

Testimony on Imbalanced *CDC* and Alternative Maps

Commissioners:

Would like to offer some important comments on 2 maps you have received, since their drafters have not revealed these points to you. Also, I will add a few points about your preliminary map and the AGR map.

First, since a new ad hoc lobbying organization has formed within the past 3 weeks espousing "compact" districts, I need to point out again **in summary** what the legal priority is for your districting:

§ 3. REDISTRICTING.

(E) The commission shall establish the boundaries of the council districts for the City of Austin in a plan using the following criteria as set forth in the **following order of priority**:

1. districts **shall** comply with the U.S. Constitution... [one person, one vote]
2. districts **shall** comply with the federal Voting Rights Act...
3. districts **shall** be geographically contiguous.
4. the geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest **shall** be respected in a manner that **minimizes their division to the extent possible...**
5. **to the extent practicable**, district boundaries shall be drawn to encourage geographical compactness...
6. **to the extent practicable**, district boundaries shall be drawn using the boundaries of existing election precincts.
7. **to the extent practicable**, district boundaries shall be drawn using geographically identifiable boundaries.

You will notice that "compactness" shows up on that list at #5 in priority and is not "shall" required, it is only "to the extent practicable." Further "compactness" **follows (1.) One person, one vote, with a TOTAL of 10% derivative allowed around 79,783, (2.) The Voting Rights Act, (3.) Contiguity, (4.) Maintaining neighborhoods or communities of interest "to the extent practicable,"** followed by:

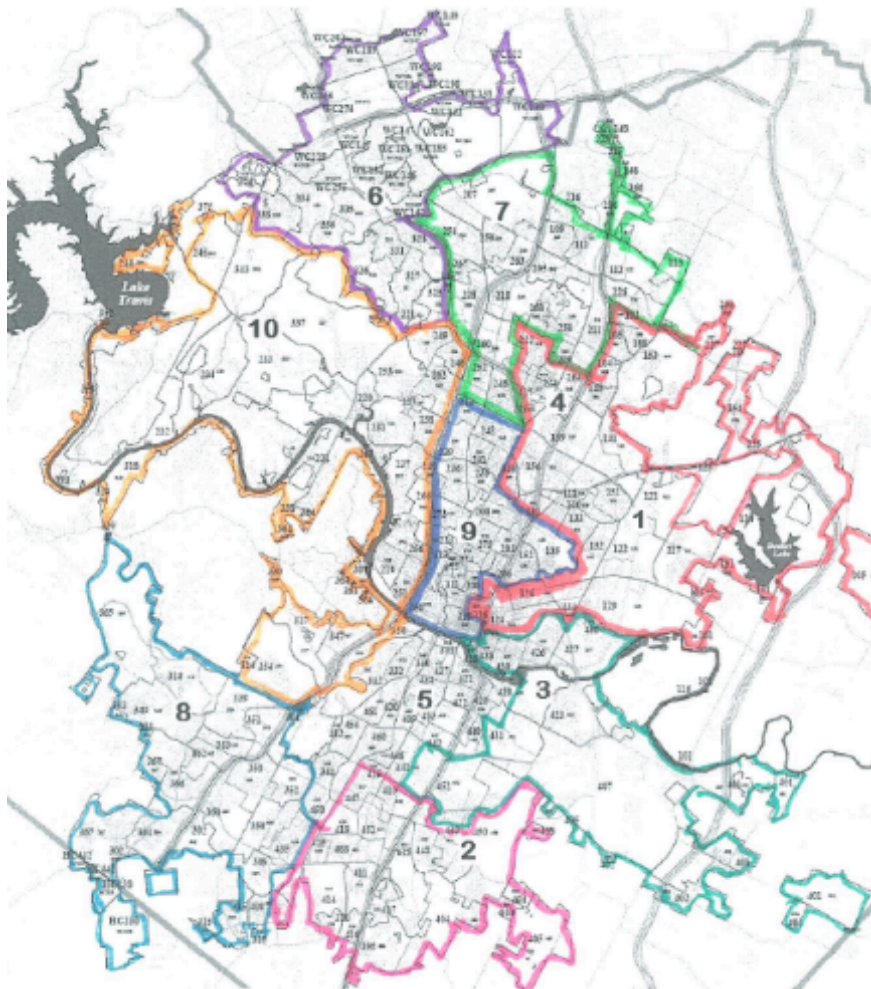
(5.) Compactness "to the extent practicable," meaning there may be limited cases in your map where compactness may not be followed, (6.) Using existing election precincts "to the extent practicable," meaning with reason you can split some precincts, and (7.) Using geographically identifiable boundaries "to the extent practicable," meaning streets, highways, creeks, rivers, etc., but where necessary non-visible boundaries such as political subdivisions can be used.

I review the above because in the law it is clear that your map should not be named after nor prioritized on "compactness." "Compactness" is not even

absolutely required throughout your map, only to the extent that you as a committee deem to be "practicable" given deference to the 4 other higher priorities.

A point that needs to be said, and I don't believe anybody has said it to you yet, you can draw a hundred different maps of districting of Austin, and you **will not** be able to draw a perfect map with 10 districts. If you could do it in 12 districts, you might be able to come close, but when 10-1 was petitioned and put on the ballot, it was not known if the voters would approve of it, and a number larger than 10 was thought to be possibly too large of a change for the voters from the current Council, so you are now mapping 10 districts instead of 12 or more, as it is what was put pen to paper and the voters were willing to pass. But, keep in mind, **you will not be able to draw a perfect map with only 10 districts in Austin**. It is important to recognize that and map 10 districts that meet your top 3 absolute requirements while trying to limit to a minimum the number of district(s) that may fall short on one of the later 4 "to the extent practicable" **goals** for the priority of your mapping.

Having said that, I want to comment on the following map, called the "*Compact Districts Coalition*" (CDC) Map:



In addition to being approved and shepherded by a consultant closely aligned with City Hall incumbents, **the CDC map DOES NOT meet the first three requirements in law for your mapping.** When the above CDC map is input into a fully functional GIS system with 2010 Census data with properly clipped Travis County precincts to the Austin City Limits, which the CDC proponents amazingly did not do, the following are the summary results for the CDC districts:

CDC District #	Deviation	% Deviation	Total Population	%Black Voting Age Population	%Hispanic Voting Age Population
1	-3002	-3.8%	76,821	30.4%	37.2%
2	-2757	-3.5%	77,066	7.6%	51.3%
3	-5877	-7.4%	73,946	11.7%	61.2%
4	-2855	-3.6%	76,968	11.1%	59.6%
5	1340	1.7%	81,163	4.7%	33.3%
6	-2027	-2.5%	77,796	4.7%	12.8%
7	-3380	-4.2%	76,443	9.2%	21.8%
8	7811	9.8%	87,634	3.6%	20.8%
9	9211	11.5%	89,034	3.5%	13.7%
10	1439	1.8%	81,262	2.0%	9.2%

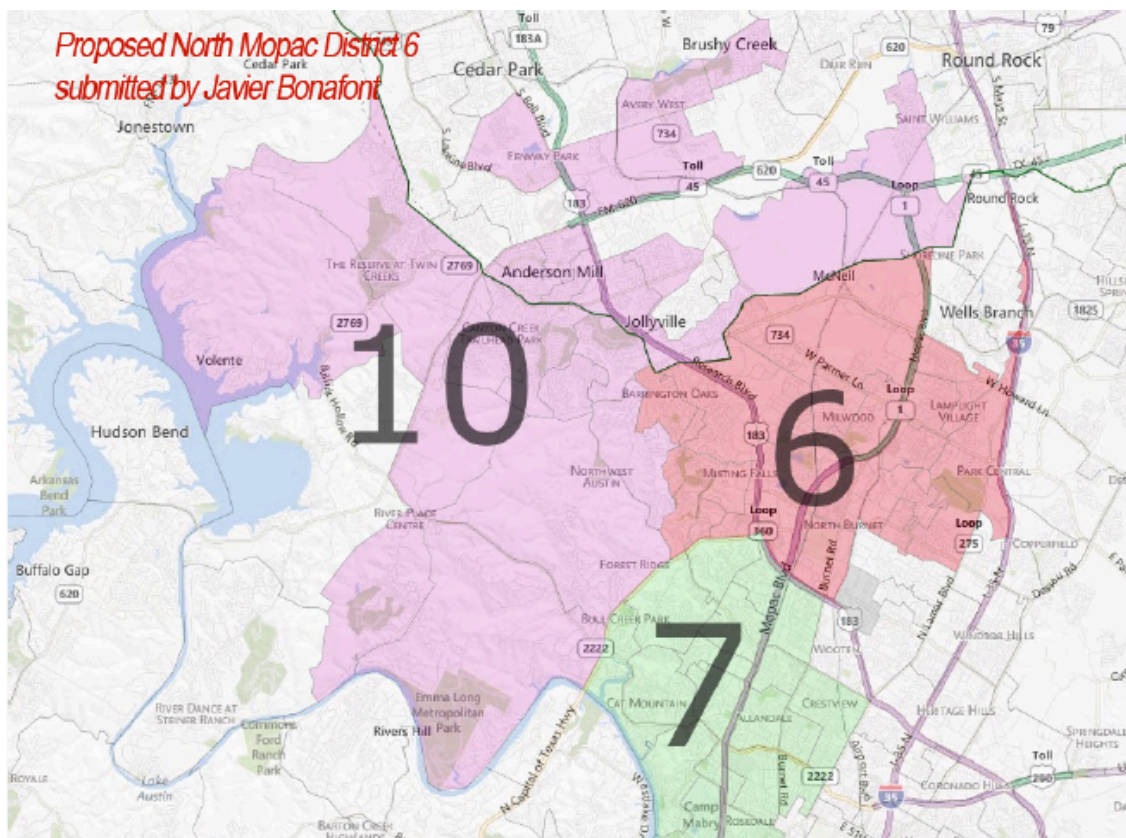
You will notice that Districts 8 & 9 on the CDC map are well over the allowable variance in total population. District 3 is well under the allowable variance in total population. Furthermore, District 2 is not functionally an Hispanic opportunity district, with Hispanic CVAP well below 50%. That is as compared to AGR's Hispanic opportunity districts 2 & 3 which both have Hispanic CVAP equal to or above 50%, thereby being the legal standard to be compared to. All 4 of these CDC districts 2, 3, 8, & 9 need to be redrawn by their presenters to meet "one person, one vote" and the VRA before they should be seriously considered. I will just note further that CDC Districts 2, 3, & 8 are south of the river and necessitate the redrawing of the whole southern portion of their map; additionally, CDC redrew your map north of the river to generate their District 9 which is 11.5% over population. To make their map balance, CDC will have to redraw at least 2 and possibly 4 of their districts north of the river to get it to balance as your ICRC map already does. If the Commission wants to do a check on this, you might have your mapping consultant map CDC's Districts 8 & 9 to see how much over in population they are in fact.

Now is a good time to say:

1. **Starting over or beginning with the CDC map, as some have testified, would be a dramatic regression, many steps backwards for the ICRC.**

2. **There are simple changes that can be done around the edges of the ICRC Dist. 7 & 9 to fix them without starting over.**
3. **Additionally, there needs to be a few precincts swapped between the ICRC's Dist. 2 & 3.** ICRC Dist. 2 is too strong in HVAP and Dist. 3 is not strong enough in HVAP, by the VRA. But that can be easily corrected by moving just a few precincts between Dist. 2 & 3.
4. There are other minor changes that could be done to improve the ICRC map, but starting over or dramatically remaking the ICRC map is not needed and would likely be counterproductive and quite possibly result in a less ideal map than the ICRC already has.

The other map that needs to be commented upon, because its presenter has left out important information, is the map presented by Javier Bonafont of North Austin.



Mr. Bonafont presents a map that is claimed to be only for District 6, but he leaves boxed-in too much population for the District 10 next to his Dist. 6 & 7. The population in his map in far western Austin near the river is boxed in by the discontinuity near the river and by Mr. Bonafont's already fully populated Dist. 6 & 7, so he is stuck with a Dist. 10 that would be overpopulated, if he showed that. What this means is that Mr. Bonafont would need to redesign his Dist. 6 & 7 to bring down the population of his boxed-in Dist. 10.

The Commission's District 6 & 10 are already balanced. Rather than take a number of large steps backwards with the above maps, the Commission should look to make a few recommended adjustments around the edges of the ICRC Districts 6, 7, & 10 to improve Dist. 7's logic and compactness without blowing up your entire map and undoing the greater and more accurate work you have done compared to the above illegal and conflicted maps.

Thank you again for your independent, competent, and objective volunteer work
Commissioners,

Brad Parsons,
Austin, TX.