

Rodriguez, Lisa

From: HPD ICRC Commissioners
Sent: Saturday, August 28, 2021 2:13 PM
To: HPD ICRC Commissioners DL
Subject: FW: District Affinity Characteristics

From: Joseph Reynolds [REDACTED] >
Sent: Saturday, August 28, 2021 7:12:37 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: HPD ICRC Commissioners <ICRC.Commissioners@austintexas.gov>
Subject: District Affinity Characteristics

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Commissioners,

One of the factors you use when setting boundaries is ‘affinity’, how closely people and activities are bound by the same forces.

Obvious factors are all in the news; race and ethnic or cultural background, age has similar impact as those, and in narrower ways, religion, education, and wealth impact us.

But, less customary factors can be just as powerful in forming community.

Long physical features generate shared issues and concerns:

Creeks that flood like Shoal Creek, Roads, like 620 or Burnet or Lamar, are examples. Shoal Creek begins with its’ northern watershed north of Parmer Ln. It ends downtown in LadyBird Lake. The neighborhoods all down the stream share concerns. The concerns change with geology and with time of neighborhood founding. The southern end of Shoal Creek follows Lamar Blvd and has high ‘cliff side’ banks. That is because before WW-II the streets followed the creeks, it was easier to build that way and the streets were narrower. After WW-II development was large scale with the Veteran Boom, and large tracts, often with the creeks through the middle were developed. The southern end of Allandale was a dairy farm, with the creek through the midst, so houses back directly to the creek, and the creek bed is owned as part of the house’ s lot. This pattern continued into the 1960s as development to Anderson Ln was completed. But, all the neighbors share flooding concerns, and it affects building and development.

When setting boundaries, look for theses common issues. They can be physical like a creek that floods, or cultural like a road that forms a linear social center. These are very important and in ways controlling items.

Common Social settings due to neighborhoods being formed at about the same time.

Allandale, Brentwood, and Crest View share ≈1950 as a date when they were initiated. That gives them common issues of street patterns, and house size which lead to shared social patterns and affinity. They tend to have common gas/water/sewer utility problems and concerns. Contrasting with the 1950s, the neighborhoods just South, such as Rosedale and Brykerwood developed in the 1930' s and earlier. Again lot size issues change with time, street widths change as automobiles change and horses are replaced. Date of development set the neighborhood physical character. West 45th St is a common boundary for these neighborhoods, as it is for voting precincts, and for social interest.

I have lived in several different neighborhoods where the date of development impacted the neighborhood character. I lived on West 6th at Prather, which was developed about the time of WW-I. I lived on West 7th between Baylor and Blanco in a house with lumber branded Calcasieu Forest 1901. The two neighborhoods were very different. I lived in University Housing on Lake Austin Blvd, and in what had been 1930s/1940s faculty housing on Hampton near the Law School. Those had the common items of students and University, but very different neighborhoods in goals and engagement and social / friendship bonds.

Transportation sets Boundaries:

It is easy to see how Freeways split community. They so restrict movement that commonality of social structure is difficult across them. Railroads and Trolly Lines have a similar if lesser effect. The transportation in place before development has a lasting effect, often because the earlier land owner' s holdings were bordered by highways and railroads. Allandale extends from MoPac to Burnet Rd, from a railway [now with a freeway built along it] eastward to a State highway. Highways, after housing development, can then have a connecting effect, as the two communities, one on each side, encounter a common shared condition. Businesses get built with a shared market area, churches draw from both sides.

I hope that you take the time and make the effort to identify and utilize factors such as these when you evaluate 'affinity'. Not doing so will generate problems for voters when selecting Council members.

Joseph Reynolds

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