

Greetings Mr. Tounget.

Please forward the attached statement and Central West Austin Neighborhood Map Proposal to Chairwoman Blanco and the other Commissioners. This submission follows the testimony I presented at the Oct. 23 meeting on behalf of the West Austin Neighborhood Group, including an Alternative Compact Map Proposal for reconfiguring Districts 6, 7 and 10.

The details of our position and requested changes are set forth in the attached letter. However, you will see from the attached statement, map, and supporting Excel data spreadsheet that we updated our Alternative Compact Map Proposal to reflect the Austin redistricting data that was used by the ICRC in preparing the Official Preliminary Map. As a consequence, we are fully confident that the mapping proposal meets the deviation allowances required by your charter. Indeed, the population totals for our revised Districts 6, 7, and 10 are closer to the target population than was achieved in the ICRC's Official Preliminary Map. To support this statement, we have included a spreadsheet showing the population totals by precinct for the revised district maps on our Alternative Compact Map Proposal.

I would also like to briefly address the other questions raised by the Commissioners during my presentation.

Commissioner Cocco noted that our proposed map divides some of the Williamson County precincts into different districts. While this is true, I doubt that Williamson County has any more right to have its precincts segregated than Travis County or Hays County do. And while election precinct boundaries are one of the mapping criteria for the ICRC, there is no reference to using county boundaries as a mapping criteria. Indeed, the charter states that "Districts shall not be drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against any ... political group."

Commissioner Cocco also noted that the ICRC has received testimony that the Spicewood and Mesa neighborhoods prefer to stay with the Jester and Great Hills areas. However, you have also received testimony from the Highland Park West/Balcones Area Neighborhood Association that they would prefer to be grouped with the Allandale, Rosedale, Tarrytown, Hancock, and other central west neighborhoods. In short, there are competing claims to the area between MoPac and 360, but we believe that our Alternative Compact Map Proposal allocates this area in a way that provides for more compact and reasonable districts.

Commissioner Solis asked about the length of Revised District 6 in our proposal. According to the maps, District 6 is 11 miles wide in the ICRC map, and 13 miles wide in the our Alternative Compact Map Proposal. This allows the other districts to become more compact. By a rough calculation, Revised District 7 is 77% more compact, with the length shrinking from 15 miles to 10.5 miles. In addition, Revised District 10 is 68% more compact, with the width shrinking from 12.5 miles to 8.5 miles. Finally, Revised District 6 is only 18% larger due to the increase in length from 11 to 13 miles.

Commissioner Costello also asked if the West Austin Neighborhood Group area would have any problems with being included with neighborhoods located further north or west, or being included in a "Lake Austin" district that extended to include the ICRC District 10, and if we shared a "community of interest" with the Westlake neighborhoods. While I provided my personal opinion on these questions, we have not yet collected input from the neighborhood to provide an official response, but hope to do so time permitting.

Yours very truly,

Michael Rocco Cannatti  
West Austin Neighborhood Group