

2022

8.17.22 - NYC Districting - Bronx Public Hearing

Piper Benedict



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The New York City Districting Commission 2022-23 Public Hearing
Wednesday August 17, 2022 @ 5:30pm to 9pm
Lehman College (CUNY), Gillet Auditorium,
250 Bedford Park Blvd West, The Bronx 10468

The Bronx		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Council Member Eric Dinowitz	New York City Council – District 11	<p>District 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lines must take into account communities of interest – they're not always reflected in neighborhood lines from census maps • Draft plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wakefield was removed from 11 and added to 12 • Part of Kingsbridge Heights was moved from 14 and added to 11 • Historic nature of 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NW section of Wakefield – historically part of 11 • Kingsbridge Heights - historically part of 14 • Should include Wakefield in 11 • Kingsbridge Heights should remain united with 14 • Communities of interest around housing • In north, 11 has homes generally zoned R1-R5 – lower in density <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property taxes, parking, cleaning services, transportation, etc. • Kingsbridge Heights zoning more similar to 14 • Wakefield has more property owners • Bronx delegation - Bronx Unity Map in process – block by block level - Will submit electronically • Retain 2012 lines for district 11 with some changes to reflect communities of interest and population change
Council Member Amanda Fariás	New York City Council – District 18	<p>District 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will submit additional testimony in coming weeks

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft plan for 18 is ok, but community input is needed • Importance of using different methods of outreach to increase public participation • Continue to keep Parkchester whole and the Clason Point, Harding Park community whole • Crucial we don't fracture communities that have long history of underrepresentation
Council Member Kevin Riley	New York City Council – District 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 12 • Reconsider boundary lines and seek alternatives for the fragment of the neighborhoods in Gun Hill and the Valley • Those neighborhoods are taken from 12 in the draft map • 47% of the cases from his office are from zip codes 10467 and 10469 – east Gun Hill Road area and Valley area • District is majority African American community • Strong Black home ownership
Council Member Althea Stevens	New York City Council - District 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 16 • Things added to district that are an improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniting 161st St. bid into one district • Joyce Kilmer and Franz Sigel Park • High poverty rate • Important to pay attention to communities left out of the process – uplift unheard voices • Don't divide those communities • Working with IS229 focused on gun violence – keep this school in district • Working on waterfront – keep in 16 • Must preserve Black community – don't dilute • Noted VRA • With draft plan – Black population decreased from 46% to 36% • Removal of two historical predominately Black communities from district 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodstock Terrace • Forest Houses • Riverpark Towers • Include those neighborhoods in 16

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will submit testimony
Former Council Member Andy King		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't want to lose part of the Valley or Gun Hill Houses • Reduces voting power • Keep map the way it is now with very few changes • Keep 12 whole
Beatrice Cornell?	Community Board 12 *testifying as resident	<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Echo Council Member Riley • 12 is an organically dense Black homeownership population • Preservation of representation of district matters • Close knit community • Majority Black • Reconsider lines • Reconsolidate Gun Hill and the Valley • Restore original district lines
Bernadette Ferrara	Community Board 11 Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance (president)	<p>District 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft unites all of Van Nest into one district • Proposed lines include all of Van Nest • Aligning with low density community issues • Can be better partners with neighboring communities • Also connects larger Yemeni population in Van Nest • No longer tail split between two districts • Hope these will be the final lines • Hopes to achieve community goals
Judith Benitez	Community Board 12 - Secretary *testifying as individual	<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep community unified • Shared values, should be shared access to resources • Dividing along Gun Hill Road and Bronxwood and Gun Hill Road and Holland Ave. – require further distance to gov. services • Ownership rate 39.1%, large portion are Black • Reconsider these lines • Consider Gun Hill and the Valley • Would like to continue this unified community

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep families together, restore original district boundaries
Emerita Torres	<p>State Committee Member in Assembly District 85</p> <p>*speaking in personal capacity</p>	<p>District 17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two main concerns with preliminary map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shifting of Kingsbridge Armory and Kingsbridge Heights community from 14 to 11 – important landmark and community of interest – should keep in 14 Unequal weight given to voices of Staten Island residents – underpopulated districts – should distribute populations more evenly throughout city
Dr. Caray Lin Gordon?		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will submit written testimony as well Reconsider lines for Gun Hill Road Evander Childs High School - Should remain in 12
Laverne Bes King?		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave district as in – together
Chanelle Finney?		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique area Improvements along Gun Hill Road Keep Gun Hill and the Valley in district 12
José Francisco Ávila	Garifuna Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garifuna community of interest community is divided on preliminary map into 18, 15, 16, 17 boundaries - ? 135th St. to the south, Webster Ave. to the east Consolidate into as few districts as possible – ideally 8 and 17
Alonzo de Castro		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed his activism Now all of district 12's reps are African American Do not exclude Gun Hill Houses
Council Member Pierina Ana Sanchez	New York City Council – District 14	<p>District 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will submit longer testimony in writing Concerns about preliminary lines Northwest Bronx Kingsbridge

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft removes Kingsbridge from 14 into 11 • Central part of community • Armory is iconic – NWBCCC – fighting for decades to develop armory • Kingsbridge road is important commercial district (immigrant small businesses) – draft plan divides the road down the middle • Kingsbridge neighborhood=largely Latinx, lower income, mostly renters – moving to 11 which is wealthier, whiter – dilution of protected class • Armory to Kingsbridge Heights should remain in 14 • South of district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries make sense as they currently are (on draft?) • Need better balance. Not fair that Staten Island has smaller districts
<p>Orlando Ovalles</p>	<p>Northeast Director of Civic Engagement for the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for maps that provide Latinos and other underrepresented groups with fair opportunity to elect leaders who are responsive to their communities • Accessible, inclusive, and transparent process • Listen to communities of interest in the Bronx – share social, economic, cultural interests • Comply with Constitution, VRA – reflect growth of Latino community • Noted lack of Latino participation in 2020 census - Should account for undercount
<p>Rowshon Sarker</p>	<p>Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)</p>	<p>District 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkchester, Castle Hill, Westchester Square • Starling Ave. • Bangladeshi community • Language needs • If district is broken, would be more difficult to get services, especially for immigrant community • Keep neighborhoods and communities intact, compact, limit crossover, avoid gerrymandering, avoid oddly shaped districts

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Kamel Yard?		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted importance of growing up in the area and interacting with Magenta Park, Valley, Gun Hill, Evander Child High School, Co-op city, etc. • Don't break up the community
<p>Evan Casper-Futterman</p> <p>- Read by someone else</p>	<p>The Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative</p>	<p>District 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern re Staten Island – imbalance of power • Draft map does not balance fairness and power • Draft map breaks up communities across Bronx • Every district in the Bronx = overpopulated and underrepresented • Walks by these areas regularly - Kingsbridge Armory, St. James Park, Reservoir • Don't move Armory from 14 to 11 • 14 has worked for decades to develop Armory • 11 has no relation to Armory • Supports Unity Map
Joel Guerrero		<p>District 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingsbridge Road • Kingsbridge Improvement District • Bringing Kingsbridge Road to 11 would mean having to build new relationships – want to remain in 14 to continue relationships • Tenant rights, small businesses, churches, parks • Don't want to have to restart and build relationships with 11
Juan Nunez	<p>Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment – have been organizing for over 30 years • Put Armory back into district 14 • Redraw Kingsbridge Heights into 14 • Keep Bedford Park neighborhood together in 11 • Limit number of overpopulated districts in the Bronx • Concern re Staten Island
Margarita Rosario		<p>District 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives not too far from where hearing was held • Emphasized strength of community

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted PS 86
Michael Partis	Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposed to overpopulation of Bronx districts - Dilutes voting power, voting rights, and racial justice • Kingsbridge Armory should not be separated from historical community of interest • Small business owners
Rowshon Sarker Translated for Gina Talukdar?	Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)	<p>District 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkchester community – Castle Hill, Westchester, and other areas • Same culture, similar shopping, food, cultural activities, practices – want to continue the unity • If split, it would be difficult to continue this unit
Cerimar Olivares		<p>District 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed map cuts district off at Kingsbridge Rd. – moving Kingsbridge Armory out of 14 – community engagement over last 30 years • Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Morris Heights, Fordham = communities of common interest • Would dilute Latino voting power • Move boundary north to 195th St. • Don't divide communities • Keep Kingsbridge Armory in 14
Marshall Strawbridge	Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) Bronxwide Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underrepresentation in the Bronx - Overpopulated districts • All districts in the Bronx are underrepresented • Should be enhancing these voices • Kingsbridge Armory should not be moved out of 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move all of Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood back to 14 • Don't go back to previous version that included Wakefield(taking away from West Indian population) but instead bring southern boundary include all of Bedford Park • Bring that boundary down to 196th St. east of Grand Concourse

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Daniel Renel?	<p>Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)</p> <p>Bronxwide Coalition</p>	<p>District 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWBCCC • Don't move Kingsbridge Heights or Armory to 11 – diluting power of those communities • Reading on behalf of Julie Colon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in district 17 • Don't divide community by putting Kingsbridge Heights in 11 • They don't have same issues • Already overpopulated and underrepresented • Preliminary map would intentionally separate these communities • Kingsbridge Armory in 11 does not make sense – 14 has organized around Armory for 30 years • Keep Bedford Park community in 11 • Don't overpopulate districts in the Bronx
Roxanne Delgado	Friends of Pelham Parkway (founder)	<p>District 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelham Parkway Greenway = community of interest • Proposed plan carves out Pelham Parkway north in odd shape • Splits community of interest into 13 and 15 • If divided, advocacy won't be possible – parkway will deteriorate • Draft also moves over 1500 units of NYCHA housing • Adding more poor people into 15 will overburden office • Large Mexican population in Pelham Parkway north and south – future Mexican voting bloc in 13 – would be diminished in 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Mexican representative • Concern re politics and drawing of 13 and 12 • Point on Van Nest – potentially putting political interests first
Robin Rolan?	Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)	<p>District 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't move Armory out of 14 • Got involved with NWBCCC during pandemic • Concern re encampments of homeless people

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armory = opportunity to revitalize community
Elizabeth Thompson		<p>District 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't move Armory • Also noted Reservoir and history of fighting for things in the district
Crystal Reyes Marshall Strawbridge read testimony on her behalf	Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)	<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure info is accessible to all community members • Draft maps continue to create racially imbalanced boundaries that will negatively impact Black, Brown, and Asian communities • Duty to create maps that provides communities with fair and just access to resources and opportunities – especially in light of pandemic • Distribute population equally • Important that Kingsbridge Armory remain in 14 and not in 11 – 11 is drastically different • Also keep District 12 together • Don't divide communities or overpopulate districts
Ramon Mendez	Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)	<p>District 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant issues for Kingsbridge Heights community • Don't remove Armory from 14 – would rob community of their voice • Disrespectful • Concern re Staten Island districts • Keep Bedford Park together in 11
Cedric Fergus		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gun Hill, the Valley, Eastchester – should never leave district 12 • Fighting to make neighborhood better – could not do this will neighborhood divided • Keep district 12 and northeast Bronx together
Lisa Benton-Fergus		<p>District 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast Bronx, Kingsbridge Armory • Think about how it will affect the youth
Christian Ramos	Queensbridge Merchant Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small business owner • Kingsbridge Armory • Don't divide district • Close neighborhood

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Sandra Lobo	Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) (executive director) Bronxwide Coalition	District 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed map would overpopulate the Bronx overall and underrepresent Bronx in the city council districts These would be devastating to their people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kingsbridge Armory – world’s largest Armory – have been organizing for over 25 years – should be kept in 14 Draft separates commercial corridor in 14 – Kingsbridge Rd and Jerome Ave. – draft splits it in half Kingsbridge Heights should not be moved to 11 – Black/Latino working class (highest rates of eviction) – 11 is whiter, wealthier Will include longer written testimony
Rod Saunders		District 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep boundaries of 12 exactly where they are Need representatives that understand the area Kevin Riley was very helpful during pandemic, very well represented by him Noted VRA
Shirley Saunders		District 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider keeping Evander Childs in that district as well as the Gun Hill Houses
Maria Teresa Mariposa Fernandez	The Point CDC Bronxwide Coalition	District 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bronx districts = overpopulated and underrepresented Kingsbridge Armory should remain in 14 Kingsbridge Heights should be in 14 Gun Hill area, Gun Hill Houses, the Valley – should remain in 12 Bronx has long history of being harmed Staten Island should not have stronger voice than the Bronx
Lisa Wade Stewart		District 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gun Hill Houses, Evander HS Keep district together with common interests – many Indo-Caribbeans in the area Small businesses
Rubina Akdar? -	Desis Rising Up and Moving	District 18

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<p>Rowshon Sarker translated</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't divide Westchester Square from Parkchester - Bangladeshi community • Language access • Being together, can solve issues together • Keep 18 together
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<p style="text-align: center;">Brooklyn</p>		
<p>Witness Name</p>	<p>Organization(s)</p>	<p>Testimony</p>
<p>Antonia Clemente</p>		<p>District 38</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Hook, Park Slope, Winslow Terrace, Borough Park • Sunset Park • Latino community in southwest Brooklyn • Extensive history • Concern re draft map harming Latino representation • Noted VRA and charter - fair/effective representation • Joining district with Bay Ridge would have negative impact and loss of Latino representation • Keep old map intact • Maintain 38 district in one district • Noted increase in Latino population – map must reflect community's growth
<p>Catherine Walsh</p>		<p>District 38</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Red Hook and Sunset Park together • Concerned about proposed map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of equity and keeping communities of interest together • Sunset Park = working class community, community of immigrants, heavily Latino and Asian American population • Proposed map takes Sunset Park and merges with Bay Ridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could dilute representation and voice • Red Hook and Sunset Park should stay together in 38 – work on shared challenges together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront community – facing impacts of climate change

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation issues and traffic – trucking facilities, health, asthma
Eugene Strupins		<p>District 43</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave Bay Ridge as it is with Dyker Heights • Don't split up Sunset Park and join with Bay Ridge – different interests • Noted state districting and multiple primaries • Don't mess with districts so drastically
Cynthia Jeffers	Alliance for Puerto Rican Education and Empowerment	<p>District 38</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep lines similar to how they are now • Draft splits Sunset Park in half • Her half which is largely Latino would be joined with Bay Ridge – creating majority white district • Other half would be combined with Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst – majority Asian district • Red Hook would be removed and joined with 39 – creating another majority white district and breaking up industrial waterfront • 38 was designed to be a Hispanic opportunity district • Noted subway shooting in April and pandemic – representative was able to help • Business district would also be divided

Manhattan		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Denny Salas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Echo Council Member Sanchez's point re Staten Island • In support of Unity Map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 2 – add Latino population • District 1 – better chance of having Asian representative • Should adopt Unity Map

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Queens		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Henry Euler	Auburndale Improvement Association (President) Queens Civic Congress	District 19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned with Station Road being split into 19 and 20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunite into 19 • Similar zoning • Similar issues • Bayside Hills split between 19 and 23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be all in 23 • Referenced Paul Graziano's map • Submitted written testimony and maps
Jagpreet Singh	Desis Rising Up and Moving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asian, Indo-Caribbean community • Noted importance of this community to society and especially during pandemic • South Queens – Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, Ozone Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamaica Ave. to the north • Van Wyck to the east • Conduit Blvd to the south • Brooklyn border to the west • Large Punjabi, Indo-Caribbean, and Bangladeshi neighborhood • Community saw largest growth in the city • Richmond Hill – home of first hate crime after 9/11 • No representation currently • Don't crack community • Supports Unity Map – plurality South Asian, Indo-Caribbean district • Issue with Staten Island – need equity
Barbara Brown	Eastern Queens Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent communities in districts 27, 28, 31 • Advocating for keeping districts largely intact as they are • Community south of Jamaica Ave. should remain in 27 • Rochdale Village should be in one district • District 31 – include all of JFK airport in the district – communities are impacted by JFK • Rest of 31 should remain intact – largely Black descendent district

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Eddie Cuesta	Dominicanos USA (Executive Director)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong growth in Latino community • No longer a minority group • Dominican population • Community of interest • Have elected 6 Dominican city council reps • Changing lines will harm this effort • District 7 – introduction of high-density white voting blocs in places additional Latino voting blocs – harm ability of Dominican Latinos to elect candidates of their choice • Northern boundary of 160th St. displaces significant portion of Latino community and incorporates large white population in Upper West Side Manhattan Valley Area • Adopt previous northern boundary – 165th St. • And eastern boundary at Amsterdam • District 14 - Don't move Kingsbridge Heights from 14 • Reflect growth of Latino community especially in the Bronx
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Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
William Stanford Jr.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressed concern re Queens hearing • District 12 – should be bounded by Gun Hill Rd. to the south, 241st St. to the north, Webster Ave. or White Plains Rd to the west, Eastchester Rd. to the east • District 11 – should be bounded by Gun Hill Rd. to the north, Fordham Rd. to the south, Webster Ave. to the east • Should go by bus corridors • Timing of hearing • Don't break up communities
Carlos Vargas-Ramos	Center for Puerto Rican Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will submit written testimony • Provided details about plurality districts and majority districts and how they reflected or did not reflect census results • Overrepresentation of districts in Staten Island