

To: ICRC
From: Neighborhood Board, Highland Park West / Balcones Area Neighborhood Association (HPWBANA)
Subject: Official Statement of the HPWBANA in Response to the Preliminary Commission Map approved on September 28, 2013 by the ICRC
Date: October 29, 2013

Members of the Committee,

Please find below a formal statement from the board of the Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood Association (HPWBANA) intended to communicate the following:

- To formally submit our concerns regarding the preliminary commission map
- To respond to mis-information suggesting our board supported the NWAC recommendations for District 10
- To express our support for more compact districts, and in particular a new map revision being promoted by Mike Cannatti of WANG

Our priority in this process is to serve our residents to the best of our ability to ensure that they have a voice in city government in the new district-based representation, and to join our residents with other neighborhoods with similar concerns so that the strength of that voice is multiplied.

Concerns with the Preliminary Commission Map

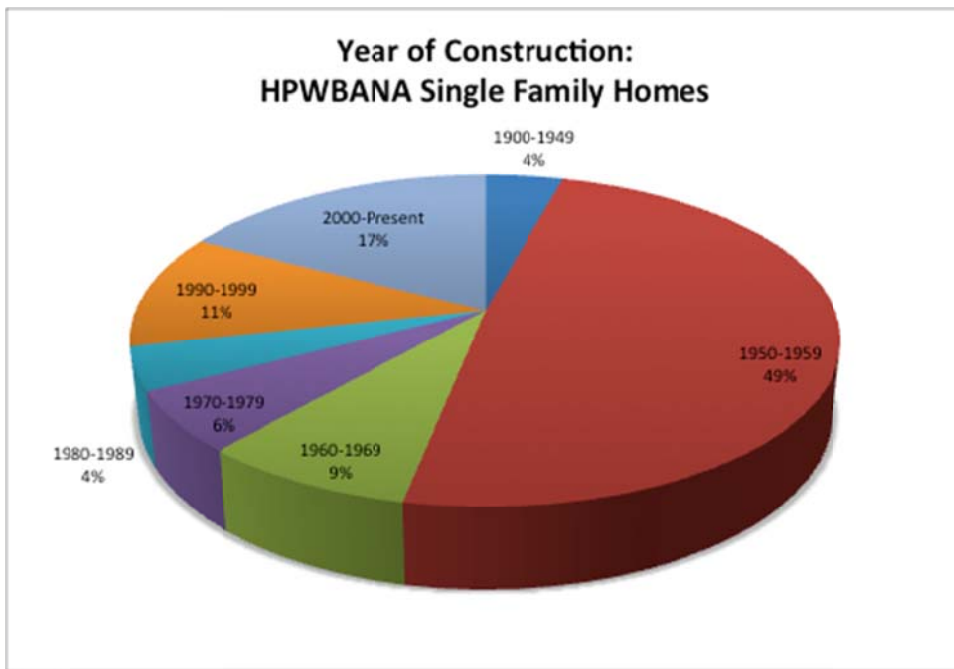
As you heard in testimony from both Dawn Lewis and Donna Edgar at your October 23rd public input session, the neighborhood issues that are most concerning to HPWBANA are issues known to be shared with other central Austin neighborhoods.

A recent survey of residents confirms this:

- Almost 90% of respondents indicated concerns about the future development of state-owned properties. HPWBANA borders state-owned land in Tarrytown's Austin State School property, the Bull Creek property (also bordered by Rosedale and Allandale), and every single neighborhood mentioned here has a vested interest in the future of Camp Mabry
- 85% of residents surveyed expressed concern about the MoPac Improvement Project, set to begin in the next few weeks and continue for 2-3 years.

These two issues alone seem sufficient to illustrate the affinity HPWBANA has with the immediately surrounding neighborhoods of Tarrytown, Rosedale and Allandale, but we can also simply look at the homes in HPWBANA and see how the issues we face are going to be very different from those of the far reaches of District 10.

The median "effective year of construction" for homes in HPWBANA is 1958. The vast majority of homes here are more than 40 years old (see Graph 1).



As a result of the age of our homes and their proximity to the university and downtown, our issues (much like our immediately surrounding neighbors) are:

- In-fill development
- Zoning issues
- Short-term rentals
- Stealth dorms

Therefore it is the position of the HPWBANA board that District 10 as drawn in the preliminary commission map does not put HPWBANA in a district of its peers with common interests and concerns, and ultimately does not serve this block of voters as effectively as is possible.

Mis-Information Regarding the Position of HPWBANA

It was with great dismay that we heard from the committee at the October 23 public input session that it had been represented to the committee that the HPWBANA board was aware of, and in support of, the NWAC proposed District 10.

We can confirm that Mr. Robert Thomas, on our invitation, was invited to speak to our board as part of our own information gathering process to better understand the districting process and where things stood. At that time he invited us to support his map (what we believe NWAC has campaigned for) and we told him then that:

1. The board would not adopt a position on any map until further research had been conducted and residents had been given the opportunity to provide feedback
2. We did not feel that the map he proposed grouped HPWBANA with neighborhoods that shared similar concerns with ours, and did not serve our residents to ensure a strong voice in city government

At no time during that meeting, or in any correspondence or conversation before or since that meeting, did anyone on the board (or for that matter any resident of the neighborhood that I am aware of) ever express support for a map that placed HPWBANA in a district which extended as far north and west as what is proposed. Any representation to the committee otherwise is simply not true.

Alternative Map with Compact Districts

It is the opinion of this board that more compact districts better serve neighborhood residents and ensure a more common set of issues among members of any particular district. For that reason the HPWBANA board is in favor of district boundaries like those suggested by a couple of proposals that the ICRC is now aware of, the Compact District Coalition (CDC) and the recent submission by Mike Cannatti of WANG.

After on-going dialogue and discussion with members of WANG, Allandale, Rosedale, and other central Austin neighborhoods, we believe that the most recent alternative map proposed by Mike Cannatti is a better solution for HPWBANA. We the board members of HPWBANA strongly endorse the most recent alternative map proposed by Michael Cannatti of WANG as one which gives HPWBANA the community of interest and shared concerns we seek, affinity with others in the district, and above all, affords our neighborhoods the best opportunity to be represented by a council member focused on our issues.

Conclusion

We thank the committee for considering our position and for hearing the feedback from our residents and board members. Should you require additional information or clarification of our position, please do not hesitate to contact our board.

Sincerely,

Highland Park West / Balcones Area Neighborhood Association

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Dawn Lewis
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Donna Edgar
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