Regional Position 9, and Regional Position 10, of the Board of Directors, as At-Large Districts, shall be repurposed as Regional Positions.

Section 6. Creation of Regional Positions. Effective January 1, 2025, there shall be three (3) Regional Positions on the Board of Directors to be enumerated as Regional Position 8, Regional Position 9, and Regional Position 10; the elector serving in such a position:

(a) Shall have been elected in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance at the 2024 General Election;

(b) Shall be subject to all laws that impact service in any Board of Directors position.

Section 7. Election of Regional Positions.

(a) The geographic boundaries of a Regional District shall be established in the same manner as a Ward position on the Board of Directors as determined by Arkansas State Law, and as impacted by the most recent Federal Decennial Census.

(b) To be eligible to hold a Regional Position, a candidate must reside within the geographical boundaries of the Regional District at the time of filing to be a candidate for such a position;

(c) To be elected to hold a Regional Position, a candidate must receive more votes than any other candidate for the position.

Section 8. The following question shall be referred to the electors of the City during the General Election held on in 2022:

FOR the election of three (3) separate members of the Board of Directors from a distinct Regional District as a means of repurposing the current At-Large Positions………………………………………………………………………………□
AGAINST the election of three (3) separate members of the Board of Directors from a distinct Regional District as a means of repurposing the current At-Large Positions........................................................

DESCRIPTION

A Regional Position refers to a position on the Little Rock Board of Directors which represents a Regional District comprised of boundaries that overlap the boundaries of other Districts. To be eligible to seek election to a Regional Position, a candidate shall reside within the boundaries of such a Regional District at the time the person files to be a candidate.

Section 9. As set forth more fully in the ballot title and government description contained in Section 8 of this ordinance, the Board of Directors, pursuant to authority granted in Ark. Code Ann. § 14-61-107 hereby refers to the electorate the question of repurposing the At-Large Positions on the Board of Directors as Regional Positions with candidates elected from a Regional District who will first take office on January 1, 2025. Also, the creation of three (3) Designated Positions on the Board of Directors to first be elected at the General Election of 2024, and to take office on January 1, 2025. In addition, to be a successful candidate for a Regional Position, a person must reside within the boundaries of the Regional District on the date the candidate files for the office. Only electors who reside within the boundaries of a Regional District are eligible to vote for a candidate for that Regional Position.

Section 10. The Mayor and City Clerk are directed to complete any and all proclamations required by law to be filed for the November 2022 General Election, and to prepare and publish any notices or advertisements required, and further to perform all necessary acts to have the Pulaski County Election Commission and other officers assure that this matter is placed upon a ballot for the November 2022 General Election.

Section 11. Severability. In the event any title, section, paragraph, item, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this ordinance is declared or adjudged to be invalid or unconstitutional, such declaration or adjudication shall not affect the remaining portions of the ordinance which shall remain in full force and effect as if the portion so declared or adjudged invalid or unconstitutional was not originally a part of the ordinance.

Section 13. Repealer. All laws, ordinances, resolutions, or parts of the same, that are inconsistent with the provisions of this resolution, are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency including, but not limited to, Little Rock, Ark., Ordinance No. 16,435 (June 1, 1993) and Little Rock, Ark., Ordinance No. 19,761 (June 12, 2007).

Section 14. Emergency Clause. In light of changes in Arkansas State Law, and the recommendations of the Governance Structure Study Group, it is deemed important that the structure of the Little Rock Board of Directors consist of a directly elected Mayor, three (3) members elected from Regional Districts which shall overlap various Ward boundaries, and seven (7) members elected by Ward; further, the ability to implement a government structure permitted by State Statute is essential to the public health, safety, and
welfare; an emergency is, therefore, declared to exist, and this ordinance shall be in full force and effect, as set forth above, from and after the date of its passage although the election called for in this ordinance will not take place until 2022.

PASSED: November 16, 2021

ATTEST:

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Susan Langley, City Clerk  Frank Scott, Jr., Mayor

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

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Thomas M. Carpenter, City Attorney