

[REDACTED]

From: Lissa Bentley [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 3, 2021 2:39 PM
To: HPD ICRC Commissioners
Subject: Opposition of proposed city council district map - changes in District 8 specifically

*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

Hello,

I write to express my disagreement with the proposed boundary for District 8 in the proposed city council district map. I do not believe that stretching the boundary of D8 to include the neighborhoods in a thin sliver north of the cities of Rollingwood and West Lake Hills is appropriate. This does not make sense given the charter to encourage geographic compactness in the redrawing of the districts.

The decision to move Precincts 212, 221, 307, 318, and 338 from District 10 to District 8 was not justified by any of the principal reasons for changing the boundaries of the council districts that are specified in the Austin City Charter. This proposal clearly violates the charter and many of the initiatives put in place. The communities in SW Austin are very different from those who live in these areas north of Rollingwood and West Lake Hills. I reside in far Southwest Austin and I urge you to reconsider moving precincts 212, 221, 307, 318 and 338 from D10 to D8.

Please also consider these more detailed points of why the redistricting of these precincts is inappropriate:

1. The first priority in the Austin City Charter is population equality among the districts. The change is not necessary to add population to District 8 to make the population among the districts more equitable. In fact, the population of District 8 went from 95,544 in the draft map to 101,397 after the addition of the five precincts. In the draft map, the population deviated by -0.67 percent from the ideal district population. In the preliminary map, the deviation from the ideal district population is 5.42 percent.
2. The justification given for the addition of the precincts was to conform to the geographical boundary provided by the Colorado River and Lady Bird Lake to separate District 8 from District 10. However, in the draft map, the boundary between District 8 and District 10 was provided by the obvious separation of the cities of Rollingwood and West Lake Hills from the City of Austin. Thus, adding the precincts to make the Colorado River and Lady Bird Lake the boundary is unnecessary and actually attaches an apparently disconnected crescent-shaped appendage to the northern boundary of District 8, making the northern portion of the district wrap around the cities of Rollingwood and West Lake Hills. Austin City Charter, V, A, 5 indicates: "To the extent possible, district boundaries shall be drawn to encourage geographical compactness such that nearby areas of population are not bypassed for more distant populations." With the addition of the five precincts, District 8 is less compact.
3. Another reason that was expressed for the change in the District 8 boundaries is the desire of residents of Lost Creek to add the precinct to District 8. The rationale involved a community of interest that Lost Creek shared with the area north of West Lake Hills and Rollingwood for shopping and other activities. In actuality, the location of Lost Creek makes shopping along Bee Caves Road and at Barton Creek Mall much more likely. Barton Creek Mall is already in District 8, and Bee Caves Road is a part of West Lake Hills and south of the Colorado River. Advertisements by realtors for properties in Lost Creek mention the neighborhood's proximity to Barton Creek Mall and the HEB on Bee Caves Road.
4. A final reason given for the changes was that Eanes Independent School District (EISD), which serves Lost Creek, would be united with the portion of Eanes ISD which is in District 10 in the draft map and the current district boundaries. According to the Austin City Charter, V, A, 4, "A community of interest is a contiguous population that shares common

social and economic interests that should be included in a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.”

There is no indication that adding the precincts would result in more effective and fairer representation before the Austin City Council than the precincts’ residents are currently receiving as members of District 10.

Thank you for reading this and I urge you to reconsider moving precincts 212, 221, 307, 318 and 338 from D10 to D8.

Thank you,
Melissa

Melissa “Lissa” Bentley
Homeowner in Precinct 367

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