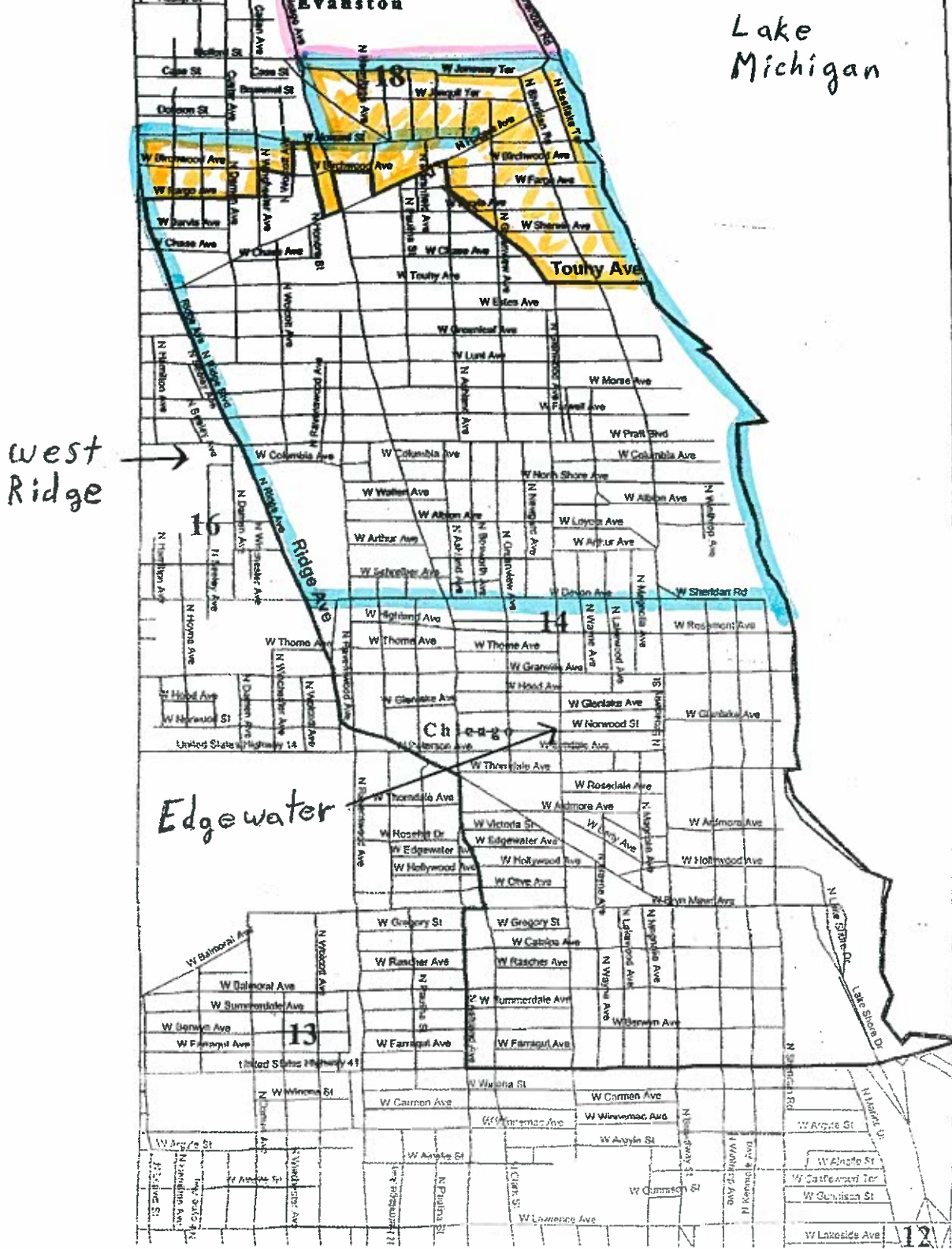


Rogers Park Neighborhood  
Calvary Cemetery  
Area of Interest

### State of Illinois Representative District 14



Good afternoon Senators.

My name is Jim Ginderske and I live in the Rogers Park community of Chicago.

I lead the health advocacy group Neighbors for a Healthy Rogers Park, which among other things completed a Community Health Needs Assessment of Rogers Park, and subsequently used that data to recruit a provider and obtain a federal New Access Point grant that built the Rogers Park Health Center.

I also serve on the 49<sup>th</sup> Ward Zoning and Land Use Committee, the Steering Committee of the 49<sup>th</sup> Ward Democratic Organization, County Commissioner Larry Suffredin's Health Advisory Board, and Senator Steans' Policy Advisory Board and am a founding member of the 49<sup>th</sup> Ward's Participatory Budgeting Leadership Committee. My work in these and other roles has given me a solid understanding of the challenges presented by the current configuration of our electoral districts.

Rogers Park is an old community, established in 1830, incorporated as a village in 1878, then annexed into the City of Chicago in 1893. Chicago officially designates the area outlined in blue in your handout as the "Rogers Park neighborhood."

As you can see, Rogers Park adjoins Lake Michigan on the east side, the suburb of Evanston to the north, the West Ridge neighborhood to the west, and Edgewater to the south. Roughly 85 percent of Rogers Park is within the 7<sup>th</sup> Senate and the 14<sup>th</sup> House districts. The other 15 percent, along the northern edge and outlined in orange in your handout falls within the 9<sup>th</sup> Senate and 18<sup>th</sup> House districts. It is that area that I wish to address today.

The question for Rogers Park is whether our northern eleven precincts fit better with districts that are 95 percent suburban in composition or are more intimately linked to the rest of the Rogers Park community. The answer is clear. Historically, economically, culturally, in matters of government and other services as well as geography, Rogers Park is a distinct community and its north section is an integral part of it.

The area in question, again marked in orange is nearly surrounded by Rogers Park's 7<sup>th</sup> Senate and 14<sup>th</sup> House districts. To the north, marked in pink is a cemetery, to the east is the lake, and to the west a fifteen foot high wall surrounding the CTA train yard. Only a few block section of Howard Street, to the west of the train yard is an actual interactive border with the 9<sup>th</sup> Senate and 18<sup>th</sup> House districts, and this is a mostly commercial area along a major thoroughfare, which is also the municipal border with Evanston.

This arrangement places a dense and complex Chicago neighborhood into a mostly suburban legislative district, forcing suburban legislators to maintain an additional layer of constituent service resources for an area that is barely 5 percent of their jurisdiction.

This division makes even less sense when neighborhood factors are considered. Rogers Park's elementary schools feed into the 7<sup>th</sup> district's Sullivan High School and Chicago Math and Science Academy, except for Gale elementary which is located in the 9<sup>th</sup> district. Also, Howard Area Community Center's Alternative High School- for kids who have struggled at Sullivan- is located in the 9<sup>th</sup> District, putting matters that involve families with children at both neighborhood institutions under the aegis of four legislators.

This situation plays out in other ways as well.

On Health, for example public health and emergency services in Rogers Park are handled by Chicago's Fire Department and Department of Public Health. This is especially relevant with epidemiology issues like H1N1 flu, West Nile virus, and rabies tracking.

Suburban data, generated by analysis there and provided to 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> district legislators is only relevant to 95 percent of those districts, and possibly in conflict with what may be provided by Chicago agencies to the portion of the district within City limits. This confusion is compounded by the use of email for constituent communications, as email lists have to be specially configured to account for geography.

Mental health issues in Rogers Park involve multiple Chicago agencies, including the Chicago Department of Mental Health. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts, the Evanston and Skokie Departments of Public Health hold sway. Also, suburban health institutions often see themselves as disconnected from Rogers Park residents, for example Evanston Hospital, which recently redrew its charity care boundaries to specifically exclude Rogers Park residents.

Rogers Park is served by the 24<sup>th</sup> district of the Chicago Police Department. In cases where legislator involvement in police issues is required, under the current mapping two Senators and two representatives share responsibility for Rogers Park's 1.8 square mile area.

The complexity of this was clear a couple of years ago, when the majority of 911 calls for service in Rogers Park were from the area in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts, while the rest of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> districts lie within the 24<sup>th</sup> Police District. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> legislative districts, most policing is done by suburban departments, who do not have jurisdiction in Rogers Park.

One shared resource between all four districts is the lakefront. Here too, however there are substantial differences between how Rogers Park and Evanston view their portion of the Lake Michigan shoreline. Different agencies manage this resource in the city and suburb, and in Rogers Park the beaches are open to everyone, where in Evanston access is controlled using fees.

The Rogers Park business community is served by the Rogers Park Business Alliance, which manages two City of Chicago Special Service Area taxing districts, one in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and one in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts. There are also three tif districts in Rogers Park, with two of those in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> districts and one in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts. Additionally, most businesses in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts are represented by suburban Chambers of Commerce, who don't have a presence in Rogers Park. If it sounds confusing, well, it is.

Rogers Park is served by a number of unique media, including [rogerspark.com](http://rogerspark.com). A recent survey found that Rogers Park had the 5<sup>th</sup> highest concentration of neighborhood-based blogs in the nation, which shows clearly that residents feel strongly about their community. There are two newspapers in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts, but they mostly confine their reporting to events in the suburbs.

Finally, there are the human services providers, several of which are partially State funded and serve the Rogers Park neighborhood. Little if any work is done by most of these

agencies in the suburban areas of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Districts. They are city neighborhood institutions and should be accountable to city neighborhood legislators. Some, like Howard Area Community Center actually have buildings in all four Rogers Park district areas, creating extra burdens to maintain relationships that divert resources from their primary missions.

In no way is this proposed change intended to imply dissatisfaction with the legislators who currently serve the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts. Indeed, Sen. Schoenberg and Rep. Gabel have consistently risen to the challenges this mapping has forced upon them. However, this remap could allow them to serve uniformly suburban districts, without the distraction of a five percent City of Chicago carve out.

On nearly every front, from business to culture to charity work to education, as well as our ability to speak as a united community, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> precincts of the 49<sup>th</sup> ward in Chicago are part of Rogers Park and should be part of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> State legislative districts. This redistricting process is a great opportunity to rectify the inefficient and unnecessarily complicated governance resulting from the current boundaries.

I thank you for considering this matter and I welcome any questions.

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