

STATEMENT FROM THE FERGUSON ROAD INITIATIVE
REGARDING 2022 REDISTRICTING COMMISSION DECISION
TO DIVIDE THE FAR EAST DALLAS COMMUNITY INTO THREE DISTRICTS

April 2021 - FRI convened a Far East Dallas Redistricting Task Force to navigate the process of redrawing district lines every ten years based on population changes. The charter of this Task Force was to make all best efforts to keep our Far East Dallas community within two city council districts. Dividing our community into three districts would make FRI's political advocacy more difficult and unnecessarily complex. We knew early on that population shifts, not to mention the tremendous population growth of Dallas, Far East Dallas, and Texas overall, could potentially change our city council districts. The charter of this task force stated that our Far East Dallas community (comprised of four zones: Forest Hills/Casa Linda, Casa View, White Rock East, and White Rock Hills) should remain in two city council districts.

April - December 2021 – FRI's Redistricting Task Force routinely met to discuss the evolution of the redistricting process and to prepare for the multiple community forums held by the Redistricting Commission.

January 27, 2022 – **The Redistricting Commission heard from four FRI speakers for over 10 minutes about the many reasons why FRI should remain in two council districts.** Vikki Martin, FRI Executive Director, Maria Valenzuela, FRI's 15+ year office manager, and board members Jared Greco and Austin Endo explained how Far East Dallas fits the Redistricting Commission's own requirements as a "community of interest." Our community has improved its quality of life with in a very large part because the area is split between two, not three, city council districts. Specifically, we have helped:

- Reduced overall crime by 25% and violent crime by 61% in targeted areas and crime continues to remain in-check since 2011
- Unified neighborhoods, from five (5) in 1998, to thirty-seven (37) today
- Increased social services by identifying needs and then finding agencies to address community gaps in service, like helping to establish the Owenwood Farm & Neighbor Space
- Netted more than \$40MM in capital bond program funds to build public amenities like the White Rock Hills Library in 2012, sidewalks, flood mitigation, and intersection improvements (scheduled for 2023)
- Facilitated \$300MM in quality economic development in the form of affordable, middle- and high-income housing and retail (like the new David Weekley Grove at White Rock Hills and Ferguson Townhomes by Karrington & Co.)

This is not to mention that the Trinity Forest Spine Trail will very soon connect Ferguson Road and Far East Dallas to the entire City. Children play and dogs walk with their owners around the track at the new White Rock Hills Park. We have plans to bring a senior activity center and recreation center to our community, thus addressing the recreation and medical deserts that exist in our area. Our friends in Casa View successfully championed the recent renovations of the historic Casa View Shopping Center and Family Aquatics Center at Harry Stone Recreation Center.

Late April 2022 - The Redistricting Commission selected two undesirable maps for potential presentation to the City Council (Redistricting Maps 17 & 41). The Task Force was shocked when these maps were posted and began meeting almost daily. FRI's Board Meeting, originally scheduled a few days after Maps 17 & 41 were announced, was rescheduled for several board members to speak to the Redistricting Commission at their following meeting. Note: The Task Force felt that Map 40 was a

perfect fit for our community because it maintained FRI in Districts 7 and 9. Map 40 was a finalist considered by the Redistricting Commission but for reasons not known to FRI it was discarded.

April 28 - The Redistricting Commission heard from four FRI speakers about why Redistricting Maps 17 & 41 were undesirable because each would slice Far East Dallas right down the middle at Ferguson Road by placing another city council district, District 2 - easily recognizable in both maps as a “bacon strip” stretching from Love Field through Downtown along I-30 and up Ferguson Road and dividing the Greater Casa View community in-half.

April 30 - FRI received the following communication from the Redistricting Commission regarding the reason for inserting District 2 into Far East Dallas and breaking apart our community:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 30, 2022 2:46:28 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ferguson Road Initiative and Redistricting

[REDACTED]
Thank you for your information about the Ferguson Road Initiative. Using the FRI map, I outlined the sections of the FRI and placed them roughly onto the proposed Map #41 (with amendments). Please see attached.

I certainly appreciate and understand the desire to minimize the districts involved with the FRI. Getting new partners up to speed does take effort.

Due to the growing, heavy Latino community along Ferguson Road and far East Dallas, we do need to stretch D2 northward along the corridor so that this community can be represented at City Council by a Hispanic district D2. I have tried to match the FRI sections with the Council District lines where possible, to assist the FRI leadership in organizing their efforts. With the rapid and continual growth of the Hispanic population, D2 leaders may prove very beneficial partners for outreach for FRI efforts.

I also did try about 4 other configuration for this area. Balancing population numbers and minority concentrations can be rather difficulty for many areas of Dallas. The arrangement shown on the attached partial map provides the strongest minority representation for Latinos and African Americans. Different configurations reduced their overall strength in D2 and D7.

Please let me know if you have further comments. We are doing our best to balance everyone's needs.

Have a great Saturday,
[REDACTED]

Note: The communication was from Mapmakers and not Redistricting Commissioners, therefore names have been redacted to protect individual privacy.

May 1 - With it now confirmed in writing by those directly involved with the Redistricting Commission that District 2 was here to stay, FRI's Redistricting Task Force determined that the most realistic edit was to simply request that it maintain the White Rock Hills zone of Far East Dallas intact by expanding District 2 eastward from Ferguson Road to include the area south of Lakeland Drive, Hunnicut, St. Francis, to Highland Road. The rationale is remarkably simple: Keep our community of interest unified in one district - albeit a district we may not have much in common in - at least we're together. FRI clearly explained this to the Redistricting Commission so that they understood the boundaries of White Rock Hills.

May 7—To ensure that White Rock Hills remained a “community of interest”, a representative from the FRI Task Force and a resident of the Claremont Neighborhood spoke at the public hearing to the Redistricting Commission to ensure they understood the boundaries of White Rock Hills.

May 9—The Redistricting Commission announced their selection of map 41-B, thus officially dividing Far East Dallas into three City Council Districts: District 9, 2, & 7.

To review the selected Map 41-B go to: <https://dallasredistricting.com/>

May 11 - Redistricting Commissioner Norma Minnis (D14) recklessly misspoke, albeit with no discernable malintent, by informing several irate FRI residents that the decision to divide Far East

Dallas into three city council districts was at FRI's request. This misrepresentation of the facts was most likely in regards to the recent requests of FRI that we extend the lines of District 2 to include all of White Rock Hills that were made on May 1 and May 7 by FRI for the aforementioned reasons.

May 13 - Vikki J. Martin, FRI Executive Director, sent the following correspondence to Commissioner Norma Minnis

From: Vikki Martin
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2022 8:18 AM
To: Norma Minnis <normaminnis@aol.com>; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Clarification of FRI's Position on Redistricting Maps

Ms. Minnis,

Thank you for this email. But I want to make it clear to you and the Redistricting Committee that any future responses to Far East Dallas community members needs to clearly state that it was the Redistricting Committee's decision NOT FRI to split us down the middle by inserting D2 through our community. We spoke both in January and April asking that this not happen to our community. This is not clearly being made to our community members and I have received dozens of calls, emails and have now been vilified on NextDoor. I have no problem with you stating that once we learned of the Redistricting Committee's decision to divide the FRI target area into three districts, that it was then that we requested that D2 be expanded eastward from Ferguson Road into the White Rock Hills community in order to maintain our community of interest.

This is what I ask you share in any future responses to the friends and neighbors of FRI:

It was the Redistricting Committee's decision to split the Ferguson Road Initiative target area into three districts. The Redistricting Commission did this in order to include the high growth of Hispanic residents in the Casa Linda/Casa View area into a Hispanic district so that they also can be more able to elect a City Councilmember of their choice – which is the purpose of this redistricting.

Although FRI advocated against dividing the community into three districts, once Ms. Vikki Martin learned of the Redistricting Commission's decision, it was her intent to try and keep the White Rock Hills area of Far East Dallas in tact and remain a community of interest.

We understand the concerns of Far East Dallas community members, but FRI will now have another partner in FRI's effort to improve their community. The D2 city councilman, Jesse Moreno, has strong experience, talent, and enthusiasm for working with other districts, community leaders, and a diversity of residents for exceptional projects.

Thank you for your willingness to amend any future comments to my community regarding the Redistricting Commission's decision to split us into three districts.

Thank you.

Vikki

As you can clearly see, the Redistricting Commission ignored FRI's ongoing advocacy to maintain our area in two districts. This is the same Redistricting Commission that lectured those in attendance at each of the above meetings about the "rules of the road" for redistricting, which interestingly enough included a requirement for "compact, contiguous districts." For the avoidance of doubt, Miriam-Webster's dictionary defines these terms as follows:

- *com·pact: adjective - kəm'pakt, 'käm ,pakt - closely and neatly packed together; dense*
- *con·tig·u·ous: adjective - kən'tigyooəs - sharing a common border; touching.*
- *dis·trict: noun - distrikt - an area of a country or city, especially one regarded as a distinct unit because of a particular characteristic.*

We encourage neighborhoods that are as horrified as we are about what is happening to our community to continue to complain - in writing - to the Redistricting Commission and their Councilmembers. All neighborhood leaders and community residents should place their comments *in writing* and email them to Redistricting@dallascityhall.com . It is important your concerns be documented in case of potential litigation.

Lastly, for over 20 years FRI has held dear the trust that this community places in us. At all meetings listed above FRI were the **only** speakers advocating for any part of Dallas east of Garland Road. We hope this statement helps our friends and neighbors understand this highly complex and politicized situation.

Thank you,

Ferguson Road Initiative