

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you and to consider our community's request. My name is Teri Nguyen and I've lived and worked in the Little Saigon area since 1982 including my business in Westminster since it was founded in 1987. My father was the founder of Little Saigon radio, the first Vietnamese language radio station in 1993.

I remember going to events with my dad to learn and celebrate our culture, heritage and traditions which are the same ones I've passed on to my children. My children have attended Thomas Paine Elementary in Garden Grove, Sarah McGarvin Intermediate School in Westminster, La Quinta High School in Westminster within Garden Grove Unified School District, and Fountain Valley High School within the Huntington Beach High School District. The Huntington Beach High School District has more than 30,000 Vietnamese-American families living inside of it. Making it one of the largest populations of Vietnamese by school district in the entire country. My children have not only grown up in this area, but some have stayed here. My extended family and friends are all within the area as well.

The proposed map visualizations that came out on October 4th for Orange County were very alarming against our community. We are now very fearful of the harm that you'll cause to the growth and expansion of our community for the next ten years. Although we can respect that these maps were maybe drawn from people who don't live here nor are they knowledgeable about how our community has grown in the last 40 years, we have to disagree because these maps have the potential to be harmful to our community. So I hope that my background gives you a glimpse on my first-hand knowledge of our community and area for over 40 years.

I would like to explain and share to you what this area means to over a quarter-of-million Vietnamese-Americans who call Orange County home and share with you the history of our Little Saigon area, located in Central and West Orange County. Orange County today has the largest number of Vietnamese residents outside of Vietnam. We are a community that fled communism in search of democracy and freedom.

The Fall of Saigon in 1975 brought waves of over 2 million Vietnamese refugees to the United States following the next 3 decades. One of the first waves of Vietnamese refugees who left with the Americans days before and after the Fall of Saigon in 1975 was sent to Camp Pendleton in San Diego.

After months of living in the refugee camp at Camp Pendleton, the Vietnamese refugees migrated north and established Westminster as their new home. Westminster became known as Little Saigon. The first Vietnamese grocery stores, restaurants, and doctor's offices were established here. Vietnamese refugees all around Southern California would travel to Little Saigon to be able to buy and enjoy traditional Vietnamese food and be around those who share cultural and traditional celebrations. Little Saigon began to expand in the late 80's to Garden Grove, 90s to Fountain Valley and now Huntington Beach, Rossmoor, Seal Beach and Los Alamitos where the second generations of Vietnamese-Americans are moving to.

Our parents established their business 40 years ago in Westminster and Garden Grove, now we, the 1.5 & 2nd generations, have taken over those businesses and have our own families. We've kept our businesses in Westminster and Garden Grove but have since moved to nearby cities like Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Los Alamitos, Rossmoor and Seal Beach to establish our own growing family. We moved to these areas because it is still close to our parents, churches and temples and businesses and are more in line with our shared values, culture and other school districts that give our children more educational opportunities that aren't available in other school districts.

The proposed map visualizations seem to group our community with other minority communities in Orange County. This is a significant disservice to our community and the over 40 years of hard work that our community has put in to establish for our children and grandchildren. The issues we face are unique to our families and children's future. We have fought tirelessly to preserve and pass on our traditions and culture to our children.

Our communities and cultures are very different for example, Santa Ana and Anaheim host Dios De Los Muertos "Day of the Dead" and Mexican Independence Day while Garden Grove, Westminster, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach and Los Alamitos hosts events like the Tet Parade (Lunar New Year), Moon Festival, Black April Memorial Month in remembrance of the Fall of Saigon, Cherry Blossom Festival and the Fourth of July. As you can see these major holidays within the Garden Grove, Westminster, Fountain Valley, Los Alamitos and Huntington Beach communities clearly show that we have a community of interest together.

Although we respect other communities' traditions, it would not be appropriate to group us with communities that celebrate the dead while that tradition is frowned upon in our culture since it is said to be bad luck to keep the dead spirit around your home and businesses. We mourn and remember the month of April as Black April for the Fall of Saigon and not celebrate Mexican Independence Day on September 16th. Given our roots as refugees from a communist country, we love to celebrate Fourth of July because we are grateful and honor the freedom and democracy that America has given to us and we are honored to have two military bases nearby in Los Alamitos and Seal Beach because our parents were service members in the South Vietnam Army and are grateful to the American soldiers who fought on our behalf. To summarize these maps have to be drawn carefully to keep our unique community of interests together. Please don't divide us and risk what our families have built over generations.

First Map: 100% of Westminster, Midway City, Fountain Valley, Rossmore, Los Alamitos and Seal Beach and 80% of Garden Grove and a little over 50% of Huntington Beach including Huntington Harbor. The majority of the 405 freeway and 22 Garden Grove freeway touches the Cities of Westminster, Fountain Valley, Rossmore, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach and Huntington Beach.

Before I begin to explain the maps, please understand that the map I drew from your program might not be exactly correct when it comes to the cities boundary because it is kind of hard to see the street names and I've never drawn a map in my life before.

- Northeast Border: the line stops at West Street in Garden Grove because as you drive East of West Street; you can significantly see the change in the non-Vietnamese restaurants and stores which indicates that the area is less populated with Vietnamese-Americans. Going a little south, we stopped at Missouri Lane in Santa Ana since we also share businesses and economic values within this area.
- Southern East border: the line stops at the border of Fountain Valley.
- North border: the line stops on the border of Garden Grove and Los Alamitos.
- Western border: the lines are the border of the Cities of Los Alamitos, Rossmore, and Seal Beach (which includes an area known as Sunset Beach).
- Southern border: takes in Bolsa Chica State Beach in Huntington Beach and goes to Goldenwest Street which takes in part of the Huntington Beach dog park; goes to Yorktown Avenue (north of Yorktown Avenue) to Fiji Lane; go north to Kamuela Drive to Ward Street in the Huntington Beach boundary. Skipping the area between Goldenwest and south of Ellis.

Second Map: 95% of Santa Ana, part of Garden Grove (East of West Street, borders Santa Ana); moves North through Orange and into part of Anaheim.

The two maps clearly respect the two different communities of interests, culture, traditions, and history. This clearly helps define the two prominent communities. It allows both communities to flourish and continue to establish themselves.

It keeps our Little Saigon Area together while incorporating the rapid growth of Vietnamese Americans to nearby cities. Please keep our current cities for our Little Saigon community residents together by making sure that Westminster, Garden Grove, Midway City, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Seal Beal, Los Alamitos and Rossmoor stay together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Teri Nguyen