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Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission
City of Austin

Dear Commissioners:

The attached maps are presented to you tonight to illustrate three options for a City Council district to include all the neighborhoods of the South Central Coalition (ANC sector 7); from west to east: Barton Hills, Zilker, South Lamar, Bouldin Creek, Galindo, Dawson, and South River City Citizens.

I have included a first draft of a citywide map of all 10 districts, based on the City of Austin's Neighborhood Reporting Areas, and their associated demographic data. My first priority in drafting this map was to create the best possible districts for the Hispanic neighborhoods of northeast Austin (District 9) and southeast Austin (District 4). Besides having a uniformly high concentration of Hispanic population in the 2010 Census, these districts also have the highest concentration of low-income households (household income under 200% of the federal poverty level), low median income, low voter registration, and low voter turnout. They are therefore susceptible to dilution of their vote. Before the neighborhoods of the South Central Coalition can recommend boundaries for our own City Council district, we must be assured that our neighbors in Montopolis, Del Valle, and communities south of Ben White have a fair shot at electing representatives of their own choice.

The demographic data for the city's Neighborhood Reporting Areas does not include voting age population (VAP). Instead, I have attempted to gauge the relative voting strength of neighborhood areas using the voter registration and voter turnout data for the Proposition 3 election in November 2012. The votes cast in that city election indicate that voter turnout in heavily urbanized precincts west of Montopolis, especially west of Pleasant Valley, is likely to overwhelm voters in more suburban communities to the east and south. The East Riverside Corridor is changing rapidly, as is the South Lamar Corridor, and so I urge the Commission to gather the most recent demographic information available for the area between I35 and Montopolis, to double-check that the Hispanic population that we are all eager to protect does in fact still live in those precincts.

Once the communities of Montopolis, Del Valle, Franklin Park, and Bluff Springs are sufficiently protected, the next priority in South Austin should be to keep existing communities of interest, including the South Central Coalition, intact.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you very much for your service on this vital commission.

Sincerely yours,
Lorraine Atherton
(Voting precinct 332)