

Dear Members of the Redistricting Commission:

I am following up on previous correspondence to you fine folks regarding the North and Far North districts and my previous proposal for a "North Mopac District."

Building on the preliminary map the committee generated, and taking more care with population data, I am attaching here a revised proposal for your consideration. The central elements of this revision are as follows:

1. Create Geographic Compactness. The current proposed District 7 is a nightmare. There are no commonalities between Walnut Crossing and Tarrytown of any kind. Moreover, anyone with any knowledge of voting patterns can conclude that every council member elected to this seat will be from the urban core or Allandale. The north area just does not turn out in sufficient numbers to offset the entrenched central neighborhoods. This northern area is likely to receive even worse representation than it does now.

2. Linking similar areas with common interests. Moreover, the Gracywoods and other neighborhoods on the east side of mopac are all extremely similar to the Walnut Crossing and Milwood neighborhoods to the west, all built around the same time, similar sizes and costs. Modest homes for the most part. Both sides of mopac use Summit Elementary, and the Milwood Library. Both are heavily impacted by the new Burnett/Gateway plan, both share a hike and bike trail linking two parks. Both suffer from a dearth of cultural and civic spending or opportunity and struggle against Urban Sprawl symptoms. Tarrytown residents, by the same token, have much more in common with residents of Cat Mountain, Balcones and Old Enfield, who are impacted daily by urban core issues that don't ever touch folks above the 183.

3. Put Williamson County residents in a separate and single district. Ending District 6 at McNeil and creating a Far North/West District 10 that includes all the 620/45 N corridor creates a district that is large, relatively sparse, and rapidly developing. It has little in common with areas near mopac.

4. Essentially keep the Opportunity Districts of 1 and 4 as they were with one exception, which was to put IN to District 1 the precinct to the east of I-35 which you had assigned to District 7. If we treat Districts 1 and 4 as essentially immovable objects, then it makes sense to then keep building districts by moving West. What the commission did, as most districting experts suggest, is to move from the edges to the center, but if all the immobile pieces are on the east, then what you wind up with is a crushed and weird center, which is what happened. The Western edge of the city has no peculiar restrictions, so is more flexible in the way those lines can be drawn. It seems from the current map that the folks that are paying the price for creating the opportunity districts are District 7 residents, and by extension the east District 6. There is no valid reason for this when other options exist. My proposed New District 6 moves in that direction.

5. Owning the highways. The Texas highways are the bane of the city, creating impassable barriers and turning all shopping toward cars rather than people. It is essential that we do not

further entrench these things as walls and no-mans-lands between districts. New Proposed District 6 bridges Mopac and 183 to take ownership of those portions of the highway.

6. The Primary focus of this map is NEW DISTRICT 6. The lines for a new district 7 and new District 10 are drawn because it was necessary to provide an example of viable districts that can accommodate the new district 6. However, I have no vested interest in the exact lines for either of those two other districts. As mentioned earlier, the other two districts touching New 6, 1 and 4, are with only one exception, unchanged.

I am the first to admit that I am a novice in using the mapping software, and have had no end of problems getting it to do anything near what I want, so the map I am offering is at best an approximation. The software did not accommodate for districts that were only partly in the city limits, nor did it follow the lines that your maps did (particularly in the outlying areas of my District 10). I was unable to split districts to accommodate the needs of District 4 exactly, and several other problems. Nonetheless, the population numbers for these three districts are in the ballpark of 80,000 and better software, along with more skilled hands, can certainly adjust the edges of these districts to come closer to the necessary numbers.

While I do not currently speak for the neighborhoods in an official capacity, I was the founder and 10 year president of the Walnut Crossing Neighborhood Association (WXNA) and have had relationships with many of the surrounding neighborhoods, in particular the Milwood Association which we partner with regularly. Neither Milwood nor WXNA have as yet officially endorsed any maps, again owing to a decidedly apolitical bent. However, this proposed map of mine is circulating among members who may advocate for it as private citizens, as I am doing.

Thank you for your time and Herculean efforts in this cause. I hope that my thoughts are useful. I hope I can manage to attend another of your meetings in person, but if not I will continue to follow your work through the webcasts. Best of luck.

Sincerely,

Javier Bonafont  
Precinct 263, Walnut Crossing