

CENTRAL WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CONTACT TEAM

October 29, 2013

Organized 2010

"To facilitate the implementation of the Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan."

Magdalena Blanco (Chairwoman)
Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC)
c/o Craig Tounget, Executive Director
811 Barton Springs Rd #425
Austin, Texas 78704
E-mail: icrc-craig.tounget@austintexas.gov

OFFICERS

Michael Cannatti
Chair

Re: Public Input and Map Proposal from Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan Contact Team

August Harris
Vice Chair

Dear Commissioners:

Joyce Basciano
Secretary

On behalf of the Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (CWANPCT), I am writing to request the ICRC to make, at a minimum, two *small* adjustments to District 7 in the Official Preliminary Map to respect our "geographic integrity" by combining our "neighborhood or local community of interest" into a single district.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Michael Curry
Craig Duewall
Roya Johnson
Jerry Lloyd
Mark Nixon
Blake Tollett
Betty Trent
Diane Umstead
Tina Weinberger
Vivian Wilson

The Central West Austin Neighborhood Planning Area encompasses the central west Austin neighborhoods between West 35th Street, Lady Bird Lake, and Lamar Boulevard (excepting the area east of MoPac and south of Windsor Road), including the West Austin Neighborhood Group, Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association, and Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association. Currently, the ICRC's Official Preliminary Map divides our neighborhood plan area across three separate districts – District 10 (on the northwest), District 7 (in the middle) and district 9 (on the southeast).

The first requested change would be to expand the boundary of District 7 to include West 35th Street and Mayfield Park (the portion of Precinct 266 below 35th Street). As seen in the attached map, this change would move Mayfield Park and Scenic Drive from District 10 to District 7. With this small change, this part of our neighborhood would no longer be divided between Districts 7 and 10, and the revised District 7 would respect the boundaries and "geographic integrity" of our "neighborhood or local community of interest," namely, our Central West Austin Neighborhood Planning Area. While this change would effectively divide Precinct 266 between Districts 7 and 10, we understand from Chairwoman Blanco that voter precinct boundaries can be disregarded in favor of census block boundaries in cases where neighborhood communities of interest are being protected. For purposes of identifying the census boundaries here, this change would require that Census Tract 16.04 (Census Blocks 1000, 2001, 2002, and 2008) be transferred to District 7, resulting in a population transfer of 450 people to District 7.

The second requested change would be to expand the boundary of District 7 to include Windsor Road just east of MoPac (the portion of Precinct 250 above Windsor). As seen in the attached map, this change would include the Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association in District 7. With this small change, this part of our neighborhood would no longer be divided between Districts 7 and 9, and the revised District 7 would respect the boundaries and “geographic integrity” of our “neighborhood or local community of interest” by including the Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association with the district for our Central West Austin Neighborhood Planning Area. While this change would effectively divide Precinct 250 between Districts 7 and 9, we believe that the voter precinct boundaries should defer to census block boundaries when protecting neighborhood communities of interest, such as neighborhood plan areas. For purposes of identifying the census boundaries here, this change would require that Census Tract 16.03 (Census Blocks 3006, 3009, 4004, 4007, 4009-11, and 4020) be transferred to District 7, resulting in a population transfer of 529 people to District 7.

While we respect the difficulties of drawing ten districts to meet the mapping criteria, we believe that two very small changes can be made to the boundaries of ICRC District 7 which will more fully comply with the mapping criteria, including respecting the “geographic integrity” of our “neighborhood or local community of interest,” encouraging geographical compactness, using geographically identifiable boundaries, and conforming to the census block boundaries for our neighborhood.

Thank you for your considering our request.

Sincerely,

Michael Rocco Cannatti

Chair, Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan Contact Team

PS -- If there is any significant re-drawing of the districts to divide north and south Austin such as proposed by the Compact District Coalition map, we would request an extension of the scheduled implementation be provided to allow additional public comment.