

Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Office of the Mayor

R. T. Rybak Mayor

350 South 5th Street - Room 331 Minneapolis MN 55415-1393

> Office 612 673-2100 Fax 612 673-2305 TTY 612 673-3187

Thursday, April 23, 2009

Craig Best Assistant Regional Census Manager for Geographic Operations US Census Bureau/Kansas City Regional Office 2001 NE 46th St Kansas City, MO 64116

Dear Mr. Best:

In accordance with the Census Bureau's "Participant Statistical Areas Program" this letter requests three minor modifications to Census geography within the City of Minneapolis. The goal of these changes is to better align Census geography — and therefore the related tract and block group data — with the official City of Minneapolis neighborhood boundaries [see enclosed map]

These boundaries – most of which were established decades ago – demarcate the 80+ individual neighborhoods within the City and represent longstanding sub-city administrative boundaries. The City uses neighborhood boundaries to organize a variety of city services, including its citizen participation and community engagement programs. Additionally, some federally funded programs – such as HUD's Community Development Block Grant funds – are allocated partially on the basis of neighborhoods and income thresholds. It is important to us to be able access detailed Census data at the City-defined "neighborhood" level even at the risk of losing some longitudinal data at a small number of tracts or block groups

In 1980 and 1990, the City was able to access this neighborhood level data via the User Defined Areas Program. When this program ceased in 2000, the City had to spend \$14,000 for a special tabulation of selected STF3 data sorted by City-defined neighborhood boundaries. As we look forward to annual releases of the detailed data via the American Community Survey, it is even more important to align Census geography with City-defined neighborhood boundaries, so we can sort tract and block group data by neighborhood, and thereby minimize the need for future special tabulations.

After consultation with City and Metropolitan Council GIS staff and reviewing the Census Bureau's PSAP guidelines, some of the more minor inconsistencies were dropped, others are submitted without incident due to changes in the landscape (i.e., a new University football stadium development across Census geography). The following proposed

modifications in Census boundaries remain as the three most important cases needing to be addressed These modifications will go a long way to address the more problematic differences between Census geography and City-defined neighborhoods. They are:

1) Boundary between Jordan and Hawthorne neighborhoods Census tracts affected: 101500 – 101600

This change would move the north/south boundary between these two tracts one block west, thus aligning with City of Minneapolis neighborhood boundaries. This change affects approximately 160 households, constituting 475 persons. Block group boundaries would adjust accordingly. See attached image #5

2) Boundary between Cedar-Isles-Dean and West Calhoun neighborhoods

Census tracts affected: 106500 - 109100

This change would continue the westward end of the east/west boundary between these two tracts along Lake Street, rather than veering southwesterly along a railroad track to France Avenue. This request returns the tract boundaries to its pre-2000 location. For reasons unknown, this boundary was changed in the Census 2000, which both City and Census GIS staff have previously discussed as a mistake needing correction. This change will impact approximately 425 households and 600 persons but with the exception of Census 2000, will improve longitudinal data. See attached image #26.

3) Boundaries between the Harrison, Bryn Mawr, Lowry Hill neighborhoods

Census tracts affected: 104100, 105100, and 105500

This is a two part request in a currently unpopulated and underutilized part of the City that will be undergoing significant redevelopment in the next decade, including housing and commercial development. The area currently straddles two tract boundaries and we are trying to align Census geography with City neighborhood boundaries and incorporate the entire development within a single geography BEFORE this area becomes populated or redeveloped. The first part of the request is to move the southeastern boundary between tracts 105100 and 105500 to follow. Linden Ave West, thus matching an existing neighborhood boundary. This is a move of about 100' involving no population and no employment. The second change would be to move the northerly boundary of tract 105100 to follow Bassett Creek rather than the railroad line; at the point where Bassett Creek turns easterly, follow existing property lines due east [just south of the large electrical substation] approximately three blocks to West

Lyndale Avenue. Block group boundaries would adjust accordingly. See attached image #8-10-11

We believe these three changes will correct the three most important cases where Census geography does not align with Minneapolis' longstanding sub-city administrative boundaries, thus making it easier to sort detailed Census data by neighborhood. We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please contact Jeff Schneider in our Community Planning and Economic Development Department if you have questions or need further information. He can be reached at jeff.schneider@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-5124.

Sincerely,

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Mayor R.T. Rybak

Cc: Council Member Lilligren
Jeff Schneider, CPED
Paul Hanson, Metropolitan Council GIS Coordinator
Dennis Johnson, Kansas City Regional Director, U.S. Census Bureau