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## **Balto. Co. redistricting plan approved**

### **Woodlawn, Towson areas to see changes**

By Alison Knezevich, The Baltimore Sun

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An area that is home to the Social Security Administration would see its political borders shift, and communities around Towson would be split from the county seat's district under a plan Baltimore County Council members approved Monday.

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The council voted unanimously to accept a redistricting plan based largely on the recommendations of a five-person redistricting commission that turned over its proposals earlier this year. The changes will take effect during the 2014 elections.

Under the plan approved Monday, the Social Security Administration and residents in the Woodlawn High School precinct would be shifted from the 4th District — now represented by Democratic Councilman Kenneth N. Oliver — to the 1st, represented by Councilman Tom Quirk, also a Democrat.

Oliver withdrew an amendment he proposed last week to keep the Woodlawn precinct of 6,000 in his district.

"I didn't have the votes for it," he said after the meeting. "[Other council members] wanted to go along with whatever the commission came up with."

At public hearings, Woodlawn residents had said the commission's recommendation to shift the precinct in question would rob the district of an economic engine. Oliver's district is also

the only one with a majority of black residents.

Quirk said he would work with Oliver and looked forward to representing residents in the precinct.

"We share a lot of commonalities," he said of Oliver. "We have a lot of communities that border each other."

The redistricting plan also would move communities including Loch Hill and Glendale/Glenmont from Republican Councilman David Marks' 5th District to Democratic Councilwoman Cathy Bevins' 6th District.

People from those areas have said they wanted to stay in the same district as Towson because they share similar interests and a sense of community.

At the meeting, Marks said he had hoped to keep the communities in the same district but couldn't find a way to do it because shifting the residents would make the districts' populations too unequal.

"You all know the many hours we've spent looking at this issue," he said.

He said he considered splitting precincts to keep the communities intact, but couldn't find support to do that. He also looked at exchanging precincts with other districts but thought it would be unfair to other communities, coming so late in the process.

Marks, Bevins and Democratic Councilwoman Vicki Almond of the 2nd District would all represent the Towson area under the approved plan.

David Kosak, president of the Greater Towson Council of Community Associations, said after the meeting that many voters would be disappointed in the final map.

"Now we've got three people that we'll have to go to when we have issues," said Kosak, whose group represents more than 30 neighborhoods.

The council made only one change to the redistricting commission's proposal, amending it to keep an Essex precinct that includes Hopewell Pointe in Bevins' district. The commission had proposed putting that area in Council Chairman John Olszewski Sr.'s 7th District.

About 1,000 people live in the precinct, Bevins said.

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