



NEWS RELEASE

**Suite 403, City County Building
400 Main Street**

Knoxville, TN 37902

www.knoxmpc.org

(865) 215-2500 Fax (865) 215-2068

Contact: Tim Kuhn
Phone: 215-2500

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County Commission and School Board Redistricting Plan Alternatives Available for Review

A joint committee of local elected officials is seeking public comment on redistricting plans.

Knox County Commission and Knox County Board of Education, with support from representatives of City of Knoxville and Town of Farragut administrations, formed a Redistricting Committee in March to develop a redistricting plan. Redistricting is the mandated process that rebalances population between voting districts to restore roughly equal distribution. It is not school rezoning.

Redistricting occurs every 10 years following the release of decennial census counts. Often times, a county will experience population change in the years between censuses, and unequal distribution can occur. Considerable growth occurred in Knox County since 2000, with gains of more than 50,000 people, according to the 2010 Census. Half of that growth occurred in west Knox. As a result, population by district is unbalanced and may fail to meet one of the most fundamental democratic principles: equal representation, or "one person, one vote."

In the effort to rebalance local population by district, the Redistricting Committee will consider plans that align County Commission and School Board districts. Three plan priorities were adopted by the group: ensure that new boundaries will withstand legal challenge, include at least one high school in each district, and minimize the impact of change on voters while keeping neighborhoods and communities intact where possible.

At its July 21st meeting, the Committee asked MPC to develop a series of redistricting plan alternatives. The Committee also called for submission of plans from the public and Committee members themselves.

MPC has come up with an initial set of four plan options. Those and others submitted by the public are now posted on a website hosted by the Knox County Election Commission (www.knoxredistricting.org). The public is invited to comment on the plans by email to redistricting@knoxcounty.org or by attending upcoming meetings of the Redistricting

Committee. The next meeting is set for Thursday, August 18 at 3:30 p.m. in the School Board's 1st Floor Conference Room in the Andrew Johnson Building, 912 S. Gay Street.

Contacts:

Knox County Redistricting Committee Co-Chairs:

Larry Smith, Knox County Commission - District 7

Phone: (865) 679-4106, Email: larry.smith@knoxcounty.org

Lynne Fugate, Knox County Board of Education – District 4

Phone: (865) 566-7414, Email: lynne.fugate@knoxschools.org

Technical Assistance:

Tim Kuhn, GIS Manager, Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission

Phone: (865) 215-3806, Email: tim.kuhn@knoxmpc.org

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