

October 2, 2013

RE: Preliminary Map of 9-28

Dear Commissioners,

The Preliminary Map approved on Sept 28 is frankly a disaster for the north Austin communities of Walnut Crossing, Milwood, and others living on the west side of the Mopac corridor. While the original “unofficial” preliminary map of a week before gave me hope that our needs were being considered, the new one seems to have surrendered to the vocal AGR camp.

Our neighborhoods are now grouped in District 6. If you look at where the commercial development is in the district, its along the 183 and 45-N corridors. The Mopac corridor, on the west side, is almost entirely residential. Second, look at where the wealthy suburbs are, and they are all in the northern half of the district that’s in Williamson County. What does that mean for the working class neighborhoods along Mopac? Who will listen to us? The center of gravity for this version of District 6 is the booming Lakeline Mall area and the 45-N/620 corridor. Our neighborhoods’ interests are Mopac-centric, not 45-N centric, but whoever represents District 6 will most likely have to focus on the big growth areas where there is major development and also a more wealthy pool of residents / campaign donors.

This does not mean that I think we should be part of what is CURRENTLY drawn as District 7. District 7 is a ridiculous joke if you think the folks that live next to Mayfield Park have anything at all in common with people in apartments in far north Lamar. There is no center to this district. No common schools, no common libraries, no common parks, wildly different property values, completely different levels of infrastructure and opportunity. It completely defies the concept of “Geographic Compactness”. It seems like this district is what was left over after you made the other ones, and it makes no sense at all.

However, if you were to cut off the bottom part of District 7, everything south of 2222 and then expand District 7 a mile or so west of Mopac to take in the eastern edges of 6 and 10, you would have a more sensible District 7 that would include the bulk of the 1970s/80’s development and take ownership of Mopac. I applaud how you have worked to bridge I-35, I do not understand this lack of interest in doing the same to north Mopac. The current map creates a walled off area half the length of Austin.

Thank you for your hard work, and for taking the time to consider my thoughts on the matter. Best of luck as you continue to carve.

Sincerely,

Javier Bonafont  
Walnut Crossing, Precinct 263