

Dugan, Matthew

From: Dugan, Matthew
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2021 8:17 AM
Subject: FW: Redistricting Timeline

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2021 1:52 PM
To: Christine Granados <christinegranadosicrc@gmail.com>; HPD ICRC Commissioners <ICRC.Commissioners@austintexas.gov>
Cc: Falcon, Camellia - BC <BC-Camellia.Falcon@austintexas.gov>
Subject: Redistricting Timeline

*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

Hello Commissioners,

I was at the Saturday meeting for public input, and want to thank you for your efforts.

But the primary reason I'm reaching out is the deadline in the City Charter (Nov 1) and what that implies given our lack of census data due to Covid delays.

At the meeting, I had some discussions with a few of you about the dismal turnout and lack of public engagement, and I think it's clear that people will not pay much attention until preliminary maps are issued, and then people will mobilize and have opinions, but this will take time, and I'm worried about how legitimate the process will feel to people if there is so little time between the preliminary map and the final approved map. If I recall correctly, the first time we did this, the process from first map to final map took nearly 3 months, and there were easily a half dozen proposed alternate maps in between from various groups which slowly shaped the process. While you do not need to start from scratch this time, I would not underestimate the pushback of neighborhoods being reshuffled.

The committee's own timeline shows that it does not anticipate having appropriate census data and online tools until the end of SEPTEMBER .

This pretty much means that the entire process of crunching the data, creating preliminary maps, distributing them, collecting feedback and forums, revising the maps, having another round of public comment, and then revising them again to a final proposal, and voting on it has to happen in the nearly unfathomable timeframe of about five weeks by an all-volunteer staff. As someone who was involved in the first round of creating maps, the technical aspects alone of this endeavor make this seem like a disaster waiting to happen, and the accusations of a "rushed approval process" are just almost inevitable.

Given this possibility, I looked at the actual charter text, which includes this:

If the commission does not adopt a final plan by the dates in this section, the city attorney for the City of Austin shall immediately petition state court for an order prescribing the boundary lines of the single-member districts in accordance with the redistricting criteria and requirements set forth in this section. The plan prescribed by the court shall be used for all subsequent city council elections **until a final plan is adopted by the commission to replace it.**

So, the last line to me reads like it gives us some latitude. It does not preclude the panel from being a month late and still use their map for the next election. Does it? Sure, it requires the City Attorney to “immediately” petition for a court solution, but that doesn't mean we will ever be bound by it if the commission finishes its work in a reasonably timely manner.

By this I mean to suggest that a conversation begin to discuss what the options are for a more reasonable timeline to create the districts. Such a conversation might necessarily include soliciting legal opinions from the City Attorney and advising Council. It would seem prudent to create this Plan B with enough lead time so that it can maybe become Plan A, and have a less stressful, less time compressed process. We have to live with these districts for a decade, so taking a few extra weeks seems like a worthy investment.

Thanks for listening. I apologize if I am stating the obvious.

Javier Bonafont
Writer - Director - Prod Designer

CineFont

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On Jul 27, 2021, at 9:01 AM, Christine Granados <christinegranadosicrc@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Mr. Bonafont,
Camellia forwarded me your email and we appreciate your willingness to help get the word out about the commissioner's redistricting efforts. Below is a press release about today's forum and some really cool graphics that Camellia whipped up.

If you go to this website below, you will find an agenda for each public forum, a powerpoint and worksheet documents that are being used in these public forums (These may not be uploaded until noon though.)

https://www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards_commissions/meetings/116_1.htm

PRESS RELEASE
July 26, 2021
For Immediate Release
Sara Inés Calderón
bc-sara.calderon@austintexas.gov

Camellia Falcon
bc-camellia.falcon@austintexas.gov

Commissioners want citizens to make their voices heard at public input hearings

AUSTIN, TX (July 27, 2021) – As the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) waits for the 2020 Census data to redraw the boundaries for the 10 city council districts their aim this week is to focus on districts 8 and 4 by listening to public testimony from Austinites.

The volunteer board of 14 commissioners invite members of the public to an in-person public meeting about Austin's District 8. At this forum, they will hear from the ICRC and the work being done on the new City Council district maps. The public will have an opportunity to provide public comment and feedback on the city's current district map. The forum will take place at 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, July 27 at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739.

They want to learn about the unique characteristics of communities of interest from those most familiar with their neighborhoods to help them determine the areas that should remain intact and/or be grouped together.

The goal is to have a new district map approved in November.

On Saturday, July 31 from 2-4 p.m. commissioners will host another public comment forum focusing on District 4 at the Gus Garcia Recreation Center, 1201 E. Rundberg Lane, Austin, TX 78753.

These volunteers are committed to drawing up a fair, impartial and inclusive city district map not just because they are civic minded but they are members of the districts themselves. For instance Commissioner Joshua Blank from District 8 will be on hand to listen to his neighbors talk about their boundary concerns. Blank brings extensive polling expertise to the commission.

Commissioner Sterling Lands from District 4, a senior pastor of Greater Calvary Bible Church, is a civil rights and community activist, youth advocate, and author. He participated in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and has been fighting for minority representation in Austin since the 1980s.

Along with census data, publicly submitted comments will be used to assist the commission when it begins drawing district boundaries between March 2021 through November 2021. The focus of public testimony is to receive information about the unique characteristics of communities of interest from those most familiar with their neighborhoods to help the commission determine areas that should remain intact and/or be grouped together in districts.

Public input forums will be recorded and videos of the meetings will be available after the meetings here: <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/watch-atxn-live>. Past meetings and agendas can be viewed on the commission's website at www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards_commissions/meetings/116_1.htm

Interpretation or translation services will be available free of charge by advance request in Spanish, Chinese or Vietnamese. Call 311 or email matthew.dugan@austintexas.gov to request these services 48 hours in advance of a forum.

To find City Council Districts in Austin visit this link and type in an address:
<https://www.austintexas.gov/GIS/CouncilDistrictMap/>

A list of upcoming ICRC public forums:

- Tuesday, July 27, 2021, 6-8 p.m., District 8 at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739.
- Saturday, July 31, 2021, 2-4 p.m., District 4 at Gus Garcia Recreation Center, 1201 E. Rundberg Lane, Austin, TX 78753.
- Tuesday, August 3, 2021, 6-8 p.m., District 6 location pending.
- Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021, 1-3 p.m., District 3 location pending.
- Tuesday, Aug. 10, 2021, 6-8 p.m., District 2 location at Mendez Middle School, 5106 Village Square Dr., Austin, TX 78744.
- Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021, 1-3 p.m., District 1 at George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, 1165 Angelina St., Austin, TX 78702.
- Tuesday, Aug. 17, 2021, 6-8 p.m., District 5 location pending.
- August TBA Virtual Public Forum

ICRC Information

Commissioners are: Joshua Blank (District 8), Sara Inés Calderón (D2), Erin Dempsey (D10), Camellia Falcon (D7), Luis Gonzalez (D10, Vice-Chair), Errol Hardin (D1), Shaina Kambo (D9), Prabhu Kannan (D5), Dr. Sterling Lands (D4), Hoang Le (D8), Brigham Morris (D3), Christina Puentes (D7, Chair), Eugene Schneider (D6) and Selina Yee (D1).

The ICRC board will hold its weekly commission meeting via videoconferencing 6 p.m., Wednesday, July 28, 2021.

To join the meeting visit:

<https://zoom.us/j/98278207374?pwd=eEhDSFpzNjVlZWFXNGcyYWpOKzZvZz09>

Login with these credentials: Meeting ID: 982 7820 7374 Passcode: iqY34Q

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Christine Granados
Administrative Manager
Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC)

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