



Date: January 25, 2021

To: Austin City Council
Mayor Steve Adler
Council Member Alison Alter
Council Member Greg Casar
Council Member Paige Ellis
Council Member Vanessa Fuentes
Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison
Council Member Mackenzie Kelly
Council Member Ann Kitchen
Council Member Leslie Pool
Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria
Council Member Kathie Tovo

From: Travis County Commissioner Jeffrey Travillion
Travis County Commissioner Brigid Shea

RE: Agenda Item #25
Request to Approve Allowing Austin ETJ Voters to Participate in Emergency Services District No. 17 Election

As Travis County Commissioners representing the two county precincts that include northeast Austin's extra-territorial jurisdiction, including Northtown and Wells Branch, we respectfully request that the Austin City Council allow the voters to decide if they would like to be included in the proposed Emergency Services District No. 17 for emergency medical services. In 2020, more than 4,700 registered voters signed a petition in support of an election for the proposed "medical overlay" of the current ESD No. 2 (which provides fire service). We strongly encourage you to allow those Austin residents to select the appropriate set of services for their area.

Emergency Services District No. 2, a voter-created taxing entity, was established to fund and operate fire and rescue response within its boundaries. With the help of a sales-tax supplement to its annual budget, ESD 2 has initiated and expanded a fire-based emergency medical service that currently staffs and operates five ambulances, delivering advanced life support and ground transport, with excellent response times, to the approximately 140,000 residents in their district, including your constituents. The ESD has determined that having its emergency medical transport service coupled with its fire budget is financially unsustainable in the long term, and therefore proposes an election to create an ESD overlay medical district to fund it. More than 4,700 registered voters in this district supported that proposal by signing a petition to hold an election.

There have been three ESD medical overlay elections held in Travis County in the past decade, all of them successful, and all of which were initiated with certified petitions. In approving and funding these elections, the Travis County Commissioners Court has clearly indicated that, by meeting the statutory requirements to hold an election, the voters should be given a chance to decide.

The provision of emergency scene response, advanced life support, and ground ambulance service is necessary for all residents of Travis County, including ESD 2. The funding mechanism for this continued service in your jurisdiction, the proposed new ESD 17, is a decision that should rest with all ESD 2 voters, including those in Austin's ETJ. We, the Travis County Commissioners for Precincts 1 and 2, urge you to allow your residents the opportunity to vote in the election they have duly requested.