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December 1, 2021

Minnesota House of Representatives
Redistricting Committee
C/O Nancy Conley

Dear Redistricting Committee:

I, Mayor Brad Wiersum, am writing on behalf of the full Minnetonka City Council to share our concerns about the proposed redistricting lines for Minnetonka. We understand you have the challenge to satisfy competing expectations, and we appreciate the difficult work you're performing to address those concerns.

The House Redistricting Committee approved Redistricting Principles that recognize that "preservation of communities" is important and that the districts "must minimize the division of identifiable communities of interest." We soundly agree with this principle; however, based on the proposed district boundaries, we believe these legislative boundaries do not align with these values and result in potentially disadvantageous impacts on those we serve.

We respectfully request the following be considered:

- Currently, Minnetonka residents are represented by three Senate Districts (SD 44, SD 49, and SD 48) and three House Districts (44B, 48A, and 49B). Two of the House Districts (44B and 48A) preserve large, meaningful amounts of Minnetonka geographically and by population. In only one current House District (49B) is a small portion of Minnetonka geography, and residents severed and attached to a House District that predominantly preserves the interests of a neighboring community (Bloomington).
- The proposed redistricting adds a new fourth House District that significantly deviates from the current Minnesota House District map. This approach does not value Minnetonka's residents as a distinct community of interest. In all four proposed House Districts, Minnetonka residents are paired with a significant population of a separate and distinct community of interest (31B with all of Wayzata, 47B with all of Hopkins, 47A with a large area and population of Eden Prairie, and 24B with all of Excelsior and many Lake Minnetonka communities).
- It will be difficult for a Minnetonka resident to be elected to a state office in the future because the preponderance of the electorate for each district will be outside our community.
- Without a single legislative member with a majority stake in our city, there will be no decisive champion for our city priorities at the Capitol, making it more difficult to promote our needs.
- Minnetonka is a perennial contributor to State resources – disbursing far more than we receive regarding local government aid (LGA), fiscal disparities, etc. We request little assistance, so we feel it is imperative to have at least one legislator fully representing our interests when we ask for something of need.

- We feel strongly supported by our current legislators and appreciate their unwavering dedication; however, more legislators representing our community is not always practical. Given today's political polarization and key legislative issues, it will be challenging to convince all seven legislators to support a specific position.
- From a fairness perspective, the only other cities in the proposed map to be fragmented as much as the City of Minnetonka are the first-class cities of Minneapolis and St Paul. However, they remain distinguished by retaining full senate and house districts within their borders.
- Minnetonka is not asking for special treatment but rather to be treated the same as other cities in the metro area. For example, our neighbor to the North, the City of Plymouth, and the City of Eden Prairie to the South are proposed to have two senate and three house districts.

Thank you for incorporating our comments into the record.

Sincerely,


Brad Wiersum
Mayor

Deb Calvert
Minnetonka City Councilmember at Large, Seat A

Susan Carter
Minnetonka City Councilmember at Large, Seat B

Brian Kirk
Minnetonka City Councilmember, Ward 1

Rebecca Schack
Minnetonka City Councilmember, Ward 2

Bradley Schaeppi
Minnetonka City Councilmember, Ward 3

Kissy Coakley
Minnetonka City Councilmember, Ward 4

Cc: Alex Hassel, League of Minnesota Cities
Representative Laurie Pryor
Senator Steve Cwodzinski
Representative Patty Acomb
Senator Ann Johnson Stewart
Representative Steve Elkins
Senator Melisa Franzen

Attachments: proposed map

