

**Weiss, Rachel**

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**From:** Joy [sixk5j.j\_7@tssmt.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 05, 2012 11:22 AM  
**To:** Redistricting  
**Subject:** Whitehall meeting Jan 4,2012

Greetings, The meeting with Jon Bennion was very informative.Thank you, Mr. Bennion.

I wish to oppose any redistricting of Jefferson County into Silver Bow County.

It would be much more reasonable and preferable to consider joining rural Madison County.

Joy Des Rosier  
Whitehall, Jefferson County.

Jan. 7, 2012

8073 U.S. Highway 89  
Great Falls, MT 59405

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for taking up the difficult and painstaking task of redrawing the state legislative map.

Although I am not a legislator, I spent most of my life in Great Falls and have spent a good deal of time talking to voters of Great Falls. I am consistently struck by the fact that few Great Falls voters know their legislative district, and that virtually all of them, when apprised of the district they live in and its shape, express surprise at the legislative districts' shape and breadth.

Principally, this applies to the legislative districts that run in long, east-to-west strips in the Great Falls city grid south and east of the Missouri River: HD 20, 21, 22, and 23.

While districts like Riverview/Valleyview (HD25), the West Side (HD26), and Fox Farm (HD18) draw together areas which local Great Falls citizens have long regarded as neighborhoods, the same is certainly not true of HD 20-23 in the city grid.

Some of these districts are 50 blocks long east-to-west, but only 6 or 7 blocks tall north-to-south.

I would encourage the Commission to work hard to make those districts more compact and contiguous by following local-government political boundaries that are drawn to encompass recognized "neighborhoods" and making use of school-district data that is suggestive of socioeconomic communities of interest.

An easy change would be to shape the districts more in the manner that the City of Great Falls has shaped its map for the city's nine Neighborhood Councils. You will see that HD25, HD26, and HD18 largely cohere already to those boundaries (with additional unincorporated areas added to the legislative districts).

Neighborhood council meetings are reported in the paper and draw a not insignificant and growing turnout, especially when controversial topics are being discussed. Many legislators and other elected officials pay visits to the councils. But beyond the councils *per se*, the true reason to adopt a map more in the Neighborhood Council image is because that map is itself drawn based on local conceptions of neighborhoods, school zones, busing patterns, and economic communities of interest.

For instance, Neighborhood Council #7 is the "downtown" neighborhood council. It brings together the business center and some of Great Falls' most economically depressed areas. Great Falls has spent a great deal of time, like other cities have, trying to revitalize its once-flagging downtown. Some successes have been achieved, and there is an increased pride in the downtown area as well as a renewed attention to the problems of working-class poverty and homelessness in the areas that gird the

downtown. I believe the community of Great Falls would be strongly supportive of a distinct "downtown" legislative district whose member could be a strong advocate for these issues. The boundaries of Neighborhood Council 7 could be expanded eastward to take in more population and achieve population equity with other districts.

By contrast, in today's map, the larger downtown area (including the business district, the lower north side, and the lower south side) is currently divided between *four* legislative districts, HD 20, 21, 22 and 23.

In practical terms, this means that Longfellow Elementary, which has a free or reduced-price lunch eligibility of 93%, has its zone divided into three districts (HD20, 21, and 22). These districts then stretch east to include neighborhoods like the one surrounding Lincoln Elementary (a 37% free or reduced-price lunch eligibility), in the case of HD 21 and 22.

A downtown district could include virtually the entire zones feeding into the two elementary schools with the highest percentage of free-and-reduced-lunch eligibility: Longfellow (93%) on the lower south side and Whittier (86%) on the lower north side.

Statistics on free and reduced-price lunch enrollment are a good proxy for a neighborhood's economy, and can be found for individual elementaries at the Great Falls Public Schools website:

<http://www.gfps.k12.mt.us/schools/>

In general, I believe Great Falls citizens would welcome districts which are more tied to neighborhoods, which means maintaining proportions of east-to-west and north-to-south that are not nearly as large as the nearly 10:1 ratio exhibited by some of Great Falls' districts in the current map.

Finally, I also believe HD24 should be redrawn to avoid crossing the Missouri River. It is probably the most awkward district in the City of Great Falls—veering all the way to the 15<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in order to cross the river, and then again jogging east to include Black Eagle—and it should include as much as possible those actual neighborhoods which are populated by present or retired military personnel and those service, namely the east-side of the City of Great Falls. Were the "Malmstrom District" to look more like Neighborhood Council 4, it would be a considerable improvement.

Thank you again for your hard work and consideration.

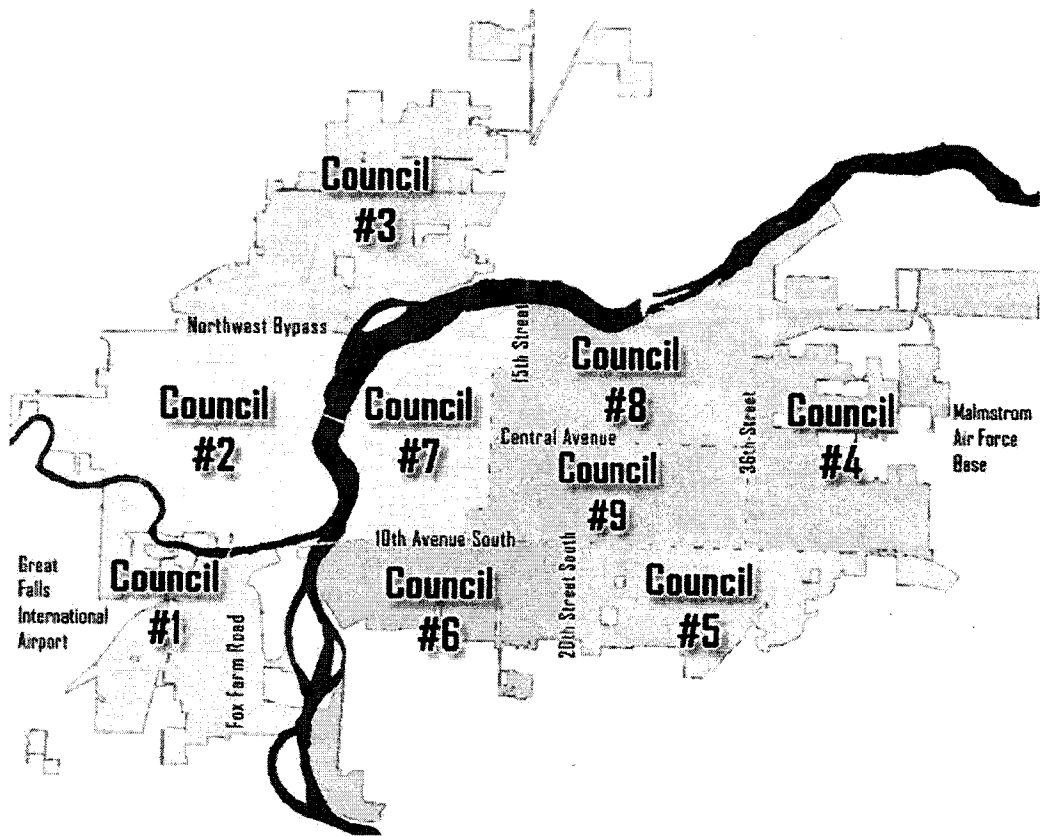
Sincerely,

/Travis Kavulla/

Enc: Map of Neighborhood Councils, City of Great Falls. Also available online with council-by-council detail at: [http://www.greatfallsmt.net/people\\_offices/ncouncils/](http://www.greatfallsmt.net/people_offices/ncouncils/)



## Neighborhood Councils



### Creation

Pursuant to the Charter of the City of Great Falls, the Neighborhood Council program was established by Ordinance 2727 in 1997. There are nine separate Council districts throughout Great Falls.

### Purpose

Provides a means for the citizens of Great Falls to actively participate in local government through a formal organization working at the neighborhood level. The Neighborhood Councils provide advice and counsel to the City Commission on a variety of neighborhood issues.

**Weiss, Rachel**

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**From:** Terry Murphy [murphter5@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 08, 2012 9:27 AM  
**To:** Redistricting  
**Subject:** Jefferson County

Jefferson County has about 1,500 more people than the ideal House District. I believe that Jefferson County, under the redistricting, should contain a complete House District within its borders. The extra people should then be assigned to an adjoining district in an adjoining county with a similar community of interest, economically and culturally.

Jefferson is my home county. I appreciate your considering my views. Terry Murphy, Senator in District 39

**Weiss, Rachel**

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**From:** Judy & John Jones [jones@nemont.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2012 5:26 PM  
**To:** Redistricting  
**Subject:** Montana redistricting

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission:

I am the current mayor of Fort Peck. My ideas pertain to the redistricting comment from the editorial in the Billings Gazette regarding redistricting: "...as much as possible, existing neighborhood and jurisdictional boundaries should be used to keep communities sharing the same interests together."

Residents of Fort Peck consist of a cross-section of people including retirees, government employees, teachers, business owners and private sector employees. The median household income is fairly high.

Almost all of the residents use Glasgow as their trade area, which is in the present districts 18 and 35. Fort Peck is currently in Districts 16 and 32. Residents have very little in common with these 2 districts. Therefore it would make more sense to have the town of Fort Peck and the Fort Peck Lake cabin site residents to be included with districts 18 and 35.

Thank you for your consideration of this move.

John H. Jones, Mayor