

2022

6.29.22 - NYC Districting Commission - Public Hearing

Piper Benedict



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The New York City Districting Commission 2022-23 Public Hearing

June 29, 2022

**4-7pm at New York City Technical College
Auditorium, 285 Jay St., Brooklyn, NY 11201**

Notes:

- Commissioner Go requested that public be precise in specifying street boundaries for Communities of Interest
- Next public hearings:
 - Wednesday July 6, 2022 @ 4:00 P.M.
Hostos Community College, 500 Grand Concourse, The Bronx, NY 10451
 - Thursday July 7, 2022 @ 4:00 P.M.
Staten Island Borough Hall, 10 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, NY 10301
- In about 30 days, commission will release a draft map
- Opportunity for public and city council comment
- Public encouraged to submit testimony by email at any time:
Publictestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov

Brooklyn		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Crystal Hudson	Council Member District 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 35 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Brooklyn • Crown Heights; Prospect Heights; Fort Greene; Clinton Hill; Bedford-Stuyvesant • Unify Communities of Interest • Will submit written testimony with maps • Population deviation under 5% with current lines, don't need radical changes to the district boundaries to meet requirements • Flatbush Ave. should remain western boundary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving across the de facto highway would divide Communities of Interest • Communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caribbean immigrants in Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant • Lubavitch community in Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black American families in Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, and Prospect Heights • More than 14,000 residents live in the five NYCHA Developments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Atlantic Terminal 2. Lafayette Gardens 3. Ingersoll Houses* 4. Farragut Houses* 5. Walt Whitman Houses* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Used to be one development “Fort Greene Houses” • Cultural fabric of district • Newer white Brooklynites as well • Importance of diversity, history, especially Black history • Black retail owners and restaurant owners – Fulton St., Myrtle Ave., Washington Ave., Franklin Ave., Nostrand Ave. • Importance of arts, museums, cultural institutions
Chi Ossé	Council Member District 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic Ave. = good boundary between 35 and 36 • District 36 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford-Stuyvesant • Northern Crown Heights • Historically Black neighborhoods • Importance of culture and collective memory • Neighborhoods have grown closer together with increase in Caribbean immigrants • Unification in a single district has worked well • Lost only a few thousand residents • Slightly expand borders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unify North Crown Heights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive and defined historic district • Several blocks above Eastern Parkway • Keep lines mostly the same but expand by unifying all of Northern Crown Heights • Echoed sentiment of Council Member Hudson – keep lines as similar as possible to current lines • Bedford-Stuyvesant is unified and should stay that way

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Dr. Kimberly Whitehead	Medgar Evers College (Senior Vice President; Chief of Staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 35 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crown Heights • Importance of the college in the community • Importance of diversity in Central Brooklyn and importance of retaining the diversity • Keep district as similar as possible to what it is currently • Less than 5% deviation; doesn't require changes • Keep main arteries as boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flatbush Ave. should remain a boundary
Frank Lachapelle	Community Board 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 36 • Bedford-Stuyvesant and North Crown Heights • Keep District 36 same or similar • Culture, arts, community • Rich history, shared history for generations • Keep district lines same or similar • Want to keep relationships with representative
Stephanie Wong	United Chinese Association of Brooklyn (President, Founder)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bensonhurst • APA community in Bensonhurst is a Community of Interest and should be kept whole as much as possible • Currently split into four districts • APA community is not a majority in any of the four districts • APA increase of about 345,000 residents • In Brooklyn alone, 43% increase • Could create a near majority APA majority • 1/4 APAs in NYC live in Brooklyn • Share community resources, common needs - language access, affordable housing, transportation, safety • Need for more equitable community representation • Need to have voices heard, currently diluted • Issues: more homeless shelters, fighting anti-Asian hate crime
Paul Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep District 36 the same, don't remove Crown Heights • Works in harmony with Assembly District 56 • Maintains historic Bedford-Stuyvesant in one piece and keeps North Crown Heights within

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He will also submit written testimony with more detail
Dr. Zulema Blair	<p>Medgar Evers College (Professor)</p> <p>Center for Law and Social Justice (Redistricting Research Director)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Law and Social Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looks at all districts in totality in NYC • Do not map districts in isolation • Concern about Communities of Interest of African descent throughout the five boroughs • Considers other levels of gov. lines • Maintain boundaries as much as possible • Understanding things will need to change a little due to population changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 35 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Eastern Parkway as border would separate Crown Heights • Don't separate Crown Heights • District 36 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep boundaries as is as much as possible • But can expand western boundary a little bit, maybe one block • Sheepshead Bay Housing should remain in 46 • Rockaway Parkway train station should be in 46 • Coney Island should be with all beach area, not isolated (hurricanes) • Staten Island – have to take 20,000 people from Brooklyn – Dyker Heights, Ft. Hamilton Parkway area • Queens – keep 31 with Far Rockaway, extend a little bit • South Ozone Park too many people of African descent to be pushed to different boundary • District 9 – Central Harlem – Polo Grounds should remain the same • Northern Bronx – Community of Interest - Wakefield – large Caribbean background, should be in District 12 – leave border at Gun Hill Rd. • Community of Interest in Allerton area below Gun Hill Rd. • Try to keep Crotona Park East whole – South Bronx District 16
Robert Smith III	Community Board 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep historically Black neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights intact in District 36

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share schools, hospitals, subway stations, demographics, • Common issues: public safety, gentrification, sanitation • Echo Paul Spring - District 36 aligns with Assembly District 56 • Allows for historically Black communities to have important share of political power
Ekram Alrowmein	<p>Academy of Medical and Public Health Services</p> <p>APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA Community of Interest in Bensonhurst – keep whole as much as possible • Currently split into 4 districts – limited resources, overpopulated schools, lack of language access, rising food insecurity, unemployment, increased homelessness, lack of affordable housing, increased crime • Could create near majority APA district • Sunset Park should remain whole in a single district (38) • Noted VRA and Charter re APA communities
Lurie Daniel Favors	<p>Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College</p> <p>Unity Map Coalition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 35 Crown Heights • CLSJ submitted citywide map outlining the 13 districts that comprise significant and performing Communities of Interest of people of African descent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also submitted additional 10 Communities of Interest located outside of those districts and should be maintained regardless of which district they’re drawn into • Exponential growth in population of people of African descent in Brooklyn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford-Stuyvesant • Crown Heights • Brownsville • East New York • Prospect Heights • Prospect Lefferts Gardens • Flatbush • East Flatbush • More recently: Canarsie and Flatlands • Look at city as a whole • Keep shoreline communities together

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coney Island, Manhattan Beach, Brighton Beach • Coney Island should not be isolated • Communities of Interest in Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant • Sheepshead Bay Housing should remain in District 46 – Community of Interest • She will submit written testimony and copy of the CLSJ report • Member of Unity Map Coalition – working to also submit maps – equitable distribution of power based on data
Banny? Chen	APA Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunset Park Brooklyn • Bensonhurst • Helped with Census and APA Voice • Strong Chinese American community • Bensonhurst currently divided into four districts • Sunset Park is kept whole while Bensonhurst is divided • Voices are diluted • Keep Chinese American community whole in Bensonhurst
Deborah Young	<p>Crown Heights North Association (President, founder)</p> <p>Community Board 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 35 • She submitted written testimony • Crown Heights North community currently split between 35 and 36 - make whole • Fragmentation impacts community • Two council members who are committed to constituents, but the schism prevents them from being represented as a whole • More complicated and inefficient to have to work with two separate offices • Should be in one district • Districts should include entire neighborhoods and communities • Don't divide streets down the middle
Cesar Ruiz	<p>Latino Justice</p> <p>Unity Coalition Project</p> <p>AALDEF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latino population growth - particularly in Brooklyn (added over 20,000 residents) • Districts should reflect that growth • Reflect on impact of gentrification and shifting populations - Williamsburg, Bushwick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaced many Latinx residents

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	<p>Medgar Evers College</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latinx community has shifted into Ridgewood, Cyprus Hills, Woodhaven • Recognize demographic trends and shifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 34 crossing to Queens is good (Williamsburg, Bushwick, Ridgewood) • District 38 should be kept compact – centering Sunset Park and Red Hook • Hope Gardens - Latinx Community of Interest – currently split 34 and 37 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring remaining part of Hope Gardens into 37 • Shift of southern boundary to Broadway • Noted John R. Lewis NY Voting Rights Act • Will submit maps
<p>Jerry Vattamala</p>	<p>Democracy Program at AALDEF (director)</p> <p>Unity Map Coalition</p> <p>APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already submitted 16 Asian American Communities of Interest boundary lines with links to maps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 maps with input from organizations and has street boundaries of all Communities of Interest • Try to keep Communities of Interest whole to the extent possible • Any map considered, superimpose those maps with any proposed maps to see if communities are divided • Bensonhurst divided into four different districts – unacceptable • South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill – divided • Hope to remedy these problems • Unity Map will submit full 51 district map that complies with the laws and is the most fair and equitable • Asian population growth – Brooklyn 43% growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New lines should reflect that growth in respective boroughs and especially Brooklyn – Bensonhurst should be in one district • APA - Protected group under VRA • Mentioned charter – consider language and racial minorities protected under VRA communities before other considerations for other Communities

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		<p>of Interest (religious groups, waterfront communities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to charter prioritized list • Keep communities that are currently successful in electing members of their choice (performing districts) – do not retrogress or dismantle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20, 23, 25, 26 - Queens • Will submit Unity Map
Ari Kagan	Council Member District 47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 47 in Southern Brooklyn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coney Island; Bensonhurst, Gravesend, Sea Gate; Brighton Beach • Russian Americans, Muslim Americans, Italian Americans • Waterfront communities should be in same District 47 • Mentioned shape of district • Return to old lines
Elizabeth (Liz) OuYang	<p>APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce (Coordinator)</p> <p>AALDEF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities of Interest maps already submitted • Three of those Communities of Interest are in Brooklyn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheepshead Bay, Sunset Park, Bensonhurst • Bensonhurst divided into four districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Bensonhurst whole – APA community • Dilutes community; prevented from fully participating in civic engagement • Growth of APA community in Brooklyn • None of the four are even near a majority APA district • Keep Bensonhurst as whole as possible by creating a near majority APA district • Maps and boundaries have been submitted • Bensonhurst <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West: 14th Ave – North: 55th St. – East: McDonald Ave to Southshore Parkway
Ashley Chen	<p>Chinese American Planning Council (CPC)</p> <p>APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAPI population growth especially in Brooklyn • Bensonhurst is Community of Interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split into four districts • APAs in each of these districts range from 17%-30% • 43, 44, 47, 48 • Make Bensonhurst as whole as possible

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting power; funding; investment • Sunset Park whole in 38 – keep as is • Keep Communities of Interest intact
Jack Plushnick		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 48 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider return to old lines prior to 2013 • Used to go up to Avenue I • Orthodox Jewish community – split currently between 45, 48 - Should make whole • Sheepshead Bay Housing used to be included in district – Use transit hubs in 48 – should be in 48 • Coney Island should no longer be included in District 48
Eli Cohen	Crown Heights Jewish Community Council (executive director)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 Jewish congregations • Crown Heights Community of Interest • Split currently into 3-4 separate districts • Proposing map of section of Crown Heights that should be kept together • Rodgers Ave. (West) – Rochester Ave and the Park (East) – Sterling Place (North) – Clarkson Ave. (South) • He will submit map • 70 synagogues mapped out • Jewish residents in that area all attend school and synagogue in that region – very compact • 35, 40, 41 – currently divided
Thomas Gilroy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 36 • Bedford-Stuyvesant and North Crown Heights • Important to keep Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant grouped together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History, culture, Black community in both communities • Gentrification • Integrity of Black communities are more and more threatened • Overlap with Assembly District 56 • Strong voice at city level and state level • Preserving this should be prioritized
Sheikh Galib Rahman		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 34, Jamaica, Queens • South Asian voters • Would like South Asian district

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamaica and Richmond Hill • Will join the next hearing with more specific requests
Alexa Aviles	Council Member District 38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 38 – South Brooklyn • She will submit written testimony • Critical considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons to be learned from state redistricting process • Keep districts compact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Communities of Interest together • South Brooklyn communities have similar issues • Compact districts are better for organizing around shared districts • District 38 should remain majority Latino district • Consider history of representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gerrymandering • Red Hook and Sunset Park • Take into account community board cohesion and overlapping • Avoid gerrymandering
George H?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodside, Jackson Heights • Need for a solid South Asian district instead of divided – political power
Mr. Siddiqi		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brighton Beach area, Coney Island, Beach Haven should be combined in District 37 • Pakistani community • Submitted written testimony • Will submit map with boundaries of Pakistani Community of Interest

Manhattan		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Dr. Norman Lafond	Manhattan Policy Forum (Chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper West Side - Park West Village • Growth of District 7 • Rich in diversity – ages, housing types, resources, etc. • Split in two on Broadway - District 6 and 7

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer useful to split • Either side of Broadway has shared common interests and needs, shop at same stores, worship together, volunteer together • Commercial corridor between 100th and 96th St. along Columbus Ave. runs through Park West Village in District 7, but serves much of District 6 as well • Residents on either side of Broadway use same trains, same exit, same sanitation issues, efforts to pursue many shared projects • Expand District 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand west to Broadway and south of 109th as you deem necessary • Park West Village should remain in District 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest voter participation rate in the state • Voice would be diluted in another district • Also Towers on the Park Complex - 110th (2 of them) condo association split into two – should be in one district
<p>Louise Cruise</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 7 • Washington Heights • Growth of District 7 and 10 in Upper Manhattan • Include Polo Grounds Towers in District 10 • Keep 150th – 160th west of Amsterdam as part of District 7 • Will ensure Black/Latino communities in Upper Manhattan continue to have adequate representation • Washington Heights has always been represented by at least two city council members and it's crucial that they continue to be represented by two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes more funding from city • Strong advocacy for challenges they face • Don't put Washington Heights in one district

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latino population in District 7 would be hurt if Washington Heights was cut out of district • Schools need as much help as they can get • Community Health Academy of the Heights – only high school in District 7 – should remain in District 7 • Don't move to District 10 bc 10 has two high schools already
Carlos Castiano		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of 7 and 10 • Keep districts in Upper Manhattan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact • not oddly shaped • ensure they serve Communities of Interest • ensure they allow Black and Latino residents to be adequately represented on City Council • Polo Ground should be in District 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already connected to 10 via FDR • Natural direction for 10 to expand • Dyckman Housing connects to Polo Grounds and is a Community of Interest • Coogan's Bluff is in District 10 and should serve residents on both sides including District 10 and Polo Grounds Towers • 160s and 150s west of Amsterdam should remain part of District 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep two councilmembers for Washington Heights - funding • echoed point on high schools – District 10 is not equipped to serve three high schools • will provide written testimony and map
Benjamin Rosenfield		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper West Side • Expansion of District 7 • Increase District 7 by expanding west of Broadway and south of 109th street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same exit • Same train • Same sanitation issues • Broadway mall

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open street • Continuity for Jewish community • West of Broadway and east of Broadway should be in same district • Towers on complex on 110th St. should be wholly in same District 7 • Park West Village should remain in District 7 • Commercial corridor on Columbus Ave equally serves District 6 and 7
Kevin Corte	Community Board 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts 7 and 10 – both have lost population • Expand west of 96th St. to include both sides of Broadway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadway is a main street and having it split makes it more difficult to form business administrations • District 10 – sliver at bottom – Coogan’s Bluff – should be part of 10 • Will submit written testimony

Queens		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Shah Nawaz		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson Heights, Woodside, and Elmhurst • South Asian Community of Interest – should be kept together in one district

Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
William Stanford Jr.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not start public hearings before 6pm • Expressed problems with organization of meeting and communication issues • Should have current district lines in the book that’s provided • Would like maps posted including who represents each district

Note: This summary of witness testimony excludes the first witness following the 10-minute break.