

[REDACTED]

From: alexis webster [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 4, 2021 1:47 PM
To: HPD ICRC Commissioners
Subject: Save City Council District 8

*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the new district maps and proposed shifting of precincts from District 10 to District 8 in Austin, TX, which is unjustified by any of the principal reasons for changing the boundaries of the council districts that are specified in the Austin City Charter.

I am a resident of Austin, TX [REDACTED] and appreciate the opportunity to register my concerns and rationale against the proposed changes:

1. The first priority in the Austin City Charter is population equality among the districts. The change was 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 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 was 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 for the change in the District 8 boundaries was the desire of residents of Lost Creek to add the precincts 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. Actually, 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 was that Eanes Independent School District (ISD), 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.

Regards,

Alexis Webster

Alexis Webster

College Consultant



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