

Commissioners:

When you began work on your Preliminary Map on Sat. Nov. 2nd, you had a map that by your own words should have been “90% done” and only needed a little “tweaking” to improve the compactness of Dist. 7 and equalize the strength between Dist. 2 & 3. Both of those could have been done with the minimum of changes which were presented to you in detail and mapped testimony by others.

Instead, when you began work on Sat. Nov. 2nd, one of the Commissioners began up North and totally remade the map along very similar lines of what he had first attempted to present at your very first session of mapping back on Sept. 21st <http://austintx.swagit.com/play/09212013-501>. The results of that map up North only slightly improve the compactness of Dist. 7, but create a much less geographically compact and politically highly ‘packed’ Dist. 6, some would say Dist. 10 has also turned into a less compact district.

Then on Mon. Nov. 4th, instead of relying on the simplest of changes to equalize Dist. 2 & 3 in SE Austin, the other half of the ‘Sept. 21st Predetermined Team’ proceeded to significantly change Dist. 2 & 3 in South Austin particularly unnecessarily taking up enough population from Dist. 5 that it thus necessitated it’s dramatic reshaping into the uncompact “snake” that many had been concerned about since the very first maps presented to the Commission from South Austinites.

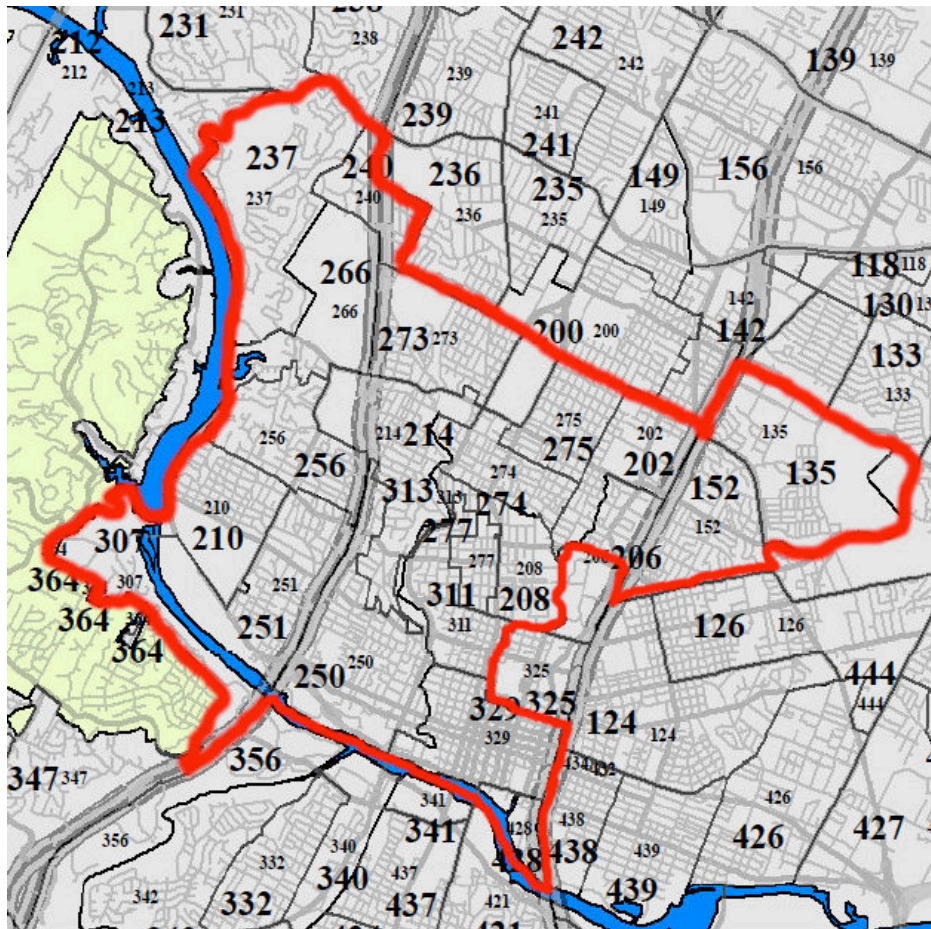
You began with 1 uncompact district and now have at least 3 north of the river and 1 new uncompact district south of the river. A number of the Commissioners took note of this toward the end of your meeting of Nov. 4th.

COMMISSIONERS, you still have plenty of time to do this task well. I beseech you all to reconsider all of the testimony that you received in the past couple of months, not just cherry-picked portions of it to suit a predetermined goal of one or two, and reconsider the unnecessary changes of your past two meetings. You have the resources to do that in just 1 or 2 more meetings with your mapper, starting Nov. 6th.

PARTICULARLY, you could keep Dist. 1 & 4 as they are. Dist. 2 & 3 can still be improved, keeping them equally strong, but reducing their footprint into the area that would be Dist. 5. As a note, your mapper ‘should’ be able to show you shading of minority population densities with his mapping system that should help you to **see** where your Dist. 2 & 3 lines could be efficiently drawn, instead of your guessing at it as transpired on Nov. 4th.

The idea of keeping Dist. 7 above 45th Street is a good one to improve the compactness of your Preliminary Map’s Dist. 7. Also, considering the testimony from

South Central Austin (78704), and Highland Park West, and OHAN, and CDC, I am recommending a new District 9 here that balances with a population of 81,137.



After that District 9, I recommend that you “pivot” Districts 10 and 6 back to something closer to what you had on your Preliminary Map, as in “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” You can still fill out a Dist. 7 above 45th Street. Dist. 6 can be used to fill out the map above Parmer Lane in the North Central area if necessary. To be filled out, Dist. 10 might need to be pushed closer to the County Line in the TC Precincts of the 33x area.

In South Austin, you would need to reshape a Dist. 5 and 8, with 8 starting in the SW area, and Dist. 5 starting on the river in the 78704 area. You can build those two very similarly to what you have done, respecting most of the testimony you have received for those areas. Keeping in mind, should you need them, there are areas SW and South of the river you can explore for additional population that thusfar the Commission has not recognized. Further, Dist. 8 can be sized as low as 76,000 without a problem in light of 2015 changes that the Commission WILL still be responsible for in 2015 (still using 2010 data) under the Charter.

COMMISSIONERS, for all the work that you have done, you are now at the point “where the rubber meets the road.” You still have time to do this well, even under the ambitious schedule you have set for yourselves. Let’s do this the best that can be done and balanced, Austin deserves no less. All it takes is at least 6 of you to expect and pursue no less.

Brad Parsons,
Austin, TX.