



To: Colorado Independent Redistricting Commissions
From: City Council of the City of Commerce City, Colorado
Subject: Preliminary Maps
Date: August 17, 2021

Dear Members of the Colorado Independent Congressional Redistricting Commission,

The City Council of the City of Commerce City is writing to you today to request the Commission's consideration to keep Commerce City whole as part of the redistricting process. The preliminary map published by the Commission on June 23, 2021 shows Commerce City divided between Districts 4 and 8. We believe dividing our city into two separate Congressional districts would negatively impact our city long-term.

We have been working for several years to address the issue of having a divided city geographically and socio-economically. Commerce City is somewhat unique in the Denver metropolitan area in that we have a large growth boundary to our north and north-east. This growth area is within the proposed District 4. This has seen a significant boom in development and population growth over the last several years. This growth will continue to happen over the next several years which will contribute to more and more residents of Commerce City residing within District 4 on the preliminary map over time.

Conversely, Commerce City also has our older "core" city in the south and south-west that is within the proposed District 8. This core city is in close proximity to I-70, I-270, and I-76, the Suncor Refinery, Metro Wastewater Reclamation plant, and other various heavy industrial sites. The core city has significantly less population growth potential compared to our northern areas which will mean the proposed District 8 will have far fewer residents than the proposed District 4 during the next 10 years until the next census takes place.

Commerce City also contains railroad lines along Highway 2 and has the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge in the middle of the city. While these might seem like natural geographic dividers for the proposed districts, we fear these may in practice harm the communities of interest we have been trying to build in Commerce City for over 20 years and could diminish the influence and representative of minority and undocumented populations that primarily reside within the "core" city in the proposed District 8.

The proposed split in Commerce City also amplifies the divide in race and income makeup of the northern and southern parts of the city that we have been working to address. The portion of Commerce City within the proposed District 8 has a majority of Hispanic-Latino residents, containing roughly 67% of the population. The portion of Commerce City proposed to be within District 4, on the other hand, contains roughly 28% Hispanic-Latino residents.

Additionally, the portion of Commerce City within the proposed District 8 has roughly 24% of the population with income below the poverty level. Conversely, the portion of Commerce City within the proposed District 4 has roughly 4% of the population with income below the poverty line. The area within District 8 has median household incomes somewhere between \$40-50,000 whereas the area within District 4 has median household incomes somewhere between \$90-105,000. All of these figures are rough estimates using the information provided on the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's Race/Ethnicity and Income/Poverty maps which use the 2013-2017 American Community Survey information.

Lastly, it appears we are one of the few larger cities in Colorado that reside wholly within a county but is split between Congressional districts on this preliminary map.

We hope you take this information under advisement and keep Commerce City whole as you continue to craft the Congressional district boundaries going forward.

Kind regards,

Benjamin A. Huseman, Mayor, on behalf of the City Council

