

2022

7.6.22 - NYC Districting Commission - Public Hearing

Piper Benedict



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The New York City Districting Commission 2022-23 Public Hearing

July 6, 2022

**4-7pm at Hostos Community College
500 Grand Concourse, The Bronx, NY 10451**

Notes:

- Next public hearing:
 - Thursday July 7, 2022 @ 4:00 P.M.
Staten Island Borough Hall, 10 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, NY 10301
- Commissioners discussed the 5% deviation to clarify the population range
- Public encouraged to provide specific boundaries in their testimony
- Commissioners emphasized that public will provide input in the next phase as well after a draft map is drawn
- Commissioners discussed potential for other outreach and communication strategies
- Publictestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov

The Bronx		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Council Member Althea Stevens	New York City Council - District 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 16 - West Bronx • Keep communities together • Make district more cohesive and complete • Highbridge was divided in last redistricting • Expansion of District 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unify Highbridge • Bring in Harlem River – work being done to create accessible waterfront access • Try to keep rest of district as intact as possible to avoid uncertainty – mentioned state redistricting
Bernadette Ferrara	Community Board 11 Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van Nest - East Bronx • Don't divide Van Nest • Community goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community center • Middle School • Youth programs • Senior programs • Senior housing • Currently divided – two council members

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being divided has not helped them reach any of these goals • Van Nest is on the fringe of 15 and 13 • Half of Van Nest is only a small portion in both those districts • Don't split Van Nest in half <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of Van Nest currently in 15 should be united with other half of Van Nest in 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More aligned with 13 - Low density community issues, community board 11, 49th precinct (she submitted maps) • Unite Van Nest; Morris Park; Pelham Parkway; Majority of Bronx Park East; and majority of Allerton in 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All work together • She submitted maps
<p>Council Member Amanda Farías</p>	<p>New York City Council – District 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle Hill; Clason Point; Harding Park; Parkchester; Unionport; and Soundview • Large portion of district is bordered by three bodies of water: East River; Bronx River; Westchester Creek • Massive traffic throughways: Cross Bronx; Bruckner; Bronx River Pkwy; Hutchinson River • Unique community due to infrastructure and natural landscape • Waterfront communities – new transit infrastructure • Harding Park known as Little Puerto Rico – generational households • Shorehaven – homeowning families, young families, renters • Community block parties • Interconnectivity with all of these communities • Latinx and Black communities – have been able to build generational wealth • Racism, poverty rates • NYCHA complexes • Keep Castle Hill and Soundview together in 18 • Boom in Asian immigrants in Parkchester

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bengali, Bangladeshi community in Parkchester, Unionport, and edge of Castle Hill – one of largest in northeast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starling Ave cultural hub • Needs to be considered when drafting new lines • Diversity of District 18
Andrea M. (McCloud?)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soundview of Bronx – 10473 zip code • Echoed Council Member Farías • Emphasized diversity of area including NYCHA, private homes, condos • Complaint re redistricting – not able to vote directly across the street anymore • Senior citizens are not happy now they have to walk farther to vote • Why isn't redistricting done using zip codes? • Unhappy with some representatives • Area is expanding • Too many shelters as opposed to Riverdale – should be even distribution of shelters • Diversity of housing and people
Jasmine Cordero		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 17 - Needs to be smaller • Currently - Port Morris (Average rent is \$2100) • Can't understand funding needs of Hunts Point that deals with poverty • Needs to be smaller by excluding Port Morris
Justin Castro		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 10 - Marble Hill (Bronx) • Current districts are 10, 11, 14 • Almost 90% is in 10 • Many residents have strong ties in Manhattan • Unite Marble hill into one district – 10
Mazeda Uddin	<p>Newly elected district leader assembly district 24 (part B)</p> <p>AALDEF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkchester • 12,000 apartments in Parkchester • Large influx of Asian American, especially South Asian in the Bronx • Castle Hill, Parkchester • Public schools didn't have Halal options – now they do – PS 106 • Supports Asian American districting lines for communities of interest that AALDEF submitted • Protected group under VRA and charter

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't divide • Parkchester, Castle Hill, Westchester Square? – communities of interest - keep whole • City council lines should reflect growth in Asian population
Fulvia Vargas-De Leon	Latino Justice PRLDEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latino voters in The Bronx • Only borough with Latino majority population • Currently eight districts in Bronx and one split between East Harlem and South Bronx • Latino majority in six of those districts and plurality in two • Latino voters have been able to vote for candidates of their choosing – should not ignore this progress or dilute Latino voters • Influx of Latino residences due to high rents in Manhattan • Upper Manhattan and Bronx share lots of communities of common interests • District 11 should no longer crack community of Wakefield, unite community of Bedford Park – plurality Latino currently – instead move south to 195th St. along Webster Ave. • Unite all of Marble Hill in District 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move north to 230th St. • West to Johnson Ave. • East to Exterior St. • Crossing of East Harlem into South Bronx should remain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority Latino district • Will submit written testimony
Marisol Duran		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 16 • Crotona Park East • Do not identify as West Bronx • Loss in public park • Borders 15, 16, 17 • 15 and 17 - council members acknowledge they share responsibility • But when 16 tries to bring improvements can't get anything done – the park isn't in District 16 even though they live across street from park • Hoping new districting could take into account that park

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost some park land for non-public use • Pay attention to Crotona Park - Need voice bc should be preserving green space • Need improvements
?? In person		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 18 – Parkchester • (? audio wasn't clear) • South Asian communities • South Asian population increase
Andrea Augustus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronx 10458 • District 7 • Recently had a community resource fair • Need more wellness program in her area • Access to resources • She has wellness company - Poetic Black Girl LLC
Council Member Pierina Sanchez	New York City Council - District 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 14 - Northwest Bronx <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingsbridge • Fordham • Morris Heights • 1,400/2,000 people have come in person to her office this year • Lack of broadband • Language access needs • Over 70% Latinx – from Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Mexico, other countries in Central/South America • 20% African, African American descent • 3% API • 94% of residents are renters • Median income \$21,000/year vs. \$37,000 citywide • 33% under federal poverty line • Racialized disinvestments • District 14 has been cohesive • Dramatic increase in African and Latinx communities • New lines need to ensure the power of these communities is not diluted • Communities of interest • Take into account voter participation rates varying by race, etc. • Fairness needs to be at center of process

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Roxanne Delgado	Friends of Pelham Parkway Park Community Board 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 13 - Morris Park should be moved into 15 or 18 • Pelham Parkway • Black and Brown majority but silent majority • Discrimination in Bronx CB 11 • Morris Park Community Org – right wing • Community board is against affordable housing • Not reflective of the district • Shuts down women of color in meetings
Michael Brady	Third Avenue Business Improvement District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared paper copy with commissioners • Commercial corridor in South Bronx • Provides voice for 1200 Bronx businesses • Busy transportation center • The Bronx cares about redistricting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are committed to the process and wants equitable representation • Many work multiple jobs so difficult to get to these meetings • Issues with the primer – should be available in more languages and shouldn't just be online – areas with no internet connectivity • Implement new ways to reach communities • East Harlem and South Bronx should not be combined – can't adequately serve both communities • should not combine boroughs • Need community training sessions – use Council Member Sanchez's session as example • Will provide feedback after draft maps
Tayono Romano? (Police officer)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction near her home • Problems with lack of safety/communication from the construction • Contractor is not helping
Michael Beltzer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 18 – Southeast Bronx between Bronx River, Long Island Sound, Westchester Creek, and East Tremont Ave. • 98% Black and Brown • Should remain the same • Brings together core constituencies • Bengali communities should not be broken up • Very compact district

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundaries should not move <p>(Commissioner Go followed up by mentioning that this district is actually overpopulated)</p>
Chantel Jackson	New York State Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concourse Village area Keep council lines same as possible

Manhattan		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Council Member Shaun Abreu	New York City Council - District 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 7 - Upper Manhattan Maintain integrity of District 7 2 steps <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Keep 150s and 160s in Washington Heights in 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep Washington Heights so that it has two representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increases funding allows for coordination Black, Latino, White communities in Washington Heights On southern end of the district, don't split on either side of Broadway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both sides of street are united except for city council district Both sides of Broadway go to same bagel shop, parks, etc. east of Broadway feels same as rest of District 7 – same with area just east of Broadway don't dilute Harlem vote He will submit written testimony
Will Miner?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upper West Side – Growth of District 7 Because district needs to grow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand district west of Broadway And south of 109th St. To extent necessary

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East and west side of Broadway share same interests and needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same stores, worship together, volunteer together • Currently separated – 6 and 7 • Riverside Park – used by both sides • Both sides of Broadway are invested in success of commercial corridor – between 100th and 96th along Columbus Ave. • Both sides take the 1 train and use same exit off West Side Highway • Same sanitation issues – Broadway mall, more composting • Other projects – open streets • Concerns re overdevelopment • This expansion would better reflect how area has evolved changed • Entirety of Towers on the Park complex (w 110th) should be in 7 (right now only one building is in 7 while other is in 9)
Evan Torres?	Community Board Hamilton Heights Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton Heights • District 9 in West Harlem but District 7 office is right across the street from his building - confusing • 141 Hill • Elderly can't make it back up the hill • Prefer to be on other side of town • Keep communities together • West Harlem 110, 155, west of Morningside • Split between 2 districts – 7 and 9 • District 10 has population deficit • Washington Heights is split between • Should be moved to 10 • West Harlem - don't split
Anthony Del Orbe	Nonprofit - Kingdom of Heaven Empire, Refreshing Planet Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marble Hill - 10463 • 3 different council members currently - 10, 11, 14 • should be in one District – 10 – majority of Marble Hill is in 10 currently • Issue with housing developments – divided

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Marble Hill whole – reduce confusion with voting
Barry Weinberg	Chair of Community Board 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 7 • Unify West Harlem – 110th – 155th – West of Jackie Robinson, Nicholas, and Morningside Parks (St. Nicholas Ave.) • Currently split between District 7 and 9 • Keep neighborhoods intact • Parks – natural cliffs and bluffs that cut off from rest of Harlem • Washington Heights should not be split in two districts • Keep neighborhoods and communities intact • District 10 has population deficit • Don't move Polo Grounds out of district 9 into 10 – would fragment and maybe violate VRA • Unify West Harlem west of the parks into District 7 • Move portion of Washington Heights in 7 into 10 to address deficit
Mary Sweeting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harlem 10039 • Central Harlem area near Polo Ground on 8th Ave down to 145th St. • Culture of community is being damaged with other changes • Do not remove Polo Grounds from current district • Leave district whole • 8th Ave and 146th to 155th St. Polo Grounds back to 148th St. and Esplanade Gardens • Do not cut up district
Earnestine Bell-Temple		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 7 - Harlem • Don't change lines • Washington Heights • Community Board 9 • Shared interests • Echoed Barry Weinberg • Noted issues with voting during primary with new districts – June 28 – people went to wrong polling sites

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important that citizens know who represents them • Still issues from covid
Joshua Clennon		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 9 - Harlem • Community Board 10 • Preserve historical and cultural integrity of District 9 which includes “Village of Harlem” • Hudson River on Harlem River – 155th St. – 5th Ave – Morningside Park – Central Park North • Only Manhattan district with plurality of African American voters • Polo Grounds, Central Park North – share unique history and interests • Don’t divide any portion into new district • Preserve the history and cultural integrity of 9 by keeping lines that are in place today
Moire Davis	Esplanade Gardens (board president)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t redraw Central Harlem by moving Polo Grounds into Washington Height’s district • Polo Grounds is an historical part of Harlem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to be baseball field • Home to Yankees, Mets, Giants • Rich part of Harlem culture • Rucker Park – famous park for basketball • Keep community intact • Harlem has become a chop shop – broken up • Polo Grounds has been part of Harlem forever
Sandra Fisher	County committee member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harlem, Sugar Hill • Witnessed all changes and dismantling in Harlem and especially West Harlem • Trying to get polling place moved from down the cliff so it’s easier for seniors • Currently in District 9 but should be in 7 • Echoed Barry Weinberg
LeClair Glover		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esplanade Gardens • Opposition to moving Polo Grounds into Washington Heights district • Echoed Moire Davis

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harlem community would be robbed of rich history of Polo Grounds and Rucker Park • Further marginalization • Respect community boundaries • Leave Central Harlem district lines as they are
Dr. Tawanna Gilford		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oppose redrawing of lines • Echo Joshua Clennons and Earnestine Bell-Temple • Wondering why they must redraw lines now • Just out of the pandemic - Harlem was hit hard • Increased prices, housing, food insecurity • Redrawing lines would add to instability • Mental health needs • Does this have to be done now? <p>(Commissioners followed up by explaining reason this must be done now – mandate under US Constitution – one man, one vote)</p>
Council Member Gale Brewer	New York City Council - District 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 6 – 54th St./10th Ave. to above Columbus Circle – up to 96th St. to 108th/109th St. west of Broadway • Population is over the max • Use to be - W96th down to W54th over to Central Park • 96th down to the 50s makes sense as a district • Lincoln Center / Columbus Circle Area • West 55th Harborview NYCHA development connected to Amsterdam Houses – makes sense to keep together • Very high voter turnout – very active area
Ruth McDaniels		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 9 - Harlem • Opposed to redistricting by losing Polo Grounds and Rucker Park • Polo grounds should not be with Washington Heights

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Queens		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Valerie L. West	District Leader - 31 st Assembly District (part A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 31 - Keep district whole <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arverne • Arverne by the Sea • Brookville • Edgemere • Far Rockaway • Rosedale • Laurelton • Springfield Gardens • Mentioned state redistricting causing lower voter turnout – want to avoid for city council • Don't want to change current representative • Storms, COVID – district worked closely together • Don't want to be separated • JFK should remain in district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JFK redevelopment project • Economic driver • Affected by the JFK health hazards so important that they reap benefits from having it in their district
Kevin Livingston		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 31 • Southeast Queens – Rosedale, Laurelton, Far Rockaway • Interconnectedness of Rosedale, Laurelton, and Far Rockaway • During pandemic – assisted senior citizens with food from families in Far Rockaway • it's one, we look out for each other • JFK should stay in 31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should receive benefits of airport bc they're dealing with asthma issues from fumes, and sleep issues from noise • Excellent representatives currently • Consider keeping 31 together - made of beautiful Black and Brown folk and Jewish members

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Naida Ryans	Parent coordinator at PS 151 in Woodside Queens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 30 • On behalf of school community • Woodside Housing • Would be good to be redistricting to district where representative represents their school • Not able to receive funding for critical resources
Ahnaf Alam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamaica 11432 • South Asian population - Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani • Same language, same culture • Have been divided • Need better representation • Create a South Asian district
Linda Dada		<p>Sewer Flooding Issue – 106th 107th Ave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constituent of Community Board 12 • Sewer line on private property - Flooding • Houses on 107th and 106th Ave. • Frequent backups cause basement flooding • DEP refuses to help • City should reevaluate situation • Has cost residents thousands of dollars
Joycilin Davis		<p>Sewer Flooding Issue – 106th 107th Ave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same issue as above • 106th and 107th Ave. in Queens • 11433
Hasna Happy		<p>Sewer Flooding Issue – 106th 107th Ave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 106 and 107th Ave / 178th • Private sewer line • Flooding • Have to call private sewer company to clean • Costing homeowners a lot of money • DEP has been collecting sewer payment but refuses to do anything

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Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
William Stanford Jr. (Five Borough Man)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue with location posting and wrong building address • Would like to start meetings after 6pm bc people are still working and then lower participation • Districts 7 and 10 (? Audio wasn't clear) • District 16 ? • Should use bus coordinates to draw lines
Don Jason?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Board Districts 5, 6, 7, 8 • Advocating for more libraries/librarians in public schools • Addressing problems with schools • Robotics (school board districts 7, 5 used to have) • Would like new city council person to help with these issues