

Dear Mapping Commissioners,

I understand that you are considering whether or not to split Williamson County, based partially on your concerns about ensuring school district lines are respected.

I'd like to clear up a very common misunderstanding about Texas counties and construction. It is true that Texas counties do not have general zoning authority by the state legislature. That does not mean, however, that the only permits that are needed by to build, or make modifications to structures and properties, fall under the City of Austin.

First, there is the floodplain management. Floodplain management is dictated by the Federal Government and implemented by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Each county is responsible for inspecting construction and properties to ensure the plans adhere to the current floodplain management established for that county.

The second is the jurisdiction of roads. Because most of North and Far Northwest Austin was annexed fairly recently, roads in our area can be maintained by the city, by the county, or by the state.

I also understand that there are some differences in the wildfire management programs between Williamson County and Travis County, although I have to admit I am not well-versed enough to understand those differences, or how it affects properties and constructions.

This is exactly why the Department of Justice recognizes 'geographic areas of interests' - for the unique situation that Wilco neighborhoods face.

It is true that I don't live in Williamson County. I do, however, live in Gracywoods and my neighborhood butts up to section of North Lamar, which is under the jurisdiction of Texas Department of Transportation. So I do know firsthand the frustration of trying to get a City Council member to understand that my problems with a road cannot be solved simply by referring me to Austin's Transportation. And I have seen the same frustration from the neighborhoods in Far Northwest - and I know that frustration is compounded because their issues with City Council is not just jurisdiction of roads, its based on a lot of other legalities that most people don't even realize exist.

I hope this information helps and gives you some insight into what is a pretty complicated issue at this end of town. Once again, thank you again, for all your hard work and your dedication to this process!

Regards,

Mary Rudig

GWNA Coach