

UNITED COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE

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STATEMENT OF ALBERT BALDEO, FMR. DISTRICT LEADER CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE & REDISTRICTING COALITION

TO THE NYS INDEPENDENT DISTRICTING COMMISSION

July 22, 2021

I am a former elected Democratic District Leader of the 38th Assembly District, a Community Advocate and retired Attorney-at-Law. I am also the Chairman of the United Communities Alliance and Redistricting Coalition, an organization that empowers and improves the quality of life of all residents-regardless of race, religion or national origin living in Queens, the place that best defines us all as “a nation of immigrants.”

Our goals are to consolidate residents of the district into active participation for the betterment of the district, to fight for fair redistricting and social justice, to develop coalitions of neighborhood organizations and groups, to foster a greater civic voice for the community, and to solve the common issues and problems confronting the neighborhoods of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, which should constitute one City Council District: **Exhibit “A.”**

In addition to running for public office several times before, my interaction with residents in these communities as an attorney, community organizer and leader, has given me a deep understanding of the common issues, problems, concerns and solutions that impact us collectively.

Gerrymandering has cracked these natural “communities of interest” into unrecognizable portions, with concomitant suppression from participation in even the most basic structures of government. The issues, problems, solutions and allocation of resources confronting them are overpowered and overlooked in preference to those confronting communities like Rochdale Village, Glen Oaks Co-ops, and the Jamaica Housing Projects over the Van Wyck Expressway-a natural divide.

These communities should not be lumped together. They all deserve separate attention. We ask you, “How can you continue to lump these Mitchell Lama, Co-ops and Housing Projects together, with Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park, which consists of only one and two family homes, or vice versa?” Indeed, the Supreme Court of the United States requires that districts be redrawn to encompass communities of common interest. See *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900, 920 (1995).

Like all of the esteemed members of this Commission, we are proud and patriotic Americans. We, our children and relatives have died fighting to preserve America's freedoms, and we have collectively shed our blood, sweat and tears for our great country. And so we have to ask you, "Why are we being relegated to second class citizens?"

Consequently, the present divisions fundamentally prohibit "fair and effective representation to these communities of interest," precipitate an ugly apartheid system no different than South Africa's with concomitant hate crimes and oppression, and is contrary to our greatest American jurisprudence and values. We are presently split, and diluted, into 4 Assembly Districts: Districts 23, 24, 31 and 38. Unequivocally, these gerrymandered districts emasculate what the Federal Courts and US Constitution have articulated as factors which establish a community of interest. **Exhibit "B."**¹

Common problems abound, common issues are ignored, and common solutions are impossible to achieve. The death of small business, COVID tragedies, rampant home foreclosures, closure of hospitals, medical centers and schools, kids being subjected to filthy, overcrowded trailer parks and locker rooms for classrooms, spiraling unemployment, increased taxes, neighborhood quality, public safety, immigration, language assistance and the cost of living have marginalized these communities of interest from government services and funding. Our need for representation at all levels of government has never been more compelling.

Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park are a single neighborhood comprised mainly of Bangladeshis, Indians, Sikhs, and Indo-Caribbeans. The residents are homeowners and the neighborhood is zoned for single and multi-family homes. There are many extended families living together, reflective of their communities "back home" in South Asia and the Indo-Caribbean communities. Most residents are dependent upon public transportation and utilize the A train and J train subway lines for transportation services. There are a high number of senior citizens that reside in Richmond Hill, but the only senior center is in Ozone Park on Sutter Avenue.

The neighborhood of South Jamaica, east of the Van Wyck Expressway, should not be grouped with Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park because the home property values are significantly less, the high school population is not comprised of students from any of Richmond Hill's, Ozone Park's or South Ozone Park's middle schools. Moreover, the population in South Jamaica is not comprised of many immigrants like Richmond Hill/Ozone Park, South Ozone Park; and the population of South Jamaica is mostly African-American who have settled in that neighborhood for a long time and who rely on different public transportation lines, mainly the E train subway line to Jamaica Center. It is also unfair for them to be annexed to us.

Our plight is best understood when you consider that we suffered from the highest COVID infection rate, our area hospitals and sole high schools Richmond Hill High and John Adams face constant threats of closure, and we have the highest rate of COVID infections, unemployment, highest home foreclosures and small business closures in our district. Zip codes 11417, 11419 and 11420, covering Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and

¹ Jonathan P. Hicks, In District Lines Critics See Albany Protecting Its Own, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 2, 2004, at B4

South Ozone Park, had the highest positivity rate in all of Queens, at 15.81%. Even if you want to designate us as a COVID disaster district, similar to leper colonies, we will take that! Just stop gerrymandering us out of existence! Exhibit "C."²

We do not even have health clinics, community centers, day care centers, senior centers, social services centers, or job training centers. The press recently exposed the fact that we have only one (1) cooling center in the area! MTA has been shutting down our bus routes. No other community comes close to this paradigm of utter despair.

Currently, Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park are cracked into numerous City Council, State Senate, Assembly and Congressional Districts. Consequently, there is reduced effectiveness in problem solving, shared bonds are destroyed, and constituents are reduced to mere statistics. The perverse goal here was no doubt to protect incumbents, divide and rule, and preserve their base of political support in their districts.³ You must purge the treacherous so-called "leaders, lobbyists and fakes" who will rather dump our cause under the bus, as they seek personal favors and progress."

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that this august body must fully comply with all of the factors the Federal Courts, Supreme Court and the redistricting jurisprudence have recognized in the drawing of district lines: (1) Compactness and contiguity (2) Respecting political subdivisions (3) Preserving communities of interest and race (4) Meeting political goals.

They have recognized cultural background, economic status, common media markets, shared community services and organizations (including health clinics, stores, public transportation, and workplaces), voting patterns, common language and dialects, and common country of origin as factors and shared community concerns in drawing district lines. See e.g. *Diaz v. Silver*, 978 F. Supp. 96 (E.D.N.Y., Feb. 27, 1997) (bizarrely shaped Hispanic-majority 12th congressional district is an unconstitutional racial gerrymander), *aff'd sub nom. Silver v. Diaz*, 118 S. Ct. 36 (1997) (No. 96-1680), *Acosta v. Diaz*, (No. 96-1904), *Lau v. Diaz*, (No. 96-2008) (mem.)

The continued separation, bizarrely drawn and fragmentation of Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park will fundamentally breach these mandates, short change these vibrant communities of interest and cannot withstand legal muster/scrutiny.⁴ Moreover, as presently gerrymandered, these districts collectively fail to meet the

² Susan Lerner & Sean Coffey, How to Salvage N.Y. Redistricting Reform, TIMESUNION (Sept. 21, 2011, 12:20 AM), <https://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/How-to-salvage-N-Y-redistricting-reform-2180826.php>, archived at <https://perma.cc/WY97-QS64>; Schultz, *supra* note 22, at 137-138.

³ For a fuller discussion of the need for majority-minority districts to promote minority representation see Janai S. Nelson, White Challengers, Black Majorities: Reconciling Competition in Majority-Minority Districts with the Promise of the Voting Rights Act, 95 GEO. L.J.1287 (2007).

⁴ Maintaining a "community of interest" traditionally also has been considered a legitimate goal in creating a districting plan. Courts will find the existence of a community of interest where residents share substantial cultural, economic, political and social ties. See. e.g., *Wilson v. Eu*, 1 Cal. 4th 707, 4 Cal.Rptr.2d 379, 407, 823 P.2d 545, 573 (1992) (*en banc*). In *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900, 907-08, 115 S. Ct. 2475, 2484, 132 L.Ed.2d 762 (1995), the Supreme Court found that the 11th Congressional District of Georgia failed to incorporate a community of interest.

compactness requirement of *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30, 106 S. Ct. 2752, 92 L.Ed.2d 25 (1986).⁵

It is imperative, therefore, that you unite Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park together, utilizing the Van Wyck Expressway to the East, Queens/Brooklyn County (City Line)/Woodhaven line to the West, Hillside/Jamaica Avenue to the North and the South Conduit/Belt Parkway to the South as an Assembly District: Exhibit “A.” (If Howard Beach, Woodhaven and Glendale must be connected, you can adjust the Queens/Brooklyn County line boundary nearer to Woodhaven Boulevard).

This Assembly District can also serve as the anchor/core district for our concomitant State Senate and Congressional Districts. Please draw them accordingly.

Here is where the critical mass of this community of interest is, and I challenge this esteemed panel to produce a more compact and contiguous district, which also adheres to the law-natural boundaries, and established ties of common interest and association-historical, economic, ethnic, religious or other.

The law, common sense, democracy and reason mandate that these communities must be kept together as described, not only for their continued economic and cultural survival and growth, but also with the practical goal of having laws tabled and passed in the State legislature.

This complies with the requirements that districts must be equal in population and they cannot intentionally discriminate against minority voters, pursuant to the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act. After these obligatory federal requirements, most states and localities also require that districts be reasonably compact,⁶ and “contiguous.”⁷ The borders should follow natural geographical and political boundaries, such that they do not cross bodies of water, or divide cities and counties.⁸ Finally, they encompass “communities of common interest,”⁹ groupings of people who have similar values, shared interests, or common characteristics.¹⁰ The Supreme Court of the United States has held these as “traditional redistricting criteria” to which all districts must encompass.¹¹

⁵ Plaintiffs, as residents of the district, have standing to bring suit. See *United States v. Hays*, 515 U.S. 737, 744-45, 115 S. Ct. 2431, 2436, 132 L.Ed.2d 635 (1995) (“Where a plaintiff resides in a racially gerrymandered district, ... [that] plaintiff has been denied equal treatment because of the legislature's reliance on racial criteria, and therefore has standing to challenge the legislature's action.”). Moreover, notwithstanding that two of the plaintiffs are Latino (as are the majority of the district's residents), they have standing because they can suffer stigmatization and hostility by virtue of their race. See *Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630, 643, 113 S. Ct. 2816, 2824-25, 125 L.Ed.2d 511 (1993).

⁶ *Bush v. Vera*, 517 U.S. 952, 959-60 (1996); *Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630, 647 (1993); *DeWitt v. Wilson*, 856 F. Supp. 1409, 1414 (E.D. Cal. 1994), aff'd, 515 U.S. 1170 (1995).

⁷ *Shaw*, 509 U.S. at 647; *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900, 906 (1995).

⁸ *Shaw*, 509 U.S. at 647; *Abrams v. Johnson*, 521 U.S. 74 (1997).

⁹ *Miller*, 515 U.S. at 919-20; *Abrams*, 521 U.S. at 74

¹⁰ *League of United Latin Am. Citizens v. Perry*, 548 U. S. 399, 435 (2006); *Miller*, 515 U.S. at 915-16.

¹¹ *Miller*, 515 U.S. at 915-16.

The needs of all Americans must be met in terms of education, housing, health, social, economic and human services, as well as representation in the State legislature. Health care providers in this community also advise of the common problems patients living here face, like high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. Moreover, they cannot relate their symptoms to strangers who are insensitive to their medical needs. Likewise, citizens complain of law enforcement profiling and prejudices, all being evil consequences of the scourge of gerrymandering.

Moreover, this lack of representation has resulted in jobs being denied to constituents at JFK Airport and environs, the Resorts World/Aqueduct Development, area hospitals, schools, and other businesses right here in our back yard. This area does not get any meaningful member item funds from any elected official. It is a crying shame, resulting in a cycle of poverty, an apartheid effect!

These constituents pay all the taxes-income tax, city, federal, state, real estate, sales, et cetera. Over 4,000 houses have been bought and sold in these two- and three-jobs neighborhoods over the past decades, consisting mainly of essential workers, yielding billions of revenue dollars. They have revitalized these once depressed neighborhoods, giving impetus to the American economy, and are ranked among the largest growing groups in New York City: Exhibit "D." With the hope and promise of the America Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, John Lewis and other great visionaries have died for, we have come to "create good and necessary trouble" and to cash that check.

If you still harbor pause, just attend the Phagwah Parade which ushers in the spring, and you will see the hundreds of thousands of these ignored minorities who participate in one of the largest parades in the entire USA. Or visit the business corridors of Liberty, Jamaica, Atlantic, 101, Rockaway, Lefferts Avenues and Boulevards, JFK Airport or Resorts World and you will be convinced as to who constitute this critical mass.

Residents living in this district cannot help but feel that this is a deliberate, institutional attempt to disenfranchise them. This status quo threatens the life of their growing communities and causes new generations to grow up without representation, identity and commitment to the destiny of family, home, community, city, state and, ultimately, their country, the United States. It is a vicious and unnecessary cycle of poverty, humiliation and exploitation, leaving life and democracy better off in the Third World by comparison.

You must not precipitate this American tragedy any longer. We urge you, therefore, to redraw boundaries that will preserve their community of interests, their traditions, needs and solutions, and their common history and heritage. Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, must not be divided into different voting districts. We urge you to consolidate them now, or your actions will have been "made in violation of lawful procedure, was affected by an error of law or was arbitrary and capricious or an abuse of discretion."¹²

¹² N.Y. C.P.L.R. § 7803(3) (CONSOL. 1909)

Districts that do not meet statutory criteria that must be applied “as practicable,” are void. In *Badillo v. Katz*, *Badillo*, 343 N.Y.S.2d 451, 461 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1973), aff’d 41 A.D. 829 (N.Y. App. Div. 1973), aff’d 32 N.Y.2d 825 (1973), the New York Supreme Court struck down two of the City Council’s planned thirty-three “councilmanic” districts. It held that those districts did not meet the statutory criteria of being contiguous, convenient, and compact.

In *Favors v. Cuomo*, No. 1:11-cv-05632 (E.D.N.Y. March 19, 2012), the court ordered the Magistrate Judge to, “where possible, draw districts that preserve communities of interest, and consider other factors and proposals submitted by the parties, which... are reasonable and comport with the Constitution and applicable federal and state law.” Additionally, the court also authorized the magistrate judge to “consider other factors and proposals submitted by the parties, which...are reasonable and comport with the Constitution and applicable federal and state law.”¹³

In *Rodriguez v. Pataki*, 207 F. Supp. 2d 123, 124, 125 (S.D.N.Y. 2002), the court instructed the Special Master it appointed in the 2000 round of redistricting as follows: “adhere to and, where possible, reconcile the following guidelines:

- (a) Districts shall be of substantially equal population, compact, and contiguous.
- (b) The plan shall comply with 42 U.S.C. § 1973(b) and with all other applicable provisions of the Voting Rights Act.”

The federal courts in New York have given strong credence that they would consolidate, unite and uphold geographically defined communities of interest like Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park. This Commission is bountifully equipped with such resources and experience that litigation seems moot at this point, and we are confident that you will, collectively, unite us, as beseeched.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr’s guidance is instructive when he said that you should not make others exiles in their own land, and that you should judge each person by their content and character. Our Constitution still speaks to us all collectively, as “We the People.” So we ask you to uphold the Constitution, reminding you of the fierce urgency of now, and the sins and omissions of the past by previous partisan commissions.

It will be an unforgivable travesty for you to give us back our deserving check back yet again, like previous redistricting committees did, marked “Insufficient Funds.” Our children and families proudly fight and die for our great country, and, collectively, we continue to build America, with our blood, sweat and tears.

Right thinking Americans, like Abraham Lincoln, Emma Lazarus and others, will surely be turning in their graves. This Commission must do what you are mandated to do! Inasmuch we have been advised that these arguments constitute a valid legal claim for redress, we urge you to approve this district. Please do the right thing!

Respectfully submitted,

¹³ Order of Referral to Magistrate Judge, *Favors v. Cuomo*, No. 11-CV-5632 RR GEL, at 3 (E.D.N.Y. Mar. 19, 2012).

Albert Baldeo
Chairman, United Communities Alliance & Redistricting Coalition

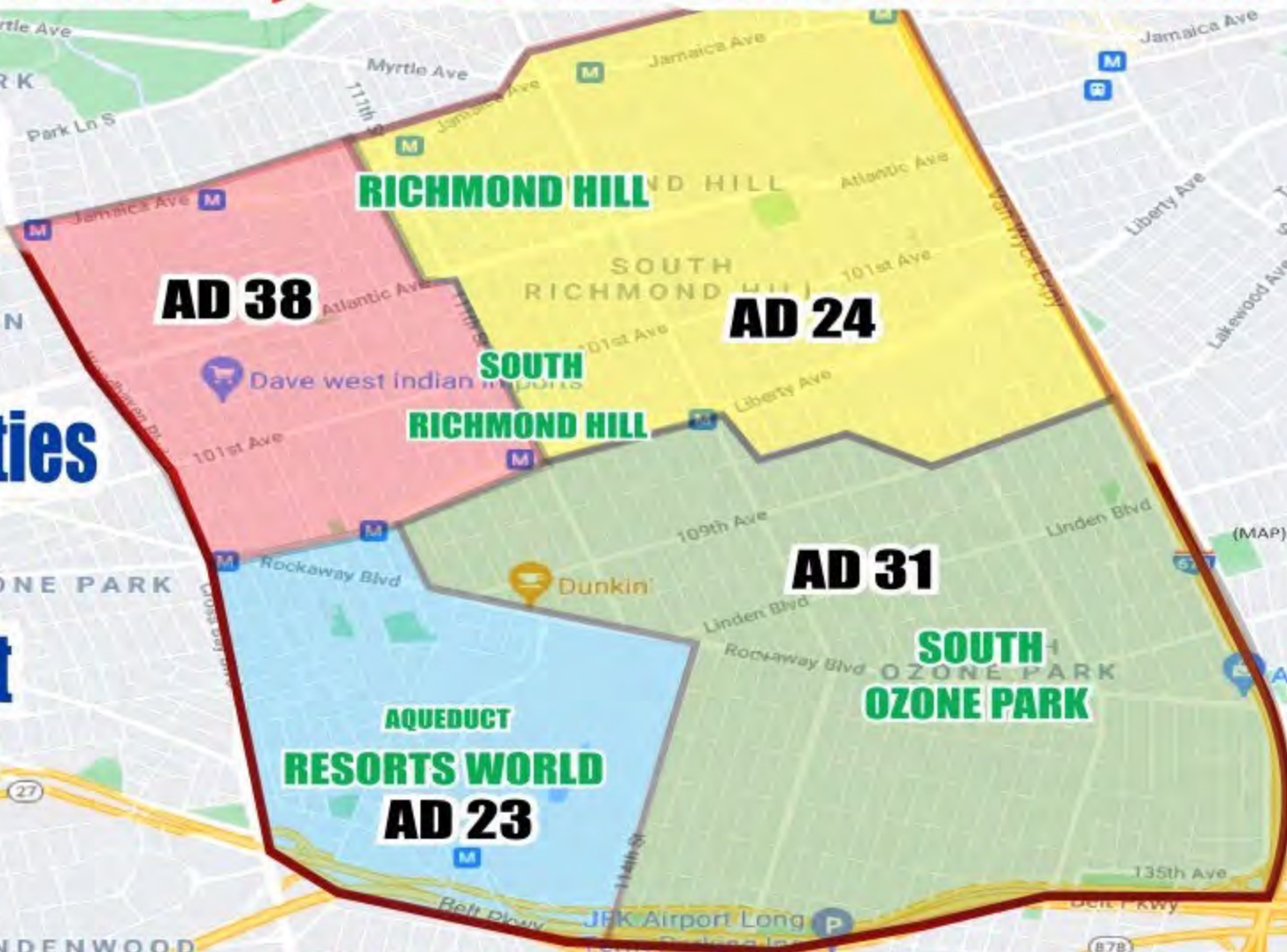
EXHIBIT A

Albert Baldeo United Communities Alliance

Unite RICHMOND HILL

OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK

Communities
of
Interest



FAIR REDISTRICTING!



UNITE
RICHMOND HILL
OZONE PARK
SOUTH OZONE PARK
COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

Keep Richmond Hill United
Fair Re-Districting

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WE DO RENT

Keep Richmond Hill United
Districting

Keep Richmond Hill United
Re-Districting

Fair Re-Districting

SOUTH OZONE PARK
COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST




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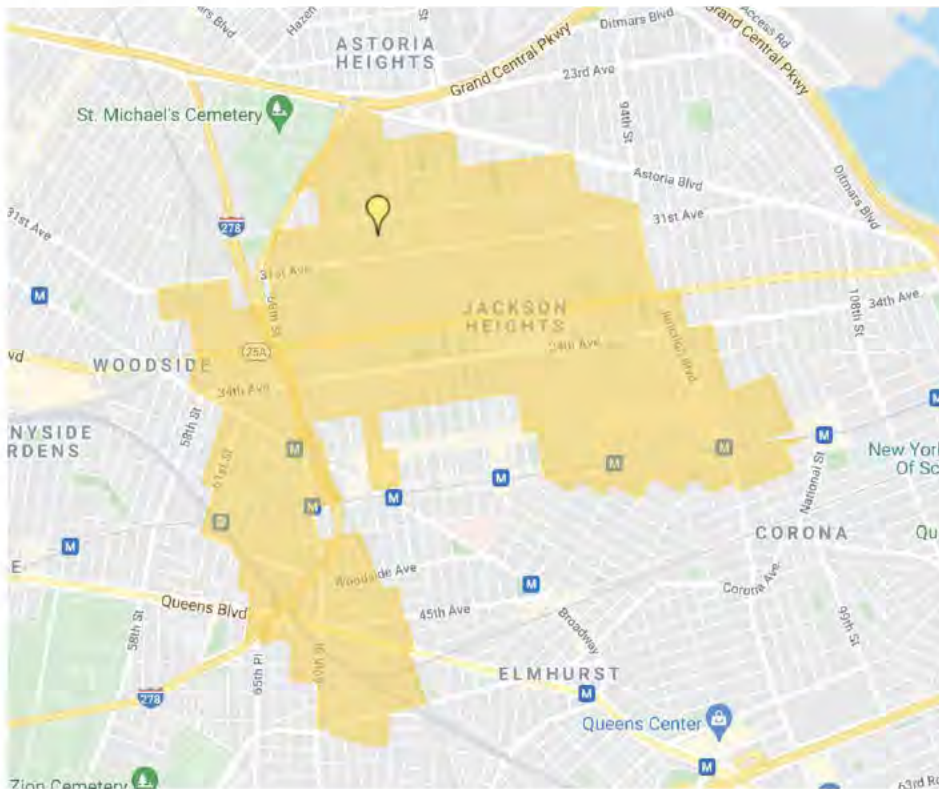
NYC RANKED-CHOICE VOTING
MORE CHOICE AT THE POLLS

Choose and rank up to 5 candidates



Queens gears up for once-in-a-decade redistricting

July 19, 2021



QUEENS RESIDENTS WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO WEIGH IN ON HOW THE COUNTY'S ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, LIKE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 34 PICTURED ABOVE, ARE DRAWN. MAP VIA JESSICA GONZÁLEZ-ROJAS/NYS ASSEMBLY

By Jacob Kaye and Rachel Vick

For the first time in history, Queens residents will have the opportunity to weigh in on the districts that will define the borough's representation in government for the next decade.

The redistricting process will begin with a public meeting for residents to share their thoughts on existing district lines with the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission. Using public input and census data, the commission will redraw electoral districts for congressional and State Legislature seats, potentially changing the make-up of who gets elected to office in Queens.

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“Residents have a chance to shape the next 10 years of representation,” said Douglas Breakell, one of the co-executive directors of the commission. “And it’s important that we have participation for this process to work.”

Redistricting was formerly a partisan process prior to 2014, when a state law was passed to bestow the map drawing powers into the hands of the commission, which is made of five Democratic and five Republican members and two co-executive directors.

Also new to the process is the public comment period. In Queens, residents will have the opportunity to submit testimony and speak about the ways in which they wish to see the lines redrawn at 2 p.m. on Thursday, July 22.

Karen Blatt, the commission’s other co-executive director, said she hopes people share not only how they are negatively impacted but also how they are positively impacted by district lines.

After detailed census data is released next month, the commission will draw up a first draft of new districts. Following the first map, more public input will be collected and then the commission will present a final draft to the State Senate and Assembly.

If the legislature rejects the map twice, the lawmakers will have the opportunity to draw their own maps.

Queens representatives say that they have faith in the commission and in the process, which they feel should be independent of political motivations.

“It’s really critical that districts that are put together to reflect their communities and do so in an equitable and fair way,” said Assemblymember Nily Rozic. “You want [districts] that are contiguous, that are practical, that encourage people to participate in government, that look like the people that they’re aiming to represent and that that happen in an independent and fair way.”

Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas, a first-term lawmaker representing Assembly District 34, said that while she believes the process should be independent, she’s hoping the new lines reflect her community’s interests and are more cohesive than the current map.

Assembly District 34 is made up of portions of several neighborhoods. The District 34 map resembles a handgun, with a slim portion running south through Woodside and into Elmhurst, with a larger portion running east into Jackson Heights and Corona.

“As someone who represents a community, I want to have a very strong stake in what the lines look like and how it’s carved up,” González-Rojas said. “[The Independent Redistricting Commission] is great. It should be a very independent process. But obviously, as someone who represents this district, it’s important to me what the lines will look like and how it will change.”

“I don’t actually have one community that’s intact,” González-Rojas said.

Other electoral maps in Queens represent the ideal scenario; connected neighborhoods that represent the population without being skewed for political gain.

“I’m lucky, compared to most, that my district actually seems to make some sense,” said Astoria Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani. “The way in which

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it's been drawn, it isn't leaps and bounds to cut out some things and add in others.”

In districts that do cut through portions of neighborhoods, or leave out certain ethnic, racial or economic populations, voters have their franchise infringed upon, Mamdani said.

“There are some [districts] where it cuts into part of a neighborhood and then cuts out and is doing the work to ensure that certain constituencies have their voting power diluted,” he said.

The commission is tasked with a balancing act, juggling fair redistricting for communities with an obligation to evenly distribute the population – a rule responsible for every congressional district in Queens except one crossing county lines.

There is only a small deviation allowed between districts, said Jeffrey Wice, director of the New York Law School's New York Census and Redistricting Institute.


“The question becomes how many congressional districts Queens [will] retain wholly in the borough or share with other counties and this will all depend on what the census data shows on the local level,” Wice said.


“New lines will be set in place for 10 years and will help determine who represents Queens; everything is dependent on programs and dollars, and that's dependent on electoral districts,” he added. “If you don't think your district is properly represented, this is the time to speak up. There's no second chance – we have one opportunity to take the census and one opportunity to redraw the lines and that... lasts for a decade.”

Queens residents can sign up to speak at the Independent Redistricting Commission's hearing at nyirc.gov/meetings.

 Jacob Kaye  0 Comments

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 News, Politics

 Redistricting, Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, Zohran Ma, Nily Ro, State Assembly, State Senate, Congressional Districts, New York State Independent Redistricting Commission, Douglas Breakell, Karen Blatt

< QUEENS ACTOR INDICTED ON JAIL OFFICERS UNION FILES SUIT

EXHIBIT B

Around the World in New York City: A Neighborhood Itinerary

BY WHITNEY BROWN - October 9, 2020

New York City is an entire world, all on its own. Its residents come from countries spanning every continent, and the sizable immigrant population (from first generation to current inhabitants) has made the Big Apple feel more like home by establishing ethnic neighborhoods across the city. And while you've probably heard of Chinatown and Little Italy, there are many other neighborhoods for globetrotters to add to their New York City itinerary — or for residents to visit to simulate traveling the world while staying close to home. Here are just a few of them.

LITTLE SENEGAL

To find West Africa in New York City, simply head to Harlem. Little Senegal, also referred to as “Le Petit Sénégal,” is a thriving cultural enclave, where both the music and food have a distinctly African flavor. Although most of the neighborhood’s residents are Senegalese, people from Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, and other African nations have also made their homes here.

In Little Senegal, you'll find authentic restaurants like Africa Kine and Le Baobab, as well as Red Rooster, an American restaurant that sprinkles its food with African spices. No matter which Senegalese restaurant you choose, make sure to try the *yassa* (chicken or fish cooked with onion, garlic, lemon juice, and mustard) or the *thiakry* (a couscous dish topped with fruit, sour cream, and pure vanilla extract). You should also check out the Malcolm Shabazz Market, where vendors sell hand-carved figures, traditional garb, and jewelry. And if you happen to be visiting New York during September, you'll want to check the dates for the annual African-American Day Parade.



Photo by Camille Danielich

You can find Little Senegal on and around West 116th Street in Harlem. The most convenient subway stop is 116 Street/8 Avenue on the B train.

LITTLE GUYANA

Located in Queens, this neighborhood is an exciting hub of Guyanese life. The Guyanese are descendants of slaves brought from Africa by the Dutch and indentured servants brought from India by the British; today, Guyana is the only English-speaking country in South America, and its culture is a smooth blend of Indian and Caribbean characteristics.

There are about 140,000 people of Guyanese descent living in New York City today, and they've left their mark. You'll notice Christians, Hindus, and Muslims roaming through Little Guyana. Liberty Avenue is the neighborhood's main thoroughfare, where you can find notable restaurants like Sybil's — but wherever you eat, consider ordering curry, fish, or oxtail.

Little Guyana is at its most vibrant during the Phagwah Parade, celebrating the arrival of spring during the Hindu festival of Holi. The parade makes Little Guyana feel vibrant and colorful, especially since people celebrate by tossing bright, colorful powders in the air.

You can find Little Guyana in the Richmond Hill area of Queens. The most convenient subway stop is Ozone Park – Lefferts Boulevard on the A train.

LITTLE ITALY

Without a doubt the most iconic “little” neighborhood in New York City, Little Italy can feel like a tourist thoroughfare. Its streets are crowded with Italian restaurants, clothing stores, and — of course — people.

Mulberry Street is the best-known road that runs through the neighborhood; as you walk it, keep an eye out for street art! As far as Little Italy’s iconic buildings go, check out St. Patrick’s Cathedral. You can also venture into NoLita (“North of Little Italy”) to see the former NYPD headquarters, now converted into luxury apartments.



Photo by Milla Olsson

Although there are good reasons to visit throughout the entire year, Little Italy is at its best in September during the Feast of San Gennaro, when a festive atmosphere settles over the neighborhood. Throughout the celebration, parades, live music, delicious food, and events like a cannoli-eating competition bring Little Italy to life, for both locals and visitors.



Photo by Oisín McEvoy

You can find Little Italy just northeast of Chinatown in lower Manhattan. The most convenient subway stops are Spring Street on the 6 train and Canal – Lafayette on the J, N, Q, R, W, Z, 4, and 6 lines.

LITTLE COLOMBIA

A perfect afternoon stop for anyone who loves salsa music, Little Colombia is a vibrant neighborhood in the Jackson Heights area of Queens. Along Roosevelt and 37th Avenues, you'll find plenty of traditional restaurants serving up delicious food — empanadas, fried fish, and arepas, to name just a few dishes. Try Pollos A La Brasa Mario for casual dining or La Pequeña Colombia for a more upscale experience. In the evenings, track down the Arepa Lady food truck for tasty street food options.

Little Colombia pulses with salsa music, so don't be surprised when you hear it playing in the streets. The neighborhood lights up even more during the summer, when several parades and parties pass through the area. The Colombian Independence Day Parade, which usually takes place on a Saturday in late July, is the most festive of all.

You can find Little Colombia in the Jackson Heights area of Queens. The most convenient subway stop is Jackson Heights – Roosevelt Avenue on the E, F, M, R, and 7 lines.

KOREATOWN

New York City has a huge Korean population, so Koreatown doesn't disappoint. And even though few people actually *live* here, the neighborhood is densely packed with businesses — from spas to stores, and from bars to Korean barbecue joints. Ktown is tucked in the shadow of the Empire State Building and, after sunset, it lights up in bright neon signs, with almost every business open 24/7. Swing by anytime for a taste of Seoul in New York City!

Some of Koreatown's highlights include Gagopa Karaoke (with a BYOB policy and more than 30,000 songs in its repertoire), deluxe spas dotted throughout the neighborhood, and Gaonnori (a fancy Korean barbecue restaurant offering panoramic views of Manhattan).

Photo by Camille Danielich

Photo by Camille Danielich

Photo by Camille Danielich

You can find Koreatown between Fifth Avenue and Broadway, with 32nd Street running down the center. The most convenient subway stop is 34 Street – Herald Square on the B, D, F, M, N, Q, R, and W trains.

CHINATOWN

From bakeries to bars, pharmacies to temples, there's a reason that New York City is home to one of the most famous Chinatowns in the world. Although the neighborhood is best known

English Language Proficiency by Country of Birth New York City, 2011

	Population 5 and over	Percent not English Proficient
Total, NYC	7,711,330	23.0
Native-born	4,665,425	6.2
Foreign-born	3,045,905	48.8
Dominican Republic	365,232	70.0
China	357,476	74.8
Mexico	178,295	82.1
Jamaica	169,504	1.0
Guyana	136,906	1.8
Ecuador	142,753	75.8
Haiti	102,042	49.6
Trinidad and Tobago	87,868	1.3
India	79,080	32.4
Russia	74,235	63.2
Bangladesh	74,323	58.4
Korea	68,049	62.8
Colombia	63,511	63.5
Ukraine	63,110	70.9
Poland	52,669	48.7
Philippines	45,115	24.4
Italy	50,413	45.0
Pakistan	37,418	45.4
United Kingdom	33,152	1.2
El Salvador	30,794	79.4

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey-Public Use Microdata Sample
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning



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News

Guyanese migrate to S. Ozone Park

By Sarina Trangle

0 comments

Posted on January 14, 2014



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QNS

By Sarina Trangle

Guyanese migrating from Richmond Hill to South Ozone Park propelled the neighborhood into the top immigrant-adding neighborhood in the borough.

Surveys taken in 2000 and 2007 through 2011 show South Ozone Park's foreign-born population increased 14.5 percent from 39,899 to 45,681. The most current statistics included in the Department of City Planning's "Newest New Yorkers" report indicate that 58.3 percent of the neighborhood was born outside America, with 46.5 percent of its immigrant population hailing from Guyana.

The neighborhood also drew in Caribbean immigrants of Asian descent, with 14.4 percent of its foreign-born population from Trinidad and Tobago, 3.7 percent from the Dominican Republic, 3 percent from Jamaica and 1.8 percent from Colombia.

"As with Guyanese immigrants, Trinidadian and Tobagonian immigrants of Asian and African descent each had a preferred borough of residence. Queens accounted for the overwhelming majority (73 percent) of New

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York's Trinidadian and Tobagonian immigrants of Asian descent, while Brooklyn settled nearly two-thirds of those of African descent," the report noted.

South Ozone Park has a large Indian population as well, with immigrants from the country accounting for 5.4 percent of its foreign-born population.

To a lesser extent, people from Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador and China have found a home in South Ozone Park. The report indicates each of those immigrant groups accounts for less than 4 percent of the area's foreign-born population.

In the 1990s, the Guyanese enclave in Richmond Hill began expanding into South Ozone Park, according to the report.



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Vishnu Mahadeo, founder and president of the Richmond Hill Economic Development Council, said Guyanese families who grew tired of the more urban environment in Richmond Hill sought more residential homes in South Ozone Park.

By 2011, nearly a quarter of the city's Guyanese population resided in the two neighborhoods.

The Indo-Guyanese began a campaign encouraging the community to participate in the census, with the hopes that more accurate demographic statistics would help them mend city and state political districts and field the first Guyanese City Council candidate in 2001. To date, the Guyanese community is split between four Council and six state Assembly seats, according to Mahadeo.

“Gerrymandering works against the Caribbean community,” he said. “They have gotten so accustomed to being overlooked and neglected that everyone here has to rely on themselves.”

*Reach reporter Sarina Trangle at
718-260-4546 or by e-mail at
strangle@cnglocal.com.*



Photo by Christina Santucci

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QNS

In Little Guyana, Proposed Cuts to Family Immigration Weigh Heavily

By Vivian Wang

Aug. 11, 2017

Richard David's face is plastered around the Richmond Hill neighborhood of Queens. Along Liberty Avenue, on posters in the windows of sari shops and roti restaurants, Mr. David advertises his campaign for City Council, which, if successful, would make him New York's first city councilman of Guyanese descent.

One of Mr. David's campaign promises: securing money for resources like immigration lawyers or language assistance for the diverse neighborhood that includes Little Guyana, a hub of the largest Guyanese community outside of the country itself.

It is also the community in New York City that could lose the most from a new federal effort to cut legal immigration in half, in part by limiting what are known as family preference visas, which go to the siblings, grandchildren, in-laws or adult children of United States citizens, as well as the spouses and children of legal permanent residents. That is exactly the kind of visa that allowed Mr. David to immigrate from Guyana in 1995, and that helped bring other members of his family into the country, too, as recently as last month.

"Eight family members of mine just came through family sponsorship on the Fourth of July," Mr. David said. His grandmother sponsored two adult daughters, who also brought their children. Of the proposed immigration bill, which was endorsed by President Trump last week, Mr. David said, "This could cease or significantly reduce Guyanese migration to the country."

It is unclear if the bill will ever become law.

The Guyanese community brings in more people through family preference visas than any other immigrant group in the city. Of the Guyanese in New York City who received legal permanent residence between 2002 and 2011, 60 percent entered on family preference visas, according to a 2013 report by the Department of City Planning. Thirty-seven percent entered as immediate relatives, an uncapped visa category that includes the spouses, parents and minor children of citizens.

Foreign-born Guyanese people make up a tiny share of the United States as a whole — just over 280,000 people in 2015, or 0.09 percent of the total population — but a hefty share of New York City's immigrant population. More than half of the Guyanese population in the United States lives in New York City, according to city data, making it the fifth-largest immigrant population in the five boroughs and the second-largest in Queens.

"Their propensity to come to New York City is very high," said Joseph J. Salvo, chief demographer at the Department of City Planning. "And they are heavily reliant on family preferences — and reliant on categories that, under this proposal, would disappear. There's no question that they would be affected in a dramatic fashion."

The bill, sponsored by Senators Tom Cotton of Arkansas and David Perdue of Georgia, seeks to reduce the number of people granted legal permanent residency each year — currently more than one million — by 41 percent in its first year and 50 percent by its 10th year, according to its sponsors' estimates.

To do that, it proposes narrowing the definition of immediate relatives, removing parents from the list and lowering the age of qualifying children to 18 from 21. Siblings of citizens, as well as the adult children of citizens or permanent residents, would no longer be eligible for family sponsorship. The total number of family preference visas would be cut to 88,000 a year, a 60 percent reduction from the current 226,000.

Of New York City's Guyanese immigrants who became legal permanent residents from 2002 to 2011, 45 percent were the parents, married children or siblings of citizens, or their spouses or children, according to the city's data. If the proposed bill had been law at the time, nearly half of new Guyanese immigrants to the city would have been ineligible.

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For a community that relies upon tightly knit family units, where multiple generations live together in one house and grandparents often care for grandchildren while parents work, the constriction of family immigration would be especially wrenching.

“In our Guyanese community, nuclear family is not tied down to mother, father, children,” said Deborah Assanah, 56, associate director of the Guyana Cultural Association. “We have like a village of family members who assist with raising the kids.”

The Guyanese community, which includes people of Indian, African, Chinese and indigenous descent, has one of the highest rates of female labor force participation among New York City immigrants, perhaps aided by the availability of extended family to care for young children, said Philip Kasinitz, a sociology professor at the City University of New York.

And because many Guyanese immigrants send remittances to relatives at home, cutting off family immigration would effectively make immigrants responsible for financially maintaining two households, with no prospect of reunification, said Vishnu Mahadeo, president of the Richmond Hill Economic Development Council.



The Little Guyana neighborhood is a hub of the largest Guyanese community outside of the country itself. Damon Winter/The New York Times

Additionally, many Guyanese parents prefer for their children to come to the United States either as very young children or after they have completed their education, so that they can integrate more easily into American society or the work force, Ms. Assanah said. But that means many are older when they immigrate, making them targets of the new proposal Ms. Assanah immigrated in 2008, sponsored by her husband, who is a citizen. A few years earlier, he also sponsored their twin daughters, who were 21 at the time — older than the proposed new cutoff

Many Guyanese had not yet focused on the bill. Vrinda Jagan, a lawyer in Richmond Hill who works on immigration, said that immediately after the November election, clients flooded her office with questions and pleas for reassurance that they would not be deported en masse. But nobody had asked her about the new bill, she said. And applications for family sponsorship have not flagged since President Trump’s endorsement of it

“I sent out a few this week,” she said “They’re continuing to petition for their family members, and they’re petitioning for their spouses, their children, a lot of children over 21. That hasn’t changed.”

The policy would be most devastating to people whose applications for family sponsored visas had been pending for years, said Randy Capps, director of United States research at the Migration Policy Institute.

Especially for those with lower priority cases, like siblings or married children, the wait can be 10 years or even more.

At Singh's Roti Shop and Bar on Liberty Avenue, Sandra, who asked to be identified by only her first name because she feared disrupting her immigration proceedings, said she had been waiting on family sponsorship for 12 years; she was in the United States on a tourist visa.

She was being sponsored by her sister-in-law, who had submitted an application for her brother, Sandra's husband. Under the current system, Sandra and her three children would be allowed to enter as well.

If the bill were passed, Sandra said, "I would feel bad, because you wait so long." Her children, who have never been to the United States, are eagerly awaiting the day the application is approved. "They're so excited," she said.

Follow Vivian Wang on Twitter @vwang3

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 20 of the New York edition with the headline: In Little Guyana, Family Visa Cuts Would Be Painful

Little Guyana, an Indo-Guyanese enclave in Queens

By Ray Cavanaugh

October 9, 2014

Nobody told me about Little Guyana, a mile-plus-long stretch in the Richmond Hill neighborhood of Queens where the residents are Indian but sound like Bob Marley when they speak.

I discovered it by accident when I fell asleep on the A train, passed up my intended destination and was awakened by a fellow passenger telling me that the train had reached its last stop. The people here, known as Indo-Guyanese, are mainly descendants of indentured servants who were recruited from India (often by deceptive tactics) to work on the sugar plantations of present-day Guyana — formerly known as British Guiana — starting in 1838, when the British abolished black slavery in their colonies.

I was surprised to learn that the Guyanese are New York's fifth-largest immigrant group, according to American Community Survey figures reported by multiple media outlets. It's probably safe to say that many, if not most, Americans know little or nothing about Guyana, a small nation on the northeast coast of South America, although some may recall the 1978 Jonestown atrocity, in which cult leader Jim Jones persuaded (or forced) more than 900 of his followers to commit suicide by drinking poisoned Kool-Aid in the agrarian utopia he'd founded in that country.

Aside from a few Creole-sounding words, there's no real language barrier in this neighborhood. Guyana is South America's only English-speaking country. It's also considered part of the Caribbean, and this West Indies connection accounts for the Bob Marley accent here in Little Guyana, a neighborhood that began to take shape in the 1970s.

Upon my unplanned arrival, I exited from the subway station onto Liberty Avenue, which cuts through the Queens neighborhoods of Richmond Hill and Ozone Park, and is the throbbing heart of Little Guyana. Refreshed by my subway snooze, I felt like walking a mile or so in the direction of the place I'd intended to visit. This intended destination was soon forgotten, though, as the Little Guyana carnival atmosphere cast its spell on me.

It would be difficult to overstate the vibrancy: I was hard-pressed to pass a block of storefronts without witnessing the full color spectrum on display. Nearby 101st Avenue has considerable flavor, but nothing approaching the bewitching carpet ride of Liberty Avenue. The Little Guyana strip runs from 104th to 130th

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I kept hearing a wild type of music that I later learned is called “chutney.” It contains sounds of the Far East, but has a faster tempo and a more pulsating beat, reflecting the Caribbean influence. Because the weather was pleasant, cars with open windows kept delivering a loud dose of chutney. In many cases, though, open windows were superfluous; some vehicles were equipped with speakers that blasted the music as if it were a block party.

Aesthetically, Liberty Avenue is less than flawless. Suspended overhead is a subway rail, an old structure that emits a cacophony of squeaks every few minutes as a train passes by. I also had to dodge some bird droppings. Urban grit is rife, but there’s no real danger.

The strip is bustling and unabashedly commercial. A house of worship might stand 30 feet from a rum joint and right next door to a henna tattoo parlor. Within three minutes of people-watching, I’d spotted Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and cross-wearing Christians passing by the same street corner. In a five-block radius you’ll find a Pentecostal church, a Jehovah’s Witness kingdom hall, a Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Hindu temple and an Islamic clothing store.

There’s also a spiritual venue directly beneath a subway entrance. This is called the Sri Durgamatha Astrological Center, where you can ascertain your everlasting destiny, for better or worse. I tried to go in, but the place was closed. Hopefully, there was no deeper meaning there.

Although many women go about in Western garb, I saw no shortage of saris, the traditional Indian dress, or sari shops, where prices range from a few dollars to many times that amount. My bargain-hunting senses were titillated by the DVD boxes full of low-priced Bollywood flicks at many spots along the strip.

At one point along Liberty Avenue, I encountered a snacker’s nirvana. I obtained a bite of heaven at the Little Guyana Bake Shop, where a mere 85 cents purchased me a coconut bun that was as sweet and fluffy as it was addictive. I then considered some pine tarts, cheese rolls and crunchy Guyanese sal sev biscuits. But I opted for jalebi (a circular sweet with the chewiest of textures) and salara (an especially decadent red coconut roll).

A few blocks from the Bake Shop, I met a machete-wielding man who offered, for \$3, to hack open a coconut and plunge in a straw for my exotic refreshment. I thought about it but declined. Then I asked whether I could take a picture of him swinging his machete. He declined.

An intriguingly high number of restaurants were serving Chinese food done Guyanese style. As it turns out, a small population of Chinese also once worked as indentured servants in Guyana; they left their culinary mark on their Indian counterparts.

Despite some occasional banality — CVS, 7-Eleven, McDonald’s — the overall cultural thumbprint is strong, about as much as it’s possible to find in the United States in 2014. That said, I’ve read that there has been discussion in the community about how to answer the classic multiple-choice ethnicity question: Despite

being from South America, the Guyanese are not Latino. Nor are they black, white or East Asian. So, what are they?

I'm not sure, except to say that they're a colorful and distinctive blend, just like their neighborhood.

Cavanaugh is a freelance writer in Massachusetts.

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IF YOU GO

GETTING THERE

From Manhattan, head to either the 42nd Street Port Authority subway stop or the 34th Street Penn Station subway stop, and take the A train to its final stop: Ozone Park — Lefferts Boulevard. Exit onto Liberty Avenue.

STAYING THERE

Days Inn and Suites

137-08 Redding St., Ozone Park

www.daysinn.com

718-845-6666

Newly built hotel offering free breakfast, exercise facilities and quick access to the subway. From \$109 a night.

EATING THERE

Singh's Roti Shop Restaurant and Bar

131-14 Liberty Ave.

718-323-5990

www.singhsrotishopnyc.com

Feast on dishes including curry, jerk chicken and fried shark. There is also an extensive vegetarian menu. Meals start at \$5.

Little Guyana Bake Shop

116-04 and 124-13 Liberty Ave.

718-843-6530; 718-843-4200

Enjoy breads, biscuits, cakes, tarts, and other forms of decadence from less than \$1.

SHOPPING THERE

Shakti Saree & Spiritual

124-15 Liberty Ave.

718-738-1300

www.shaktisaree.com

Find a vibrant selection of old-world Indian apparel, religious relics and musical instruments.

— **R.C.**

 **7 Comments**

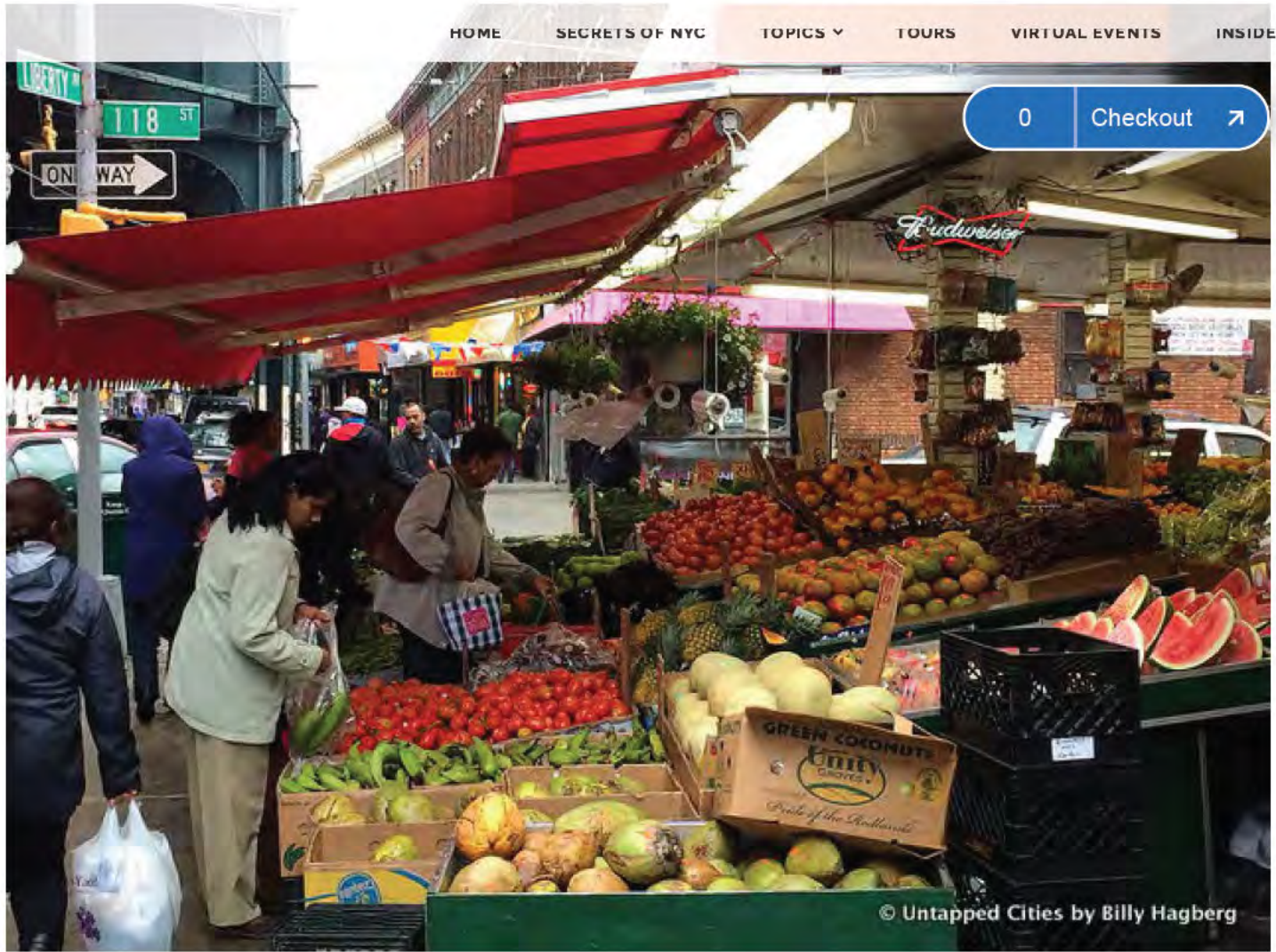
Ray Cavanaugh

Ray Cavanaugh is a freelance writer from Boston.

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ARCHITECTURE FEATURED NEW YORK

NYC'S MICRO NEIGHBORHOODS: LITTLE GUYANA IN RICHMOND HILL, QUEENS



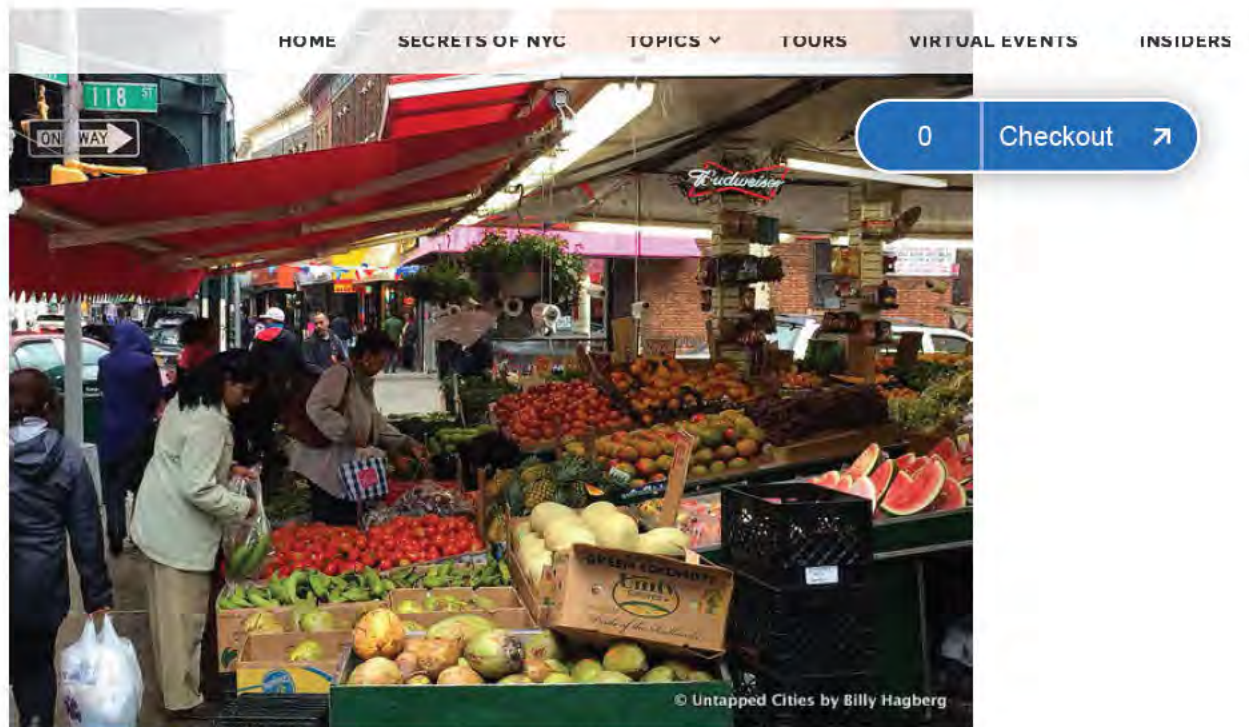
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BILLY HAGBERG

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Open air markets are a common sight in Little Guyana

Welcome back to our *Untapped Cities* series on [NYC's Micro Neighborhoods](#), where we delve into long standing ethnic enclaves.

Bordered by Kew Gardens to the north, Woodhaven to the west and Jamaica to its South, Richmond Hill in [Queens](#) has long been home to a hodgepodge of European immigrants. More recently, and occasionally making the news, Richmond Hill also houses the [largest Sikh population in NYC](#). However, since the 1970s, many Caribbean Indians have been calling the southern part of the neighborhood home, one of the largest populations being from Guyana.



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Checkout ↗

© Untapped Cities by Billy Hagberg

Fresh fruit with pepper sauce on sale

Along Liberty Avenue, named for being the only toll-free road in the area during a bygone era, you'd be hard-pressed to find a pizza or deli. Dotting the main drag are roti and dooble (a street sandwich consisting of fried bread, curried chick peas and topped with Caribbean spices, cucumber, coconut and a hot pepper sauce) shops interspersed with clothing stores selling fabric and traditional Indian clothing.

Guyana itself is a small South American country of mixed cultural and ethnic heritage, predominantly a mix of Indian and local peoples. This combination of Caribbean and South Asian culture is extremely unique and while many Guyanese immigrants have settled in **Bushwick** and Canarsie, one of the largest pockets has settled into Richmond Hill.



Local stores offer a variety of traditional Indian clothing

Most easily accessible by the [A train](#), getting to the heart of Little Guyana can be a long but fairly straightforward trip, and well worth it for the culinary-minded. As diverse as its citizens, Little Guyana offers Caribbean twists on traditional Indian cooking. While predominantly Indian, you can find Caribbean, African and Chinese food—and every combination therein—to accommodate any price range. Guyanese restaurants and bakeries are abundant, notably Sybil's Bakery and Restaurant Shop where you can taste the gambit of traditional Guyanese meals and the [Little Guyanese Bake Shop](#) which offers a variety of traditional cakes, breads and sweets.



Inside the Little Guyanese Bake Shop

The neighborhood has various sit-down [restaurants](#) and street-fare stalls as well, from Caribbean-Suriname crossover to Trinidadian "bake and shark" (exactly as it sounds; fried shark on a dough bun) to Chinese-infused curry dishes. Near the larger markets, it's not unusual to find a picnic table selling fresh peppered mangoes and melons.

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Checkout



© Untapped Cities by Billy Hagberg

With active commerce throughout the day and bars offering a variety of spiced rum and live music at night, Little Guyana is strip of bright and flavorful sights and sensations running through Richmond Hill. While larger chains have begun moving onto the main drag, visitors to the neighborhood can still find themselves in the middle of an incredibly unique intersection of cultures.

Read more about [Richmond Hill's Sikh population](#) and watch a session with Indian singer [Laddi B.](#) The author can be contacted via Twitter [@jimipage26](#)

EXHIBIT C

00:00 

02:10

CORONAVIRUS

Richmond Hill Sees Highest COVID-19 Positivity Rate in NYC

BY SHANNAN FERRY NEW YORK CITY
PUBLISHED 9:24 PM ET JAN. 12, 2021

Vishnu Mahadeo is sounding the alarm about the high rate of coronavirus in his neighborhood.

As of Tuesday night, the city reported zip code 11419 with a COVID-19 positivity rate of 16.31%, making Richmond Hill, Queens the highest across the five boroughs.

“You know how sad it is, imagine this, I take a senior to the hospital they get tested positive, and that’s the last I see them,” he said.

Mahadeo is a longtime resident of Richmond Hill and a community activist who involved in several organizations.

On Tuesday, he distributed masks and literature throughout the neighborhood,

Many people took it for granted that their family members were not impacted or infected and now we are beginning to find it out there are consequences,” he said.

Kennard Lall was among those to pick up face masks from Mahadeo. He too is frightened to hear about the positivity rate in this zip code.

Because of the virus, you need to always get this in stock you know, this is something you need more than food right now,” Lall said.

Zip code 11420 nearby in South Ozone park also had a high rate of nearly 15% as of Tuesday evening Mahadeo says he will try to lower the positivity rate one conversation at a time.

Some people are very skeptical they say oh this is a way of getting more money and I say no this is an opportunity for you to make yourself better,” he said

Mahadeo will be distributing masks again Saturday at L Fernandez Pharmacy on Liberty Avenue from 11a.m. to 1pm.

He also plans to distribute them on Sunday at the Sikh Cultural Society on 118th St from 11a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Neighborhood Data Profiles

Search for data summaries of NYC neighborhoods by ZIP code to see how COVID-19 is affecting your community.

Enter your ZIP code or neighborhood:

Your Neighborhood: **11417: Ozone Park**

Totals

Population: 31,041

Totals

Cases: **3,610** **One out of every 8** people in this neighborhood was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Deaths: **84** **One out of every 369** people in this neighborhood died of COVID-19.

People Vaccinated: **19,452** Of these people, 17,970 people are **fully vaccinated**.
(at least 1 dose)

Comparisons

Case rate: **11,629.65** **Higher** than the Queens case rate of **10,285.56** .
per 100,000 **Higher** than New York City's case rate of **9520.43** .

Death rate: **270.61** **Lower** than the Queens death rate of **384.23** .
per 100,000 **Lower** than New York City's death rate of **340.53** .

Vaccination: **62.66%** **Lower** than the Queens vaccination rate of **64.17%** .
(at least 1 dose) **Higher** than New York City's vaccination rate of **58.19%**

Rates are numbers that are adjusted for population (similar to per capita). They help us compare areas with different population sizes by showing how common cases or deaths are. Some neighborhoods may have more people reported vaccinated than our estimate for the underlying population.

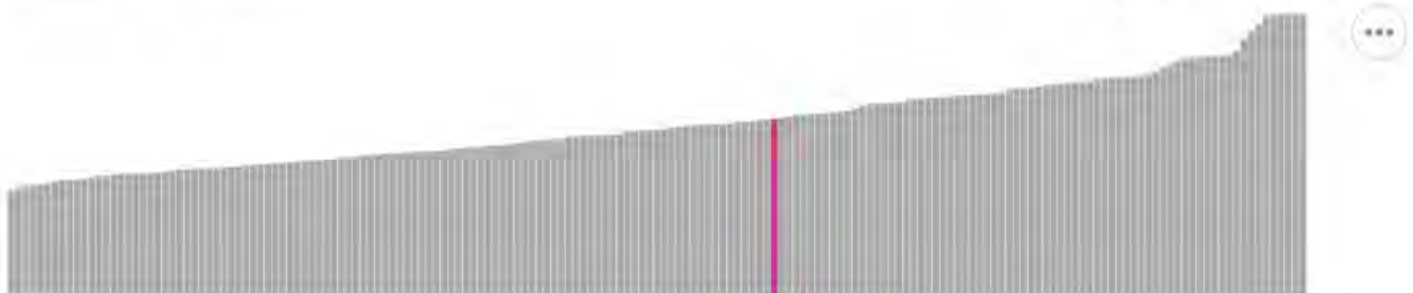
For more data since February 29, 2020, visit [COVID-19 Data: Totals](#).

Vaccination Rates

At least 1 dose Fully vaccinated

Lowest ZIP: **36.9 %**

Highest ZIP: **99.36 %**



In **11417: Ozone Park**:

- **62.66 %** of people have had at least 1 dose.

- That is **Higher** than the median, **58.76 %** of people.

The **median** is the middle value of all the values. Half of neighborhoods have a higher value than the median and half have a lower value. Neighborhoods with 99.9% may have more people reported vaccinated than our estimate for the underlying population.

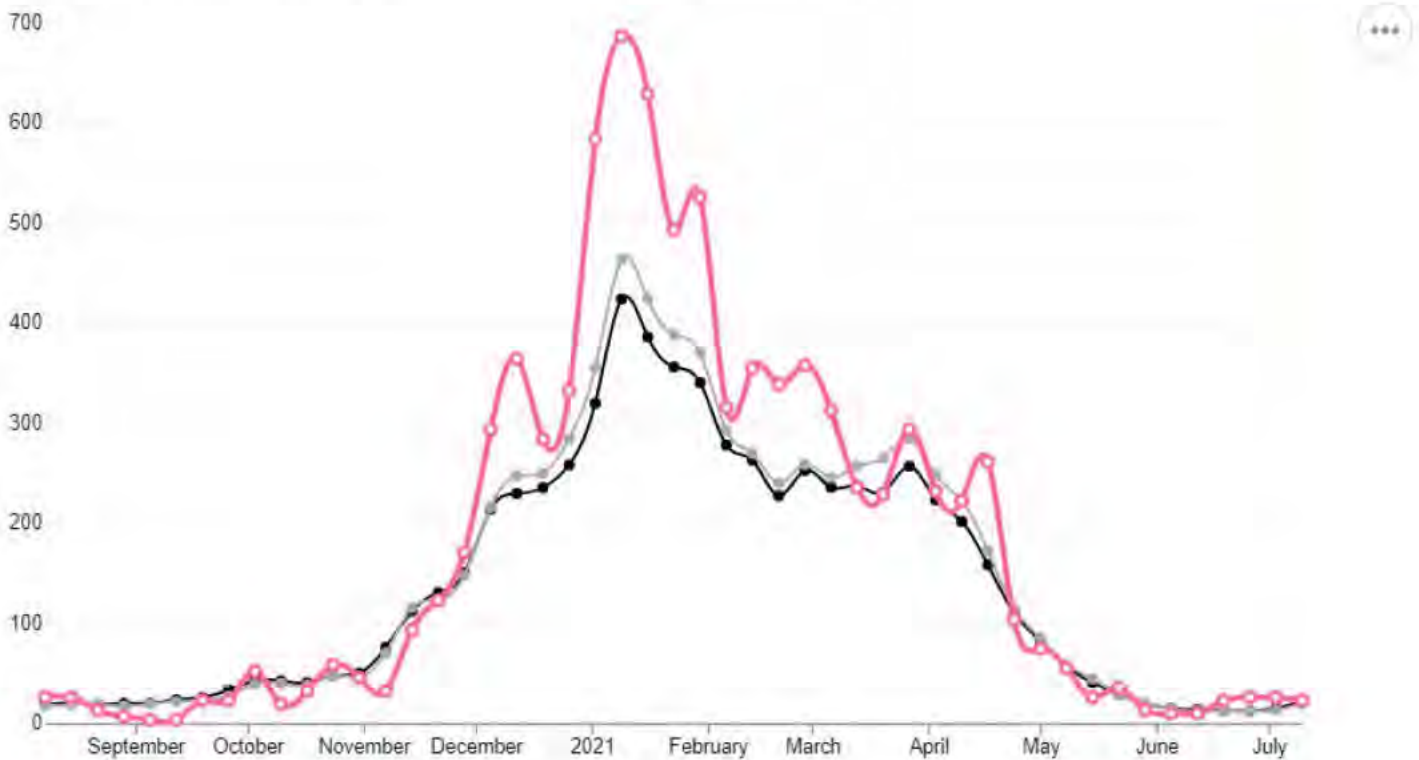
For more vaccination data, visit [COVID-19 Data: Vaccines](#).

Trends Over Time

These charts compare data for your selected ZIP code to your borough and the city. They show whether the pandemic is getting better, getting worse or staying stable. The virus is controlled if neighborhoods have a high test rate, low percent positivity and low case rate.

Case rate Test rate Percent positive

Case rate (per 100,000 people) in 11417 , Queens , and all of NYC



For trend data, visit [COVID-19 Data: Trends](#).

All data is provided at the modified ZIP Code Tabulation Area level. Get more information about modified ZIP Code Tabulation Areas

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Neighborhood Data Profiles

Search for data summaries of NYC neighborhoods by ZIP code to see how COVID-19 is affecting your community.

Enter your ZIP code or neighborhood:

Your Neighborhood: 11419: Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park

Totals

Population: **48,504**

Totals

Cases: **5,952** **One out of every 8** people in this neighborhood was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Deaths: **168** **One out of every 288** people in this neighborhood died of COVID-19.

People Vaccinated: **31,854** Of these people, 29,072 people are **fully vaccinated**.
(at least 1 dose)

Comparisons

Case rate: **12,270.92** **Higher** than the Queens case rate of **10,285.56** .
per 100,000 **Higher** than New York City's case rate of **9520.43** .

Death rate: **346.36** **Lower** than the Queens death rate of **384.23** .
per 100,000 **Higher** than New York City's death rate of **340.53** .

Vaccination: **65.67%** **Higher** than the Queens vaccination rate of **64.17%** .
(at least 1 dose) **Higher** than New York City's vaccination rate of **58.19%**

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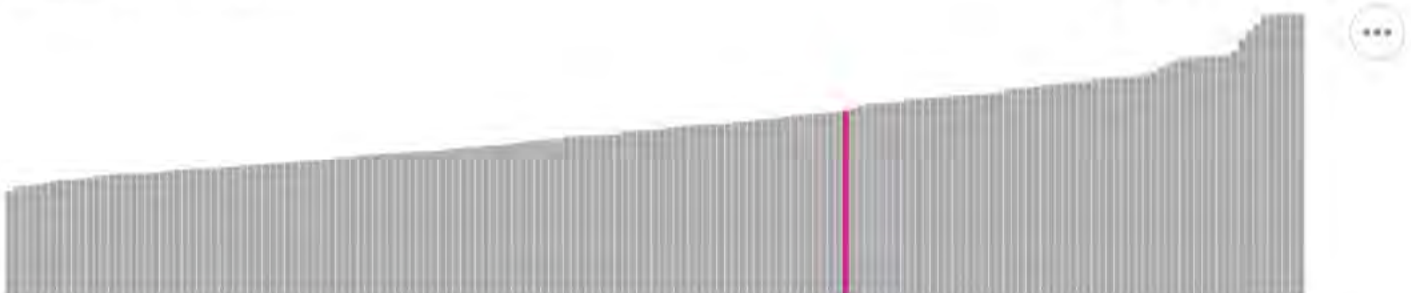
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Vaccination Rates

At least 1 dose Fully vaccinated

Lowest ZIP: **36.9 %**

Highest ZIP: **99.36 %**



In **11419: Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park:**

- **65.67 %** of people have had at least 1 dose.

- That is **Higher** than the median, **58.76 %** of people.

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Case rate Test rate Percent positive

Case rate (per 100,000 people) in 11419 , Queens , and all of NYC



For trend data, visit [COVID-19 Data: Trends](#).

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Neighborhood Data Profiles

Search for data summaries of NYC neighborhoods by ZIP code to see how COVID-19 is affecting your community.

Enter your ZIP code or neighborhood:

Your Neighborhood: **11420: South Ozone Park**

Totals

Population: **47,835**

Totals

Cases: **5,611** **One out of every 8** people in this neighborhood was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Deaths: **169** **One out of every 283** people in this neighborhood died of COVID-19.

People

Vaccinated: **29,142** Of these people, 26,866 people are **fully vaccinated**.
(at least 1 dose)

Comparisons

Case rate: **11,729.89** **Higher** than the Queens case rate of **10,285.56** .
per 100,000 **Higher** than New York City's case rate of **9520.43** .

Death rate: **353.3** **Lower** than the Queens death rate of **384.23** .
per 100,000 **Higher** than New York City's death rate of **340.53** .

Vaccination: **60.92%** **Lower** than the Queens vaccination rate of **64.17%** .
(at least 1 dose) **Higher** than New York City's vaccination rate of **58.19%**

Rates are numbers that are adjusted for population (similar to per capita). They help us compare areas with different population sizes by showing how common cases or deaths are. Some neighborhoods may have more people reported vaccinated than our estimate for the underlying population.

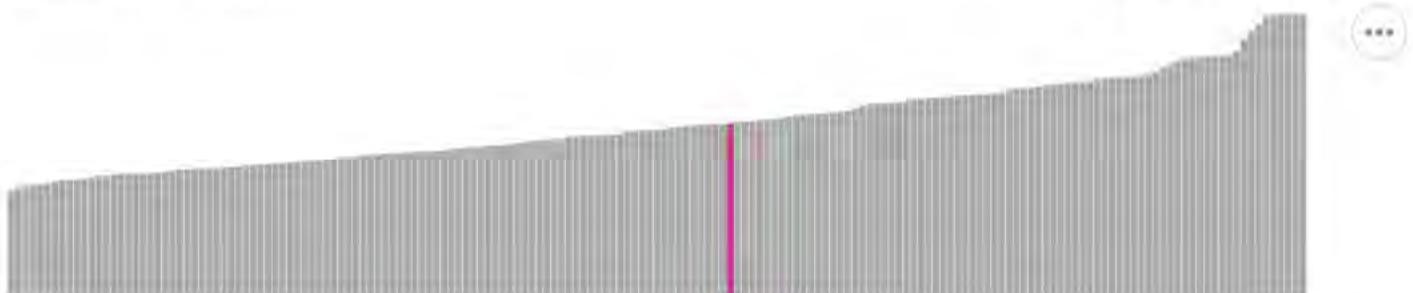
For more data since February 29, 2020, visit [COVID-19 Data: Totals](#).

Vaccination Rates

At least 1 dose Fully vaccinated

Lowest ZIP: **36.9 %**

Highest ZIP: **99.36 %**



In **11420: South Ozone Park:**

- **60.92 %** of people have had at least 1 dose.

- That is **Higher** than the median, **58.76 %** of people.

The **median** is the middle value of all the values. Half of neighborhoods have a higher value than the median and half have a lower value. Neighborhoods with 99.9% may have more people reported vaccinated than our estimate for the underlying population.

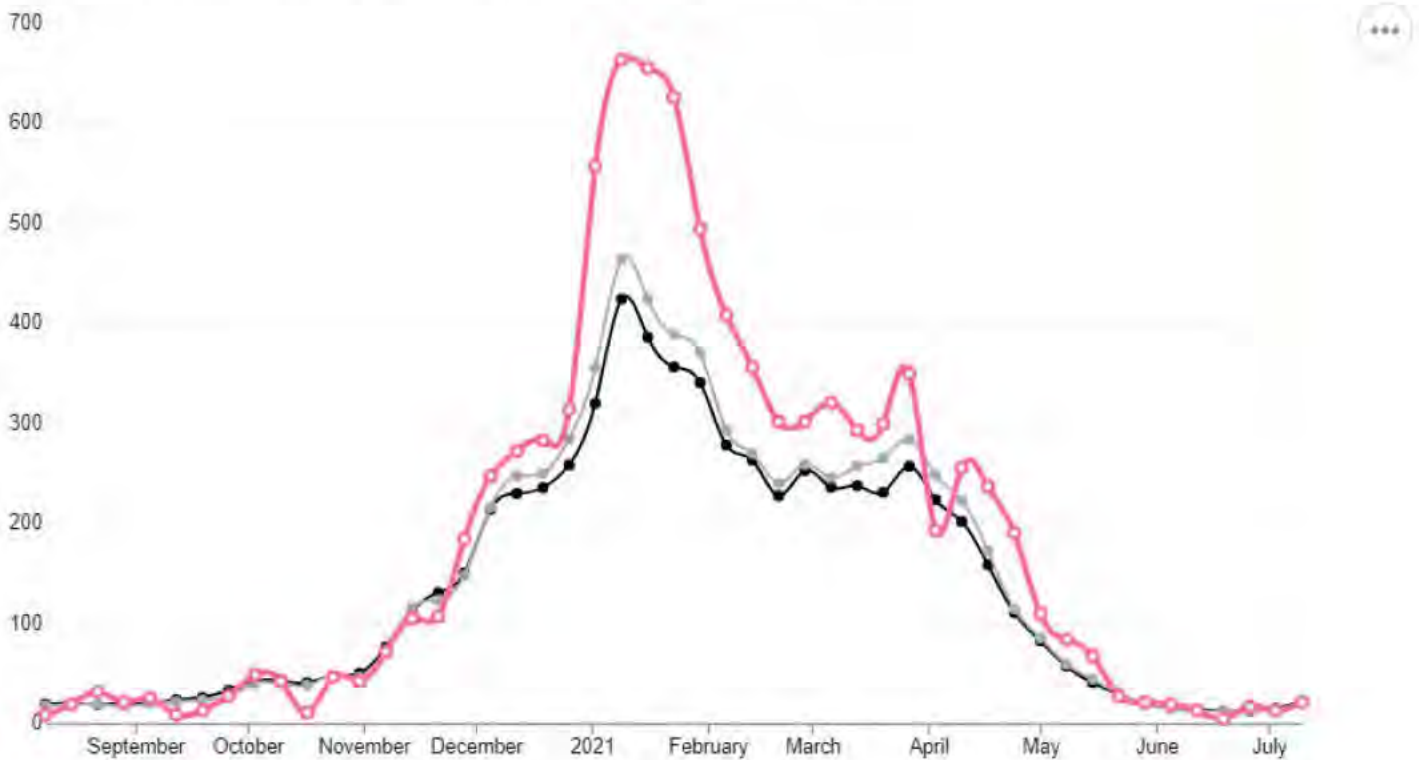
For more vaccination data, visit [COVID-19 Data: Vaccines](#).

Trends Over Time

These charts compare data for your selected ZIP code to your borough and the city. They show whether the pandemic is getting better, getting worse or staying stable. The virus is controlled if neighborhoods have a high test rate, low percent positivity and low case rate.

Case rate Test rate Percent positive

Case rate (per 100,000 people) in 11420 , Queens , and all of NYC



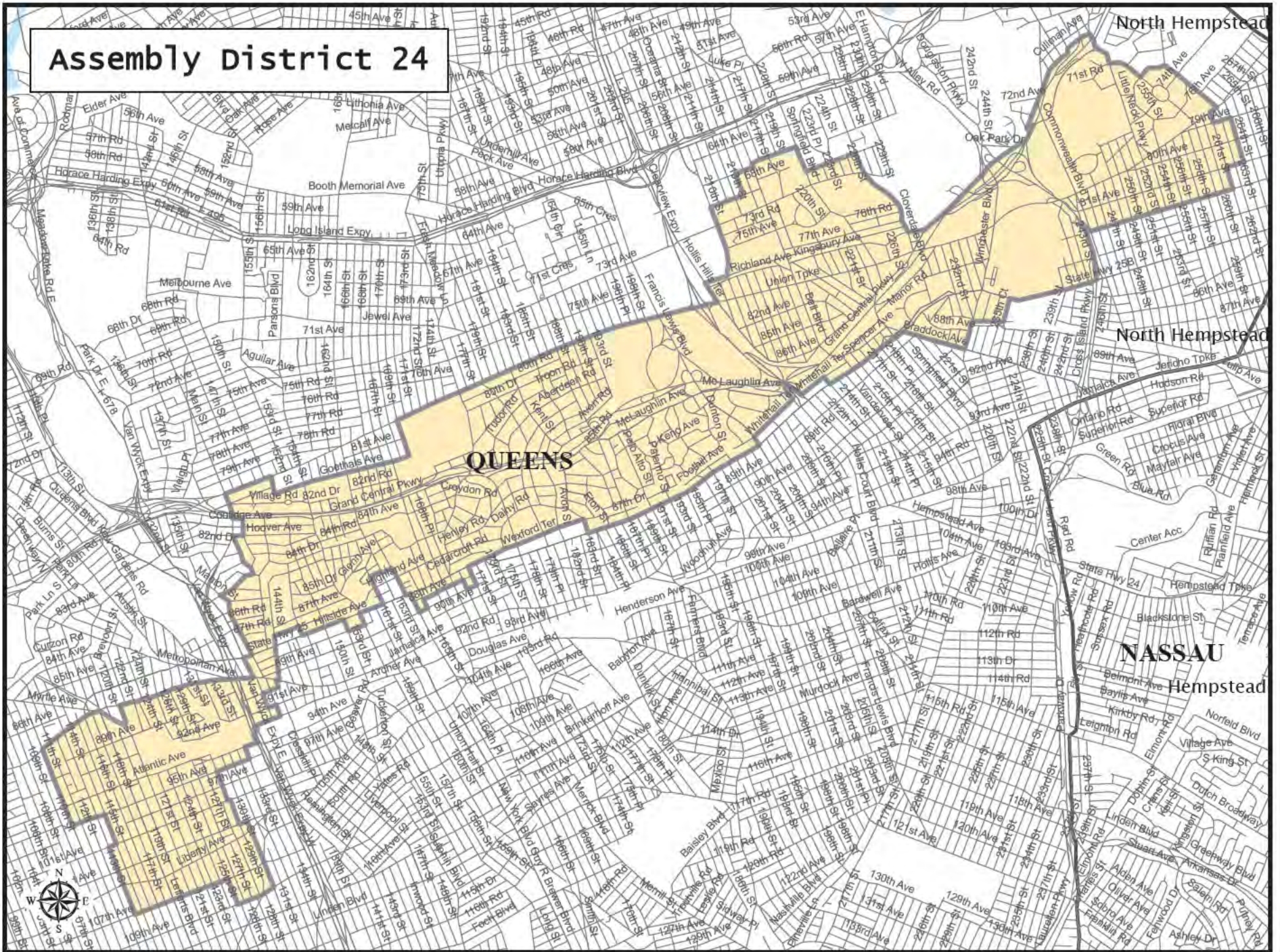
For trend data, visit [COVID-19 Data: Trends](#).

All data is provided at the modified ZIP Code Tabulation Area level. Get more information about modified ZIP Code Tabulation Areas

Additional Resources

- [COVID-19 Zone Finder](#)
- [About the Data](#)

Assembly District 24



Assembly District 24

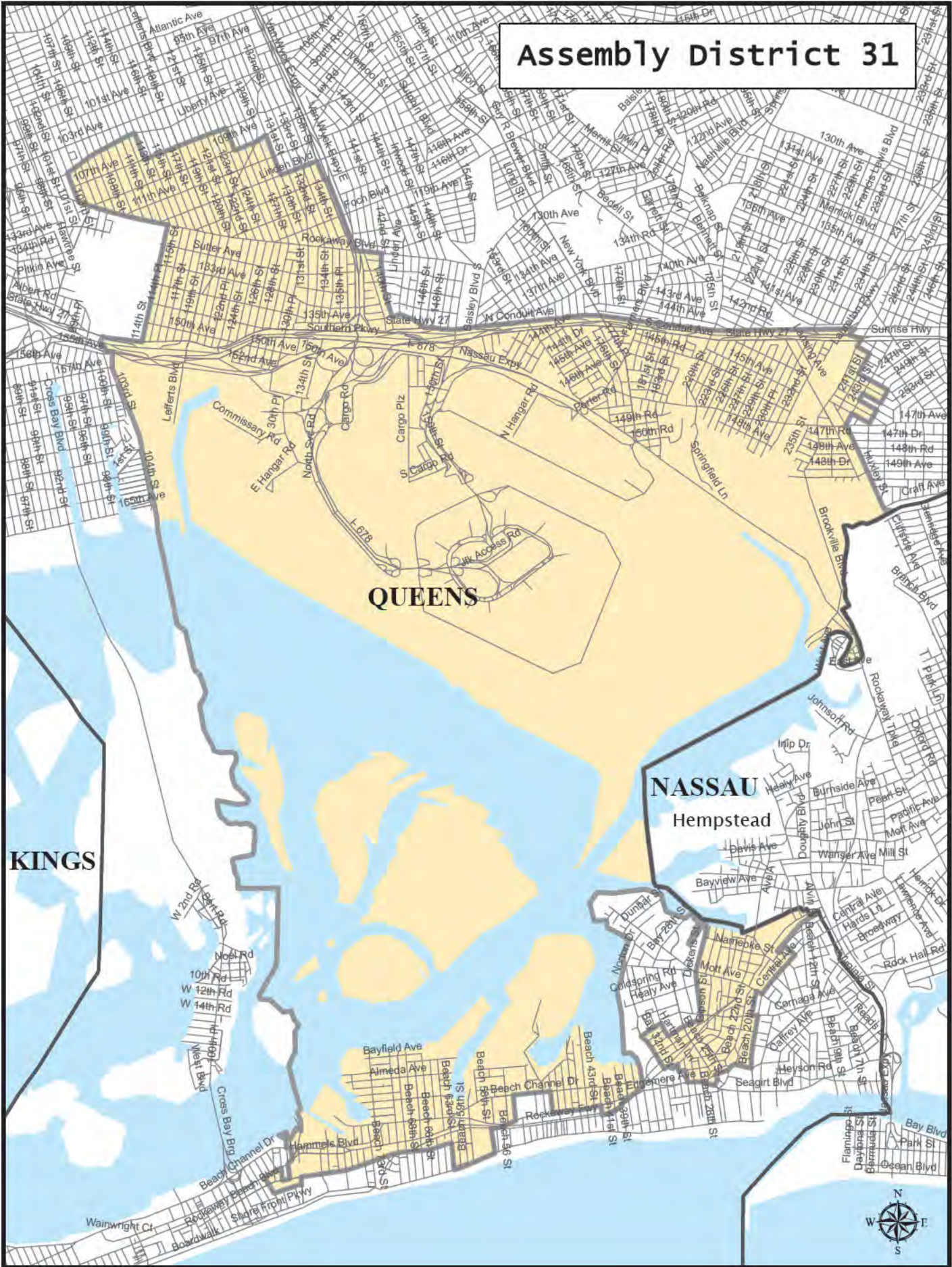
Adjusted Total Population : 124,114
Deviation : -4,975
Deviation Percentage : -3.85

	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	29,099	16,294	24,031	42,392	737	155	6,794	4,611	1
% of Total	23.45	13.13	19.36	34.16	0.59	0.12	5.47	3.72	0.00
Total 18+	25,331	13,250	18,548	32,741	444	122	5,165	3,450	1
% of 18+	25.57	13.38	18.73	33.05	0.45	0.12	5.21	3.48	0.00

Department Of Justice									
	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	29,099	16,642	24,031	43,152	784	177	5,511	4,717	1
% of Total	23.45	13.41	19.36	34.77	0.63	0.14	4.44	3.80	0.00
Total 18+	25,331	13,486	18,548	33,210	478	142	4,331	3,525	1
% of 18+	25.57	13.62	18.73	33.53	0.48	0.14	4.37	3.56	0.00

NOTE: For a description of field names and Department of Justice definitions, please refer to the documentation above the district listing.

Assembly District 31



Assembly District 31

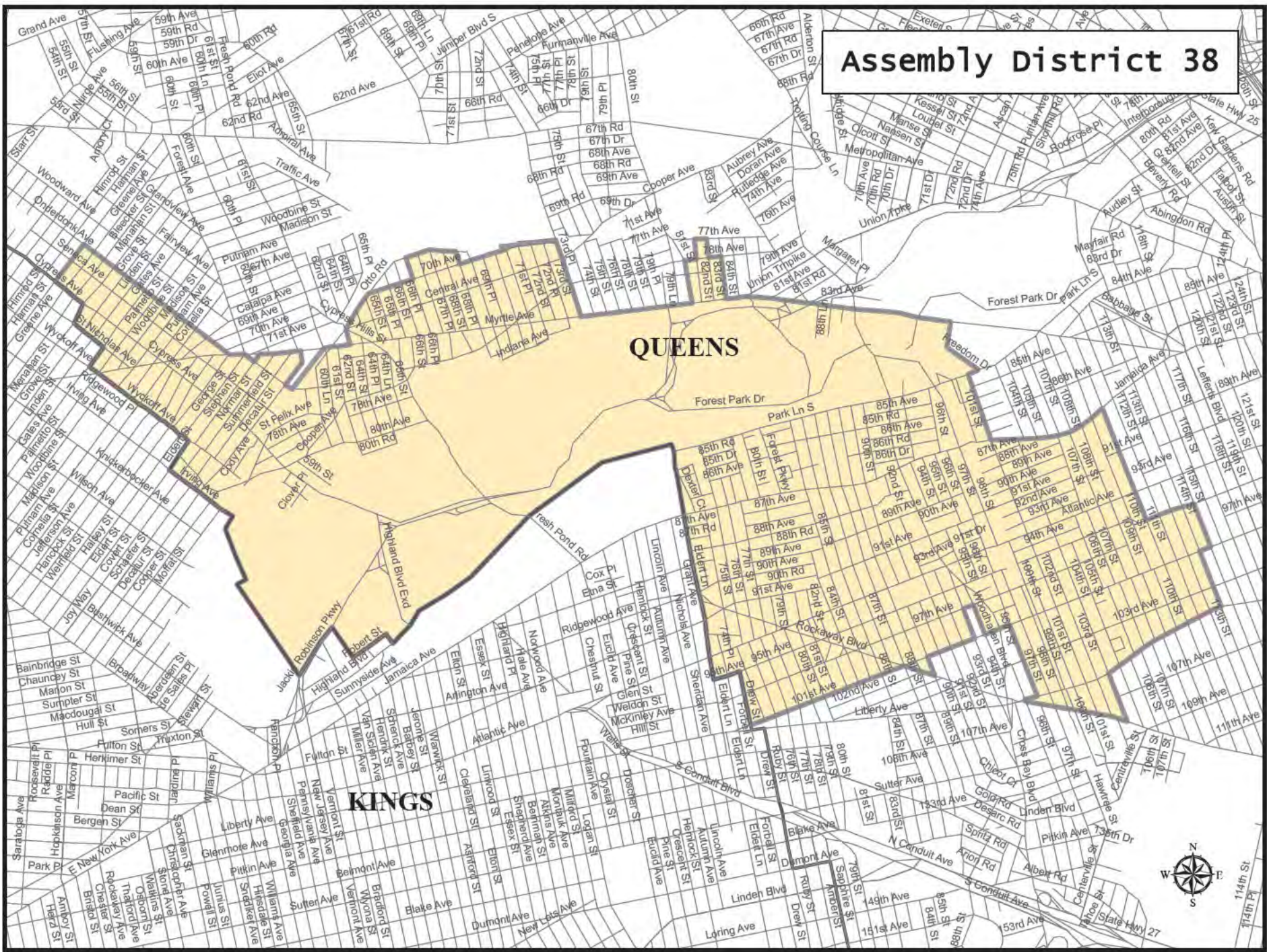
Adjusted Total Population : 124,134
Deviation : -4,955
Deviation Percentage : -3.84

	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	7,055	63,257	26,741	12,968	921	115	6,882	6,191	4
% of Total	5.68	50.96	21.54	10.45	0.74	0.09	5.54	4.99	0.00
Total 18+	6,176	45,902	18,720	9,905	552	88	5,187	4,590	4
% of 18+	6.78	50.37	20.54	10.87	0.61	0.10	5.69	5.04	0.00

Department Of Justice									
	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	7,055	63,628	26,741	13,155	950	119	6,232	6,250	4
% of Total	5.68	51.26	21.54	10.60	0.77	0.10	5.02	5.03	0.00
Total 18+	6,176	46,103	18,720	10,020	571	92	4,806	4,632	4
% of 18+	6.78	50.59	20.54	11.00	0.63	0.10	5.27	5.08	0.00

NOTE: For a description of field names and Department of Justice definitions, please refer to the documentation above the district listing.

Assembly District 38



Assembly District 38

Adjusted Total Population : 124,105
Deviation : -4,984
Deviation Percentage : -3.86

	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	28,397	6,803	62,324	18,621	648	88	3,873	3,351	0
% of Total	22.88	5.48	50.22	15.00	0.52	0.07	3.12	2.70	0.00
Total 18+	24,136	5,053	44,392	14,386	369	59	2,839	2,415	0
% of 18+	25.77	5.40	47.40	15.36	0.39	0.06	3.03	2.58	0.00

Department Of Justice									
	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	28,397	7,021	62,324	19,014	695	123	3,080	3,451	0
% of Total	22.88	5.66	50.22	15.32	0.56	0.10	2.48	2.78	0.00
Total 18+	24,136	5,162	44,392	14,631	408	82	2,355	2,483	0
% of 18+	25.77	5.51	47.40	15.62	0.44	0.09	2.51	2.65	0.00

NOTE: For a description of field names and Department of Justice definitions, please refer to the documentation above the district listing.

Assembly District 23



KINGS

QUEENS

Hempstead
NASSAU

Assembly District 23

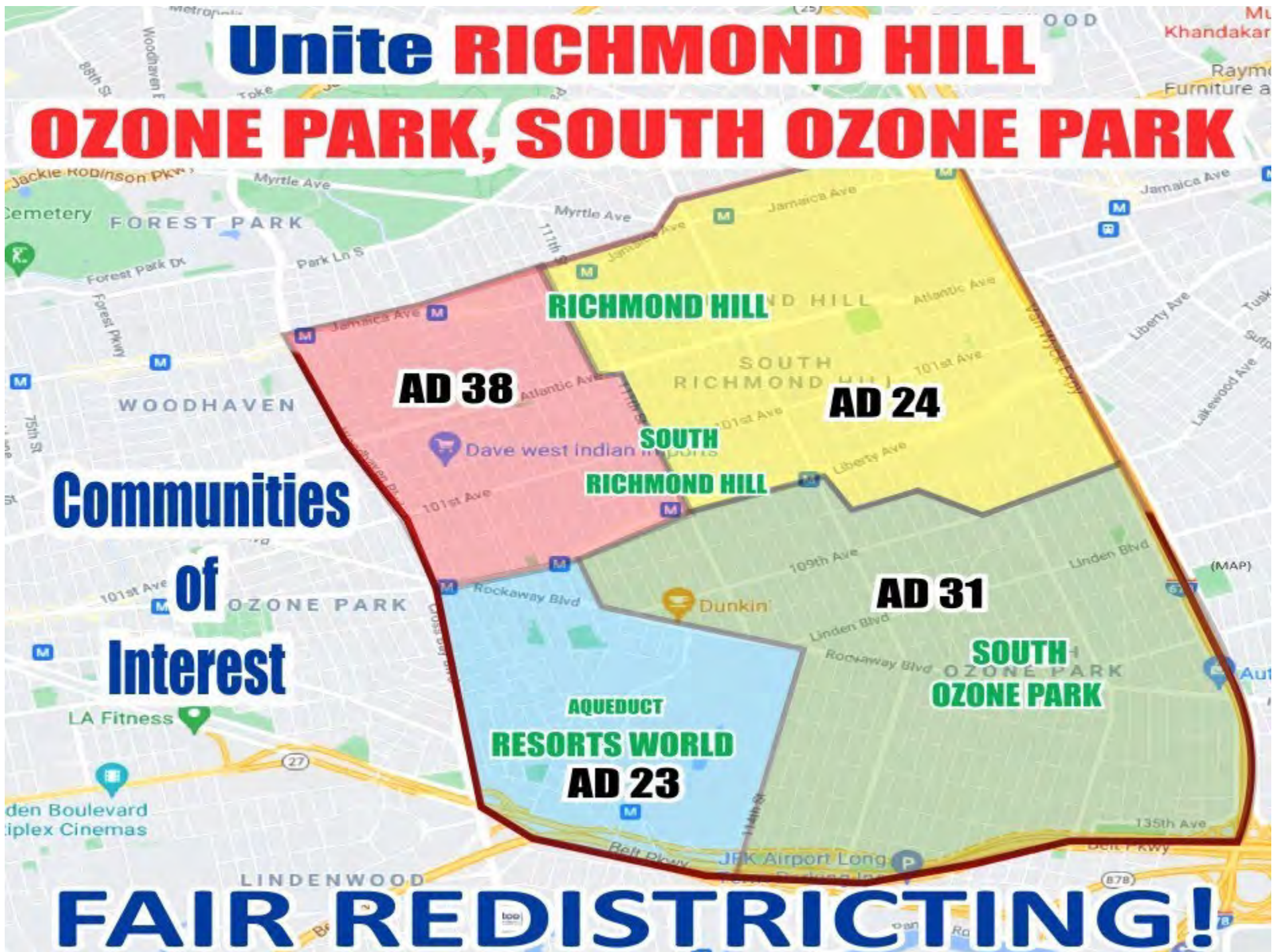
Adjusted Total Population : 124,114
Deviation : -4,975
Deviation Percentage : -3.85

	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	65,904	19,871	26,416	7,926	335	66	2,300	1,294	2
% of Total	53.10	16.01	21.28	6.39	0.27	0.05	1.85	1.04	0.00
Total 18+	53,208	14,912	18,976	6,071	221	51	1,551	920	2
% of 18+	55.48	15.55	19.78	6.33	0.23	0.05	1.62	0.96	0.00

Department Of Justice									
	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	NH Amlnd	NH Hwn	NH Multi	NH Other	Unknown
Total	65,904	20,217	26,416	8,227	431	85	1,456	1,376	2
% of Total	53.10	16.29	21.28	6.63	0.35	0.07	1.17	1.11	0.00
Total 18+	53,208	15,068	18,976	6,236	292	67	1,093	970	2
% of 18+	55.48	15.71	19.78	6.50	0.30	0.07	1.14	1.01	0.00

NOTE: For a description of field names and Department of Justice definitions, please refer to the documentation above the district listing.

Unite RICHMOND HILL OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK



**Communities
Of
Interest**

FAIR REDISTRICTING!

EXHIBIT D



[Reviews \(/amazonsale.cms\)](#)[Cryptocurrency \(/cryptocurrency\)](#)[Tech \(/tech\)](#)[Business \(/business\)](#)

[Home \(https://www.businessinsider.in\)](https://www.businessinsider.in) > [Life \(https://www.businessinsider.in/thelife\)](https://www.businessinsider.in/thelife) > [The 8 Best Ethnic Neighborhoods In New York City](#)

The 8 best ethnic neighborhoods in New York City



Little Guyana, Richmond Hill, Queens



You might not be able to place Guyana on a map, but it's taken over Richmond Hill. The small country on South America's Caribbean coast, east of Venezuela, has a population that's a colorful mix of South Asian (mostly from east India) and Afro-Caribbean.

New York is home to around 140,000 Guyanese, making them the fifth-largest group of immigrants in the city.

Liberty Avenue is Little Guyana's nucleus, featuring ~~Link Copied~~ sals and spices, roti and rum, as well as businesses like the Little Guyana Bake Shop (<http://www.littleguyanabakeshop.com/>) and The Hibiscus Restaurant & Bar (<https://plus.google.com/112308708329891687975/about?gl=us&hl=en>).

Advertisement

Koreatown, West 32nd Street, Manhattan



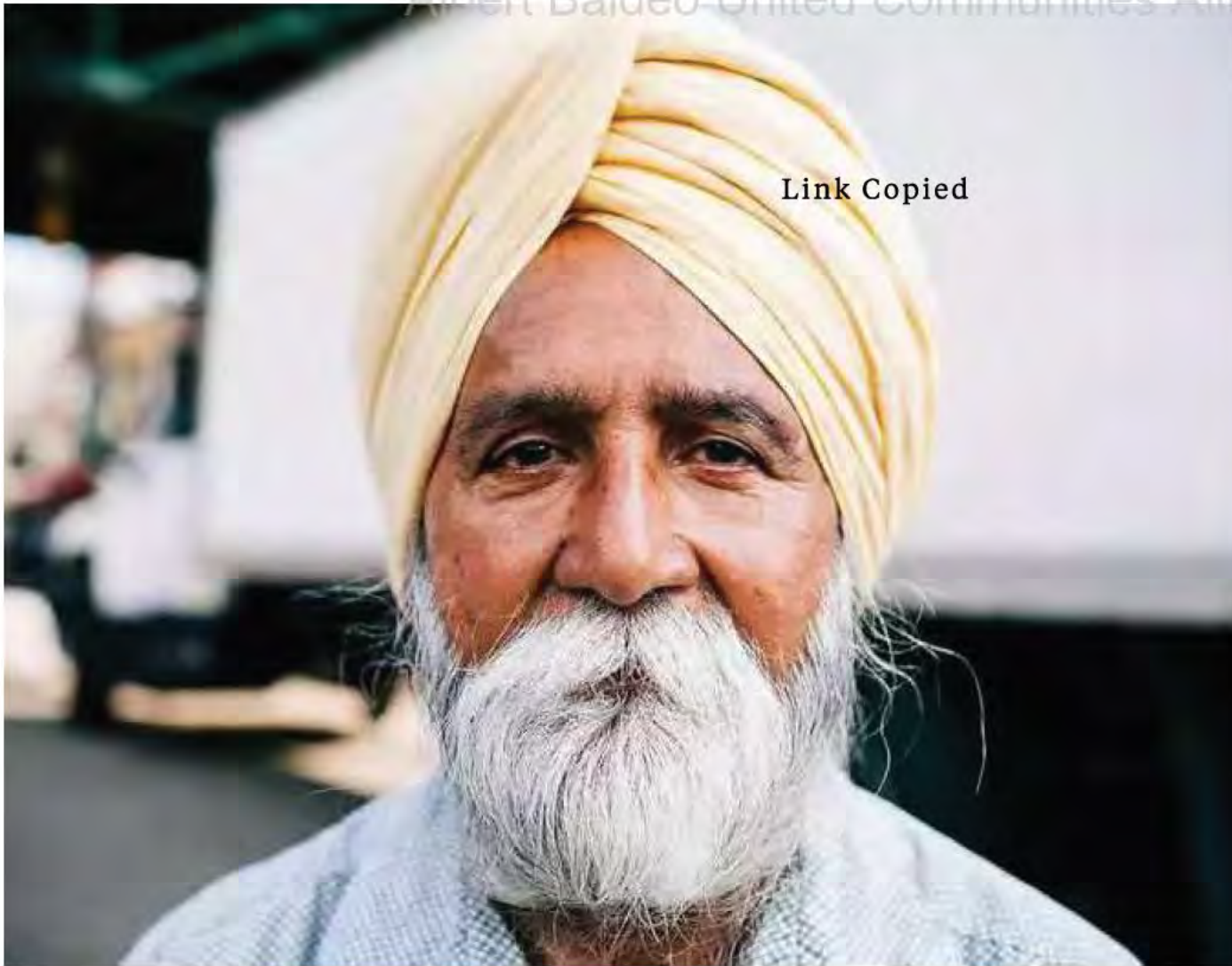
K-Town, a highly concentrated strip along Manhattan's West 32nd street, between Broadway and 5th Avenue, is a slice of Seoul (<http://www.businessinsider.com/koreatown-new-york-2011-11?op=1#ixzz3fPUubpNY>) in the city, and officially known as "Korea Way."

It features dozens of Korean restaurants, karaoke clubs, and even 24 hour spas, most of them stacked on top of each other thanks to the narrow borders of the area.

New York is home to over 140,000 Korean residents — [Link Copied](#) the second largest Korean population in the US — and while they may not all live in Koreatown (many live in Flushing, Queens, another Korean hotspot), they do frequent it enthusiastically, giving the area a super local and authentic vibe.

While there's always a debate as to where the food is better, Flushing or Manhattan, K-Town is steadily gaining a stellar foodie rep.

Little India, Jackson Heights, Queens



Jackson Heights is incredibly diverse, and it can make you feel like you've been transported to a different country with every block.

However, India (and Bangladesh and Pakistan) has staked its claim on 74th Street between Roosevelt and 37th Avenue, where women will shop for jewelry and rich fabrics while wearing colorful saris, and stores are full of Bollywood films and

incense.

Like an open air market, the air is thick with the smell of curries and spices, and the streets are lined with sweet shops, curry houses, and eateries selling fresh curry leaves and chutneys.

[Link Copied](#)

Advertisement

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The advertisement features a man in a dark suit holding a smartphone with the Policy Bazaar logo on the screen. The background is a light green and blue abstract shape.

KNOW MORE

Recommended by Colombia

Little Odessa, Brighton Beach, Brooklyn

10 Fast Facts About Guyanese Immigrants In The US You Should Know

By NewsAmericas - May 9, 2016



Guyanese immigrants make up a significant portion of the foreign-born population in NYC.



Guyanese immigrants make up a significant portion of the foreign-born population in NYC.

By NAN Staff Writer

News Americas, NEW YORK, NY, Tues. May 10, 2016: Come May 26th, the CARICOM South America-based nation of Guyana will mark its 50th year of independence from Britain. Thousands of Guyanese call the U.S. home, and in New York, Guyana's 50th Independence Anniversary Celebration Committee will mark the anniversary with a week-long series of events between Saturday, June 4th and Sunday June 12, 2016. Here are ten fast facts about Guyanese in the U.S. you may not know:

1: The United States has the highest number of Guyanese outside of Guyana. An average of 6,080 people a year emigrated from Guyana between 1969 and 1976, increasing to an average of 14,400 between 1976 and 1981. As of 1990, 80 percent of Guyanese-Americans lived in the Northeast United States.

2: According to the latest U.S. Census' American Fact Finder, there are an estimated 273,000 people in the U.S. claiming Guyanese as their first ancestry as of 2013.

3: The majority of Guyanese live in New York City – some 140,000 – making them the fifth-largest foreign-born population in the city.

4: In Queens, NY – which has the largest concentration of Indo-Caribbeans in the five boroughs – Guyanese represent the second largest foreign-born population with some 82,000. A large concentration of them can be found in the neighborhoods of Richmond Hill and Ozone Park, Queens according to the 'Population Analysis of Guyanese and Trinidadians in NYC' by the Indo-Caribbean Alliance using *New York City* Department of City Planning data.

5: Guyanese are the second largest immigrant group in Queens, NY. Other Guyanese populated areas in the U.S. include Orlovista, FL; Irvington, New Jersey; Orange, New Jersey; East Orange, New Jersey; Flatbush, Brooklyn; Canarsie, Brooklyn; East Flatbush, Brooklyn, Rockland County, New York, Schenectady, New York; Verona Walk, FL; Oakland, FL; Emerald Lakes, PA; South Plainfield, NJ; Olanta, S.C.; Lincoln Park, GA; Bladensburg, MD and Loganville, FL.

6: The first Guyanese to arrive in the U.S. came around 1968, either as "private household workers" or as nurses' aides and were of African descent according to research from Jacqueline A. McLeod in "Guyanese-Americans." Some 70,523 came post 1964.

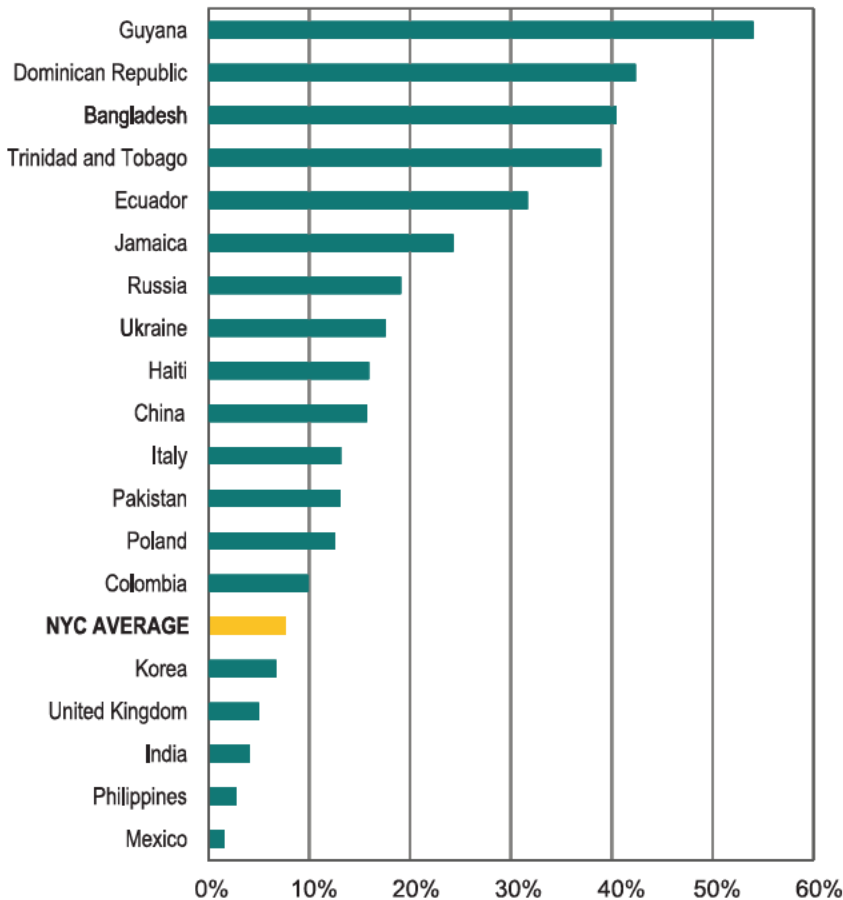
7: According to Monica Gordon in 'In Search of a Better Life: Perspectives on Migration from the Caribbean,' more Guyanese women than men settled in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, making them primarily responsible for securing immigrant status for their families. These women, Gordon concluded, tended to see migration as a means to improve their economic and social status and the educational opportunities of their children.

8: Some 17 percent of Guyanese in the U.S. are seniors (ages 65 and older) but 74 percent of all immigrants from Guyana had the highest naturalization rates, meaning they are more likely to be U.S. citizens and can vote.

9: Recent remittances from the United States to Guyana totaled some US\$438 million, (G\$ 90.7 billion), according to the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF).

10: Famous Guyanese and those of Guyanese ancestry include: late elected politician Shirley Chisholm; actors Derek Luke, C. C. H. Pounder, Nicole Narain, Sean Patrick Thomas and Mark Gomes; baseball player Mark Teixeira and highly recognized HIV researcher, Dr. Deborah Persaud.

Figure 2-5
New York City's 2011 Share of the U.S. Foreign-born Population by Country of Birth



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey-Summary File
 Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

saw declines in their populations and were replaced by the United Kingdom and El Salvador, respectively.

In 2011, New York City's 3.1 million immigrants comprised under 8 percent of the country's foreign-born population (Figure 2-5). But most of New York's top 20 immigrant groups disproportionately made their home in the city. The Guyanese had the highest proclivity to settle in New York, with over one-half of Guyanese immigrants in the U.S. making their home in the city. Other countries that were disproportionately represented in the city included the Dominican Republic, Bangladesh, and Trinidad and Tobago—around four-in-ten immigrants in the U.S. from these sources settled in New York. Only five countries in

the city's top 20 list of the foreign-born had a below average propensity to settle in New York. These countries were Mexico (under two percent of the nation's Mexican-born population lived in the city), Philippines (three percent), India (four percent), the United Kingdom (five percent) and Korea (seven percent).

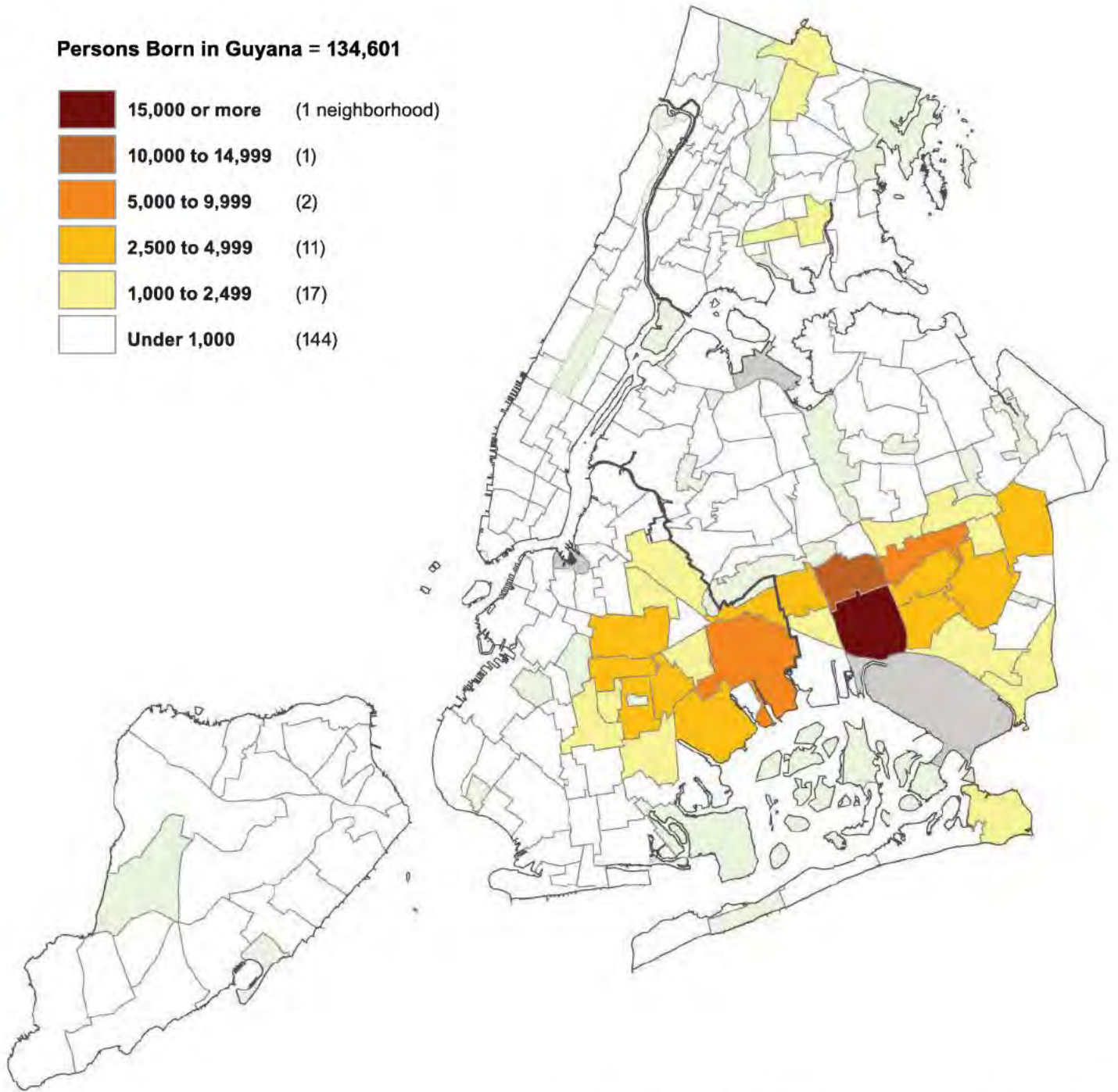
The top sources of the foreign-born population for the U.S. differed markedly from those for New York City (Figure 2-6). Mexicans dominated the U.S. immigrant population, accounting for nearly three-in-ten of the nation's 40 million foreign-born. In contrast, the city's immigrant population was more diverse—Dominicans, the largest immigrant group in the city, accounted for only 12 percent of the foreign-born. China was the second largest source country for the U.S., followed by India, the Philippines, El Salvador, Vietnam, Cuba, Korea, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala. Six countries on the nation's top 10 list—Philippines, El Salvador, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and Guatemala—were not among the city's top 10 groups, and the last 3 were not even among the city's top 20 groups.

Change in the Composition of the Immigrant Population, 1970–2011

This section examines the changing composition of the foreign-born population since the passage of the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act. For the years 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2011, Tables 2-3 and 2-4 show the area of origin and top source countries of the foreign-born populations of New York City and the U.S., respectively, while Figure 2-7 shows the share of each area of origin during this period.

In 1970, of the 1.44 million immigrants in the city, 64 percent (922,800) were from Europe, and the top five source countries were all European. Those born

Figure 3-25
Residential Settlement of Persons Born in Guyana by Neighborhood
New York City, 2007–2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007–2011 American Community Survey–Summary File
Population Division–New York City Department of City Planning

UNITED COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE

106-11 Liberty Avenue, Suite 102

Ozone Park, NY 11417

**ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF THE UNITED COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE &
REDISTRICTING COALITION TO THE NYS INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING
COMMISSION**

ADDENDUM to testimony previously submitted testimony 7/22/21

Petition to please unite our communities of interest-Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into one State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness

This addendum to our petition takes into account the recently released census numbers which show a very large increase in the numbers of South Asians residing in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park. In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth. See, e.g.,

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/8/12/22622709/nyc-asian-surging-population-electoral-power>

https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/queens-outperforms-population-estimates-in-census/article_b6bc1494-fc5e-11eb-9f0b-73f0acfc108a.html

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/12/us/politics/marginalized-groups-redistricting.html>

In accordance with the IRC's invitation to submit additional testimony to assist it in its deliberations, this additional testimony is respectfully submitted accordingly.

With respect to the State Senate and Congressional districts, we respectfully submit this enlarged community of interest district, which is compact and contiguous, and large enough to constitute a State senate district, and a Congressional seat-in addition to the State Assembly District.

Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park alone had enough population to constitute a State Assembly district, cycles ago. See attached 2010 district data, which has increased significantly. These communities of interest have also surged past these 2010 boundaries in greater numbers.

With the addition of Ozone Park extended to the Cityline/Eldert Lane boundary bordering the Queens and Brooklyn county lines, the combined areas of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, the quintessential community of interest, will easily constitute a State senate district and a Congressional District, also.

Albert Baldeo- United Community Alliance

You will appreciate that only having a State Assembly representative, with no corresponding State senate and Congressional representative, will not only result in the dilution and suppression of our voices, issues and problems, and will only be a token seat in decision making-the proverbial voice in the wilderness.

Equally importantly, these districts will also keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, with established ties of common interest and association, historical, racial, cultural, economic, ethnic, religious and otherwise, as previously emphasized.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Albert Baldeo

Albert Baldeo

(President)

STATE SENATE, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Unite **RICHMOND HILL**
OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK



FAIR REDISTRICTING!

JOIN THE CITY



CENSUS

NYC Asian Activists Seek to Turn Surging Population Into Electoral Power

New Census numbers showing a 43% increase of Asian New Yorkers in Brooklyn and a 29% jump in Queens fuel demands for more representation as the process for redrawing elected officials' district lines heats up.

BY CHRISTINE CHUNG, CLIFFORD MICHEL AND WILL WELCH | AUG 12, 2021, 8:37PM EDT



The southern side of 8th Ave. at 46th St. in Sunset Park, Brooklyn which is in a different Senate district than the northern side of the street. | Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

New Census numbers out Thursday show a robust 7.7% population increase for New York City since 2010 — and even bigger surges for Asian New Yorkers at a time when Asian candidates and community groups are moving to build out political power.

In Queens, the Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents — far outpacing the borough’s overall 7.8% population growth.

In Brooklyn, the number of Asian residents counted by the Census swelled to nearly 420,000, a nearly 43% increase from 2010, compared with a 9.2% hike in the borough’s population overall.

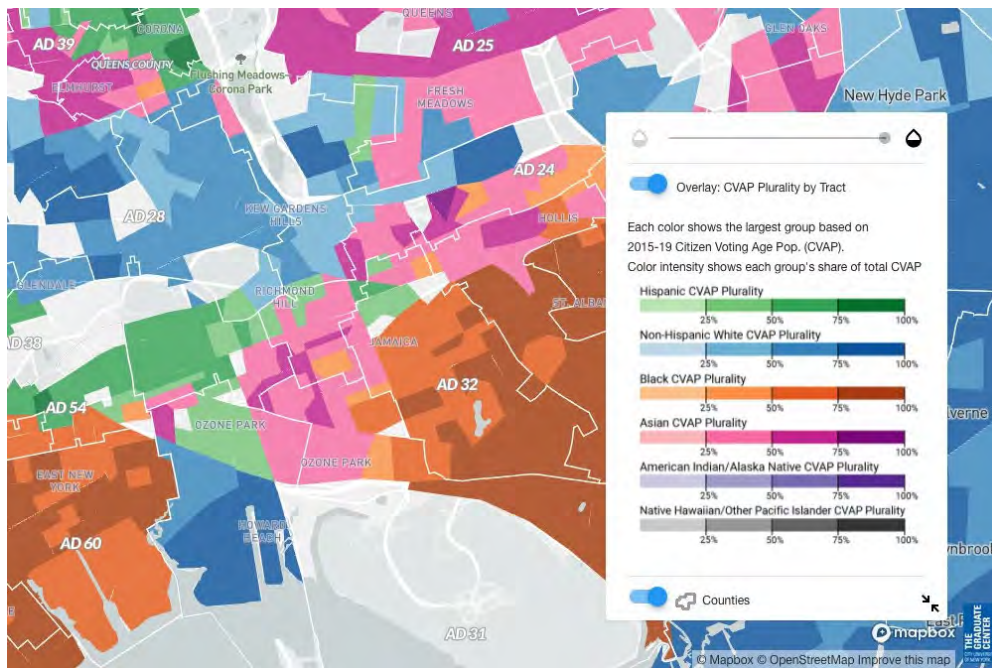
With strength in numbers, New York City’s diverse Asian communities are organizing to build political power that reflects them and their needs, as a state commission readies to redraw congressional and state legislative district lines.

“In the past, they would divide a neighborhood or a community who they felt were not politically engaged or were not visible,” said Elizabeth OuYang, who is coordinating a redistricting task force composed of 20 Asian community groups across the city. “We are going to make sure that we are very visible in this redistricting round.”

The new coalition is already at work to break down what members call artificial borders dividing communities and leaving them shortchanged on elected leadership and public services.

Case in point: Richmond Hill and Ozone Park. These Queens neighborhoods have more Asian residents — including many of Guyanese, Trinidadian or Punjabi heritage — than Black or white ones, past population surveys have shown.

Yet these hubs of Asian life in Queens are currently sliced into seven different Assembly districts — making it difficult for the communities to coalesce around a representative focused on their priorities or receive services tailored to their language, dietary or other needs, activists say.



The Queens neighborhood of Richmond Hill (center) is split between seven Assembly districts. | Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

“For us, redistricting is not an academic exercise, nor simply a mathematical equation. It means power, accountability, and equal access to services that we are entitled to for the next 10 years,” OuYang said.

No Representation

Every decade, following the U.S. Census, lawmakers redraw district lines to reflect population changes, with the goal of achieving equal representation. By law, and backed by litigation, so-called communities of interest, such as racial groups, are not supposed to be divided in a way to weaken their political power.

This year, for the first time in New York, the process for seats in Congress and the state Senate and Assembly is being overseen by an independent commission.

Its 10 members are largely appointed by the party leaders of the state Legislature, and working under updated rules that explicitly require equal apportionment and compact districts, while forbidding racial discrimination.

Queens and Brooklyn residents packed online hearings last month to voice concerns about what they described as divisive lines thwarting their chances of electing representation.

For much of the July 22 Queens hearing's five hours, the focus was on Richmond Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. During the July 29 Brooklyn hearing, speakers pointed out that despite continued Asian population growth in southern Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, Asian residents are outnumbered in every single Assembly and Senate district as currently drawn.

Brooklyn has no Asian representatives in the state Senate or Assembly, Congress or City Council.

District Divided by Water

Richard David, a Guyanese-American district leader who ran for an Assembly seat last year spanning South Ozone Park and part of the Rockaways, said that area's political divisions have created dire outcomes for the community, including a lack of funding for social services.

There are no city or state-funded senior centers in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, or South Ozone Park that primarily serve South Asians and Indo-Caribbean people, he told THE CITY. When constituents seek to reach elected officials, they either don't know whom to call or are overwhelmed by the long list of people to contact, David added.

He cited his District 31, which encompasses parts of South and Southeast Queens, along with the Rockaways, as a "textbook example of gerrymandering."



South Ozone Park, Queens, near the convergence of three Assembly districts. | Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

The eight neighborhoods within the district, especially those in the Rockaways, each have a very distinct cultural identity, he noted, making it challenging for one candidate to build a broad coalition of support.

“Public transportation does not connect these three parts, so in addition to a car, it would be faster to go by boat to the different parts of the district,” said David, who lives in South Ozone Park.

More than 42% of the district’s population is foreign born, nearly double the rate in New York State. Closer looks within the district’s lines more clearly illuminate significant racial disparities.

The borough’s [Community District 14](#), which encompasses most of the Rockaway peninsula, is about 36% Black, about 34% white, and roughly 4% Asian. [Community District 10](#), including Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, is 23.7% Asian, 21% white, and 14% Black.

In the June 2020 Democratic primary, David [won the district’s northern half](#) in Ozone Park and south Ozone Park resoundingly, but fell short in its southern

region. He ultimately lost by about 800 votes to Khaleel Anderson, a 25-year-old Black progressive candidate who then won the November general election. The overall Assembly district is now 45% Black and 12% Asian, the new Census numbers show.

Aminta Kilawan-Narine, founder of the South Queens Women’s March, contends that the lines reflect a “blatant disregard for the natural communities of interest that exist.” She contends that they also run afoul of the federal Voting Rights Act’s requirement for compact and contiguous districts.

“The way in which the lines have been drawn divides and dilutes our ability to be a stronger voice,” Kilawin-Narine added. “When a naturally occurring community of interest like ours is so very divided, electeds don’t have the kind of vested interest in serving us — after all, we become but a fraction of their constituency.”

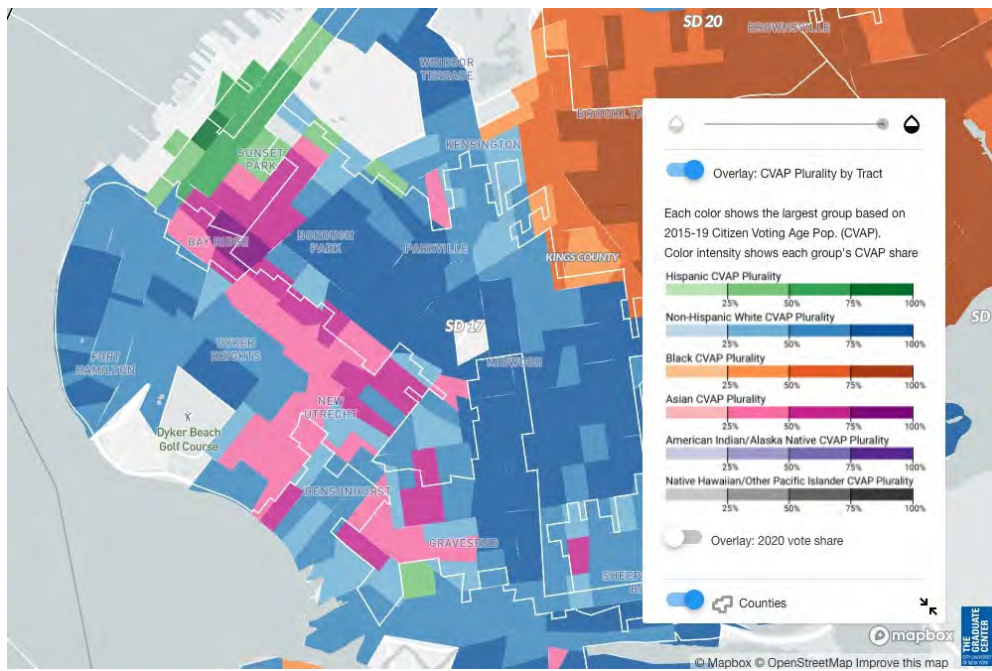
A Neighborhood Divided

Brooklyn’s Sunset Park was once defined by the docks where its largely white residents worked — only to change dramatically after the region’s ports mostly moved to New Jersey in 1958.

Today, in addition to a sizable Hispanic population, the area is home to a large number of Asian residents and businesses, part of a revival that is redefining commercial strips in several southern Brooklyn neighborhoods.

But walking north on the area’s bustling Eighth Avenue corridor, with scores of Asian-owned businesses, a short stroll from 46th street to 39th street takes a pedestrian through three different State Senate districts.

Those districts and two others in southern Brooklyn are home to more than 220,000 Asian residents. But because the population is splintered into three districts, activists argue they can’t effectively rally around a political candidate.



The Brooklyn neighborhood of [Sunset Park](#), upper left, is divided between three state Senate districts. | Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

The lines were drawn a decade ago by Albany Republicans with the objective of diluting downstate Democrats' power.

"It's always said that we don't vote in the right numbers, but no one ever talks about how our communities are gerrymandered that even if we all would come out to vote it would not make a difference," said Don Lee, the chairperson of Homecrest Community Services, a nonprofit that provides meals, translation services and social events for Asian American immigrants and seniors.

Homecrest was started in 1997 after its founders saw Asian seniors riding the N train daily to Chinatown in Manhattan to receive social services in a language they could understand. Today, activists say that there are still many needs that aren't being met for vulnerable Asian residents.

Many Asians in New York City were born outside of the U.S., and the need is pressing for services offered in languages other than English. As of 2018, 21.7% of Asian New Yorkers lived in poverty, according to an annual City Hall survey, [higher](#) than the city overall rate.

'No Rhyme or Reason'

Yet, nonprofits and civic groups say it's difficult to get the ear of elected officials to support these communities.

“The most active in Sunset Park is Senator [Zellnor] Myrie, but he definitely does spend more time in the Crown Heights neighborhood that he also represents because that is the majority of his district,” said Mon Yuck Yu, vice president and chief of staff of the Academy of Medical and Public Health Services, which focuses on helping immigrant New Yorkers.

“A lot of resources go there and Sunset Park is seeing less. In terms of the other senators that represent Sunset Park, we've hardly seen any active outreach or activity or funding levels coming into the neighborhood.”

Matt Baer, a spokesperson for Myrie, said that the senator's office does a “particularly good job” at representing constituents in Sunset Park — and that there is no “rhyme or reason” as to how the lines were drawn for the district.

“I couldn't find anybody to defend why Brownsville and Sunset Park are in the same district,” Baer said. “I don't think any rational person could explain why the lines are drawn the way they are.”

State Sen. Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), whose two-borough district juts into Sunset Park, agreed that the neighborhood was overly divided in the last redistricting cycle.

“This time there should be an effort to provide more complete representation. A Senate district is always going to be difficult,” said Savino. The redistricting commission, she said, “should examine whether this form of gerrymandering is fair to anyone.”



Brooklyn State Senator Simcha Felder attends a meeting in Albany, March 20, 2019. | Photo Courtesy of NY Senate Media Services

Not all of its reps see the division of Sunset Park as unfair.

State Sen. Simcha Felder, whose predominantly Borough Park and Midwood district includes small slice of Sunset Park, said that “since the beginning of creation, every part of the district complains that the other part is getting more attention.”

He said he’s allotted a “disproportionate amount” of attention and resources to Sunset Park.

A decade ago, the Republicans who controlled the state Senate created his Brooklyn district with the objective of electing an Orthodox Jewish state senator to help support GOP control — a possible precedent for creating an Asian-centered district now.

Drawing New Lines

Over the past 10 years, the number of Asian residents in Brooklyn increased by more than 110,000, to nearly 371,000, far outpacing any other racial group, the latest Census figures show.

Activists see an opportunity to unite Sunset Park, Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay — the three Asian population centers of Brooklyn — into a Senate district that could elect an Asian senator.

Dr. Wah Lee, a lifelong Bensonhurst resident who has a private medical practice in the neighborhood, said he hopes a unified district brings more focused attention to issues like the [increase in assaults on Asian New Yorkers](#).

Lee said that he and his wife were both recently accosted — and that patients have been showing him items they’ve purchased for self-defense.

Said Lee: “If there were enough services the citizens wouldn’t have to do this on their own.”

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QUEENS Daily Eagle

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MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2021

50¢

QUEENS TODAY
AUGUST 16, 2021

U.S. REP. GRACE MENG IS ENCOURAGING families to check their bank accounts to make sure that they received the second installment of their expanded Child Tax Credit payment, which started July 15. "Last month, hardworking middle-class families in New York and across the United States began receiving these monthly tax cut payments, and I'm glad to see that the second round of funds is now being sent out," Meng said. "These tax cuts will put money back in the pockets of families as we work to tackle the pandemic, move forward with our recovery, and get our economy back on track."

JAMAICA RESIDENT TYRONE Absolam, 42, was arraigned Friday by a grand jury on a 16-count indictment with charges including aggravated vehicular homicide, vehicular manslaughter and driving while intoxicated for allegedly driving drunk and killing a mother and her 10-year-old daughter. He faces up to 25 years if convicted. "As alleged, a family now mourns the loss of a mother and her 10-year-old daughter because of the defendant's selfish decision to ignore the rules of the road," Katz said. "Drunk driving is never acceptable."

THE DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN announced that Catholic schools will have a mask mandate for all students, faculty, and staff when classes begin on Sept. 8. "This is the most responsible approach to take when we begin the new school year," said Superintendent Dr. Thomas Chadzutko. "I know the return to these safety measures is not the situation parents, teachers or students were hoping for in the 2021-2022 school year, but we cannot ignore the trends."

A 22-YEAR-OLD MAN WAS SHOT MORE than a dozen times outside the K-Show Bar in Flushing early Friday morning, NBC reported.

A BAYSIDE GRANDMA UNVEILED A Free Little Library on Thursday in honor of the newest member of the family, Patch reported. Patricia Manley Silverman told Patch she hopes the dedication will help inspire her first grandchild to love reading. "There'll be a lot of foot traffic, and people can just walk by on the sidewalk and help themselves," Silverman said.

JAMAICA CENTER WAS NAMED among the city's most stress-inducing subway stations after 67 percent of respondents said they experienced frustration, according to a Fleet Logging report.

Queens' grows by over 7 percent, census shows



Queens' population grew by 7.8 percent over the past decade, according to 2020 Census data. The borough is now home to over 2.4 million people. Photo via Wikimedia Commons

By Rachel Vick and Jacob Kaye
Queens Daily Eagle

After a landmark effort to ensure a complete count in the 2020 Census, the results are in and Queens is up.

The World's Borough grew by 7.8 percent in the past decade, according to early data released by the U.S. Census Bureau. With

2,405,464 people in Queens, the borough is the second most populous in the city.

Only Brooklyn grew more in the past decade.

The data was released in an effort to aid states in their attempt to draw new electoral district lines, a process that began in New York last month.

The Independent Redistricting Commission, the body tasked with drawing the lines, began a listening tour in July and heard feedback from over 100 Queens residents who mostly said the old lines divided communities and weakened political power for Queens residents of color throughout the borough.

Continued on page 16

Transwomen call for violence to end in Queens

By Jacob Kaye
Queens Daily Eagle

A group of transwomen gathered in Jackson Heights last week to demand an end to violence against trans and queer people.

Organized by Make the Road New York and supported by lawmakers Sen. Jessica Ramos and Assemblymembers Catalina Cruz and Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, the group spoke out against several instances of trans and queer violence from inside Lorena Borjas Triangle, a pedestrian square recently renamed for the trans activist who called Queens her home.

Make the Road reported that it had been notified of six instances of trans or gender non-conforming people being assaulted in Brooklyn and Queens in the past week.

Jennifer, one of the trans women who spoke at the rally, said that she had been attacked in Jackson Heights over the weekend while waiting for a taxi.

"Last Saturday, while my friends and I waited for a taxi we were attacked by a man who threw rocks and glass bottles at us," said Jennifer, a Queens resident. "I ran away, but fell down, and the man continued to attack me. I tried to fight to save my life and ended up

Continued on page 2



Jennifer, a trans woman from Queens, spoke about a recent attack in Jackson Heights that left her in a sling, at a rally against trans violence last week. Photo via Make the Road/Twitter

NYC Asian activists seek to turn surging population into electoral power

By Christine Chung, Clifford Michel, and Will Welch
THE CITY

New Census numbers out Thursday show a robust 7.7% population increase for New York City since 2010 — and even bigger surges for Asian New Yorkers at a time when Asian candidates and community groups are moving to build out political power.

In Queens, the Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents — far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth.

In Brooklyn, the number of Asian residents counted by the Census swelled to nearly 420,000, a nearly 43% increase from 2010, compared with a 9.2% hike in the borough's population overall.

With strength in numbers, New York City's diverse Asian communities are organizing to build political power that reflects them and their needs, as a state commission readies to redraw congressional and state legislative district lines.

"In the past, they would divide a neighborhood or a community who they felt were not politically engaged or were not visible," said Elizabeth OuYang, who is coordinating a redistricting task force composed of 20 Asian community groups across the city. "We are going to make sure that we are very visible in this redistricting round."

The new coalition is already at work to break down what members call artificial borders dividing communities and leaving them shortchanged on elected leadership and public services.

Case in point: Richmond Hill and Ozone Park. These Queens neighborhoods have more Asian residents — including many of Guyanese, Trinidadian or Punjabi heritage — than Black or white ones, past population surveys have shown.

Yet these hubs of Asian life in Queens are currently sliced into seven different Assembly districts — making it difficult for the communities to coalesce around a representative focused on their priorities or receive services tailored to their language, dietary or other needs, activists say.

"For us, redistricting is not an academic exercise, nor simply a mathematical equation. It means power, accountability, and equal access to services that we are entitled to for the next 10 years," OuYang said.

No Representation

Every decade, following the U.S. Census, lawmakers redraw district lines to reflect population changes, with the goal of achieving equal representation. By law, and backed by litigation, so-called communities of interest, such as racial groups, are not supposed to be divided in a way to weaken their political power.

This year, for the first time in New York, the process for seats in Congress and the state Senate and Assembly is being overseen by an independent commission.

Its 10 members are largely appointed by the party leaders of the state Legislature, and working under updated rules that explicitly require equal apportionment and compact districts, while forbidding racial discrimination.

Queens and Brooklyn residents packed online hearings last month to voice concerns about what they described as divisive lines thwarting their chances of electing representation.

For much of the July 22 Queens hearing's five hours, the focus was on Richmond Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. During the July 29 Brooklyn hearing, speakers pointed out that despite continued Asian population growth in southern Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, Asian residents are outnumbered in every single Assembly and Senate district as currently drawn.

Brooklyn has no Asian representatives in the state Senate or Assembly, Congress or City Council.

District Divided by Water

Richard David, a Guyanese-American district leader who ran for an Assembly seat last year spanning South Ozone Park and part of the Rockaways, said that area's political divisions have created dire outcomes for the community, including a lack of funding for social services.

There are no city or state-funded senior centers in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, or South



The Queens neighborhood of Richmond Hill (center) is split between seven Assembly districts. Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

Ozone Park that primarily serve South Asians and Indo-Caribbean people, he told THE CITY. When constituents seek to reach elected officials, they either don't know whom to call or are overwhelmed by the long list of people to contact, David added.

He cited his District 31, which encompasses parts of South and Southeast Queens, along with the Rockaways, as a "textbook example of gerrymandering."

The eight neighborhoods within the district, especially those in the Rockaways, each have a very distinct cultural identity, he noted, making it challenging for one candidate to build a broad coalition of support.

"Public transportation does not connect these three parts, so in addition to a car, it would be faster to go by boat to the different parts of the district," said David, who lives in South Ozone Park.

More than 42% of the district's population is foreign born, nearly double the rate in New York State. Closer looks within the district's lines more clearly illuminate significant racial disparities.

The borough's Community District 14, which encompasses most of the Rockaway peninsula, is about 36% Black, about 34% white, and roughly 4% Asian. Community District 10, including Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, is 23.7% Asian, 21% white, and 14% Black.

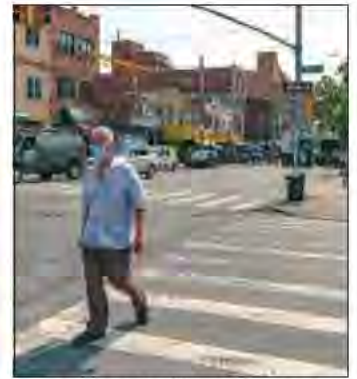
In the June 2020 Democratic primary, David won the district's northern half in Ozone Park and south Ozone Park resoundingly, but fell short in its southern region. He ultimately lost by about 800 votes to Khaleel Anderson, a 25-year-old Black progressive candidate who then won the November general election. The overall Assembly district is now 45% Black and 12% Asian, the new Census numbers show.

Aminta Kilawan-Narine, founder of the South Queens Women's March, contends that the lines reflect a "blatant disregard for the natural communities of interest that exist." She contends that they also run afoul of the federal Voting Rights Act's requirement for compact and contiguous districts.

"The way in which the lines have been drawn divides and dilutes our ability to be a stronger voice," Kilawan-Narine added. "When a naturally occurring community of interest like ours is so very divided, electeds don't have the kind of vested interest in serving us — after all, we become



South Ozone Park, Queens, near the convergence of three Assembly districts. Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY



The southern side of 8th Ave. at 46th St. in Sunset Park, Brooklyn which is in a different Senate district than the northern side of the street. Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

difficult to get the ear of elected officials to support these communities.

"The most active in Sunset Park is Senator [Zellnor] Myrie, but he definitely does spend more time in the Crown Heights neighborhood that he also represents because that is the majority of his district," said Mon Yuck Yu, vice president and chief of staff of the Academy of Medical and Public Health Services, which focuses on helping immigrant New Yorkers.

"A lot of resources go there and Sunset Park is seeing less. In terms of the other senators that represent Sunset Park, we've hardly seen any active outreach or activity or funding levels coming into the neighborhood."

Matt Baer, a spokesperson for Myrie, said that the senator's office does a "particularly good job" at representing constituents in Sunset Park — and that there is no "rhyme or reason" as to how the lines were drawn for the district.

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"This time there should be an effort to provide more complete representation. A Senate district is always going to be difficult," said Savino. The redistricting commission, she said, "should examine whether this form of gerrymandering is fair to anyone."

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THE CITY is an independent, nonprofit news outlet dedicated to hard-hitting reporting that serves the people of New York.

Census data shows big growth in Queens

Continued from page 1

Ivan Garcia, national political director for Make the Road, said that the lines drawn after the 2010 Census did not evenly distribute populations or represent communities — a wrong that “must be fixed in the next map.”

“This process should center the needs of the community, not political parties,” Garcia said. “In an ideal world a benefit is any growth anywhere should see fair representation, that the representation would reflect the increase.”

“We already saw in the last state senate map that Queens, and in reality all of New York City, got disproportionately low representation,” he added. “One of the challenges is what we’ve seen time and again of politics as usual.”

Queens residents will have another chance to provide comments on redistricting after the committee completes and submits a first draft to the State Legislature.

The commission will release their first draft Sept. 15.

Queens, which saw significant change in its population, could potentially see that change reflected in its electoral maps.

The borough has around a dozen Assembly Districts that have fewer people than the average district, meaning the lines will be redrawn to include more people, according to maps provided by the CUNY Graduate Center.

The Asian population in Queens grew by 29 percent and is heavily represented throughout northwest, central and eastern Queens.



Some Queens residents hope the census data will help reshape the electoral lines drawn throughout Queens, including in Richmond Hill, which is divided among several Assembly Districts.

Map via nyc.gov

According to the data, the borough is 25.8 percent white, 16.8 percent Black, 27.5 percent Asian, 10.1 percent two or more races, 1.3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native and 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Around 27 percent of 2020 Census respondents in Queens said they were Hispanic or Latino.

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards celebrated the borough's growth in both population and diversity.

“The large jump in our borough's population underscores what we in Queens have

known for a long time; that Queens truly is a fantastic place to live and raise a family,” Richards said in a statement. “My heartfelt appreciation goes to all of the 2.4 million people who make Queens their home, including the more than one million people who have come here from across the globe to build new lives in ‘The World's Borough.’”

New York City as a whole also experienced a decade of growth and remains the city with the largest population in the country.

The growth was echoed across metro areas in the U.S., which grew by 9 percent in the past

decade. Around 86 percent of all people in the country live in a metropolitan area. However, New York City's growth wasn't consistent across the state.

Steve Romalewski, the director of CUNY Mapping Service, said that though the state will be down one congressional seat, it will most likely be lost from a region upstate. Districts in New York City and Long Island are juggling the need to meet state averages within a small margin of error and balanced populations.

“Because of tremendous population growth in New York City, pressure will be downstate in terms of how district lines will be drawn,” Romalewski said. “Where the lines are redrawn and how that turns out is the question.”

Romalewski said that “the real issue is making sure districts are drawn fairly and that they reflect the communities” but with the additional public awareness this year and changes to both the requirements and redistricting process “here's hope.”

The Independent Redistricting Commission, which is made up of four Democratic and four Republican appointed members, is scheduled to submit its final maps to the State Legislature by January 2022.

New Yorkers will vote on a ballot measure that includes redistricting reform in November. If the measure passes, the commission's timeline will be moved up and it will be required to submit the final draft to the legislature earlier in the month of January than it is currently scheduled to.

Queens Community Board to vote on member's expulsion proceedings

By Jacob Kaye
Queens Daily Eagle

Queens Community Board 7 will meet Monday to vote on whether or not to expel member John Choe from its ranks.

The vote will center around several alleged instances of Choe's misconduct. The accusations, brought by the board's Vice Chair Chuck Apelian in May, range from slander to violating the rules of the Campaign Finance Board. Choe has repeatedly denied committing any wrongdoing.

A simple majority either way will determine Choe's future with the board.

The meeting, being held at 7 p.m. at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Whitestone, comes after a five-person special committee created by the board's chair, Eugene Kelty, voted unanimously to bring four of the five charges against Choe to the full board.

Choe, who was invited to the special committee meeting to defend himself, chose not to show because he didn't want to give the proceedings any “credibility.”

Choe told the Eagle Friday that he plans to show up to the Monday meeting and give a statement on his behalf.

“I feel, not just for my own sake but for the sake of the community, I need to really call out the community board's executive committee for pushing such false charges in a very transparent attempt to silence [dissent],” Choe said.

Prior to the special committee's July meeting, the full board voted 42-3 with one abstention in June to begin the process of hearing the allegations against Choe, who recently finished third in his City Council race in District 20.

Apelian declined to comment ahead of Monday's meeting.

Choe said he suspects the outcome to be similar to the previous meetings and that come Tuesday, he'll be off the board.

“This is a very tightly run community board,”



Community Board 7 will meet on Monday at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Whitestone to vote on whether or not to expel member John Choe.

Photo via Google Maps

he said. “They don't schedule meetings unless they know what the vote will be ahead of time.”

Apelian alleges that Choe violated the City Charter on multiple occasions as a member of the board.

The special committee found cause on the allegations that Choe violated the charter by emailing his fellow board members requesting campaign contributions, started an unauthorized Facebook group for the board, had a poor attendance record and defamed members of the board by accusing them of being corrupt.

The special committee didn't find cause on the fifth and final allegation brought by Apelian, which alleged that Choe told then-acting Borough President Sharon Lee that his opinion could be swayed “for the right price” during a hearing on the Flushing Waterfront Development plan in February 2020. Choe's comment

was met with laughter at the Borough Board meeting and the special committee said the context didn't warrant moving forward with the allegation.

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards reappointed Choe to the board in April, despite City Councilmember Peter Koo recommending against it.

In a statement to the Eagle Friday, the borough president's office said it was the office's policy “to consider and address specific complaints regarding community board conduct in a confidential manner.”

Koo did not respond to request for comment. In December 2020, Kelty filed a formal complaint against Choe with the city's Conflicts of Interest Board concerning his campaign fundraising email sent to board members.

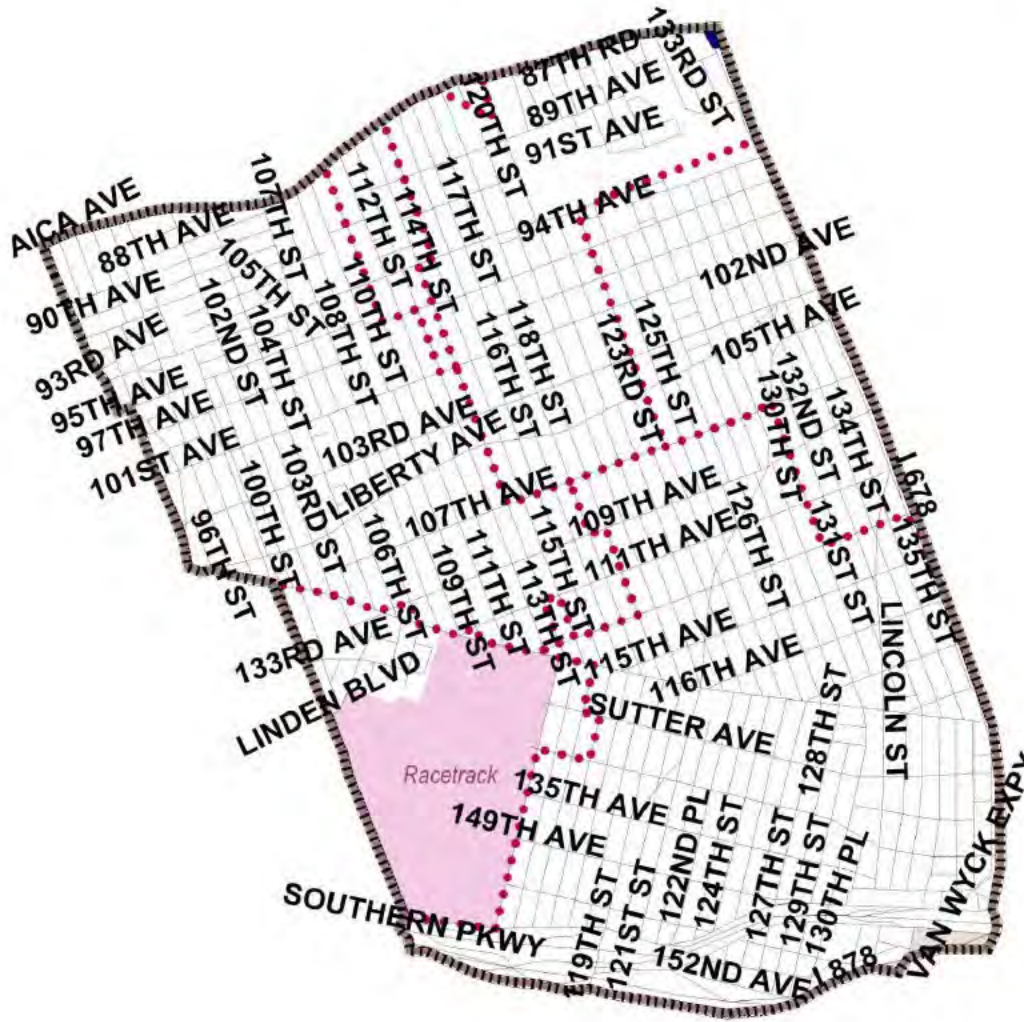
A COIB spokesperson told the Eagle that

they are unable to disclose “whether it has received a complaint, is pursuing an investigation of a matter, has initiated an enforcement action against a public servant, or even whether a case exists involving a public servant unless or until the Board issues a public disposition in such case.”

Regardless of the outcome of Monday's meeting, Choe said he's worried that the entire process the executive committee has brought against him will have a chilling effect on dissent within the board.

“My concern is that it will send the wrong message that people shouldn't get involved and speak up because what people may interpret from what's going on is that the establishment has so much power that there's really no tolerance for different views and perspectives,” he said.

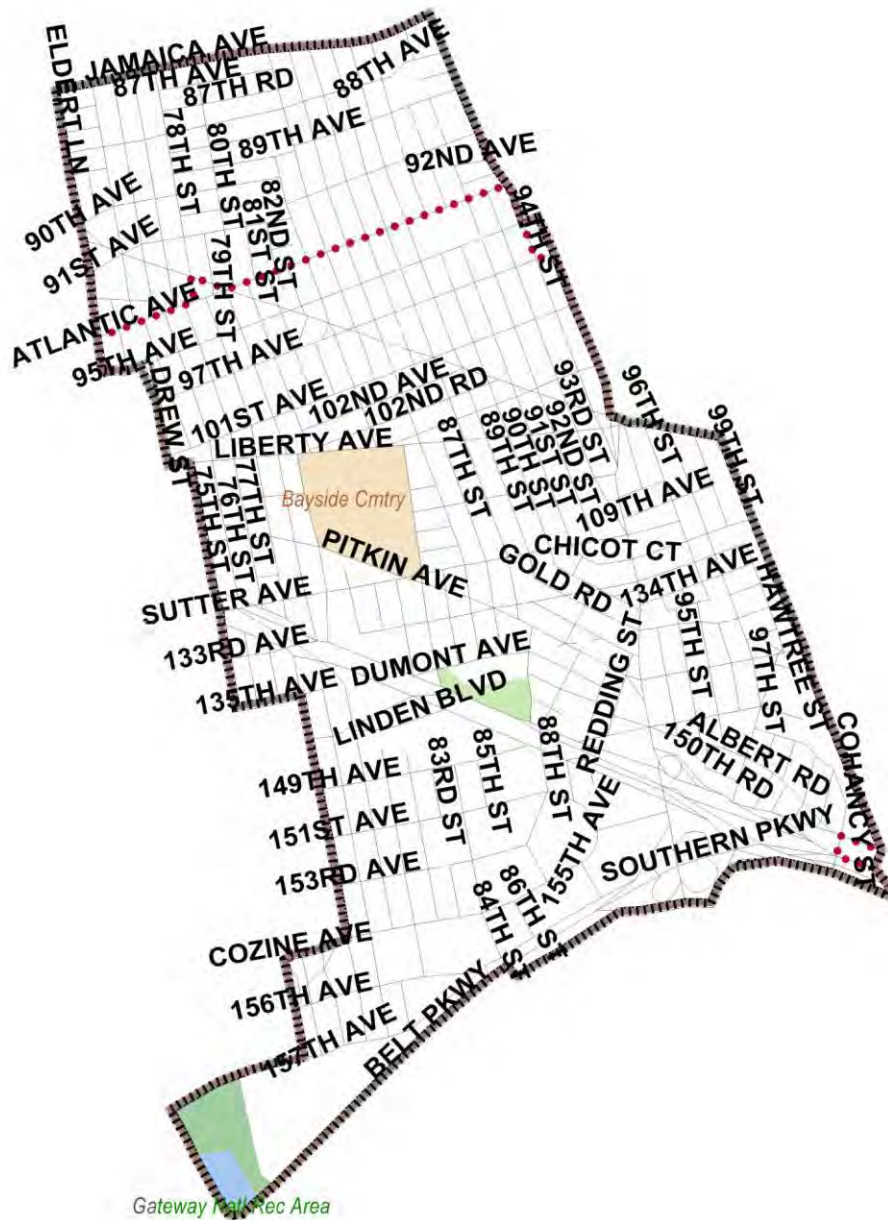
Richmond Hill- South Ozone Park



POPULATION	133,260
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	+4,073 (+3.2%)
% HISPANIC	27.6%
% NH WHITE	7.9%
% NH BLACK	19.4%
% NH ASIAN	25.5%



Ozone Park



POPULATION	68,070
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-61,117 (-47.3%)
% HISPANIC	45.1%
% NH WHITE	26.9%
% NH BLACK	5.9%
% NH ASIAN	16.3%

Gateway Park Rec Area





SOUTH QUEENS WOMEN'S MARCH
SOUTHQUEENSWOMENSMARCH @ GMAIL.COM 1(929) 367 -0010
SOUTHQUEENSWOMENSMARCH.ORG

Testimony for Independent Districting Commission, Queens Hearing, July 22, 2021
Aminta Kilawan-Narine, Esq. Founder & Director, South Queens Women's March

Good Afternoon esteemed members of the Independent Redistricting Commission. My name is Aminta Kilawan-Narine and I am a lawyer, organizer, and the founder and executive director of South Queens Women's March (SQWM), a local grassroots gender justice organization. Founded right before the pandemic hit, and inspired by global and national women's rights movements, SQWM amplifies the voices of South Queens' diverse women and gender-expansive people. We are an all-volunteer multi-generational, intersectional platform working to foster women's empowerment through dismantling norms, practices, and institutions that support patriarchy and gender injustice. We take our sisterhood to the streets to unify women and gender non-conforming individuals in our community and connect them to the tools and resources necessary to empower their own lives and thrive.

Women have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and we recognize the need to meet women, girls and gender-fluid people where they are. Community members have ended up practically trapped at home with their abusers, reprieve is far from reachable, and resources become that much more critical. So, we provide food pantries and essential distributions to meet our community members where they are, reaching several thousand local families. We have hosted monthly workshops on healing and wellness to support survivors in coping with trauma, establishing healthy boundaries, fostering self-love, addressing street harassment and how to have healthy intimate relationships. We offer youth and professional development workshops to immigrant families who do not have access to quality information to support their educational and career development. They are often in first-generation families learning for the first time how to navigate complex systems and bureaucracies. And finally, we're building political power from the ground up, utilizing community/ethnic media as a platform for civic engagement, street canvassing to register voters, and raising our voices to educate our communities and decision-making bodies on how we have been historically oppressed, including placed in multiple districts that dilute our power. To that end, SQWM is a proud member of APA Voice's Redistricting Task Force.

Much of our work, which has grown exponentially over our short year plus of existence, has been based in the Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, and Ozone Park neighborhoods of South Queens, home to a vibrant and sprawling Asian American population - specifically South Asians, mainly Punjabi, and Indo-Caribbeans that Census data unfortunately does not fully account for. For clarification sake, Indo-Caribbeans are those who migrated from India to the Caribbean as indentured servants in the early 1800s - to places like Guyana, Trinidad and Suriname. These communities have been gerrymandered for far too long.

I began to organize in my community a decade ago during the last redistricting cycle. Ten years later, I find myself asking for the same thing: **please don't divide us - keep our communities of interest together**. If you take a look at the district lines at every level of government for these neighborhoods, you will see a blatant disregard for the natural communities of interest that exist. You will see lines that do not uphold the Voting Rights Act but instead run afoul of them - not compact nor contiguous by any means. This is particularly egregious at the State Assembly Level where we are divided into at least 7 districts - Assembly Districts 23, 24, 27, 28, 31, 32 and 38.

The way in which the lines have been drawn divide and dilutes our ability to be a stronger voice. Our communities have been split into smaller pieces for far too long. Most people in our community aren't able to identify who their elected officials are, because the lines are drawn without regard for them. Our communities are distinct from the areas they are lumped with: very different from areas such as Howard Beach to the south, Jamaica and St. Albans to the east, or Glendale and Maspeth to the north. We have one of the largest concentrated immigrant communities in all of NYC yet people like me - South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans including countless Guyanese and Trinidadian people, have no real representation at the City, State or Federal level because our community has been artificially splintered. When a naturally occurring community of interest like ours is so very divided, electeds don't have the kind of vested interest in serving us - after all, we become but a fraction of their constituency. We organizers have to spend hours on end liaising with so many elected officials just for a small piece of the pie and resources become that much harder to acquire.

The communities I speak of are linked by strong ties - cultural, culinary, familial, religious, educational, economic, and more. We take the same trains and buses, we go to the same schools, go to the same mandirs, masjids and gurdwaras; shop at the same ethnic grocery stores, face the same financial struggles, we are even extensions of the same families - yet the lines divide us in a way that dilutes our ability to be a stronger voice. If our communities of interest were kept whole, we wouldn't still be struggling to get the adequate sanitation and garbage bins on our major thoroughfares. If our communities of interest were kept whole, we could advocate more effectively to address the housing crisis that prices our people out of becoming homeowners in their own neighborhoods, or living in basement apartments because there's really nowhere else to go. If our communities of interest were kept whole, we would have a true community center and not be forced to find alternatives like the local Burger King or our libraries which themselves are in need of capital updates.

We are in the process of working through the lines we'd like to see, awaiting key data that would inform our proposed maps. We commit to a united front in proposing equitable lines that would empower a historically marginalized people. This is not about identity politics. This is about protecting disenfranchised populations. This is about eradicating voter dilution. This is about community empowerment. Thank you to the entire commission and your staff for your time and efforts. As we always say at South Queens Women's March, our voice is our power. Please redraw these lines to uplift our voices.



Ashlery Coulter



Redistricting Testimony

Hello, my name is Ashley Coulter and I do not approve of constantly redistricting South East Queens(SEQ). The focus is primarily financial and I get the idea, it's just where the funds are distributed and accessed matters. Community centers, beautifying the neighborhood, cleanliness and Street cleaning as well as grocery store maintenance and accessibility are extremely needed. Seniors, the elderly and those with a disability like myself deserve safety and nice areas, not just "good enough". Caring about the community and the people in it can have bigger and more positive outcomes that can reach further than a few lines on a map. At the end of the day, hard workers pay more tax dollars and should at least feel comfortable knowing they're getting something in return without feeling left out or ripped off. Thank you for listening



Edited 11:50 AM



Anisa Ayon

FW: 7/22 Queens County Public Meeting with the New York Independent Redistricting Commission

Ahsia Badi <badia@nyirc.gov>

Thu 7/22/2021 8:42 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>


Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2021 8:30 AM**To:** [Ahsia Badi](#)**Subject:** Re: 7/22 Queens County Public Meeting with the New York Independent Redistricting Commission

My testimony

Good afternoon,

I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in today's hearing regarding the Redistricting of Central Queens.

My name is Anisia Ayon. I have resided in Rego Park for the past 52 years where I have raised my children's and grandchildren.

For the majority of these 50 plus years, I have been extremely active in my community and have been a voice of the people and for the people. In March 2019, I joined the Borough President Queens Complete Count initiative to help inform my neighbors and fellow Queens residents about the importance of the Census and for the future of our community. The results in my region and beyond were positive and viewed as a great success and a personal accomplishment.

After the completion of the Census, next steps of the Redistricting opened my eyes and I have realized that the outlines of Central Queens will be gravely impacted. Families, schools, businesses and places of worship will be negatively impacted by the lines drawn with this plan. Right now we have 3 Senators and 3 Assembly Members.

This district needs State Senators and Assembly Members that are familiar with our region, our people and our community. Neighborhood representatives have gathered here today on behalf of the new formed "Central Queens Redistricting coalition" to ask you to reconsider your plans. We need you to consider our diverse community, including a high percentage of senior citizens - people who have lived here and dedicated the best of their years to this community. Let us NOT forget them and ALL the multicultural faces that represent Rego Park.

In closing, I am here as a voice of the people and for the people, as a Cuban American Citizen who fought to live in this amazing country and neighborhood, as a senior citizen, a mother, a grandmother and I implore you to reconsider the Redistricting and re-draw the maps to include all our diversity and select one Senator and one Assembly member that cares for our Central Queens community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 21, 2021, at 12:33 PM, Ahsia Badi <badia@nyirc.gov> wrote:



Ashley Coulter

Redistricting Testimony

Hello, my name is Ashley Coulter and I do not approve of constantly redistricting South East Queens(SEQ). The focus is primarily financial and I get the idea, it's just where the funds are distributed and accessed matters. Community centers, beautifying the neighborhood, cleanliness and Street cleaning as well as grocery store maintenance and accessibility are extremely needed. Seniors, the elderly and those with a disability like myself deserve safety and nice areas, not just "good enough". Caring about the community and the people in it can have bigger and more positive outcomes that can reach further than a few lines on a map. At the end of the day, hard workers pay more tax dollars and should at least feel comfortable knowing they're getting something in return without feeling left out or ripped off. Thank you for listening



Edited 11:50 AM



**Queens County Public Meeting – July 22, 2021 - Testimony by Ashook Ramsaran
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission**

Good afternoon.

Ashook Ramsaran

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this hearing. A copy of my testimony has been uploaded for the record

My name is Ashook Ramsaran, born in Guyana and a long-time resident of Queens for 53 years. I am a vice president of Queens Civic Congress (QCC) representing more than 80 civic and other community organizations throughout the Borough of Queens, providing a forum for the civic associations and neighborhood organizations to develop and present common policies and positions. Co-Chair of Queens Complete Count Committee of Census 2020; I am also a member of the Fresh Meadows Home Owners' Civic Association (FMHCA); Chair of NY Presbyterian Hospital Queens Community Advisory Council; Secretary of Caribbean American Coalition (CAC) and the boards of several local, regional and global civic organizations and academic institutions and member of several others. I am also president of the Indian Diaspora Council (IDC) with worldwide chapters and membership, advocating fairness and equitable rights of people of Indian origin globally I have previously advocated, supported and testified at several hearings including Redistricting Hearings in 2017, R2A re-zoning of Fresh Meadows, landmarking of the Brinkerhoff Cemetery in Queens and other hearings.

Rachael Fauss, Policy and Research Manager, Citizens Union said, *“We recognize that there are a number of factors that contribute to the election of candidates to office, but the lack of fair and objective criteria in the drawing of district lines has too often allowed for the protection of incumbent legislators at the expense of communities of interest”*. According to Citizens Union, Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR) has a history of gerrymandering to ensure incumbents win re-election and the parties in power maintain their control of their respective houses in the legislature. In doing so, the current redistricting process fails to adequately account for growing minority groups and provide for representation that reflects the diversity of the state.

I fully support the community initiative to assign a cohesive state assembly (and state senate) district to include the South Asian population of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, South Ozone Park and Woodhaven. I am advocating and adding to those who have spoken before and will speak afterwards on the critical need to retain a single, contiguous, compact, cohesive community for fair, equitable and effective representation of people with similar backgrounds and interests, families and friends with shared culture, history, aspirations and community spirit as well as shared interests, shared concerns, shared values, - in a singular district in order to keep the community area intact: socially, culturally, economically and politically.

Census 2020 statistics show that, for the many reasons which are well known, Queens' count was less than NYS 64% and far less than national response of 67%. Ultimately, these statistics are to be used to determine redistricting. Doing so without consideration of the uncouneted would be denying segments and areas deservedly real representation. Real demographics and population statistics clearly confirm the need for retaining the community intact and provide the supporting means for its own representation – at all city and state levels. The maps and respective statistics make it obvious.

The US Constitution with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 guarantees fair and equitable representation. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Articles 21, 27 and 29 affirm the inalienable rights of people “to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives” – underline freely chosen representatives. What better way to be in compliance than to provide the means for chosen representation by keeping the community intact. People choose their representatives; representatives must choose the people. This is wrong and needs to be remedied.

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission states that it “is critical to ensuring district lines are drawn to keep your community whole and grouped with nearby communities with similar interests. That ensures that your voice is heard by your elected leaders in such decisions as the quality of your child’s schools or how high your taxes are.”

The New York Times: *“....draw straightforward and fair maps of Congressional and state legislative districts by keeping communities intact and respecting local jurisdictional lines.”*

It is critical to keep a unified, compact district with natural and sensible boundaries. It makes no sense to partition and divide this community, ripping apart neighborhoods and destroying the strong partnerships shared by those who live in these communities.

**PLEASE DO NOT DIVIDE, DILUTE & DISRUPT - IT IS NOT IN THE PEOPLE’S INTEREST.
WE ASK YOU TO DO THE RIGHT THING – IT IS YOUR DUTY. NYS MUST NOT BECOME LIKE TEXAS !!**

You have a tough job to do and we can help you as we are doing today.
Please give positive consideration to our proposals.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by: Ashook Ramsaran *Date:* July 22, 2021



NY Independant Redistricting Committee – Public Commentary

Brady A Berman, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I believe that it would be beneficial to four boroughs to redistrict my congressional district 12 and 14. Currently, I am in District 12, about four blocks south of the border with District 14, in the same neighborhood in Astoria. District 12 also covers the Upper East Side of Manhattan, straight down to the East Village of Manhattan; wealthy areas, all. The only comparable neighborhood in Queens that is part of District 12 is Long Island City. For years, the votes of the wealthy in Manhattan have overruled the votes of those in Queens and Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and our needs have been subsumed by those whose priorities are for more high-value housing markets, lower capital gains taxes, and the conservation of Central Park. It is not equitable to have a small area of the outer boroughs neglected due to the larger population in Manhattan, watching as our elected officials both north, south, and east of us represented by congresspeople with our needs and desires in mind.

With this in mind, my proposal is to merge the Queens portions of NY 12 with the adjoining district 14 (making a Queens/Bronx district with a much more socioeconomically homogenous population), merging the Manhattan districts 10 and 12, and the Brooklyn portions of NY 12 with both district 7 and 8. The outer boroughs should be represented by outer borough representatives.

Thank you.

Brady A. Berman, Ph.D.

PROPOSED ORAL TESTIMONY

Bruce Grossberg

My name is Bruce Grossberg. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of this Redistricting Committee.

I am testifying in an individual capacity. I have sent additional biographical information about myself in my written testimony

I wanted to make a comment to the Committee about the well-known fact that there are 435 members of the United States House of Representatives.

While the Constitution states that there must be 2 Senators for each state, it is less clear on the number of members of the House.

Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution states that there needs to be a Census every ten years, and that the apportionment of the Representatives to each state, and indirectly the number of votes each State has in the Electoral College, has something to do with the Census. But the rest of the issues regarding Congressional apportionment and representation is left to Congress, and to the respective state legislatures.

The statute regarding the apportionment of members of Congress has been amended from time-to-time. In general, the statutes allowed for the number of House members to expand in rough proportion to the expansion of the population in general.

However, the most recent version --- the Reapportionment Act of 1929 --- took a different approach.

2 U.S. Code Section 2(a) says, in relevant part:

[I will only read the bold print of the next paragraph in oral testimony]

"On the first day, or within one week thereafter of the first regular session of the Eighty-second Congress and of each fifth Congress thereafter, the President shall transmit to the Congress a statement showing the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed, as ascertained under the seventeenth and each subsequent decennial census of the population, and the number of Representatives to which each State would be entitled under an apportionment of the then existing number of Representatives by the method known as the method of equal proportions, no State to receive less than one Member."

The "then existing number of Representatives" in 1929 was 435. And that is why, almost 100 years later, there are still 435 members of the House.

The sentence about "then existing number of Representatives" is the only sentence that needs to be changed in order to raise the cap on the number of members of the House of Representatives.

The census of 1930 showed approximately 123,000,000 people sharing 435 Representatives.

The census of 2020 shows approximately 331,000,000 people sharing 435 Representatives.

There are a lot of methods floating around for how to add Representatives. For example, New York has approximately 35 times the population of Wyoming, the least populated state. It would stand to reason that New York should have 35 members in the House.

Instead, New York has only 26 members.

I refer to using Wyoming as a benchmark in greater detail in my written testimony

Raising the number of Members of the United States House of Representatives does not require a Constitutional amendment, a 15-member Supreme Court opinion, or DC Statehood. It just requires rewriting a one-sentence statute.

Thank you for your time.

Bruce Grossberg

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF BRUCE GROSSBERG

I am a member of Community Board 6 Queens, where I am the co-chairman of the Education, Library and Youth Committee. I have previously been Chairman of the Community Board Budget Committee.

I have been a resident of Forest Hills since 2000, a resident of Briarwood from 1994-2000, and a resident at another location in Forest Hills from 1983-1989. I attended elementary school at P.S 42 in Arverne and Junior High School at P.S 180 in Rockaway Park between 1963 and 1971.

Although I am not currently practising law, I have a law degree from Harvard Law School (1982) and did practice law for approximately 25 years. I did not practice election law or redistricting law.

Attached is an Excel Spreadsheet that is on the website of the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau entitled

"Apportionment of Population and Number of Representatives by State: 2020 Census"

The original version of the Spreadsheet had all the information set forth on Columns A, B, C and D.

- A. Each State
- B. It's official 2020 Census Number
- C. The number of House Members each state will have based on the 2020 Census
- D. The change in each State's House Members from the number it had based on the 2010 Census

The original version also had the 2 footnotes that remain in the table.

The footnotes refer to the legislation that enables the Constitutional requirement to have a Census every 10 years and to base the number of members of the House of Representatives (and indirectly, the number of Electoral College votes) on the result of that census.

I revised the spread sheet I'm sending you from the one that is on the U.S. Census Bureau website.

I added a column called:

"Number of Apportioned Representatives Based on Wyoming Population."

I simply divided the population of each state by the population of Wyoming.

I rounded the fractions to a whole number based on whatever rounding technique was already imbedded in the U.S. Census Bureau webpage. Honestly, I do not have the tech skills to look into what the rounding technique is.

I added another column called:

"New Representatives"

Under this formula, there would be 138 new Representatives

The House of Representatives would have 573 Members, instead of the current 435 Members.

New York would get 9 more Representatives, increasing from 26 seats to 35 seats, because New York has roughly 35 times the population of Wyoming.

California would get 17 additional seats.

Texas would get 13 additional seats, and Florida would get 9 additional seats.

Thank you for your time.

Bruce Grossberg

5



U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1. APPORTIONMENT POPULATION AND NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES BY STATE: 2020 CENSUS

STATE	APPORTIONMENT POPULATION (APRIL 1, 2020)	NUMBER OF APPORTIONED REPRESENTATIVES BASED ON 2020 CENSUS ²	CHANGE FROM 2010 CENSUS APPORTIONMENT	NUMBER OF APPORTIONED REPRESENTATIVES BASED ON WYOMING POPULATION	NEW REPRESENTATIVE S
Alabama	5,030,053	7	0	9	2
Alaska	736,081	1	0	1	0
Arizona	7,158,923	9	0	12	3
Arkansas	3,013,756	4	0	5	1
California	39,576,757	52	-1	69	17
Colorado	5,782,171	8	1	10	2
Connecticut	3,608,298	5	0	6	1
Delaware	990,837	1	0	2	1
Florida	21,570,527	28	1	37	9
Georgia	10,725,274	14	0	19	5
Hawaii	1,460,137	2	0	3	1
Idaho	1,841,377	2	0	3	1
Illinois	12,822,739	17	-1	22	5
Indiana	6,790,280	9	0	12	3
Iowa	3,192,406	4	0	6	2
Kansas	2,940,865	4	0	5	1
Kentucky	4,509,342	6	0	8	2
Louisiana	4,661,468	6	0	8	2
Maine	1,363,582	2	0	2	0
Maryland	6,185,278	8	0	11	3
Massachusetts	7,033,469	9	0	12	3
Michigan	10,084,442	13	-1	17	4
Minnesota	5,709,752	8	0	10	2
Mississippi	2,963,914	4	0	5	1
Missouri	6,160,281	8	0	11	3
Montana	1,085,407	2	1	2	0
Nebraska	1,963,333	3	0	3	0
Nevada	3,108,462	4	0	5	1
New Hampshire	1,379,089	2	0	2	0
New Jersey	9,294,493	12	0	16	4
New Mexico	2,120,220	3	0	4	1
New York	20,215,751	26	-1	35	9
North Carolina	10,453,948	14	1	18	4
North Dakota	779,702	1	0	1	0
Ohio	11,808,848	15	-1	20	5
Oklahoma	3,963,516	5	0	7	2
Oregon	4,241,500	6	1	7	1
Pennsylvania	13,011,844	17	-1	23	6
Rhode Island	1,098,163	2	0	2	0
South Carolina	5,124,712	7	0	9	2
South Dakota	887,770	1	0	2	1
Tennessee	6,916,897	9	0	12	3
Texas	29,183,290	38	2	51	13
Utah	3,275,252	4	0	6	2
Vermont	643,503	1	0	1	0
Virginia	8,654,542	11	0	15	4
Washington	7,715,946	10	0	13	3
West Virginia	1,795,045	2	-1	3	1
Wisconsin	5,897,473	8	0	10	2
Wyoming	577,719	1	0	1	0
TOTAL APPORTIONMENT POPULATION ¹	331,108,434	435		573	138

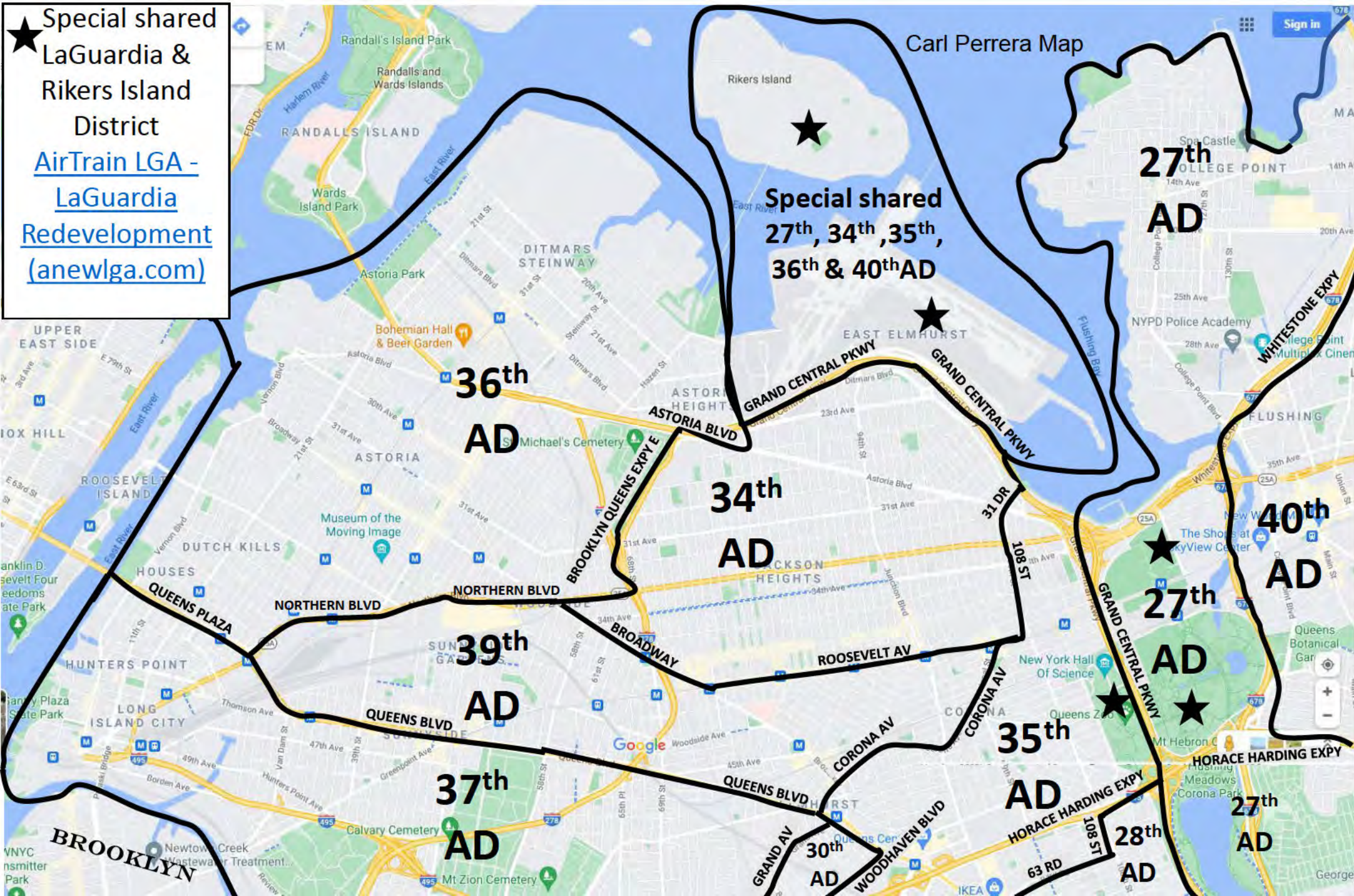
¹ Includes the resident population for the 50 states, as ascertained by the Twenty-Fourth Decennial Census under Title 13, United States Code, and counts of U.S. military and federal civilian employees living overseas (and their dependents living with them overseas) allocated to their home state, as reported by the employing federal agencies. The apportionment population excludes the population of the District of Columbia. The counts of overseas personnel (and dependents) are used for apportionment purposes only.

² The U.S. Census Bureau prepared these calculations using the existing size of the U.S. House of Representatives (435 members) and the Method of Equal Proportions, as provided for in Title 2, United States Code, Sections 2a and 2b.

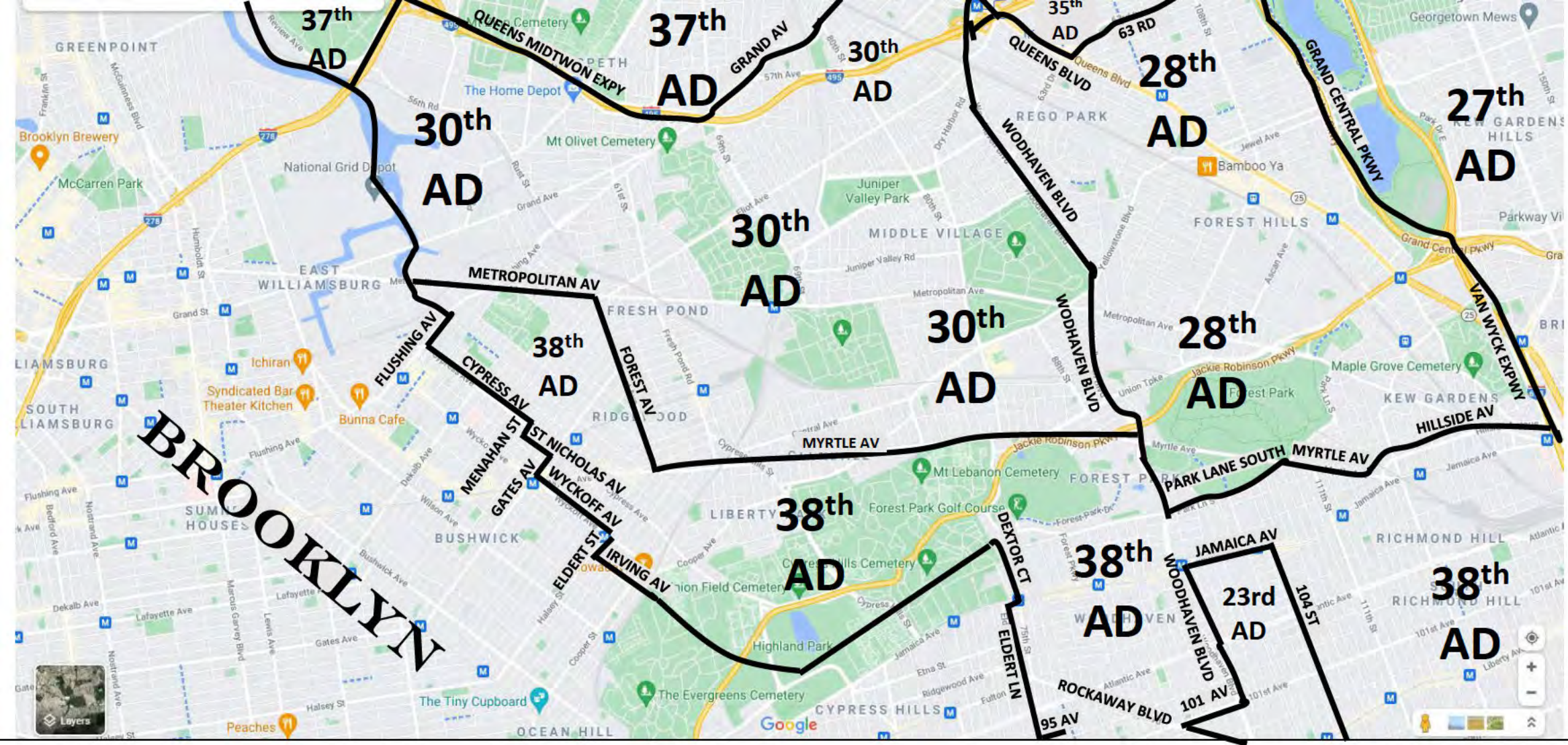
Carl Perrera Map

**PROPOSED
QUEENS COUNTY
NEW YORK STATE
ASSEMBLY
DISTRICTS**

★ Special shared LaGuardia & Rikers Island District
[AirTrain LGA - LaGuardia Redevelopment \(anewlga.com\)](http://AirTrain LGA - LaGuardia Redevelopment (anewlga.com))

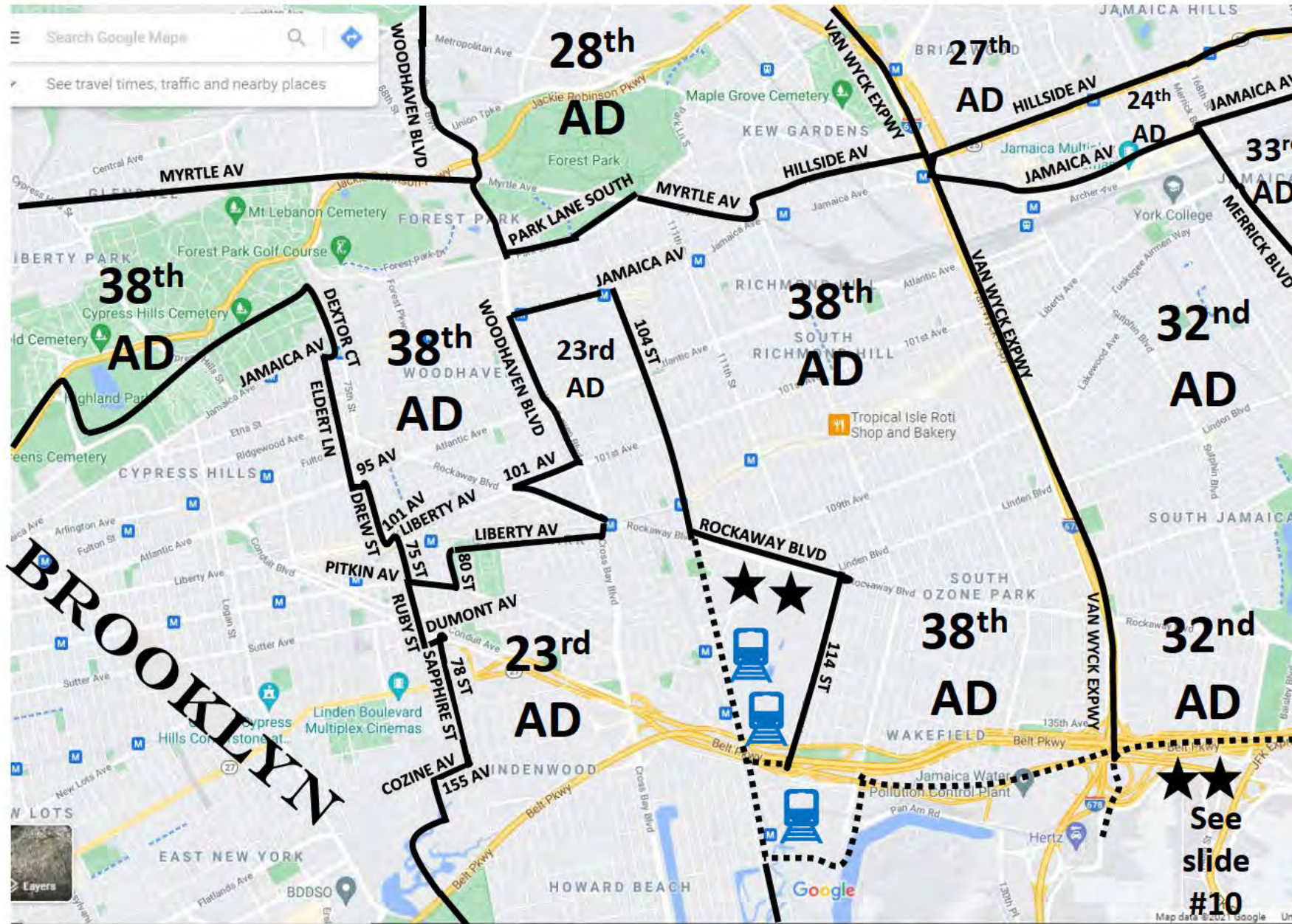


★ Special shared LaGuardia & Rikers Island District. Also Flushing Meadows Corona Park could be included within this Special District. All bordering Assembly Districts could equally share in representation such as Districts 27th, 34th, 35th, & 36th, & 40th. For access to jobs for many neighboring Queens communities.



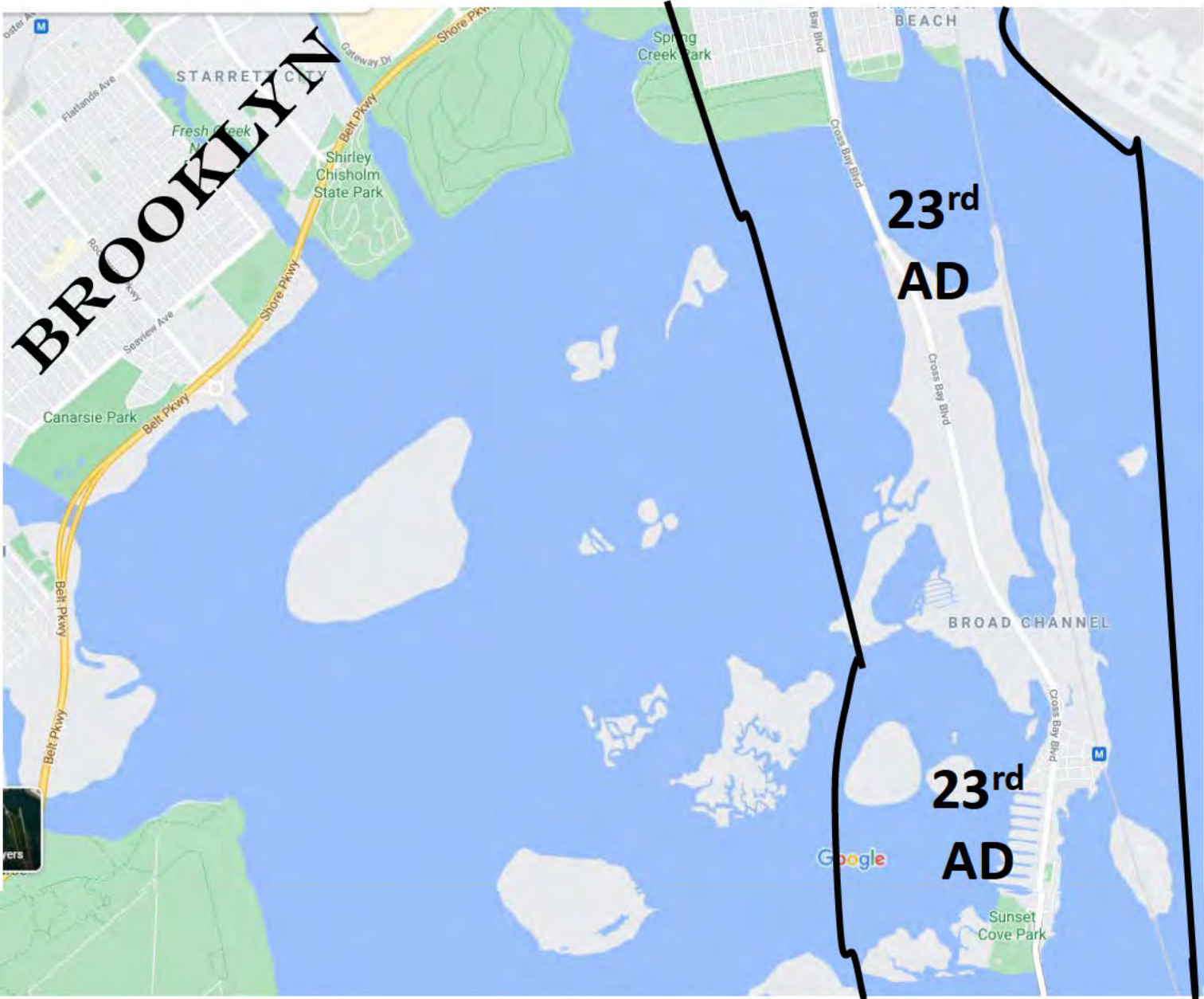
Carl Perrera Map

Carl Perrera Map



★★ See slide #11 for Special shared district: JFK Airport – Aqueduct Racetrack – Resorts World – New York City Casino Special District. All bordering Assembly Districts could equally share in representation such as 23rd, 38th, 29th, 31st & 32nd Districts. For access to jobs and transit for many Queens communities.

Future Queenslink Transportation Proposal. Go to: <http://thequeenslink.org> or go to: www.vanshnookenraggen.com/_index/2021/07/queenslink



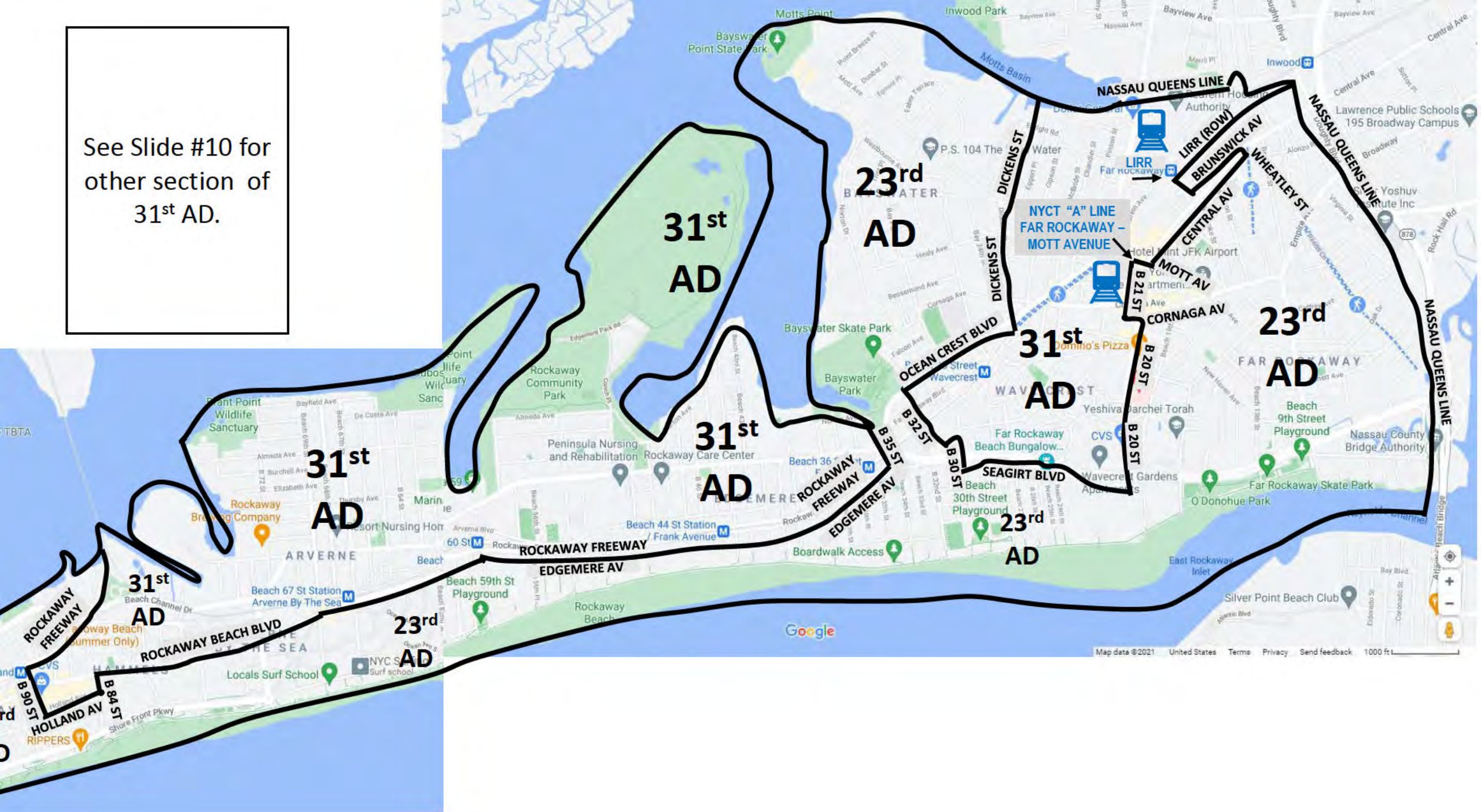
Carl Perrera Map

Carl Perrera Map



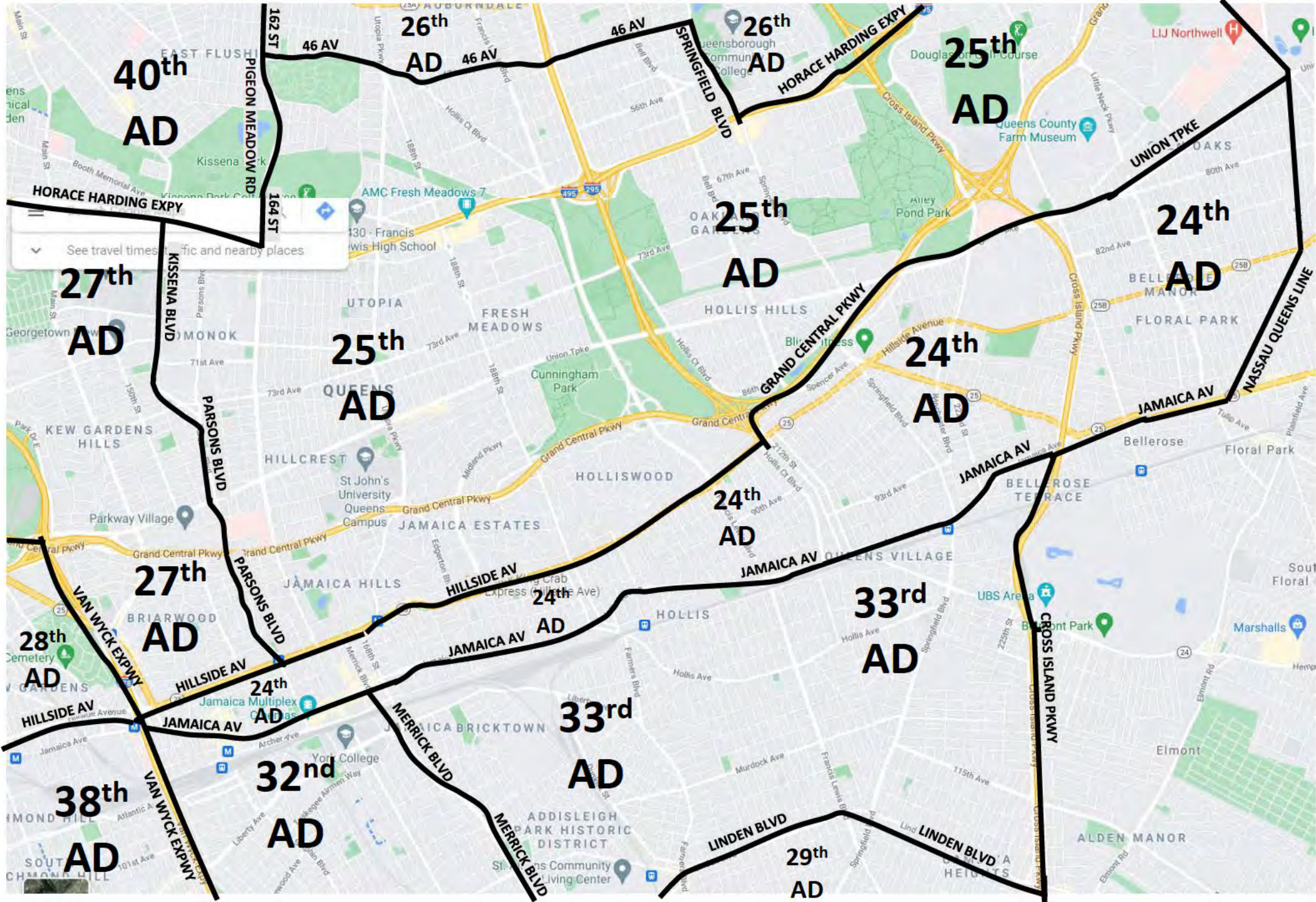
Carl Perrera Map

See Slide #10 for
other section of
31st AD.

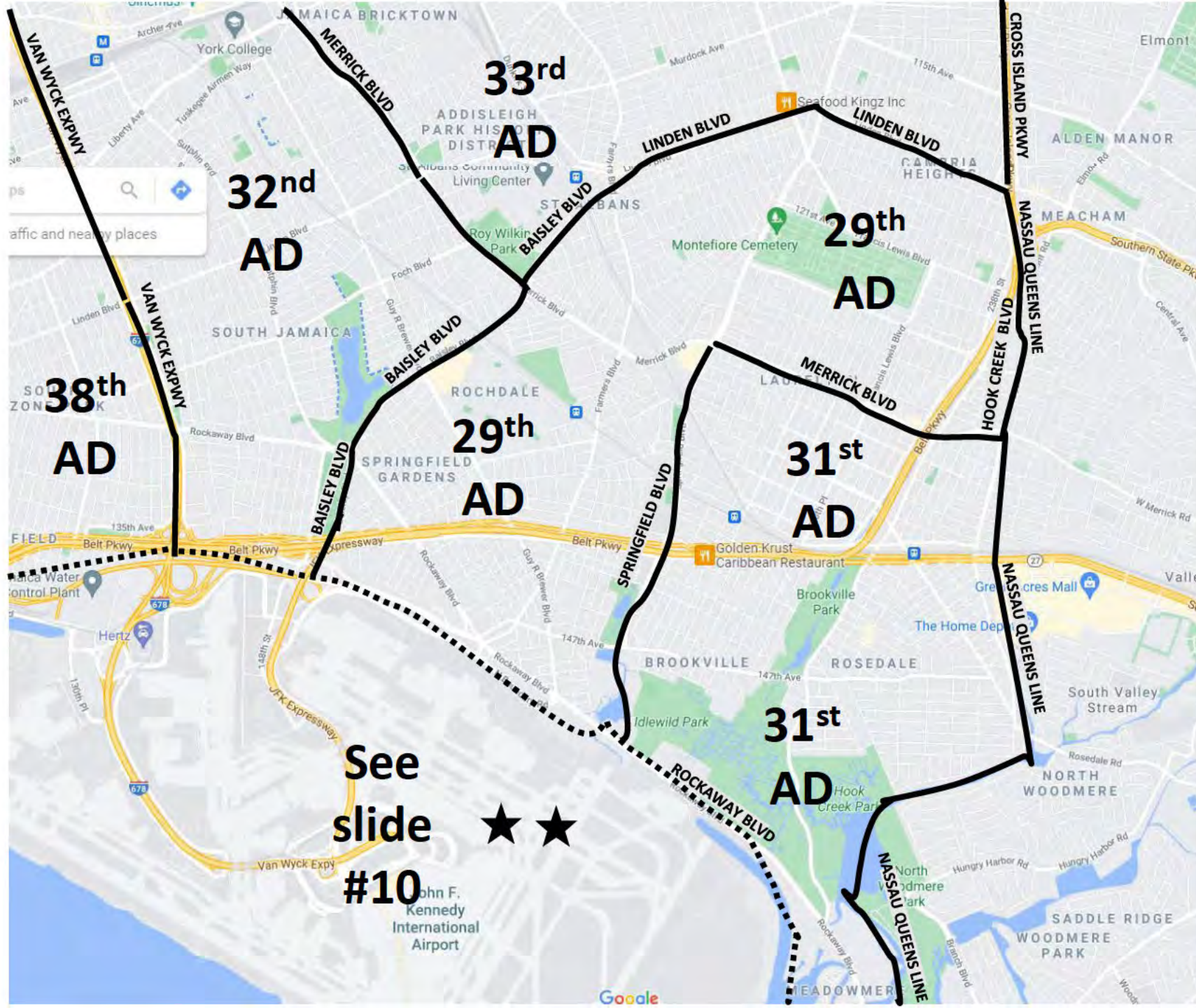


Carl Perrera Map



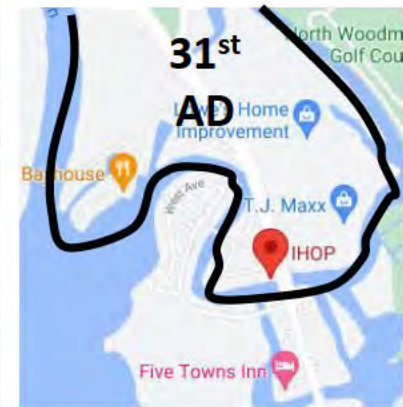


Carl Perrera Map



See slide #7
for Rockaway
section of 31st
AD.

Also see slide #11
For details of
JFK Airport –
Aqueduct
Racetrack –
Resorts World –
New York City
Casino
Special District.





Special shared district:

JFK Airport –

Aqueduct Racetrack –

Resorts World –

New York City Casino

Special District.

All bordering Assembly

Districts could equally

share in representation

such as 23rd, 38th, 29th, 31st

& 32nd Districts.

For access to jobs and

transit for many Queens

communities.

Future Queenslink

Transportation Proposal.

Go to:

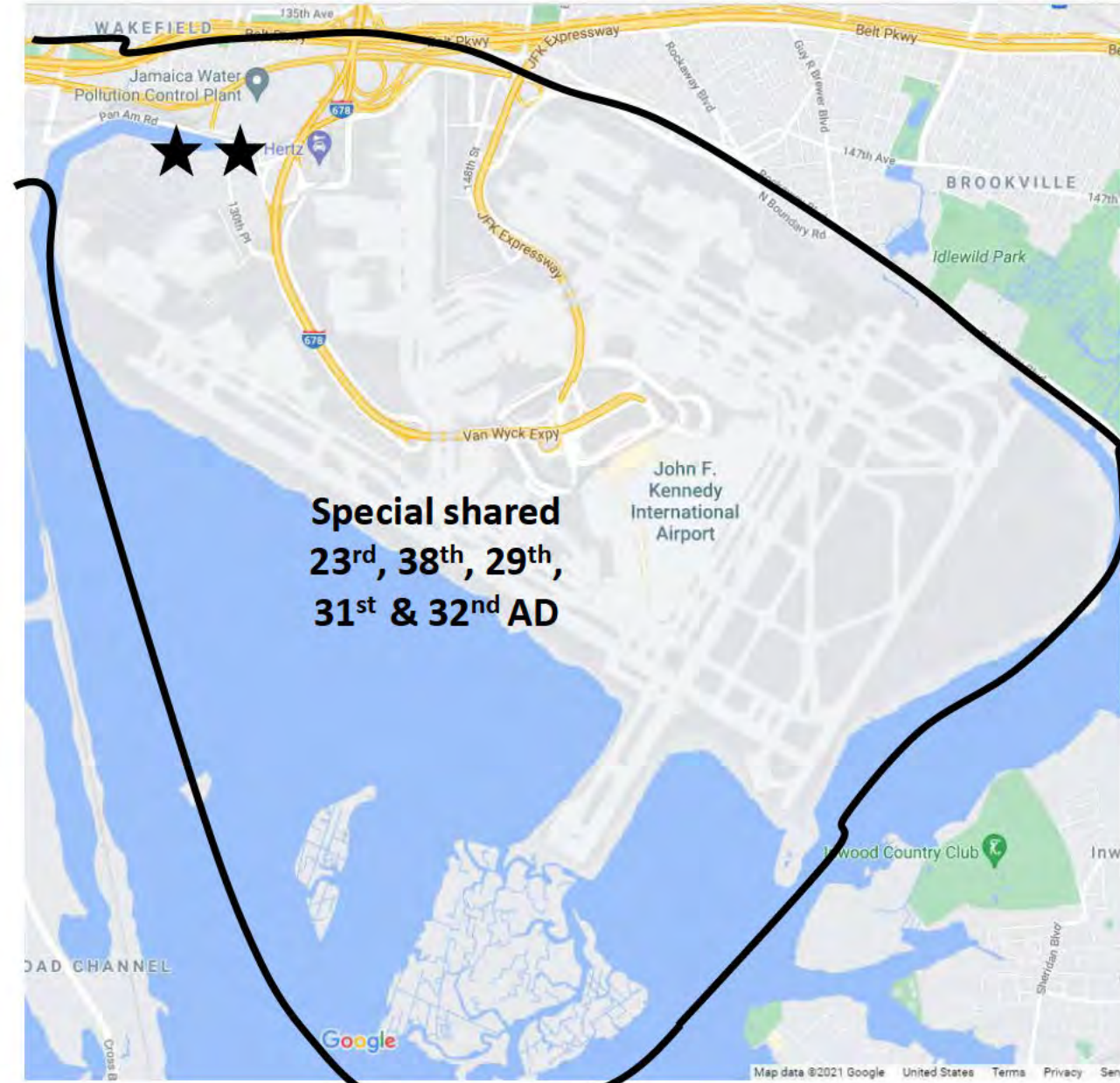
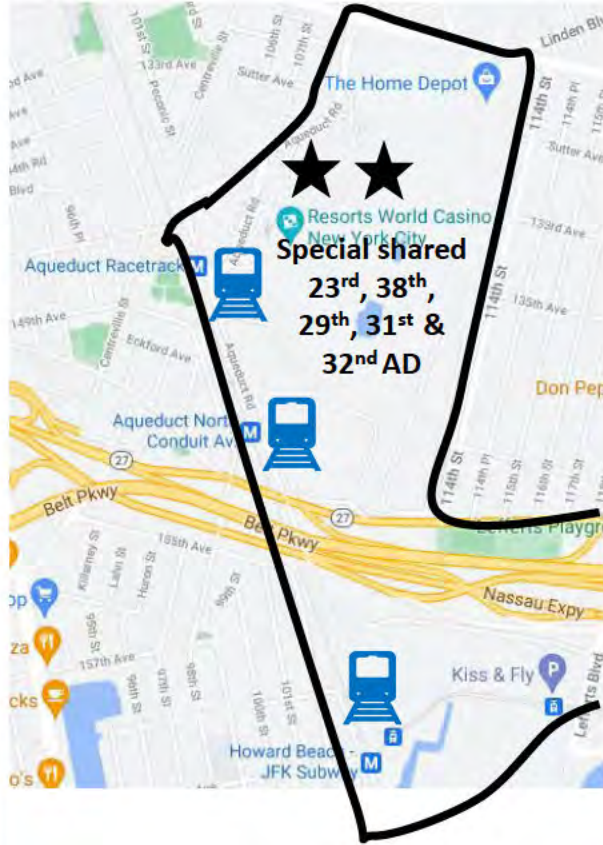
<http://thequeenslink.org>

or go to:

www.vanshnookenraggen.com/_index/2021/07/queenslink

/queenslink

Carl Perrera Map



Map Submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Fri 9/10/2021 1:51 PM

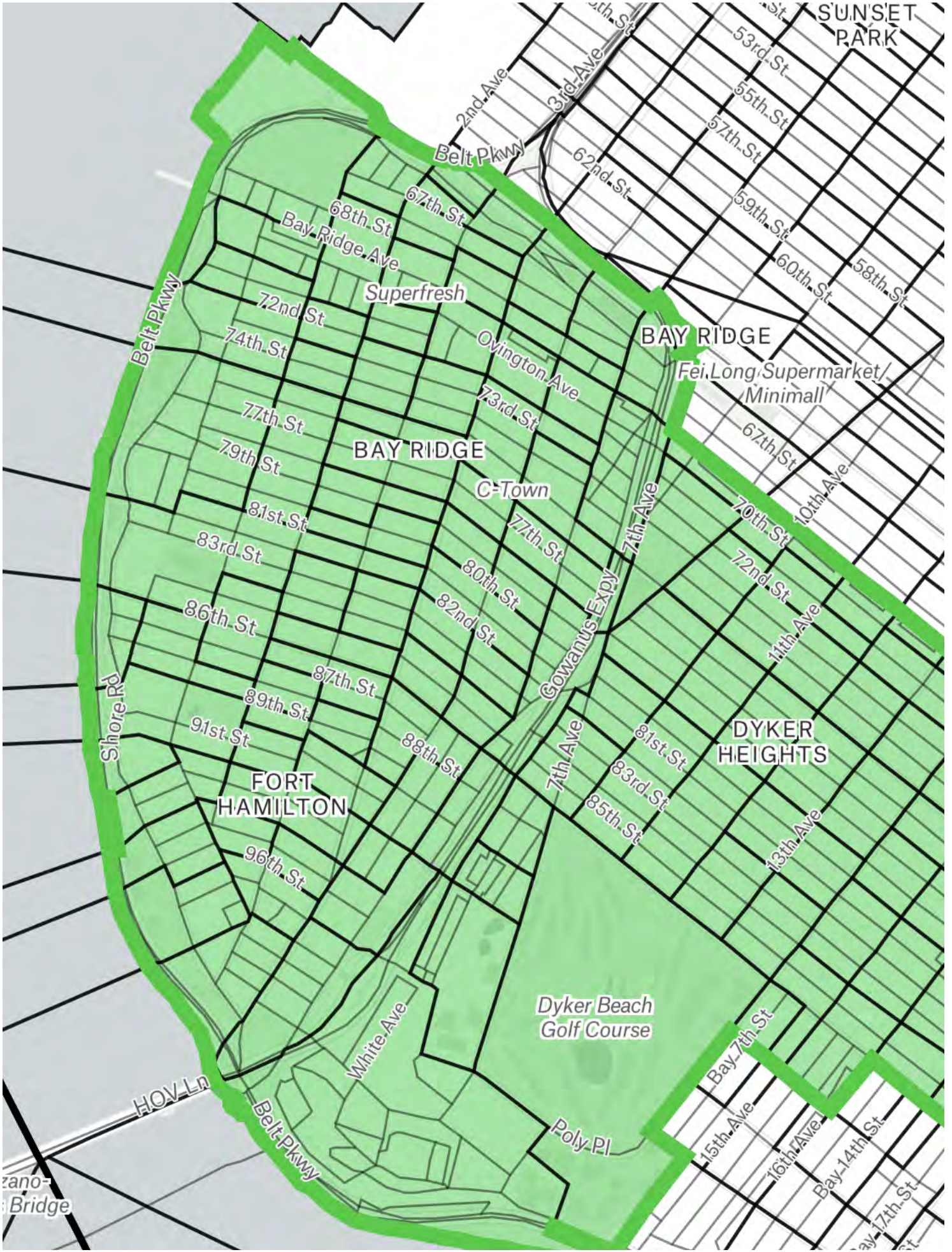
To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Chi
- **Last Name:** Anunwa
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** My name is Chi Anunwa. I live on the corner of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I'm a Bay Ridge resident that wants fair representation, which means having Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights entirely together in one district.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

This e-mail has been automatically generated



SUNSET PARK

Belt Pkwy

BAY RIDGE

BAY RIDGE

C-Town

DYKER HEIGHTS

FORT HAMILTON

Dyker Beach Golf Course

HOV Ln

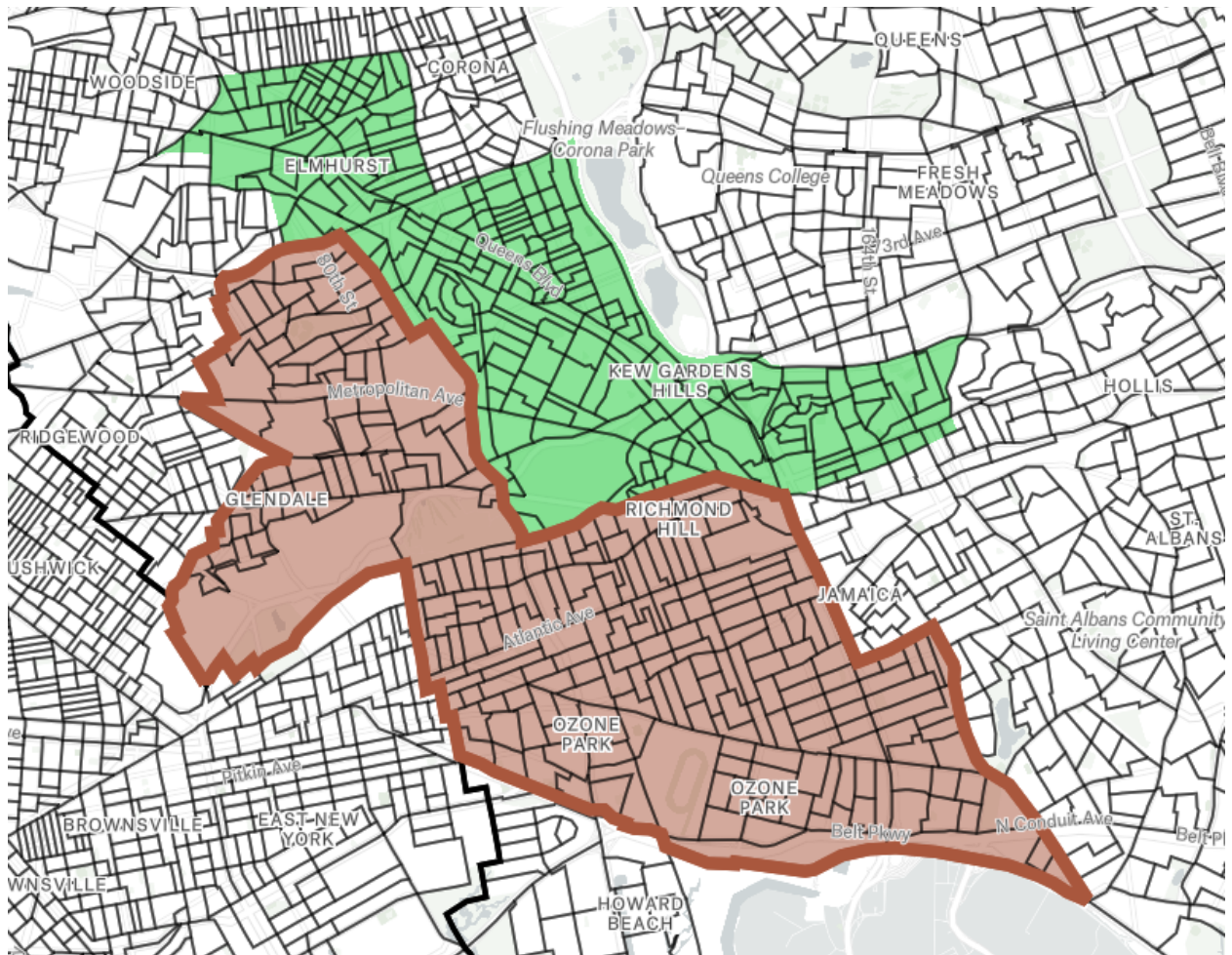
Belt Pkwy

Bay Bridge



NY State Senate Map Submission

<https://app.districtbuilder.org/projects/3e47cf79-3817-4c44-ba6b-2650e05bed08>



Description

This map represents a reimagining of NY State Senate Districts 15 and 16. District 15 (in brown) includes all or part of Glendale, Middle Village, Woodhaven, Brooklyn Manor, Ozone Park, Morris Park and Richmond Hill. NY State Senate District 16 (in the green) includes all or part of Elmhurst, Rego Park, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, Briarwood and Jamaica Hills.

Senate District 15 (green) borders include:

- Roosevelt Avenue
- Junction Boulevard.
- Long Island Express
- Grand Central Parkway
- Home Lawn St.
- Hillside Ave.
- 89th Ave.
- Jamaica Ave.

Guyanese American workers, United

GUYANESE AMERICAN WORKERS UNITED

[REDACTED]
New York, NY 10162
[REDACTED]

July 22, 2021

The NYS Independent Redistricting Commission

Dear Honorable members of the Commission:

I am the President of the Guyana American Workers United, an organization that seeks to empower and improve the quality of life of all residents-regardless of race, religion or national origin living in Queens, the place that best defines us as a nation of immigrants and dedicated working class families.

The systemic separation of the communities of **Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park** has unfairly prevented basic workers' right such as unionization, collective bargaining and minimum wages. Workers' rights have been exploited and stifled across this community of interest. Please see attached proposed map.

Substantial parts of our region have been gerrymandered into Assembly Districts 23, 24, 31 and 38, State Senate Districts 10 (State senator James Sanders) and 15 (Joe Addabbo), and Congressional District 5 (Gregory Meeks). Recently, the Mayor co-named these communities- Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, "Little Guyana," and "Punjab Avenue." It is a welcome token, but it does not translate into economic, political and/or social reality.

Clearly, we have been cut up and parceled out in fragmented pieces in a divide and rule strategy of disenfranchisement. These aberrations have diminished our voice in government, reduce the effectiveness of problem solving for the people who live in these districts, in the most un-American way.

What does this situation tell you? It is very difficult for this community of interest to achieve any political representation, secure resources and get our issues and problems solved at the State, City, State or at the Federal levels of government. Incumbent legislators will continue to implement the old imperialist/colonial "divide and rule" methods" to continue to fragment and suppress us.

Many of these deprived residents and hardworking tax payers are essential workers, nurses, therapists, livery and cab drivers, security guards, domestic workers, porters,

Guyanese American Workers, United

secretaries, technologists, etc. They are the engine and backbone of the New York City and local economies.

Other residents work at the behemoth Resorts World Casino, chain supermarkets and other businesses and offices in this community, but they have no unions representing them. Moreover, they are fired, prevented and victimized when they try to do so. The cycle of poverty and victimization is endemic in this immigrant community.

Consequently, like our collective whole, they also lack a voice. This is the basic scourge of gerrymandering and disenfranchisement, and you are compelled to remedy it by giving us fair and compact districts in the State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts.

Consolidating the residents of these common districts into active participation for the betterment of the district, quality of life, access to government services and a common voice will go a long way toward solving issues and problems confronting our neighborhoods, consisting of Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park.

We are entitled to be heard. We have been ignored for decades. This is not pre-civil rights America, nor is it South Africa pre-Mandela! Why are we still being used as filler for other communities, which share nothing in common with us, just to thrive on our backs? Yet, we continue to be fillers for large, communities like Howard Beach, Kew Gardens, Rochdale Village, South East Queens across the Van Wyck Expressway, Jamaica Housing Projects, and Glen Oaks, another large coop.

We are proud to be Americans. Collectively, we have shed our blood, sweat and tears for our community and for America. Our children and relatives have died fighting to preserve America's freedom. So, why are we being relegated to second class citizens?

We want to work with you and be part of the political process, and reflect our government in New York State and in America. We are the 2nd largest immigrant group and the 5th largest group in NYC, and although immigration and building inspector fears has caused a grave undercount, we aggregate about 500,000 in NYC.

Gerrymandering has produced the same social, political and economic injustices and subclasses as slavery, and must be seen as its evil twin. We therefore petition you as abolitionists, in the fervent hope and belief that you will show the leadership and sense of justice and fair play to reform this putrid system.

The record of the last transcript of these hearings held the previous decades confirms that nothing, except lip service, was done to alleviate this shameful state of affairs. We need to remind ourselves that taxation without representation is un-American, and that this pattern of injustice and exclusion also includes the State legislature and City Hall.

Guyanese American Workers, United

Discrimination and racism strangle the everyday existence of the folks here who share the same heritage, customs, jobs, culture, just about everything and who live in the Richmond Hill/Ozone Park/South Ozone Park area to the status of second class citizens.

Closure and underfunding of our hospitals, clinics, medical centers and schools, our kids subjected to filthy, overcrowded trailer parks for classrooms, home foreclosures, harassment from the City's building inspectors and sanitation, spiraling unemployment, increased taxes and the cost of living have marginalized us from government services and funding, Police, DOB harassment and profiling, immigration phobia, quota ticketing and revenue fines, have all underscored the need for representation at all levels of government.

This dire situation has been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. That is why we had the highest infections rates, died in the highest ratios, and you can appreciate the injustice and evil perpetrated. Ambulance reply times take too long. Our plight is best understood with the closings of our area hospitals Mary Immaculate and St. John's, and the threatened closures of John Adams and Richmond Hill High School in our district. This is unacceptable. Some of us could not afford burial costs. Our so-called representatives could not have been found. They did absolutely nothing for us.

Other groups and communities have been elected to be Governors, Congressmen, State Senators, Assembly members and City Council members, all across America, yet, in New York State, the gateway for immigrants and the most diverse capital of the world, we remain ostracized and marginalized from governmental inclusion. Enough is enough!

A painful reality is that many elected officials take our money but forget that we even exist after taking office. Some State Senators and Assemblywomen told us, that we have to be enslaved before we can be elected to anything, and they became very dismissive when I told that that our forefathers actually were, and that they were practicing reverse racism. Some threaten to break our arms and legs if we do not accept the status quo. Some do not even take our calls about issues that they should be confronting in our community. We simply do not exist in their eyes, except as fillers and campaign contributors.

The legislative districts must be compact, contiguous, and concise, and reflect the community characteristics embodied in local neighborhoods, a fundamental breach other preceding commissions have made.

As shown, this issue is a matter of life and death for our communities in the sense that without culturally-cohesive communities our communities, which are part of the political boundaries and formation of districts, our communities may not survive for the simple reason that most of our people have established temples, gurdwaras, masjids, churches, markets, and communities, so that it makes it easier for them to go on with their day-to-day life. In addition, the communities require ethnically-sensitive public facilities, whether these be senior centers, whether these be hospitals, whether it concerns common medical issues.

Guyanese American Workers, United

I quickly want to give you an example. An elderly lady could not describe her symptoms to her normal, average physician until somebody who was sensitive to her language was brought in and she was able to explain what her problem was. So, for her it was a matter of physical survival to have access to those facilities. So too, when they exercise their fundamental right to vote.

And I would ask that communities like Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park, where we have the largest concentration of South Asian population, be placed in one State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional district.

Despite the size of the community we do not have any representation both in the halls of Assembly, the State Senate or in Congress. If our communities continue to be bifurcated and divided we will never have that critical mass that we need, and to be able, even to good-hearted, good-meaning, and God-fearing public servants, the sensitivity to some of these issues is very hard to come by, and, therefore, I would like to make this appeal to this august body that please be sensitive to the needs of communities like ours, and make sure that even though we are a very large proportion of some of the districts in which we live, but we are a practically transparent and invisible people.

Our people pay all the taxes -- income tax, city and state taxes, real estate tax, sales tax, et cetera. Over 4,000 houses have been bought and sold in these one- and two family homes over the past decade, yielding to the City, State and Federal governments billions of dollars.

It is imminent that the demarcation lines of the voting districts be examined and that this Independent Redistricting Commission lives up to its creed-make it its first priority of business, please, to afford to our disenfranchised communities of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, their constitutional inheritance to have a voice and say in their governance.

I thank you very much for considering my testimony, for and on behalf of these currently disenfranchised communities and trust that you will do the right thing by us, them and for them.

Thank you for your consideration and courtesies.

Sincerely,

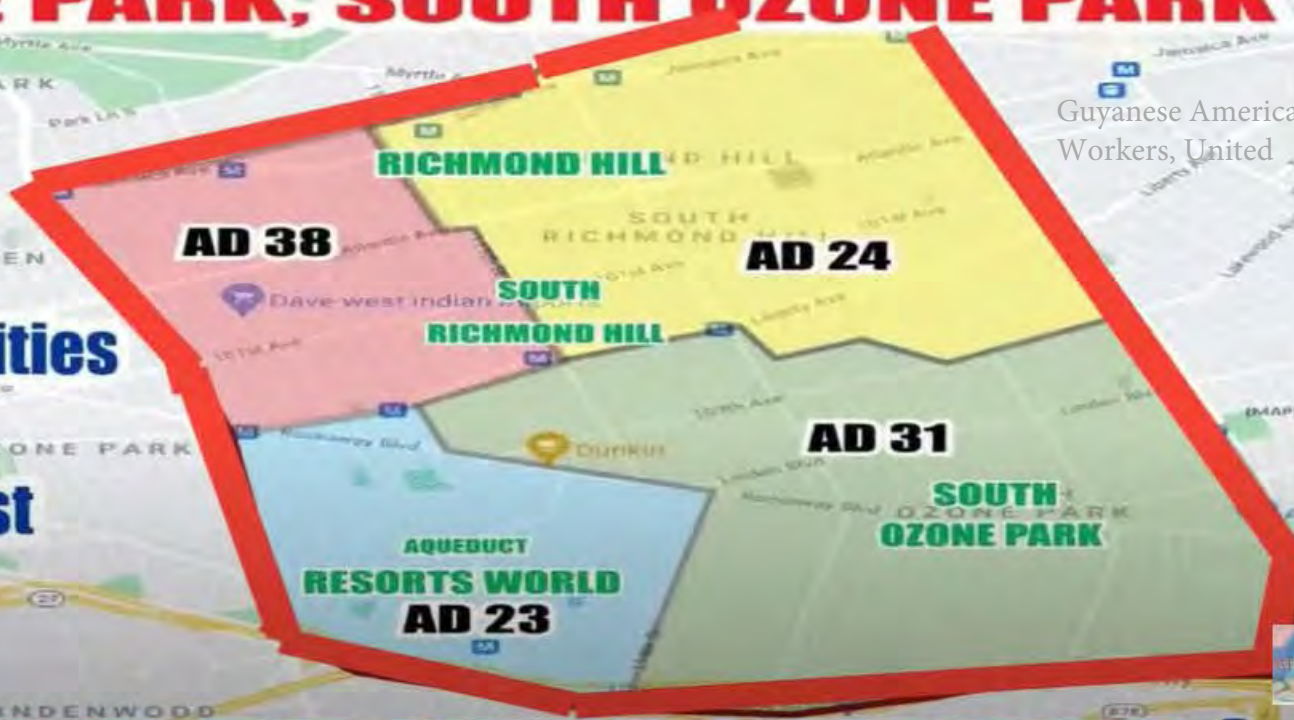
Chuck Mohan

Chuck Mohan
President

Unite RICHMOND HILL OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK

Guyanese American
Workers, United

Communities
of
Interest



DARREL GANESH SUKHDEO

Community Activist/Chef/Business Coach/IndoCaribbean Expert
Little Guyana, Queens County, New York

STATEMENT/TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Dear Commissioners,

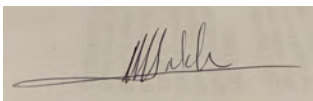
I am a resident of South Richmond Hill and have lived there for more than 20 years! I was part of the Indo-Caribbean Task Force during the 2000 Census and redistricting advocacy afterwards, as well as the coalition during the 2010 redistricting cycle. I've been a community organizer and advocate since 1998 and have worked long and hard to bring out the vote, build bridges, help the community complete the census and help foster the tremendous growth in civic participation in South Queens.

I am also active in several local nonprofit organizations including the Rajkumari cultural center, the Indo-caribbean alliance, the richmond hill economic development corporation, the hindu parades and festivals committee, Sadhana coalition of progressive hindus, the sikh coalition, grow Richmond Hill, as well as several citywide agencies and organizations that represent our community

As the 2020 census shows the South Asian community in Queens and in particular in our communities has grown significantly. The census data, the Asian American Asian research institute at CUNY (AARI/CUNY), and AALDEF conservatively estimate this growth as near 53,000 residents. The need for representation is now absolutely crucial, the new proposed district lines are essential to our community's well being. For way too long these justified district lines have been ignored by the LATFOR commissioners, it is time to grant these lines without adjustment as we have indicated through our maps. New Census numbers show that In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth. And yes we say Asians should represent Asians.

I'm advocating for one State Senate and one Congressional District representing the south asian community of interest that includes South Richmond hill, south ozone park, Ozone park and Richmond hill in their entirety, as well as portions of Woodhaven and Kew gardens. This area is one community of common interest. I estimate two New York State assembly districts can share this area unlike the currently drawn 7 districts. The current lines continue to dilute the community's votes in this area, this is unamerican. I am here once again advocating for districts that provide my south Asian community with representation at the New York State Assembly and Senate and in the United States House of Representatives. I demand and expect your complicity.

Respectfully yours,



Darrel G. Sukhdeo

Derek Evers

Dear New York State Independent Redistricting Commission,

My name is Derek Evers and I'm a Democratic District Leader in Assembly District 37B living in the neighborhood of Ridgewood, Queens, and I'm writing to request that Ridgewood be made whole again during the upcoming redistricting.

During the 2000 redistricting, Ridgewood Queens was split up in an act of gerrymandering meant to weaken the vote of the immigrant, and largely Hispanic populations who live here. The result has worked just as intended.

Despite being one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in all of Queens, Ridgewood has two State Senators, two Assembly members, two Congressional reps and two City Council members. We share our Congressional representation with Brooklyn and are one of only three City Council districts to have a portion that crosses boroughs. In maybe the most extreme example of how weakened the vote of Ridgewood residents has become, our sitting Assembly member lost the plurality in 2020 and in the Queens portion of Ridgewood, residents voted 75% against the sitting City Council member. Along the border where it was redistricted to Brooklyn, they voted nearly 85% against him.

The results stretch well-beyond elections - the lack of representation has led to inequities in how resources are distributed. Because we border multiple districts, our resources are often centralized miles away in Brooklyn or further into central Queens. We were one of the last neighborhoods to get city-run COVID testing and vaccination sites. We do not have a single hospital. In a neighborhood that is 50% foreign born, we do not have a single dual-language universal pre-k program and not one universal 3-k program. During the most recent heat waves, we didn't have a single cooling center because our libraries and community centers remained closed well after COVID re-openings. Ridgewood has some of the fewest green spaces in all of New York City, and when COVID forced the closure of playground parks, we were without any outdoor spaces beyond cemeteries. We are also a transit desert yet have some of the worst bike infrastructure in the city and have had zero open-streets programs in our neighborhood to date.

To make matters worse, Ridgewood has also seen the largest increase in housing prices over the last five years of any New York City neighborhood. Displacement is at an all-time high and the level of gentrification in Ridgewood is so great it has become the subject of New York Times trend pieces, while neighboring areas call themselves "Ridgewood" to increase their property value. Yet, despite the neighborhoods newfound wealth, all of our middle schools still fall way behind SHSAT test results when compared to schools in neighborhoods less than a mile away (by over 500% in the most extreme cases). And due to the political gerrymandering of our neighborhood, the Hispanic population is underrepresented in our Community Board by over 25%. Asian and Black representation is also below population levels, and women are underrepresented by over 50%.

Derek Evers

In closing, I would just like to finish by saying this is not a Republican vs Democrat debate or right vs left, but ultimately a moral debate. Ridgewood is one of the five most populous neighborhoods in Queens. It is a historically rich and diverse neighborhood of Queens - one of the first in fact - and the current districting, from Congressional all the way to City Council, has led it to become largely overlooked. At the very least we deserve to be a proper Queens District and not one whose vote gets diluted because we share a border with Brooklyn.

I am asking the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission to start the process of righting this wrong by making Ridgewood whole again when it redraws the district lines.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. Sincerely,

Derek Evers

E Kaur

You, the Independent Districting Commission, have a daunting task ahead of you. I urge you to approach this task with some key points as your guiding principles.

1. Gerrymandering is wrong. Creating districts shaped to favor any group for whatever reason whether they be for political party, race, ethnicity, religious, or national origin advantage is inherently wrong.
2. We are a nation with 50 states and numerous political subdivisions within those states. Here in this great NY state within its boundaries there are also numerous political subdivisions. Boundaries of our state legislative districts must be guided by fairness to ALL and must be based on two concerns – an equal or as nearly equal as possible number of persons within them and shapes that are as regular as possible to keep geographic communities intact.

As census numbers are the driving force since the very first census I urge you to utilize them wisely. Yes, as this nation has grown the census has adapted and grown to amass a wealth of usable data for many purposes, but it is the numbers of people that should be the driving force for redistricting. It should not be who is within any district created that is the driving force. I would offer that districts created based upon a fair use of geography will result in more districts with fairer opportunities for competition within them.

I further urge you to create districts using census geography features in use that provide a guide to keeping geographical areas intact. Wherever possible ZCTA areas and Public Use Microdata Areas should be main guides to initial geography considerations.

In Queens County the 14 PUMS areas already have generally neighborhood oriented shapes that offer a good starting point for a geographical approach as do the census tracts and block groups within them.

In a county as diverse as Queens County drawing districts to satisfy political pressure from differing groups would only serve to disenfranchise other groups. I urge that your approach to your daunting task be numerical and geographical in nature with no consideration given to creating any district that favors or gives an advantage by drawing lines aimed at favoring any group over another whether based on political party, race, ethnicity, religious, or national origin.

In my humble opinion creating districts not shaped by those types of considerations will go a long way toward reducing divisions in our society that are based on political party, race, ethnicity, religious, or national origin concerns. The continuation of gerrymandering to give any particular group of people an advantage in the political context of running for office is wrong.

**South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill and Ozone Park
United for Justice & Empowerment**

Richmond Hill, NY 11419

8/22/21

Petition to unite South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill and Ozone Park, in Queens, NYC, our communities of common interests, into 2 State Assembly, 1 State Senate and 1 Congressional District, in accordance with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness

Attention: To The Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

-We are a group empowered to secure justice for our splintered and marginalized communities, which includes advocacy before you and, if necessary, bringing legal action. After 4 decades of lobbying/pleading, we are fed up, nothing has changed, and our highest COVID disasters are the last straws.

-As you are aware, we are currently segregated into seven different Assembly districts, making it difficult for our communities to receive services responsive to our economic, medical, educational, dietary, vocational, small business, ethnic, religious, historical, racial, cultural, language, customs and/or other needs, and/or coalesce around a representative focused on our priorities. We are mere fillers for others.

-As the current 2021 census data undoubtedly shows, our numbers have increased exponentially. They demand, justify and mandate two (2) State Assembly districts, a State senate district, and a Congressional seat, as per consensus exhibit attached. These census numbers confirm a very large, disproportionate increase in our numbers of South Asians residing in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park.

-In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth, and Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park is the center of gravity of this massive increase in numbers, even though we were undercounted!

-Of course, the failure by this independent Commission to act, will only result in the continued dilution and disregard of our issues, advocacy and problems, while diminishing your duties and responsibilities as per your mandate. We are entitled to these stated majority-minority districts. You know it, we know it!

-We therefore pray and beseech of you, in accordance with justice, the Voting Rights Act and the NY and US Constitutions, and on account of the fact that these districts share common established ties of common interest and association, that it is only right that you keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, as is herein requested. Or let a Judge draw us our districts. We have suffered long enough...

Respectfully submitted.

Thank you for your kind courtesies and consideration.

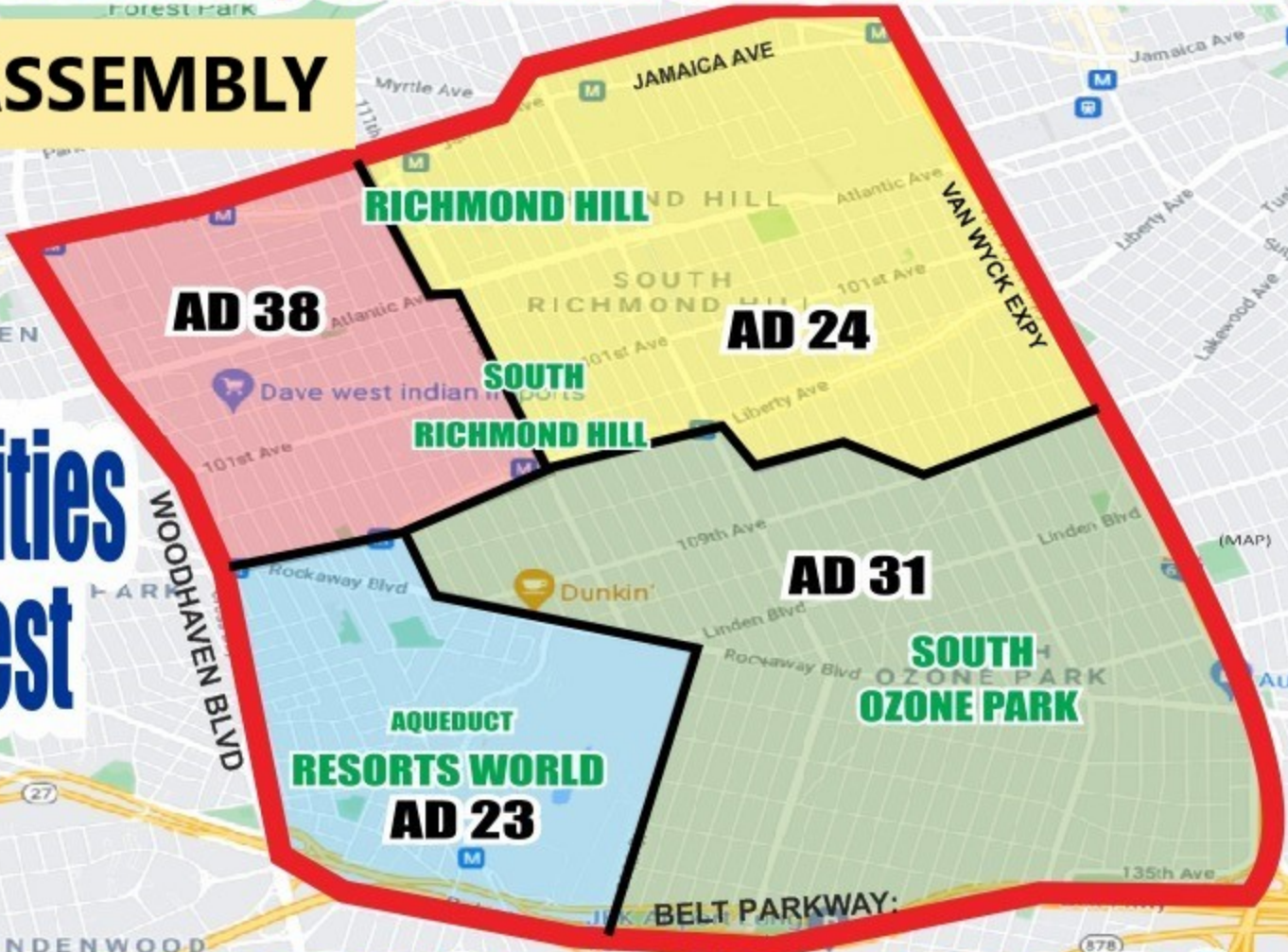
Garth Marchant (Sgd)

President & Legal Coordinator

Unite **RICHMOND HILL** **OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK**

STATE ASSEMBLY

**Communities
of Interest**



FAIR REDISTRICTING!

STATE SENATE, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Unite **RICHMOND HILL**
OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK



FAIR REDISTRICTING!

Hannah Alexis Cera

Dear New York State Independent Redistricting Commission,

Arriving as the new kid in the neighborhood, I was surprised when I saw people that had similar features as me. Although I moved here at the age of 3 with little awareness and knowledge of my surroundings, I had the privilege of growing up near Little Manila where I had a hint of taste of the Philippines and NYC. I was connected to the entirety of Little Manila not only because I lived near, but also from the food and the Filipinos walking by everyday.

Little Manila may not be exactly like the Philippines, but the Filipino businesses that have been established took a part of the Philippines that later on built up a home for many Filipinos. My family did not fail to teach me the culture and the language and made sure that I ate the aromatic foods from the Philippines. From Chicken and Pork Adobo, Kare Kare, Tinolang Manok, Pancit, Sinigang, Bulalo, Pinakbet, Chop Suey, Ginisang Munggo, the list goes on. If it wasn't for Little Manila restaurants having a wide variety of food in their menu, I would've never known the other iconic Filipino dishes such as Lomi, Pares, Chicken Afritada, Menudo, Kaldereta, etc. Little Manila introduced me to our cultural foods, which expresses my cultural identity. Many Filipinos immigrate here to provide for their family, therefore having a united community filled with food from the Philippines preserves their culture, gives them a sense of pride, and takes a little piece of "home" with them everyday.

Having a united community teaches one another to accept each other and have respect towards everyone. Although there is a probability that the Filipinos in Little Manila know one another, those who don't still have some bond they can share with others--love for family, providing for their family, education, starting a new life, and many more. Family is one of the top priorities in Filipino culture. If you closely observe, Little Manila as a whole is one tremendous family. The people of Little Manila evidently cooperated and pushed through the midst of the pandemic together, especially being the epicenter. Businesses continued to operate, restaurants gave back to the front liners, and we remained to show our support for those who are essential workers and front liners.

Little Manila is currently between at least three State Assembly districts: 30, 34, and 39. The significance of Little Manila being in one district allows Filipinos to have a stronger and louder voice. Being in one district educates those who did not have the opportunity to grow up in the Philippines the culture, food, and language. The curriculum in schools are all Euro-centric, which is why many in the Filipino community educate themselves on issues, history, and overall culture. Filipinos in Little Manila may not have realized it, but the obstacles they have faced unveiled the strength, passion, and power we have as a unified community.

Please keep our family together by keeping our community together.

Sincerely,

Hannah Alexis Cera

Worker at Amazing Grace Restaurant in Little Manila, Queens

Feedback on congressional district map

Hannah Berson

Hannah Berson <[REDACTED]>

Fri 7/23/2021 3:38 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Hello,

I am a resident in US Congressional District NY-12. I strongly urge you to revise this district map.

It is perplexing and preposterous that our district includes some of the wealthiest zip codes in the entire nation (on the Upper East Side) along with communities that are middle class and/or experiencing poverty. How can one congress person successfully and authentically reflect the needs of people living in multi-million dollar apartments and the Queensbridge Houses public housing? It is not realistic.

As I live in the Queens portion of this district, I can only speak from experience: please, parse out our communities from Manhattan's in D12. I assure you that my best interests and legislative priorities are not the same as those of the residents of 5th Avenue.

Thank you,

Hannah Berson (zip code 11106)



Map Submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Mon 8/30/2021 10:08 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Heather
- **Last Name:** Beers-Dimitriadis
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** Description This map represents zip codes 11374, 11375, and 11415. The neighborhoods included are Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens. The borders are as follows: Horace Harding Expressway (LIE Service Road Eastbound) Woodhaven Blvd Grand Central Parkway Eastbound Union Turnpike Metropolitan Avenue Van Wyck Expressway

Why this Map Presently Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens is represented by 4 different Assembly Members (Aubry, Barnwell, Hevesi, and Rosenthal). This map creates an Assembly District that does not break up these three communities. It allows for entire communities to have one representative in the Assembly. That community can now advocate, organize and engage in a more efficient way. This always provides the representative with a district that is easier to manage and connect with.

Commonalities The three communities make up the northern part of school district 28. They share modes of transit - the Q60 bus, and the M, R, F, and E subway lines. Kew Gardens and Forest Hills also share the LIRR. The residential profile of the neighborhoods is a mixture of single family homes, co-ops, condominiums, and rentals throughout. Population density remains consistent within the district.

What this map solves Assembly District 28 currently is made up of seven separate communities. None of these communities are represented in its entirety. This map creates a district that wholly

represents Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens. A consolidated district is easier to serve and creates a more focussed approach to community problems solving. It also joins together districts that share a school district, mass transit rhythms, parks, and budget priorities.

Submitted by This map is being submitted by the Central Queens Redistricting Coalition Rego Park/Forest Hills working group. The following persons are a member of that working group:

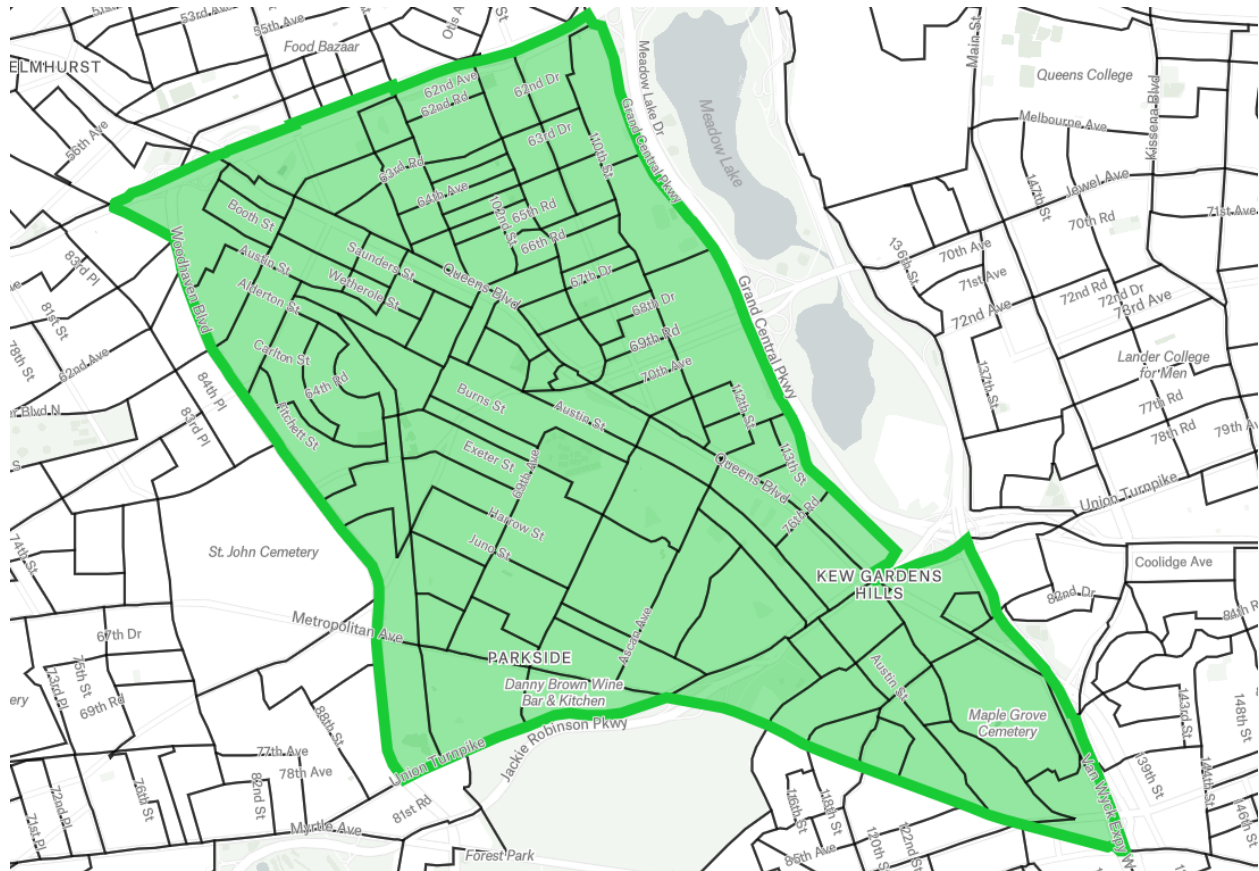
Anisia Ayon Eric Arnum Peter Beadle Heather Beers-Dimitriadis
Cameron Jones Maria Kaufer Raj Korpan Mark Laster Tania Padgett
Sahand Sharabani Stella Xu Titi Yaskukawa

- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Map

<https://app.districtbuilder.org/projects/24bec7c6-9f06-4f59-92c4-a43e40553c7f>



Description

This map represents zip codes 11374, 11375, and 11415. The neighborhoods included are Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens. The borders are as follows:

- Horace Harding Expressway (LIE Service Road Eastbound)
- Woodhaven Blvd
- Grand Central Parkway Eastbound
- Union Turnpike
- Metropolitan Avenue
- Van Wyck Expressway

Why this Map

Presently Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens is represented by 4 different Assembly Members (Aubry, Barnwell, Hevesi, and Rosenthal). This map creates an Assembly District that does not break up these three communities. It allows for entire communities to have one representative in the Assembly. That community can now advocate, organize and engage in a more efficient way. This always provides the representative with a district that is easier to manage and connect with.

- Metropolitan Avenue
- 85th Avenue
- Park Lane South
- Woodhaven Boulevard

Senate District 16 (brown/left) borders include:

- Park Lane South
- Van Wyck Expressway
- Sutphin Boulevard
- Rockaway Boulevard
- Nassau Expressway
- North Conduit Avenue
- Eldert Lane (Brooklyn border)
- Forest Park
- Central Avenue
- Long Island Expressway
- 84th Street
- Woodhaven Boulevard

Why this Map

Senate Districts 15 and 16 are now heavily gerrymandered. Both districts cut communities into pieces and assemble pieces that have little in common with one another, while. Having a district that runs from Maspeth into Rockaway Beach and another that runs from Woodside into Alley Pond Park does not show continuity. The maps above strive to keep communities whole and to assemble them in logical ways, within relatively compact districts. While their shapes are irregular, that mostly reflects the irregularities of their park and highway borders.

Commonalities

Senate District 15 (green)

This consolidated area creates a Majority Minority district. The breakdown is:

- Asian - 42%
- Hispanic - 27%
- White - 25%
- Black - 7%

The district shares public transportation corridors with a mixture of one and two fare zone commuters. Single family and multi-family houses, and apartment buildings intermingle throughout its expanse. A large wave of new construction along Queens Boulevard in zip codes 11373, 11374 and 11375 is creating a mix of high-end and affordable housing on top floors and much needed commercial space at street level. Shopping areas along Queens Boulevard, Metropolitan Avenue, 108 Street, Myrtle Avenue and Central Avenue cater to communities that range from working class to affluent.

Senate District 16 (brown)

District 16 is also a majority minority district: It is 32% Hispanic, 25% Asian, 19% white, and 18% black. It encompasses all of Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, South Ozone Park, Woodhaven, and Morris Park, and part of Glendale. The areas have similar housing (mostly single family and two family homes, some detached and some row houses, as well as some apartment buildings), with shopping along Jamaica Avenue, Liberty Avenue, Woodhaven Boulevard, and Rockaway Boulevard that cater to predominantly working class and moderate-income immigrant communities.

What this map solves

These maps create two Senate Districts in Central Queens that are geographically condensed. This allows residents greater opportunity to organize and advocate for issues that affect them. We also strongly believe that keeping communities whole in their representation makes them easier to manage.

Submitted by

This map is being submitted by the Central Queens Redistricting Coalition NY Senate working group. That group includes:

Eric Arnum
Anisia Ayon
Peter Beadle
Miriam Bensman
Heather Dimitriadis
Aleda Gagarin
Raj Korpan
Maria Kaufer
Mark Laster
Bright Limm
Tania Padgett
Sahand Shahrabani
Sarah Shea
Stella Xu
Titi Yasukawa

Map Submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Sun 8/29/2021 11:33 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Sarah
- **Last Name:** Shea
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** Name of Map: CQRC RH Assembly District

Borders: North End: Park Lane South & Metropolitan Ave East End: Van Wyck Expressway South End: Rockaway Blvd West End: 98th St

What neighborhoods or zip codes are you including? Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, and a very small (eastern) portion of Ozone Park

What do these communities share in common? Transportation: Mix of drivers and folks who rely on public transportation Public Transit: J train, Q37, Q55, Q10 Housing: Mix of apartment buildings and 1- to 3-family houses Schools: CEC27 Shopping: Metropolitan Avenue, Jamaica Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, Liberty Avenue, and Lefferts Blvd Origins: Largest Indo-Guyanese community in NYS, interspersed with large, diverse Latin American and South Asian populations, and smaller white and black populations.

What are the benefits of this map? This map keeps the Richmond Hill community in one Assembly District

What issues does this map solve? There is a South Asian and Indo-Caribbean community of interest residing in the neighborhoods of Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, and South Ozone Park. Currently, these three neighborhoods are divided among seven (7) Assembly Districts. Our proposed district would unite these three neighborhoods in one (1) Assembly District, resolving the

“cracking” of this community of interest by the current Assembly map. This proposed Assembly district is largely consistent with the “Richmond Hill” community of interest as described by the APA Voice Redistricting Task Force (<https://www.representable.org/submission/da8a3b80-facd-4549-97b7-2cceb0e6bff>).

How is this better than the current boundaries? This map keeps the Richmond Hill community in one Assembly District, making it easier for the community to get its issues addressed. It also increases the chances that the Guyanese community could elect a state representative for the first time.

Map Created by: Central Queens Redistricting Coalition (CQRC)
Kew Gardens/ Richmond Hill team Bright Limm Sarah Shea Aleda
Gagarin Miriam Bensman

- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Commonalities

The three communities make up the northern part of school district 28. They share modes of transit - the Q60 bus, and the M, R, F, and E subway lines. Kew Gardens and Forest Hills also share the LIRR. The residential profile of the neighborhoods is a mixture of single family homes, co-ops, condominiums, and rentals throughout. Population density remains consistent within the district.

What this map solves

Assembly District 28 currently is made up of seven separate communities. None of these communities are represented in its entirety. This map creates a district that wholly represents Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens. A consolidated district is easier to serve and creates a more focussed approach to community problems solving. It also joins together districts that share a school district, mass transit rhythms, parks, and budget priorities.

Submitted by

This map is being submitted by the Central Queens Redistricting Coalition Rego Park/Forest Hills working group. The following persons are a member of that working group:

Anisia Ayon

Eric Arnum

Peter Beadle

Heather Beers-Dimitriadis

Cameron Jones

Maria Kaufer

Raj Korpan

Mark Laster

Tania Padgett

Sahand Sharabani

Stella Xu

Titi Yaskukawa

Map Submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Tue 9/14/2021 2:14 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Heather
- **Last Name:** Beers-Dimitriadis
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** Description This map represents a reimagining of NY State Senate Districts 15 and 16. District 15 (in brown) includes all or part of Glendale, Middle Village, Woodhaven, Brooklyn Manor, Ozone Park, Morris Park and Richmond Hill. NY State Senate District 16 (in the green) includes all or part of Elmhurst, Rego Park, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, Briarwood and Jamaica Hills.

Senate District 15 (green) borders include: Roosevelt Avenue Junction Boulevard. Long Island Express Grand Central Parkway Home Lawn St. Hillside Ave. 89th Ave. Jamaica Ave. Metropolitan Avenue 85th Avenue Park Lane South Woodhaven Boulevard

Senate District 16 (brown/left) borders include: Park Lane South Van Wyck Expressway Sutphin Boulevard Rockaway Boulevard Nassau Expressway North Conduit Avenue Eldert Lane (Brooklyn border) Forest Park Central Avenue Long Island Expressway 84th Street Woodhaven Boulevard

Why this Map Senate Districts 15 and 16 are now heavily gerrymandered. Both districts cut communities into pieces and assemble pieces that have little in common with one another, while. Having a district that runs from Maspeth into Rockaway Beach and another that runs from Woodside into Alley Pond Park does not show continuity. The maps above strive to keep communities whole and to assemble them in logical ways, within

relatively compact districts. While their shapes are irregular, that mostly reflects the irregularities of their park and highway borders.

Commonalities Senate District 15 (green) This consolidated area creates a Majority Minority district. The breakdown is: Asian - 42% Hispanic - 27% White - 25% Black - 7%

The district shares public transportation corridors with a mixture of one and two fare zone commuters. Single family and multi-family houses, and apartment buildings intermingle throughout its expanse. A large wave of new construction along Queens Boulevard in zip codes 11373, 11374 and 11375 is creating a mix of high-end and affordable housing on top floors and much needed commercial space at street level. Shopping areas along Queens Boulevard, Metropolitan Avenue, 108 Street, Myrtle Avenue and Central Avenue cater to communities that range from working class to affluent.

Senate District 16 (brown) District 16 is also a majority minority district: It is 32% Hispanic, 25% Asian, 19% white, and 18% black. It encompasses all of Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, South Ozone Park, Woodhaven, and Morris Park, and part of Glendale. The areas have similar housing (mostly single family and two family homes, some detached and some row houses, as well as some apartment buildings), with shopping along Jamaica Avenue, Liberty Avenue, Woodhaven Boulevard, and Rockaway Boulevard that cater to predominantly working class and moderate-income immigrant communities.

What this map solves These maps create two Senate Districts in Central Queens that are geographically condensed. This allows residents greater opportunity to organize and advocate for issues that affect them. We also strongly believe that keeping communities whole in their representation makes them easier to manage.

Submitted by This map is being submitted by the Central Queens Redistricting Coalition NY Senate working group. That group includes:

Eric Arnum Anisia Ayon Peter Beadle Miriam Bensman Heather Dimitriadis Aleda Gagarin Raj Korpan Maria Kaufer Mark Laster

Bright Limm Tania Padgett Sahand Shahrabani Sarah Shea Stella
Xu Titi Yasukawa

- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

This e-mail has been automatically generated

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Fwd: REMINDER: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Accepting Map Submissions

Miranda Goodwin Raab <goodwinraabm@nyirc.gov>

Wed 9/8/2021 12:31 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Scott Avidon <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, September 07, 2021 12:31 PM

To: Miranda Goodwin Raab <goodwinraabm@nyirc.gov>

Subject: RE: REMINDER: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Accepting Map Submissions

I live in the northwestern "claw" of the 14th Senate District. My neighborhood of Kew Gardens has little in common with St Albans and Cambria Heights which lie miles away to the east. Our proper sister neighborhoods are Forest Hills, Rego Park and Richmond Hill. The Senate Republicans who created the lines in 2011 were more concerned with racial districts to maximize Republican election chances than geographically coherent districts. At least my Senator Comrie is a good man and tries to represent all. The last 3 Senators before him left in disgrace and only cared about their own self-interest.

Scott Avidon
8420 Austin St #4D
Kew Gardens, NY 11415

From: Miranda Goodwin Raab

Sent: September 01, 2021 8:03 PM

To: Miranda Goodwin Raab <goodwinraabm@nyirc.gov>

Cc: Ahsia Badi <badia@nyirc.gov>

Subject: REMINDER: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Accepting Map Submissions

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a reminder that the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission is still eagerly seeking input from all New Yorkers, **especially in the form of maps. The Commission will be releasing its first round of maps on September 15th, so the sooner we hear from you, the better!**

Please tell us about your community. Show us on a map where your community lives, goes to school, goes grocery shopping, and/or worships.

Preferred file types for maps/geographic data: *Geographic JavaScript Object Notation (.geojson, .json), Google Keyhole Markup language (.kml, .kmz), ESRI Shapefile (.shp, .dbf, .shx)*

Also accepting the following for maps/geographic data: *Microsoft Excel (.xls, .xlsx), Comma Separated Values (.csv) Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf), Bitmap Graphics (.bmp), Graphics Interchange Format (.gif), JPEG images (.jpg, .jpeg), Portable Network Graphics (.png), Scalable Vector Graphics (.svg), Tagged Image File Format (.tif, .tiff)*

If you have already sent us your maps and comment, we have received them and our Commissioners are busy reviewing your input.

**South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill and Ozone Park
United for Justice & Empowerment**

Richmond Hill, NY 11419

8/22/21

Petition to unite South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill and Ozone Park, in Queens, NYC, our communities of common interests, into 2 State Assembly, 1 State Senate and 1 Congressional District, in accordance with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness

Attention: To The Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

-We are a group empowered to secure justice for our splintered and marginalized communities, which includes advocacy before you and, if necessary, bringing legal action. After 4 decades of lobbying/pleading, we are fed up, nothing has changed, and our highest COVID disasters are the last straws.

-As you are aware, we are currently segregated into seven different Assembly districts, making it difficult for our communities to receive services responsive to our economic, medical, educational, dietary, vocational, small business, ethnic, religious, historical, racial, cultural, language, customs and/or other needs, and/or coalesce around a representative focused on our priorities. We are mere fillers for others.

-As the current 2021 census data undoubtedly shows, our numbers have increased exponentially. They demand, justify and mandate two (2) State Assembly districts, a State senate district, and a Congressional seat, as per consensus exhibit attached. These census numbers confirm a very large, disproportionate increase in our numbers of South Asians residing in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park.

-In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth, and Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park is the center of gravity of this massive increase in numbers, even though we were undercounted!

-Of course, the failure by this independent Commission to act, will only result in the continued dilution and disregard of our issues, advocacy and problems, while diminishing your duties and responsibilities as per your mandate. We are entitled to these stated majority-minority districts. You know it, we know it!

-We therefore pray and beseech of you, in accordance with justice, the Voting Rights Act and the NY and US Constitutions, and on account of the fact that these districts share common established ties of common interest and association, that it is only right that you keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, as is herein requested. Or let a Judge draw us our districts. We have suffered long enough...

Respectfully submitted.

Thank you for your kind courtesies and consideration.

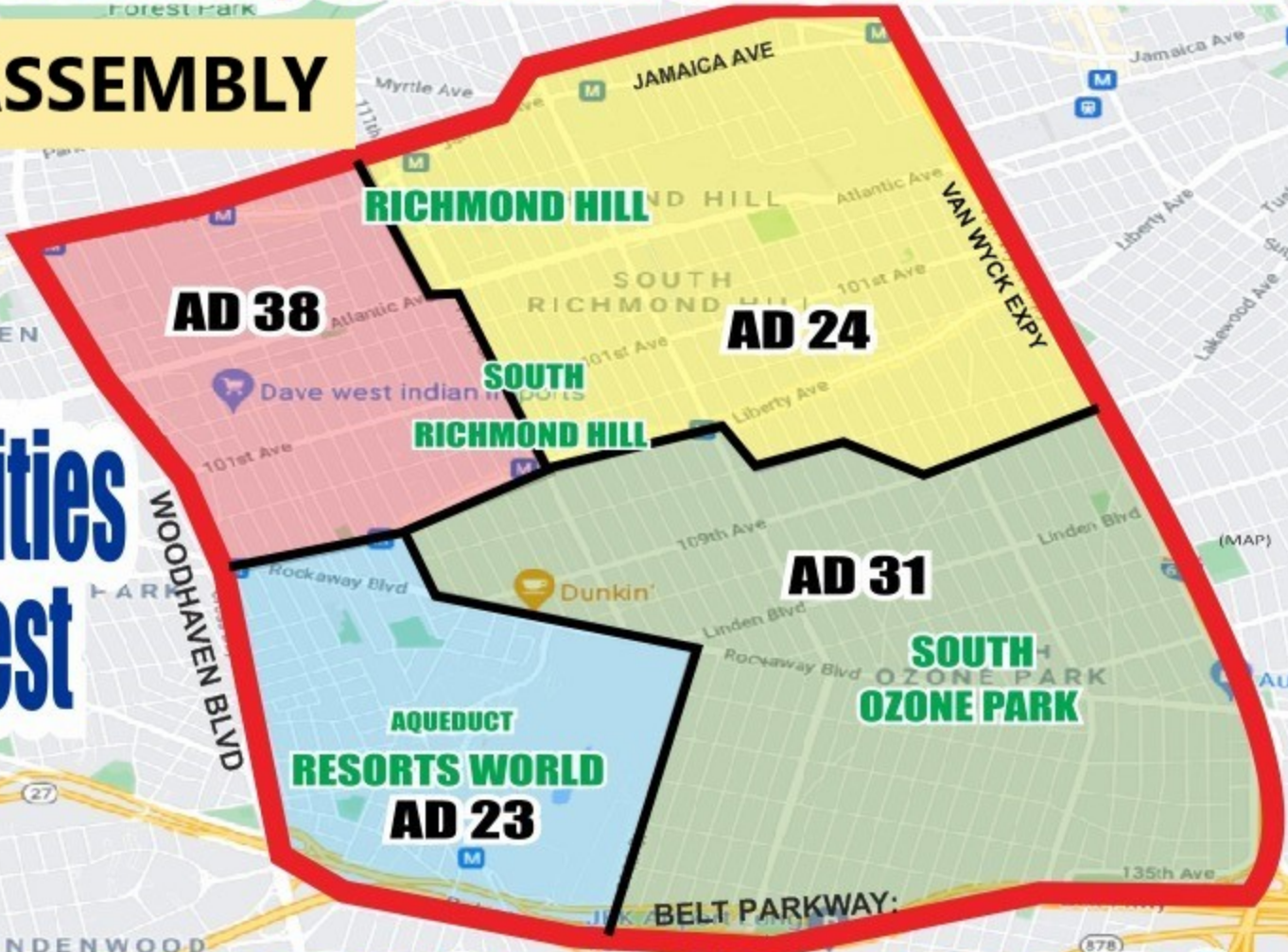
Garth Marchant (Sgd)

President & Legal Coordinator

Unite **RICHMOND HILL** **OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK**

STATE ASSEMBLY

**Communities
of Interest**



FAIR REDISTRICTING!

STATE SENATE, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Unite **RICHMOND HILL**
OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK



FAIR REDISTRICTING!

Fwd: Senate District 15

Karen Blatt <blattk@nyirc.gov>

Thu 9/9/2021 9:38 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Cc: Ahsia Badi <badia@nyirc.gov>

Begin forwarded message:

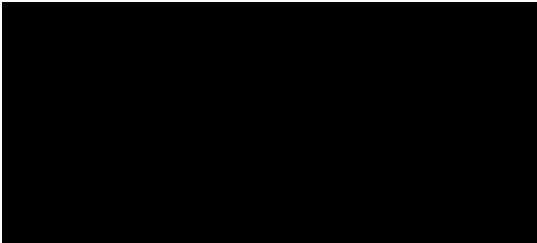
From: "Jacqueline A. Jones" 

Date: September 9, 2021 at 9:29:47 AM EDT

To: Karen Blatt <blattk@nyirc.gov>, Douglas Breakell <breakell@nyirc.gov>

Subject: Senate District 15

In the process of redistricting, I urge you to stop the gerrymandering that created Senate District 15. I have no problem with Senator Addabo, but those of us in Forest Hills, the northernmost part of the district, have little in common (except maybe color) with those in the southernmost part of the district, on the water. Please put Forest Hills in a district with other nearby central Queens neighborhoods and reshape this ridiculously designed district.



SACHIN BALDEO
Youth & Student Leader
[REDACTED]
Richmond Hill, NY 11419

=====

Consensus, consolidated testimony for the Independent New York State Re-Districting Commission

Please unite our communities of interest into one State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts: Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park

Honorable Commission Members:

My name is Sachin Baldeo. I am 17 years old and I live with parents in Richmond Hill, which is part of the compact, **indivisible and contiguous neighborhood of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, as the map attached shows. These are natural and realistic boundaries.**

You don't need to be a demographic expert to appreciate what has happened here. Our district was cut up into 4 different Assembly districts to dilute and oppress us, bypassing natural boundaries, geographic boundaries and common heritage and culture. (Pgs. 1-4). The community of interest is on pg. 5.

In the fall, I will start my last year at Brooklyn Technical High School. I am involved in several extra-curricular programs at my school and in my community.

In my testimony here, I will express the common and widely held views of young people of my age who reside in this area. These views are also shared by the adults and parents who reside here.

I have always hoped that my immediate neighborhood should include where I live, where I go to school, where I go grocery shopping with my family or where we go to pray together. However, this is not the case, as our districts have been gerrymandered, sliced up and diced into fragmented and neglected parts.

For example, I have to take 2 trains and when the train has problems, an expensive cab, to get to school. It takes me over an hour to get to school, which is in another County (Brooklyn). This is because we have no specialized, nor credible High Schools in our area. Most of our resources go to other neighborhoods.

There is poor sanitation and other government services. Grocery shopping has to be done in another district. Worship is also possible only in another district. If we have a problem, we have to run to several different officials, because they are all located in different areas.

Each of these is in a separate Assembly, State senate or Congressional District, resulting in the most complicated, poorest local governance and service delivery we see anywhere in New York City.

Consequently, people do not even bother to get their problems and issues addressed, whether it be educational, medical, government services, or otherwise. They have given up.

Older people in the neighborhood compare this deprivation and state of affairs to the social, economic, historical and political suppression and situations they faced in their home countries, which forced them to seek a better life in the United States.

This was the main reason they left and came here in the first place, only to face the same deprivation, suppression and denial caused by gerrymandering and the separation of our communities of interest of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into different districts.

This partition and divisions have had debilitating and trying consequences on us. The graduation rates for students at our sole high schools-Richmond Hill High School and John Adams High School, is 54% and 71% respectively, way below the 84% rates state wide. Minority enrollment is 96% of the student body in both schools, which is higher than the New York state average of 57%. It is easy for you to understand why our morale is so low.

The reason for this is based on lack of resources, improvement and attention being paid to our community. Parents resign to a second class standard of education, but this is due to gerrymandering and isolation of our minority community. Hope is a scarce commodity after it was revealed that we suffered the highest infection and death rates during the recent pandemic.

Most of the students here or their parents are from Central and South America, Guyana, Bangladesh, Trinidad, India, Suriname, Jamaica, and can trace their roots to South Asia and Latin/South America. They live in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park or South Ozone Park.

In this entire area of over 500,000 residents, there is no community center and/or senior center, after school programs, skills teaching center and/or sports center. The facilities that are supposed to save us, cannot accommodate us all. We cannot help but feel ostracized in our own community, even with our dealings with law enforcement.

Although we have many self-sustaining places to worship, ethnic food stores and many family members here, we have nowhere to go for assistance with homework, academic guidance, counseling, vocational, play sports, or afterschool programs. On weekends, we usually have to leave the neighborhood to find anything useful to do with our time. Our libraries are overcrowded and need expansion. Public transportation can be improved.

Please help us attain a better life. We should not have to go to 4 different Assembly representatives (ADs 23, 24, 31, 38), 2 different State Senators (SDs 10, 15), or 2 Congressional Representatives to deal with issues like when both of our major high schools were proposed for closure, when we were designated the area with the highest COVID infection rates, when we are unfairly treated by the cops, when we need solutions to our issues and problems.

We need a district where the elected officials will be familiar with our heritage and culture, who are from this neighborhood and who will work with the community on our needs, e.g., get better graduation rates and help with homework, spaces for students to go after school, cooling centers, better police relations, minimizing hate crimes, and so on.

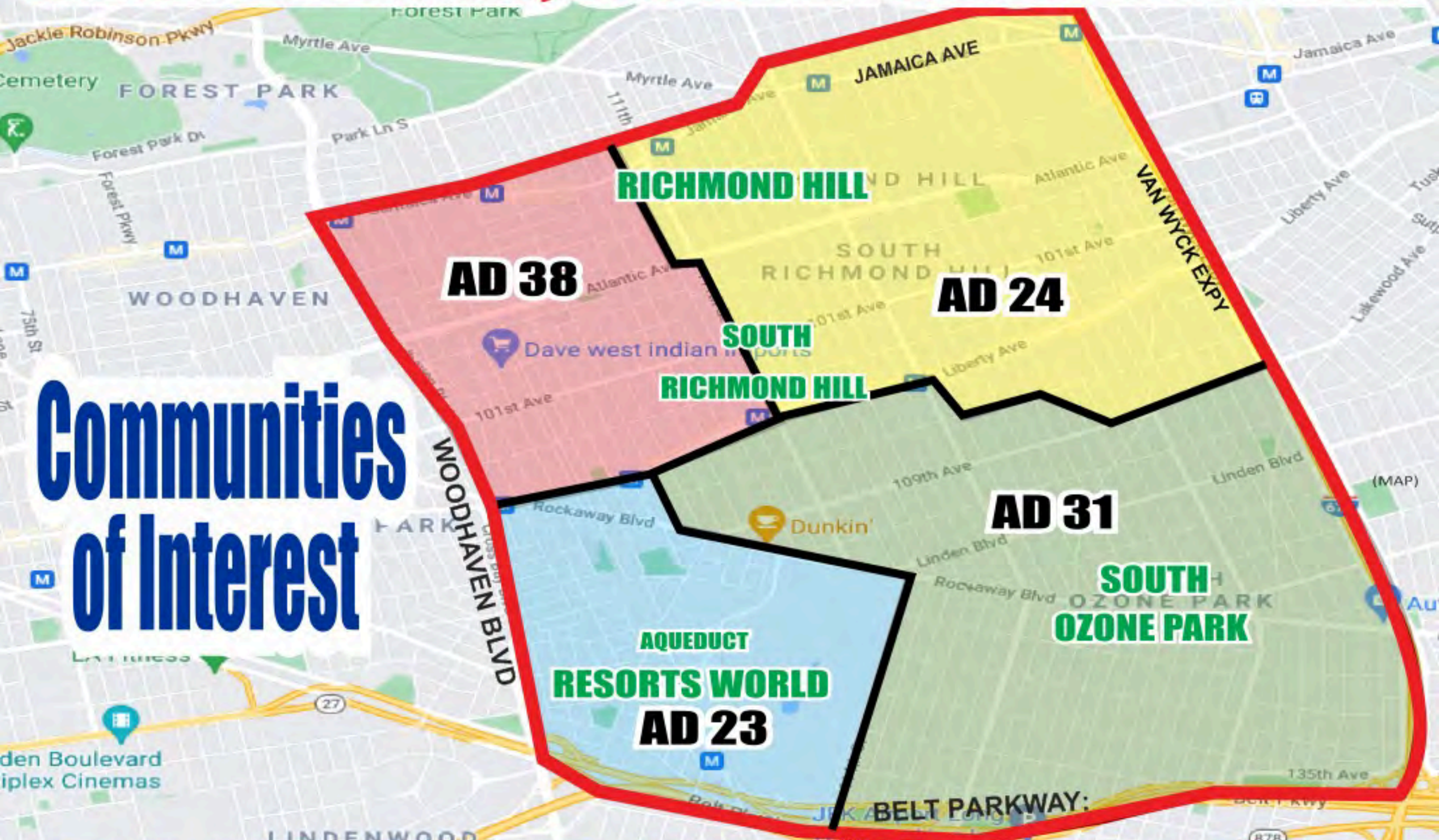
I strongly urge you to keep these neighborhoods together in a single district for the State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with your mandate, conscience and duties.

Thank you for your courtesies and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Sachin Baldeo (Youth & Student Leader)

Unite **RICHMOND HILL** **OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK**



**Communities
of Interest**

FAIR REDISTRICTING!

**TESTIMONY FOR QUEENS: SOUTH OZONE PARK, OZONE PARK + RICHMOND HILL-
REDISTRICTING PETITION**

Tue 8/24/2021 11:56 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>; Kevin Murphy <murphyk@nyirc.gov>; Ahsia Badi <badia@nyirc.gov>

📎 2 attachments (517 KB)

State Senate and Congressional Districts_8.22.21.jpeg; State Assembly District REV.jpg;

**JUSTICE FOR SOUTH ASIAN & LATIN AMERICANS ORGANIZATION
QUEENS JUSTICE CENTER
125-09 Liberty Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11419**

FAIR REDISTRICTING APPEAL 2021

**The Communities of Interest-Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park must be given 2 State
Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts**

Most Honorable Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/8/12/22622709/nyc-asian-surg-ing-population-electoral-power>

https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/covid-rates-soaring-in-south-queens/article_ce446f19-f242-5095-a7a1-5b3a321eba21.html

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/08/21/us/asians-census-us.html>

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/population-changes-nations-diversity.html>

<https://licpost.com/population-of-queens-swelled-by-nearly-8-percent-in-last-10-years-census>

We do not have to overwhelm you with unnecessary paperwork! The links above and CONSENSUS maps attached present a compelling case, as stated. The case has been made in the latest Census numbers. Discharge your duty, please!

The 1st reference shows:

"In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth. The latest 2021 census numbers verify a very large, exponential, increase in our numbers of South Asians residing in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park."

The 2nd reference shows:

"As the city's seven-day Covid positivity jumped from 6.92 percent on Monday to 9.25 by Wednesday, South Queens has remained near the top of the city's infection rate. Three neighborhoods in the area have surpassed the rest of the borough in Covid positivity. Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park's 11419 ZIP code had climbed to the third-highest rate of Covid in the entire city at 15.71 percent. Three surrounding ZIP codes 11420, 11416 and 11417, encompassing Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, had also ascended to be the next-highest rates in all of the borough — all with rates hovering near or above 15 percent."

These reports present a compelling case before you, ignore it at your own peril, that the area is unconscionably and currently diced and sliced into seven different Assembly districts, hence it is impossible for its constituents to receive services responsive to their justice, educational, medical, vocational, economic, ethnic, religious, historical, racial, cultural, language, customs, dietary and/or other needs. Do the right thing!

The reality is that the South Asian population has exponentially grown to numbers that mandate two (2) State Assembly districts, a State senate district, and a Congressional seat. This is your sworn duty, please fulfill it!

They have no say in their affairs. Any negative decision by your revered Commission will also abrogate your duties and responsibilities, while usurping their rights, arbitrarily and capriciously. One of the Commission members who sat on previous Redistricting Commissions (2011), did not fulfill his duties. This cannot happen again!

On account of the fact that these districts share common established ties of common interest and association, and in accordance with justice, the Voting Rights Act and the NY and US Constitutions, do the right thing as you are mandated to do. Keep these neighborhoods and communities intact. It is the right thing to do for all of you.

Respectfully submitted.

Thank you for your kind courtesies and consideration.

Singh Duggal/Singh Duggal

(Chairman)

Carlos Iglesias /Carlos Iglesias

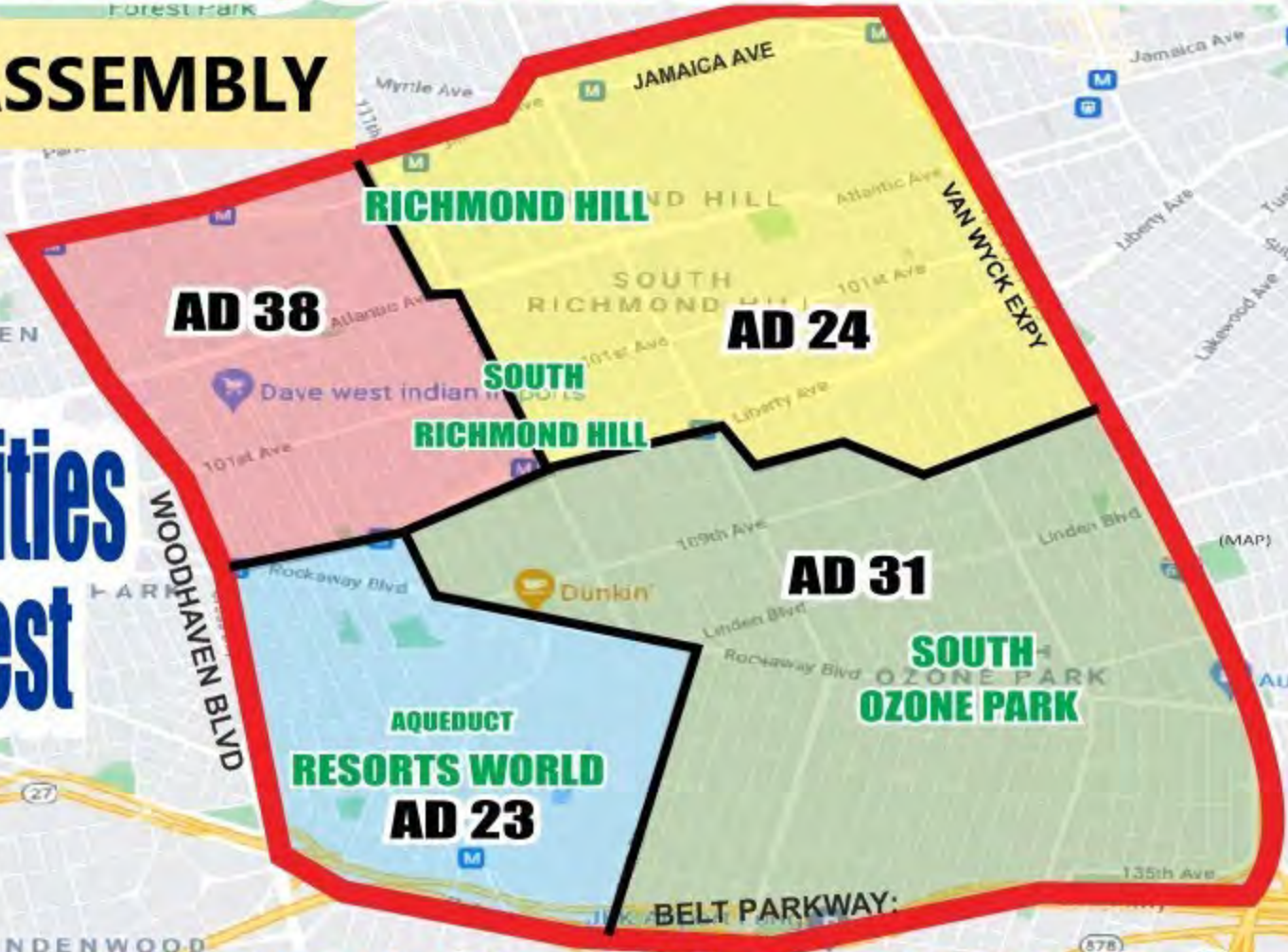
(President)

Unite **RICHMOND HILL** **OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK**

STATE ASSEMBLY

Justice for South Asian &
Latin Americans
Organization Queens
Justice Center

**Communities
of Interest**



FAIR REDISTRICTING!

STATE SENATE, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

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OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK

Justice for South Asian & Latin
Americans Organization Queens
Justice Center



FAIR REDISTRICTING!



Asian Americans for Equality

Public Testimony: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Thursday, July 22, 2021 - Queens County Virtual Hearing

Good afternoon, my name is Jennifer Sun. I am testifying today in my role as co-executive director of Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE), a 47-year-old community development organization dedicated to providing greater housing stability and economic opportunity for Asian Americans and other systematically disadvantaged communities. AAFE is part of the APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force, which is advocating through the redistricting process to keep communities with shared interests together.

Each year, AAFE provides multilingual and culturally appropriate community services to 20,000 New Yorkers through our offices in Chinatown/Manhattan, Flushing/Queens and Jackson Heights-Elmhurst/Queens. Today I will be focusing my remarks on Jackson Heights and Elmhurst, where existing district lines have diluted the voices of low-income immigrant communities and deprived these communities of essential public resources.

Our office on 84th Street, steps from Roosevelt Avenue, is located in State Assembly District 39, just below the boundary with Assembly District 34. We serve thousands of residents from both legislative districts, providing housing assistance, Covid emergency cash relief, application assistance for government social services, immigration counseling and ESOL civics classes. More than half of our clients last year in Queens came from just three zip codes: 20% from Jackson Heights (11372), 18% from Elmhurst (11373) and 15% from Corona (11368).

There is no question that Jackson Heights and Elmhurst are communities of interest, with large Asian and Latinx populations who share similar socioeconomic attributes and community needs. We strongly believe that they should be united and made whole through the redistricting process.

Jennifer Sun- Asian Americans for Equality

These communities' shared interests are obvious to us as grassroots community organizers and service providers, and the data backs up what we see every day on the ground. Both neighborhoods have high poverty rates: 15% in Jackson Heights and 10% in Elmhurst (based on 2019 data). In both communities, at least one-third of renter households were severely rent burdened in 2019, paying more than half of their household income for housing costs. Senior residents of Elmhurst and Jackson Heights come to AAFE for help with similar issues: enrolling for SNAP benefits, applying for affordable health care, acquiring utility subsidies and reduced rate Metrocards, locating affordable housing and applying for rental assistance.

When communities are artificially divided, their ability to participate in the political process is undermined. But there are other consequences, as well. Because Jackson Heights and Elmhurst are separated, community-based organizations, AAFE included, are underfunded by city government and often hamstrung in their efforts to provide critical social services.

For example, AAFE holds a contract with the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) to provide senior services for Neighborhood Development Area 3. NDA 3 includes Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, and North Corona. Although we also serve many residents of neighboring NDA 4 - including Elmhurst and South Corona - our work with these clients does not count towards our contract deliverables. Similarly, AAFE holds a DYCD contract to provide housing services for NDA 4 and serves a similar volume of residents living in NDA 3. AAFE is aware of other CBOs turning down contracts to avoid under-performing and underfunding of city contracts for these and other immigrant services.

What these experiences tell us is obvious. Community needs in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst are aligned. Separate representation harms all of our communities by choking off resources for education, affordable housing, transportation and social services. By combining the communities of interest now in Assembly Districts 34, 35 and 39, we can take a major step towards a more equitable New York. A single, unified assembly district across these neighborhoods will help all of us provide comprehensive, culturally-sensitive and language-accessible services for immigrant New Yorkers to thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission.



DONOVAN RICHARDS
President

CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF QUEENS
120-55 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11424

718.286.3000
www.queensbp.org
info@queensbp.org

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Queens County Hearing

July 22, 2021

Testimony

Good afternoon. I am Michael Mallon, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at the Office of Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.

Thank you to the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission for allowing me to testify on behalf of Borough President Richards today.

Today, the Queens Borough President adds his voice to a growing number of New Yorkers calling for a more transparent and equitable redistricting process.

In addition, especially when it relates to elected representation, this process should also not be used to dilute the voices of marginalized communities.

As the chief advocate for Queens, Borough President Richards supports a fair process that promotes cultural competency and public engagement.

Queens is home to families that speak close to 200 languages and come from nearly as many countries as those represented at the United Nations.

We must ensure there is adequate access so the message is shared with residents who speak those languages.

Our immigrant communities must never be left behind — I encourage the Commission to work with local organizations to conduct outreach and confirm the funding is streamlined to do so.

Queens is also a borough of nearly 2.4 million people.

We must ensure we do as much as possible to reach all those folks and engage them in this redistricting process.

We must educate Queens residents on this issue; the more informed we are, the better it is for our democracy.

Borough President Richards and his office are here to support the Commission and its efforts.

From connecting the Commission to the aforementioned local immigrant organizations to helping promote the Commission's efforts, you can find a valuable partner in Borough President Richards. Thank you very much.



Queens County Public Meeting with the NY Independent Redistricting Commission Jahajee Sisters Testimony

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to address this Commission. My name is Simone Jhingoor and I am a Co-Director of Jahajee Sisters, an organization with over one thousand members founded in 2007. Jahajee Sisters is a healing and political home for Indo-Caribbeans who have survived or are at risk for experiencing gender-based violence, and we organize with them to achieve gender justice. Our community of support guides survivors to heal, recover, and thrive. Through leadership development, grassroots organizing, and arts activism, we amplify community voices to transform culture -- including the systems that hold us back. Our Indo-Caribbean community, which is primarily based in the Richmond Hill, South Ozone, and Ozone Park areas of Queens, is a large *and* marginalized Asian American population.

Our members are immigrant and first-generation survivors, child witnesses, and working class women vulnerable to abuse at home and on the job. In 2013, the New York City Department of City Planning issued a report showing that Guyanese are the 2nd largest immigrant group in Queens and the fifth largest in New York City. This is despite the data not including Guyanese born here or Indians from Trinidad, Suriname, or Jamaica. Despite our large population, our struggles go unaddressed. We experience domestic violence at alarming rates, and the areas we live in are resource deserts. In fact "Little Guyana" has been one of the most impacted by COVID infections and also one of the last to receive testing or vaccine sites.

We are testifying today because the survivors we serve need for Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, and Ozone Park to remain whole. Right now, political lines split our community apart -- which makes more work for organizers and advocates like us who are fighting for better conditions. Why should we have to make demands of six different legislative offices? Why should we stretch the valuable time and energy of our working class members who are struggling to make ends meet but yet put in the work to share their stories with elected officials?

The way our community is split up is also evidence of gerrymandering and it is deeply concerning for the marginalized groups that live in this area. That can be seen in the



many assembly districts that are fragmented in Richmond Hill, which has 6 different overlapping Assembly districts. Communities here are mostly immigrant. They share the same needs for job opportunities, affordable housing, transportation improvement, and health care. They go to the same schools. They worship at the same temples, churches, and masjids. Yet we are broken up. When we need elected officials to advocate for us, this becomes extremely problematic because legislators are able to say "oh this is not my responsibility" this is the responsibility of X, Y, or Z legislator -- they pass the buck, and then the community does not get the attention it deserves.

We want to make sure redistricting is done fairly and with justice as the guiding force. We want to make sure you know that this area -- Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, and Ozone Park -- is among the most egregiously gerrymandered in all of New York State.

We ask you to keep Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, and Ozone Park together in the redistricting process.

Thank you.

Neisas Yin

My name is Neisa Yin. I am 21 years old. I've been a resident of Bayside for 17 years. I urge that the New York State Redistricting Commission keep my community together.

Bayside is home to many parks where families enjoy BBQing and playing sports. According to the American Community Survey, my neighborhood is 45.1% Asian American, 11.5% Latino, 39.7% White, and 2.4% African American.

Bayside is known for its churches, which serve as a lifeline and network for Korean immigrants. Families, including immigrants, come here to build new lives, while others come to retire. The most important issues to us are safety, affordability and education.

My community which is majority Asian American needs to stay together so we can build the political power to address racism and discrimination in our neighborhood. I'm part of a Facebook group called "Bayside, Queens" where racist rhetoric runs high. When a 5-story apartment complex was considered being built along Northern Boulevard, my white neighbors online stated it would be terrible for Bayside to look like Flushing. Last year, a white man physically attacked a Korean man inside of the 7/11 on Bell Boulevard.

Last year, I also talked with my neighbors about reforming the police and dismantling racism in our neighborhood. I attended a Black Lives Matter protest that aimed to counter a Blue Lives Matter event in John Golden Park in Bayside. The police lunged at our Black organizers, punched one of our attendees, and pepper sprayed several others. The cops and the white Blue Lives Matter rally-goers severely outnumbered us, yet the police still aggressively targeted us, a group of young Black, Brown and Yellow people.

Thank you to the commissioners for listening. I hope you keep us together.



SAFEST

South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship & Training

TESTIMONY OF:

Mazeda Uddin – Founder and CEO

South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship and Education (SAFEST)

NYS Redistricting Commission Virtual Hearing on July 22nd, 2021

My name is Mazeda Uddin, founder and CEO of South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship, and Training (SAFEST) and a resident of Jamaica Hills, Queens. SAFEST is an organization that provides services according to immigrants' needs. Since 2015, we have delivered a comprehensive array of services to thousands of children, youth, adults and entire families from South Asian countries in Queens.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak about our vibrant South Asian neighborhoods in Jamaica Hills and Briarwood. As the backbone of our thriving Banladeshi community, Hillside Avenue has countless ethic grocery stores, houses of worship, and restaurants. Not only do they provide daily household needs of our newly immigrated families but also satisfy the longing of a taste from home for some. Unlike other neighborhoods, our growing Bangladeshi neighbors live where they shop. Any division of Jamaica Hills and Briarwood would dilute the strength of the community there.

As a SAFEST representative, my team and I have the first-hand understanding of challenges that our communities face on a daily basis. Since the start of COVID19, many of our South Asian students have suffered inequity in education ranging from lack of assistance to device requests to lack of mental health support from schools because their parents speak little or no English. Any division of our community could negatively impact the resources our community desperately needs.

While the 24th Assembly District roughly kept our community intact, the Senate Districts 11 and 14 lines quietly snaked through Hillside Avenue and curved us in a way that simply wouldn't even make sense to a Fifth Grader. I strongly suggest that the Commision smooth out the district lines to keep our community united and adhere to your duties under the Charter of the City of New York to preserve communities of interest.

Thank you,

Mazeda A. Uddin,

Founder and CEO of SAFEST

Comment has been submitted

Sahand Shahrabani

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Wed 7/21/2021 7:53 PM

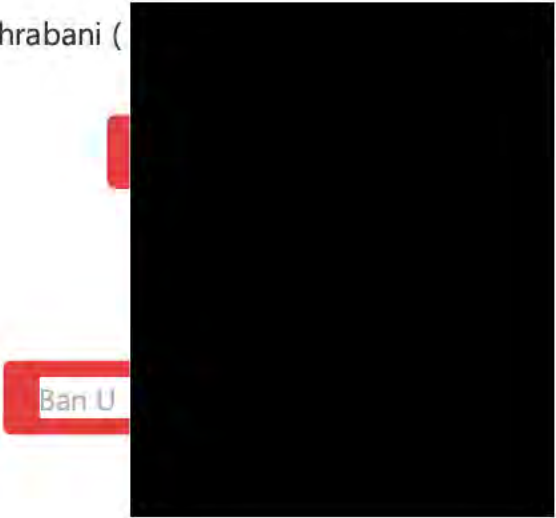
To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

I hope the Commissioners will consider joining Forest Hills and have the community represented by one State Assembly Member and one State Senator.

User: Sahand Shahrabani ([REDACTED])



This e-mail has been automatically generated

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**HISPANIC & SOUTH ASIAN ALLIANCE
FOR FAIR REDISTRICTING IN SOUTH QUEENS**

[REDACTED]
OZONE PARK, NY 11420
[REDACTED]

August 7, 2021

Petition to please unite our communities of interest-Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into one State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness

Most Honorable Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

We are a group that represents the largest numbers of constituents in South Queens, namely Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park. We-Latinos and South Asians alike-live with our families, and side by side in these hitherto indivisible, compact and contiguous neighborhood of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park. This is our home, and our community, built up by our blood, sweat and tears.

This proposed district will keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, with established ties of common interest, ownership and association, grounded in historical, racial, economic, ethnic, religious, and other ties.

We need united, strong voices and responsive leadership to lift our struggling community out of this pandemic. Lack of progress and hope will cripple us, unless you unite us, and let democracy prevail. We have enough constituents to form a State Assembly district, and, at a minimum, this can be the core for a larger State Senate and Congressional district. This cannot be business as usual.

We are the largest group in New York City, and the largest settlement and conglomeration of folks who can trace their ancestry to South Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean and the West Indies. Moreover, as new, first and second generation Americans, we share many common bonds, and are one large family.

Our mission is to keep residents and voters in those communities together in one district, so that we can obtain common solutions to our issues and problems that affect our families on a daily basis. Many of us are essential workers and working families, whose children have served, defended and died for America-proudly. Please stop dividing and fragmenting us.

As you can see from the compact and contiguous maps submitted, we are bordered and defined by natural, geographic boundaries. In prior redistricting attempts, these natural and God-made boundaries have been consciously obliterated and ignored. It behooves you to act accordingly and unite us as a community, and not use us as filler for other communities.

Our elected officials and their staff do not look like us, nor care about us. They do not understand our customs, language or heritage. They treat us as if we are from a different planet. They look down upon us. They are imported from other communities.

Indeed, Assembly member David Weprin, whose political dynasty/family have monopolized and kept their monarchy over a divided Richmond Hill in AD 24 since 1965 in a “switcheroo style typical of colonialists,” has openly rejected his seat at the last redistricting. **Exhibit 1.**

Another, Hon. Jenifer Rajkumar, who represents Glendale, Ridgewood, Forest Park, and Woodhaven, and a small part of our gerrymandered district in AD 38, has openly acknowledged that this area “deserves its own representation.” She has honestly admitted that she is not the answer to this problem. **Exhibit 2.**

Rajkumar only moved into the district to run for office a few months ago, having lived and ran previously for decades in Manhattan, and has acknowledged her unsuitability and obvious limitations to represent these largely immigrant Latino and South Asian communities. Exhibit 3.

We pray that you honor your mandate and duties to draw fair, common districts, and free us from the absurd, egregious gerrymandering that has divided us up unconscionably and unfairly. We have, at present, as shown in maps, districts that resemble dinosaurs and reptiles, not communities of interest being kept together. **See attached diagram. Exhibit 4.**

Look at the present maps re Assembly Districts 23, 24, 27, 32, 31 and 38. Exhibit 3. They have been drawn to dilute and separate us, diminishing our already suppressed voices. They have *ALL* been drawn with an evil purpose in mind-protect these incumbents and suppress and dilute the communities of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park.

Everyone with a conscience call them the apartheid maps. They have been divided to suit the incumbent politicians, special interests and status quo, who do not care about us. The Covid pandemic confirmed this. None of them even brought a single mask, a testing center, nor any other much needed Covid help to our hard hit community-the hardest in NYS. Shame on them, and shame on you if you preserve the status quo.

We could not get any help from any of them to get unemployment compensation, help us with homelessness, rent assistance, food, PEP or any other assistance, even though all of these societal problems increased during the pandemic. We could not even get help to bury our deceased. We were abandoned, and left without hope. That is why we are appealing to you. This desertion and deprivation must not be institutionalized, nor tolerated, by your revered commission any longer.

Districts must comply with state and federal laws and be similarly sized with reasonable, not zigzagging shapes. This commission, which can be an example for other states stifled and divided by partisan gerrymandering, must also consider that we are indivisible and solid “communities of interest.”

Our lives are so intertwined that we share the same heritage, ancestry, religions, places of interest, shopping centers, food markets, play the same sports, work in the same industries, have the same vocations and our children attend the same schools. We also use the same public transportation, and other facilities like libraries, Post Offices etc.

Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park have the largest conglomeration of residents from South Asia that live in the USA-Guyanese, Sikhs, Trinidadians, Surinamese, Bengalis and Punjabi communities. We have been splintered, cruelly and shamelessly into six Assembly districts.

This is evil gerrymandering, and show how it dilutes and exploits communities of interest-apartheid style.

Moreover, none of these Assembly, members have an office in our neighborhood. Nor do live in this area, nor do they ever come here. Most residents do not even know who these so-called representatives or staff members are. They never return our calls for help and assistance. We don't exist, for them.

That is because our splintered neighborhoods make politicians less responsive to constituents' needs as gerrymandering diminishes our ability to influence elections. It is the same old divide and rule policy our great nation fought for in our independence against the British colonialists, now being used against us centuries later!

Look at our districts! They are the obvious end result of dicing, slicing, and gerrymandering. They eviscerate the Voting Rights Acts and the NYS and US Constitutions. The boundaries are disgraceful and shocking. They are an abomination of the redistricting standards/principles that require districts to be compact and contiguous, and preserve "communities of interest," among other guidelines.

We contribute our fair share, to the Federal, State, and City coffers in various forms of taxes, yet we are not known. We energize the economy of the area by revitalizing businesses, the professions and other services. We are small business owners, essential workers, factory workers and laborers, engineers, lawyers, doctors and dentists, academics and teachers, brokers of real estate, insurance and financial services, businessmen and women, writers, poets, artists, and others, filling every niche of activity, and contributing tangibly to the growth and development of our neighborhoods and America.

Indeed, in these communities, there is a uniqueness in dress, dance, music, food, custom, religious routines, and other cultural practices. They convey a unique attribute to this area. One need only walk on Liberty, Atlantic, Jamaica and Rockaway Avenues in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park, yet we are not given justice, hope and due recognition.

These corrupt district lines make community organizing around school funding, health care, social services, among other political, social and workers' causes, impossible. Our political, economic and social rights have been made a mockery of. Enough is enough!

Lack of a voice has caused systemic deprivation and exploitation by government and other entities. Our communities are unfairly targeted by ICE, although we provide the tertiary workers like cooks, bell boys, household workers, cleaners, janitors, security and other personnel whose only "crime" is to secure a better life for their families in this great land of opportunity.

Moreover, whereas basements are legal for other communities, for example in Borough Park, neighboring Howard Beach, and are exempted from Department of Building enforcement sanctions, the Building Inspectors target us here with massive fines, vacate orders and other penalties. They call them "mother and daughter apartments," whereas we are violated and selectively prosecuted for having a prayer room or a recreation room in our attics and basements.

Again, we are singled out for other types of enforcement, environmental and traffic violations. We have the largest daily quota of summonses. Our small businesses are violated at higher rates, compared to other neighborhoods. At one time, a few years ago, we were the only neighborhood targeted for jaywalking.

We are frustrated and deprived. We have been undercounted because some of us did not take part in the Census or speak to census takers due to building inspector harassment and immigration fears of deportation.

You must appreciate what has happened here. As Exhibit 4 compellingly demonstrates, our district was cut up into at least 4-6 different Assembly districts to dilute and oppress us, bypassing natural boundaries, geographic boundaries and common heritage and culture. (Pgs. 1-6). The community of interest is on pg. 7.

Our kids have to travel for hours outside our communities, in fact, counties, to get a decent education, because our schools are failing, with unacceptable graduation rates. We have no specialized High Schools in our area, because our taxes paid unfairly are routed to other neighborhoods to develop those more affluent communities-Kew Gardens, Howard Beach, Jamaica Estates, Glendale etc.

There is poor sanitation and other government services here. Grocery shopping has to be done in another district. Worship is also possible only in another district. If we have a problem, we have to run to several different officials, because they are all located in different areas, although we live just a few blocks away from each other.

Each of these is in a separate Assembly, State senate or Congressional District, resulting in the most complicated, poorest local governance and service delivery we see anywhere in New York City.

Consequently, people do not even bother to get their problems and issues addressed, whether it be educational, medical, government services, or otherwise.

Older people in the neighborhood compare this deprivation and state of affairs to the social, economic, historical and political suppression and situations they escaped from in their home countries, which forced them to seek a better life in the United States.

This was the main reason they left and came here in the first place, only to face the same deprivation, suppression and denial caused by gerrymandering and the separation of our communities of interest of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into different districts.

Minority enrollment is 96% of the student body in both schools, which is higher than the New York state average of 57%. The graduation rates for students at our sole high schools is far below the 84% rates state wide. Richmond Hill High School and John Adams High School, is at 54% and 70% respectively. It is easy for you to understand why our morale is so low, and why we feel deprived as a majority-minority community. These partitions and divisions have caused grave consequences upon us.

The reason for this is based on lack of resources, improvement and attention being paid to our community. Parents resign to a second class standard of education, due to gerrymandering and isolation of our minority community. Hope is a scarce commodity. That is why we suffered the highest infection and death rates during the recent pandemic-systemic suppression. Neglect and disenfranchisement were the root causes.

Most of the students here, and their hardworking families are from Central and South America, Guyana, Bangladesh, Trinidad, India, Suriname, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, and can trace their roots to South Asia and Latin/South America. They live in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and/or South Ozone Park.

In this entire area of over 500,000 residents, there is no community center and/or senior center, after school programs, skills teaching center and/or sports center. The facilities that are supposed to save us, are not enough. We cannot help but feel ostracized in our own community, even with our dealings with law enforcement. Ambulance and law enforcement response times are the slowest in New York City.

Although we have many self-sustaining places to worship, ethnic food stores and many family members here, we have nowhere to go for assistance with homework, academic guidance, counseling, vocational, play sports, or afterschool programs. On weekends, we usually have to leave the neighborhood to find anything useful to do with our time. Our libraries are overcrowded and need expansion. Public transportation can be improved.

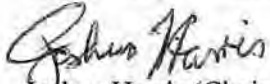
Please help us attain a better life. We should not have to go to 4-7 different Assembly representatives (ADs 23, 24, 31, 38 mainly), 2 different State Senators (SDs 10, 15), or 2 Congressional Representatives to deal with issues like when both of our major high schools were proposed for closure, when we were designated the area with the highest COVID infection rates, when we are unfairly treated by the cops, and/or when we need solutions to our issues and problems like high foreclosures and poor government services.

We need a district where the elected officials will be familiar with our heritage and culture, who are from this neighborhood and who will work with the community on our needs, e.g., improve graduation rates, help with homework, spaces for students to go after school, cooling centers, better police relations, minimizing hate crimes, domestic violence counseling, more sports grounds, and so on.

We strongly urge you to keep these neighborhoods together in a single district for the State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with your mandate, conscience and duties. Don't blame us for voter and census apathy, and higher suicide rates if you fail us.

Thank you for consideration and attention,

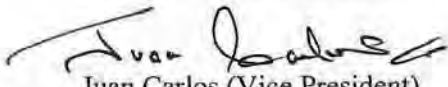
Respectfully submitted,



Joshua Harris (Chairman)



Gregory Adams (President)



Juan Carlos (Vice President)



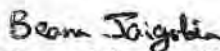
Maria Bueno (Secretary)



Elizabeth McCarthy (Treasurer)



Tara Nath (Membership)



Beann Jaigobin (Organizing Secretary)

EXHIBIT 1

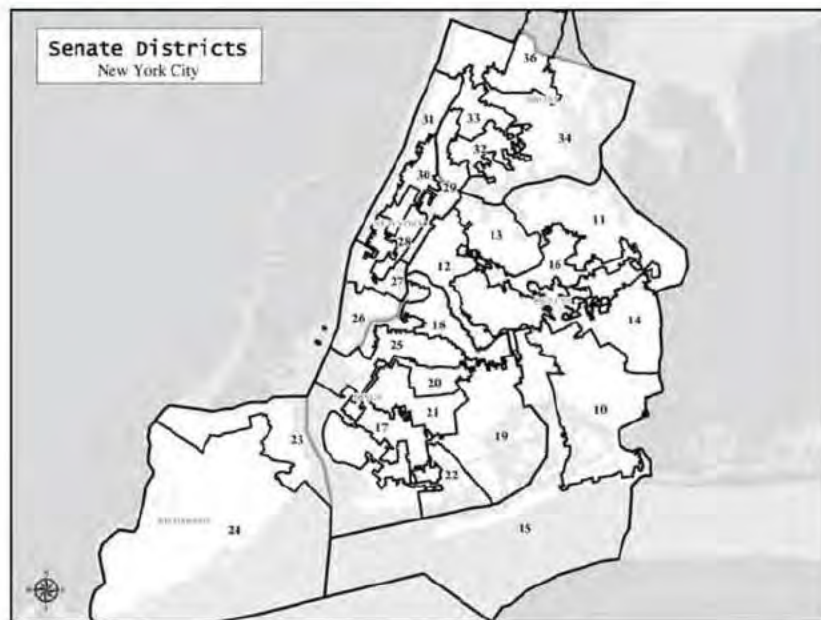
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News




Queens delegation split over redistricting


By Joe Anuta


0 comments Posted on March 22, 2012



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By Joe Anufa

The contentious redistricting process that changed political representation in Queens came to a close Monday when a federal judge signed off on the new congressional lines, days after Gov. Andrew Cuomo did the same at the state level.

Queens lawmakers from the state Assembly largely voted to approve the state lines, while those from the state Senate unanimously opposed it.

A panel of judges overseeing the congressional lines approved the plan drawn up by the magistrate judge, Roanne Mann, with little changes.

Reaction to the state and congressional maps was drastically different, with independent groups and elected officials blasting the state lines as gerrymandered to keep Senate Republicans in power,



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LATEST NEWS



Queens community

while praising the congressional lines drawn by a court-appointed judge as fairly drawn.

“The bad guys won,” said Sen. Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria), who led a call for the process to be taken care of by an independent commission.

Gianaris was part of the group of Queens lawmakers in the Senate who opposed the legislation and even walked out of a late-night discussion of the bill along with Democrats from around the state before it was eventually passed without their support.

Senate Democrats are also suing over a 63rd seat that was created upstate.

Gianaris voted against the state lines, as did all the Queens lawmakers in the Senate, according to records from the state Legislature.

But in the Assembly, it was just the opposite: Nearly every Queens lawmaker voted in favor of the lines, according to the bill.

Some said they voted for the new lines because they were fair, or because of another bill that provided a constitutional amendment to reform the redistricting process next time around in 2022.



leaders celebrate grand opening of Hyatt Regency hotel at Resorts World



State honors Astoria legend Tony Bennett as he closes out memorable career



Queens Supreme Court exonerates man who spent more than 30 years in prison for murder



Queens Tech Council to host first in-person networking event in LIC



Real estate website launches new tool to help protect New York City renters

Cuomo also signed that bill after it passed, which stipulates that an independent commission will be created after the next census in order to take power of redistricting out of the hands of the Legislature in an effort to circumvent gerrymandering.

Cuomo also passed a law that will ensure that the amendment sticks.

But Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas (D-Astoria) said the constitutional amendment is not enough.

Simotas, along with Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Little Neck), were the only two members of the Queens delegation in the Assembly to vote against the lines.

“If the Senate lines weren’t so hyper-political, perhaps I would have reconsidered,” she said, referring particularly to the neighborhood of Astoria, which was split in half in the Senate. “I’m not going to do anything that would damage my community by splitting it in half.”

Even though the Assembly lines were less controversial, Simotas said the Senate lines factored into her decision.

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In addition, Simotas said she signed a pledge pushed by former Mayor Ed Koch to support independent redistricting.

Koch blasted the lawmakers who went back on the pledge, saying in an op-ed earlier this month that “unfortunately (but not surprisingly), many of the same legislators who pledged to support independent redistricting have reneged and are now trying to continue the same practice of gerrymandering — meaning business as usual.”

But several members of the Assembly did not sign the pledge, including Rory Lancman (D-Fresh Meadows), Michael Simanowitz (D-Flushing) and William Scarborough (D-St. Albans).

Cuomo said the amendment would help make the process more transparent in the future.

“This agreement will permanently reform the redistricting process in New York to once and for all end self-interested and partisan gerrymandering,” Cuomo said.

Reach reporter Joe Anuta by e-mail at januta@englocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4566.



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EXHIBIT 2



New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar



PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Vjola Isufaj, Chief of Staff
Office of Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar
929-353-5470 isufajv@nyassembly.gov

Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar's Statement on the Public Meeting of Independent Redistricting Commission in Queens County

First South Asian Woman Elected to State Office Urges Commission to Empower South Asian Community in the Redistricting Process

South Queens, NY (July 22, 2021) - As I watched today's Public Meeting of the Independent Redistricting Commission in Queens County, I was heartened that public testimony consistently echoed what I have said since before I became an Assemblywoman: that the South Asian community needs recognition in the redistricting process. Queens is home to a vibrant South Asian community, including Bengalis, Punjabis, Guaynese and other Indo-Caribbeans. However, the South Asian community across Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park has been split among seven Assembly districts.

For too long, South Asian New Yorkers have not had a seat at the table. Until recently they had no one from their community representing them in Albany. Their demographic categories are not included in most data. Their religious holidays are not recognized the same as others. However, if they are united in their own Assembly district, they can have representation that responds to and advocates for their needs.

A major factor in redistricting is to keep together "communities of interest," areas where people have the same demographics and utilize the same institutions. And as the first South Asian woman elected to New York State Office, I recognize that the South Asian community of Queens unquestionably meets these criteria. That is why I urge the Independent Redistricting Commission to listen to the people who spoke today and create common-sense district lines that give South Asian New Yorkers the political voice they deserve.

EXHIBIT 3

NEW YORK STATE



What Lies Ahead For Kathy Hochul If She Becomes Governor?

POWER LIST



The 2021 Brooklyn Power 100

EDITOR'S NOTE



Editor's Note: De Blasio's Free Vaccine Money A Hit While Cuomo Is Down

NEW YORK STATE



Why Cuomo Will Resign ... And Why He Won't








The carpetbaggers in the 2020 primaries

A handful of New York candidates moved into their districts only recently.



Assembly District 38 candidate Jenifer Rajkumar. SULTAN KHAN

By REBECCA C. LEWIS | MAY 22, 2020

Moving to a new area to run for office is a long tradition in American politics, dating at least as far back as the Reconstruction era, when the term “carpetbagger” was coined. The practice certainly hasn’t faded away in New York. For example, over the course of several recent election cycles, political activist Sean Eldridge, Fordham Law professor Zephyr Teachout and attorney Antonio Delgado all moved to the same Hudson Valley district to run for Congress – and only Delgado succeeded. The 2020 elections have a crop of carpetbaggers too.

Michelle Caruso-Cabrera

This challenger to Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez likes to tell people that AOC grew up in Westchester County, not the Bronx. But until late 2019 Michelle Caruso-Cabrera had never lived in Queens or the Bronx, the two counties in the district. Originally from New Hampshire, Caruso-Cabrera lived in Manhattan for 20 years before transplanting to Sunnyside, Queens, shortly before announcing her candidacy. She’s also seeking to run as a Democrat despite being a former Republican.

EVELYN FARKAS

“Carpetbagger” is perhaps too strong a word to describe Evelyn Farkas. While she only recently moved into the district she hopes to represent in Congress, it was a move back to the area where she grew up. Farkas was born and raised in Chappaqua, a Westchester County suburb represented by the retiring Rep. Nita Lowey, whom Farkas wants to replace. But Farkas hasn’t lived there for years and returned home only in 2019, not long before announcing her congressional

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ambitions. A campaign spokesperson added, however, that while Farkas' primary residence had been in Washington, D.C., she often spent time in Westchester to visit her family.

ADAM SCHLEIFER

Like his opponent Farkas, Adam Schleifer is a [Chappaqua native](#) – his dad is the founder of a Westchester-based biotech company. Schleifer most recently lived in California for several years before returning home late in 2019. Last year, he helped prosecute actress Felicity Huffman in a [college admissions scandal](#) that also involved Lori Loughlin. But he's back in Westchester now, looking to succeed Lowey in representing the district he grew up in.

PAPERBOY LOVE PRINCE

The rapper and subway performer turned congressional candidate Paperboy Prince, who uses they/them pronouns, says their family has long lived in Brooklyn and told City & State, "[my spirit, my energy, my legacy has always been in Brooklyn.](#)" However, the long-shot contender grew up near Washington, D.C., and only moved to New York 2014. And when Prince first announced their candidacy, their listed address was in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which is near, but not in, the 7th Congressional District. Prince told City & State that the address was only used to receive mail. Another address listed more recently with the New York City Board of Elections puts Prince in Bushwick, which is in the district.

JENIFER RAJKUMAR

Jenifer Rajkumar first ran for office in 2016, attempting to win the empty Manhattan Assembly seat vacated by ex-Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver thanks to a corruption scandal. She lost the Democratic primary to Yuh-Line Niou, who went on to win the seat. Four years later, Rajkumar now lives in [Woodhaven, Queens](#), and is running against Assemblyman Michael Miller. Her [campaign website](#) notes that her immigrant parents settled in Queens when they came to the U.S.

RITCHIE TORRES

This is another borderline case, but when Ritchie Torres filed to run for Congress last year to replace the retiring Rep. José E. Serrano in the Bronx, the address he provided was just outside the district. However, Torres has represented a portion of the 15th Congressional District as a city councilman and has lived in the Bronx his entire life. He also told City & State that he moved to a new home within the district last year, and the new address he provided matches the address he provided the New York City Board of Elections. [c](#)

Update: This story has been updated to include Adam Schleifer. It has also been updated with comments from Evelyn Farkas' campaign.

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NEXT STORY: [Independent pharmacies need COVID-19 testing support](#)



Independent pharmacies need COVID-19 testing support

Unlike CVS and Walgreens, the state's smaller pharmacies may struggle to begin administering coronavirus tests.



Dichter Pharmacy in Inwood #EK-AND-IN/SHUTTERSTOCK

By AMANDA LUZ HENNING SANTIAGO | MAY 21, 2020

About a month after Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order allowing pharmacies across the state to administer COVID-19 tests, the state's independent pharmacies are unprepared to begin testing for the virus.

Some pharmacists were not even aware that they were supposed to begin administering coronavirus tests until they heard the governor discussing the order on the news. "I don't know if we're even going to be doing the testing or not," a pharmacist at the VIP Pharmacy Corp. in Queens, told *The City*. "There's just way too much lack of information at the moment for us to go ahead and go through with it."

The governor signed the executive order on April 25 to be able to utilize more than 5,000 pharmacies to increase the state's testing capability, which is key to reopening the state. However, *The City* reported that numerous independent pharmacies had not been given any support from the state that would prepare them to begin COVID-19 testing, such as access to tests or training to learn how to administer them.

Unlike chain pharmacies, such as CVS and Walgreens, most independent pharmacies do not typically have registered nurses on staff. This has left many wondering if they'll be able to administer COVID-19 tests themselves or if they'll need to hire additional help. Some pharmacists have also begun calling on the state for training to learn how to administer the COVID-19 test, which would enable them to begin testing. "The first thing we need is the training that was mentioned in the executive order from the Department of Health," Steve Moore, president of the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York, told *The City*. "We need to understand what that means and what they're looking for. And the other thing that we will probably need help with is access to the tests."


But many independent pharmacies do not have the same cash flow as bigger chains, which means they might not be able to order COVID-19 tests in bulk, which can cost anywhere from \$25 to \$100 per test. A large number of pharmacies have also lost a significant amount of money due to the coronavirus crisis, which would make having enough money to procure the tests even more difficult. There's also confusion over which COVID-19 tests pharmacies should be purchasing, aside from who will be responsible with purchasing them.

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Moore told The City that the state should obtain the tests and be in charge of distributing them to independent pharmacies, as it has done with vaccines. He added: "That model does exist, and that would be the fastest and easiest way to get started." 

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NEXT STORY: [Where are the ex-IDC members now?](#)



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Jenifer Rajkumar Champions Fascists, not Communities #RejectJenifer



QueensAgainstHinduFascism Feb 25, 2020 · 5 min read

REJECT JENIFER

Jenifer Rajkumar Champions Fascists, not Communities

Who are We?

Queens Against Hindu Fascism is a collective of progressive South Asian activists, organizers and citizens concerned with the rise of right-wing Hindu nationalism in American politics. We are especially concerned with the creep of Hindu Fascism in New York City and Queens, the most diverse county in the country. Our goal is to hold public officials, political candidates, and institutions accountable for supporting policies which target Indian religious minorities and caste-oppressed people both in America and abroad.

Why Reject Rajkumar?



Jenifer Rajkumar
@JeniferRajkumar

A great day for the Indian diaspora, as Madison Square Garden and 20,000+ fans welcomed new Prime Minister Narendra Modi. [#ModiInAmerica](#)

6:14 PM · Sep 28, 2014 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

<https://twitter.com/JeniferRajkumar/status/516350313058803713>

Jenifer Rajkumar, a candidate for NY Assembly District 38, has received nearly \$20,000 in donations in the past year from wealthy Hindu Nationalists from outside of the district and across the country. Jenifer has also openly supported and welcomed Prime Minister Modi to NYC. This is in contrast to the progressive values Rajkumar claims to support. Jenifer claims she is bringing back honor to politics and restoring sacredness to public service. However, her record on issues related to South Asian religious and caste minorities reveals a disturbing history of influence from dangerous right wing Hindu Fascists. We must hold our leaders accountable when they claim to promote a progressive agenda here and enable fascism abroad.

Rajkumar Openly Receives Support from Hindu Fascists:

(Donations received between January 1, 2019 — January 31, 2020)

- Received \$10,400 from Dinesh Paliwal, the wealthy CEO of Harman International, and family. Paliwal has publicly supported Modi and criticized protests against CAA. He is on the Global Board of Directors for the U.S India Business Council which commended Modi's re-election in May, 2019. He is also on the Board of Directors of Raytheon, one of the largest U.S. military defense contractors.
- Received \$2500 from Vijay Goradia, the billionaire CEO of Vinmar International. In 2019, Goradia welcomed Modi in a video on Twitter for Howdy Modi saying, “on behalf of all Houstonian but especially the large indian diaspora here, I extend you a warm welcome, Mr. Prime Minister.” He also said that “...as a member of Advisory

Council for the Ministry of Petroleum under Dharmendra Pradhan, I can vouch for this growing relationship between India and Houston.” Dharmendra Pradhan is a controversial BJP leader and currently the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Minister of Steel in the Second Modi Ministry. Goradia also participated in a business leader roundtable with Modi in Houston.

- Received \$4000 from Kamla Gupta and Rajiv L. Gupta, Chairman of Delphi Automotive. Kamla and Rajiv run the Ujula Foundation which has donated to Ekal Vidyalaya, an organization that creates schools in villages to spread RSS ideology.
- Received \$1000 from Raj Bhayani, a Brooklyn based neurosurgeon. Bhayani is on the Core Committee of ModiforPM.org, has been honored by BJP America and played a key role in bringing Modi to Madison Square Garden in 2014. In June 2019, he also hosted a fundraiser for Tulsi Gabbard, a well know champion of Hindu Fascism. Bhayani also agreed to pay the United States \$1,109,000 to resolve civil allegations that he and his practice paid kickbacks and submitted false claims to federal healthcare programs for services provided to residents in adult homes in violation of the False Claims Act.

What is Hindu Fascism?

Hindu fascism, also known as Hindutva or Hindu nationalism, is a right-wing political ideology that guides the current ruling party in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a majoritarian political ideology and far-right ethnonationalist movement. Hindu nationalist groups in India like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) were inspired by Nazi Germany and Mussolini's fascists in Italy. Hindu fascism's aim is to concentrate power, land, and resources in the hands of the oppressor castes and to make India a Hindu ethnostate. Watch more [here](#) and read more [here](#).

Why Oppose Hindu Fascism?

Hindu fascist organizations combine their cultural and political power with violence to oppress minorities, quash dissent and subvert Indian democracy. Their leaders have openly called for violence against Muslims and Christian minorities. Since their spread and rise to power, South Asia has seen an alarming rise of anti-Muslim violence, lynchings, rapes, and other acts of intimidation against religious minorities and caste-

oppressed people. Hindu nationalism would not be possible without the cultural and financial support of the United States diaspora, so it's imperative to challenge candidates like Rajkumar, who platform Hindu nationalists. Among Hindu nationalists' many recent actions, the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is especially egregious. The CAA works in conjunction with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR) to create an anti-Muslim, anti-minority, religious litmus test for citizenship in India and sets the legal foundation for the largest network of concentration camps in the world. Hindu nationalists have no place in American politics and stand for values antithetical to the progressive values of the broader South Asian-American community. This is why we are demanding that Jenifer Rajkumar come clean and disavow his Hindu nationalist ties.

What does Hindu fascism have to do with the United States?

A network of Hindu fascist inspired organizations, collectively called the Sangh Parivar, has established national and local organizations throughout the U.S., including the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), Sewa International, and Ekal Vidyalaya. They spread Hindu fascist propaganda through seemingly innocent methods like government briefings, cultural events, charity work and youth religious camps. President Trump and other Congressional leaders, were in attendance at the 2019 Howdy Modi event. Trump and Modi held hands and made speeches promising to uplift each other's agendas. The Indian government's actions resemble Trump's actions, such as the Muslim ban and the African country ban, building detention centers for asylum seekers, placing severe limits on refugee populations, and other xenophobic, anti-immigrant policies.

What are we asking progressive South Asians to do?

1. Challenge Rajkumar on her ties to Hindu fascism via telephone, email, and social media;
2. Ensure Rajkumar does not get elected; Only support candidates who have publicly disavowed Hindu Fascism.
3. Encourage your friends, family, and other community members to stop funding Rajkumar and other individuals with ties to Hindu fascism;
4. Spread the message that supporting Hindu fascism is supporting genocide.

Contact us:

- Email us at queensagainsthindufascism@gmail.com
- Follow us on Twitter @ NoHindutvaNYC

UPDATE (March 3, 2020): Jenifer responds to our calls by saying she is “proud of everyone who supports me.” See video:



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Candidates for 1st City Council District

PRIMARY ELECTION **VOTER GUIDE** 2013

DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY



Margaret S. Chin



Jenifer Rajkumar

* If there is an asterisk next to a candidate's name, s/he did not submit a profile or record a video.



Jenifer Rajkumar

Democratic



Party Enrolled In: Democratic

Current Occupation: Civil Rights Lawyer at Sanford Heisler LLP

Previous Occupation(s): National Women's Law Center, Law Fellow

Education: Stanford Law School (with pro bono distinction), University of Pennsylvania (magna cum laude, phi beta kappa)

Organizational Affiliations: WIN (Young Woman of Achievement Award Winner 2012), City & State Rising Stars (Named a 2012 "Rising Star"), Women's Campaign Fund (National Board of Directors Emeritus), Downtown Independent Democrats, Battery Park City Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Save Our Seaport, CAAN 2031, SoHo Alliance, Friends of Petrosino Square, Village Independent Democrats, Village Reform Democrats.

Prior Public Experience: Democratic District Leader, 65th Assembly District

transcripts | [English](#) | [Español](#) | [中文](#)

1. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN COUNCIL DISTRICT 01 YOU WOULD ADDRESS IF ELECTED?

The need for a **strong, active council member** who will fight for working families in **all the many diverse neighborhoods across Lower Manhattan**. We need a council member who champions **participatory democracy**, and who tackles Lower Manhattan's issues with a **collaborative approach**.

2. WHAT OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES WOULD YOU ADDRESS IF ELECTED?

I will **prepare Lower Manhattan for future hurricanes** in our Sandy affected district. I will work to **build more schools** so that all children can attend quality schools near where they live. I will continue to be a **strong advocate against Stop, Question, and Frisk**, **against the NYU 2031 expansion plan**, and against any BID plan which places the interests of outside business ahead of residents. I will also fight to make **safe, affordable housing** a reality for all New Yorkers downtown.

3. WHAT MAKES YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS OFFICE?

I have been a courageous voice for the disenfranchised my entire career, and I will continue to be a courageous voice for our community in City Council. As a **civil rights lawyer** from a national law firm, I have the **tough negotiating skills** needed to fight for Lower Manhattan in City Hall. As a **local district leader**, I have built the community relationships needed to effectively deliver results for our community in the City Council.

Reprinted as supplied by the candidate. Participating in the NYC Campaign Finance Program.

[View Candidate Submission Disclaimer](#)



New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar



PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Vjola Isufaj, Chief of Staff
Office of Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar
929-353-5470 isufajv@nyassembly.gov

Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar's Statement on the Public Meeting of Independent Redistricting Commission in Queens County

First South Asian Woman Elected to State Office Urges Commission to Empower South Asian Community in the Redistricting Process

South Queens, NY (July 22, 2021) - As I watched today's Public Meeting of the Independent Redistricting Commission in Queens County, I was heartened that public testimony consistently echoed what I have said since before I became an Assemblywoman: that the South Asian community needs recognition in the redistricting process. Queens is home to a vibrant South Asian community, including Bengalis, Punjabis, Guaynese and other Indo-Caribbeans. However, the South Asian community across Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park has been split among seven Assembly districts.

For too long, South Asian New Yorkers have not had a seat at the table. Until recently they had no one from their community representing them in Albany. Their demographic categories are not included in most data. Their religious holidays are not recognized the same as others. However, if they are united in their own Assembly district, they can have representation that responds to and advocates for their needs.

A major factor in redistricting is to keep together "communities of interest," areas where people have the same demographics and utilize the same institutions. And as the first South Asian woman elected to New York State Office, I recognize that the South Asian community of Queens unquestionably meets these criteria. That is why I urge the Independent Redistricting Commission to listen to the people who spoke today and create common-sense district lines that give South Asian New Yorkers the political voice they deserve.

EXHIBIT 4

**Unite RICHMOND HILL
OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK**

Communities of Interest

AD 38
RICHMOND HILL

AD 24
SOUTH RICHMOND HILL

AD 31
SOUTH OZONE PARK

AD 23
AQUEDUCT
RESORTS WORLD

FAIR REDISTRICTING!

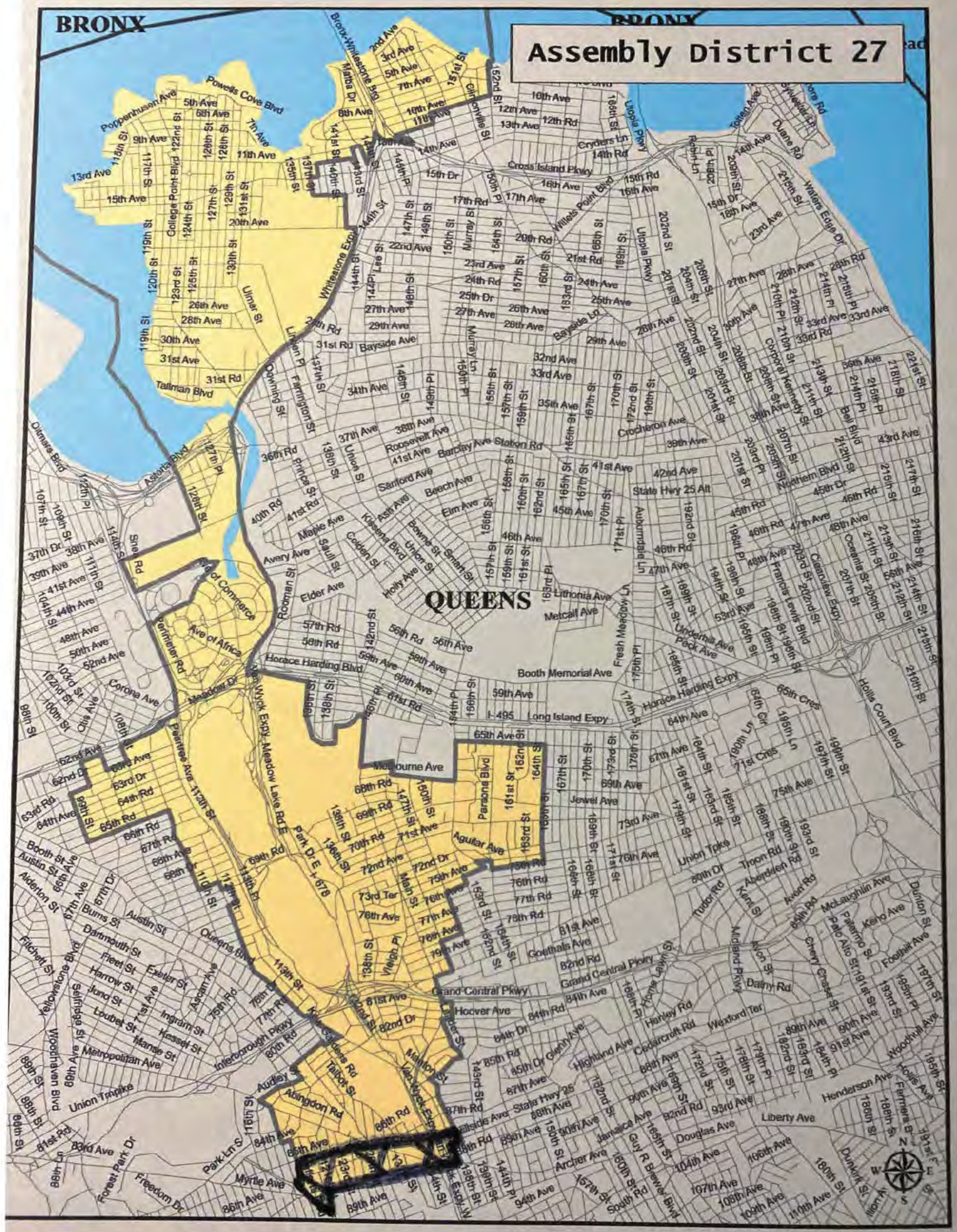
The map displays four distinct communities of interest, each outlined in black and collectively enclosed by a red border. AD 38 (pink) covers Richmond Hill. AD 24 (yellow) covers South Richmond Hill. AD 31 (green) covers South Ozone Park. AD 23 (blue) covers Aqueduct and Resorts World. Major roads like Woodhaven Blvd, Rockaway Blvd, and Belt Parkway are visible. Landmarks such as Forest Park and Dave West Indian Imports are also marked.

BRONX

BRONX

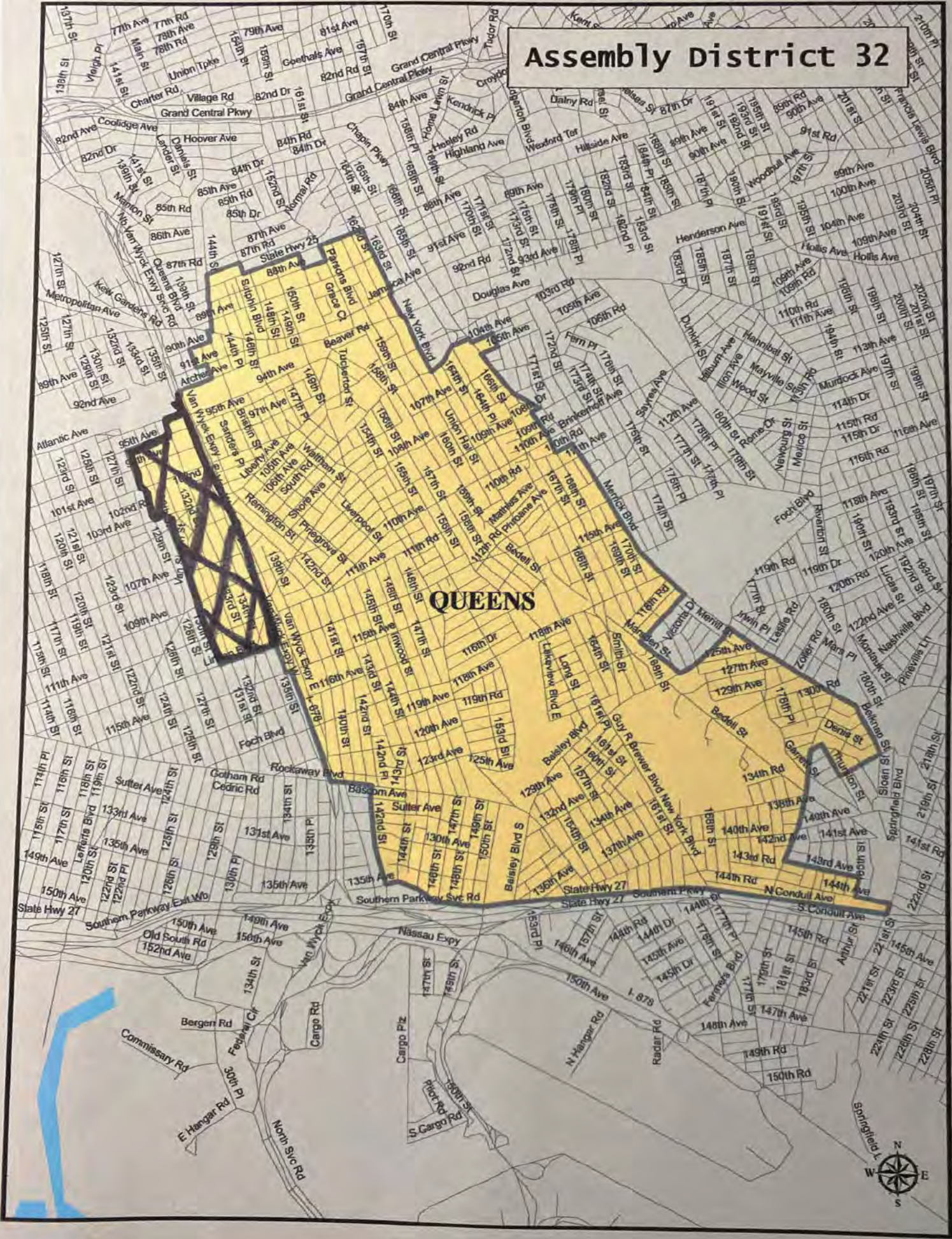
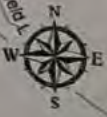
Assembly District 27

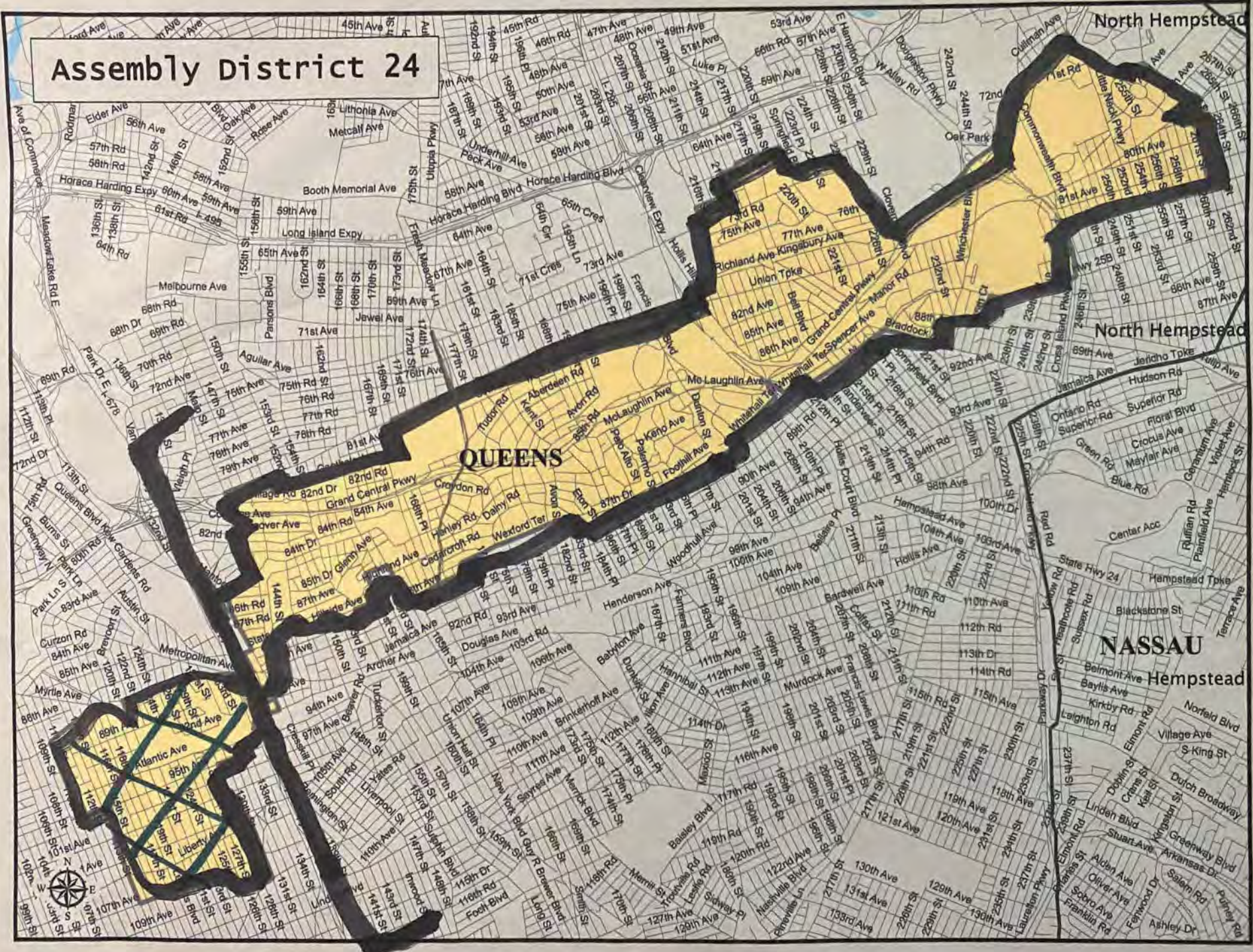
QUEENS



Assembly District 32

QUEENS





Assembly District 24

QUEENS

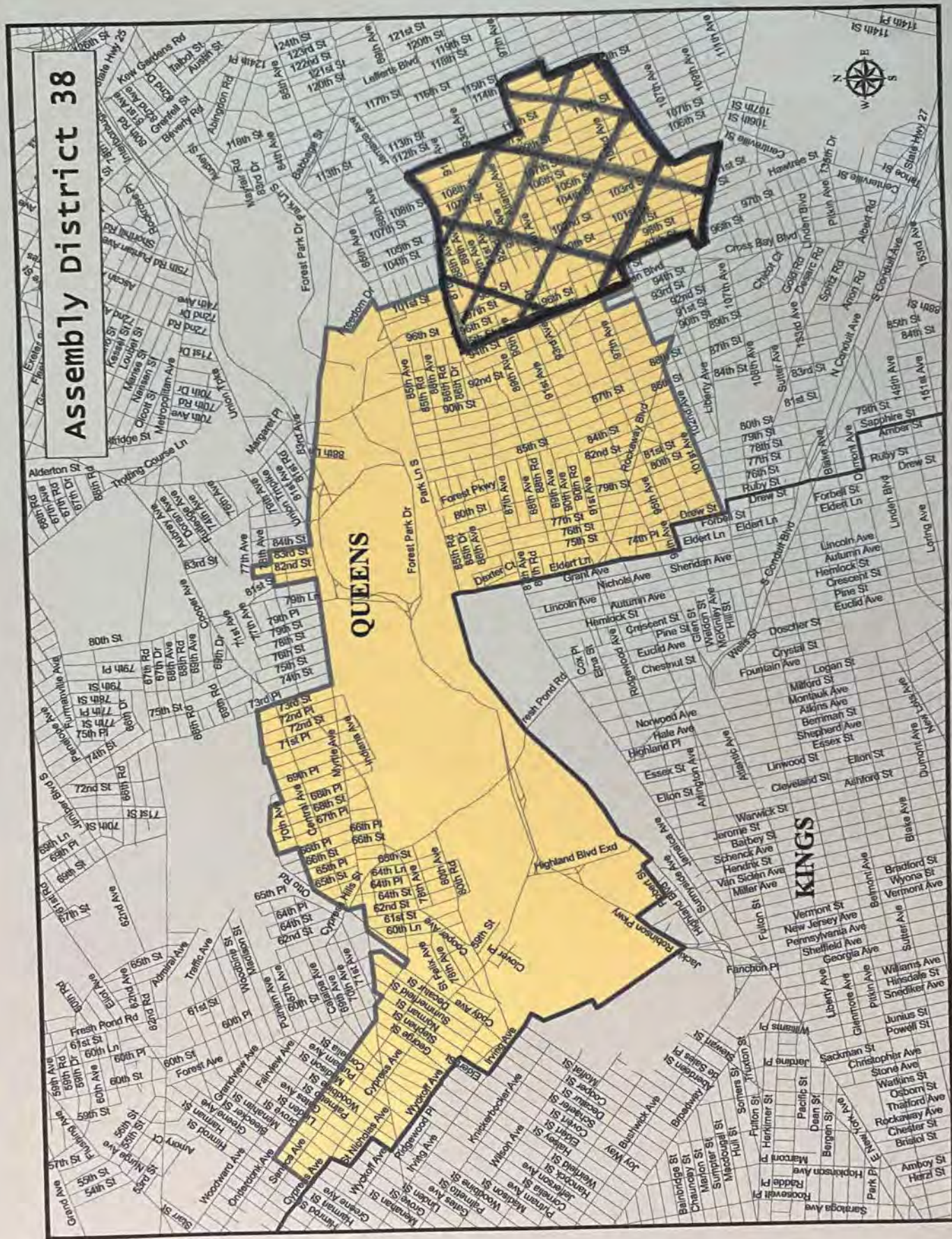
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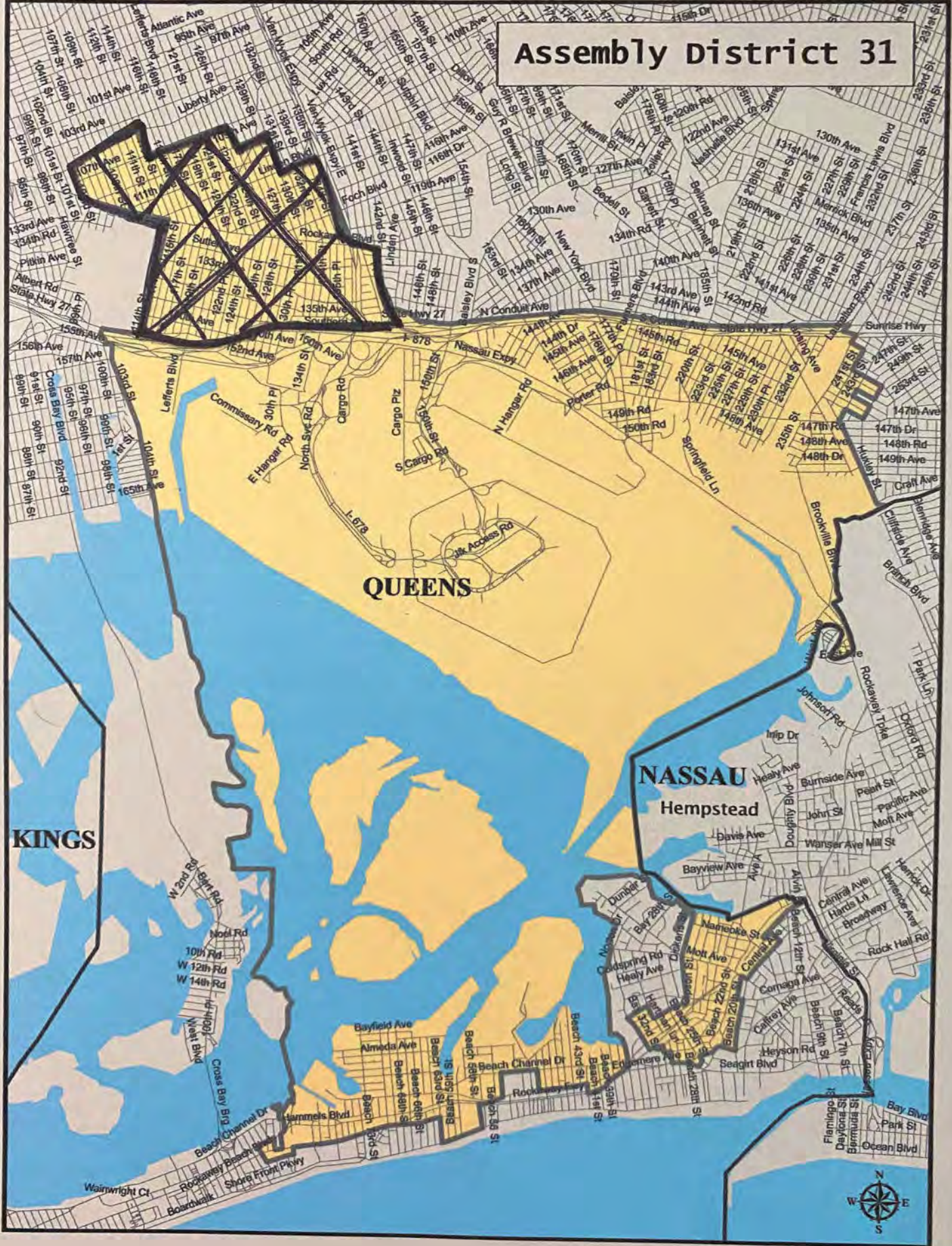
Assembly District 38

QUEENS

KINGS



Assembly District 31



QUEENS

NASSAU
Hempstead

KINGS



Assembly District 23





SAFEST

South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship & Training

TESTIMONY OF:

Mazeda Uddin – Founder and CEO

South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship and Education (SAFEST)

NYS Redistricting Commission Virtual Hearing on July 22nd, 2021

My name is Mazeda Uddin, founder and CEO of South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship, and Training (SAFEST) and a resident of Jamaica Hills, Queens. SAFEST is an organization that provides services according to immigrants' needs. Since 2015, we have delivered a comprehensive array of services to thousands of children, youth, adults and entire families from South Asian countries in Queens.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak about our vibrant South Asian neighborhoods in Jamaica Hills and Briarwood. As the backbone of our thriving Banladeshi community, Hillside Avenue has countless ethic grocery stores, houses of worship, and restaurants. Not only do they provide daily household needs of our newly immigrated families but also satisfy the longing of a taste from home for some. Unlike other neighborhoods, our growing Bangladeshi neighbors live where they shop. Any division of Jamaica Hills and Briarwood would dilute the strength of the community there.

As a SAFEST representative, my team and I have the first-hand understanding of challenges that our communities face on a daily basis. Since the start of COVID19, many of our South Asian students have suffered inequity in education ranging from lack of assistance to device requests to lack of mental health support from schools because their parents speak little or no English. Any division of our community could negatively impact the resources our community desperately needs.

While the 24th Assembly District roughly kept our community intact, the Senate Districts 11 and 14 lines quietly snaked through Hillside Avenue and curved us in a way that simply wouldn't even make sense to a Fifth Grader. I strongly suggest that the Commision smooth out the district lines to keep our community united and adhere to your duties under the Charter of the City of New York to preserve communities of interest.

Thank you,

Mazeda A. Uddin,

Founder and CEO of SAFEST

Minewattie Gayadin Ali

Redistricting Request

Mr. David Imamura

Chair

July 22, 2021

Re: Request for Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, Ozone Park, Hillside Ave, and Van Wyck to be one District

Dear Mr. Imamura,

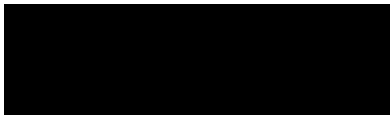
I am writing to request that we the people of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park be given fair representation by redistricting and making our community one. Our community has been carved up into four districts: District 38, District 24, District 31, and District 22, making it impossible for us to have fair representation. We have been living in the Richmond/Ozone Park Community for over forty years and have worked hard in this community to raise first- generation and second- generation scholarly Americans. Our community have been divided into four districts, District 38, District 24, District 31, and District 22 making it impossible for us to have fair representation. We have worked very hard to raise our family and build The Richmond Hill/Ozone Park Community. We lost many community members during the Covid-19 pandemic because so many of our community members were and are essential workers. Yet, we had no representatives bringing special help to our community, or anyone who reflects our community in District Leadership. We have been trying for the past forty years to have representation but it was not made possible and still is not possible because representation is denied by breaking up our community into four districts, District 38, District 24, District 31 and District 22.

I am asking that you end this disparity by redistricting and rectifying this bias by keeping our community, the Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park Community as a whole District so that we can have representation. In Queens Guyanese represent the second largest foreign-born population in the borough. Guyanese are the fifth largest immigrant population in New York City yet we are consistently denied a voice in local government. Guyanese have unique social, economic, and political needs that should be represented and advocated for by a representative chosen by the people.


Thank you for taking the time to read my request, and acting to rectify this bias and injustice. There should be representation with taxation, and we pay our fair share of taxes. It is time for representation which is long overdue. New York City can and should do better.

Sincerely,

Dr. Minewattie Gayadin Ali Ed.D.



**HISPANIC & SOUTH ASIAN ALLIANCE
FOR FAIR REDISTRICTING IN SOUTH QUEENS
124-06 ROCKAWAY BOULEVARD
OZONE PARK, NY 11420**



August 7, 2021

Petition to please unite our communities of interest-Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into one State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness

Most Honorable Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

We are a group that represents the largest numbers of constituents in South Queens, namely Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park. We-Latinos and South Asians alike-live with our families, and side by side in these hitherto indivisible, compact and contiguous neighborhood of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park. This is our home, and our community, built up by our blood, sweat and tears.

This proposed district will keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, with established ties of common interest, ownership and association, grounded in historical, racial, economic, ethnic, religious, and other ties.

We need united, strong voices and responsive leadership to lift our struggling community out of this pandemic. Lack of progress and hope will cripple us, unless you unite us, and let democracy prevail. We have enough constituents to form a State Assembly district, and, at a minimum, this can be the core for a larger State Senate and Congressional district. This cannot be business as usual.

We are the largest group in New York City, and the largest settlement and conglomeration of folks who can trace their ancestry to South Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean and the West Indies. Moreover, as new, first and second generation Americans, we share many common bonds, and are one large family.

Our mission is to keep residents and voters in those communities together in one district, so that we can obtain common solutions to our issues and problems that affect our families on a daily basis. Many of us are essential workers and working families, whose children have served, defended and died for America-proudly. Please stop dividing and fragmenting us.

As you can see from the compact and contiguous maps submitted, we are bordered and defined by natural, geographic boundaries. In prior redistricting attempts, these natural and God-made boundaries have been consciously obliterated and ignored. It behooves you to act accordingly and unite us as a community, and not use us as filler for other communities.

Our elected officials and their staff do not look like us, nor care about us. They do not understand our customs, language or heritage. They treat us as if we are from a different planet. They look down upon us. They are imported from other communities.

Indeed, Assembly member David Weprin, whose political dynasty/family have monopolized and kept their monarchy over a divided Richmond Hill in AD 24 since 1965 in a “switcheroo style typical of colonialists,” has openly rejected his seat at the last redistricting. **Exhibit 1.**

Another, Hon. Jenifer Rajkumar, who represents Glendale, Ridgewood, Forest Park, and Woodhaven, and a small part of our gerrymandered district in AD 38, has openly acknowledged that this area “deserves its own representation.” She has honestly admitted that she is not the answer to this problem. **Exhibit 2.**

Rajkumar only moved into the district to run for office a few months ago, having lived and ran previously for decades in Manhattan, and has acknowledged her unsuitability and obvious limitations to represent these largely immigrant Latino and South Asian communities. Exhibit 3.

We pray that you honor your mandate and duties to draw fair, common districts, and free us from the absurd, egregious gerrymandering that has divided us up unconscionably and unfairly. We have, at present, as shown in maps, districts that resemble dinosaurs and reptiles, not communities of interest being kept together. **See attached diagram. Exhibit 4.**

Look at the present maps re Assembly Districts 23, 24, 27, 32, 31 and 38. Exhibit 3. They have been drawn to dilute and separate us, diminishing our already suppressed voices. They have *ALL* been drawn with an evil purpose in mind-protect these incumbents and suppress and dilute the communities of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park.

Everyone with a conscience call them the apartheid maps. They have been divided to suit the incumbent politicians, special interests and status quo, who do not care about us. The Covid pandemic confirmed this. None of them even brought a single mask, a testing center, nor any other much needed Covid help to our hard hit community-the hardest in NYS. Shame on them, and shame on you if you preserve the status quo.

We could not get any help from any of them to get unemployment compensation, help us with homelessness, rent assistance, food, PEP or any other assistance, even though all of these societal problems increased during the pandemic. We could not even get help to bury our deceased. We were abandoned, and left without hope. That is why we are appealing to you. This desertion and deprivation must not be institutionalized, nor tolerated, by your revered commission any longer.

Districts must comply with state and federal laws and be similarly sized with reasonable, not zigzagging shapes. This commission, which can be an example for other states stifled and divided by partisan gerrymandering, must also consider that we are indivisible and solid “communities of interest.”

Our lives are so intertwined that we share the same heritage, ancestry, religions, places of interest, shopping centers, food markets, play the same sports, work in the same industries, have the same vocations and our children attend the same schools. We also use the same public transportation, and other facilities like libraries, Post Offices etc.

Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park have the largest conglomeration of residents from South Asia that live in the USA-Guyanese, Sikhs, Trinidadians, Surinamese, Bengalis and Punjabi communities. We have been splintered, cruelly and shamelessly into six Assembly districts.

This is evil gerrymandering, and show how it dilutes and exploits communities of interest-apartheid style.

Moreover, none of these Assembly, members have an office in our neighborhood. Nor do live in this area, nor do they ever come here. Most residents do not even know who these so-called representatives or staff members are. They never return our calls for help and assistance. We don't exist, for them.

That is because our splintered neighborhoods make politicians less responsive to constituents' needs as gerrymandering diminishes our ability to influence elections. It is the same old divide and rule policy our great nation fought for in our independence against the British colonialists, now being used against us centuries later!

Look at our districts! They are the obvious end result of dicing, slicing, and gerrymandering. They eviscerate the Voting Rights Acts and the NYS and US Constitutions. The boundaries are disgraceful and shocking. They are an abomination of the redistricting standards/principles that require districts to be compact and contiguous, and preserve "communities of interest," among other guidelines.

We contribute our fair share, to the Federal, State, and City coffers in various forms of taxes, yet we are not known. We energize the economy of the area by revitalizing businesses, the professions and other services. We are small business owners, essential workers, factory workers and laborers, engineers, lawyers, doctors and dentists, academics and teachers, brokers of real estate, insurance and financial services, businessmen and women, writers, poets, artists, and others, filling every niche of activity, and contributing tangibly to the growth and development of our neighborhoods and America.

Indeed, in these communities, there is a uniqueness in dress, dance, music, food, custom, religious routines, and other cultural practices. They convey a unique attribute to this area. One need only walk on Liberty, Atlantic, Jamaica and Rockaway Avenues in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park, yet we are not given justice, hope and due recognition.

These corrupt district lines make community organizing around school funding, health care, social services, among other political, social and workers' causes, impossible. Our political, economic and social rights have been made a mockery of. Enough is enough!

Lack of a voice has caused systemic deprivation and exploitation by government and other entities. Our communities are unfairly targeted by ICE, although we provide the tertiary workers like cooks, bell boys, household workers, cleaners, janitors, security and other personnel whose only "crime" is to secure a better life for their families in this great land of opportunity.

Moreover, whereas basements are legal for other communities, for example in Borough Park, neighboring Howard Beach, and are exempted from Department of Building enforcement sanctions, the Building Inspectors target us here with massive fines, vacate orders and other penalties. They call them "mother and daughter apartments," whereas we are violated and selectively prosecuted for having a prayer room or a recreation room in our attics and basements.

Again, we are singled out for other types of enforcement, environmental and traffic violations. We have the largest daily quota of summonses. Our small businesses are violated at higher rates, compared to other neighborhoods. At one time, a few years ago, we were the only neighborhood targeted for jaywalking.

We are frustrated and deprived. We have been undercounted because some of us did not take part in the Census or speak to census takers due to building inspector harassment and immigration fears of deportation.

You must appreciate what has happened here. As Exhibit 4 compellingly demonstrates, our district was cut up into at least 4-6 different Assembly districts to dilute and oppress us, bypassing natural boundaries, geographic boundaries and common heritage and culture. (Pgs. 1-6). The community of interest is on pg. 7.

Our kids have to travel for hours outside our communities, in fact, counties, to get a decent education, because our schools are failing, with unacceptable graduation rates. We have no specialized High Schools in our area, because our taxes paid unfairly are routed to other neighborhoods to develop those more affluent communities-Kew Gardens, Howard Beach, Jamaica Estates, Glendale etc.

There is poor sanitation and other government services here. Grocery shopping has to be done in another district. Worship is also possible only in another district. If we have a problem, we have to run to several different officials, because they are all located in different areas, although we live just a few blocks away from each other.

Each of these is in a separate Assembly, State senate or Congressional District, resulting in the most complicated, poorest local governance and service delivery we see anywhere in New York City.

Consequently, people do not even bother to get their problems and issues addressed, whether it be educational, medical, government services, or otherwise.

Older people in the neighborhood compare this deprivation and state of affairs to the social, economic, historical and political suppression and situations they escaped from in their home countries, which forced them to seek a better life in the United States.

This was the main reason they left and came here in the first place, only to face the same deprivation, suppression and denial caused by gerrymandering and the separation of our communities of interest of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into different districts.

Minority enrollment is 96% of the student body in both schools, which is higher than the New York state average of 57%. The graduation rates for students at our sole high schools is far below the 84% rates state wide. Richmond Hill High School and John Adams High School, is at 54% and 70% respectively. It is easy for you to understand why our morale is so low, and why we feel deprived as a majority-minority community. These partitions and divisions have caused grave consequences upon us.

The reason for this is based on lack of resources, improvement and attention being paid to our community. Parents resign to a second class standard of education, due to gerrymandering and isolation of our minority community. Hope is a scarce commodity. That is why we suffered the highest infection and death rates during the recent pandemic-systemic suppression. Neglect and disenfranchisement were the root causes.

Most of the students here, and their hardworking families are from Central and South America, Guyana, Bangladesh, Trinidad, India, Suriname, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, and can trace their roots to South Asia and Latin/South America. They live in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and/or South Ozone Park.

In this entire area of over 500,000 residents, there is no community center and/or senior center, after school programs, skills teaching center and/or sports center. The facilities that are supposed to save us, are not enough. We cannot help but feel ostracized in our own community, even with our dealings with law enforcement. Ambulance and law enforcement response times are the slowest in New York City.

Although we have many self-sustaining places to worship, ethnic food stores and many family members here, we have nowhere to go for assistance with homework, academic guidance, counseling, vocational, play sports, or afterschool programs. On weekends, we usually have to leave the neighborhood to find anything useful to do with our time. Our libraries are overcrowded and need expansion. Public transportation can be improved.

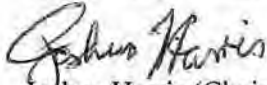
Please help us attain a better life. We should not have to go to 4-7 different Assembly representatives (ADs 23, 24, 31, 38 mainly), 2 different State Senators (SDs 10, 15), or 2 Congressional Representatives to deal with issues like when both of our major high schools were proposed for closure, when we were designated the area with the highest COVID infection rates, when we are unfairly treated by the cops, and/or when we need solutions to our issues and problems like high foreclosures and poor government services.

We need a district where the elected officials will be familiar with our heritage and culture, who are from this neighborhood and who will work with the community on our needs, e.g., improve graduation rates, help with homework, spaces for students to go after school, cooling centers, better police relations, minimizing hate crimes, domestic violence counseling, more sports grounds, and so on.

We strongly urge you to keep these neighborhoods together in a single district for the State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with your mandate, conscience and duties. Don't blame us for voter and census apathy, and higher suicide rates if you fail us.

Thank you for consideration and attention,

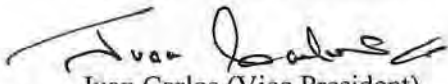
Respectfully submitted,



Joshua Harris (Chairman)



Gregory Adams (President)



Juan Carlos (Vice President)



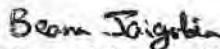
Maria Bueno (Secretary)



Elizabeth McCarthy (Treasurer)



Tara Nath (Membership)



Beann Jaigobin (Organizing Secretary)

EXHIBIT 1

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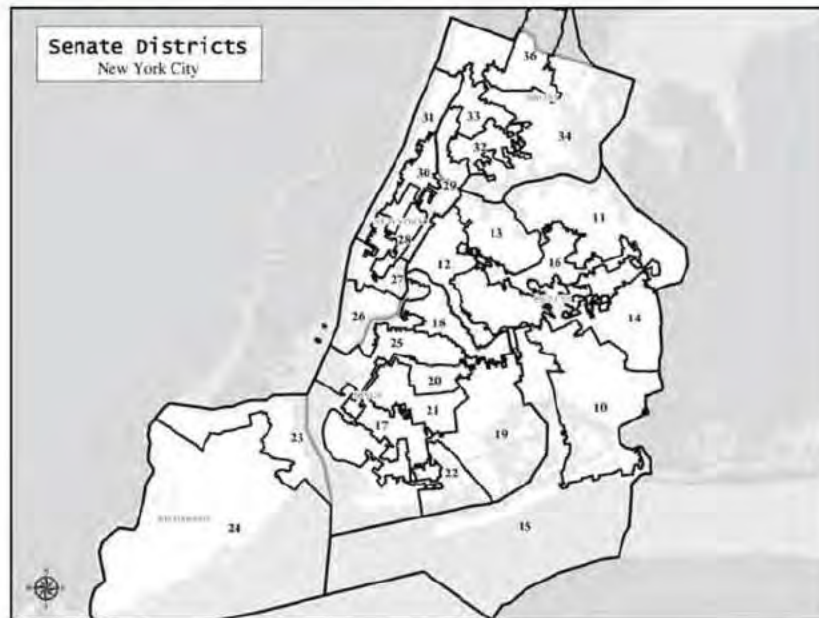
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News

Queens delegation split over redistricting

By Joe Anuta

0 comments Posted on March 22, 2012



Eric W

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By Joe Anufa

The contentious redistricting process that changed political representation in Queens came to a close Monday when a federal judge signed off on the new congressional lines, days after Gov. Andrew Cuomo did the same at the state level.

Queens lawmakers from the state Assembly largely voted to approve the state lines, while those from the state Senate unanimously opposed it.

A panel of judges overseeing the congressional lines approved the plan drawn up by the magistrate judge, Roanne Mann, with little changes.

Reaction to the state and congressional maps was drastically different, with independent groups and elected officials blasting the state lines as gerrymandered to keep Senate Republicans in power,



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while praising the congressional lines drawn by a court-appointed judge as fairly drawn.

“The bad guys won,” said Sen. Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria), who led a call for the process to be taken care of by an independent commission.

Gianaris was part of the group of Queens lawmakers in the Senate who opposed the legislation and even walked out of a late-night discussion of the bill along with Democrats from around the state before it was eventually passed without their support.

Senate Democrats are also suing over a 63rd seat that was created upstate.

Gianaris voted against the state lines, as did all the Queens lawmakers in the Senate, according to records from the state Legislature.

But in the Assembly, it was just the opposite: Nearly every Queens lawmaker voted in favor of the lines, according to the bill.

Some said they voted for the new lines because they were fair, or because of another bill that provided a constitutional amendment to reform the redistricting process next time around in 2022.



leaders celebrate grand opening of Hyatt Regency hotel at Resorts World



State honors Astoria legend Tony Bennett as he closes out memorable career



Queens Supreme Court exonerates man who spent more than 30 years in prison for murder



Queens Tech Council to host first in-person networking event in LIC



Real estate website launches new tool to help protect New York City renters

Cuomo also signed that bill after it passed, which stipulates that an independent commission will be created after the next census in order to take power of redistricting out of the hands of the Legislature in an effort to circumvent gerrymandering.

Cuomo also passed a law that will ensure that the amendment sticks.

But Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas (D-Astoria) said the constitutional amendment is not enough.

Simotas, along with Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Little Neck), were the only two members of the Queens delegation in the Assembly to vote against the lines.

“If the Senate lines weren’t so hyper-political, perhaps I would have reconsidered,” she said, referring particularly to the neighborhood of Astoria, which was split in half in the Senate. “I’m not going to do anything that would damage my community by splitting it in half.”

Even though the Assembly lines were less controversial, Simotas said the Senate lines factored into her decision.



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In addition, Simotas said she signed a pledge pushed by former Mayor Ed Koch to support independent redistricting.

Koch blasted the lawmakers who went back on the pledge, saying in an op-ed earlier this month that “unfortunately (but not surprisingly), many of the same legislators who pledged to support independent redistricting have reneged and are now trying to continue the same practice of gerrymandering — meaning business as usual.”

But several members of the Assembly did not sign the pledge, including Rory Lancman (D-Fresh Meadows), Michael Simanowitz (D-Flushing) and William Scarborough (D-St. Albans).

Cuomo said the amendment would help make the process more transparent in the future.

“This agreement will permanently reform the redistricting process in New York to once and for all end self-interested and partisan gerrymandering,” Cuomo said.

Reach reporter Joe Anuta by e-mail at januta@englocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4566.



The image is a promotional banner for a webinar. At the top, it says "Schenck WEBINARS" in a stylized font. Below that, the text reads "A Chat with Author Susie Petruccelli" in large, bold, red letters. To the right of this text is a small image of the book cover for "Raised a Warrior" by Susie Petruccelli, which shows a young girl in a red dress on a grassy field. Below the book title, it says "TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH AT 12 PM". At the bottom, there is a red button with white text that says "CLICK HERE TO REGISTER" and a red banner below it with white text that says "Sign up now. Space is limited."

EXHIBIT 2



New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar



PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Vjola Isufaj, Chief of Staff
Office of Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar
929-353-5470 isufajv@nyassembly.gov

Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar's Statement on the Public Meeting of Independent Redistricting Commission in Queens County

First South Asian Woman Elected to State Office Urges Commission to Empower South Asian Community in the Redistricting Process

South Queens, NY (July 22, 2021) - As I watched today's Public Meeting of the Independent Redistricting Commission in Queens County, I was heartened that public testimony consistently echoed what I have said since before I became an Assemblywoman: that the South Asian community needs recognition in the redistricting process. Queens is home to a vibrant South Asian community, including Bengalis, Punjabis, Guaynese and other Indo-Caribbeans. However, the South Asian community across Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park has been split among seven Assembly districts.

For too long, South Asian New Yorkers have not had a seat at the table. Until recently they had no one from their community representing them in Albany. Their demographic categories are not included in most data. Their religious holidays are not recognized the same as others. However, if they are united in their own Assembly district, they can have representation that responds to and advocates for their needs.

A major factor in redistricting is to keep together "communities of interest," areas where people have the same demographics and utilize the same institutions. And as the first South Asian woman elected to New York State Office, I recognize that the South Asian community of Queens unquestionably meets these criteria. That is why I urge the Independent Redistricting Commission to listen to the people who spoke today and create common-sense district lines that give South Asian New Yorkers the political voice they deserve.

EXHIBIT 3

NEW YORK STATE



What Lies Ahead For Kathy Hochul If She Becomes Governor?

POWER LIST



The 2021 Brooklyn Power 100

EDITOR'S NOTE



Editor's Note: De Blasio's Free Vaccine Money A Hit While Cuomo Is Down

NEW YORK STATE



Why Cuomo Will Resign ... And Why He Won't








The carpetbaggers in the 2020 primaries

A handful of New York candidates moved into their districts only recently.



Assembly District 38 candidate Jenifer Rajkumar. SULTAN KHAN

By REBECCA C. LEWIS | MAY 22, 2020

Moving to a new area to run for office is a long tradition in American politics, dating at least as far back as the Reconstruction era, when the term “carpetbagger” was coined. The practice certainly hasn’t faded away in New York. For example, over the course of several recent election cycles, political activist Sean Eldridge, Fordham Law professor Zephyr Teachout and attorney Antonio Delgado all moved to the same Hudson Valley district to run for Congress – and only Delgado succeeded. The 2020 elections have a crop of carpetbaggers too.

Michelle Caruso-Cabrera

This challenger to Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez likes to tell people that AOC grew up in Westchester County, not the Bronx. But until late 2019 Michelle Caruso-Cabrera had never lived in Queens or the Bronx, the two counties in the district. Originally from New Hampshire, Caruso-Cabrera lived in Manhattan for 20 years before transplanting to Sunnyside, Queens, shortly before announcing her candidacy. She’s also seeking to run as a Democrat despite being a former Republican.

EVELYN FARKAS

“Carpetbagger” is perhaps too strong a word to describe Evelyn Farkas. While she only recently moved into the district she hopes to represent in Congress, it was a move back to the area where she grew up. Farkas was born and raised in Chappaqua, a Westchester County suburb represented by the retiring Rep. Nita Lowey, whom Farkas wants to replace. But Farkas hasn’t lived there for years and returned home only in 2019, not long before announcing her congressional

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ambitions. A campaign spokesperson added, however, that while Farkas' primary residence had been in Washington, D.C., she often spent time in Westchester to visit her family.

ADAM SCHLEIFER

Like his opponent Farkas, Adam Schleifer is a [Chappaqua native](#) – his dad is the founder of a Westchester-based biotech company. Schleifer most recently lived in California for several years before returning home late in 2019. Last year, he helped prosecute actress Felicity Huffman in a [college admissions scandal](#) that also involved Lori Loughlin. But he's back in Westchester now, looking to succeed Lowey in representing the district he grew up in.

PAPERBOY LOVE PRINCE

The rapper and subway performer turned congressional candidate Paperboy Prince, who uses they/them pronouns, says their family has long lived in Brooklyn and told City & State, "[my spirit, my energy, my legacy has always been in Brooklyn.](#)" However, the long-shot contender grew up near Washington, D.C., and only moved to New York 2014. And when Prince first announced their candidacy, their listed address was in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which is near, but not in, the 7th Congressional District. Prince told City & State that the address was only used to receive mail. Another address listed more recently with the New York City Board of Elections puts Prince in Bushwick, which is in the district.

JENIFER RAJKUMAR

Jenifer Rajkumar first ran for office in 2016, attempting to win the empty Manhattan Assembly seat vacated by ex-Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver thanks to a corruption scandal. She lost the Democratic primary to Yuh-Line Niou, who went on to win the seat. Four years later, Rajkumar now lives in [Woodhaven, Queens](#), and is running against Assemblyman Michael Miller. Her [campaign website](#) notes that her immigrant parents settled in Queens when they came to the U.S.

RITCHIE TORRES

This is another borderline case, but when Ritchie Torres filed to run for Congress last year to replace the retiring Rep. José E. Serrano in the Bronx, the address he provided was just outside the district. However, Torres has represented a portion of the 15th Congressional District as a city councilman and has lived in the Bronx his entire life. He also told City & State that he moved to a new home within the district last year, and the new address he provided matches the address he provided the New York City Board of Elections. [c](#)

Update: This story has been updated to include Adam Schleifer. It has also been updated with comments from Evelyn Farkas' campaign.

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NEXT STORY: [Independent pharmacies need COVID-19 testing support](#)



Independent pharmacies need COVID-19 testing support

Unlike CVS and Walgreens, the state's smaller pharmacies may struggle to begin administering coronavirus tests.



Dichter Pharmacy in Inwood #EK-AND-INW/SHUTTERSTOCK

By AMANDA LUZ HENNING SANTIAGO | MAY 21, 2020

About a month after Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order allowing pharmacies across the state to administer COVID-19 tests, the state's independent pharmacies are unprepared to begin testing for the virus.

Some pharmacists were not even aware that they were supposed to begin administering coronavirus tests until they heard the governor discussing the order on the news. "I don't know if we're even going to be doing the testing or not," a pharmacist at the VIP Pharmacy Corp. in Queens, told *The City*. "There's just way too much lack of information at the moment for us to go ahead and go through with it."

The governor signed the executive order on April 25 to be able to utilize more than 5,000 pharmacies to increase the state's testing capability, which is key to reopening the state. However, *The City* reported that numerous independent pharmacies had not been given any support from the state that would prepare them to begin COVID-19 testing, such as access to tests or training to learn how to administer them.

Unlike chain pharmacies, such as CVS and Walgreens, most independent pharmacies do not typically have registered nurses on staff. This has left many wondering if they'll be able to administer COVID-19 tests themselves or if they'll need to hire additional help. Some pharmacists have also begun calling on the state for training to learn how to administer the COVID-19 test, which would enable them to begin testing. "The first thing we need is the training that was mentioned in the executive order from the Department of Health," Steve Moore, president of the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York, told *The City*. "We need to understand what that means and what they're looking for. And the other thing that we will probably need help with is access to the tests."


But many independent pharmacies do not have the same cash flow as bigger chains, which means they might not be able to order COVID-19 tests in bulk, which can cost anywhere from \$25 to \$100 per test. A large number of pharmacies have also lost a significant amount of money due to the coronavirus crisis, which would make having enough money to procure the tests even more difficult. There's also confusion over which COVID-19 tests pharmacies should be purchasing, aside from who will be responsible with purchasing them.

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Moore told [The City](#) that the state should obtain the tests and be in charge of distributing them to independent pharmacies, as it has done with vaccines. He added: “That model does exist, and that would be the fastest and easiest way to get started.” 

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NEXT STORY: [Where are the ex-IDC members now?](#)



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Jenifer Rajkumar Champions Fascists, not Communities #RejectJenifer



QueensAgainstHinduFascism Feb 25, 2020 · 5 min read

REJECT JENIFER

Jenifer Rajkumar Champions Fascists, not Communities

Who are We?

Queens Against Hindu Fascism is a collective of progressive South Asian activists, organizers and citizens concerned with the rise of right-wing Hindu nationalism in American politics. We are especially concerned with the creep of Hindu Fascism in New York City and Queens, the most diverse county in the country. Our goal is to hold public officials, political candidates, and institutions accountable for supporting policies which target Indian religious minorities and caste-oppressed people both in America and abroad.

Why Reject Rajkumar?



Jenifer Rajkumar
@JeniferRajkumar

A great day for the Indian diaspora, as Madison Square Garden and 20,000+ fans welcomed new Prime Minister Narendra Modi. [#ModiInAmerica](#)

6:14 PM · Sep 28, 2014 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

<https://twitter.com/JeniferRajkumar/status/516350313058803713>

Jenifer Rajkumar, a candidate for NY Assembly District 38, has received nearly \$20,000 in donations in the past year from wealthy Hindu Nationalists from outside of the district and across the country. Jenifer has also openly supported and welcomed Prime Minister Modi to NYC. This is in contrast to the progressive values Rajkumar claims to support. Jenifer claims she is bringing back honor to politics and restoring sacredness to public service. However, her record on issues related to South Asian religious and caste minorities reveals a disturbing history of influence from dangerous right wing Hindu Fascists. We must hold our leaders accountable when they claim to promote a progressive agenda here and enable fascism abroad.

Rajkumar Openly Receives Support from Hindu Fascists:

(Donations received between January 1, 2019 — January 31, 2020)

- Received \$10,400 from Dinesh Paliwal, the wealthy CEO of Harman International, and family. Paliwal has publicly supported Modi and criticized protests against CAA. He is on the Global Board of Directors for the U.S India Business Council which commended Modi's re-election in May, 2019. He is also on the Board of Directors of Raytheon, one of the largest U.S. military defense contractors.
- Received \$2500 from Vijay Goradia, the billionaire CEO of Vinmar International. In 2019, Goradia welcomed Modi in a video on Twitter for Howdy Modi saying, “on behalf of all Houstonian but especially the large indian diaspora here, I extend you a warm welcome, Mr. Prime Minister.” He also said that “...as a member of Advisory

Council for the Ministry of Petroleum under Dharmendra Pradhan, I can vouch for this growing relationship between India and Houston.” Dharmendra Pradhan is a controversial BJP leader and currently the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Minister of Steel in the Second Modi Ministry. Goradia also participated in a business leader roundtable with Modi in Houston.

- Received \$4000 from Kamla Gupta and Rajiv L. Gupta, Chairman of Delphi Automotive. Kamla and Rajiv run the Ujula Foundation which has donated to Ekal Vidyalaya, an organization that creates schools in villages to spread RSS ideology.
- Received \$1000 from Raj Bhayani, a Brooklyn based neurosurgeon. Bhayani is on the Core Committee of ModiforPM.org, has been honored by BJP America and played a key role in bringing Modi to Madison Square Garden in 2014. In June 2019, he also hosted a fundraiser for Tulsi Gabbard, a well know champion of Hindu Fascism. Bhayani also agreed to pay the United States \$1,109,000 to resolve civil allegations that he and his practice paid kickbacks and submitted false claims to federal healthcare programs for services provided to residents in adult homes in violation of the False Claims Act.

What is Hindu Fascism?

Hindu fascism, also known as Hindutva or Hindu nationalism, is a right-wing political ideology that guides the current ruling party in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a majoritarian political ideology and far-right ethnonationalist movement. Hindu nationalist groups in India like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) were inspired by Nazi Germany and Mussolini's fascists in Italy. Hindu fascism's aim is to concentrate power, land, and resources in the hands of the oppressor castes and to make India a Hindu ethnostate. Watch more [here](#) and read more [here](#).

Why Oppose Hindu Fascism?

Hindu fascist organizations combine their cultural and political power with violence to oppress minorities, quash dissent and subvert Indian democracy. Their leaders have openly called for violence against Muslims and Christian minorities. Since their spread and rise to power, South Asia has seen an alarming rise of anti-Muslim violence, lynchings, rapes, and other acts of intimidation against religious minorities and caste-

oppressed people. Hindu nationalism would not be possible without the cultural and financial support of the United States diaspora, so it's imperative to challenge candidates like Rajkumar, who platform Hindu nationalists. Among Hindu nationalists' many recent actions, the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is especially egregious. The CAA works in conjunction with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR) to create an anti-Muslim, anti-minority, religious litmus test for citizenship in India and sets the legal foundation for the largest network of concentration camps in the world. Hindu nationalists have no place in American politics and stand for values antithetical to the progressive values of the broader South Asian-American community. This is why we are demanding that Jenifer Rajkumar come clean and disavow his Hindu nationalist ties.

What does Hindu fascism have to do with the United States?

A network of Hindu fascist inspired organizations, collectively called the Sangh Parivar, has established national and local organizations throughout the U.S., including the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), Sewa International, and Ekal Vidyalaya. They spread Hindu fascist propaganda through seemingly innocent methods like government briefings, cultural events, charity work and youth religious camps. President Trump and other Congressional leaders, were in attendance at the 2019 Howdy Modi event. Trump and Modi held hands and made speeches promising to uplift each other's agendas. The Indian government's actions resemble Trump's actions, such as the Muslim ban and the African country ban, building detention centers for asylum seekers, placing severe limits on refugee populations, and other xenophobic, anti-immigrant policies.

What are we asking progressive South Asians to do?

1. Challenge Rajkumar on her ties to Hindu fascism via telephone, email, and social media;
2. Ensure Rajkumar does not get elected; Only support candidates who have publicly disavowed Hindu Fascism.
3. Encourage your friends, family, and other community members to stop funding Rajkumar and other individuals with ties to Hindu fascism;
4. Spread the message that supporting Hindu fascism is supporting genocide.

Contact us:

- Email us at queensagainsthindufascism@gmail.com
- Follow us on Twitter @ NoHindutvaNYC




UPDATE (March 3, 2020): Jenifer responds to our calls by saying she is “proud of everyone who supports me.” See video:



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Candidates for 1st City Council District

PRIMARY ELECTION **VOTER GUIDE** 2013

DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY



Margaret S. Chin



Jenifer Rajkumar

* If there is an asterisk next to a candidate's name, s/he did not submit a profile or record a video.



Jenifer Rajkumar

Democratic



Party Enrolled In: Democratic

Current Occupation: Civil Rights Lawyer at Sanford Heisler LLP

Previous Occupation(s): National Women's Law Center, Law Fellow

Education: Stanford Law School (with pro bono distinction), University of Pennsylvania (magna cum laude, phi beta kappa)

Organizational Affiliations: WIN (Young Woman of Achievement Award Winner 2012), City & State Rising Stars (Named a 2012 "Rising Star"), Women's Campaign Fund (National Board of Directors Emeritus), Downtown Independent Democrats, Battery Park City Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Save Our Seaport, CAAN 2031, SoHo Alliance, Friends of Petrosino Square, Village Independent Democrats, Village Reform Democrats.

Prior Public Experience: Democratic District Leader, 65th Assembly District

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1. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN COUNCIL DISTRICT 01 YOU WOULD ADDRESS IF ELECTED?

The need for a **strong, active council member** who will fight for working families in all the many diverse neighborhoods across Lower Manhattan. We need a council member who champions **participatory democracy**, and who tackles Lower Manhattan's issues with a **collaborative approach**.

2. WHAT OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES WOULD YOU ADDRESS IF ELECTED?

I will **prepare Lower Manhattan for future hurricanes** in our Sandy affected district. I will work to **build more schools** so that all children can attend quality schools near where they live. I will continue to be a **strong advocate against Stop, Question, and Frisk**, against the **NYU 2031 expansion plan**, and against any BID plan which places the interests of outside business ahead of residents. I will also fight to make **safe, affordable housing** a reality for all New Yorkers downtown.

3. WHAT MAKES YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS OFFICE?

I have been a courageous voice for the disenfranchised my entire career, and I will continue to be a courageous voice for our community in City Council. As a **civil rights lawyer** from a national law firm, I have the **tough negotiating skills** needed to fight for Lower Manhattan in City Hall. As a **local district leader**, I have built the community relationships needed to effectively deliver results for our community in the City Council.

Reprinted as supplied by the candidate. Participating in the NYC Campaign Finance Program.

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New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar



PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Vjola Isufaj, Chief of Staff
Office of Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar
929-353-5470 isufajv@nyassembly.gov

Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar's Statement on the Public Meeting of Independent Redistricting Commission in Queens County

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EXHIBIT 4

**Unite RICHMOND HILL
OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK**

Communities of Interest

AD 38
RICHMOND HILL

AD 24
SOUTH RICHMOND HILL

AD 31
SOUTH OZONE PARK

AD 23
AQUEDUCT RESORTS WORLD

FAIR REDISTRICTING!

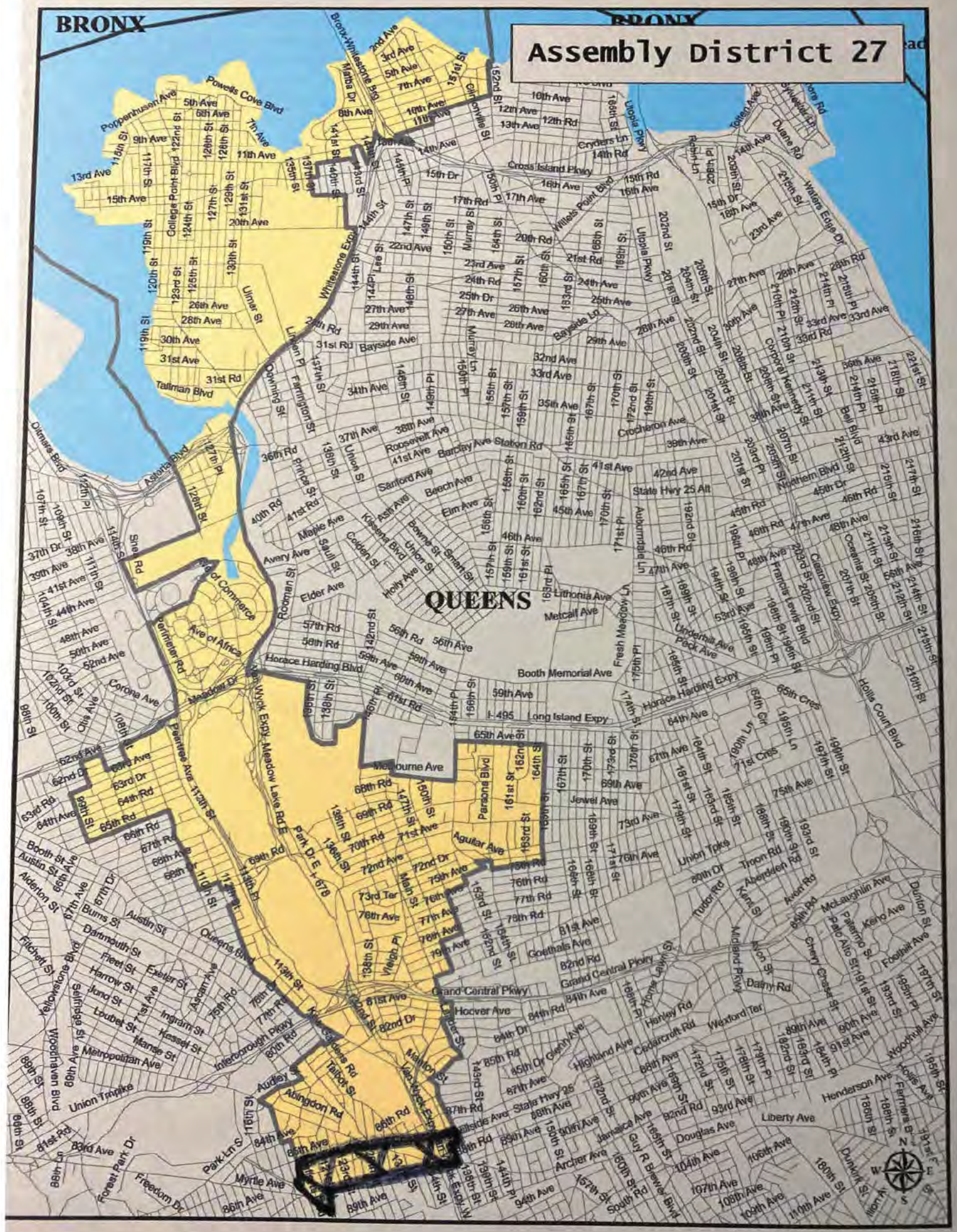
The map displays four distinct redistricting areas, each outlined in black and collectively enclosed by a thick red border. The areas are: AD 38 (pink) in the northwest, AD 24 (yellow) in the northeast, AD 31 (green) in the southeast, and AD 23 (blue) in the southwest. Major roads like Woodhaven Blvd, Atlantic Ave, and Van Wyck Expy are visible. Landmarks such as Forest Park and Aqueduct are also marked.

BRONX

BRONX

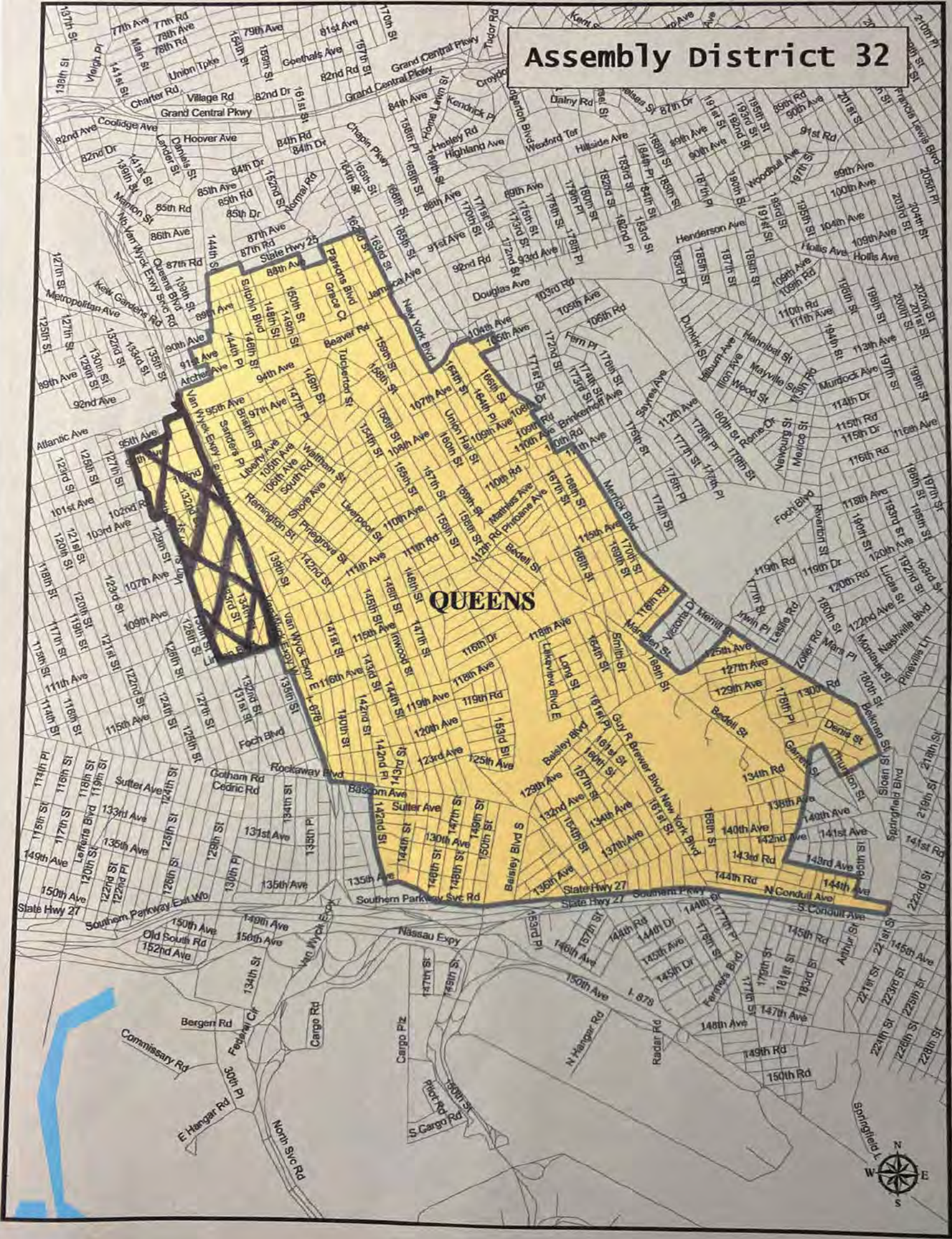
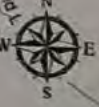
Assembly District 27

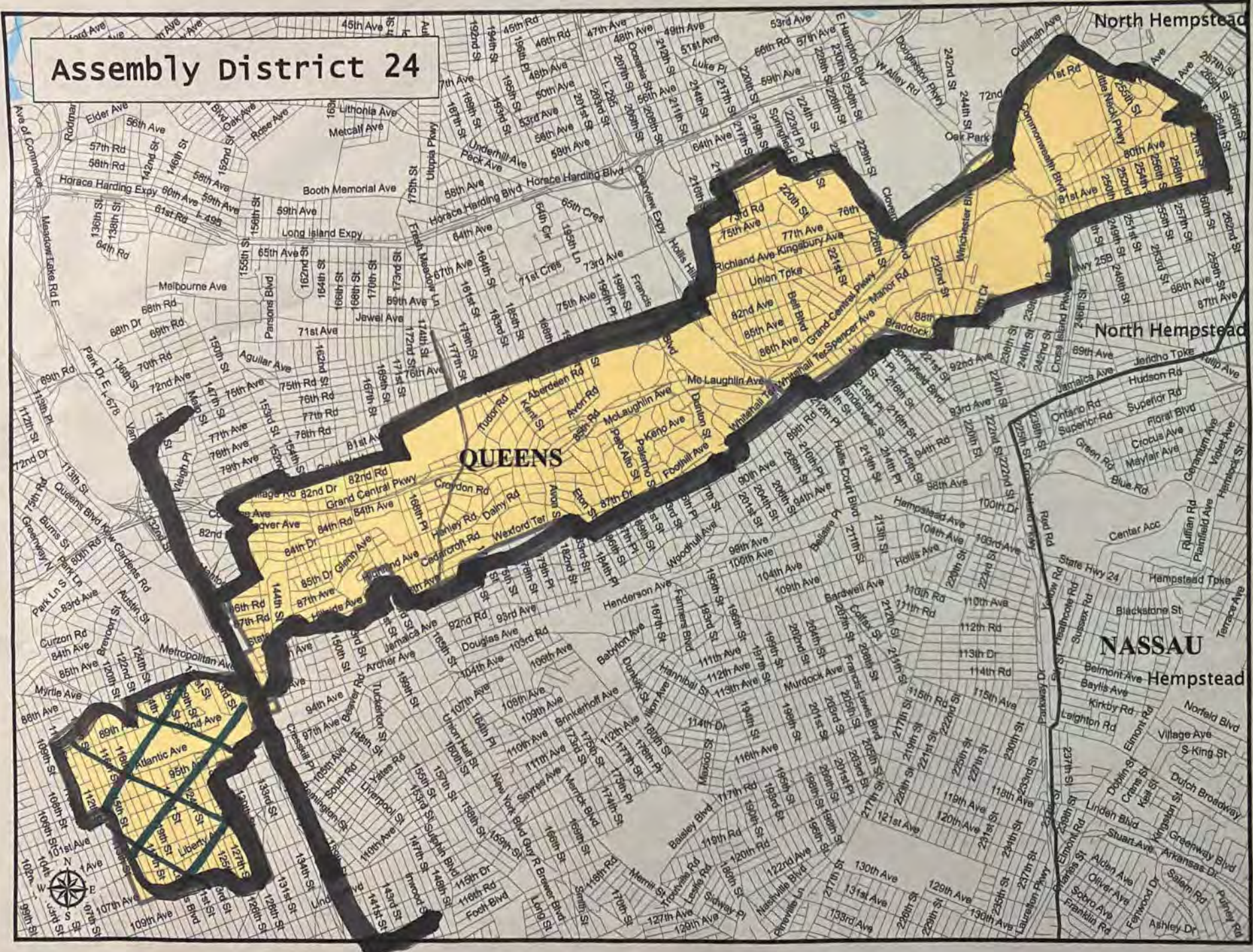
QUEENS



Assembly District 32

QUEENS





Assembly District 24

QUEENS

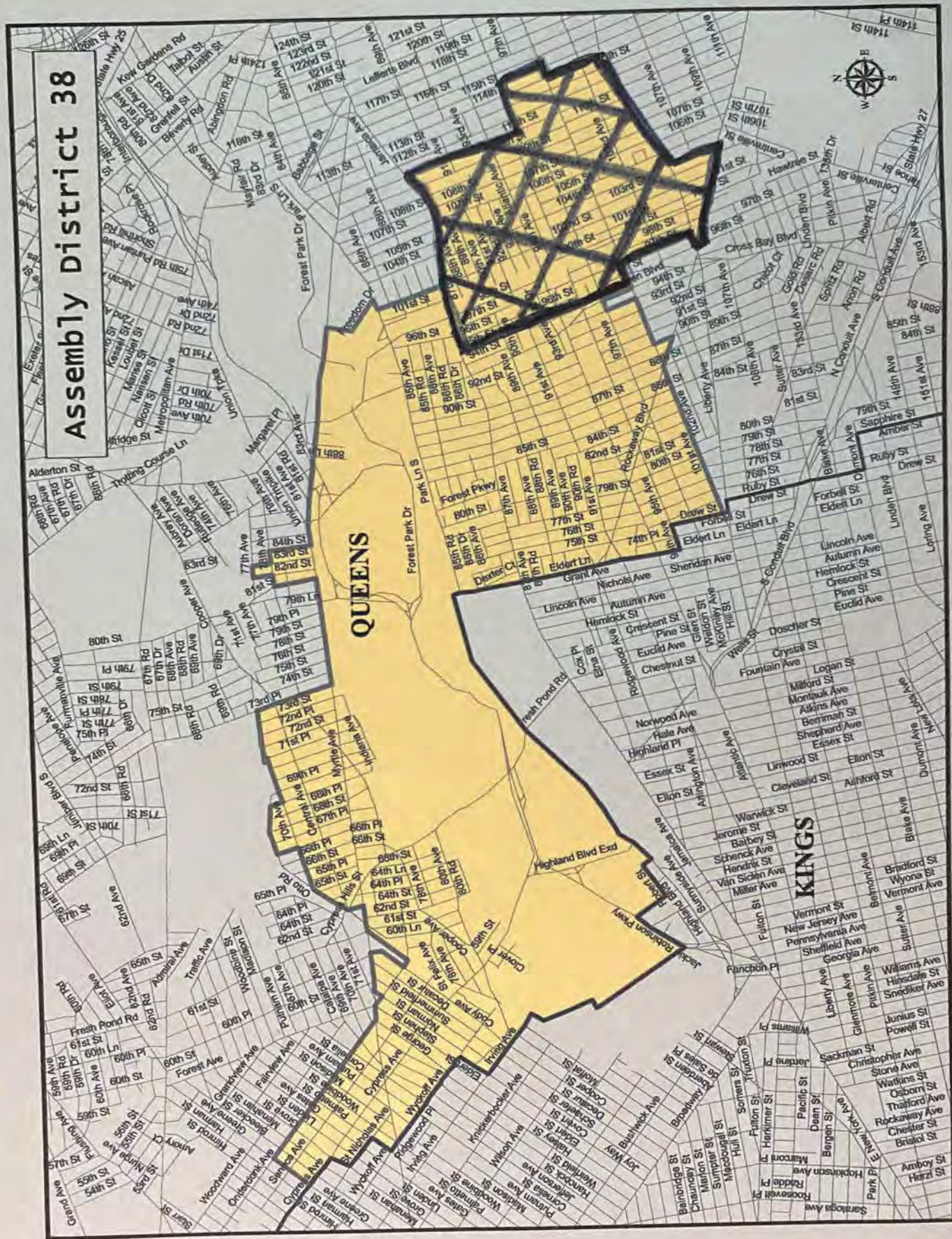
NASSAU

Hempstead

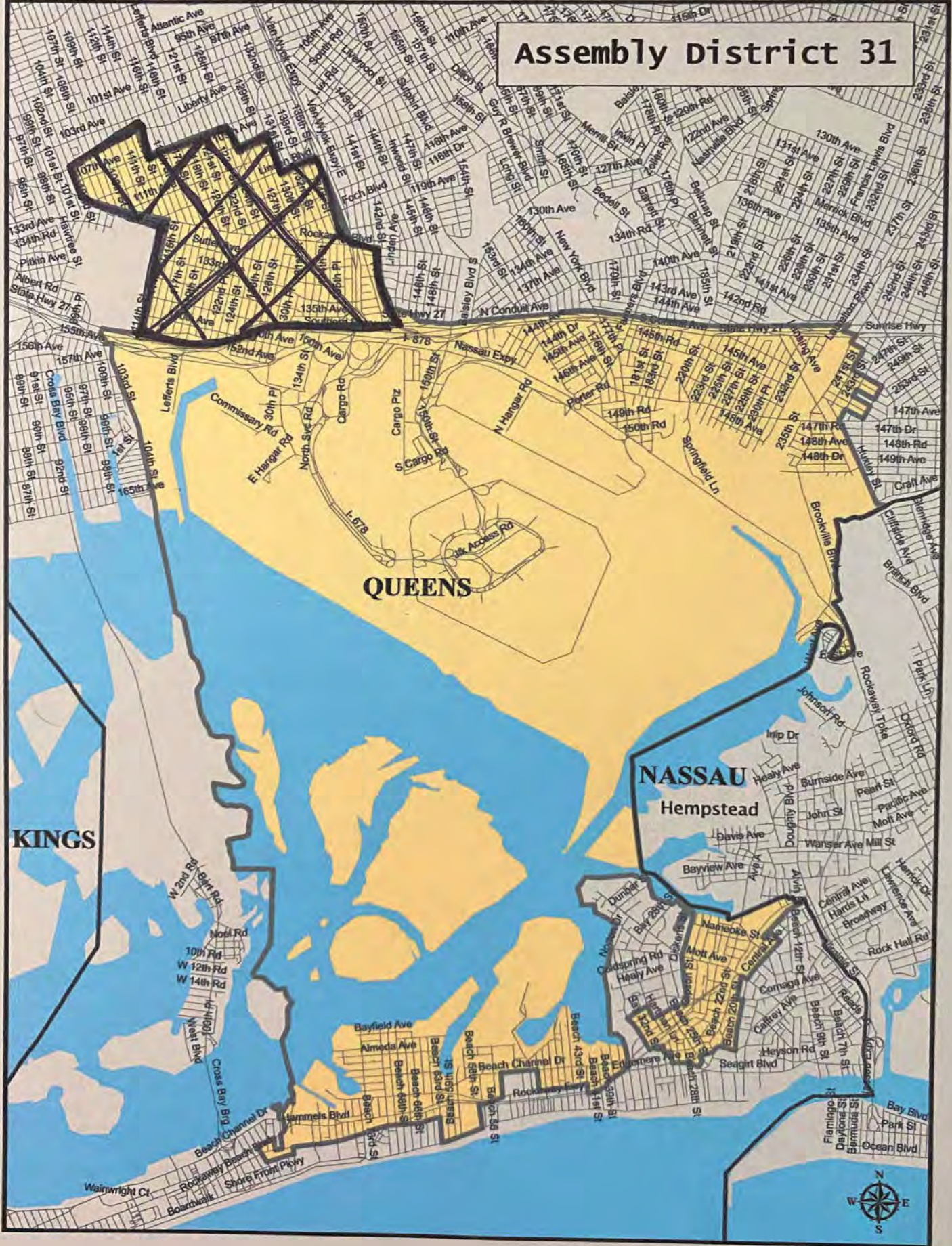
Assembly District 38

QUEENS

KINGS



Assembly District 31



KINGS

QUEENS

**NASSAU
Hempstead**



Assembly District 23



**Statement by James Hong to the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission
July 22, 2021**

Intro

Hello Commissioners, thank you for your service and the opportunity to comment. My name is James Hong. Northeast Queens has been my home and the focus of my advocacy for over a decade. In the past I was the spokesperson for ACCORD, a coalition of Asian American groups from the 2010 cycle, many of whom are here today. At that time I worked in Flushing, leading civic engagement of Asian Americans and immigrants citywide, while living in Woodside, Queens. Today, I come to you as a resident of Flushing, a citizen, and a voter who deeply believes in the importance of the task of this commission.

Assembly

I will start with the Assembly level, with the most problematic district in NE Queens, and that is District 27. This is simply an indefensible district. AD27 is a tortured sausage, and it's a mystery how it was made. It spans THREE different school districts, FIVE community board districts, and FOUR city council districts. AD27 runs from the Whitestone Bridge (i.e. the Bronx) down to Richmond Hill. On the way, it goes through Beechurst, Malba, College Point, Willets Point, Flushing, Kew Gardens Hills, Kew Gardens, and Forest Hills. There is no community of interest between these very disparate neighborhoods, each with different income levels, ethnic groups, transportation lines, and obviously, needs from state government.

Either in whole or in part, College Point, which I live right next to, should be joined with either the closest parts of AD26, AD40, or even AD35 (Corona). The rest of the district southward should be incorporated into the districts along the Van Wyck Expressway. And that highway should be a firm boundary between districts from Flushing down to JFK.

AD40, my home district, should be largely maintained, given it is a majority-minority Asian district, probably the most compact of *all* Assembly districts, and it elects one of New York's few Asian Americans to Albany.

AD25, to the south, was created as a new majority Asian district in the last round, but among its various issues, it divides Bayside and reaches into Douglaston.

Senate

In the state senate - District 16, the state's only majority Asian district, and SD11, which elects the state's only Asian American senator, must be carefully considered once census data are released. But one thing is clear at this point: the current senate boundaries egregiously divide vibrant Asian American communities along Hillside Avenue and along 8th Ave in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

Congress

I will end with the two Congressional districts in which I have resided. While New York must reduce its delegation by one, District 6 and District 14, both are excellent districts which keep

James Hong

together large swaths of similar neighborhoods and communities of interest. They both have elected women of color who are leaders and popular in their districts. The courts really listened to the people and selfless actors in the last round. These boundaries should be maintained as much as possible.

Thank you.



Jennifer Silverman- Sunnyside Community Services

Testimony for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

July 22, 2021

Thank you to the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) for organizing this series of public hearings on the upcoming redistricting cycle.

My name is Jennifer Silverman, and I am the co-chair of the Advocacy Leadership Team at Sunnyside Community Services. Each year we serve over 16,000 people of all ages in western Queens and across the city with a continuum of programs including pre-kindergarten classes, afterschool programs, college access and job preparation for teens, English for Speakers of other Languages and immigration assistance, job training for adults, and a range of senior services both onsite and in people's homes.

Sunnyside Community Services is a member of the Mapping Our Future coalition. Mapping Our Future is a statewide coalition of advocates dedicated to mobilizing the grassroots to get involved in redistricting and advocate for a fair process and fair maps.

We believe that fair districts are the foundation for fair representation, and a good redistricting process can make sure that happens. Our organizational vision is for diverse, inclusive, and caring communities where all people thrive and reach their fullest potential, and fair representation supports this.

The neighborhoods we serve in western Queens include Sunnyside, Long Island City, Elmhurst, Corona, Woodside, and Jackson Heights. These are some of the most diverse communities in the country. Census data show that in multiple communities, more than 50% of our neighbors are immigrants. We ask that redistricting honor this as a community of concern during the drawing process. Also, many of the existing districts in western Queens are split within the same neighborhood, which can dilute how a community is represented. For example, Woodside has five different state

assembly districts (30, 34, 36, 37 and 39), four state senate districts (12, 13, 15, and 16), and two congressional districts.

A good redistricting process can remedy that. Well-drawn districts that keep communities like these together can protect New York's immigrants and communities of color, allow challengers to have a fair shot at winning elections, and energize civic engagement.

These public hearings are a promising start. I urge the IRC to consider the entire redistricting process to be a public one. At a minimum, please include multilingual community education events, regular updates, and open meetings, with outreach to hard-to-reach communities so that they can also have a voice in this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. We look forward to seeing what the IRC maps look like.



TAKING OUR SEAT

The South Asian Voice in Redistricting

Testimony of John P. Albert
Taking Our Seat

Before the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Thursday 22, 2021

My name is John Albert with Taking Our Seat, we are a South Asian, Queens-based demographic data collection and advocacy organization focused on informing the redistricting process. This is Taking Our Seat's second redistricting cycle and personally, my third. We are proud to be members of the APA Voice Redistricting Task Force.

I want to speak to you about a part of Queens that we call the Hillside Ave corridor. This area now encompasses the Eastern portion of the 24th Assembly district, the seat held by David Weprin and on the Senate side, Districts 11 and 14, currently held by Senators Liu and Comrie.

Going East to west, the neighborhoods are Bellrose, Floral Park, Glen Oaks, Queens Village, Hollis Hills, Jamaica, Jamaica Hills and Briarwood, ending at the Van Wyck Expressway. The common spine of these neighborhoods is Hillside Ave, all the way from the border with Nassau County to the Van Wyck Expressway.

What ties these neighborhoods together is not just a road, but the people. People who have their origins in Asia. In the 70s, the part of this area closest to Nassau county saw an influx of medical professionals from India since its home to LIJ hospital. Since then, the corridor has also seen, first, Filipino immigrants in the 80s and most recently in the 2010s, Bangladeshis. Since the last redistricting cycle, the area has only seen an increase in the number of Asian American immigrants from these countries making these neighborhoods some of the most diverse in Queens.

District 24's Asian population, east and west of the Van Wyck Expressway, is large enough to be the nucleus of at least two Assembly districts each with their own geographic locus. The eastern end is split among three districts, 24, 26 and 33. In the East, we ask that District 24 be extended to



the Nassau border and, in the West, we ask that you do not extend the Assembly district beyond the Van Wyck.

If you look at the Senate district that covers the area the lines are egregious. The way the Senate districts 14 and 11 twists and turns around Briarwood and Jamaica Hills makes it impossible for residents to know, block from block, who represents them. This needs to be fixed.

The redistricting commission can help correct this long-standing dilution of the community's power. The neighborhoods of Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park have sufficient population and a common community identity rooted in the Indo Caribbean immigrant experience to draw Assembly and Senate districts. Those neighborhoods should be kept together and whole. The neighborhoods East of the Van Wyck that traverse both sides of Hillside Avenue have their own identity. They are distinct and can be kept whole.

###

Mark Laytin

Comment has been submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Wed 7/28/2021 6:34 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

As a community leader, it is essential that districts maintain their unique character. Therefore county lines must be respected, without Queens crossing into Nassau, or vice versa. Mark Laytin, New Hyde Park

User: Mark Laytin

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Mazeda Uddin

Comment has been submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Thu 7/22/2021 3:04 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

QUEENS IS MORE DIVERSE BOROUGH. I WAS THE ADVOCATED BENGALI Translted Ballot in queens 60 polling centers. since 2010 shows Bengali population is rising.

User: Mazeda Uddin ([REDACTED]

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New York Independent Redistricting Commission Testimony
Miriam Bensman, July 22, 2021

Good morning! My name is Miriam Bensman

Twenty-one years ago, my husband and I bought the house in Richmond Hill where we have raised our three kids. I am also a member of the Central Queens Redistricting Coalition, a non-partisan, neighborhood-based effort to provide fair representation to the diverse center of Queens.

My little neighborhood runs north from Jamaica Avenue between Lefferts Avenue and Park Lane South. It's where Richmond Hill turns into Kew Gardens. This fact became clearer to me last year when I worked as a census enumerator. The housing stock is similar in Richmond Hill and Kew Gardens, but my little neighborhood and Kew Gardens have more trees.

I have neighbors in their 60s who were born in the houses they live in now. Mostly middle and working class Irish, Italians and Poles, they attend nearby Catholic churches. There's also a growing number of Indo Guyanese families, as in Richmond Hill to the south, and an increasing number of large, Orthodox Jewish families, as in Kew Gardens to the north. There's a sprinkling of Hispanic and black families, too. My next door neighbors are Russian.

We mind our own business and get along. On Halloween, many of my neighbors sit on their front porches to hand out candy to kids from near and far who have heard how welcoming they are.

I recognize that districts must have boundaries, and that not all boundaries can be rivers, parks and highways. But really! I'm in Council District 32; the postman across the street lives in District 29. The representatives of both districts ignore us both. For 20 years, we've asked for stop signs, to prevent the frequent accidents at our corner. Our pleas have fallen on deaf ears; cars keep crashing there.

Miriam Bensman

I'm on the edge of my other districts, too. I'm in Senate District 10, which stretches from one block north of me, to Rockaway Beach, 9 miles away. The district isn't compact, contiguous nor a community of interest. It must be redrawn. I'm on the southern edge of Congressional District 6 and Assembly District 28, too.

My recommendations: Since our little neighborhood is in Community Board 9 and the kids attend District 27 schools, it should probably have the same City Councilmember as the rest of Richmond Hill. All of it should--don't carve us up.

But many of us shop and go to the movies in Kew Gardens and Forest Hills. Many of us belong to churches, synagogues, scout troops and clubs in those neighborhoods, too. We probably belong in the same Assembly, Senate and Congressional district as those neighborhoods.

Thank you.

To whom it may concern:

I live in Queens County. Arguably, Queens is the most ethnically diverse place in this country, if not the planet. If the Commission chooses to engage in creating districts based upon ethnicity and/or national origin it will fail in its mission to create districts without gerrymandering to special interest groups.

The districts you should create should reflect two factors in my opinion.

1. All districts should be based upon geography in the sense of using common geographical boundaries as they tend to define neighborhoods clearly.
2. All districts should be of similar populations in terms of numbers of people, not the ethnicity or national origin of the people.

In my view, gerrymandering anywhere in the nation has always been used to give one group of people advantages over other groups of people whether in the distant past or the more recent years. At different times in our history and still today the practice has been wrong as its purpose has always been to gain electoral advantage for different groups seeking an advantage for themselves.

If we are to move forward as a society toward that “more perfect union” the founders sought we cannot end the divisions in this nation by continuing to unfairly draw districts to suit any particular groups whether it is by political party, race, ethnicity, or national origin that just perpetuate advantage for some and disadvantage for others.

District lines need to be drawn with a fair use of geography to create districts coterminous with clear boundaries based on geography and population. They should not be drawn with “squiggly” lines rather than lines as straight as geography allows just to provide people of one group or another an advantage.

As I said at the beginning of this comment, I live in Queens. To be more specific, I live in southern Queens. Geography, in terms of both natural boundaries and man-made boundaries such as highways offer some guidance to what I mean. What I define as southern Queens uses that type of measure. You have the county lines of Kings County and Nassau County on the west and east, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south, and the Forest Park corridor/Hillside Ave glacial line and roadway on the north. To further sub-divide the Van Wyck Expressway is a roadway that serves to some extent to separate southeast Queens from southwest Queens. Off the mainland of Queens Broad Channel is an island and the Rockaway peninsula has a bridge that offers a division point on it.

I am not all that familiar with what could serve as district boundaries in northern Queens but certainly there are roadways there that provide them. Certainly the Flushing Meadow Corona Park provides a boundary of sorts between east and west in northern Queens.

In closing, I most strongly urge you to not engage in drawing districts by who lives in them rather I most strongly urge you to draw them to be as compact as possible with comparable

numbers of people. To my way of thinking the greater the mix of people the fairer they will be.
No advantage of any kind should be given to any group.

Paul J. Sennet

Peter W. Beadle

July 27, 2021

Dear Members of the Redistricting Commission,

Thank you very much for the work you have undertaken.

I am a 22 year resident of Rego Park, Queens and have been a member of Queens Community Board 6 for over eight years. Currently I serve as the Board's Second Vice Chair (though my comments today are my own personal views and do not represent the Board). I am also very active as an advocate for safer streets, particularly for the development of safer pedestrian and bike infrastructure, have participated in Participatory Budgeting, volunteered on several political campaigns, am an advocate for greater transparency, accessibility and accountability within the Queens County Democratic Organization, have run for Party Office and served on the Borough President's Transition Team's Transportation Committee. In my nearly two decades of public advocacy and service in Queens I have come to know well the political and governmental landscape and the effects our current district maps have on fair, equitable, transparent and accountable representation. I hope you will agree with me that the maps for our current districts - particularly those for State Senate and Assembly - have had negative effects in all those areas, and seriously undermine the credibility of our legislative institutions.

Too many districts resemble ink blots used in a Rorschach test. They appear random, though they of course are anything but. These districts have been drawn by the Party in power at the time to benefit their incumbents, with little concern shown towards the needs of the residents within those districts. The maps create disconnected parts of the district with little in common between groups of residents, reducing the ability of residents to communicate and organize with each other - diluting their political and advocacy power to the benefit of those holding political office. Your non-partisan committee has an opportunity to rectify this.

We all live in communities - neighborhoods with identifiable boundaries, common gathering spaces, venues for shopping, recreation, school and worship. A key tenet of your work should be to draw legislative districts that keep neighborhoods together as much as possible. Here in New York City neighborhoods are often bound together in Community Board districts ("CB's"), which group neighboring communities to help amplify the voices of the community and aid residents to receive the services they need while providing some community oversight of issues such as land use, transportation education, parks, etc. In NYC these CB's should provide you with starting places for the creation of district maps that will be more intuitive and less confusing, and better focus the voices of the community.

For instance, in my CB6, which covers the neighborhoods of Rego Park and Forest Hills, the CB includes parts of 3 Senate districts and at least 2 different Assembly Districts. The somewhat larger area of Central Queens around CB6- including the immediately adjacent CB's 4, 9 and 5 - is covered by upwards of 5 Senators and 7 Assembly members - who also represent residents of the Rockaways in far southern Queens, Flushing to the Northeast and Jackson Heights to the Northwest - parts of Queens with different needs and concerns and different sets of advantages and disadvantages that need to be addressed. People often have no idea which one of these representatives actually represent them. District borders frequently run down the middle of small

local streets and twist and turn in nonsensical ways. All of this makes it difficult for people in these communities to have their voices heard and to hold their elected officials accountable.

I urge you to dramatically and comprehensively revise our State Senate and Assembly District maps especially, with no regard for politics, but with considerable attention to ensuring Districts are cohesive and keep communities together to make it easier for residents to identify their representatives, vote for those they believe truly represent them and participate in political and civil governance to the fullest extent they wish to.

Thank you for your consideration.

Peter W. Beadle
Rego Park, Queens



Comment has been submitted

Phil Konigsberg

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Fri 7/23/2021 2:19 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

Addendum: I believe Vice-Chair Jack Martins, a former 3rd CD candidate, can relate to my earlier testimony on 7/22/21, that NE Queens communities currently in the 3rd CD are better aligned with the 6th CD, an all Queens district.

User: Phil Konigsberg

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Richard David

Testimony for the New York Independent Redistricting Commission - Queens Public Hearing via Zoom
July 22, 2021

Contact info:

Email: [REDACTED]

Good afternoon,

It is an honor to meet you Commissioners and staff of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission at this first hearing in Queens. Thank you for making this hearing accessible. You have such an incredible job and I want to start by wishing you well serving in these important roles.

Introduction:

My name is Richard David and I live with my family in South Ozone Park, Queens. I was born in Guyana and moved to the New York 26 years ago. I teach at York College; I have worked in City government for 10 years, and I sit on the Boards of several organizations. I am also a Democratic District Leader in Assembly District 31 Part B. I identify as Indo-Caribbean or Guyanese American and I believe this body will identify me as Asian American, as our government institutions do.

The Assembly, Senate and Congressional Districts

I am here to discuss the neighborhoods of South Ozone Park, Ozone Park and Richmond Hill, a single community of interest, which is represented by seven Assembly Districts, two Senate Districts and two Congressional Districts:

- Assembly District 23
- Assembly District 24
- Assembly District 27
- Assembly District 28
- Assembly District 31
- Assembly District 32
- Assembly District 38

- Senate District 10
- Senate District 14
- Senate District 15

- Congressional District 5
- Congressional District 8

I testified before the last New York State redistricting body (LATFOR) 10 years ago, and there have been some changes in population and representation since then – for example a South Asian person was elected to the Assembly in District 38, and an Indo-Caribbean and South Asian person recently won the Democratic primary in Council District 32 which covers Ozone Park. We also co-named parts of our

neighborhood, with the help and support of our elected officials, as Little Punjab, Little Guyana and soon, Little Trinidad and Tobago. However, much else remains the same as it did ten years ago, perhaps now with greater awareness that the current Assembly lines are a textbook case of dividing communities.

Where else would I cross seven Assembly Districts after leaving my house on Saturday morning and going to get doubles for breakfast, then going to the local park to watch a cricket game and maybe having a beer or visiting my mom after – all within a 5 to 10 minute drive from each other. This is my gerrymandered neighborhood, Commissioners, and I am here with so many others to urge you to remedy this condition affecting Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park.

The political division of these areas has led to:

- No State or City-funded senior centers
- No culturally relevant community center for young people and families
- Our cultural and commercial corridor, Liberty Avenue, has every major bank, religious institutions, and retail stores but it does not have a single political office because even this heart of our community is divided into many parts.
- During Covid-19, myself, and community leaders who you will hear from today fought to save the lives of our neighbors because we were the last to receive PPE, testing sites and vaccine centers – although we had the highest infections rates anywhere in the City and State. Even today we don't know how many Indo-Caribbean and South Asian residents were infected and passed away because we are not counted with those identifies.
- During the Census, we had one of the lowest response rates here which mirrored the rates in 2010 despite more funding, outreach, and technology. This means the data which will be released will not ethnically capture this community. This is perhaps the biggest barrier to fair representation among Indo-Caribbean and South Asian residents. Historically this “data” has been used to legitimize the division of this community despite the numerous testimonies you will hear today from myself and other activists, organizations, and leaders.

In Assembly District 31, where I am a District Leader, the Western side of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park is connected to the Eastern side of Springfield Gardens, Brookville, and Rosedale by highways - the Belt Park and the Conduit and nothing else. These areas are then connected by a body of water – the Jamaica Bay – to the Rockaways which forms the Southern portion of the district. Public transportation does not connect these three parts, so in addition to a car, it would be faster to go by boat to the different parts of the district. This is indefensible and a textbook definition of gerrymandering.

The task before you is enormous and I know you will hear from many communities with competing concerns. I hope that the political lines imposed on Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park will reflect the voices of the community you have heard from today. Please let me know if you have any follow up questions.

I appreciate your time and thank you for the opportunity to speak before you.



August 16, 2021

TO: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Dear Commissioners:

Established in 1984, originally as YKASEC, Minkwon Center for Community Action in Flushing, Queens meets the needs and concerns of Korean Americans, Asian Americans, and immigrant communities through advocacy and organizing; civic participation, social and legal services, and youth empowerment. Minkwon is the convening organization of APA VOICE (Asian Pacific American Voting and Organizing to Increase Civic Engagement), of which the APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force operates under.

In 2010, APA's constituted 69% of Flushing. In the past decade, we have witnessed firsthand the growth of the neighborhood becoming increasingly more populated. To meet the needs of the growing APA community in the Flushing area, Minkwon launched a range of Immigrant services, extended Korean and Chinese language assistance and direct services, and formed the first coalition on APA redistricting, known as Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy, "ACCORD". ACCORD later became APA VOICE, to expand civic engagement efforts to voter registration, voter education, and census outreach between decennial censuses.

The 2019 American Community Survey predicts the APA community will comprise 14.09% of the City, up from 11.8% in 2010. This represents an increase of approximately 51,689 Asian Americans to the City's population for an estimated total of 1,186,608 Asian Americans. Three-fourths of this growth is just in Queens and Brooklyn. The recently released Census 2020 block data on August 12, 2021 shows a 29% growth of Asian Pacific Americans in Queens alone since the 2020 Census.

We ask the Commission to please look at this data carefully and reflect this growth in creating a third majority Asian American Assembly District in Queens, and if the configurations and forthcoming data bears it out, a second majority Asian American State Senate district in Queens.

We fully expect Flushing to continue as the epicenter of at least one majority Asian American Senate District and congressional seat. Flushing should continue to

predominantly comprise a majority Asian American Assembly District notwithstanding minor adjustments needed to its southern border.

The APA's living in Flushing share the same bus lines and 7 subway, dominate the small businesses in the area, and share persistent language needs to access government services and information. Eleven public elementary schools alone are located in Flushing. Downtown Flushing is the busiest commercial and retail area in Queens.

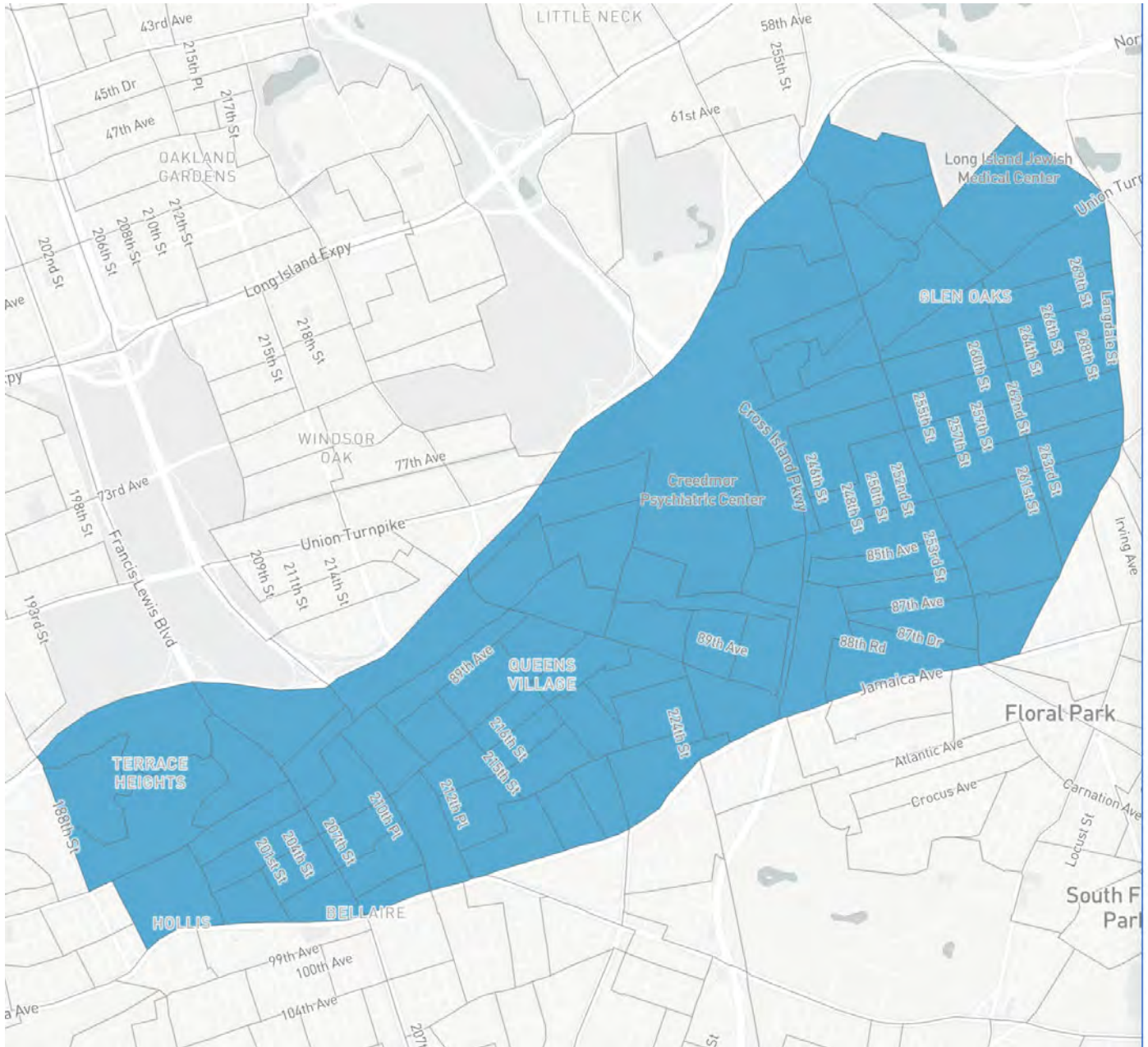
Flushing's growth leaves its primarily low income community extremely vulnerable to gentrification and the proliferation of high rise luxury construction. The community of Flushing must be kept whole in order to mount a united front to unlawful rent hikes and displacement, like the successful decades-long grassroots campaign to pass the 2019 Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act.

The community has been particularly hard hit by Covid-19. The Asian American small businesses have been doubly hit, first by the misplaced hysteria of the virus being falsely referred to as the "Chinese virus", then by government shelter in place orders. Long time residents will face eviction because many relied on these small businesses to support their families. Language and cultural barriers continue to persist in ensuring all residents are properly informed and vaccinated. The spike in hate crimes only added to the challenges of the pandemic. To continue the fight to prioritize aid to these impacted businesses and residents, the community must be kept whole.

Sincerely,



John Park
Executive Director



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HISPANIC & SOUTH ASIAN ALLIANCE
FOR FAIR REDISTRICTING IN SOUTH QUEENS
124-06 ROCKAWAY BOULEVARD
OZONE PARK, NY 11420

August 17, 2021

ADDENDUM to testimony previously submitted testimony 8/7/21

Petition to please unite our communities of interest-Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into one State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness

Most Honorable Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

This addition to our submitted petition takes into account the recently released census numbers. They confirm a very large, increase in the numbers of South Asians residing in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park. In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth. Exhibit A.

Case in point: Richmond Hill and Ozone Park. These Queens neighborhoods have more Asian residents-including many of Guyanese, Trinidadian or Punjabi heritage-than Black or white ones, past population surveys have shown.

Yet these hubs of Asian life in Queens are currently sliced into seven different Assembly districts-making it difficult for the communities to coalesce around a representative focused on their priorities or receive services tailored to their language, dietary or other needs, activists say.

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/8/12/22622709/nyc-asian-surgin-population-electoral-power>

https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/queens-outperforms-population-estimates-in-census/article_b6bc1494-fc5e-11eb-9f0b-73f0acfc108a.html

We have demonstrated that, since 2010, that Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park alone have enough population to constitute a State Assembly district. Now we have busted out of those boundaries, and increased even more exponentially. Exhibit B.

Therefore, we deserve more. Accordingly, for the State Senate and Congressional districts, we respectfully submit this enlarged community of interest district, which is compact and contiguous, and large enough to constitute a State senate district, and the core for a Congressional seat, in addition to our deserving, proposed Assembly district previously submitted. Indeed, we should have two (2) Assembly districts. Exhibit C.

With the addition of Ozone Park extended to the Eldert Lane/City Line boundary bordering the Queens and Brooklyn county lines, these combined areas of the communities

of interest-Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park deserve, and will fight for, a State senate district and a Congressional District, also.

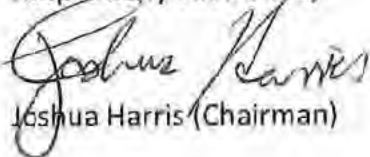
Any other decision by your respected Commission will not only result in the dilution and suppression of our voices, issues and problems, but will abrogate your duties and responsibilities, while annihilating our rights.

In accordance with justice, the Voting Rights Act and the NY and US Constituents, these districts share common established ties of common interest and association, economic, ethnic, religious historical, racial, and otherwise.

It is only right that you keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, as is hereby requested.

Thank you for your kind courtesies and consideration.

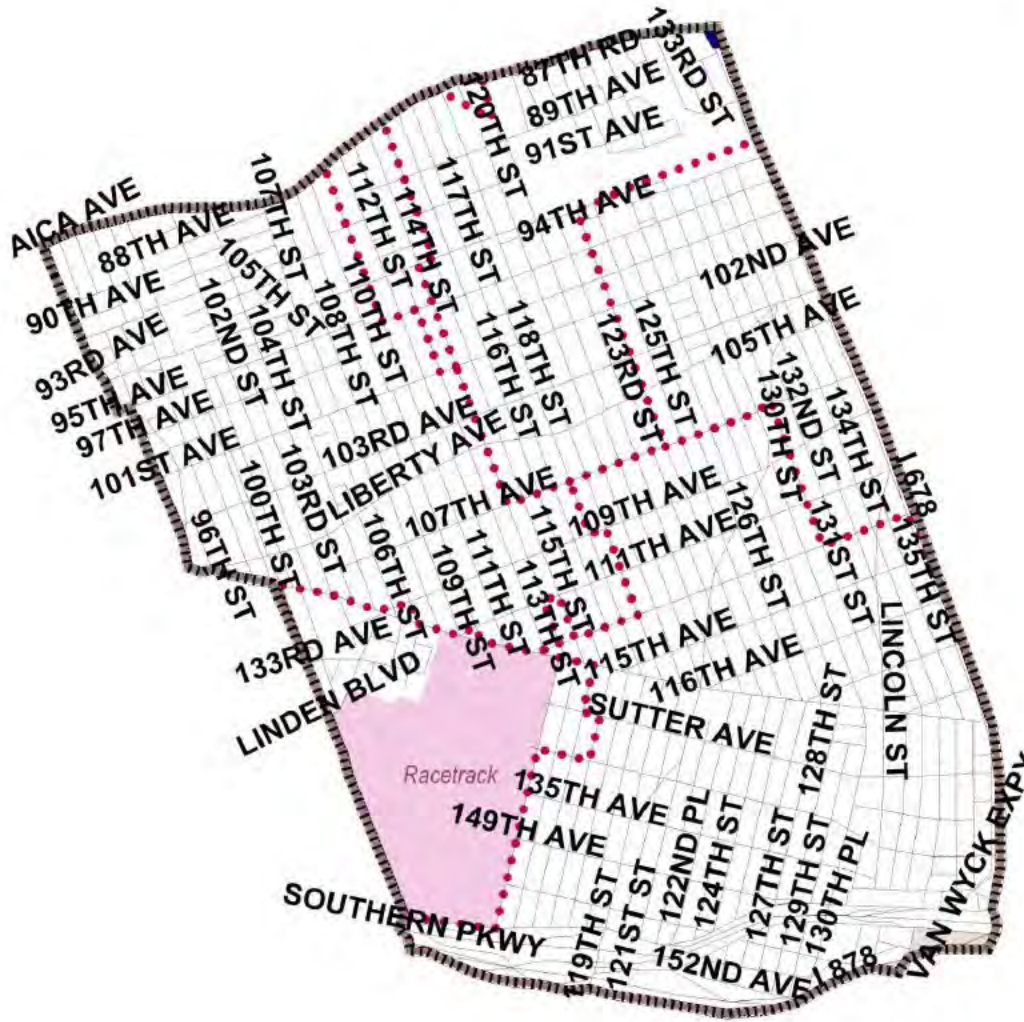
Respectfully submitted,


Joshua Harris (Chairman)

**HISPANIC & SOUTH ASIAN ALLIANCE
FOR FAIR REDISTRICTING IN SOUTH QUEENS**


OZONE PARK, NY 11420


Richmond Hill- South Ozone Park: 2010



POPULATION	133,260
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	+4,073 (+3.2%)
% HISPANIC	27.6%
% NH WHITE	7.9%
% NH BLACK	19.4%
% NH ASIAN	25.5%

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REPORTING FOR NEW YORKERS

CENSUS

NYC Asian Activists Seek to Turn Surging Population Into Electoral Power

New Census numbers showing a 43% increase of Asian New Yorkers in Brooklyn and a 29% jump in Queens fuel demands for more representation as the process for redrawing elected officials' district lines heats up.

BY CHRISTINE CHUNG, CLIFFORD MICHEL AND WILL WELCH | AUG 12, 2021, 8:37PM EDT



The southern side of 8th Ave. at 46th St. in Sunset Park, Brooklyn which is in a different Senate district than the northern side of the street. | Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

New Census numbers out Thursday show a robust 7.7% population increase for New York City since 2010 — and even bigger surges for Asian New Yorkers at a time when Asian candidates and community groups are moving to build out political power.

In Queens, the Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents — far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth.

In Brooklyn, the number of Asian residents counted by the Census swelled to nearly 420,000, a nearly 43% increase from 2010, compared with a 9.2% hike in the borough's population overall.

With strength in numbers, New York City's diverse Asian communities are organizing to build political power that reflects them and their needs, as a state commission readies to redraw congressional and state legislative district lines.

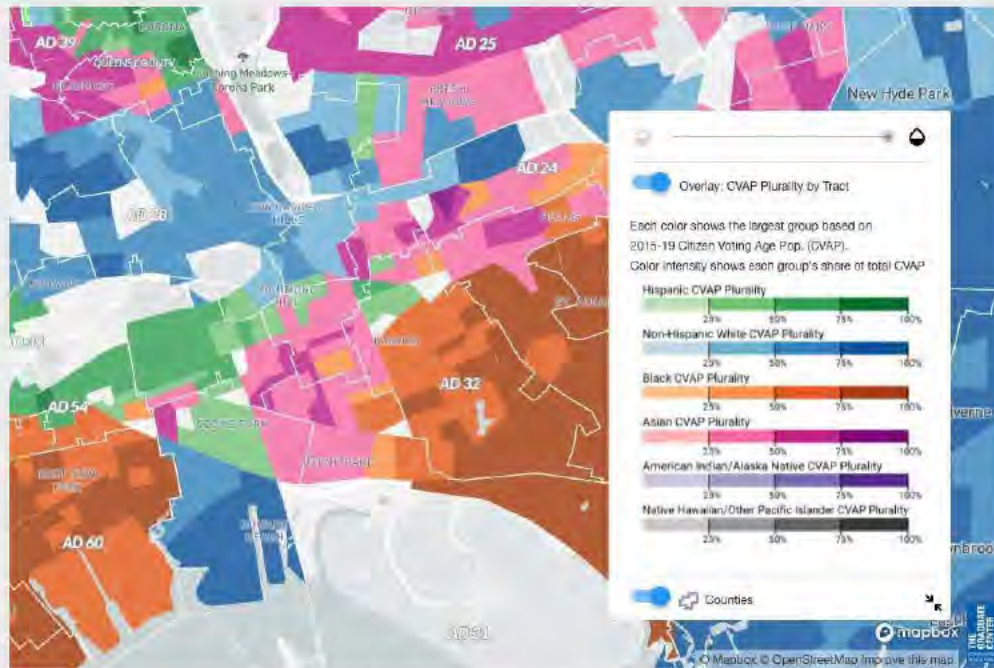
“In the past, they would divide a neighborhood or a community who they felt were not politically engaged or were not visible,” said Elizabeth OuYang, who is coordinating a redistricting task force composed of 20 Asian community groups across the city. “We are going to make sure that we are very visible in this redistricting round.”

The new coalition is already at work to break down what members call artificial borders dividing communities and leaving them shortchanged on elected leadership and public services.

Case in point: Richmond Hill and Ozone Park. These Queens neighborhoods have more Asian residents — including many of Guyanese, Trinidadian or Punjabi heritage — than Black or white ones, past population surveys have shown.

Yet these hubs of Asian life in Queens are currently sliced into seven different Assembly districts — making it difficult for the communities to coalesce around

a representative focused on their priorities or receive services tailored to their language, dietary or other needs, activists say.



The Queens neighborhood of Richmond Hill (center) is split between seven Assembly districts. | Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

“For us, redistricting is not an academic exercise, nor simply a mathematical equation. It means power, accountability, and equal access to services that we are entitled to for the next 10 years,” OuYang said.

No Representation

Every decade, following the U.S. Census, lawmakers redraw district lines to reflect population changes, with the goal of achieving equal representation. By law, and backed by litigation, so-called communities of interest, such as racial groups, are not supposed to be divided in a way to weaken their political power.

This year, for the first time in New York, the process for seats in Congress and the state Senate and Assembly is being overseen by an independent commission.

Its 10 members are largely appointed by the party leaders of the state Legislature, and working under updated rules that explicitly require equal apportionment and compact districts, while forbidding racial discrimination.

Queens and Brooklyn residents packed online hearings last month to voice concerns about what they described as divisive lines thwarting their chances of electing representation.

For much of the July 22 Queens hearing's five hours, the focus was on Richmond Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. During the July 29 Brooklyn hearing, speakers pointed out that despite continued Asian population growth in southern Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, Asian residents are outnumbered in every single Assembly and Senate district as currently drawn.

Brooklyn has no Asian representatives in the state Senate or Assembly, Congress or City Council.

District Divided by Water

Richard David, a Guyanese-American district leader who ran for an Assembly seat last year spanning South Ozone Park and part of the Rockaways, said that area's political divisions have created dire outcomes for the community, including a lack of funding for social services.

There are no city or state-funded senior centers in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, or South Ozone Park that primarily serve South Asians and Indo-Caribbean people, he told THE CITY. When constituents seek to reach elected officials, they either don't know whom to call or are overwhelmed by the long list of people to contact, David added.

He cited his District 31, which encompasses parts of South and Southeast Queens, along with the Rockaways, as a "textbook example of gerrymandering."



South Ozone Park, Queens, near the convergence of three Assembly districts. | Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

The eight neighborhoods within the district, especially those in the Rockaways, each have a very distinct cultural identity, he noted, making it challenging for one candidate to build a broad coalition of support.

“Public transportation does not connect these three parts, so in addition to a car, it would be faster to go by boat to the different parts of the district,” said David, who lives in South Ozone Park.

More than 42% of the district’s population is foreign born, nearly double the rate in New York State. Closer looks within the district’s lines more clearly illuminate significant racial disparities.

The borough’s Community District 14, which encompasses most of the Rockaway peninsula, is about 36% Black, about 34% white, and roughly 4% Asian. Community District 10, including Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, is

23.7% Asian, 21% white, and 14% Black.

In the June 2020 Democratic primary, David won the district's northern half in Ozone Park and south Ozone Park resoundingly, but fell short in its southern region. He ultimately lost by about 800 votes to Khaleel Anderson, a 25-year-old Black progressive candidate who then won the November general election. The overall Assembly district is now 45% Black and 12% Asian, the new Census numbers show.

Aminta Kilawan-Narine, founder of the South Queens Women's March, contends that the lines reflect a "blatant disregard for the natural communities of interest that exist." She contends that they also run afoul of the federal Voting Rights Act's requirement for compact and contiguous districts.

"The way in which the lines have been drawn divides and dilutes our ability to be a stronger voice," Kilawin-Narine added. "When a naturally occurring community of interest like ours is so very divided, electeds don't have the kind of vested interest in serving us — after all, we become but a fraction of their constituency."

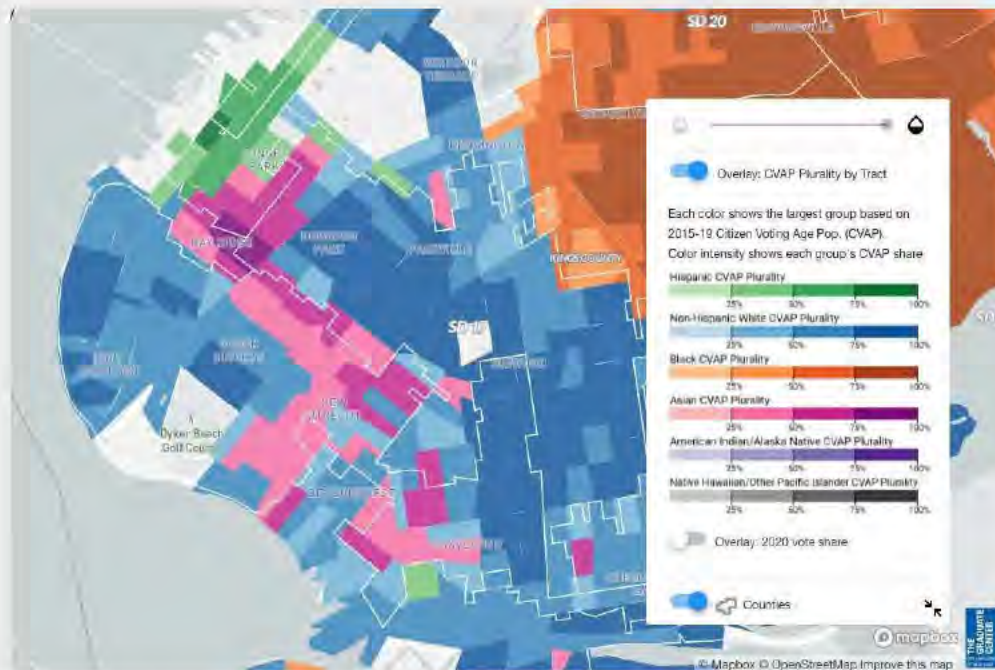
A Neighborhood Divided

Brooklyn's Sunset Park was once defined by the docks where its largely white residents worked — only to change dramatically after the region's ports mostly moved to New Jersey in 1958.

Today, in addition to a sizable Hispanic population, the area is home to a large number of Asian residents and businesses, part of a revival that is redefining commercial strips in several southern Brooklyn neighborhoods.

But walking north on the area's bustling Eighth Avenue corridor, with scores of Asian-owned businesses, a short stroll from 46th street to 39th street takes a pedestrian through three different State Senate districts.

Those districts and two others in southern Brooklyn are home to more than 220,000 Asian residents. But because the population is splintered into three districts, activists argue they can't effectively rally around a political candidate.



The Brooklyn neighborhood of [Sunset Park](#), upper left, is divided between three state Senate districts. | Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

The lines were drawn a decade ago by Albany Republicans with the objective of diluting downstate Democrats' power.

“It’s always said that we don’t vote in the right numbers, but no one ever talks about how our communities are gerrymandered that even if we all would come out to vote it would not make a difference,” said Don Lee, the chairperson of Homecrest Community Services, a nonprofit that provides meals, translation services and social events for Asian American immigrants and seniors.

Homecrest was started in 1997 after its founders saw Asian seniors riding the N train daily to Chinatown in Manhattan to receive social services in a language they could understand. Today, activists say that there are still many needs that aren’t being met for vulnerable Asian residents.

Many Asians in New York City were born outside of the U.S., and the need is pressing for services offered in languages other than English. As of 2018, 21.7% of Asian New Yorkers lived in poverty, according to an annual City Hall survey.

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‘No Rhyme or Reason’

Yet, nonprofits and civic groups say it’s difficult to get the ear of elected officials to support these communities.

“The most active in Sunset Park is Senator [Zellnor] Myrie, but he definitely does spend more time in the Crown Heights neighborhood that he also represents because that is the majority of his district,” said Mon Yuck Yu, vice president and chief of staff of the Academy of Medical and Public Health Services, which focuses on helping immigrant New Yorkers.

“A lot of resources go there and Sunset Park is seeing less. In terms of the other senators that represent Sunset Park, we’ve hardly seen any active outreach or activity or funding levels coming into the neighborhood.”

Matt Baer, a spokesperson for Myrie, said that the senator’s office does a “particularly good job” at representing constituents in Sunset Park — and that there is no “rhyme or reason” as to how the lines were drawn for the district.

“I couldn’t find anybody to defend why Brownsville and Sunset Park are in the same district,” Baer said. “I don’t think any rational person could explain why the lines are drawn the way they are.”

State Sen. Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), whose two-borough district juts into Sunset Park, agreed that the neighborhood was overly divided in the last redistricting cycle.

“This time there should be an effort to provide more complete representation. A Senate district is always going to be difficult,” said Savino. The redistricting commission, she said, “should examine whether this form of gerrymandering is fair to anyone.”



Brooklyn State Senator Simcha Felder attends a meeting in Albany, March 20, 2019. | Photo Courtesy of NY Senate Media Services

Not all of its reps see the division of Sunset Park as unfair.

State Sen. Simcha Felder, whose predominantly Borough Park and Midwood district includes small slice of Sunset Park, said that “since the beginning of creation, every part of the district complains that the other part is getting more attention.”

He said he’s allotted a “disproportionate amount” of attention and resources to Sunset Park.

A decade ago, the Republicans who controlled the state Senate created his Brooklyn district with the objective of electing an Orthodox Jewish state senator to help support GOP control — a possible precedent for creating an Asian-centered district now.

Drawing New Lines

Over the past 10 years, the number of Asian residents in Brooklyn increased by more than 110,000, to nearly 371,000, far outpacing any other racial group, the latest Census figures show.

Activists see an opportunity to unite Sunset Park, Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay — the three Asian population centers of Brooklyn — into a Senate district that could elect an Asian senator.

Dr. Wah Lee, a lifelong Bensonhurst resident who has a private medical practice in the neighborhood, said he hopes a unified district brings more focused attention to issues like the [increase in assaults on Asian New Yorkers](#).

Lee said that he and his wife were both recently accosted — and that patients have been showing him items they've purchased for self-defense.

Said Lee: “If there were enough services the citizens wouldn't have to do this on their own.”

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QUEENS Daily Eagle

Vol. 67, No. 86

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2021

50¢

QUEENS TODAY
AUGUST 16, 2021

U.S. REP. GRACE MENG IS ENCOURAGING families to check their bank accounts to make sure that they received the second installment of their expanded Child Tax Credit payment, which started July 15. "Last month, hardworking middle-class families in New York and across the United States began receiving these monthly tax cut payments, and I'm glad to see that the second round of funds is now being sent out," Meng said. "These tax cuts will put money back in the pockets of families as we work to tackle the pandemic, move forward with our recovery, and get our economy back on track."

JAMAICA RESIDENT TYRONE Absolam, 42, was arraigned Friday by a grand jury on a 16-count indictment with charges including aggravated vehicular homicide, vehicular manslaughter and driving while intoxicated for allegedly driving drunk and killing a mother and her 10-year-old daughter. He faces up to 25 years if convicted. "As alleged, a family now mourns the loss of a mother and her 10-year-old daughter because of the defendant's selfish decision to ignore the rules of the road," Katz said. "Drunk driving is never acceptable."

THE DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN announced that Catholic schools will have a mask mandate for all students, faculty, and staff when classes begin on Sept. 8. "This is the most responsible approach to take when we begin the new school year," said Superintendent Dr. Thomas Chadzutko. "I know the return to these safety measures is not the situation parents, teachers or students were hoping for in the 2021-2022 school year, but we cannot ignore the trends."

A 22-YEAR-OLD MAN WAS SHOT MORE than a dozen times outside the K-Show Bar in Flushing early Friday morning, NBC reported.

A BAYSIDE GRANDMA UNVEILED A Free Little Library on Thursday in honor of the newest member of the family, Patch reported. Patricia Manley Silverman told Patch she hopes the dedication will help inspire her first grandchild to love reading. "There'll be a lot of foot traffic, and people can just walk by on the sidewalk and help themselves," Silverman said.

JAMAICA CENTER WAS NAMED among the city's most stress-inducing subway stations after 67 percent of respondents said they experienced frustration, according to a Fleet Logging report.

Queens' grows by over 7 percent, census shows



Queens' population grew by 7.8 percent over the past decade, according to 2020 Census data. The borough is now home to over 2.4 million people.

Photo via Wikimedia Commons

By Rachel Vick and Jacob Kaye
Queens Daily Eagle

After a landmark effort to ensure a complete count in the 2020 Census, the results are in and Queens is up.

The World's Borough grew by 7.8 percent in the past decade, according to early data released by the U.S. Census Bureau. With

2,405,464 people in Queens, the borough is the second most populous in the city.

Only Brooklyn grew more in the past decade.

The data was released in an effort to aid states in their attempt to draw new electoral district lines, a process that began in New York last month.

The Independent Redistricting Commission, the body tasked with drawing the lines, began a listening tour in July and heard feedback from over 100 Queens residents who mostly said the old lines divided communities and weakened political power for Queens residents of color throughout the borough.

Continued on page 16

Transwomen call for violence to end in Queens

By Jacob Kaye
Queens Daily Eagle

A group of transwomen gathered in Jackson Heights last week to demand an end to violence against trans and queer people.

Organized by Make the Road New York and supported by lawmakers Sen. Jessica Ramos and Assemblymembers Catalina Cruz and Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, the group spoke out against several instances of trans and queer violence from inside Lorena Borjas Triangle, a pedestrian square recently renamed for the trans activist who called Queens her home.

Make the Road reported that it had been notified of six instances of trans or gender non-conforming people being assaulted in Brooklyn and Queens in the past week.

Jennifer, one of the trans women who spoke at the rally, said that she had been attacked in Jackson Heights over the weekend while waiting for a taxi.

"Last Saturday, while my friends and I waited for a taxi we were attacked by a man who threw rocks and glass bottles at us," said Jennifer, a Queens resident. "I ran away, but fell down, and the man continued to attack me. I tried to fight to save my life and ended up

Continued on page 2



Jennifer, a trans woman from Queens, spoke about a recent attack in Jackson Heights that left her in a sling, at a rally against trans violence last week.

Photo via Make the Road/Twitter

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NYC Asian activists seek to turn surging population into electoral power

By Christine Chung, Clifford Michel, and Will Welch
THE CITY

New Census numbers out Thursday show a robust 7.7% population increase for New York City since 2010 — and even bigger surges for Asian New Yorkers at a time when Asian candidates and community groups are moving to build out political power.

In Queens, the Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents — far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth.

In Brooklyn, the number of Asian residents counted by the Census swelled to nearly 420,000, a nearly 43% increase from 2010, compared with a 9.2% hike in the borough's population overall.

With strength in numbers, New York City's diverse Asian communities are organizing to build political power that reflects them and their needs, as a state commission readies to redraw congressional and state legislative district lines.

"In the past, they would divide a neighborhood or a community who they felt were not politically engaged or were not visible," said Elizabeth OuYang, who is coordinating a redistricting task force composed of 20 Asian community groups across the city. "We are going to make sure that we are very visible in this redistricting round."

The new coalition is already at work to break down what members call artificial borders dividing communities and leaving them shortchanged on elected leadership and public services.

Case in point: Richmond Hill and Ozone Park. These Queens neighborhoods have more Asian residents — including many of Guyanese, Trinidadian or Punjabi heritage — than Black or white ones, past population surveys have shown.

Yet these hubs of Asian life in Queens are currently sliced into seven different Assembly districts — making it difficult for the communities to coalesce around a representative focused on their priorities or receive services tailored to their language, dietary or other needs, activists say.

"For us, redistricting is not an academic exercise, nor simply a mathematical equation. It means power, accountability, and equal access to services that we are entitled to for the next 10 years," OuYang said.

No Representation

Every decade, following the U.S. Census, lawmakers redraw district lines to reflect population changes, with the goal of achieving equal representation. By law, and backed by litigation, so-called communities of interest, such as racial groups, are not supposed to be divided in a way to weaken their political power.

This year, for the first time in New York, the process for seats in Congress and the state Senate and Assembly is being overseen by an independent commission.

Its 10 members are largely appointed by the party leaders of the state Legislature, and working under updated rules that explicitly require equal apportionment and compact districts, while forbidding racial discrimination.

Queens and Brooklyn residents packed online hearings last month to voice concerns about what they described as divisive lines thwarting their chances of electing representation.

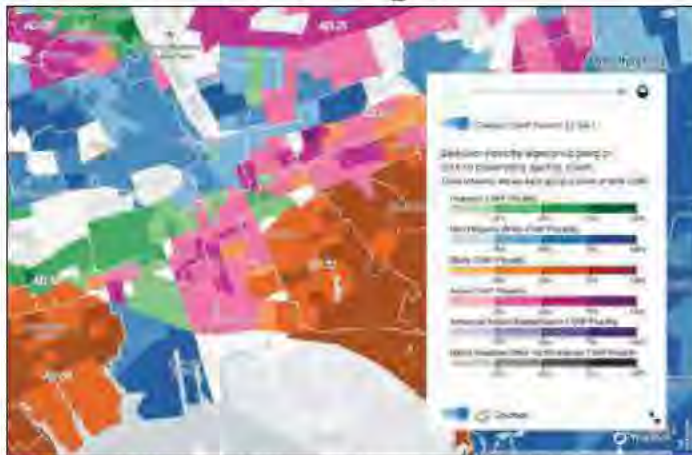
For much of the July 22 Queens hearing's five hours, the focus was on Richmond Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. During the July 29 Brooklyn hearing, speakers pointed out that despite continued Asian population growth in southern Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, Asian residents are outnumbered in every single Assembly and Senate district as currently drawn.

Brooklyn has no Asian representatives in the state Senate or Assembly, Congress or City Council.

District Divided by Water

Richard David, a Guyanese-American district leader who ran for an Assembly seat last year spanning South Ozone Park and part of the Rockaways, said that area's political divisions have created dire outcomes for the community, including a lack of funding for social services.

There are no city or state-funded senior centers in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, or South



The Queens neighborhood of Richmond Hill (center) is split between seven Assembly districts. Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

Ozone Park that primarily serve South Asians and Indo-Caribbean people, he told THE CITY. When constituents seek to reach elected officials, they either don't know whom to call or are overwhelmed by the long list of people to contact, David added.

He cited his District 31, which encompasses parts of South and Southeast Queens, along with the Rockaways, as a "textbook example of gerrymandering."

The eight neighborhoods within the district, especially those in the Rockaways, each have a very distinct cultural identity, he noted, making it challenging for one candidate to build a broad coalition of support.

"Public transportation does not connect these three parts, so in addition to a car, it would be faster to go by boat to the different parts of the district," said David, who lives in South Ozone Park.

More than 42% of the district's population is foreign born, nearly double the rate in New York State. Closer looks within the district's lines more clearly illuminate significant racial disparities.

The borough's Community District 14, which encompasses most of the Rockaway peninsula, is about 36% Black, about 34% white, and roughly 4% Asian. Community District 10, including Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, is 23.7% Asian, 21% white, and 14% Black.

In the June 2020 Democratic primary, David won the district's northern half in Ozone Park and south Ozone Park resoundingly, but fell short in its southern region. He ultimately lost by about 800 votes to Khaleel Anderson, a 25-year-old Black progressive candidate who then won the November general election. The overall Assembly district is now 45% Black and 12% Asian, the new Census numbers show.

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South Ozone Park, Queens, near the convergence of three Assembly districts. Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

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'No Rhyme or Reason'

Yet, nonprofits and civic groups say it's difficult



The southern side of 8th Ave. at 46th St. in Sunset Park, Brooklyn which is in a different Senate district than the northern side of the street. Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

to get the ear of elected officials to support these communities.

"The most active in Sunset Park is Senator [Zellnor] Myrie, but he definitely does spend more time in the Crown Heights neighborhood that he also represents because that is the majority of his district," said Mon Yuck Yu, vice president and chief of staff of the Academy of Medical and Public Health Services, which focuses on helping immigrant New Yorkers.

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THE CITY is an independent, nonprofit news outlet dedicated to hard-hitting reporting that serves the people of New York.

Census data shows big growth in Queens

Continued from page 1

Ivan Garcia, national political director for Make the Road, said that the lines drawn after the 2010 Census did not evenly distribute populations or represent communities — a wrong that “must be fixed in the next map.”

“This process should center the needs of the community, not political parties,” Garcia said. “In an ideal world a benefit is any growth anywhere should see fair representation, that the representation would reflect the increase.”

“We already saw in the last state senate map that Queens, and in reality all of New York City, got disproportionately low representation,” he added. “One of the challenges is what we’ve seen time and again of politics as usual.”

Queens residents will have another chance to provide comments on redistricting after the committee completes and submits a first draft to the State Legislature.

The commission will release their first draft Sept. 15.

Queens, which saw significant change in its population, could potentially see that change reflected in its electoral maps.

The borough has around a dozen Assembly Districts that have fewer people than the average district, meaning the lines will be redrawn to include more people, according to maps provided by the CUNY Graduate Center.

The Asian population in Queens grew by 29 percent and is heavily represented throughout northwest, central and eastern Queens.



Some Queens residents hope the census data will help reshape the electoral lines drawn throughout Queens, including in Richmond Hill, which is divided among several Assembly Districts.

Map via nyc.gov

According to the data, the borough is 25.8 percent white, 16.8 percent Black, 27.5 percent Asian, 10.1 percent two or more races, 1.3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native and 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Around 27 percent of 2020 Census respondents in Queens said they were Hispanic or Latino.

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards celebrated the borough’s growth in both population and diversity.

“The large jump in our borough’s population underscores what we in Queens have

known for a long time; that Queens truly is a fantastic place to live and raise a family,” Richards said in a statement. “My heartfelt appreciation goes to all of the 2.4 million people who make Queens their home, including the more than one million people who have come here from across the globe to build new lives in ‘The World’s Borough.’”

New York City as a whole also experienced a decade of growth and remains the city with the largest population in the country.

The growth was echoed across metro areas in the U.S., which grew by 9 percent in the past

decade. Around 86 percent of all people in the country live in a metropolitan area.

However, New York City’s growth wasn’t consistent across the state.

Steve Romalewski, the director of CUNY Mapping Service, said that though the state will be down one congressional seat, it will most likely be lost from a region upstate. Districts in New York City and Long Island are juggling the need to meet state averages within a small margin of error and balanced populations.

“Because of tremendous population growth in New York City, pressure will be downstate in terms of how district lines will be drawn,” Romalewski said. “Where the lines are redrawn and how that turns out is the question.”

Romalewski said that “the real issue is making sure districts are drawn fairly and that they reflect the communities” but with the additional public awareness this year and changes to both the requirements and redistricting process “here’s hope.”

The Independent Redistricting Commission, which is made up of four Democratic and four Republican appointed members, is scheduled to submit its final maps to the State Legislature by January 2022.

New Yorkers will vote on a ballot measure that includes redistricting reform in November. If the measure passes, the commission’s timeline will be moved up and it will be required to submit the final draft to the legislature earlier in the month of January than it is currently scheduled to.

Queens Community Board to vote on member’s expulsion proceedings

By Jacob Kaye
Queens Daily Eagle

Queens Community Board 7 will meet Monday to vote on whether or not to expel member John Choe from its ranks.

The vote will center around several alleged instances of Choe’s misconduct. The accusations, brought by the board’s Vice Chair Chuck Apelian in May, range from slander to violating the rules of the Campaign Finance Board. Choe has repeatedly denied committing any wrongdoing.

A simple majority either way will determine Choe’s future with the board.

The meeting, being held at 7 p.m. at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Whitestone, comes after a five-person special committee created by the board’s chair, Eugene Kelty, voted unanimously to bring four of the five charges against Choe to the full board.

Choe, who was invited to the special committee meeting to defend himself, chose not to show because he didn’t want to give the proceedings any “credibility.”

Choe told the Eagle Friday that he plans to show up to the Monday meeting and give a statement on his behalf.

“I feel, not just for my own sake but for the sake of the community, I need to really call out the community board’s executive committee for pushing such false charges in a very transparent attempt to silence [dissent],” Choe said.

Prior to the special committee’s July meeting, the full board voted 42-3 with one abstention in June to begin the process of hearing the allegations against Choe, who recently finished third in his City Council race in District 20.

Apelian declined to comment ahead of Monday’s meeting.

Choe said he suspects the outcome to be similar to the previous meetings and that come Tuesday, he’ll be off the board.

“This is a very tightly run community board,”



Community Board 7 will meet on Monday at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Whitestone to vote on whether or not to expel member John Choe.

Photo via Google Maps

he said. “They don’t schedule meetings unless they know what the vote will be ahead of time.”

Apelian alleges that Choe violated the City Charter on multiple occasions as a member of the board.

The special committee found cause on the allegations that Choe violated the charter by emailing his fellow board members requesting campaign contributions, started an unauthorized Facebook group for the board, had a poor attendance record and defamed members of the board by accusing them of being corrupt.

The special committee didn’t find cause on the fifth and final allegation brought by Apelian, which alleged that Choe told then-acting Borough President Sharon Lee that his opinion could be swayed “for the right price” during a hearing on the Flushing Waterfront Development plan in February 2020. Choe’s comment

was met with laughter at the Borough Board meeting and the special committee said the context didn’t warrant moving forward with the allegation.

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards reappointed Choe to the board in April, despite City Councilmember Peter Koo recommending against it.

In a statement to the Eagle Friday, the borough president’s office said it was the office’s policy “to consider and address specific complaints regarding community board conduct in a confidential manner.”

Koo did not respond to request for comment. In December 2020, Kelty filed a formal complaint against Choe with the city’s Conflicts of Interest Board concerning his campaign fundraising email sent to board members.

A COIB spokesperson told the Eagle that

they are unable to disclose “whether it has received a complaint, is pursuing an investigation of a matter, has initiated an enforcement action against a public servant, or even whether a case exists involving a public servant unless or until the Board issues a public disposition in such case.”

Regardless of the outcome of Monday’s meeting, Choe said he’s worried that the entire process the executive committee has brought against him will have a chilling effect on dissent within the board.

“My concern is that it will send the wrong message that people shouldn’t get involved and speak up because what people may interpret from what’s going on is that the establishment has so much power that there’s really no tolerance for different views and perspectives,” he said.



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NEWS [/NEWS]

NYC's Population Hits A Record 8.8 Million, According To 2020 Census

BY [ARUN VENUGOPAL, WNYC](#) [/STAFF/ARUN-VENUGOPAL]

15 HOURS AGO •

[74 COMMENTS](#) [/NEWS/NYCS-POPULATION-HITS-RECORD-88-MILLION-ACCORDING-2020-CENSUS#COMMENTS]



Domino Park in May 2021 Erik Pendzich/Shutterstock

New York City experienced dramatic growth over the last ten years, bringing its current population to a record 8.8 million, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which released the first detailed statistics from the 2020 Census.

On balance, the city added more than 629,000 residents, from 8.175 million measured in 2010, but city planning officials said that a big part of the story was that far fewer residents left the city than had been projected by census officials.

Additionally, an unprecedented effort by city officials and community groups to penetrate every neighborhood and leave no resident uncounted—during a pandemic—appears to have reaped significant dividends.

Steven Romalewski @SR_spatial · Aug 12, 2021
NYC: 2020 population of 8.8 million. Biggest large city increase from 2010.

Steven Romalewski
@SR_spatial

Slide below from the @uscensusbureau

1:36 PM · Aug 12, 2021

75 2 Share this Tweet

The new figures gave city officials something to celebrate.

Mayor Bill de Blasio tweeted “The Big Apple just got bigger!” and issued a thanks “to every City worker who made this record-breaking count possible.”

Mayor Bill de Blasio @NYCMayor

It's not easy counting 8.8 million people. From our census outreach teams, to @NYCPlanning, to every City worker who made this record-breaking count possible: thank you.

This number will ensure our city gets the federal resources we need to keep moving forward.

Mayor Bill de Blasio @NYCMayor
The Big Apple just got bigger!

The new @uscensusbureau data shows New York City grew to 8.8 million New Yorkers, and we love every single one of you (yes, even YOU)!

This is what happens when you invest in pre-K for all, safe streets and working families.

1:52 PM · Aug 12, 2021

43 19 Share this Tweet

Peter Lobo, the city's chief demographer, said he was "feeling really good" about the census figures

"The city's growth actually outpaced the growth of the nation," said Lobo. "That is unusual for a mature city like New York."

One of the key elements of the surprising outcome, said Lobo, was the identification of over 265,000 addresses that the Census Bureau did not previously have.

"Very conservatively," said Lobo, "as a result we added half a million people who would've otherwise been missed."



For the first time, New York City funded a census outreach effort, spending \$40 million and coordinating with dozens of local community groups who had close ties to populations that often go undercounted. This appears to have overcome the apprehensions of many immigrants and marginalized populations as well as a once-in-a-century pandemic that left millions of residents shut indoors, as well as efforts by the Trump administration (<https://gothamist.com/news/time-to-hit-the-panic-button-nyc-going-it-alone-in-rush-to-beat-the-census-deadline>) to end the census count early and to not include non-citizens in the count.

"We knew that the hardest to reach New Yorkers, undocumented immigrants etcetera would be very hard to reach by the federal government's door knockers, and we're incredibly, incredibly proud to see the results," said Amit Singh Bagga, who served as the Deputy Director of the city's census outreach.



Half the city's growth, said Lobo, came from an increase in the Asian New Yorker population.

While this is momentous, its true import will be measured by redistricting, said Jerry Vattamala, the director of the democracy program at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

"The new lines should reflect the growth so that communities that are growing have an equal chance, an equal say to have political participation," he said, noting that often redistricting is used to minimize the political representation that should accompany a community's population growth.

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Good Evening • 15 hours ago

Well that should stop the narrative around Covid being the end of cities and the end of NYC. Maybe people realized living in Austin, TX is not a replacement for NYC but rather a glorified Fort Worth with a strip of live music venues?

7 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Fool → **Good Evening** • 14 hours ago

Build more houses in NYC and more people will be able to move here!

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Good Evening → **Fool** • 14 hours ago

I approve of this message, Much too much of the 5 boroughs is single and 2 family homes, Transit is a big part of that equation however,

6 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Fool → **Good Evening** • 14 hours ago

Reform our civil service accountability so our transit system doesn't suck!

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



J C → **Fool** • 11 hours ago

The transit system was a lot better before the MTA took on huge debts to replace the funds stolen by Rudy + George and then not replaced by any follow on mayor. And I remind you George P was governor for a full 12 years.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Ninjahedge → **Fool** • 3 hours ago

If You Build It, They Will Come - Field of Dreams (1989)

^ | v • Reply • Share >



Daniel → **Good Evening** • 14 hours ago

Well Austin's growth is even more impressive than New York's in this latest census count. Austin's growth percentage rate was 22% between 2010-2020. NYC percentage rate in growth is only around 7-8% from 2010-2020. Which for New York is actually incredible because of how unaffordable it is.

Its more about the unexpected amount of people that stayed here that makes this number so big/surprising. But yea, big cities in the country continued to grow substantially.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

Fool → Daniel • 14 hours ago
FL as well. The Amount of 20% growth counties is incredible.
^ | v • Reply • Share >

slowp → Fool • 12 hours ago
The biggest problem with moving to Florida is that you'd then be surrounded by Floridians.
7 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

Master_G → slowp • 3 hours ago
check that, snow bird
^ | v • Reply • Share >

Ninjahedge → slowp • 3 hours ago • edited
AND that it is all about 5ft above ~~sea~~ sea level.

But I ain't sayin' nothin.

At least I got SOMEONE'S approval of seal...
1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

Good Evening → Daniel • 14 hours ago
Austin is not a fair comparison as it is a Sun Belt city that is in a region and state that is still maturing. NYC on the other hand is one of the densest and oldest urban centers in the country. Our growth says much more than theirs.
9 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

slowp → Daniel • 12 hours ago
Nobody gives a sh*t about Austin.
1 ^ | v 1 • Reply • Share >

iZombieKiller → slowp • 4 hours ago
Not brain dead people like you
^ | v • Reply • Share >

Ninjahedge → slowp • 3 hours ago
THAT'S NOT FAIR!

What did he do?



^ | v • Reply • Share >

ItsMeltsMeltsIsaacT → Daniel • 4 hours ago
Austin and southern cities are still growing, literally: these states have unincorporated areas that keep getting added to their cities' square miles. New York will always be ~300 sq miles, Jersey City will always be ~14 square miles.
4 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

the_uptowner → ItsMeltsMeltsIsaacT • 2 hours ago
To be fair, NYC once grew significantly by incorporating under-populated areas, back

in 1898!

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → Daniel • 2 hours ago

NYC percentage rate in growth is only around 7-8% from 2010-2020.

I don't think you understand how impressive 7-8% growth is for a large and mature city like NYC.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



LordByronBuxton → the_uptowner • 2 hours ago • edited

Well he *did* say: "Which for New York is actually incredible because of how unaffordable it is."

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → LordByronBuxton • 2 hours ago

That statement is tied to NYC's "unaffordability." I'm saying it's incredible even if you took that out of the equation. It's impressive due to NYC's size and maturity.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



LordByronBuxton → the_uptowner • 2 hours ago

You both are correct. What's the problem then?

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → LordByronBuxton • 2 hours ago

The thrust of his comment is about how impressive Austin's growth is versus NYC's growth, which I disagree with.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



Jaqen H'ghar → the_uptowner • 2 hours ago

Yea that kind of growth on a large base actually represents more people than a lot of those eye popping sunbelt growth numbers.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



LordByronBuxton → Good Evening • 3 hours ago

That and the fact that you're still living in Texas, with Abbott as your governor and Cruz as your congressional representation.

5 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



RobNYC → LordByronBuxton • 2 hours ago

And they're actively trying to kill people.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



GentleGiant → Good Evening • 2 hours ago • edited

That misses a couple of things. First, the census measures where people were living on April 1st, just at the beginning of the pandemic and before any exodus would have started. Second, as the article states, a lot of the growth was not because people were moving here but because the city did an impressive job of identifying addresses and encouraging people to fill out the census.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



Jaqen H'ghar → Good Evening • 2 hours ago

Midtown is still pretty dead right now though. The next year or two will be an interesting orgy of creative destruction in the commercial real estate sector with the city budget in the crossfire.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



LordByronBuxton → Jaqen H'ghar • 2 hours ago • edited

Midtown maybe, but the rest of the city, especially the outer boroughs are alive and very well. The next year or two will be more of the same as Midtown slowly crawls back to normal as offices reopen and the international tourists come back as Queens becomes "cool" and therefore expensive as Brooklyn.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → Jaqen H'ghar • 2 hours ago

True, but the number of people who live in Midtown is tiny compared to the rest of the city. The Delta variant will determine how quickly Midtown will bounce back in the upcoming months. Fingers crossed.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Jaqen H'ghar → the_uptowner • an hour ago

I'm more concerned about the office workers coming back because it all that class A office space gets reassessed at lower values for tax purposes the city just lost a massive chunk of its budget.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → Jaqen H'ghar • an hour ago

Yeah, it's worrying. Doesn't really have to do with this census count, at least.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → Good Evening • an hour ago

Are you saying Fox News viewers may be persuaded by facts and evidence??? ROFL!

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



90% Beard, 10% Man • 14 hours ago • edited

The census data is fascinating. Cities are growing across the country while rural areas are experiencing population declines.

5 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Hephastion • 14 hours ago

Wait, what??? What about the narrative that people were leaving NYC in droves?

11 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



slowp → Hephastion • 12 hours ago

The NYPost pitches this bullsh*t whenever a Dem is Mayor.

6 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



iZombieKiller → Hephastion • 4 hours ago

They have as well as several other major cities. The problem is this data is for a decade and was finished before the peak of the exodus caused by the pandemic, deaths because of the pandemic and that closed colleges kept students in their home states.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → iZombieKiller • 3 hours ago

Wrong. This is not based on counts conducted over a decade. No.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



TheOriginalSobchak → the_uptowner • 3 hours ago

The count was done last year, but the difference in numbers is over the last decade.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → TheOriginalSobchak • 2 hours ago • edited

Right, but **@iZombieKiller** seems to be saying is that "this data is for a decade" and therefore "was finished before the" pandemic exodus. It's like he's saying the counting was done up to 10 years before 2020. Laughably not.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



TheOriginalSobchak → the_uptowner • 2 hours ago

I mean, I didn't read it that way, but I can understand how one would...Gothamist writers aren't the only one who suck at formulating a coherent sentence.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → TheOriginalSobchak • 2 hours ago

Based on comments in response to **@iZombieKiller's** duplicate post, others interpreted it the same way too!

^ | v • Reply • Share >



TheOriginalSobchak → the_uptowner • an hour ago

Like I said, the writers here aren't the only ones who have a hard time writing coherently. I just think that one would have to be a complete imbecile living under a rock to think that the census is actually conducted over a period of ten years, so I gave him the benefit of the doubt and interpreted it accordingly.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



the_uptowner → TheOriginalSobchak • an hour ago

Hahah, I didn't give him the benefit of the doubt at all. Fair enough.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



RobNYC → the_uptowner · 2 hours ago

Considering the bidding war on rentals right now, people came back.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Joey Buckets Was Shadow Banned → iZombieKiller · 2 hours ago

The narrative (driven by the usual suspects) that people were leaving NYC pre-dates the pandemic.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Ninjahedge → Hephastion · 3 hours ago

KYLE!

^ | v · Reply · Share >

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Tompkins Square Track Club · 13 hours ago

I thought NYC was supposed to be a desolate ghost town! Are you telling me the 24-hour cable news channels lied to me???

12 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



kevd → Tompkins Square Track Club · 3 hours ago

I mean, Laura Ingram saw an empty bottle of booze on the street once! NYC must be a hellscape.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



RobNYC → kevd · 2 hours ago

I mean, too many wasted booze is a hellscape.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Ninjahedge → Tompkins Square Track Club · 3 hours ago

Isn't that Special...

The Specials - Ghost Town [Official HD Remastered Video]



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racialized- ARUN VENUGOPAL, WNYC

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Coronavirus Statistics: Tracking The Epidemic In New York (/news/coronavirus-statistics-tracking-epidemic-new-york)

These charts show the growth of COVID-19 in New York City and the tri-state area.

JACLYN JEFFREY-WILENSKY AND NSIKAN AKPAN

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STATE SENATE, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Unite **RICHMOND HILL**
OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK

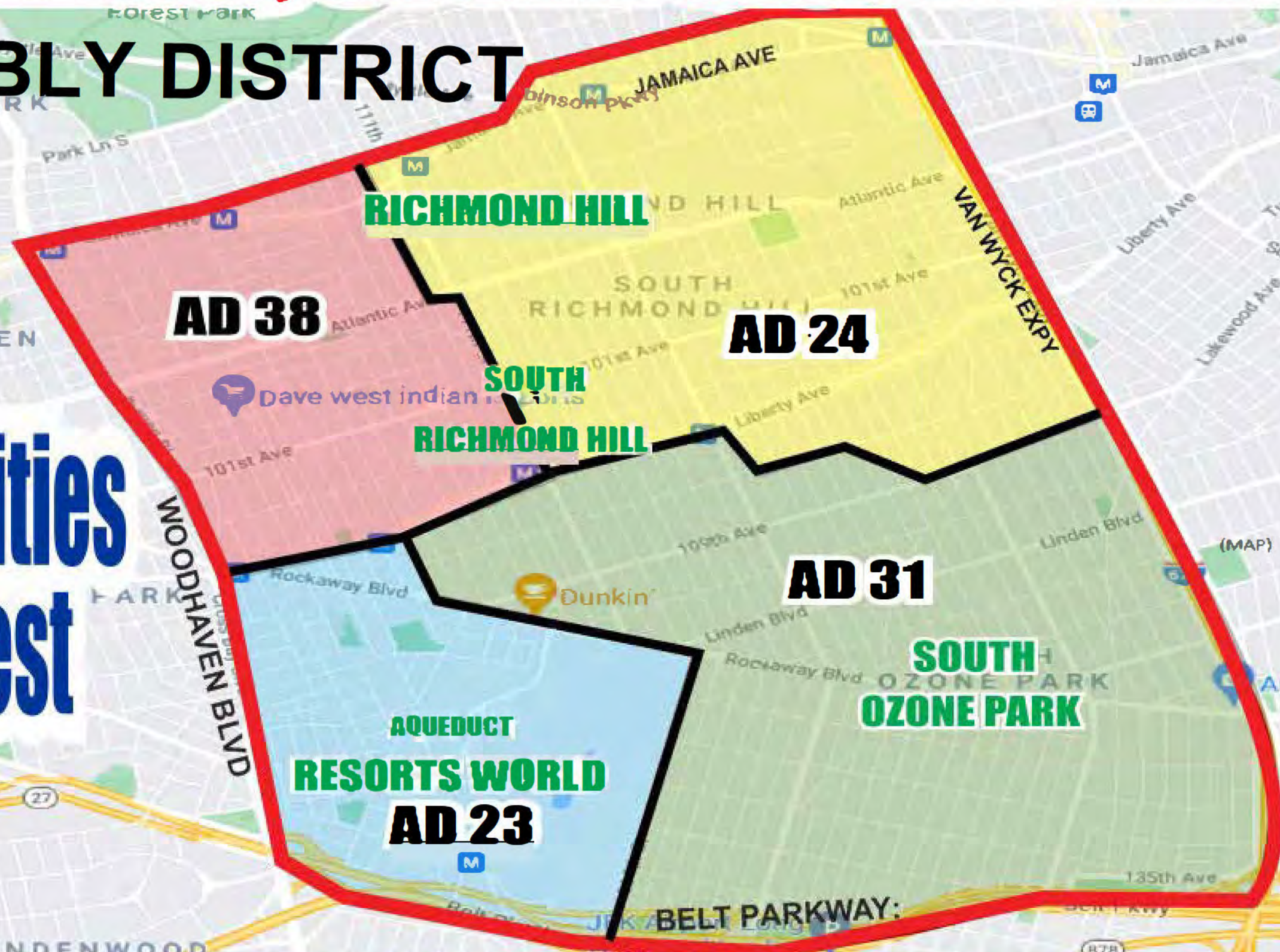


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ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Communities
of Interest



FAIR REDISTRICTING!

Joby Jacob

Map Submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Sat 8/21/2021 9:36 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Joby
- **Last Name:** Jacob

- **Description:** Using DistrictR & 2020 data, I've drawn geographically compact, contiguous NYS Senate districts in Queens which give minorities a voice. 3 districts 10, 17 & 18 cross into Brooklyn due to keep districts at 320,000 people but this creates 2 hispanic plurality (17 & 18) and 1 black plurality (10) district. Additionally, district 11 becomes AAPI majority and keeps Downtown Flushing together with its outlying community. District 12 is geographically compact & contiguous, with a white plurality District 13 is a hispanic majority district District 14 is a black majority district District 15 is a hispanic & asian coalition majority district District 16 becomes a hispanic & asian - coalition majority district. Detailed plan can be found here: <https://districtr.org/plan/37742>
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Map Submitted

Joby Jacob

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Sat 8/21/2021 9:56 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

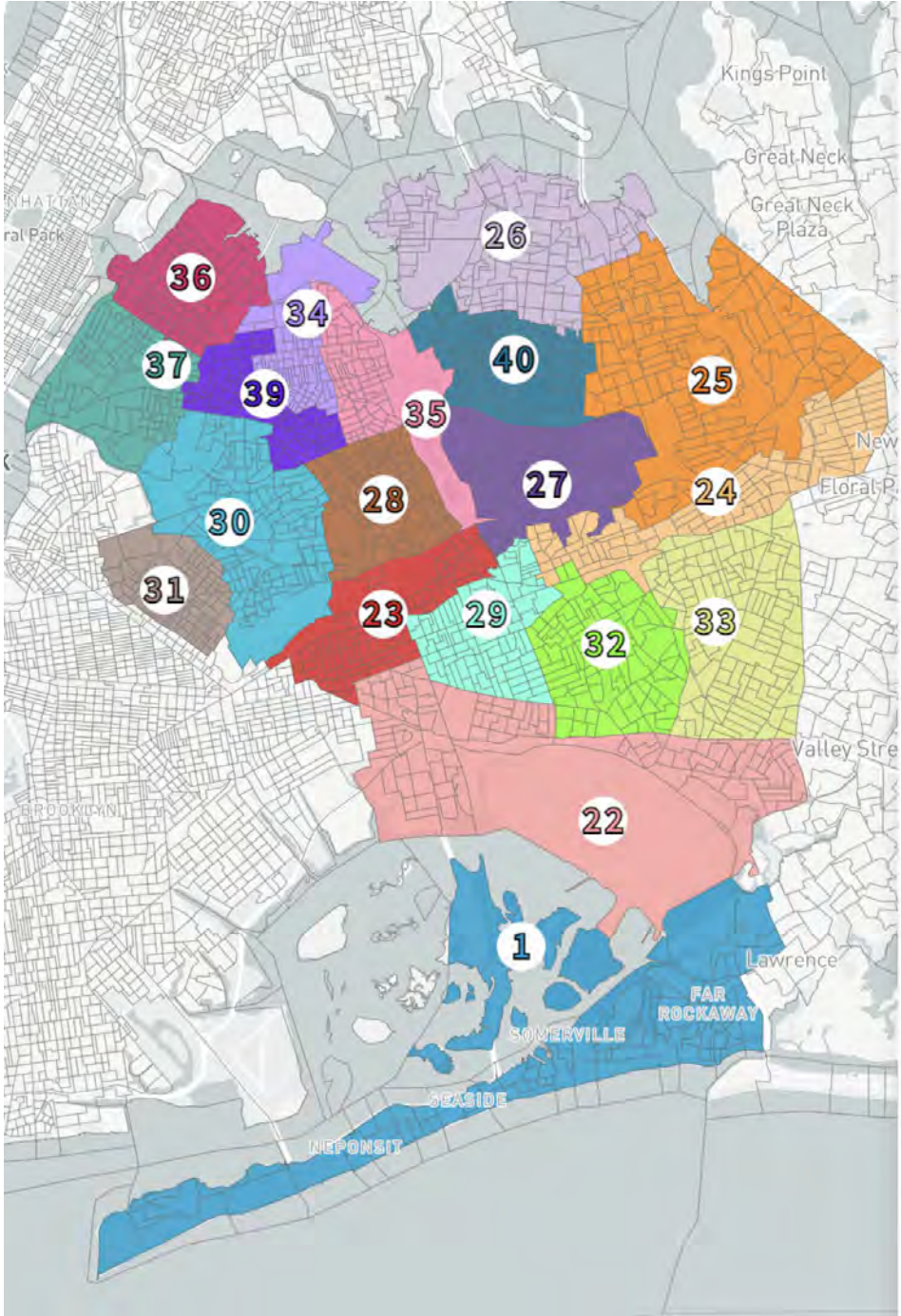
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Joby
- **Last Name:** Jacob

- **Description:** Using DistrictR I've mapped out assembly districts for Queens. These districts are drawn to be geographically compact and looking at where lines can be drawn to increase minority representation. The coalition shown on the chart on the right is a hispanic-asian coalition. In this scenario: AD1 is a minority majority district that keeps the Rockaway peninsula intact AD23 is a Hispanic plurality (49.6%) district with significant AAPI population (19.8%) AD24 is a South-Asian / Hispanic district centered on Hillside Ave in Eastern Queens. AD25 is an AAPI majority district AD26 is an AAPI majority district AD27 is an AAPI majority district AD28 is a fairly mixed but geographically compact district AD29 is a Richmond Hill district where Hispanic & AAPIs together constitute the majority AD36 would be the only white-majority district. AD39 & AD40 are AAPI majority districts I believe this map keeps communities of interest together and would significantly increase the political voice of minority communities in Queens county.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

This e-mail has been automatically generated



Population	Data Layers	Evaluation	
	White	Coalition	Black
1	31.6%	28.5%	34.5%
22	19.8%	35.8%	33.7%
23	16.3%	69.4%	7.2%
24	10%	64.9%	13.9%
25	33.7%	57.5%	5.5%
26	33.7%	62.6%	1.7%
27	33.4%	52.8%	9.4%
28	44.6%	47%	2.9%
29	5.6%	58.1%	13.9%
30	49.5%	46.2%	1.7%
31	26.1%	60.6%	9%
32	1.4%	25.1%	62%
33	1.6%	14.3%	76.5%
34	10.9%	84.4%	2%
35	3.9%	85%	8.8%
36	53.5%	36.6%	4.3%
37	35%	52.2%	7.5%
39	11.1%	84.8%	1.6%
40	7.7%	88.3%	2.3%
Overall	52.5%	29%	13.7%

Jackie de Dios

Dear IRC Commission,

I am submitting this testimony in support of community-led efforts by Little Manila Queens Bayanihan Arts (LMQBA) and the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) as they represent the APA Voice Redistricting Task Force. Their advocacy efforts are integral to providing the long overdue representation of the Filipino American community in Queens, New York. The Little Manila community stretches along Roosevelt Avenue roughly from 54th Street to 75th Street, and is currently divided between at least three assembly districts. It is our hope that Little Manila be officially recognized as a community of interest, and more importantly, that it be kept together in the same state assembly district.

My family has history in Little Manila. Throughout the 1980s-1990s, my parents Ignacio and Lydia de Dios operated two small businesses – Divisoria Food Mart, a Filipino American grocery store located on 69-06 Roosevelt Avenue and Jackie’s Pasalubong, a Filipino American Restaurant at 69-11 Roosevelt Avenue. Divisoria was the second business established after Fil-Am Food Mart, the oldest operating business in Little Manila. Johnny Air Cargo was the third established business, and Golden Oven followed on the corner of 70th Street and Roosevelt. From there, more restaurants, grocery stores, and businesses arose. In the early Aughts, it was a thrill for the Fil-Am community to see Red Ribbon and Jollibee, two major business brands from the Philippines, establish their storefronts in the Little Manila community. It meant that our community was large enough to generate economic interest and staying power. Today, there are start-up businesses established by young professionals such as From Kora and Purple Dough – two food artisan establishments that showcase more growth from our community.

I share this history because as a born and raised Woodside, Queens, resident, I believe in the value of my community and the socio-economic and cultural contributions that we have made to Queens, New York City, and New York State. To this day, my father still lives in Little Manila, just around the corner from our first grocery store. Prior to Covid-19, I visited the area with friends to enjoy meals at Rosario’s, to pick up a Chicken BBQ plate at Ihawan, or to visit relatives with my daughter who is learning about her Filipino heritage. I continue to live in Woodside in NYS District 30 where I raise my family and advocate for education and public safety initiatives. I am also a writer who has written a novel entitled, *69-06 Roosevelt Avenue* which is based on growing up in Woodside, Queens and being a witness to the growth of my community. But the true reason I wrote my story is because I was worried that one day, no one would remember my community because it would be erased. In 2021, with the displacement of Filipino American businesses and residents, my worry seems to be coming true. The Filipino American community is multi- and intergenerational. We should be recognized in the same way as Chinatown or Koreatown is in Flushing or Lower Manhattan – sadly, this is not the case. I feel it is a true disservice to our community that our representatives should properly address and rectify.

Please consider revising the district map so that Little Manila can be recognized as a complete and whole community. We have historical roots in Queens set down by our parents and cultivated by us, their children, and their grandchildren. We should not be relegated to the status of a marginalized and invisible people but one that is valued for our community spirit and significant contributions to Queens.

Respectfully,

Jackie de Dios

Resident, NYS D30

School Leadership Member and Executive Board Member, PS70Q

Writer and Community Advocate

Good afternoon Chair Imamura and Respected Commissioners on the panel.

Hello Everyone,

I am Dr. Minewattie Gayadin Ali-Ed.D

I am a newly Retired NYC Elementary School Teacher who taught in four schools in School District 27 in South Ozone Park, Queens for over 22 years.

I was born and raised in Guyana and immigrated to Queens, New York in August 1977. I was a pioneer and first wave of Guyanese to come to the U.S. I take great pride in this.

Guyanese are the second largest foreign -born population in Queens, and are the Fifth largest population in New York City, but we have always lacked Guyanese representation in local government.

Indo -Guyanese are predominantly Hindus, Muslims, and a small percentage of Christians. Diwali is a Hindu holiday celebrated at Night with family, yet in November 2001, Parent Teacher's Conference was scheduled on Diwali, with no consideration to the population's culture. In Guyanese neighborhoods, the school teachers are mostly white and many live in Long Island. At the end of the school day, I have seen teachers go home to Long Island, and not engage with the community. Children need representation. They need educators who reflect their background. We need representatives who understand that.

As mentioned, Indo -Guyanese are predominantly, Hindus, Muslims, and a smaller percentage are Christians. Some Hindus are vegetarians, or don't eat beef, Muslims don't eat pork. This is not an allergy. This is not a preference. This is culture. There is no one to advocate for our children's needs and diets in schools. We need to see representation for our children.

I have lived in Richmond Hill and Ozone Park for the entirety of my life in the US.

As a member of the community, an educator, and concerned citizen, I want to highlight some of the reasons I find are important for redistricting.

Outside of school, we have working class parents, a high cost of real estate, multi-generational households, seniors who may be dealing with health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and cholesterol. We need representatives who understand these nuances.

Recently, Liberty Avenue was renamed, Little Guyana. It was a wonderful symbol. But a sign is not enough. Little Guyana deserves political representation as well. After over 40 years of building local businesses, enhancing the community and being an integral part of New York City vibrant diversity, we earn a seat at the table. Its time you give it to us. I ask that South Ozone Park, Ozone Park and Richmond Hill be combined as one District instead of splitting our community into four districts, and denying us fair representation in local government. Our community should not be split into four districts-District 38, District 31, District 24, and District 23 which is currently what is happening.

Thank you for listening and I look forward to positive redistricting.

Unite Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, our communities of interest in Queens, NYC, into 2 State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness

Most Honorable Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

The recently released census numbers confirm a very large, exponential, increase in our numbers of South Asians residing in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park. In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/8/12/22622709/nyc-asian-surgin-population-electoral-power>

However, we are currently sliced into seven different Assembly districts, making it difficult for our communities to coalesce around a representative focused on our priorities or receive services responsive to our medical, educational, vocational, economic, ethnic, religious, historical, racial, cultural, language, customs, dietary and/or other needs, as the last Covid pandemic, during which we had the highest infection rates, painfully demonstrated:

https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/covid-rates-soaring-in-south-queens/article_ce446f19-f242-5095-a7a1-5b3a321eba21.html

Our exponentially increased numbers justify and mandate two (2) State Assembly districts, a State senate district, and a Congressional seat,

We have no voice or representative, and any other decision by your respected Commission will not only result in the dilution and suppression of our voices, issues and problems, but will also abrogate your duties and responsibilities, while annihilating our rights,

Consequently, in accordance with justice, the Voting Rights Act and the NY and US Constitutions, and because these districts share common established ties of common interest and association, that it is only right that you keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, as is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted.

Thank you for your kind courtesies and consideration.

Minewattie Gayadin Ali Ed.D.

Please see attached Attachments # 1-5

STATE SENATE, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Unite **RICHMOND HILL**
OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK



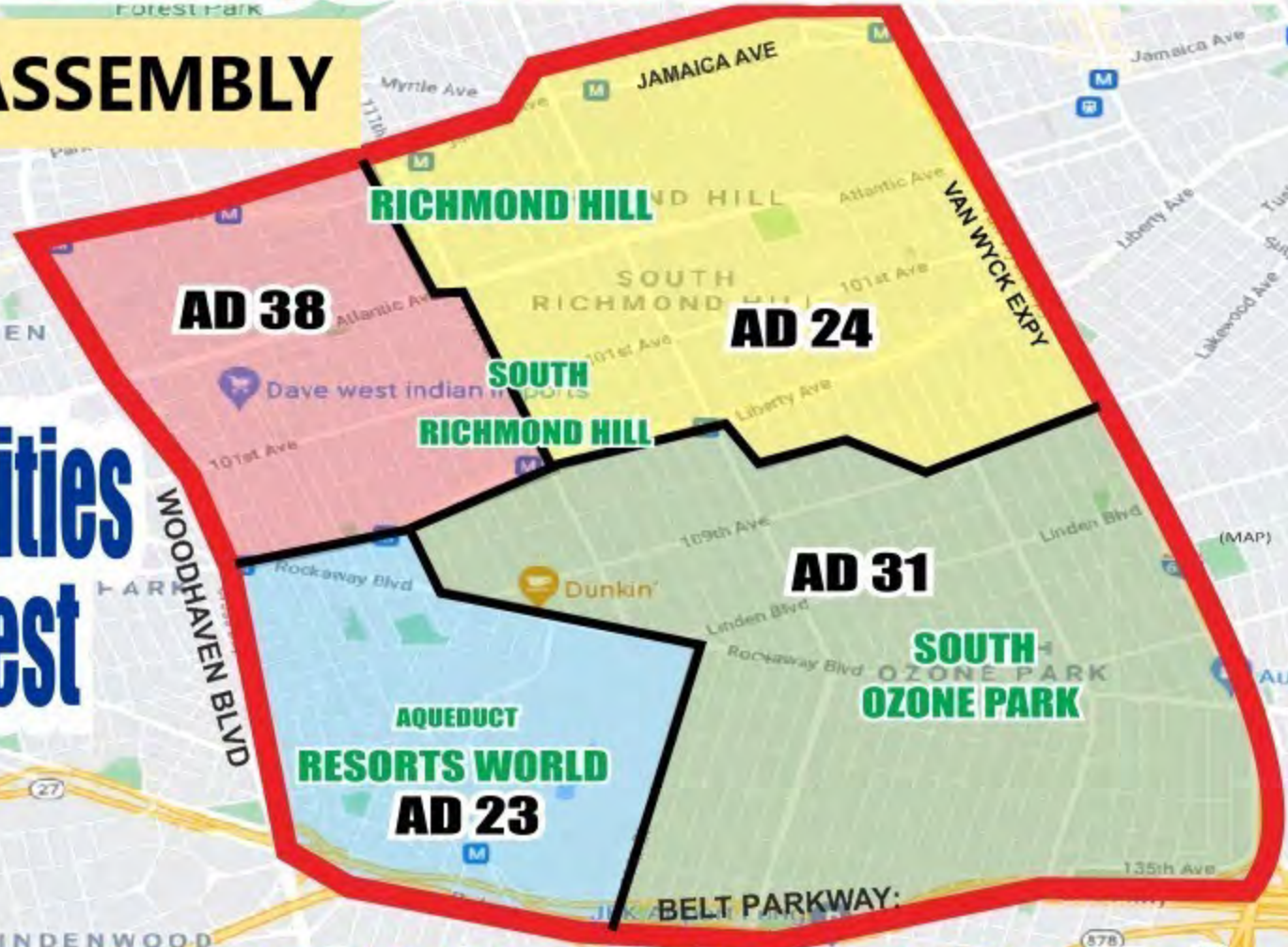
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STATE ASSEMBLY

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FAIR REDISTRICTING!

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021 | REPORTING FOR NEW YORKERS

CENSUS

NYC Asian Activists Seek to Turn Surging Population Into Electoral Power

New Census numbers showing a 43% increase of Asian New Yorkers in Brooklyn and a 29% jump in Queens fuel demands for more representation as the process for redrawing elected officials' district lines heats up.

BY CHRISTINE CHUNG, CLIFFORD MICHEL AND WILL WELCH | AUG 12, 2021, 8:37PM EDT



The southern side of 8th Ave. at 46th St. in Sunset Park, Brooklyn which is in a different Senate district than the northern side of the street. | Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

New Census numbers out Thursday show a robust 7.7% population increase for New York City since 2010 — and even bigger surges for Asian New Yorkers at a time when Asian candidates and community groups are moving to build out political power.

In Queens, the Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents — far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth.

In Brooklyn, the number of Asian residents counted by the Census swelled to nearly 420,000, a nearly 43% increase from 2010, compared with a 9.2% hike in the borough's population overall.

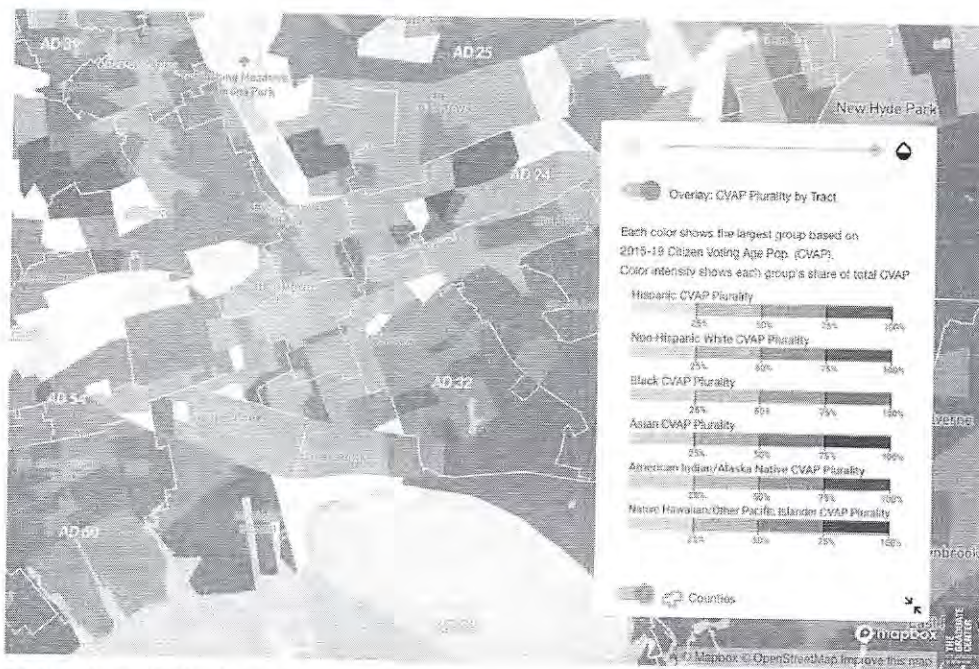
With strength in numbers, New York City's diverse Asian communities are organizing to build political power that reflects them and their needs, as a state commission readies to redraw congressional and state legislative district lines.

"In the past, they would divide a neighborhood or a community who they felt were not politically engaged or were not visible," said Elizabeth OuYang, who is coordinating a redistricting task force composed of 20 Asian community groups across the city. "We are going to make sure that we are very visible in this redistricting round."

The new coalition is already at work to break down what members call artificial borders dividing communities and leaving them shortchanged on elected leadership and public services.

Case in point: Richmond Hill and Ozone Park. These Queens neighborhoods have more Asian residents — including many of Guyanese, Trinidadian or Punjabi heritage — than Black or white ones, past population surveys have shown.

Yet these hubs of Asian life in Queens are currently sliced into seven different Assembly districts — making it difficult for the communities to coalesce around a representative focused on their priorities or receive services tailored to their language, dietary or other needs, activists say.



The Queens neighborhood of **Richmond Hill** (center) is split between seven Assembly districts. | Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

“For us, redistricting is not an academic exercise, nor simply a mathematical equation. It means power, accountability, and equal access to services that we are entitled to for the next 10 years,” OuYang said.

No Representation

Every decade, following the U.S. Census, lawmakers redraw district lines to reflect population changes, with the goal of achieving equal representation. By law, and backed by litigation, so-called communities of interest, such as racial groups, are not supposed to be divided in a way to weaken their political power.

This year, for the first time in New York, the process for seats in Congress and the state Senate and Assembly is being overseen by an independent commission.

Its 10 members are largely appointed by the party leaders of the state Legislature, and working under updated rules that explicitly require equal apportionment and compact districts, while forbidding racial discrimination.

Queens and Brooklyn residents packed online hearings last month to voice concerns about what they described as divisive lines thwarting their chances of electing representation.

For much of the July 22 Queens hearing’s five hours, the focus was on Richmond Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. During the July 29 Brooklyn hearing, speakers pointed out that despite continued Asian population growth in southern Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, Asian residents are outnumbered in every single Assembly and Senate district as currently drawn.

Brooklyn has no Asian representatives in the state Senate or Assembly, Congress or City Council.

District Divided by Water

Richard David, a Guyanese-American district leader who ran for an Assembly seat last year spanning South Ozone Park and part of the Rockaways, said that area's political divisions have created dire outcomes for the community, including a lack of funding for social services.

There are no city or state-funded senior centers in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, or South Ozone Park that primarily serve South Asians and Indo-Caribbean people, he told THE CITY. When constituents seek to reach elected officials, they either don't know whom to call or are overwhelmed by the long list of people to contact, David added.

He cited his District 31, which encompasses parts of South and Southeast Queens, along with the Rockaways, as a "textbook example of gerrymandering."



South Ozone Park, Queens, near the convergence of three Assembly districts. | Jason Scott Jones/THE CITY

The eight neighborhoods within the district, especially those in the Rockaways, each have a very distinct cultural identity, he noted, making it challenging for one candidate to build a broad coalition of support.

"Public transportation does not connect these three parts, so in addition to a car, it would be faster to go by boat to the different parts of the district," said David, who lives in South Ozone Park.

More than 42% of the district's population is foreign born, nearly double the rate in New York State. Closer looks within the district's lines more clearly illuminate significant racial disparities.

The borough's Community District 14, which encompasses most of the Rockaway peninsula, is about 36% Black, about 34% white, and roughly 4% Asian. Community District 10, including Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, is 23.7% Asian, 21% white, and 14% Black.

In the June 2020 Democratic primary, David won the district's northern half in Ozone Park and south Ozone Park resoundingly, but fell short in its southern region. He ultimately lost by about 800 votes to Khaleel Anderson, a 25-year-old Black progressive candidate who then won the November general election. The overall Assembly district is now 45% Black and 12% Asian, the new Census numbers show.

Aminta Kilawan-Narine, founder of the South Queens Women's March, contends that the lines reflect a "blatant disregard for the natural communities of interest that exist." She contends that they also run afoul of the federal Voting Rights Act's requirement for compact and contiguous districts.

"The way in which the lines have been drawn divides and dilutes our ability to be a stronger voice," Kilawin-Narine added. "When a naturally occurring community of interest like ours is so very divided, electeds don't have the kind of vested interest in serving us — after all, we become but a fraction of their constituency."

A Neighborhood Divided

Brooklyn's Sunset Park was once defined by the docks where its largely white residents worked — only to change dramatically after the region's ports mostly moved to New Jersey in 1958.

Today, in addition to a sizable Hispanic population, the area is home to a large number of Asian residents and businesses, part of a revival that is redefining commercial strips in several southern Brooklyn neighborhoods.

But walking north on the area's bustling Eighth Avenue corridor, with scores of Asian-owned businesses, a short stroll from 46th street to 39th street takes a pedestrian through three different State Senate districts.

Those districts and two others in southern Brooklyn are home to more than 220,000 Asian residents. But because the population is splintered into three districts, activists argue they can't effectively rally around a political candidate.



The Brooklyn neighborhood of **Sunset Park**, upper left, is divided between three state Senate districts. | Redistricting & You/CUNY Center for Urban Research (redistrictingandyou.org)

The lines were drawn a decade ago by Albany Republicans with the objective of diluting downstate Democrats' power.

“It’s always said that we don’t vote in the right numbers, but no one ever talks about how our communities are gerrymandered that even if we all would come out to vote it would not make a difference,” said Don Lee, the chairperson of Homecrest Community Services, a nonprofit that provides meals, translation services and social events for Asian American immigrants and seniors.

Homecrest was started in 1997 after its founders saw Asian seniors riding the N train daily to Chinatown in Manhattan to receive social services in a language they could understand. Today, activists say that there are still many needs that aren’t being met for vulnerable Asian residents.

Many Asians in New York City were born outside of the U.S., and the need is pressing for services offered in languages other than English. As of 2018, 21.7% of Asian New Yorkers lived in poverty, according to an annual City Hall survey, higher than the city overall rate.

‘No Rhyme or Reason’

Yet, nonprofits and civic groups say it’s difficult to get the ear of elected officials to support these communities.

“The most active in Sunset Park is Senator [Zellnor] Myrie, but he definitely does spend more time in the Crown Heights neighborhood that he also represents because that is the majority of his district,” said Mon Yuck Yu, vice president and chief of staff of the Academy of Medical and Public Health Services, which focuses on helping immigrant New Yorkers.

“A lot of resources go there and Sunset Park is seeing less. In terms of the other senators that represent Sunset Park, we’ve hardly seen any active outreach or activity or funding levels coming into the neighborhood.”

Matt Baer, a spokesperson for Myrie, said that the senator’s office does a “particularly good job” at representing constituents in Sunset Park — and that there is no “rhyme or reason” as to how the lines were drawn for the district.

“I couldn’t find anybody to defend why Brownsville and Sunset Park are in the same district,” Baer said. “I don’t think any rational person could explain why the lines are drawn the way they are.”

State Sen. Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), whose two-borough district juts into Sunset Park, agreed that the neighborhood was overly divided in the last redistricting cycle.

“This time there should be an effort to provide more complete representation. A Senate district is always going to be difficult,” said Savino. The redistricting commission, she said, “should examine whether this form of gerrymandering is fair to anyone.”



Brooklyn State Senator Simcha Felder attends a meeting in Albany, March 20, 2019. | Photo Courtesy of NY Senate Media Services

Not all of its reps see the division of Sunset Park as unfair.

State Sen. Simcha Felder, whose predominantly Borough Park and Midwood district includes small slice of Sunset Park, said that “since the beginning of creation, every part of the district complains that the other part is getting more attention.”

He said he's allotted a "disproportionate amount" of attention and resources to Sunset Park.

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Over the past 10 years, the number of Asian residents in Brooklyn increased by more than 110,000, to nearly 371,000, far outpacing any other racial group, the latest Census figures show.

Activists see an opportunity to unite Sunset Park, Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay — the three Asian population centers of Brooklyn — into a Senate district that could elect an Asian senator.

Dr. Wah Lee, a lifelong Bensonhurst resident who has a private medical practice in the neighborhood, said he hopes a unified district brings more focused attention to issues like the increase in assaults on Asian New Yorkers.

Lee said that he and his wife were both recently accosted — and that patients have been showing him items they've purchased for self-defense.

Said Lee: "If there were enough services the citizens wouldn't have to do this on their own."

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