



ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

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ASIAN AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

LATFOR Public Hearing

September 7, 2011

Queens, New York

Asian American
Legal Defense
and Education Fund

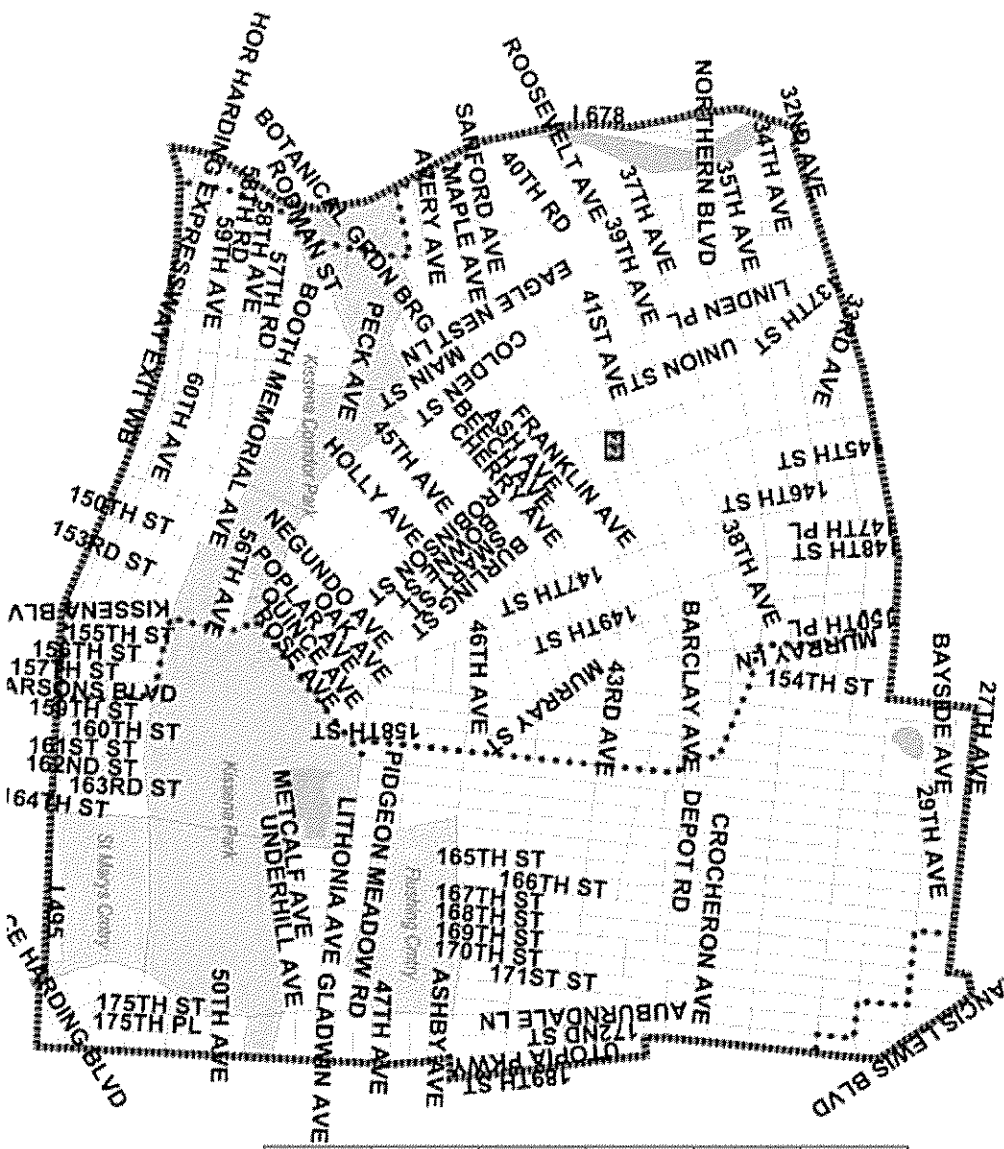


QUEENS



Flushing

POPULATION	152,078
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	+22,891 (+17.7%)
% HISPANIC	16.3%
% NH WHITE	14.8%
% NH BLACK	2.8%
% NH ASIAN	63.8%

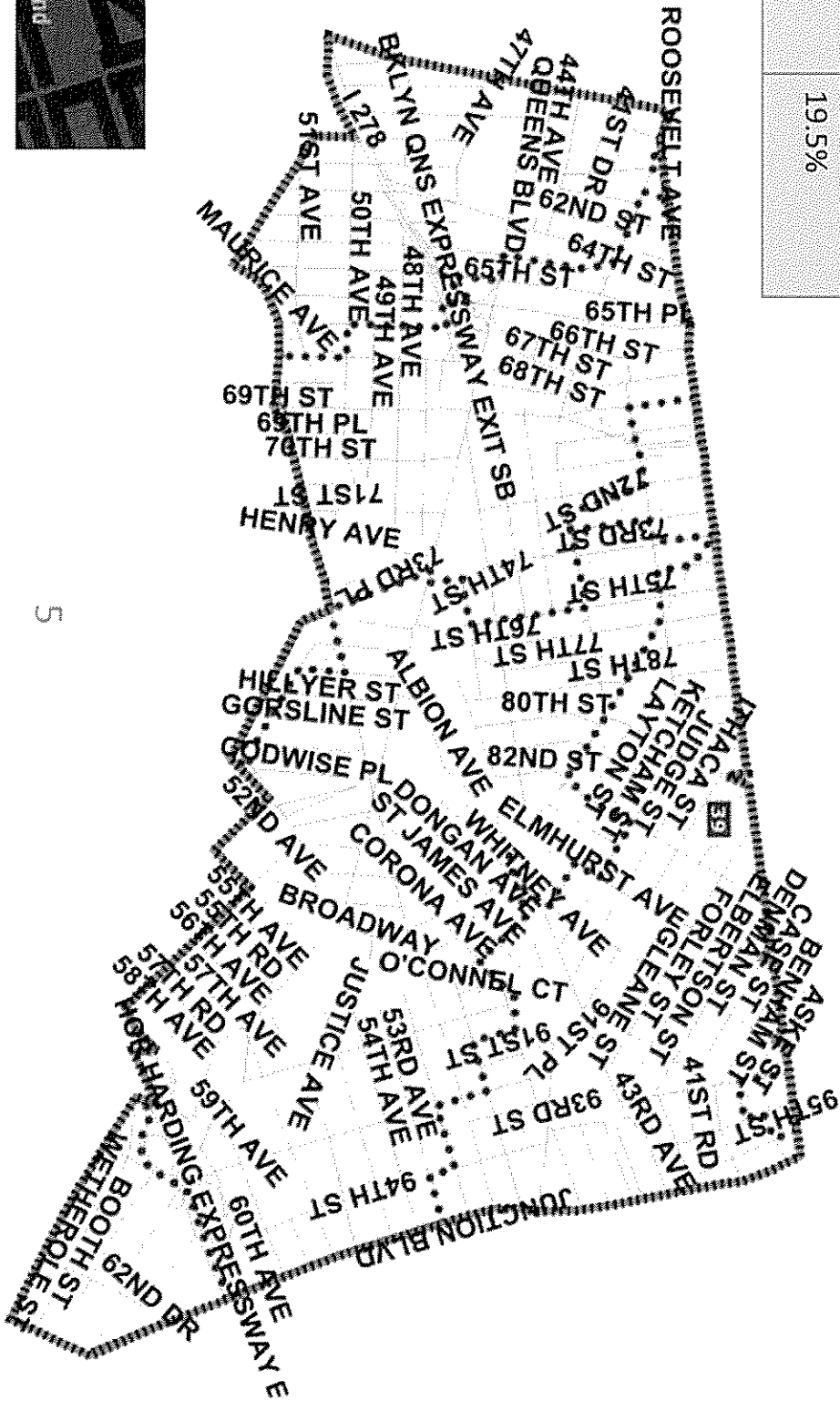


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DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-40,055 (-31.0%)
% HISPANIC	59.5%
% NH WHITE	16.6%
% NH BLACK	2.3%
% NH ASIAN	19.5%

Elmhurst



This is a detailed street map of the Astoria, Oregon area. The map shows a grid of streets. Major roads include Grand Central Parkway (top right), Astoria Blvd (middle right), and various numbered streets. A specific location is marked with a small square and labeled 'ELM HURST ST'. The map also shows the coastline and the location of the Astoria-Megler Bridge.

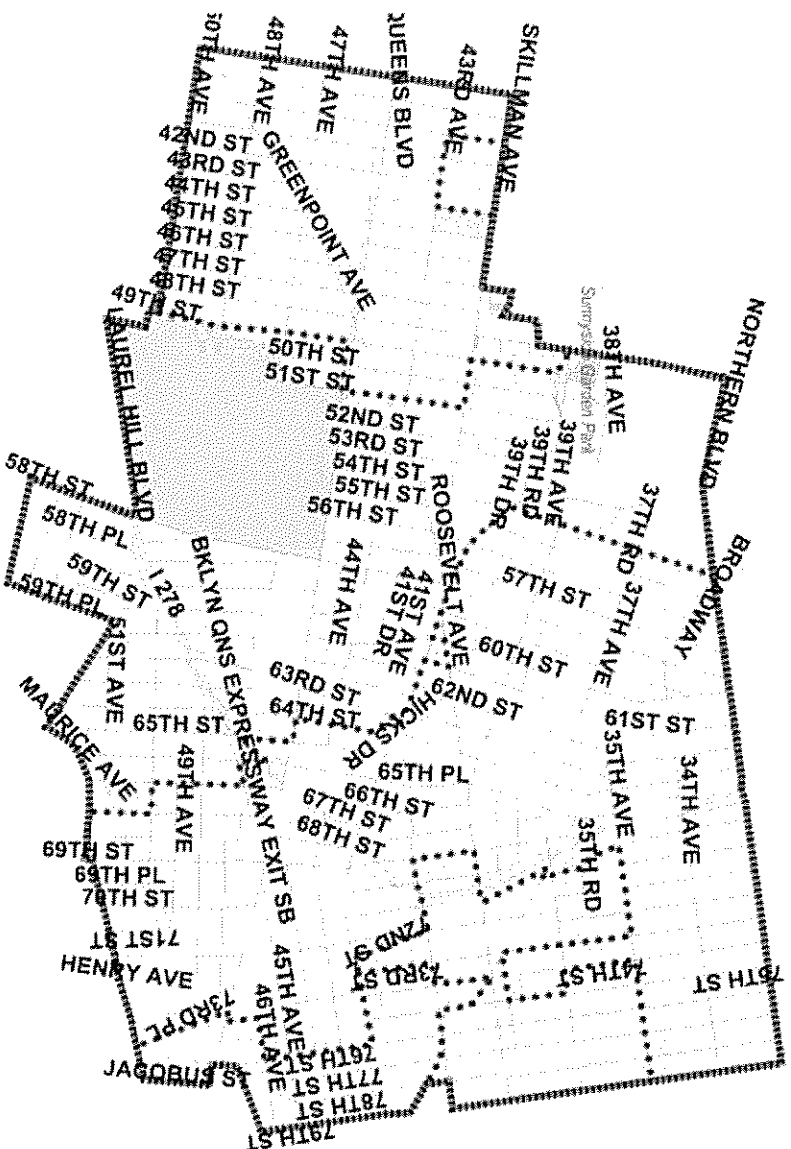
Streets shown include:

- Grand Central Parkway
- Astoria Blvd
- 95th St
- 94th St
- 93rd St
- 92nd St
- 91st St
- 90th St
- 89th St
- 88th St
- 87th St
- 86th St
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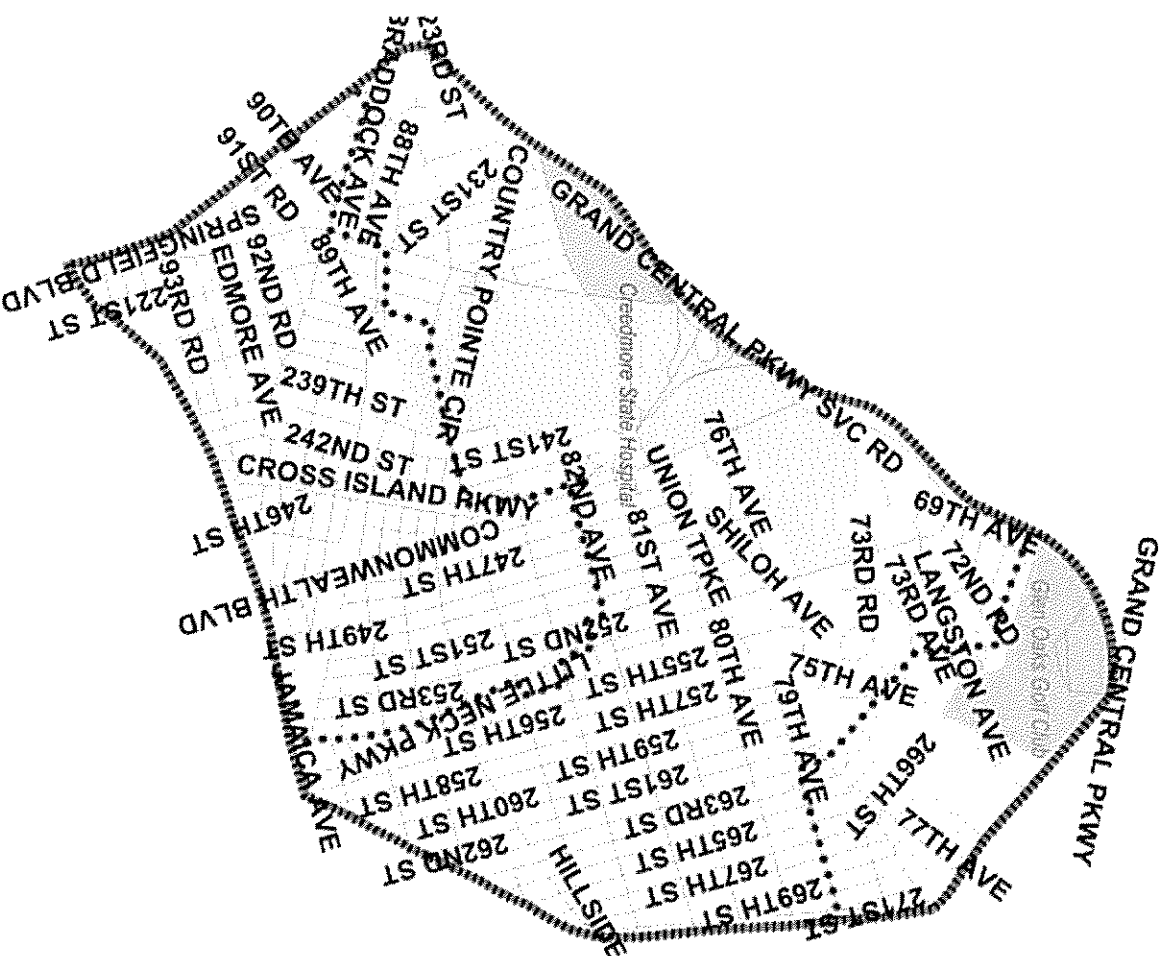
Woodside

POPULATION	124,024
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-5,163 (-4.0%)
% HISPANIC	34.8%
% NH WHITE	23.6%
% NH BLACK	1.3%
% NH ASIAN	37.7%



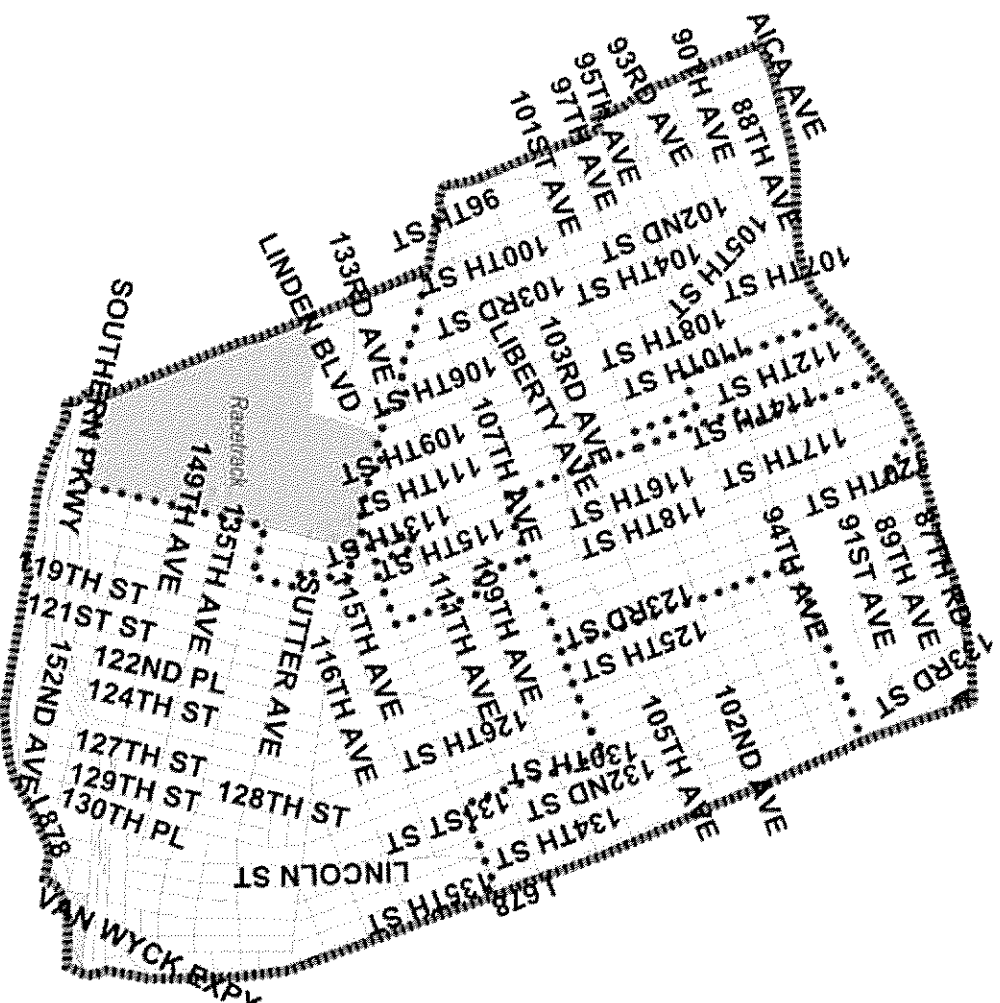
Floral Park- Bellerose- Queens Village- Glen Oaks

POPULATION	54,324
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-74,863 (-57.9%)
% HISPANIC	14.9%
% NH WHITE	36.9%
% NH BLACK	7.0%
% NH ASIAN	35.5%



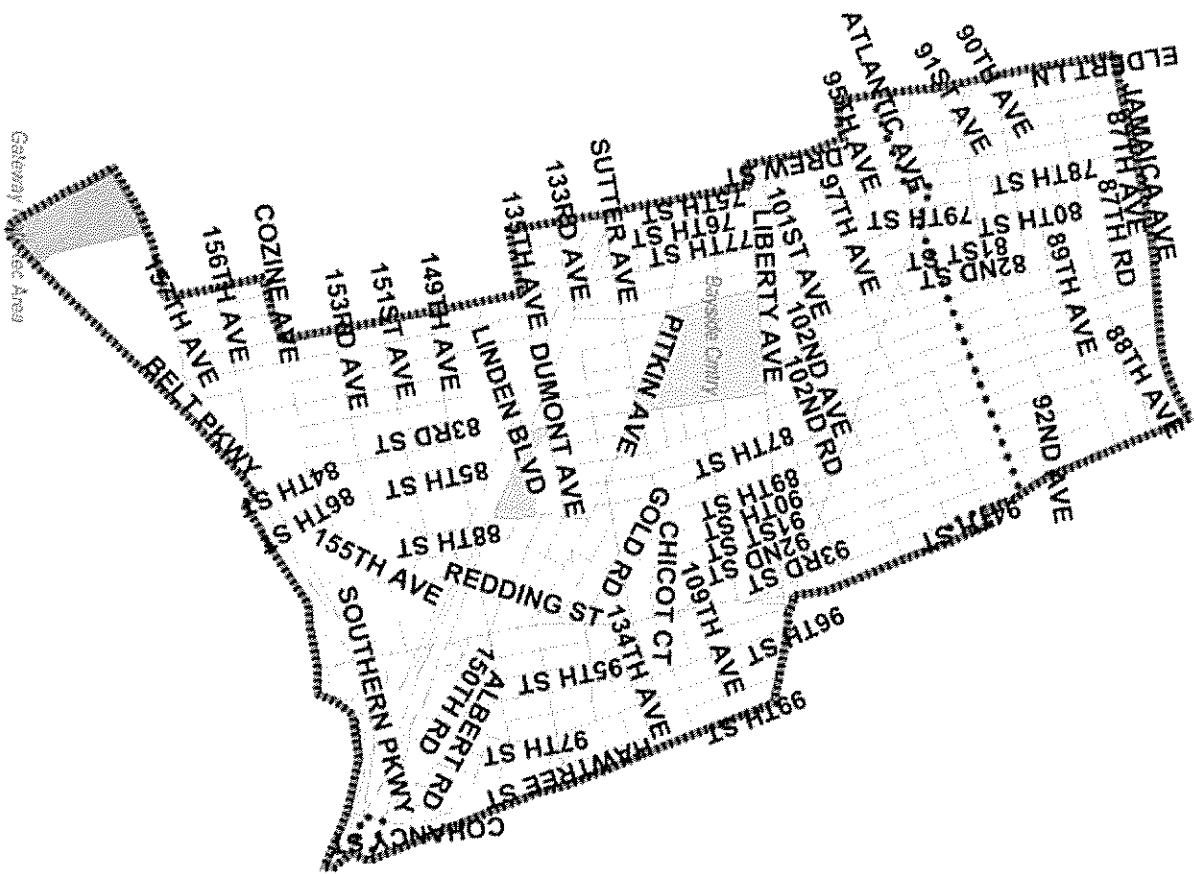
Richmond Hill- South Ozone Park

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%

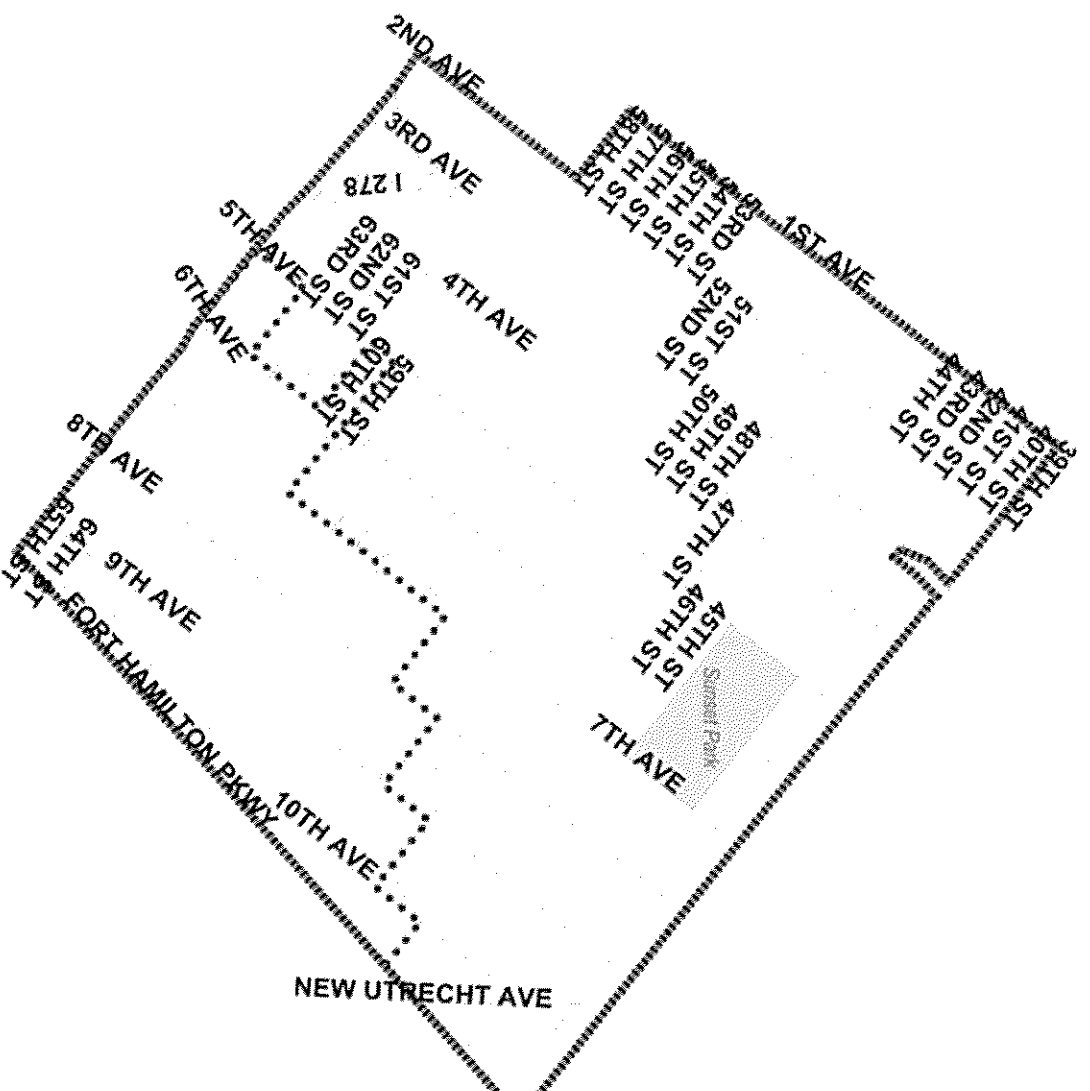


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BROOKLYN



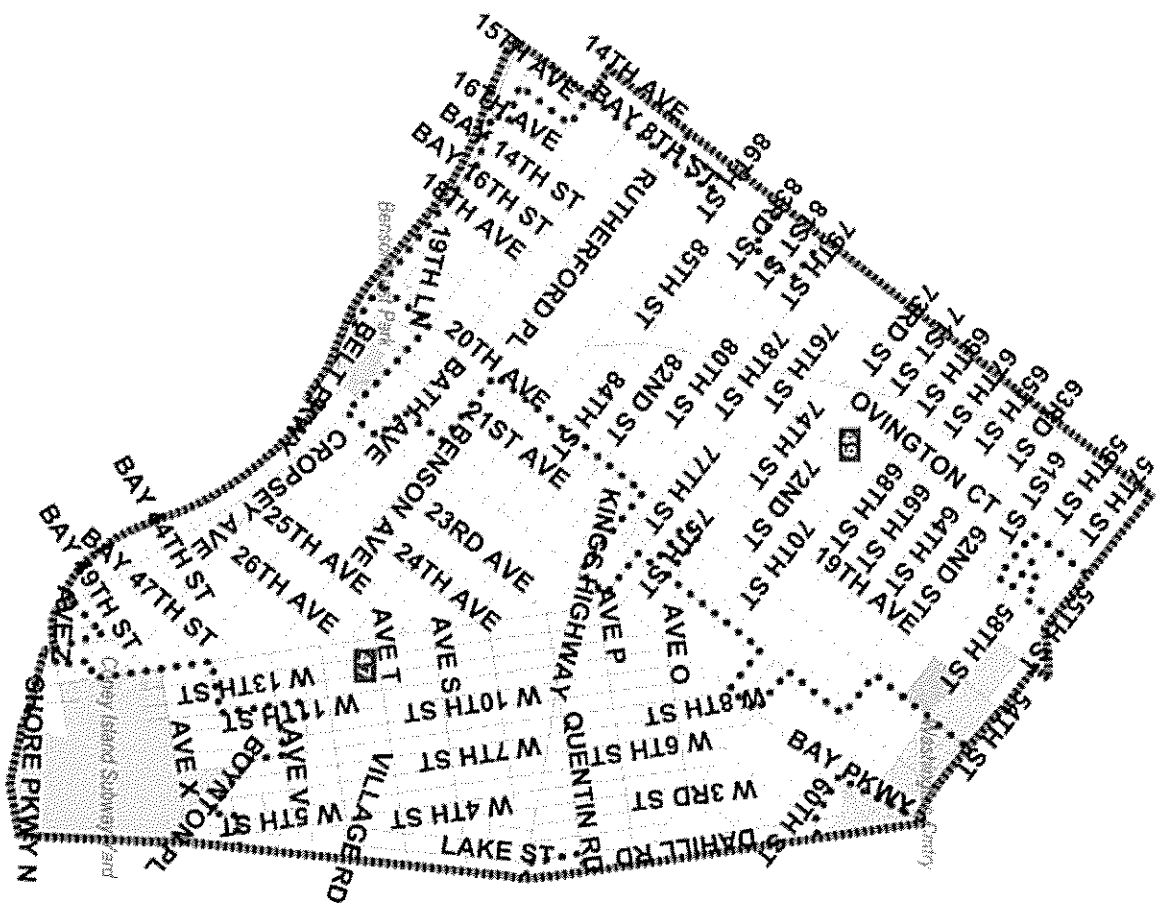
Sunset Park



POPULATION	118,834
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-10,803 (-8.4%)
% HISPANIC	42.6%
% NH WHITE	13.7%
% NH BLACK	1.6%
% NH ASIAN	40.5%

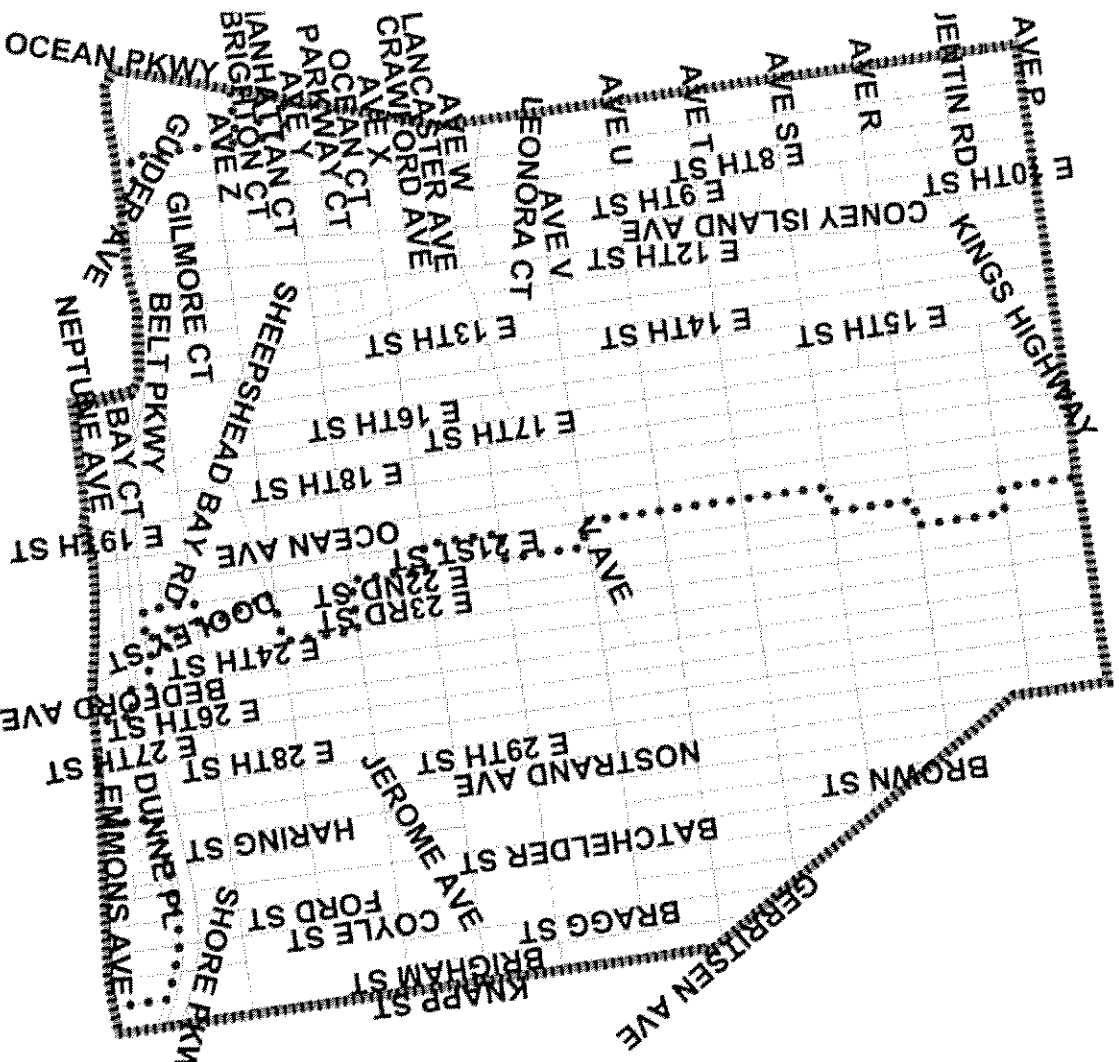
Bensonhurst

POPULATION	219,897
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	+90,710 (+70.2%)
% HISPANIC	13.4%
% NH WHITE	51.5%
% NH BLACK	1.7%
% NH ASIAN	32.0%



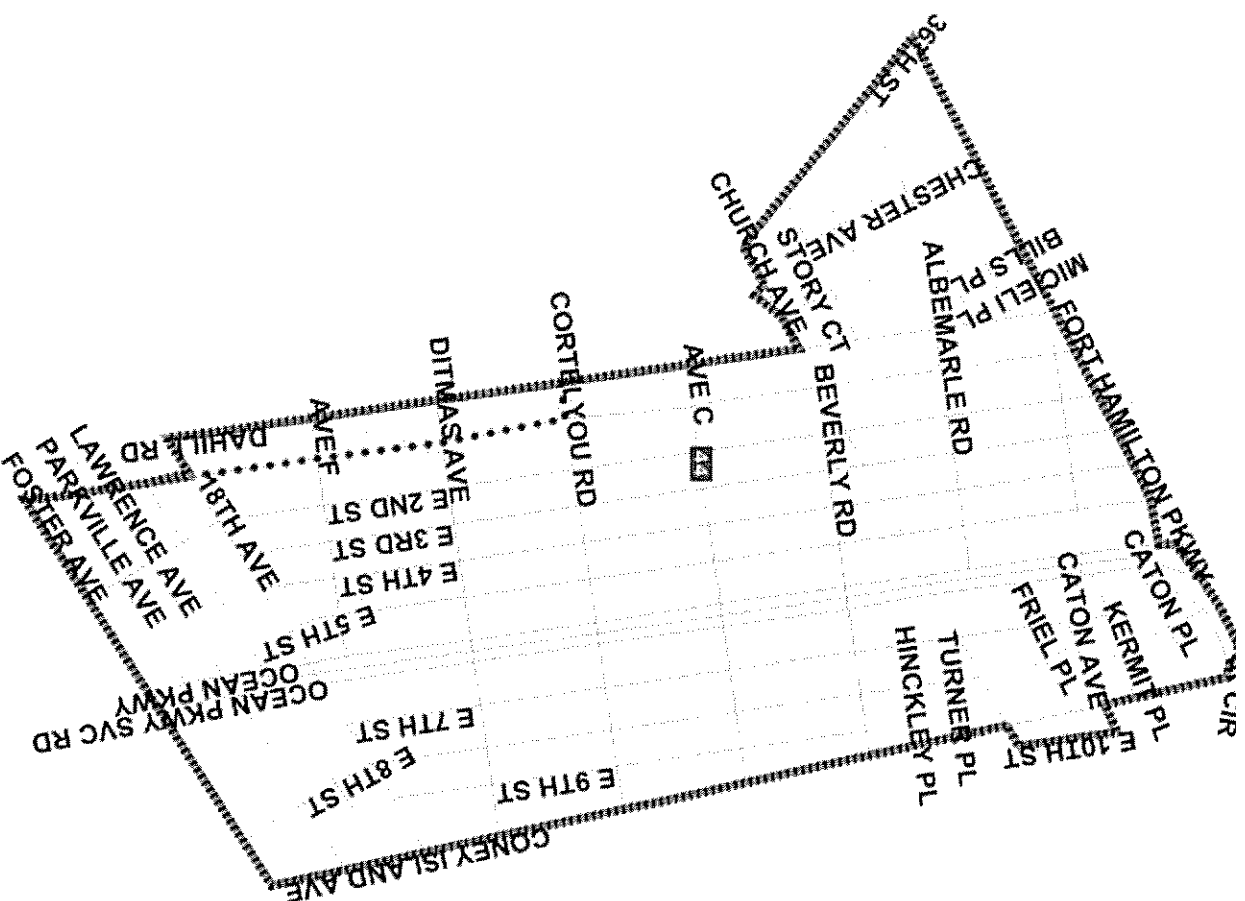
Sheepshead Bay

POPULATION	117,891
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-11,296 (-8.7%)
% HISPANIC	7.8%
% NH WHITE	68.6%
% NH BLACK	4.1%
% NH ASIAN	17.8%



Kensington

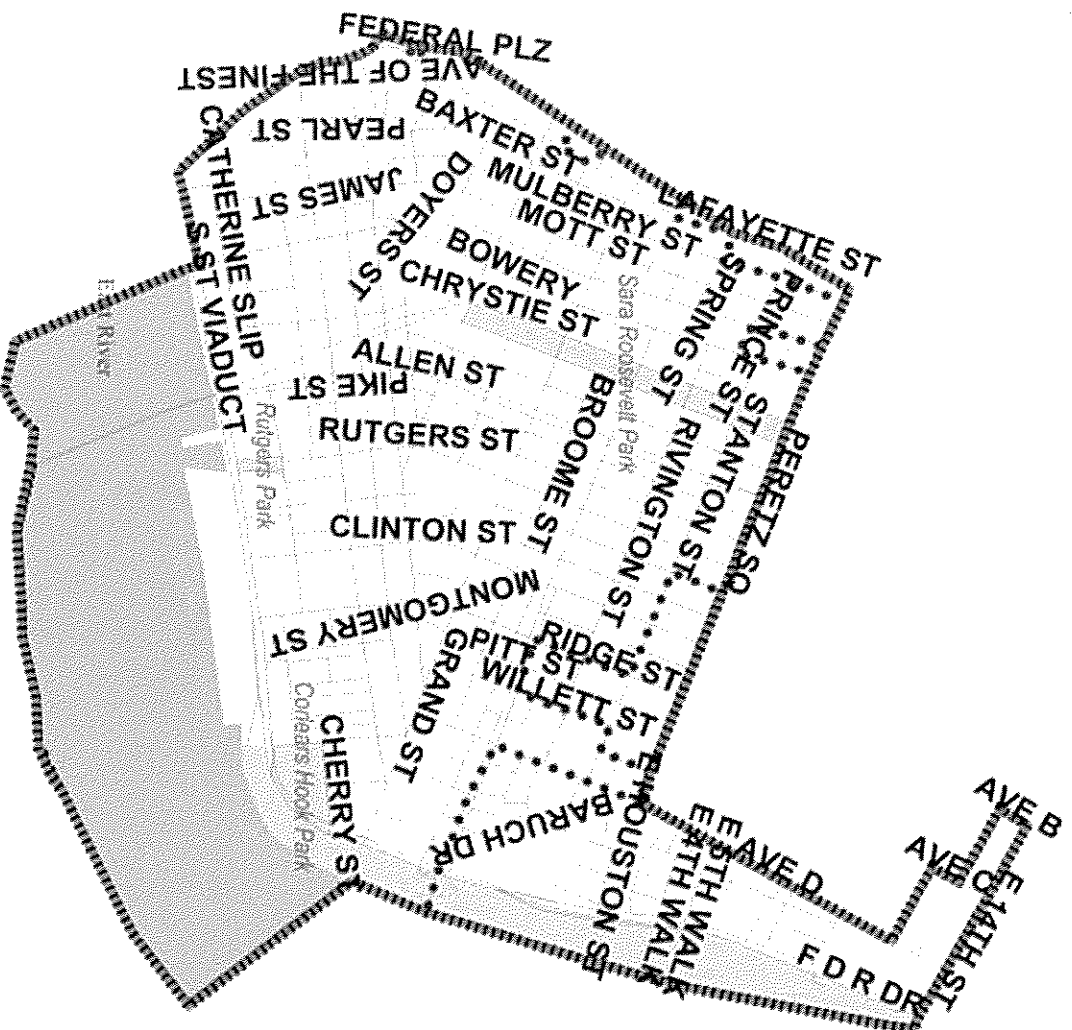
POPULATION	53,700
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-75,487 (-58.4%)
% HISPANIC	17.5%
% NH WHITE	49.8%
% NH BLACK	7.3%
% NH ASIAN	22.0%



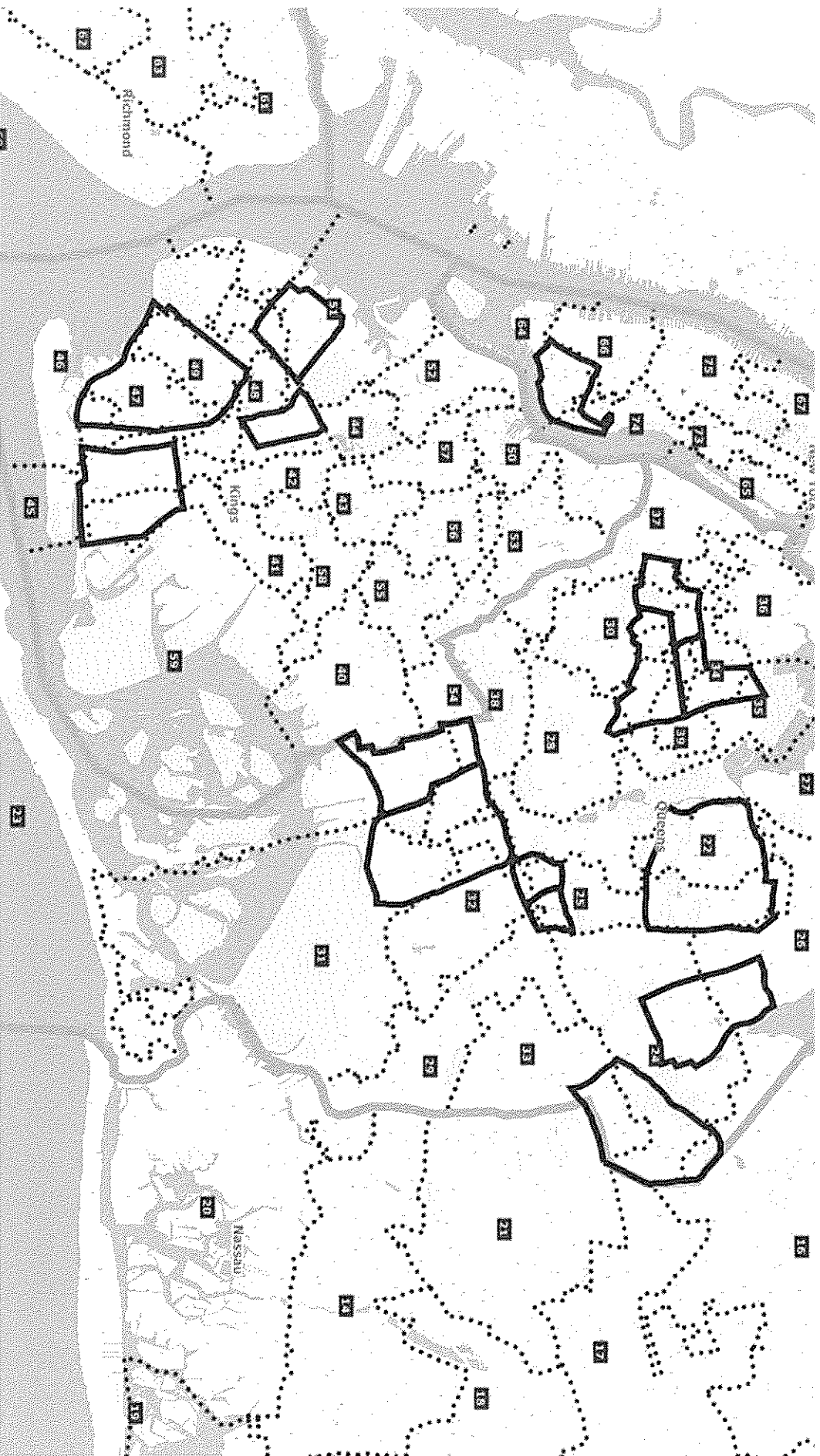
MANHATTAN



Chinatown- Lower East Side

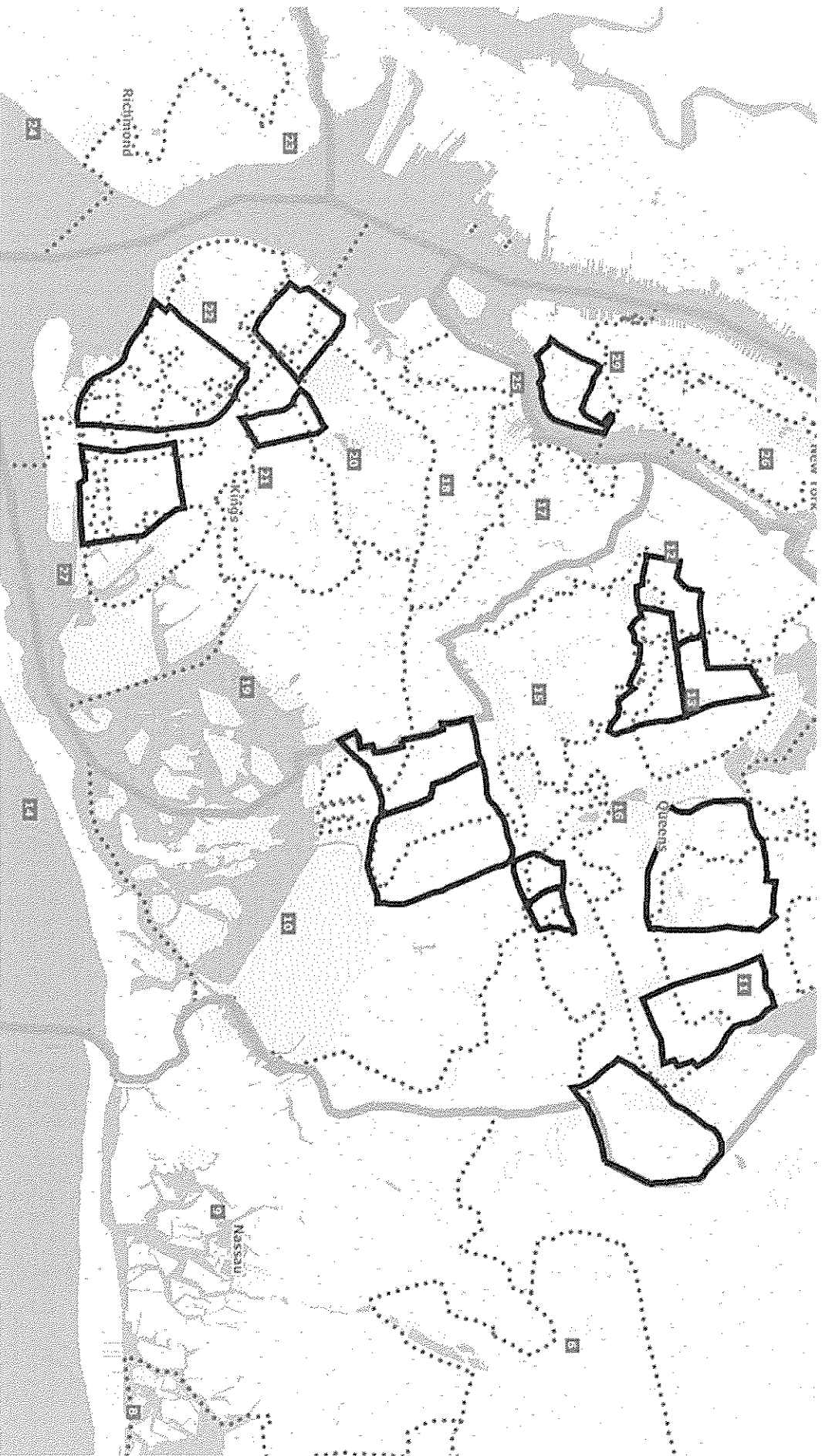


POPULATION	117,057
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-12,130 (-9.4%)
% HISPANIC	26.5%
% NH WHITE	19.4%
% NH BLACK	7.4%
% NH ASIAN	44.9%

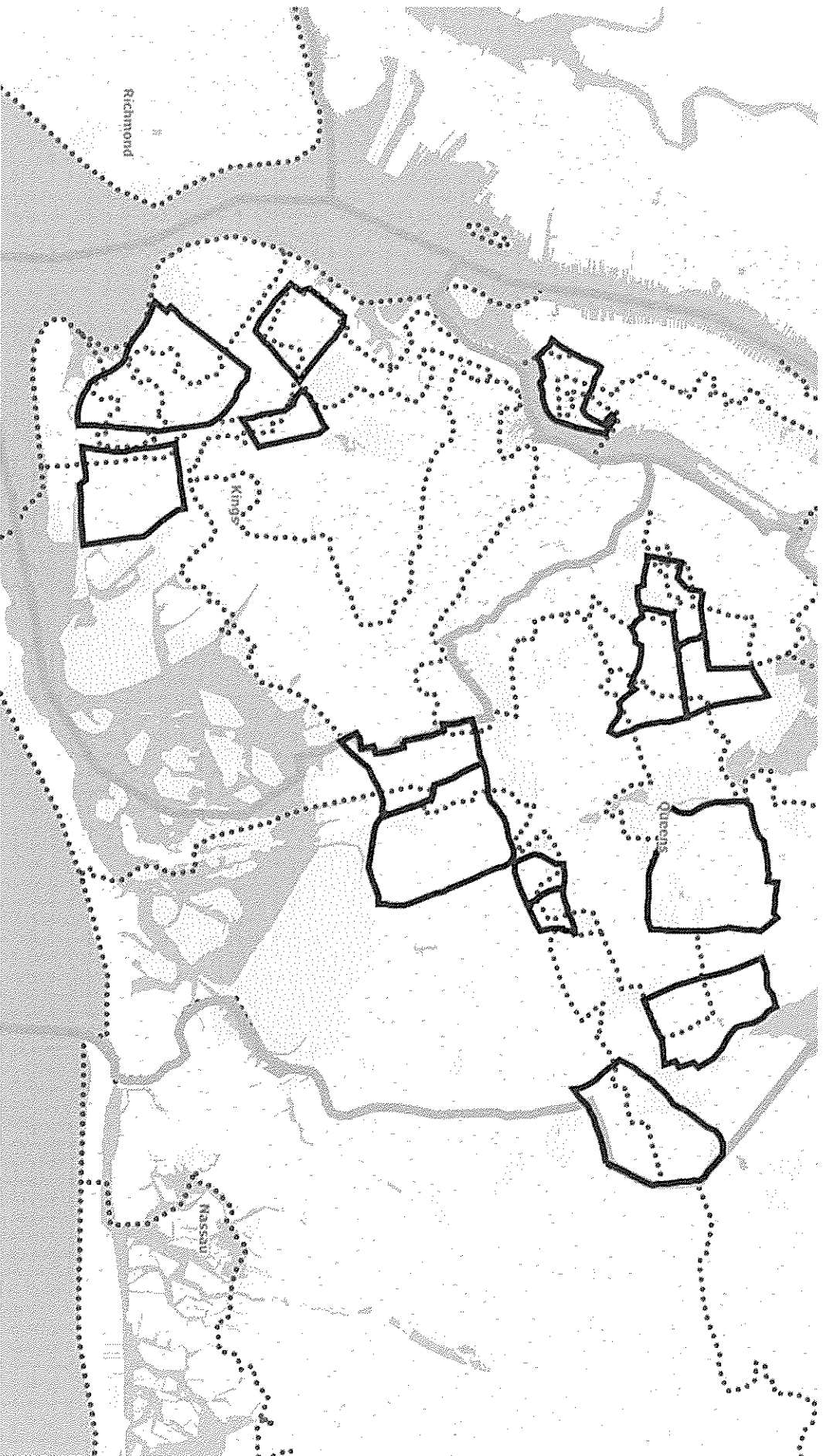


Asian American communities with

current NY State Assembly boundaries



Asian American communities with current NY State Senate boundaries



Asian American communities with

current NY Congressional boundaries



ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

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STATEMENT OF BETHANY LI
STAFF ATTORNEY
ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND
TO THE
~~NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION~~

Public Hearing, August 13, 2012
Brooklyn Borough Hall, Brooklyn, New York 11209

My name is Bethany Li and I am a staff attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), a national civil rights organization founded in 1974. AALDEF works on a broad range of issues including housing and land use policies. Among other things, AALDEF participates in many coalitions and planning initiatives focused on protecting lower-income communities of color in Sunset Park in Brooklyn and Chinatown/Lower East Side in Manhattan.

After interviewing numerous community groups, AALDEF has submitted recommendations for Asian American communities of interest that should not be divided. I have worked extensively in some of these communities with community organizations, residents, workers, small businesses, and property owners. I have also represented workers, residents, and churches in land use and housing cases in both Sunset Park, Brooklyn and Chinatown/Lower East Side, Manhattan. In addition, I have conducted a survey of the impact of luxury development on the housing needs encountered by residents in many of these communities and am drafting a report of the results. Today, I would like to share some of the preliminary results and the experiences of neighborhood residents and workers in Sunset Park and Bensonhurst in Brooklyn and Chinatown/Lower East Side in Manhattan that illustrate the interconnectedness of various Asian American immigrant communities.

The survey focused on six communities that have among the largest concentration of Asians with the highest poverty levels in New York City.¹ They are Bensonhurst and Sunset Park in Brooklyn; Chinatown/Lower East Side in Manhattan; and Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Woodside in Queens. Between 2009 and 2010, we collected a total of 853 surveys in these six neighborhoods.

¹ 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Custom Table, B17001D. Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months in Sex by Age (Asian Alone).

The survey responses and our conversations with neighborhood residents, workers, and small business owners demonstrate the connectedness of certain communities to each other. They share many characteristics such as cultural background, economic status, languages, community services and resources, public transportation, and workplaces.

Brooklyn

Sunset Park: 30% of Asians in Sunset Park live below the poverty level, and 75% are foreign born. 39,952 Chinese people live in the neighborhood,² and 81% of the Chinese-speaking population in this neighborhood is limited English proficient. This area is currently divided between 2 City Council districts (CD38 and CD39). A significant Chinese population of both Cantonese and Mandarin speakers live in Sunset Park, often considered Brooklyn's Chinatown. Sunset Park's Eighth Avenue serves as a main commercial corridor for Chinese people in the neighborhood and many surrounding areas in Brooklyn, including Bensonhurst. Sunset Park has grown in part because rents in Chinatown are increasingly expensive. Many Chinese people live in Sunset Park, but continue to work in Manhattan's Chinatown after being priced out of its rental market. Ironically city rezoning plans and development trends have also pushed more development into Sunset Park, making this neighborhood increasingly less affordable in recent years. Chinese and Latino residents are concerned about finding housing that is affordable for their families. Many Chinese families who may not be able to afford increasing rents in Sunset Park have moved to Bensonhurst, a neighborhood in Brooklyn with a high percentage of low-income Asian families that shares similar characteristics.

Bensonhurst: 17% of Asians in Bensonhurst live below the poverty level, and 69% are foreign born. 47,105 Chinese people live in Bensonhurst, and 70% of the Chinese-speaking population in this neighborhood is limited English proficient. This area is currently divided among 4 City Council districts (CD43, CD44, CD47 and CD50). Bensonhurst has also experienced a growing Chinese population in recent years. Based on our survey, the biggest reason cited for moving to Bensonhurst (31%) is the lower rents in the neighborhood. Because the populations in Sunset Park and Bensonhurst are similar, the concerns faced by residents in both neighborhoods often overlap. Our survey found that similar percentages of people in both neighborhoods have the same amount of difficulty paying bills; rent (17% in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park), healthcare costs (15% in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park), and utilities (13% in Bensonhurst; 16% in Sunset Park) topped the list. Issues with rental housing also overlap as these two Brooklyn neighborhoods had the lowest percentage of people who have leases. Only 26% and 35% in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park respectively have leases as compared to 45% of people overall in all six neighborhoods. In addition, both neighborhoods had higher percentages of people citing lack of heat as a major problem (13% in Bensonhurst; 8% in Sunset Park).

² 2010 Census, Summary File 1.

Although Bensonhurst remains more affordable than Sunset Park, market-rate development has impacted residents in both neighborhoods in similar ways. A similar percentage of people in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park noticed more luxury buildings (15% in Bensonhurst; 14% in Sunset Park). Similar percentages in both neighborhoods also have found every day goods becoming more expensive (22% in Bensonhurst; 29% in Sunset Park) and fewer stores where people can afford to shop (33% in Bensonhurst; 39% in Sunset Park). The same percentage of people in both neighborhoods (6%) noticed that more neighbors are forced to move out, which is the lowest of the six neighborhoods surveyed. However, despite similar populations and everyday needs and concerns, Bensonhurst is clearly the more affordable neighborhood based on median rent and on residents' perceptions. For example, our survey showed that only 13% in Bensonhurst find apartments to be unaffordable versus 25% in Sunset Park.

Although Bensonhurst and Sunset Park have slight differences in housing affordability, the shared characteristics between the Chinese American population in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park are significant. In fact, because of the neighborhoods' different levels of affordability, residents may have even more connections to the other neighborhood as many people have moved from Sunset Park to Bensonhurst. Residents in both neighborhoods share common languages, supermarkets and restaurants, housing concerns, and resources and services. Consequently Bensonhurst is similar to Sunset Park and should be grouped together in the same legislative district.

Manhattan

Chinatown/Lower East Side: Chinatown/Lower East Side is one of the last affordable immigrant neighborhoods in Manhattan. 34 % of Asians in Chinatown/Lower East Side live below the poverty level, and 74% are foreign born. The percentage of Asians in Chinatown/Lower East Side is 40%, and 73% of the Chinese-speaking population in this neighborhood is limited English proficient. The area of Chinatown/Lower East Side is currently in CD1 and CD2. Chinatown/Lower East Side is comprised of a significant Latino and Chinese population – which includes Cantonese, Mandarin, and Fujianese speakers. Many of the newer Chinese Fujianese immigrants live along East Broadway and farther east, stretching out much farther than what some consider the historic core of Chinatown near Mott, Pell, and Doyer Streets.

Chinatown/Lower East Side is one of the few Asian neighborhoods in which a significant amount of public housing exists, which is reflected in the higher percentage of applications to and general knowledge about public housing among Chinatown/Lower East Side residents as compared to people surveyed in the other neighborhoods. Because of this affordable housing stock in addition to the rent regulated units, Chinatown/Lower East Side has been able to hold on to a significant portion of its working class community. Both neighborhoods have a shared

immigrant history, which is reflected in the stores and resources that support the neighborhoods' economy.

Residents, small businesses, and property owners in both neighborhoods have similar concerns about the development that is encroaching in the area. Because of their similar socioeconomic status, tenants in both neighborhoods have identified the common problems of luxury development driving up rents and the lack of new affordable housing. They live in similar overcrowded housing conditions. Because of the significant amount of rent regulated buildings in both neighborhoods, tenants also face similar problems with harassment – with landlords who ignore many major problems like water leaks, rodents, and lack of heat in apartments and who will sometimes bring frivolous lawsuits to try to evict rent-regulated tenants. Much of the new hotel and condominium development that has ravaged the Lower East Side in the past several years is also hitting Chinatown. Both immigrant working class neighborhoods have experienced even more development pressure due to a rezoning in the areas slightly north of this area in 2008 that slated more luxury development for Chinatown and Lower East Side. To keep the neighborhood affordable, coalitions with organizations, residents, and workers from both neighborhoods have been working together to propose policies that would better protect the affordable housing in the neighborhood. Further, a community board-sponsored planning initiative focused on land use, education, immigrant services, economic development, and other issues faced by immigrant families encompasses both Chinatown and Lower East Side. Because Chinatown and Lower East Side face similar problems and have similar populations, people are also experiencing the impact of luxury development in the same ways and therefore are trying to find common solutions that will benefit both neighborhoods. People see the preservation of one neighborhood as tied to the other.

Because of the neighborhoods' shared socioeconomic status, housing stock, and interests, Chinatown should be grouped with the Lower East Side in the same legislative district. The neighborhoods of Tribeca and Soho should not be grouped with Chinatown because the socioeconomic status and interests of those neighborhoods is so vastly different.

Conclusion

AALDEF's neighborhood boundary lines help ensure that Asian American and other racial and ethnic minorities' voting rights will be protected under the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. The shared characteristics and concerns of the various Asian American communities of interest that we have identified are important considerations in determining neighborhood boundaries. To ensure that racial minorities have a full and fair opportunity to elect candidates of their choice pursuant to the Voting Rights Act, the Commission should adhere to the submitted neighborhood boundary lines.



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**Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian American Communities of Interest Survey in New York City
submitted to LATFOR
at the Public Hearing, September 21, 2011
250 Broadway, New York City**

The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, founded in 1974, has defended the voting rights of Asian Americans through litigation, legal advocacy and community education.

AALDEF submits this Asian American Communities of Interest Survey in connection with the redistricting hearings conducted by LATFOR in New York City. This survey, utilized in combination with the Asian American Neighborhood Boundaries, submitted to LATFOR at the September 7, 2011 public hearing in Queens, supplies LATFOR with the necessary tools to ensure that Asian American communities of interest will not be unfairly divided.

Asian Americans in New York City

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in New York City. In New York City, the Asian American population has increased 32% over the past decade and now constitutes almost 13% of the city's population, numbering 1,028,119¹. Seven out of ten Asian New Yorkers reside in three New York City boroughs: Queens, Manhattan and Brooklyn.

CENSUS 2010	Total Population	Asian Population	Asian Percent of Total	Total Growth Since 2000	Asian Growth Since 2000
New York State	19,378,102	1,406,194	7.3%	2.1%	35.7%
New York City	8,175,133	1,028,119	12.6%	2.1%	31.8%
- Queens	2,230,722	508,334	22.8%	0.1 %	30.6%
- Manhattan	1,585,873	177,624	11.2%	3.2%	24.0%
- Brooklyn	2,504,700	260,129	10.4%	1.6%	41.2%

* Only includes those who checked "Asian" and no other race².

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2000 Census.

² This "Not Hispanic Asian alone" number should be taken as the bare minimum number of Asian Americans. In the 2000 and 2010 censuses, respondents were allowed to mark more than one race, yielding a race concept known as "alone or in combination," which includes people who reported a single race alone (e.g., Asian) and people who reported that race in combination with one or more of the other race groups (i.e., White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race). In addition, race and ethnicity are considered separate and distinct identities, with Hispanic or Latino origin asked as a separate question. This means that all respondents are also categorized as either "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino." Therefore, a more accurate and inclusive estimate of Asian Americans would be to aggregate both the Hispanic and Not Hispanic Asian alone or in combination populations (e.g., the maximum number of Asian

Asian American populations have increased faster than the overall growth rate of the boroughs in which they reside. In Queens, Asian Americans have grown 306 times faster than the overall rate of the borough, and in Manhattan and Brooklyn, 7.5 and 25.75 times faster, respectively. Of all the municipalities in the nation, New York has the largest Asian American population. However, no Asian American has ever been elected to the State Senate or Congress, even though Asian Americans comprise 13% of the City's population.

Severe Underrepresentation of Asian Americans

Despite having the fastest growth rate of any racial group in New York City over the past decade, Asian Americans continue to be woefully underrepresented in New York State. Currently, there is only one Asian American representative in the State Assembly, and no Asian American representative in the State Senate. One need only look at the State Assembly and Senate district boundaries of Flushing, Queens to understand why. When communities of common interest are kept together, Asian Americans can elect a candidate of their choice, such as in State Assembly District 22. State Senate Districts 11 and 16 run straight down the middle of Flushing and divide the community in half, diluting Asian American voting strength. This Task Force should eliminate all legislative district configurations that divide communities of common interest and ensure that these communities are kept together in new districts.

As detailed below, and in the attached Asian American Neighborhood Maps, pp. 20-22, Asian American communities of interest and neighborhoods are currently unfairly divided among numerous legislative districts on all levels. Since Asian Americans are a protected minority group under the federal Voting Rights Act, districts must be drawn so that Asian Americans can elect candidates of their choice. While the United States Supreme Court has held that the consideration of race may not "predominate" in the redistricting process, the court has also held that a paramount districting criterion is to include "communities of interest" in districts³. While the court has defined this concept as groupings of people with "actual shared interests," social scientists have found communities of interest to exist when individuals share significant cultural, economic, political, and social ties⁴.

Here in New York, the federal court in *Diaz v. Silver*, 978 F. Supp. 96 (E.D.N.Y.) (*per curiam*), *aff'd*, 522 U.S. 801 (1997) recognized that Asian Americans in Manhattan's Chinatown and Brooklyn's Sunset Park were a community of interest that should be kept together within the 12th Congressional District. The court specifically recognized the following factors and shared community concerns:

Americans citywide should actually be reflected as 1,134,919 or 13.9% of the total NYC population).

³ *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900 (1995).

⁴ AALDEF Community Survey Project, Executive Summary, p. 1, "Asian Neighborhoods in New York City: Locating Boundaries and Common Interests", Professor Tarry Hum, Ph.D., Department of Urban Studies, Queens College/City University of New York, 2002. See aaldef.org/docs/Asian-Neighborhoods-in-NYC%282002%29.pdf.

- Cultural background
- Economic status
- Common media markets
- Shared community services and organizations, including health clinics, stores, public transportation and workplaces
- Voting patterns
- Common languages and dialects
- Common country of origin

Several Asian American communities throughout New York City share common concerns and socioeconomic characteristics, but they have been divided between two or more districts. We urge this Task Force to take a closer look at these neighborhoods and ensure that Asian American communities are kept together and not splintered among newly-drawn districts.

AALDEF's Survey

AALDEF met with community groups all over New York City, specifically where Asian Americans have clustered in many of the neighborhoods experiencing the fastest growth. AALDEF asked the community groups to draw their neighborhood boundaries on a map, as defined by their community. After meeting with multiple groups from a neighborhood, we conducted follow up meetings with the groups to come to an agreement on final neighborhood boundaries that all of the groups agreed upon.

We also asked the groups about the most common concerns and issues in their neighborhoods. Many of the communities we met with had concerns regarding immigration, language assistance, social services, health care and workers' rights. These shared concerns centered on daily neighborhood quality issues as well as neighborhood institutions that provide opportunities for education, employment, social services, immigrant rights, and economic justice.

Finally, we asked groups to identify the surrounding neighborhoods that were most similar and the most different to their neighborhood.

AALDEF interviewed numerous community groups, listed in the attached addendum, in the following Asian American neighborhoods:

Queens

- Flushing
- Bayside
- Elmhurst
- Jackson Heights
- Woodside
- Floral Park/Queens Village/Bellerose/Glenn Oaks

- Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park
- Ozone Park
- Briarwood/Jamaica Hills

Brooklyn

- Bensonhurst
- Sunset Park
- Sheepshead Bay
- Kensington

Manhattan

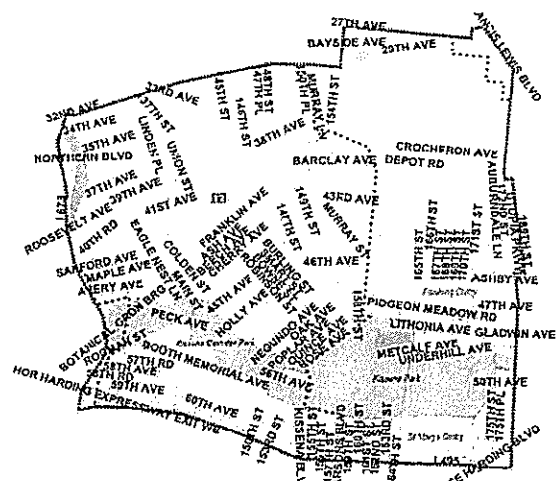
- Chinatown/Lower East Side

AALDEF submits this survey to be used in conjunction with the previously submitted Asian American neighborhood boundaries. We urge LATFOR to utilize and respect these boundaries, since they represent communities of common interest. Wherever possible, these areas should be kept in tact in drawing new legislative districts at all levels. Asian Americans are severely underrepresented in New York State, as evidenced by the paucity of Asian American representatives in the New York State Legislature and New York's Congressional delegation. Given the severe underrepresentation of Asian Americans in New York State, the time to correct this injustice is now.

Asian American Communities of Interest

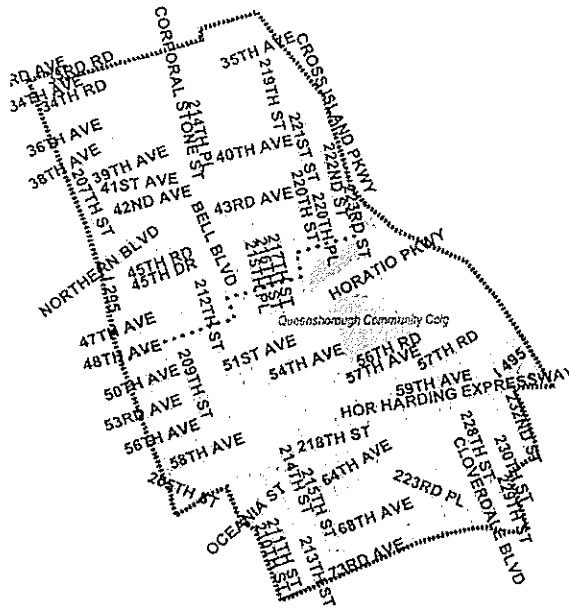
Flushing/Bayside (Neighborhood Boundaries Attachment pp. 3-4)

Flushing



Current Legislative Districts: This community-defined area is currently divided between assembly district (AD) 22 and AD25; senate district (SD) 16 and SD11; and congressional district (CD) 5.

Bayside



Current Legislative Districts: This community-defined area is currently divided between AD24 and AD26; SD16 and SD11; and CD9 and CD5.

Language: Flushing and Bayside are largely populated with Chinese Americans, with a substantial Korean American population. Flushing is home to newly arriving immigrants. Most of the newly arriving Chinese immigrants are a mix of Mandarin and Cantonese speakers and are limited English proficient. These immigrant populations require language assistance and services for young children.

Housing: Many Asian Americans work in Flushing and reside in Bayside. Recent

immigrants first settle in Flushing and rent apartments, and then “move up” to Bayside, Little Neck, Douglaston or Great Neck. Once they save enough money, they seek to move to the east and to the north. Property values tend to increase as you move northeast into Long Island, traveling from west to east along Northern Boulevard.

There has been a significant increase in development in Flushing, with developers building taller and larger buildings.

Employment: Residents in Flushing live and work in Flushing, while many residents in Bayside live in Bayside and work in Flushing, or some other neighborhood outside of Bayside. In the adjacent neighborhood of Elmhurst, most people only reside there, but they usually work outside of Elmhurst, similar to Bayside.

Transportation: Northern Boulevard is the major thoroughfare that connects the neighborhoods of Flushing, Bayside, Little Neck, Douglaston and Great Neck. The Asian American community has settled along this road and maintains a local link to Flushing, the cultural heart of the community, by residing in neighborhoods that are situated along Northern Boulevard, starting from Flushing in the west and expanding eastward into Long Island to Great Neck in the east. Using this local road, Asian Americans return to Flushing for religious purposes (the largest Korean church in New York is in Flushing), shopping, ethnic restaurants and culture.

Many residents rely on public transportation, including the 7 train subway line.

Concerns/Needs: The major roads, such as Main Street, are very congested with limited parking available. Many storeowners complain that there is not enough parking for their customers.

Racial Tensions: Charges of anti-Asian slurs and harassment were made in the 2009 City Council race in District 19, which includes the neighborhoods of Bayside, Bayside Hills and Bay Terrace. Korean American candidate Kevin Kim, a Democrat, complained that white residents supporting Republican candidate Daniel Halloran made racial slurs, vandalized campaign signs, and assaulted two Korean American volunteers. For example, in Bay Terrace, starting at 33rd Road and going north to 26th Avenue on Bell Boulevard, Korean American campaign volunteers were berated with by white youths shouting racial slurs and saying, “You all people don’t belong here!” Bay Terrace is different from Bayside, and the two neighborhoods should not be grouped together into the same legislative district.

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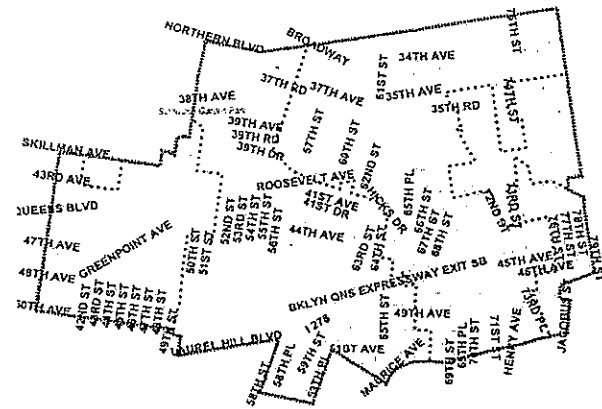
Language: Elmhurst is home to a large Asian American and Latino population. There are many young families with small children.

Employment: Many South Asians work in the construction industry or drive taxicabs. Most residents do not work in the neighborhood.

Education: Many Asian American youth attend Newtown High School in the neighborhood. Many residents would prefer to send their children to a specialized school, since this local public school is overcrowded.

The neighborhoods of Jackson Heights and Woodside are similar to Elmhurst and should be grouped together into the same legislative district if possible. The neighborhoods of Maspeth and Middle Village are vastly different from Elmhurst and should not be grouped together with Elmhurst.

Woodside (Attachment p. 7)



Current Legislative Districts: This community-defined area is currently divided among AD30, AD34, AD35, AD37, and AD39; SD12, SD13, SD15, and SD16; and CD7, CD12, and CD14.

Language: Woodside is home to a diverse population comprised of Nepali, Korean, Filipino and Bangladeshi Americans. Many immigrants are limited English proficient and in need of language assistance. Many in the

community receive their news and information from ethnic print and online media.

Housing: The majority of residents rent apartments or homes, and some are beginning to purchase homes. Woodside is more of a residential neighborhood.

Employment: Most Asian American residents work in Manhattan and New Jersey, working in nail salons, restaurants, and construction, driving taxicabs, and employed as domestic workers and entrepreneurs. They shop mostly in Jackson Heights. Some domestic workers have been in Elmhurst for many years but are still not “established,” since many are given room and board and not paid compensation.

Transportation: Most residents rely on public transportation including the 7, E, F and R train subway lines and the Q32, Q18 and Q45 buses. Domestic workers rely on the Long Island Railroad, Woodside 61st Street station, to travel to Long Island, Westchester, Connecticut or New Jersey.

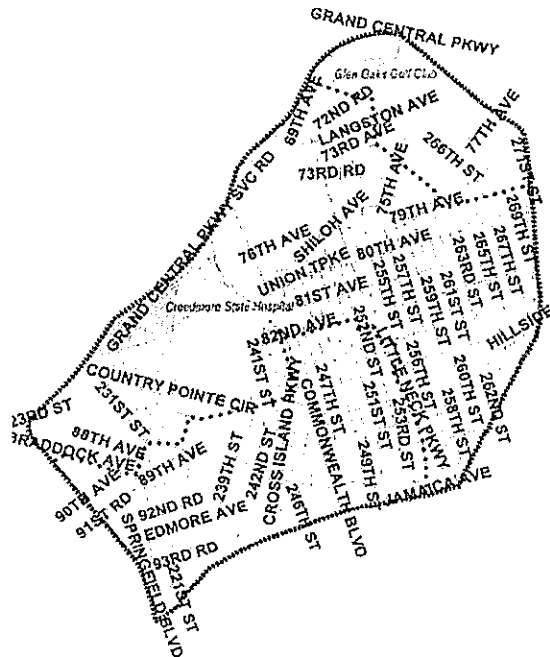
Education: The children attend public schools, P.S. 12 and P.S. 11.

Concerns/Needs: Many of the residents share common interests, including: immigration issues, workers' rights, lack of information about legal rights, need for assistance in applying for public benefits and securing health care. Most residents do not have health insurance and must rely on the already overcrowded Elmhurst Hospital emergency room for their medical needs. Many workers do not receive paid days off and cannot afford to take any days off.

The surrounding neighborhoods that are most similar to Woodside are Elmhurst and Jackson Heights. Elmhurst is most similar to Woodside, with Asian American community groups serving residents from both neighborhoods. Woodside residents also use Elmhurst Hospital, and both neighborhoods have high numbers of uninsured residents. Residents often move between Woodside and Elmhurst, using the 7 train subway line. The neighborhoods also share common

places of worship, such as the Hindu Temple on Woodside Avenue and 76th Street. Elmhurst and Jackson Heights should be grouped together into one legislative district if possible. By contrast, the neighborhood of Maspeth is distinctly different from Woodside, in that it lacks diversity and does not share common issues, such as need for language assistance or immigrant issues.

Bellerose/Floral Park/Queens Village/Glen Oaks (Attachment p. 8)



Current Legislative Districts: This community-defined area is currently divided among AD26, AD 24 and AD33; SD11; and CD5 and CD6.

Language: There is a large concentration of South Asian residents in this community.

Housing: Most of the residents are homeowners. They are opposed to downzoning and want to be able to rebuild and renovate their homes to a larger size.

Employment: Many of the men work in civil service for the United States Post Office or Metropolitan Transportation Authority, while many of the women work in health care, mainly as nurses. Residents moved to these

neighborhoods in part because of the proximity to local hospitals, including Long Island Jewish Hospital, North Shore University Hospital, Winthrop Hospital, and Parker Jewish Nursing Home.

Transportation: Residents rely on public transportation, including the F train subway line and Express Bus service, many of which run along Union Turnpike.

Concerns/Needs: The neighborhoods of Bellerose, Floral Park, Queens Village, and Glen Oaks share many common interests and should be considered as one community that should not be divided.

Neighborhoods that are distinctly different from this community include Hollis, St. Albans, and Springfield Gardens.

Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park comprise a single community of mainly Bangladeshis, Indians, Sikhs and Indo-Caribbeans.

Richmond Hill

Employment: Many of the residents work in either Brooklyn or Manhattan as unskilled laborers. There is a demand for adult basic education and trade/vocational schools. Some of the residents are also self-employed entrepreneurs.

Education: The two high schools in the neighborhood are John Adams High School and Richmond Hill High School. All of the junior high schools that provide students to these two high schools are from Richmond Hill.

Many cultural and religious institutions reflect the collective South Asian and Indo-Caribbean culture, including Sikh temples (101 Avenue and 114th Street), Hindu Temples (101 Avenue and Liberty Avenue), ethnic Christian churches (101 Avenue, Lefferts Boulevard and Rockaway Boulevard) and mosques (126th Street and Lefferts Boulevard).

Housing: South Ozone Park has fewer shops and is more residential than Richmond Hill. Many of the residents do their shopping in Richmond Hill and live in South Ozone Park. The residents of Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park also share many characteristics.

Concerns/Needs: Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park share many commonalities and should be grouped together into the same legislative district if possible. The neighborhood of South Jamaica, east of the Van Wyck Expressway, should not be grouped with Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park for several reasons. First, home property values are significantly less. Second, the high school population does not include middle school students from Richmond Hill or South Ozone Park. Third, the population in South Jamaica is not comprised of many immigrants like Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park. Instead, the population of South Jamaica is comprised of mostly African Americans who have settled in that neighborhood for a long time and rely on different public transportation lines, such as the E train subway line to Jamaica Center.

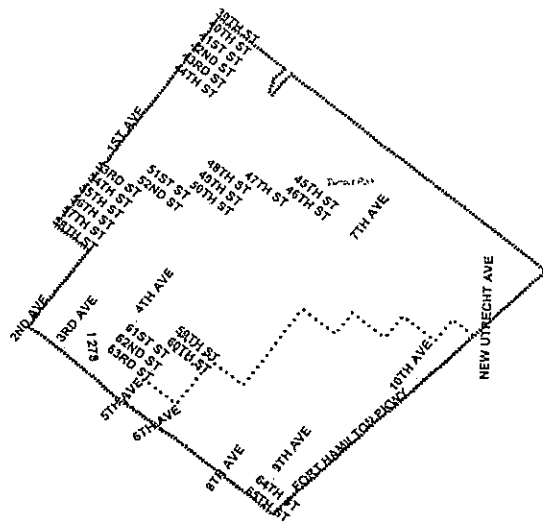
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Language: Briarwood/Jamaica Hills is home to a large Bangladeshi population.

Transportation: Most of the population are immigrants who rely on public transportation, primarily the F train subway lines, along the Briarwood, Sutphin Boulevard, Van Wyck Expressway and Parsons Boulevard subway stops. Many residents do their shopping along Hillside Avenue at ethnic stores.

11

Sunset Park (Attachment p. 14)



Current Legislative Districts: This community-defined area is currently divided among AD49 and AD51; SD23, SD20 and SD18; and CD12 and CD8.

Language: Sunset Park is home to a largely Chinese and Latino population, with a South Asian population as well. The Chinese population in Sunset Park used to be predominantly Cantonese-speakers, but a large number of the Cantonese-speaking population is moving into the more residential neighborhoods of Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge and Sheepshead Bay. A new wave of

Fujianese-speaking Chinese residents is moving into the neighborhood, mainly along Eighth Avenue. Many of these Fujianese-speakers are new Chinese immigrants. On Fifty-Sixth Street between Sixth and Fifth Avenue, there is a large South Asian population. A new mosque was recently built on Fifty Third Street and Third Avenue. The Latino population is comprised of mostly Puerto Rican and Dominican residents who reside along Second and Third Avenue.

Housing: Many of the residents are young, have small children, and live in subdivided housing.

Employment: Many of the residents are working class and not professionals.

Transportation: Many of the new Fujianese immigrants are moving into residences along the D and N train subway lines.

Similar surrounding neighborhoods include Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge and Sheepshead Bay. Borough Park is distinctly different from Sunset Park in terms of socio-economic status, employment, and culture.

Bensonhurst (Attachment p. 15)



Current Legislative Districts: The community-defined area is currently divided among AD49, AD47 and AD46; SD22, SD23, SD27 and SD21; and CD13 and CD8.

Language: Bensonhurst and Bay Ridge have a large Chinese American population that speaks Mandarin. Many of the Chinese Americans in Bensonhurst, especially the senior citizens, are limited English proficient. Many senior citizens

are eligible for government entitlements, but cannot understand and fill out the forms and lack access to Chinese interpreters.

Employment: Manhattan's Chinatown used to be home to numerous garment factories that employed Chinese Americans living in Brooklyn. After 9/11 and the declining economy, many Chinatown garment factories closed. Chinese Americans in Bensonhurst have found employment in other industries: domestic workers/home care, supermarkets and grocery stores, laundromats, and Chinese restaurants. Since many Chinese Americans in Bensonhurst are limited English proficient, they are often relegated to low-wage jobs that do not require English proficiency. Many of the senior citizens stay at home to watch the grandchildren during the day, while the parents are at work.

Education: Bensonhurst has many high schools, including John Dewey High School, which offers bilingual education programs. Sunset Park does not have any high schools.

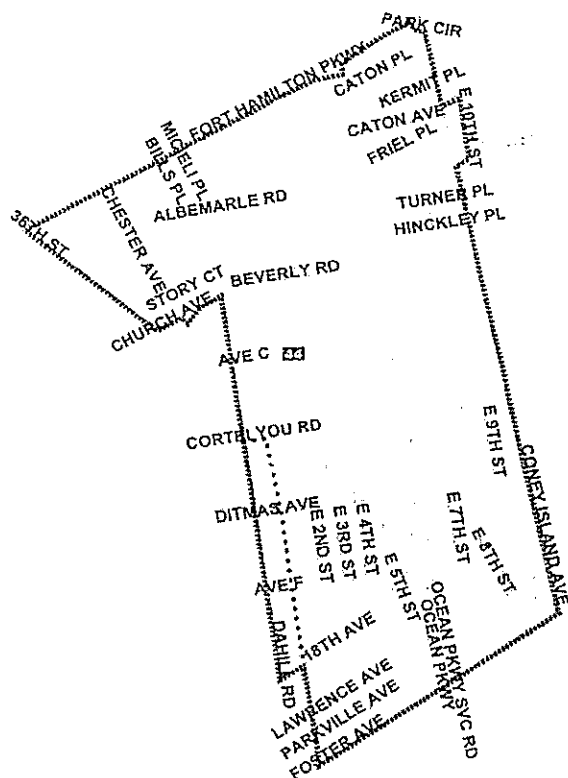
Concerns/Needs: There are many senior citizens as well as young children. Affordable day care for children is a major concern. There are no pre-kindergarten classes, and private day care is very expensive.

Other immigrant communities from Mexico and Russia share the same values as Chinese immigrants: they are hard working, have low-paying jobs, and want a good education for their children.

The neighborhoods of Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge and Sunset Park are very similar, share many common interests and should be grouped together into the same legislative district if possible. In the neighborhood of Sheepshead Bay, the Chinese American population has been established for twenty to thirty years, and many residents are retired. The Chinese American population is converging in Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge and Sunset Park.

By contrast, Borough Park, Brighton Beach, Coney Island, and Sea Gate are vastly different neighborhoods that share little in common with Bensonhurst, and should not be included in a legislative district with Bensonhurst.

Kensington (Attachment p. 17)



Current Legislative Districts: The community-defined area is currently divided between AD44; SD20 and SD21; and CD11 and CD9.

Language: Kensington is home to large Asian, African and Latino immigrant populations. The South Asian population is comprised mostly of Bangladeshi Americans.

Housing: Most residents own their homes, which are mostly multi-family houses.

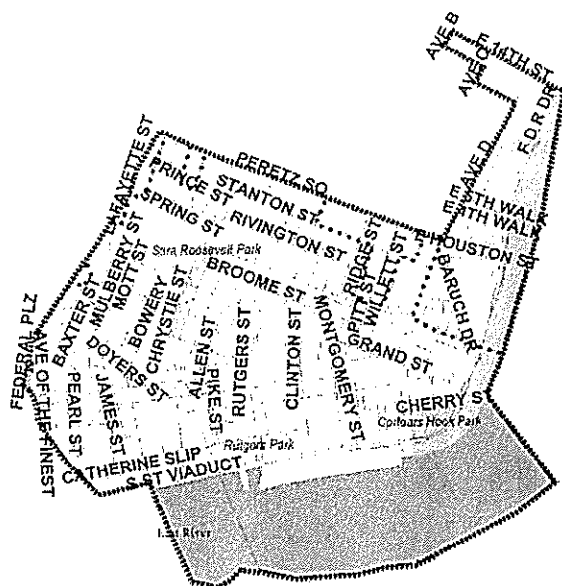
Employment: Many of the residents work outside of the neighborhood, mostly in Manhattan. Most of the South Asian men work in construction or are entrepreneurs, while the women work mostly in service industries, as restaurant workers, babysitters or school teachers.

Transportation: Most people rely on public transportation, including the F and G train

subway lines, and the B35, B67, B69, B103, B68, B63, B16, B11, B70 and B25 buses.

Education: Most children attend school in the neighborhood, at P.S. 230, P.S. 179, P.S. 216, I.S. 220 or Franklin Delano Roosevelt High School.

Chinatown/Lower East Side (Attachment p. 19)



Current Legislative Districts: The community-defined area of Chinatown/Lower East Side is currently divided between AD64; SD25; and CD12 (with Sunset Park), CD14 and CD8.

Many residents in Chinatown and the Lower East Side are foreign born. Because these recent immigrants are limited English proficient, they often encounter language barriers in education, employment, and access to government entitlements.

Chinatown and the Lower East Side share many similar demographic characteristics. Conversely, these two neighborhoods are demographically very different from Tribeca, Soho, Battery Park City, and the Financial District. Because of common socioeconomic characteristics, Chinatown and the Lower East Side should be kept in the same legislative district.

Chinatown

Language: Many residents are limited English proficient, rely on Chinese-language media, and need language assistance. They use bilingual forms to apply for government entitlements, rely on Chinese-speaking doctors or interpreters in seeking medical treatment at hospitals and local health clinics, and use bilingual ballots and interpreters in exercising their right to vote.

Housing: Many Chinatown residents live in aging tenement buildings and in public housing, which makes Chinatown one of the few remaining working-class neighborhoods in New York City. Many new hotels and market-rate condominiums have accelerated gentrification in this historically immigrant neighborhood.

Employment: Many residents live in the neighborhood and work in local bakeries, restaurants, retail stores, nail salons, as home health care attendants, in construction and as delivery truck drivers. Some residents travel to Sunset Park, Brooklyn and to Queens, performing similar work.

Transportation: Residents depend on public transportation, including the 6, B, Q, D, N, R, and F train subway lines, as well as the M15 and M22 buses.

Education: Many public schools in Chinatown are overcrowded. The Shuang Wen Academy was the first dual Chinese language/dual culture school, located at P.S. 184, and several high schools offer bilingual and English as a Second Language programs.

Concerns/Needs: Historically, Chinatown residents have organized around several common issues, including opposition to police brutality, budget cuts to city services, the White Street detention center, the Special Manhattan Bridge District rezoning, and restrictive immigration laws. They have supported rent control laws, language access to government services, better enforcement of labor laws for low-wage workers, and the reopening of Park Row after 9/11.

Some Chinatown residents have lived in the neighborhood for several generations, while others are recent immigrants.

The Lower East Side is most similar to Chinatown, and both neighborhoods should be kept in the same legislative district if possible. Residents share a similar socio-economic status and concerns with affordable housing, language access to services. The neighborhoods of Tribeca, Soho, Battery Park City and Financial District should not be grouped with Chinatown because those neighborhoods are of a vastly different socio-economic status and have substantially higher income levels, and have no common interests of immigration or language assistance.

Lower East Side

Language: The Lower East Side is comprised of mainly Chinese American and Latino residents.

Housing: Many residents live in public housing and small tenement buildings. New market-rate residential development has led to direct and secondary displacement.

Employment: The Latino and Chinese residents have similar low-income levels and perform many of the same low-wage, unskilled jobs and share similar levels of education.

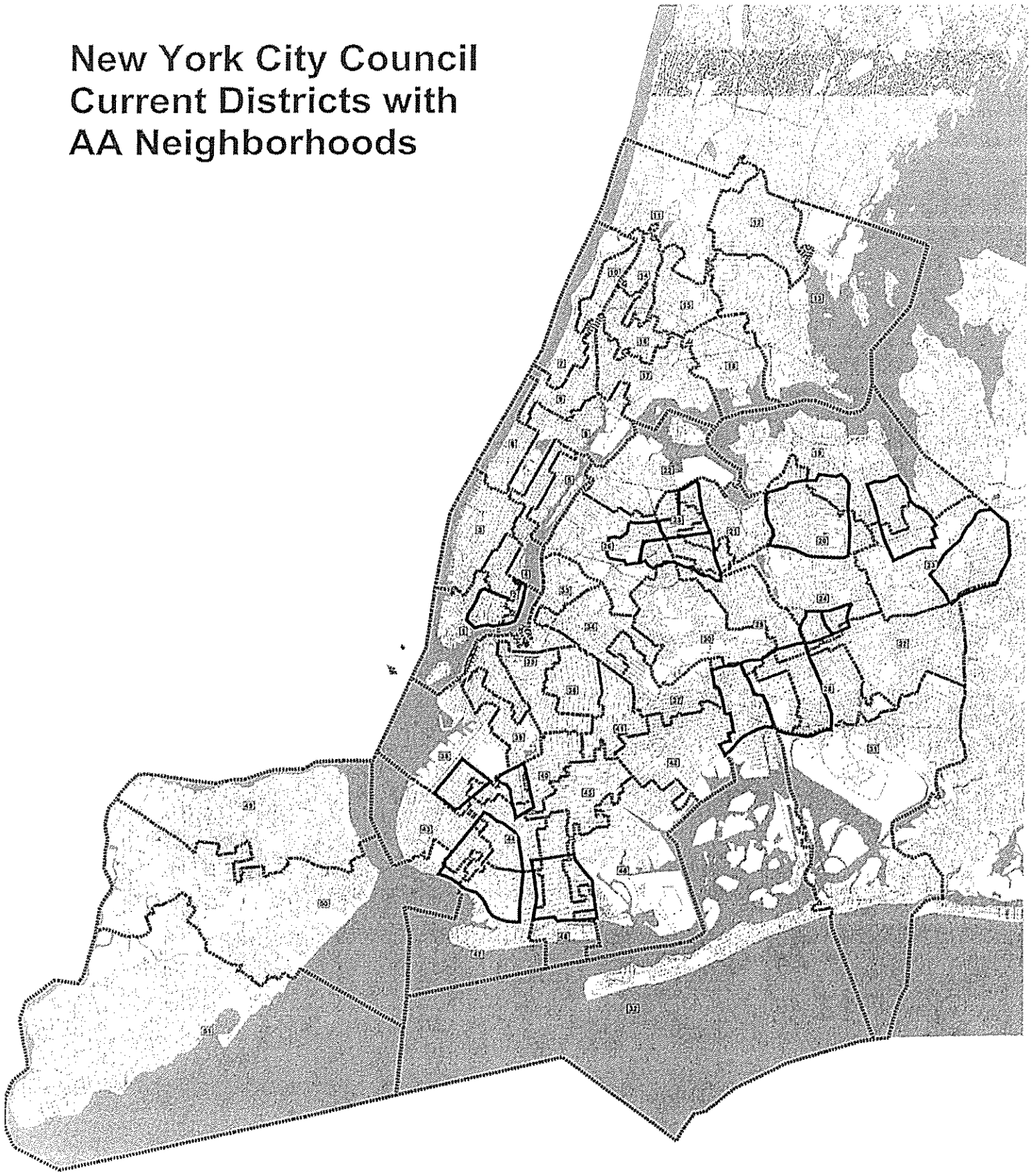
Transportation: Residents rely mainly on public transportation.

Concerns/Needs: The residents of the Lower East Side share common concerns about gentrification and its displacement of longtime residents. Rising rents and zoning changes have resulted in more tenant harassment and evictions and have pushed out small businesses serving local residents.

Conclusion

AALDEF's Asian American Communities of Common Interest Survey, taken together with the previously-submitted Asian American Neighborhood Boundaries, is designed to guide LATFOR in drawing new legislative districts that will preserve the voting rights of Asian Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities in New York. We urge LATFOR to keep communities of common interest together, and to ensure that racial minorities have a full and fair opportunity to elect candidates of their choice, as required by the Voting Rights Act.

New York City Council Current Districts with AA Neighborhoods

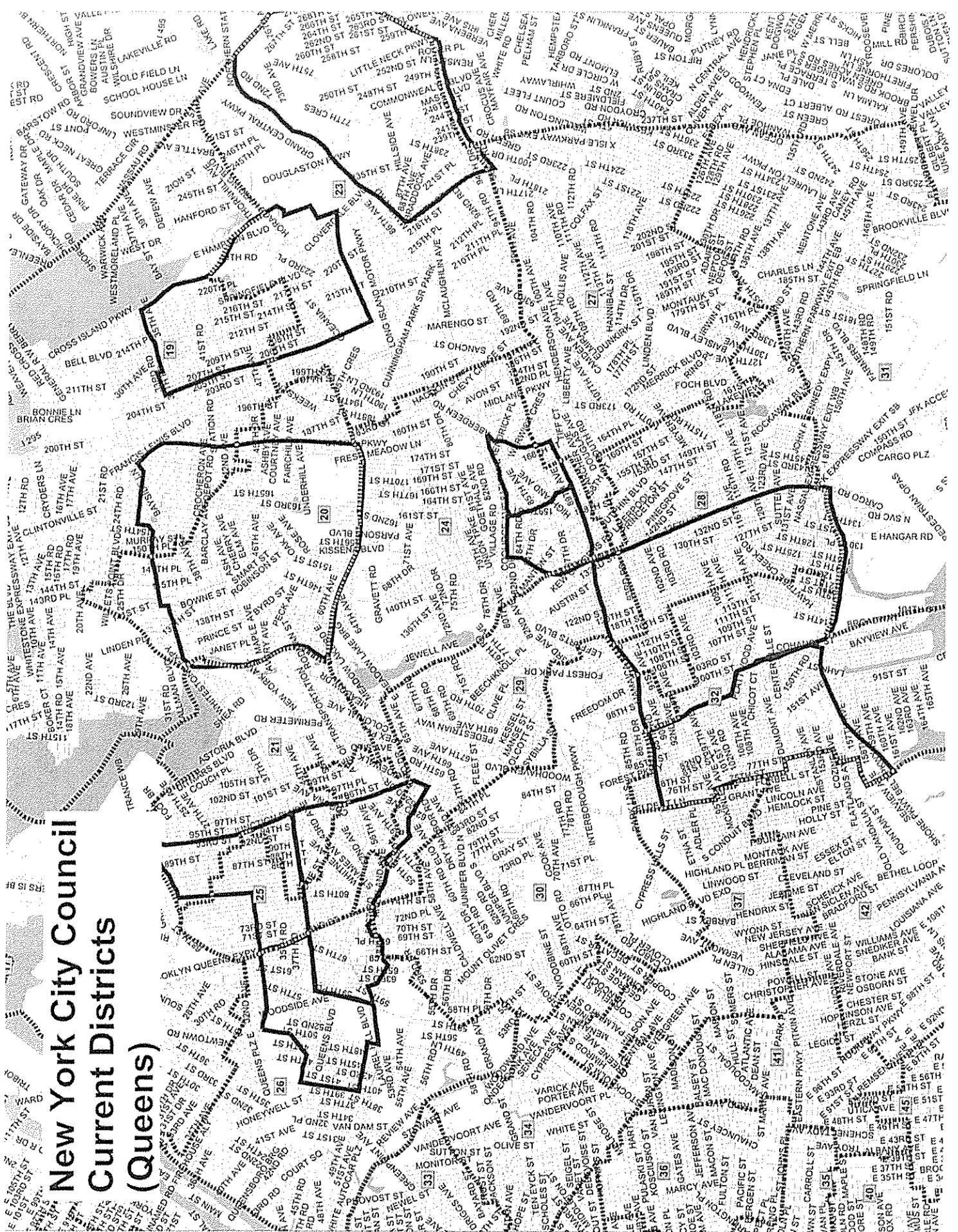


New York City Council Current Districts (Brooklyn)



New York City Council Current Districts (Lower Manhattan)

New York City Council Current Districts (Queens)





**Statement by the
Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy to the
New York City 2012-2013 Districting Commission
for the Brooklyn Borough's Pre-Map Release Public Hearing
Delivered by James Hong**

August 13, 2012
Brooklyn Borough Hall, 209 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, NY

Good afternoon Districting Commission members, staff and concerned citizens of Brooklyn. My name is James Hong and I am speaking on behalf of ACCORD, or the Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy.

ACCORD is a non-partisan, pan-Asian coalition of organizations and individuals committed to advancing the opportunity of Asian Pacific American (APA) and minority communities to meaningfully participate in the political process. ACCORD recognizes that redistricting plays a pivotal and fundamental role in these opportunities, and we support redistricting plans that keep together communities of interest that exist in and around ethnic neighborhoods across New York.

Historically, Asian Pacific Americans in New York City have been, like other minorities, treated unequally by district lines. The growth of the APA population in NYC has dramatically outpaced all other racial groups and now, in 2012, it is imperative that our districts account for the possibility that Asian voters are being disenfranchised by the outdated city council lines.

In Brooklyn, the growth of the APA population is astounding: a **40%** overall increase, and a **46%** increase among the voting age population. There are now over a quarter million APAs in Brooklyn alone. This means around 1 out of 4 APAs in New York City is a resident of Brooklyn. Many of these APA's live in an area that spans from parts of Sunset Park over into much of Bensonhurst.

While the current district lines may have served Southwest Brooklyn in 2002, this part of the borough has changed rapidly and dramatically over the past 10 years. Bensonhurst has become one of the city's most robust Chinatowns, and Sunset Park has become an even greater center of commercial and cultural activity for APAs in Brooklyn. However, these adjacent neighborhoods ~~of~~ are divided into at least five different districts (38th, 43rd, 44th, 47th, and 50th).

We refer the Commission to the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund's *Communities of Interest Survey* and the neighborhood boundaries contained therein. As a member of ACCORD, AALDEF has rigorously solicited input from our member organizations and beyond in drafting these boundaries, and we feel that those in Brooklyn can be especially helpful in informing the Commission's revisions.

These neighborhoods, or portions of these neighborhoods, contain residents sharing economic, social, political, cultural, linguistic, and educational concerns that deserve to be reflected in the results of the redistricting process.

We call on the Districting Commission to uphold the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and consequently, in light of that Act, support district maps that keep together the community of interest that exists either wholly or partly in, though is not limited to, the neighborhoods of Sunset Park and Bensonhurst.

ACCORD supports and recommends the testimony of its member groups with constituencies and history in these areas, and urges the Commission to recognize the community of interest here by drawing lines that do not divide the community, and instead hold together these areas.

Any district lines that dilute voters will undermine not only the political will of certain communities – such lines will undermine the very basis of a democracy.

As you may be aware, there is currently a single majority Asian City Council district. We want to state for the record that there is now enough APA population, in compact and contiguous areas, to support not one but three majority-minority City Council districts, including one in Brooklyn. ACCORD is not advocating nor recommending such districts at this time, but the potential for these districts reveals an incongruity between potential and reality.

ACCORD is a 14-member organization that includes the Asian American Bar Association of New York, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Asian Pacific Americans for Progress New York, Chhaya CDC, Chinese Progressive Association, Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Korean Americans for Political Advancement, Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, MinKwon Center for Community Action, OCA-NY, Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association, Taking Our Seat, United Chinese Association of Brooklyn, YWCA of Queens and Dr. Carol Huang of Queens, New York.

Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy

Established July 2011

Principles of Coalition

The Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy (ACCORD) is a non-partisan coalition of organizations and individuals committed to advancing the opportunities of Asian Pacific American and minority communities to meaningfully participate in the political process. ACCORD recognizes that redistricting plays a pivotal and fundamental role in these opportunities, and supports redistricting plans that keep together communities of interest that exist in and around ethnic neighborhoods across New York.

ACCORD affirms the following statements:

- ☐ New York State's redistricting processes have historically not resulted in elections where communities of color, including those of Asian Pacific Americans, have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice.
- ☐ Current district lines rarely reflect the compact neighborhoods and communities of interest where Asian Pacific Americans reside. In fact, many current district lines divide such neighborhoods and communities of interest into multiple districts and result in vote dilution for the minorities in those areas.
- ☐ By their nature, ethnic communities are likely to be communities of interest – and district plans should reflect this dynamic. These neighborhoods, or portions of these neighborhoods, contain residents sharing economic, social, political, cultural, linguistic, and educational concerns that deserve to be reflected in the results of the redistricting process.
- ☐ We expect our elected officials to uphold the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and consequently, in light of that Act, support district maps that keep together the communities of interest that exist either wholly or partly in, but are not limited to, the following neighborhoods:
 - o Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and Woodside
 - o Flushing, Bayside, Murray Hill, East Flushing and Queensboro Hill
 - o Sunset Park and Bensonhurst
 - o Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park
 - o Queens Village, Bellerose, Floral Park and Glen Oaks
 - o Briarwood and Jamaica Hills
 - o Chinatown and Lower East Side
- ☐ Any commission, task force or body responsible for New York State's redistricting process must act in a manner that is transparent and accountable to the people of New York. At a minimum, this should include printed materials and a website – each with translations or interpretation in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and Title VI – that offer the following:
 - o Detailed explanation of the agency's process of redistricting, including criteria used for drawing district lines
 - o Agency's timeline and schedule for redistricting
 - o Announcements of public hearings made no less than 90 days before the event
 - o Maps and data for proposed districts available no less than 90 days before public hearings

In addition, the locations, dates and times of public hearings should be arranged to maximize the public's participation.

ACCORD Members

As of 6/21/12

Asian American Bar Association of New York, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Asian Pacific Americans for Progress New York, Chhaya Community Development Corporation, Chinese Progressive Association, Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Korean Americans for Political Advancement, Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, MinKwon Center for Community Action, OCA-NY, Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association, Taking Our Seat, United Chinese Association of Brooklyn, YWCA of Queens, Dr. Carol Huang



ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

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STATEMENT OF BETHANY LI
STAFF ATTORNEY
ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND
TO THE
NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION

Public Hearing, August 13, 2012
Brooklyn Borough Hall, Brooklyn, New York 11209

My name is Bethany Li and I am a staff attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), a national civil rights organization founded in 1974. AALDEF works on a broad range of issues including housing and land use policies. Among other things, AALDEF participates in many coalitions and planning initiatives focused on protecting lower-income communities of color in Sunset Park in Brooklyn and Chinatown/Lower East Side in Manhattan.

After interviewing numerous community groups, AALDEF has submitted recommendations for Asian American communities of interest that should not be divided. I have worked extensively in some of these communities with community organizations, residents, workers, small businesses, and property owners. I have also represented workers, residents, and churches in land use and housing cases in both Sunset Park, Brooklyn and Chinatown/Lower East Side, Manhattan. In addition, I have conducted a survey of the impact of luxury development on the housing needs encountered by residents in many of these communities and am drafting a report of the results. Today, I would like to share some of the preliminary results and the experiences of neighborhood residents and workers in Sunset Park and Bensonhurst in Brooklyn and Chinatown/Lower East Side in Manhattan that illustrate the interconnectedness of various Asian American immigrant communities.

The survey focused on six communities that have among the largest concentration of Asians with the highest poverty levels in New York City.¹ They are Bensonhurst and Sunset Park in Brooklyn; Chinatown/Lower East Side in Manhattan; and Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Woodside in Queens. Between 2009 and 2010, we collected a total of 853 surveys in these six neighborhoods.

¹ 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Custom Table, B17001D. Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months in Sex by Age (Asian Alone).

The survey responses and our conversations with neighborhood residents, workers, and small business owners demonstrate the connectedness of certain communities to each other. They share many characteristics such as cultural background, economic status, languages, community services and resources, public transportation, and workplaces.

Brooklyn

Sunset Park: 30% of Asians in Sunset Park live below the poverty level, and 75% are foreign born. 39,952 Chinese people live in the neighborhood,² and 81% of the Chinese-speaking population in this neighborhood is limited English proficient. This area is currently divided between 2 City Council districts (CD38 and CD39). A significant Chinese population of both Cantonese and Mandarin speakers live in Sunset Park, often considered Brooklyn's Chinatown. Sunset Park's Eighth Avenue serves as a main commercial corridor for Chinese people in the neighborhood and many surrounding areas in Brooklyn, including Bensonhurst. Sunset Park has grown in part because rents in Chinatown are increasingly expensive. Many Chinese people live in Sunset Park, but continue to work in Manhattan's Chinatown after being priced out of its rental market. Ironically city rezoning plans and development trends have also pushed more development into Sunset Park, making this neighborhood increasingly less affordable in recent years. Chinese and Latino residents are concerned about finding housing that is affordable for their families. Many Chinese families who may not be able to afford increasing rents in Sunset Park have moved to Bensonhurst, a neighborhood in Brooklyn with a high percentage of low-income Asian families that shares similar characteristics.

Bensonhurst: 17% of Asians in Bensonhurst live below the poverty level, and 69% are foreign born. 47,105 Chinese people live in Bensonhurst, and 70% of the Chinese-speaking population in this neighborhood is limited English proficient. This area is currently divided among 4 City Council districts (CD43, CD44, CD47 and CD50). Bensonhurst has also experienced a growing Chinese population in recent years. Based on our survey, the biggest reason cited for moving to Bensonhurst (31%) is the lower rents in the neighborhood. Because the populations in Sunset Park and Bensonhurst are similar, the concerns faced by residents in both neighborhoods often overlap. Our survey found that similar percentages of people in both neighborhoods have the same amount of difficulty paying bills; rent (17% in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park), healthcare costs (15% in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park), and utilities (13% in Bensonhurst; 16% in Sunset Park) topped the list. Issues with rental housing also overlap as these two Brooklyn neighborhoods had the lowest percentage of people who have leases. Only 26% and 35% in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park respectively have leases as compared to 45% of people overall in all six neighborhoods. In addition, both neighborhoods had higher percentages of people citing lack of heat as a major problem (13% in Bensonhurst; 8% in Sunset Park).

² 2010 Census, Summary File 1.

Although Bensonhurst remains more affordable than Sunset Park, market-rate development has impacted residents in both neighborhoods in similar ways. A similar percentage of people in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park noticed more luxury buildings (15% in Bensonhurst; 14% in Sunset Park). Similar percentages in both neighborhoods also have found every day goods becoming more expensive (22% in Bensonhurst; 29% in Sunset Park) and fewer stores where people can afford to shop (33% in Bensonhurst; 39% in Sunset Park). The same percentage of people in both neighborhoods (6%) noticed that more neighbors are forced to move out, which is the lowest of the six neighborhoods surveyed. However, despite similar populations and everyday needs and concerns, Bensonhurst is clearly the more affordable neighborhood based on median rent and on residents' perceptions. For example, our survey showed that only 13% in Bensonhurst find apartments to be unaffordable versus 25% in Sunset Park.

Although Bensonhurst and Sunset Park have slight differences in housing affordability, the shared characteristics between the Chinese American population in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park are significant. In fact, because of the neighborhoods' different levels of affordability, residents may have even more connections to the other neighborhood as many people have moved from Sunset Park to Bensonhurst. Residents in both neighborhoods share common languages, supermarkets and restaurants, housing concerns, and resources and services. Consequently Bensonhurst is similar to Sunset Park and should be grouped together in the same legislative district.

Manhattan

Chinatown/Lower East Side: Chinatown/Lower East Side is one of the last affordable immigrant neighborhoods in Manhattan. 34 % of Asians in Chinatown/Lower East Side live below the poverty level, and 74% are foreign born. The percentage of Asians in Chinatown/Lower East Side is 40%, and 73% of the Chinese-speaking population in this neighborhood is limited English proficient. The area of Chinatown/Lower East Side is currently in CD1 and CD2. Chinatown/Lower East Side is comprised of a significant Latino and Chinese population – which includes Cantonese, Mandarin, and Fujianese speakers. Many of the newer Chinese Fujianese immigrants live along East Broadway and farther east, stretching out much farther than what some consider the historic core of Chinatown near Mott, Pell, and Doyer Streets.

Chinatown/Lower East Side is one of the few Asian neighborhoods in which a significant amount of public housing exists, which is reflected in the higher percentage of applications to and general knowledge about public housing among Chinatown/Lower East Side residents as compared to people surveyed in the other neighborhoods. Because of this affordable housing stock in addition to the rent regulated units, Chinatown/Lower East Side has been able to hold on to a significant portion of its working class community. Both neighborhoods have a shared

immigrant history, which is reflected in the stores and resources that support the neighborhoods' economy.

Residents, small businesses, and property owners in both neighborhoods have similar concerns about the development that is encroaching in the area. Because of their similar socioeconomic status, tenants in both neighborhoods have identified the common problems of luxury development driving up rents and the lack of new affordable housing. They live in similar overcrowded housing conditions. Because of the significant amount of rent regulated buildings in both neighborhoods, tenants also face similar problems with harassment – with landlords who ignore many major problems like water leaks, rodents, and lack of heat in apartments and who will sometimes bring frivolous lawsuits to try to evict rent-regulated tenants. Much of the new hotel and condominium development that has ravaged the Lower East Side in the past several years is also hitting Chinatown. Both immigrant working class neighborhoods have experienced even more development pressure due to a rezoning in the areas slightly north of this area in 2008 that slated more luxury development for Chinatown and Lower East Side. To keep the neighborhood affordable, coalitions with organizations, residents, and workers from both neighborhoods have been working together to propose policies that would better protect the affordable housing in the neighborhood. Further, a community board-sponsored planning initiative focused on land use, education, immigrant services, economic development, and other issues faced by immigrant families encompasses both Chinatown and Lower East Side. Because Chinatown and Lower East Side face similar problems and have similar populations, people are also experiencing the impact of luxury development in the same ways and therefore are trying to find common solutions that will benefit both neighborhoods. People see the preservation of one neighborhood as tied to the other.

Because of the neighborhoods' shared socioeconomic status, housing stock, and interests, Chinatown should be grouped with the Lower East Side in the same legislative district. The neighborhoods of Tribeca and Soho should not be grouped with Chinatown because the socioeconomic status and interests of those neighborhoods is so vastly different.

Conclusion

AALDEF's neighborhood boundary lines help ensure that Asian American and other racial and ethnic minorities' voting rights will be protected under the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. The shared characteristics and concerns of the various Asian American communities of interest that we have identified are important considerations in determining neighborhood boundaries. To ensure that racial minorities have a full and fair opportunity to elect candidates of their choice pursuant to the Voting Rights Act, the Commission should adhere to the submitted neighborhood boundary lines.



Asian Americans for Equality

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Testimony for Brooklyn Redistricting Commission

My name is Christopher Kui and I am the Executive Director of Asian Americans For Equality, a citywide social service organization with housing development, homeownership lending, and small business development capabilities targeting a main client base of NYC's Asian and Asian American residents. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Brooklyn redistricting hearings.

As a representative of AAFE, we have seen a tremendous increase of our Asian and Asian American constituents in the borough of Brooklyn, so that throughout southern Brooklyn we are seeing neighborhoods with upwards of 40% increases in Asian residents, numbering roughly 284,000 people in the last American Community Survey. In our own study published last year called "Distinct Places, Shared Opportunity", AAFE found that of the over 1 million Asian residents in the City, almost 75% live in 20 community board districts that have over 12% Asian pluralities. In 9 of these districts, Asians make up more than 25% of the population.

Within Brooklyn, many neighborhoods fall within these 20 districts, such as Sunset Park, Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Sheepshead Bay, Borough Park, Kensington and Midwood, just to name a few. In places like Bensonhurst, 1 in 3 residents are of Asian descent. Brooklyn's Sunset Park is a US Census Asian Neighborhood Tabulation Area with 53% of the residents being Asian.

Meanwhile, opportunities for political representation have not kept pace with population growth, with no elected official of Asian descent in Brooklyn when compared to Manhattan and Queens. It is imperative that we allow for such opportunities arise by ensuring that the districts reflect changes in demographics so that all New Yorkers are adequately represented. With a borough population of 284,000 and growing, Asian American New Yorkers should have one or two elected officials in Brooklyn in the coming decade.

This must not be done at the expense of other groups, but achieved in an informed manner where Asians can have elected representation while protecting the political will and aspirations of other minority groups in the borough. Haphazardly lumping Asians with other large minority plurality districts will only foster division and pit underrepresented groups against each other.

A better path would be one similar to what happened in Lower Manhattan, where the previous Redistricting Commission, with tremendous foresight created three Districts (1, 2, and 3), so that major pluralities were able to achieve political representation without impinging on each other. Today, we have Margaret Chin, Rosie Mendez, and Christine

Quinn: an Asian American, a Latina, and a woman of LGBT background, representing their major demographic constituents without doing so at each others expense.

AAFE feels strongly that this is achievable for City Council Redistricting in Brooklyn. For example, based on population studies already done by NYC-based Common Cause, we are seeing a tremendous increase in Asian residents in parts of Bensonhurst and its surrounding neighborhoods, which can be made into an Asian-plurality district much like Chinatown Lower East Side in Manhattan, and Flushing in Queens. It makes no sense to continue to have Staten Island take on parts of southern Brooklyn, which has a sufficient population to sustain its own three districts, leaving more of an opportunity for an equitable reconfiguration that takes into account increases by the Asian population. We urge the Commission to follow the example set by the NY State Assembly in re-drawing the boundaries of the 49th State Assembly District, which proposed a 51 percent majority Asian district which incorporated much of Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst in order to increase the possibility for electoral representation by the Asian American community in the NY State Assembly.

In closing, we urge the Commission to closely study and analyze the population data, work diligently and creatively to ensure that the City Council representation hopes and aspirations of 280,000 Asian Americans living in Brooklyn can be fulfilled in the coming decade.



Distinct Places, Shared Opportunity:

A Neighborhood-based Analysis of Asian Americans in NYC

A report by Asian Americans for Equality, Inc.
February 2011

Background and Purpose

New York City—home to 8.3 million people—is a constellation of neighborhoods. When analyzed from a citywide perspective, data on Asian Americans as well as other race and ethnic groups can be limiting. As a result of continued immigration, demographic change, economic growth, and housing choice, the City's Asian American communities have grown to look very different from one neighborhood to another.

The purpose of this report is to document the social and economic diversity of Asian Americans in New York City through a place-based approach. Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau's *2005-2009 American Community Survey* to identify New York City neighborhoods with a share of Asian American population above the city-wide average (12.2% Asian American). Data for neighborhoods was analyzed based on the Census Bureau's Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA) which approximate the City's 59 community districts. With a focus on 20 community districts with the greatest Asian American population, this report presents selected economic, demographic and housing characteristics for each neighborhood to show the rich complexity of NYC's Asian American communities. All data presented in this report were analyzed from the *2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates*.

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Asian Americans in New York City

The Asian American community has been the fastest growing race group in the nation and NYC for the past two decades, and remains the most culturally and economically diverse population in the U.S. The most recent American Community Survey estimates that there are 1,013,209 Asian Americans living in NYC, which represents 12.2% of the City's 8.3 million residents. Since 2000, NYC's Asian American population has grown by 16.7%. This far exceeds the City's overall population growth, which was 3.7% in the same time period. If the Asian Americans population of NYC were a consolidated city, they would represent the 10th largest city in the U.S. by population, coming in just after Dallas, TX.

There are 9 NYC community districts where Asian Americans now represent more than 25% of the population in a given neighborhood. It is in these neighborhoods—Elmhurst, Woodside, Flushing, and Bayside in Queens, and Bensonhurst and Sunset Park in Brooklyn—where Asian American communities have grown between 40-89% since 2000. Through this astonishing growth, Asian American communities have remade their neighborhoods: buying homes; opening small businesses; establishing places of worship, civic associations and community-based organizations.

Asian Americans in NYC speak more than 40 different languages and dialects, and have many national, ethnic and religious identities. While these distinctions are important to understanding the needs and assets of the Asian American community, this exploratory analysis highlights the distinction of place and brings attention to issues of equity for Asian Americans when compared to their neighbors as a whole. Across a number of measures, such as income and homeownership, Asian Americans in some neighborhoods are similar to their neighbors. However, disparities persist in terms of language access, poverty levels, and housing conditions between Asian Americans and their neighbors, as well as for Asian Americans across neighborhoods.

Asian American Neighborhoods

This report identifies 20 community districts (CD) where the Asian American population is greater than 12.2%, and compares available data for Asian Americans with the population as a whole within each CD. An estimated 74.0% of all Asian American New Yorkers live in the 20 CDs listed in Table 1 below. While CDs are not necessarily uniform in geography and population size, they serve as the most useful level of analysis for data at a local level. Neighborhoods within a given CD are also not demographically or economically uniform, and can change in terms of population and character from one block to another. For example, the aggregate poverty rate for a CD may not accurately represent the poverty rates of two neighborhoods within the it. However, these local estimates are critical to disaggregating data on Asian American communities.

Accordingly, the 5 community districts currently with the largest share of Asian American population are:

1. Flushing (Qn 7) at 42.9%
2. Chinatown (Mn 3) at 35.3%
3. Bayside (Qn 11) at 34.8%
4. Woodside (Qn 2) at 33.9%
5. Elmhurst (Qn 4) at 32.3%

Asian Americans are now a significant proportion of neighborhoods that historically have not been considered Asian American “places.” Asian Americans now represent:

- 1 in 3 residents of Bensonhurst (Bk 11)
- 1 in 4 residents of Forest Hills (Qn 6)
- 1 in 5 residents of Richmond Hill (Qn 12)
- 1 in 6 residents of Lower Manhattan (Mn 1,2)
- 1 in 8 residents of the Murray Hill (Mn 6)

Table 1: The Percent Share of Asian Americans in Selected NYC Neighborhoods

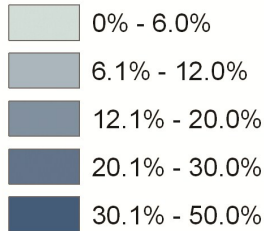
District	Neighborhoods within Community Districts	Total Population	Asian Population*	% Share Asian
QN 7	Flushing, Bay Terrace, College Point, Whitestone, Queensboro Hill	250,458	107,384	42.9%
MN 3	Lower East Side, Chinatown, Two Bridges, East Village	168,041	59,276	35.3%
QN 11	Bayside, Douglaston, Little Neck, Auburndale, East Flushing	120,600	42,001	34.8%
QN 2	Long Island City, Woodside, Sunnyside	135,448	45,886	33.9%
QN 4	Corona, Corona Heights, Elmhurst	139,583	45,127	32.3%
BK 11	Bensonhurst, Bath Beach, Gravesend, Mapleton	177,922	57,336	32.2%
QN 8	Fresh Meadows, Jamaica Estates, Flushing South, Utopia, Briarwood	152,820	48,513	31.7%
BK 7	Sunset Park, Windsor Terrace	151,262	39,767	26.3%
QN 6	Forest Hills, Rego Park	116,224	29,144	25.1%
QN 9	Kew Gardens, Woodhaven, Ozone Park, and Richmond Hill	147,338	34,170	23.2%
QN 10	Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, South Ozone Park, Howard Beach	130,753	26,562	20.3%
BK 10	Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Fort Hamilton	127,209	23,721	18.6%
QN 3	Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, North Corona	182,868	31,871	17.4%
MN 1,2	Financial District, Battery Park City, Tribeca, West Village, NoHo, SoHo	143,354	23,020	16.1%
BK 15	Homecrest, Sheepshead Bay, Manhattan Beach, Kings Bay	149,019	22,377	15.0%
QN 13	Queens Village, New Hyde Park, Bellerose, Rosedale, Floral Park	204,564	30,296	14.8%
QN 1	Astoria, Long Island City, Ditmars, Ravenswood, Steinway	184,083	25,590	13.9%
MN 4,5	Clinton, Chelsea, Midtown	143,734	18,710	13.0%
MN 6	Murray Hill, Gramercy Park, Stuyvesant Town, Turtle Bay, Sutton Place	150,263	19,336	12.9%
BK 12	Borough Park, Kensington, Ocean Parkway, and Midwood	163,611	20,481	12.5%

*Reported Asian alone or in combination with any other race.

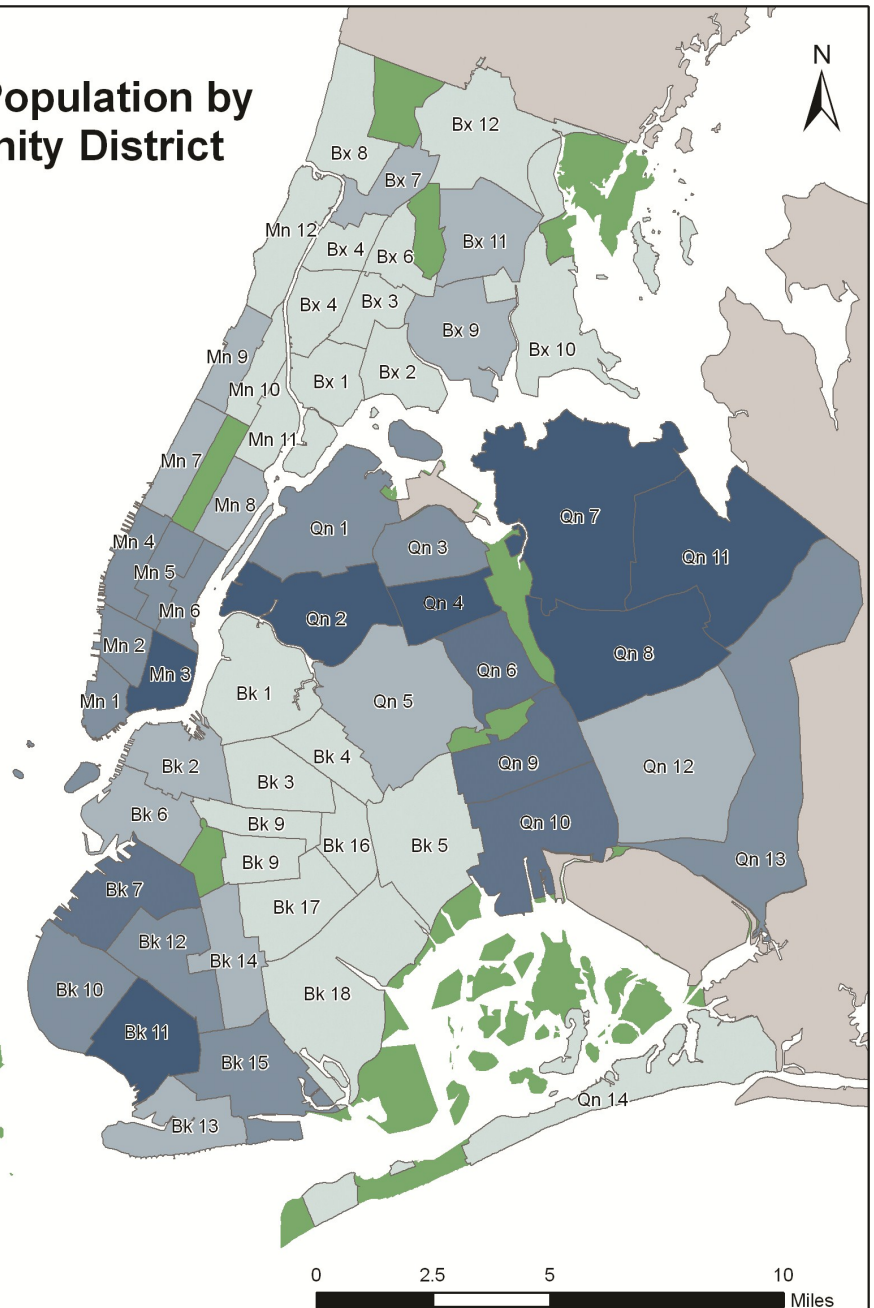
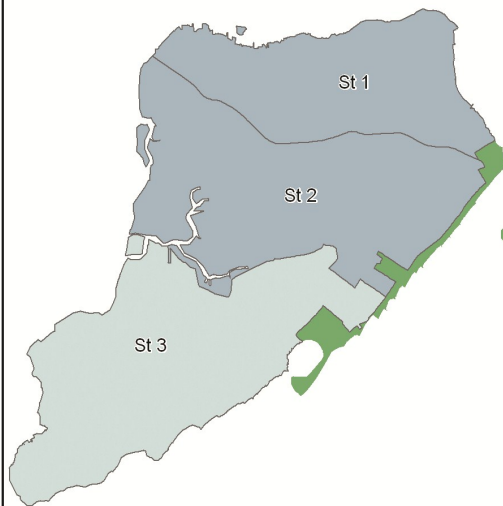
2009 Asian American Population by New York City Community District

Legend

Percent Asian Population



Map produced by
Asian Americans for Equality



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates;
New York City Department of City Planning.

Neighborhoods such as Jackson Heights (Qn 3), Flushing (Qn 7), Sunset Park (Bk 7), and Chinatown (Mn 3) are known as Asian American enclaves in NYC and serve as “gateway” neighborhoods for new immigrants. Over the past several decades Asian American communities have settled here and built up their neighborhoods, and they remain commercial hubs for their respective ethnic communities from throughout the region. The data presented here shows that Asian Americans now live throughout many NYC neighborhoods which are not historically

considered Asian American enclaves. Some neighborhoods are entirely residential, while others have become secondary and tertiary commercial districts, such as Richmond Hill (Qn 10) for the Indo-Caribbean community; Woodside (Qn 2) for the Filipino community; and Bensonhurst (Bk 11) for the Chinese community. Asian Americans choose neighborhoods for universal reasons: quality of life; affordable housing; access to transit; good schools; and employment opportunities.

Ethnic Diversity across Neighborhoods

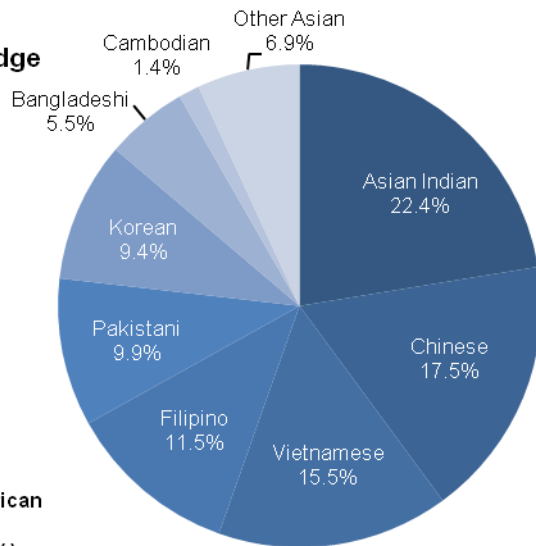
Figures 1 through 10 present the make-up of Asian American communities in selected community districts by ethnic group. Districts in the Bronx and Staten Island lack a percent share Asian population more than 12.2%, however, the North Shore in Staten Island (St 1) and Kingsbridge in the Bronx (Bx 7) have the highest share Asian populations in their respective boroughs. Based on available estimates, Chinese and South Asians represent the majority of Asian Americans living in Brooklyn. Neighborhoods throughout Queens represents the rich diversity of NYC's Asian American community. The "Other Asian" groups making up 4.7% of Asian Americans include Taiwanese, Burmese, Nepali, Indonesian, Thai, Sri Lankan, Cambodian, and Malaysian.

Table 2: NYC Asian American Population by Ethnic Group (Asian alone)

Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chinese	441,963	45.6%
Asian Indian	221,398	22.9%
Korean	88,079	9.1%
Filipino	69,564	7.2%
Bangladeshi	30,581	3.2%
Pakistani	29,251	3.0%
Japanese	24,512	2.5%
Vietnamese	17,578	1.8%
Other Asian Groups	45,235	4.7%
Total Population*	968,161	100.0%

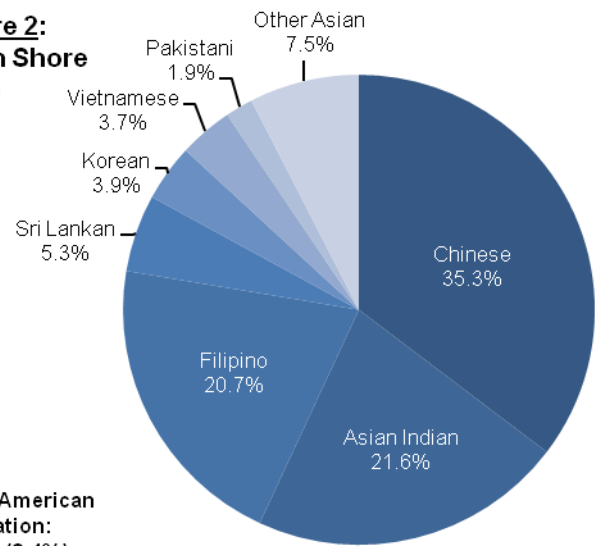
*Estimate for "Asian alone" population, see technical note on page 12.

**Figure 1:
Kingsbridge
(Bx 7)**



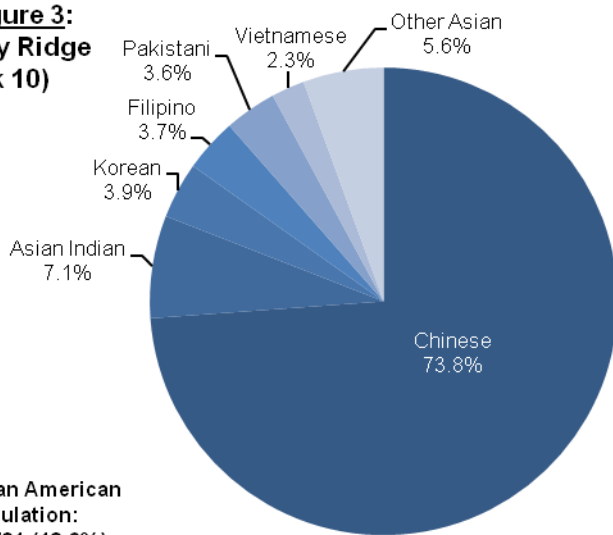
Asian American
Population:
10,528 (8.2%)

**Figure 2:
North Shore
(St 1)**



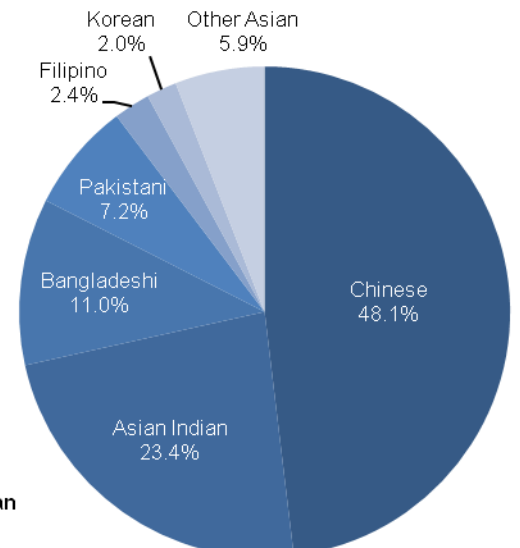
Asian American
Population:
14,738 (8.4%)

**Figure 3:
Bay Ridge
(Bk 10)**



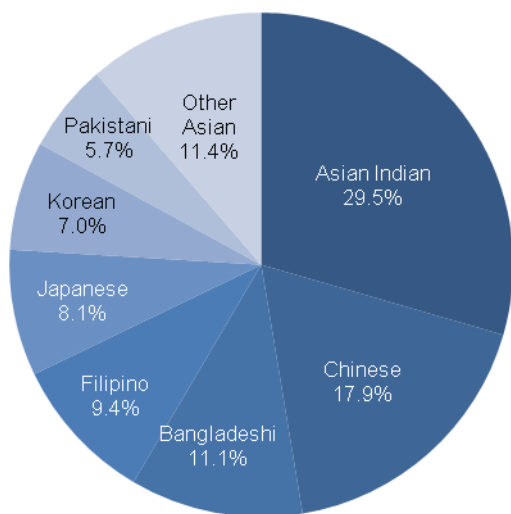
Asian American
Population:
23,721 (18.6%)

**Figure 4:
Borough
Park
(Bk 12)**



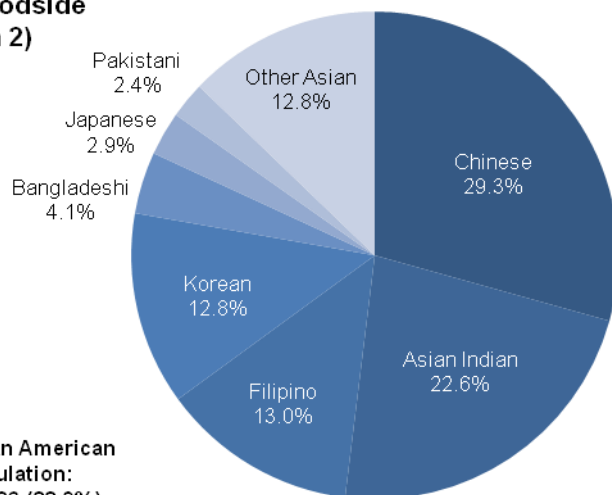
Asian American
Population:
20,481 (12.5%)

Figure 5:
Astoria
(Qn 1)



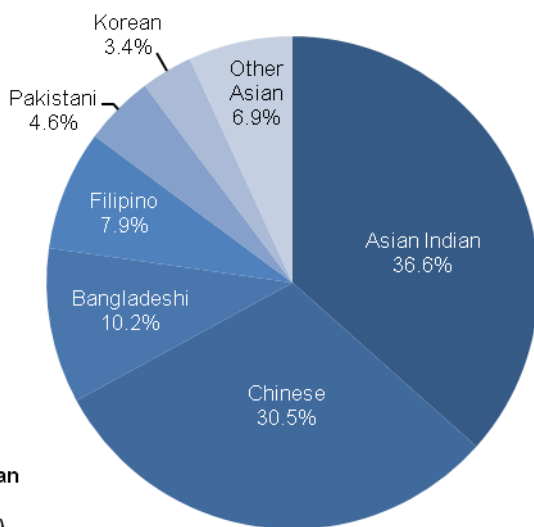
Asian American
Population:
25,590 (13.9%)

Figure 6:
Woodside
(Qn 2)



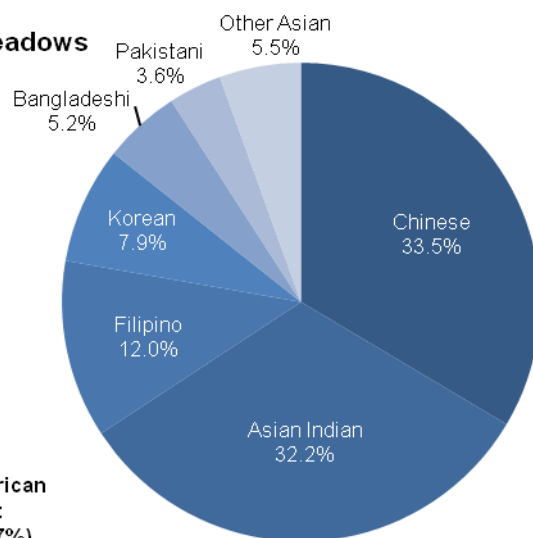
Asian American
Population:
45,886 (33.9%)

Figure 7:
Jackson Heights
(Qn 3)



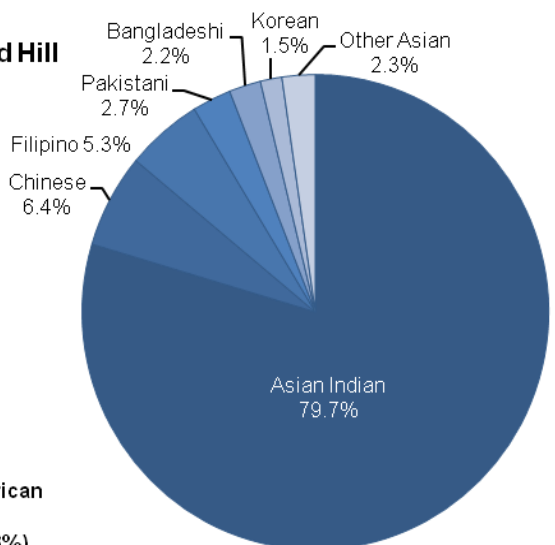
Asian American
Population:
31,871 (17.4%)

Figure 8:
Fresh Meadows
(Qn 8)



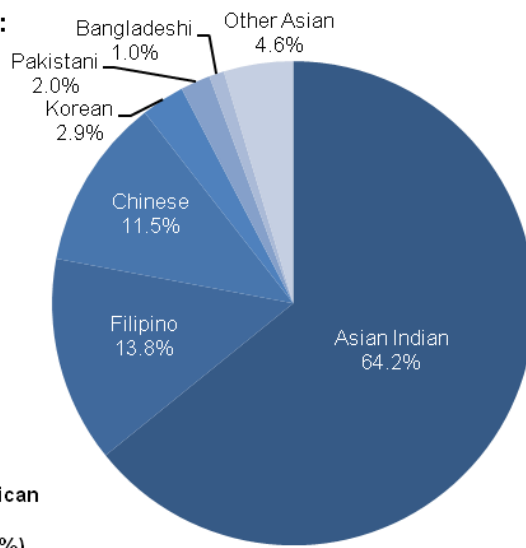
Asian American
Population:
48,513 (31.7%)

Figure 9:
Richmond Hill
(Qn 10)



Asian American
Population:
26,562 (20.3%)

Figure 10:
Queens Village
(Qn 13)



Asian American
Population:
30,296 (14.8%)

Poverty and Economic Status

Asian Americans represent every part of the economic spectrum. The median household income for an Asian American household citywide is \$53,173, which is higher than the median household income for NYC as a whole at \$50,173. This level of income is higher than for all racial and ethnic groups, except for White, Non-Hispanic households which is \$68,747. In aggregate, Asian American New Yorkers would appear to be faring well economically. However, through the lens of a neighborhood-by-neighborhood analysis, the data reveals that economic inequity persists for Asian Americans across the City.

The disparity between median incomes for Asian American households compared to all households in Figure 12 is greatest in Lower Manhattan (Mn 1 & 2) which contains economically diverse neighborhoods such as Tribeca, the Financial District, Battery Park City, Greenwich Village, SoHo, Chinatown, and Little Italy. In the analysis of presented in Figure 12, Asian American households have median incomes lower than those of their neighbors throughout neighborhoods of Queens, with the exception of Forest Hills (Qn 6) and Fresh Meadows (Qn 8) where median incomes for Asian American households were higher than that for all households.

The median per capita income for NYC is \$30,337, while the median per capita income for Asian Americans is lower at \$25,414. This is half of the per capita income for White, Non-Hispanic New Yorkers at \$49,699. The low median per capita income for

Asian Americans may indicate that the size of Asian American households are larger, and their make-up tends to be multi-generational. The overcrowding rate for Asian American households is nearly double the city-wide average of 7.8%. As a result there are more individuals who work to contribute to the household's income. New immigrants will work in low-wage jobs and household members will often pool their resources to cover living costs.

Poverty status is determined based on federal guidelines which factor the income of all persons within a household relative to total household size. Few neighborhoods in this analysis have poverty rates at or above the city-wide average of 18.6%. The average poverty rate for Asian American New Yorkers is 17.5%, just below the city-wide average. However, Figure 11 shows that poverty among Asian Americans remains high and is concentrated in neighborhoods such as Borough Park (Bk 12, 34.1%), Chinatown (Mn 3, 32.7%), Sunset Park (Bk 7, 30.6%), Jackson Heights (Qn 3, 23.6%), Elmhurst (Qn 4, 20.2%), and Astoria (Qn 1, 19.7%). Due to economic disadvantages these neighborhoods also have some of the largest household sizes and high overcrowding rates for Asian American households (Figure 15).

The largest disparities in poverty for between Asian Americans and their neighbors exist in:

- Bay Ridge (Bk 10, 21.7% vs. 14.0%)
- Lower Manhattan (Mn 1,2, 17.1% vs. 8.8%)
- Jackson Heights (Qn 3, 23.6% vs. 16.0%)
- Fresh Meadows (Qn 8, 8.6% vs. 4.2%).



Figure 11: Households in Poverty

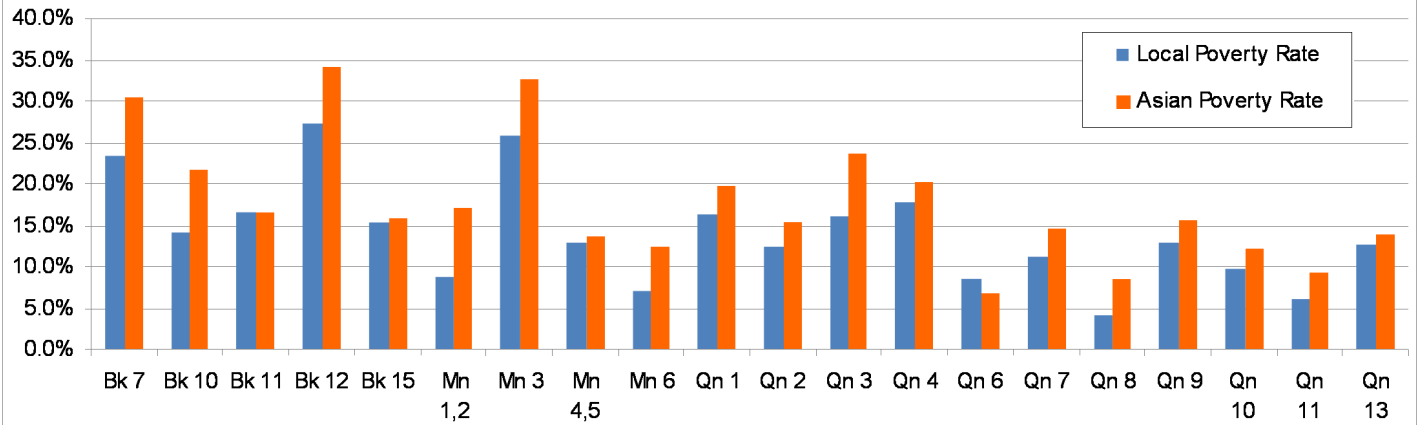


Figure 12: Median Household Income

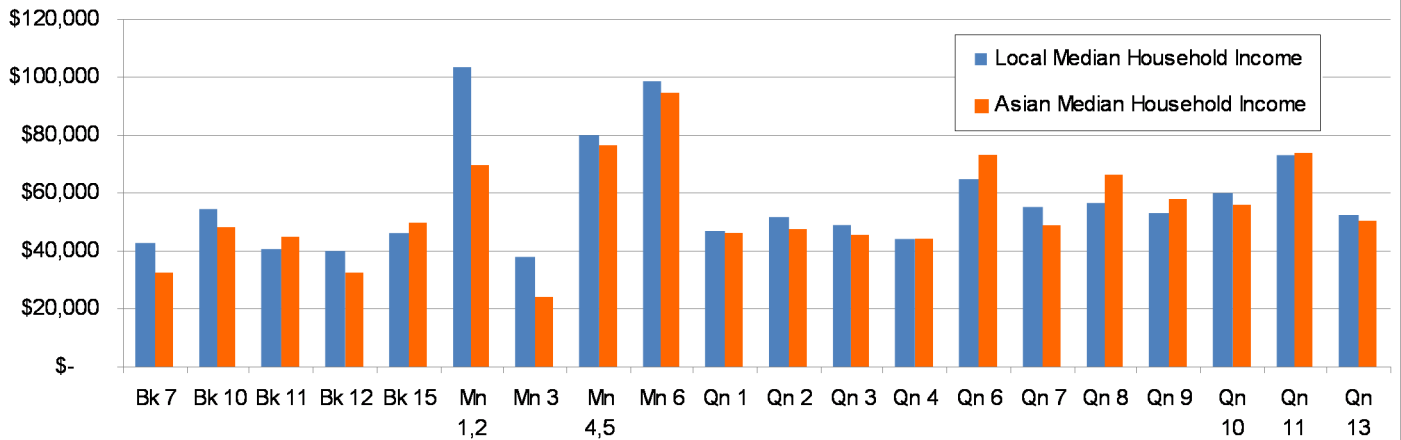
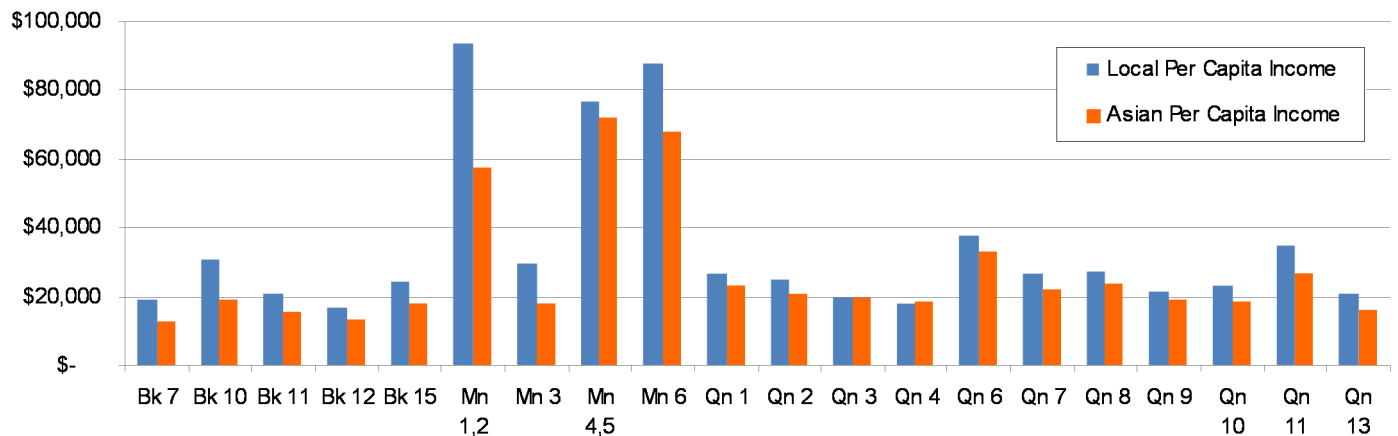


Figure 13: Per Capita Income



Housing Characteristics

Housing tenure and household overcrowding are primarily functions of economic resources and housing choice. Due to economic disadvantages and high housing costs many Asian Americans live in crowded, unsafe living conditions throughout NYC. The rate of overcrowding, defined as more than 1 person per room living within a housing unit, among Asian Americans households is 14.4% which is nearly double the city-wide average of 7.8%. The highest rates of overcrowding for Asian American households are in Sunset Park (Bk 7) and Borough Park (Bk 12). Disparities in overcrowding for Asian American households are greatest in:

- Borough Park (Bk 12, 27.2% vs. 6.3%)
- Sunset Park (Bk 7, 30.1% vs. 15.8%)
- Astoria (Qn 1, 19.0% vs. 8.0%)
- Chinatown (Mn 3, 17.7% vs. 8.5%).

The rate of homeownership for Asian American households (40.4%) is higher than the citywide average of 33.9%, but still below the rate for White, Non-Hispanic households (43.9%). In neighborhoods where there is relative parity in median household income between Asian American households and all households (Figure 12), Asian Americans still have higher rates of homeownership, including Jackson Heights (Qn 3), Bay Ridge (Bk 10), and Homecrest (Bk 15). This may demonstrate Asian Americans choosing affordable home buying opportunities in these neighborhoods. As a community of first-time homebuyers, many Asian American households play a pivotal role in neighborhood stabilization where homes have been neglected or abandoned. Asian Americans who become homebuyers also become more civically engaged and support the economic revitalization of neighborhoods as in the case of Flushing (Qn 7).

Figure 14: Homeownership Rates

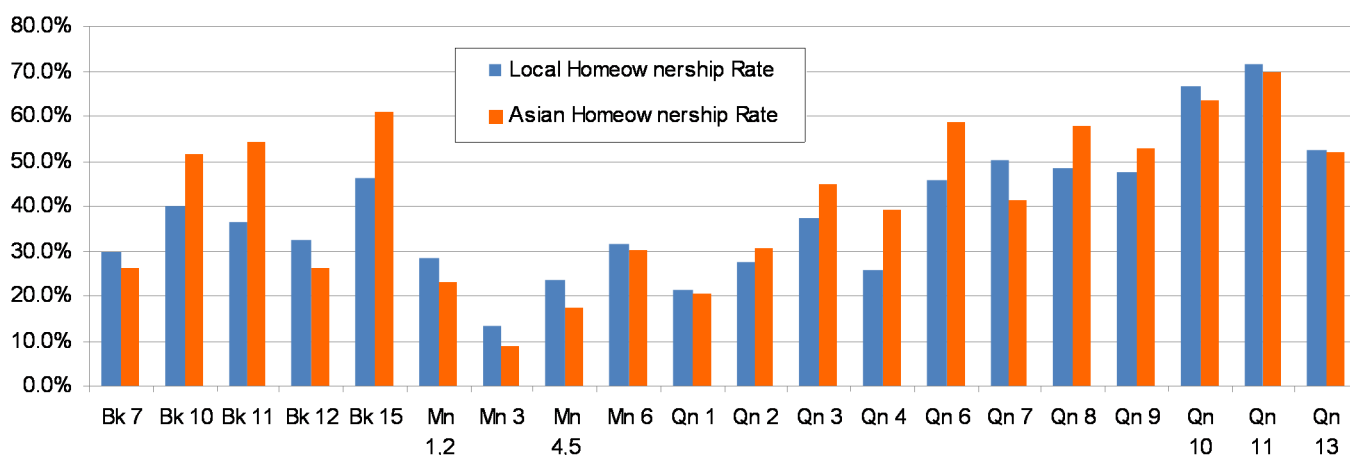
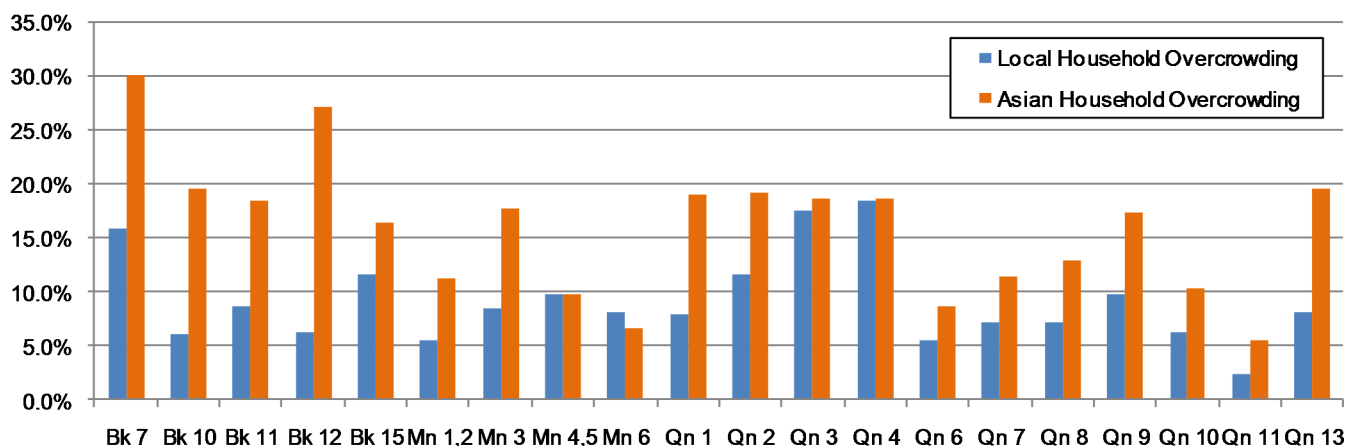


Figure 15: Overcrowded Households



English Proficiency and Language Access

For immigrant New Yorkers, limited English proficiency (LEP), defined as speaking English less than “very well,” often presents significant challenges to accessing health care, social services, employment, and education. While New York City’s population is 35.9% foreign-born, 22.8% of New Yorkers are LEP. The rate of LEP among Asian Americans in NYC is 60.0%, however this varies significantly across Asian ethnic sub-groups. Table 3 presents this variation by selected Asian language, and provides evidence for how policies and programs serving LEP individuals should be developed based on population as well as the severity of disaggregated need within a language group or local community.

Table 3: Share of LEP Individuals by Selected Asian Languages Spoken

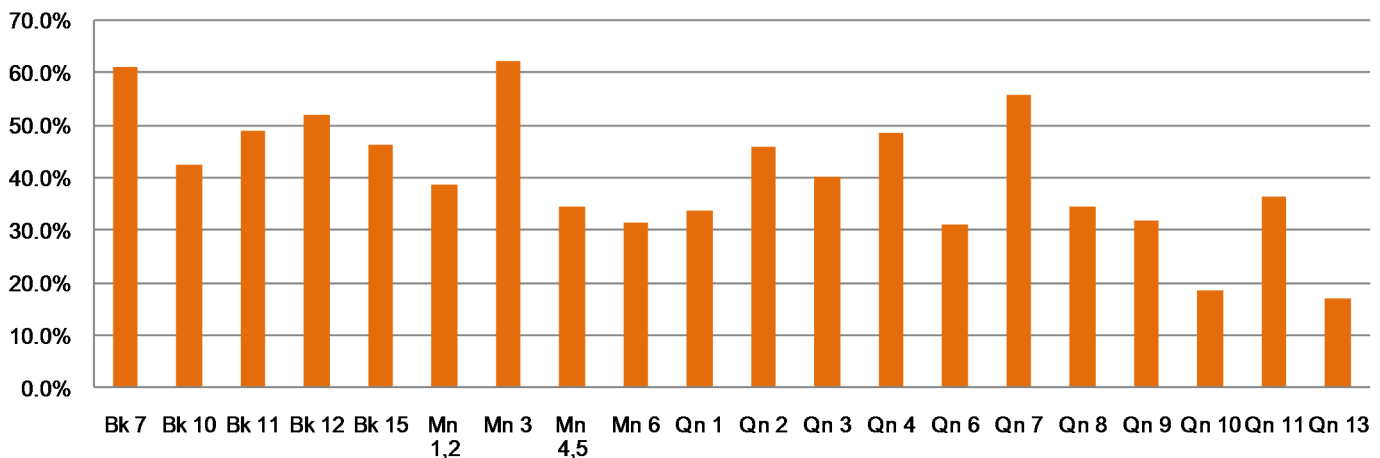
Language Spoken	Percent LEP
Chinese	67.3%
Gujurati	38.3%
Hindi	29.8%
Japanese	55.3%
Khmer	44.3%
Korean	62.5%
Tagalog	30.1%
Thai	59.3%
Urdu	44.2%
Vietnamese	60.6%

Linguistically Isolated Households

LEP Asian Americans often rely on children and other English-speaking family members to access services which lack adequate language assistance. However, an estimated 15.1% of all NYC households are linguistically isolated, defined as a household which has no individual 5 years of age or older who speaks English “very well.” NYC’s Asian American households continue to have the highest rates of language isolation when compared to any other race or ethnic group: 42.5% are linguistically isolated. Due to population growth in NYC’s Asian American communities being driven by immigration, it also is not surprising that the rate of isolated households in NYC is notably higher than that of Asian American households across the United States at 27.6%.

Figure 16 presents the rates of language isolation among Asian American households. The highest rates of linguistically isolated households are found in historic neighborhoods for the Asian American community: Sunset Park (Bk 7), Chinatown (Mn 3), Flushing (Qn 7) and Jackson Heights (Qn 4). Neighborhoods with moderate rates of language isolation such as Borough Park (Bk 12), Elmhurst (Qn 4) and Sunnyside/Woodside (Qn 2) represent residential areas adjacent to places like Sunset Park and Jackson Heights. Households in Richmond Hill (Qn 10) and Queens Village (Qn 13) have the lowest rates of language isolation. One possible explanation of this finding is that Indians and Filipinos represent more than 75% of Asian Americans living in these areas (Figures 9,10) and have high rates of English proficiency (Table 3).

Figure 16: Linguistically Isolated Asian American Households



Conclusion and Recommendations

The data on Asian Americans and neighborhoods in NYC analyzed in this report represents an initial assessment on how service providers, advocates, organizers and researchers can better understand the complexity of Asian American communities across the City. Ethnic identity, histories of immigration and settlement, languages, and religious affiliations all play important roles in influencing the needs and assets within Asian American communities. However, many additional factors ground people to their neighborhoods: social networks; housing choice despite limited resources; employment opportunities; and access to linguistically appropriate services and community resources. This data shows that Asian American communities are different across neighborhoods, but face similar challenges in terms of access and equity.

AAFE presents the following recommendations to explore further research, inform decision-makers and mainstream service providers to develop more culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and advance economic, political and social opportunities for Asian Americans in NYC.



Recommendation 1: Understand Community Change

Asian American communities have grown beyond the traditional “gateway” neighborhoods in recent decades. Some factors for this growth may be beneficial Asian Americans, such as better schools or better housing conditions; yet other factors may be detrimental to Asian Americans, such as increased demand of housing resulting in escalating housing costs. It is important to understand what is driving this mobility and why families select these new neighborhoods. We encourage further research to determine the wide-ranging effects of neighborhood change on Asian American communities.

Recommendation 2: Promote Language Access and English Language Learning Opportunities

Language access remains a priority for NYC’s Asian American communities. Every 3 out of 5 Asian American New Yorkers face barriers in accessing education, employment, and critical social and health services due to limited English proficiency. Government agencies need to be more responsive to local language needs and concerted efforts are needed to sustain and expand services that assist immigrant New Yorkers with learning English. Mainstream social service providers in communities with a growing Asian American population need to develop culturally and linguistically sensitive outreach and education initiatives to serve emerging populations. Funders and government agencies can form partnerships with traditional social service providers and local community-based organizations that have the expertise in serving Asian Americans to ensure that programs are developed to serve the needs of this growing population.

Recommendation 3: Focus on Asset-building for Families

Despite trends in homeownership and median income, poverty persists for many Asian American households throughout the neighborhoods in NYC. In many Asian American communities, more individuals are working with lower earnings in order to contribute to the household. These causal relationships need to be explored further and more needs to be done to support individuals and families who face the most economic disadvantage in building their assets.

Recommendation 4:
Expand Affordable Housing Opportunity in Targeted Neighborhoods

The situation of overcrowding for Asian American households is critical, and highlights the severe lack of housing choice, whether due to limited affordable housing opportunities or discrimination in the housing market. Affordable housing opportunities should be expanded where the real estate market provides for it, as well as where Asian American households experience disparate burdens in housing costs and rates of overcrowding.

Recommendation 5:
Consolidate Local Civic Participation

Release of the 2010 Census data in 2011 will begin the redistricting process for New York State. In many neighborhoods across the City, one elected official represents communities of interest at each level of government. Newly created electoral districts that do not regard organic neighborhoods and communities of common interest do a disservice to local civic participation. As Asian Americans grow in emerging neighborhoods, elected officials need to understand and be accountable to their changing electorate. Elected officials that represent emerging Asian American communities need to hire staff with the cultural and language capacity to serve the emerging Asian population.

Community Boards play a vital role in the public participation of members of the community. For communities with an emerging Asian American community, it is the responsibility of Borough Presidents and New York City Council Members to appoint Asian Americans to Community Boards in order to represent the community, and to advocate for the wide-ranging needs of Asian American.

Recommendation 6:
Explore Further Research on Local Communities

Data available through the American Community Survey provides a wealth of information never before available for Asian American communities at the local and neighborhood levels. Community leaders and researchers should collaborate to explore potential applications of this data to craft policy and build local resources.

Recommendation 7:
Increase Funding Opportunities for Community-Based Organizations that serve Asian Americans

Community-based organizations that are Asian American-led and serve Asian American communities have traditionally received less than 1% of New York City's government funding for healthcare, social services, and advocacy services. With the Asian American population exceeding 12% in 20 neighborhoods and 25% in 9 neighborhoods, local government agencies and elected officials need to invest more resources and create greater equity through funding for community-based organizations that serve Asian Americans.



Methods and Notes

2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates and Sampling

Data from the *2005-2009 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates* was released in December 2010. The data contained in these data products are based on the sample of households over a period of time, and not an actual count of all households in the U.S. Each year, approximately 3 million housing unit addresses from the U.S. Census Bureau's Master Address File are selected for the ACS. Independent address samples are selected for each of the 3,142 counties and county equivalents in the U.S., including the District of Columbia, for the ACS. For the 5-year data products, interviews from January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2009 were included in the sample. The multiyear estimates should be interpreted as estimates with margins of error that describe a time period rather than a specific reference year.

"Asian alone" vs. "Asian alone or in any combination"

"Asian alone or in any combination" corresponds to ACS interview responses that included Asian race, either alone or in any combination with other race categories. The data pertaining to the percent share of an Asian population within a given geography presented in Table 1 and subsequently used throughout this report are estimates for persons who are "Asian alone or in combination" with any other race. This data was used where possible as the most inclusive reporting of Asian Americans in NYC. All other demographic, economic and housing data is reported by the U.S. Census Bureau only for persons with a single race identified "Asian alone," and will not include responses in which race categories were reported in addition to Asian.

For more information on the American Community Survey, including data and documentation, visit:
<http://www.census.gov/acs>

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Acknowledgements

This report was written by Douglas Nam Le.

Data analysis and mapping were conducted by Douglas Nam Le and Peiyi Xu. Jo Ann Yoo, Richard Lee, Peter Gee, Abigail Deatley and Christopher Kui assisted in the development and review of the report.

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This publication can be viewed online at www.aafe.org. For more information about this and future publications, please contact Douglas Nam Le, douglas_le@aafe.org.

About Asian Americans for Equality, Inc.

Asian Americans for Equality is a non-profit organization established in 1974 with a mission of advancing the rights of Asian Americans and all those in need through advocacy and access in civil rights, immigrant assistance, social services, youth development, affordable housing, and economic development; to empower our communities through research and publishing that embody our issues and concerns; and to foster understanding and unity among diverse communities through building coalitions and forming collaborations.

During the past 37-years, AAFE has evolved into a nationally recognized affordable housing developer and an experienced social service provider. With offices in Chinatown, Lower East Side, Flushing and Sunset Park, AAFE is the only citywide community development corporation serving New York City's one million Asian American residents. Services include community development and housing preservation, housing legal services, community education, citizenship preparation, and social services. AAFE affiliate organizations the AAFE Community Development Fund and Renaissance Economic Development Corporation provide homeownership counseling and small business training, respectively.



Asian Americans for Equality

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布碌崙社聯會 (BCIA)
**Brooklyn Community Improvement
Association**

- A Not-For-Profit Organization -
720 57th Street Brooklyn, NY 11220
Tel#: 718-853-3302



August 13, 2012

RE: Councilwoman Sara M. Gonzalez (District 38 in Brooklyn)
Redistricting CC 38

We, Brooklyn Community Improvement Association, a non-for-profit organization support this idea for the 38th District in south-west Brooklyn: The main areas of Red Hook and Sunset Park should stay together. Gowanus is no longer part of the District. All of 8th Avenue Chinatown is now part of District 38. Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst are now united with District 43.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ray Chen', written in a fluid, cursive style.

Ray Chen
President

I think the Asian community is very well served the way the district is now. I think if you make the District so large with other Asian communities that my interests in my community would not be heard or addressed

NYC Districting Commission
Monday, August 13, 2012

City Council District 38

Dear Commission:

The Asian community should be represented by two City Council Districts, not four.

The Sunset Park Chinatown can be represented by District 38 up to 9th Avenue. This would unify the heart of Sunset Park's Chinatown, 8th Avenue, which is currently divided. The other South Brooklyn Asian communities can be represented in District 43.

This will allow for better education, sanitation, and other services for the Asian community.

This population is currently represented by four different City Council members.

I feel the Brooklyn Asian community would benefit by making the community into only two Districts.

In thank you for considering my ideas.



CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

"Staying on Freedom and Justice"

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Brooklyn NY 11225

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TESTIMONY OF
THE CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
BEFORE
THE NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION

August 13, 2012

at

Brooklyn Borough Hall
Brooklyn, New York



Prepared by:
Esmeralda Simmons, Esq.
Executive Director
Joan P. Gibbs, Esq.
General Counsel

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My name is Esmeralda Simmons and I am the Executive Director of the Center for Law and Social Justice. The Center for Law and Social Justice (CLSJ) is a unit of Medgar Evers College of The City University of New York. Founded in 1985 by means of a New York State legislative grant, the mission of CLSJ is to provide quality advocacy, conduct research, and advocacy training services to. CLSJ seeks to accomplish its mission by conducting research, and initiating public policy advocacy projects and litigation on behalf of community organizations and groups of people of African descent and the disenfranchised that promote civil and human rights, and national and international understanding. Because of its unique combination of advocacy services from a community-based perspective, CLSJ is a focal point for progressive activity.

CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE – A Major NYC Voting Rights Advocate

From its initial days, CLSJ has worked to defend the voting rights of Black New Yorkers and other New Yorkers of color who are protected by the federal Voting Rights Act. To this end, CLSJ has led or co-led the following historic voting rights advocacy initiatives in New York City: the **New Majority for Charter Change** (1987-1989) which successfully advocated for voting rights provisions and other equitable initiatives to be included in the new NYC Charter; the **Majority Coalition for Fair Redistricting** (1991-1992) which worked to ensure fair redistricting for people of color in NYC. CLSJ is also a founding member of the **New York Voting Rights Consortium** (1993-present) a coalition of leading local and national voting rights organizations advocating for the protection of voters of color in the New York metropolitan area. The voting rights litigation that CLSJ has been involved in include: *Ashe v. Board of Elections*; *Chin v. Bd. of Election*; *Reid v. Bruno*; *Rodriquez v. Pataki*; *Hayden v. Pataki*. Recently, CLSJ successfully represented petitioners-interveners in the *Little v. LATFOR and the NYS*

Dept. of Corrections case; and, currently, we represent petitioners-interveners in the *Favors v. Cuomo* case -- the ongoing federal litigation challenging the 2012 New York State Senate and Assembly redistricting plans.

Through our current "Racial Justice Redistricting Project," CLSJ has conducted a series of community trainings on the use of the census data during the New York State redistricting process. In addition, we have spearheaded a coalition, **Black New Yorkers for Fair Redistricting** that seeks to protect the voting rights of Black New Yorkers during the New York redistricting process. CLSJ has also been a very active member of the **Unity Map Group** that produced the heralded **UNITY Maps** during the state redistricting process. The Unity Maps clearly demonstrated how the voting rights of all VRA protected groups in NYC can simultaneously be respected and protected. **CLSJ intends to co-produce a "City Council Unity Map," which we hope will be seriously considered by the Commission.**

The Center for Law and Social Justice strongly urges the NYC Districting Commission to take all steps necessary to complete the redistricting process in a timely manner:

- Immediately implement the law that ended "Prison Gerrymandering;"
- Make the adjusted VTD data downloadable and available to the public online;
- Chart out your comprehensive timetable for completing City Council redistricting and release such to the public, including when the NYC Districting Commission's maps will be ready for review;
- Give notice of the second and third set of public hearings. We applaud the evening hearing hours as they allow for greater public input.

PROTECTION OF THE VOTING RIGHTS OF BLACK NEW YORKERS

As the Commission is well aware, the federal Voting Rights Act specifically protects the voting rights of Black New Yorkers, as well as Hispanic and Asian New Yorkers and some language minorities. Due to New York City's long history of voting discrimination, three counties in New York City: Kings, The Bronx, and Manhattan are "covered counties" under Section 5 of the Rights Act (VRA). Black voters and Black communities are protected against retrogression during redistricting processes.

Black folks make up 25.5% of New York City's population, over 2 million people.

Notwithstanding that fact, **for the first time in three decades, there is not have a single Black senior staff member serving at the Commission!** Such blatant disregard for diversity at the Commission does not indicate the level of respect needed in a redistricting process that must be sensitive to cultural diversity. We call on the NYC Districting Commission to undertake its duties with a heightened respect for Black communities throughout the city and the voting rights of Black New Yorkers. The Center for Law and Social Justice will be actively engaged in the City Council redistricting process. Needless to say, we and our colleagues will serve as watchdogs during the process on behalf of Black New Yorkers.

PUBLIC ACCESS PROCEDURES

As a New Yorker, and as the Vice Chair of the 1991 NYC Districting Commission, I am proud of the Commission's history of providing extremely broad public access to its redistricting process. Like voting, redistricting is a foundational process in a democracy. The Commission should be continue to lead or at least keep pace with the public access processes that occurred in

Florida and California. This redistricting cycle, the Florida public had online access to the state's data and mapping and drawing software. There was a coordinated electronic access system whereby the Florida public was able to draw districts and submit plans online to the redistricting commission for its study and use. Likewise, the newly created Californian Citizens Redistricting Commission allowed easy access and conducted an extremely open process. Further, the California Commission has been very receptive to public input.

To its credit, as early as 1991, the NYC Commission had public access terminals and an available staff to assist the public in drawing lines and reviewing data. The NYC Districting Commission must immediately set up a 21st century public access system:

- Give the public access to the City's full redistricting data base, including neighborhood, "community of interest" and socio-economic data, and election results;
- Establish dedicated user-friendly, interactive, multi-language online mapping system software linked to the Commission where the public can submit maps electronically and review and alter Commission produced maps;
- Make the drawing criteria public and explain such in plain language easily understood by laypersons;
- Have online assistance and a live Help Line.

In closing, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. The Center for Law and Social Justice looks forward to a cooperative relationship with the Commission. I will happy to answer any questions.



CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Testimony to the City Districting Commission
Brooklyn Public Hearing
August 13, 2012

Good evening, Chair Romano and other members of the City Districting Commission. My name is Dick Dadey, and I am the Executive Director of Citizens Union of the City of New York, a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Citizens Union serves as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform. Thank you for the opportunity to provide Citizens Union's thoughts regarding the process of drawing the City Council's 51 district lines.

Having been active at the state level with the redistricting process for state legislative and congressional lines, we appreciate the complexity of the task that you are about to undertake. We are also keenly aware of the need for a transparent and fair process, as the process of drawing lines this year in Albany was hyper partisan and resulted in gerrymandered maps, undermining public confidence in government's ability to be fair and even-handed when it comes to matters of representation and elections. While the New York City Charter provides a good foundation for the process of drawing lines, with mandated deadlines and defined criteria, there is more that can be done to ensure that the public has the utmost confidence in the process as it unfolds in New York City.

As we presented to you in a letter earlier this summer, we believe that the Commission can administratively enact additional requirements beyond those in the City Charter to ensure that the districting process is as open, transparent, and fair as possible for all of New York City's diverse communities. The two areas Citizens Union believes can be improved upon are transparency and public participation in the process, as well as robust criteria to make the drawing of district lines more objective.

We have no specific suggestions at this point about the make-up or design of the new districts, but it is important to note that the changes for 2013 will likely be greater than those made in the 2003 lines since the city's demography has changed significantly in the past decade.

Over the past decade, the city as a whole increased in population by 2.1 percent to nearly 8.2 million people, with the Asian population growing the most by 31.8 percent, now encompassing 12.6 percent of the city's population. Latino communities have also seen growth, with the Hispanic population growing by 8 percent, accounting for 28.6 percent of the city's population. The changes in each particular borough and community according to race and Hispanic origin will make for important decisions as how best to draw new district lines that reflect these important changes and ensure that opportunities exist for effective representation of all of New York City's communities. Given these changes, it is important that the Commission act in as transparent and accessible a manner as possible.

Transparency and Public Access

We are pleased that the Commission has already begun to ensure its work is open and transparent. The Commission's website provides important information, including the dates and times of your hearings and meetings, materials and video from your first meeting on July 17th, information about the commissioners, and links to demographic information and relevant sections of the City Charter pertaining to the Commission's work. We are encouraged that the Commission plans on providing online mapping software to allow the public to draw its own district lines. We additionally recommend the Commission do the following to improve transparency and public participation:

- 1. Make available on the Commission's website any maps, comments and testimony provided by the public** – Several bodies in New York City have provided on their websites public feedback that has been received through various channels, allowing information and perspectives to be shared with the public, including: the Reports and Advisory Board Review Commission; the Campaign Finance Board, and the 2010 City Charter Revision Commission. Additionally, other redistricting bodies across the nation have published public comments on their websites, such as the California Citizens Redistricting Commission and the Arizona Redistricting Commission, the latter of which provides publicly submitted maps on its website.
- 2. Provide to the public any underlying data for draft maps revealing district populations in user-friendly formats** – It will be essential to provide the public with the information and tools necessary to conduct independent analyses of the proposed maps. While providing mapping software online will go a long way toward this goal, providing data about the demographics of proposed districting in spreadsheet formats for members of the public unfamiliar with mapping software will be important to allow the public to analyze the proposed districts.
- 3. Webcast future Commission meetings and hearings** – We understand that the Commission staff is examining the possibility of webcasting future hearings and meetings of the Commission. The 2010 City Charter Revision Commission webcast its proceedings in locations outside of government offices, holding many of its meetings in many different locations in the five boroughs. The Mayor's Office for Media and Entertainment, which administers video for the Council and Mayor for NYC TV (Channel 74), may also be a useful resource. While providing video online of meetings after they are held is helpful, as you have done already for your meeting that was held on July 17th, livestreaming will allow for a more meaningful and timely public engagement. We call upon you to webcast future meetings.

Criteria and Commission Voting Procedures

Citizens Union in 2010 provided recommendations to the 2010 Charter Revision Commission regarding the criteria for drawing district lines, which we urge you to adopt administratively prior to adopting draft district lines. While the City Charter provides a good foundation for the drawing of district lines, we urge the Commission to build upon the criteria specified in Section 52 of Chapter 2-A of the City Charter.

The current criteria in the Charter, which are very good, are prioritized and include the following: population consistency and justification of differences in population, "fair and effective representation of racial and language minority groups," neighborhood and community cohesiveness, geographical compactness and contiguity, and compliance with voting rights laws. The charter additionally states that the commission may not redraw districts "for the purpose of separating geographic concentration of voters enrolled in the same political party" in order to weaken these voters' representational power, and that no two districts should cross the same county lines.

Recognizing that the above criteria take precedence over any additional criteria, we suggest building on the existing principles and guidelines in the City Charter. The Commission should adopt the following two additional criteria to ensure public confidence in the district lines:

1. **To the extent practicable, the most and least populous council districts should not exceed or be lower than the mean population of all senate districts by more than one , two or three percent** unless needed to comply with the Voting Rights Act or required by the New York City Charter. We understand the inherent challenges in trying to meet this standard, but we believe that it is a good one to aspire to because it ensures fairness, balance, and less rigging to suit political outcomes.
2. **Council districts should not be drawn to favor or oppose any incumbent legislator, or any previous or presumed candidate for office.** This builds on the existing criterion that prohibits weakening any political party's representational power.

Citizens Union also recommends that the number of commission members' signatures to adopt a council district plan should be a minimum of 11 of 15 signatures (73 percent). The current approval threshold is 9 of 15. The higher threshold will ensure that the requirements set forth in the criteria, particularly provisions preventing partisan gerrymandering, are met in the final plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to present Citizens Union's recommendations regarding the process and transparency of drawing the Council's district lines. I am available to answer any questions you have.

BRAD LANDER
COUNCIL MEMBER, 39TH DISTRICT

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**THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

COMMITTEES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
GENERAL WELFARE
LAND USE
HOUSING & BUILDINGS
WATERFRONTS

**Testimony to the New York City Districting Commission
August 13, 2012**

Chair Romano and distinguished members of the Districting Commission, Executive Director Hum, thank you for holding this first public hearing in Brooklyn, and for the opportunity to present testimony. I am New York City Council Member Brad Lander and I am honored to represent the 39th District in the City Council.

To begin with, I want to thank you for your service, and express appreciation that New York City's redistricting process is rightly considered a model process, with goals of democratic representation, equal justice under law, and good government. I am proud that New York City's process is undertaken by an independent commission, which I am very confident will review the demographic data, listen to public input, and produce proposed redistricting maps in accord with these goals.

Within that context, I would like to make two very modest recommendations. In general, I believe that the 39th is a great district, covering a number of wonderful neighborhoods. Two of those neighborhoods – the Columbia Street Waterfront and Gowanus Canal area — contain significant manufacturing and industrial areas. The current district lines carve up these industrial areas and separate the industrial areas from nearby residential areas.

The residential portion of the Columbia Street Waterfront neighborhood is in a separate district (39th) from the portion that contains the active freight terminal along the waterfront (33rd). I believe that the Port (controlled by the Port Authority, with some of it leased to NYCEDC) and the adjacent neighborhood should be in the same district. The need to mediate between residential and industrial uses has come up quite often in my tenure and unified representation of the Port and the neighborhood would help in addressing such issues in the future.

Similarly, the Gowanus Canal neighborhood is currently equally divided into three Council Districts (33rd, 38th and 39th). This area faces many planning and policy issues in the coming years: the EPA/Superfund cleanup of the sediment in the canal, much-needed action to improve water quality, as well as land use, zoning, and infrastructure decisions. The interdependent nature of these issues, many of which are deeply linked with City policy decisions, would be easier to grapple with if the industrial areas around the Gowanus were primarily in one Council district. I hope you will consider uniting more the Gowanus Canal area under one district.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Dr. Tim Law, a 40-year resident of Brooklyn Bensonhurst. My remarks on NYC council redistricting would be as follows:

1. In the meantime, we have four city council districts (43,44, 47, and 50) in Brooklyn Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst, Sunset Park, and Gravesend. According to CUNY Center for Urban Research, between 2000 and 2010, the Asian population in these areas increased 57% and 19,747 more people identified themselves as Asian.
 2. Because of cultural and language background, the Asian population are more comfortable to share their feelings and communicate with each other concerning their problems. Most importantly, they can share information about governmental benefits, entitlements, and applications.
 3. No matter they go to work, school, or other places, most Asians are settling down along the subway lines N, D, and F where they can easily travel from Manhattan to Brooklyn Sunset Park, Bensonhurst, Gravesend and Dyker Heights.
 4. Since 1990, most Asian Families have chosen to live in the aforementioned neighborhoods because of the school districts (20, 21, and 22) can provide their children with different special programs, such as ESL, Bilingual, Music, and Gifted and Talented classes. etc.
- In conclusion, I strongly believe there should be only three, not four, new NYC council districts in Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst, Sunset Park, and Gravesend based on our residents' language and cultural background and educational needs. The proposed districts will be more compact and much more easier to understand.

10584 Flatlands 6th Street
Brooklyn, New York 11236
August 20, 2012

Jonathan Ettricks
N.Y.C. Districting Commission
253 Broadway, 7th Fl.
Manhattan, N.Y.C. 10007

Dear Mr. Ettricks;

Canarsie's districting must be changed. We have 3 Councilmen, 4 Assemblymembers, and 2 State Senators representing our community, yet our needs are not met. In addition, Community Board 18 has not treated us fairly. In addition, it has violated the Padavan Law by allowing the large number of NY State OMRDD homes in our area compared to the rest of District 18.

Our sewers need cleaning and repair, and our roadways need removal and traffic enforcement. The Fresh Creek Nature Preserve is in dire need of care. Canarsie Pier, and its surrounding waterways and park area must be part of National Gateway's plans; as of now, funding is lacking.

To have a true democracy, Canarsie and every neighborhood in New York City should be districted according to its police precinct boundaries.

Sincerely,
Gerry C. Weiner

I live in sunset park and I think the district shouldn't stay the same.

James Kemmerer

564 72nd Street

Brooklyn NY 11209

To: NYC Districting Commission

Re: District 43

As a member of the Bay Ridge community I'd like to briefly submit my thoughts on the council redistricting process. As a resident of Bay Ridge it is common to have our state and federal districts divided and split across multiple boroughs of the city. Often parts of our community are excluded while areas not generally considered to be part of our community are included.

We would simply like to be represented as we live, as one contiguous community. Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst and Bath Beach are neighboring communities with much in common, we share the same community groups, cultural organizations, non-profit associations and most importantly, we share the same schools.

As one community we would ask that we be represented as such. For example, frequently the Bay Ridge Towers are tossed into and out of our representative districts. With friends and colleagues living in these towers, I can attest that they very much see themselves as part of Bay Ridge and our larger community but frequently find themselves without a voice in their own community.

We thank you for your consideration in this matter and we hope you will allow the communities of Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, Dyker Heights, and Bath Beach to function electorally as we do in our daily lives, as one tight knit community.

City Council Redistricting Commission
August 13, 2012
David Galarza
La Casita Comunal de Sunset Park

Good evening, my name is David Galarza. I'm a coordinator a La Casita Comunal de Sunset Park, a Project of Trinity Lutheran Church. On August 4, 2012, we joined members of Asian Americans for Equality and Common Cause for a workshop on this process. A process, I might add that occurs every ten years, but that seems to be rushed through in what feels like 10 minutes leaving the general public mostly unaware.

The men and women who participated in this forum were engaged and very aware of the importance of this process. As I had stressed at a press conference prior to forum, for us at least, this exercise was less about who was going to be in office and more about holding whoever that person was accountable to our respective communities.

The maps created from this exercise seem on the surface fair and indeed set a framework from where we can begin a conversation. Both the Asian American and the Latino communities have grown substantially and there is a real need to ensure that both communities are respected, counted and consulted in all matter of civic affairs. Obviously, we are also not homogenous groups and the sensitivities and nuances of our ethnic roots need to be taken into account.

As a Latino, I would be remiss if I didn't express my dissatisfaction with the lack of fair representation of Latinos on this Commission. Latinos have had the same number of members on this body since 1990 even though the Latino community in the city has grown by 31 percent. We should have five members.

I must also express my dissatisfaction with the timing of this process. If your stated goal is to make sure that there is little to no real public participation, then by all means continue to schedule these meetings in the middle of summer when most people are on vacation or generally aren't paying attention to these issues. But in fact, if you really care about the democratic process and really want to engage and involve and include the myriad of voices that exist and should be heard in this metropolis, then you should change the calendar and this process and devise a better system to include and honor those voices.

I want to thank Common Cause for reaching out to La Casita and coordinating the forum we had and to our brothers and sisters in the Asian American community for breaking bread with us and discussing the many ways our communities can and will work together. Sadly, it seems like the kind of exercise that some government bureaucrats are more apt to despise than to appreciate.

As this bullet train moves toward adopting new lines, I will repeat what our friends at the National Institute for Latino Policy have offered: How independent will this process be (from the parties, the Mayor, the Council, etc.); how transparent will the process be?; Will there be meaningful public participation, especially among Latino and other communities of color?; Will mapping and related technologies be made available to all communities?; Will the reallocation of state prisoners to their original New York City addresses be implemented?

We'll have more questions and we hope to get as many answers in the weeks and months ahead. And we will continue to work with groups like Common Cause, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, AALDEF and others to insure that the voices, desires and the democratic rights of all New Yorkers are respected, considered and implemented in this process.

Linda Orlando
260 65th Street Apt #23L
Brooklyn, New York 11220-6505
718-238-9135
August 13th, 2012

City of New York
Redistricting Commission Hearings
209 Joralemon Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Bay Ridge 43rd Council District

Dear Commissioners:

The Towers of Bay Ridge are a State of New York Mitchell-Llama Housing Co-op complex with 811 apartments on 65th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenue and between 3rd and 4th Avenue in Brooklyn. They were built in 1972. At that time they were in the 43rd Council District. In 1981 they were redistricted into the 38th Council District.

I would like to ask the Commissioners to move the boundary line two blocks, from Wakeman Place back to 65th Street, and return the Towers to the 43rd Council District.

Bay Ridge is a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community NORC with many seniors who have lived here all their lives and would like to remain in this community for the rest of their lives. The seniors who live in the Towers and many other seniors in the neighborhood avail themselves of the services provided by the Bay Ridge Community Center on Ovington Avenue and 4th Avenue, Seniors on the Move bus service, and many of the other senior services and health and medical facilities available in the Bay Ridge area.

During the last 40 years the shareholders of the Towers have patronized every business in Bay Ridge. They visit all the doctors and lawyers. Their children attend the Bay Ridge schools. Their seniors are members of the senior center and veterans' chapters. They have accounts in all the banks. They are members of all the Bay Ridge community organizations. They worship in all the churches. All the stores know our refrigerator, stove and air conditioner requirements and our floor and window dressing requirements. The shareholders frequent all the stores on 86th street, 3rd Avenue and 5th Avenue. They should be in the same district and be represented by the same council member that represents all the businesses in which are located all the Bay Ridge shopping areas.

The Towers have always been an integral part of Bay Ridge and should be included in the 43rd Council District. Above Wakeman Place is the Belt Parkway 65th Street entrance and exit ramps surrounded by a grassy area. There are no structures involved other than the Towers of Bay Ridge in my redistricting request. Please move the boundary line from Wakeman Place to 65th Street so the Towers of Bay Ridge would be back in the 43rd Council District.

Thank you,

Linda Orlando

LINORLANDO@aol.

cc: Council Member Vincent Gentile, 43rd Council District

NYC Districting Commission Public Hearing

August 16, 2012

Dear Chair:

I live in the seaview village area of Canarsie Brooklyn. I want to make a suggestion on the redistricting of the Canarsie community. Please do not split Canarsie up as of now Canarsie has 3 three council members which one is connected to the 60th assembly District according to the new lines drawn up from the Assembly district. And the other side of East 108th street is within the 58th Assembly district. Canarsie lines should be drawn from Ave D' to the shore line and from Ralph Ave to East 108th which would put all of Canarsie together and within the bounties of the 69th Pct.

The way the lines are now with the 3 Council members is very hard to get anything done in this area, for example: there was an issue with the fresh creek Nature preserve and I needed to get in touch with my community leaders for that area. I got in contact with the council member, and the assembly in Canarsie who I thought was my community leaders only to find out that neither one of them was responsible for that area of Canarsie. When I did get in touch with the council member and the Assembly member neither one helped solve the problem with the Nature preserve, I reached out to my State Senator and organized a community clean up to the attention of the park dept. to finally agree to restore the Fresh Creek Nature Preserve. So you can say from east 108th to seaview we don't not have leadership as far as our Assembly person and Council member.

Please do not leave The Seaview Village area of Canarsie out in the cold for the next 10 years.

P.S. I started the Fresh Creek Association because I wanted to show we care about our area and our beautiful Nature Preserve.

Thanks for your time and I truly hope you don't chop up Canarsie.

Maria Garrett

Good afternoon. My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I serve as representative for the 45th District in the New York City Council, covering the communities of Flatbush, East Flatbush, Flatlands, Midwood and Canarsie. I would like to thank the New York City Districting Commission for allowing me to testify today at the first public hearing of the latest decennial redistricting, as we discuss the initial phases of your work in drafting new legislative maps for the City Council. Special greetings go to Roxanne Persaud, who serves my District with distinction as President of the 69th Precinct Community Council.

First, I would like to commend Mayor Bloomberg, Speaker Quinn, and Black, Latino and Asian Caucus Chairs Cabrera and Jackson for assembling a Commission that reflects the diversity of backgrounds in our city. The redistricting process requires an understanding of the many communities within the five boroughs and the importance of giving every voice proper representation. The fifteen members of the Commission, under the leadership of Chair Roman and Executive Director Hum, possess a breadth and depth of experiences that should serve them well in this process.

With the importance of varied perspectives in mind, I hope the Commission will hire a staff that is as equally diverse as its membership. Their hands-on expertise will be essential to guiding this process, especially since technical details of redistricting will be new to certain members. At this time, it does not seem that the Commission's staff reflects a standard of diversity we should collectively be seeking.

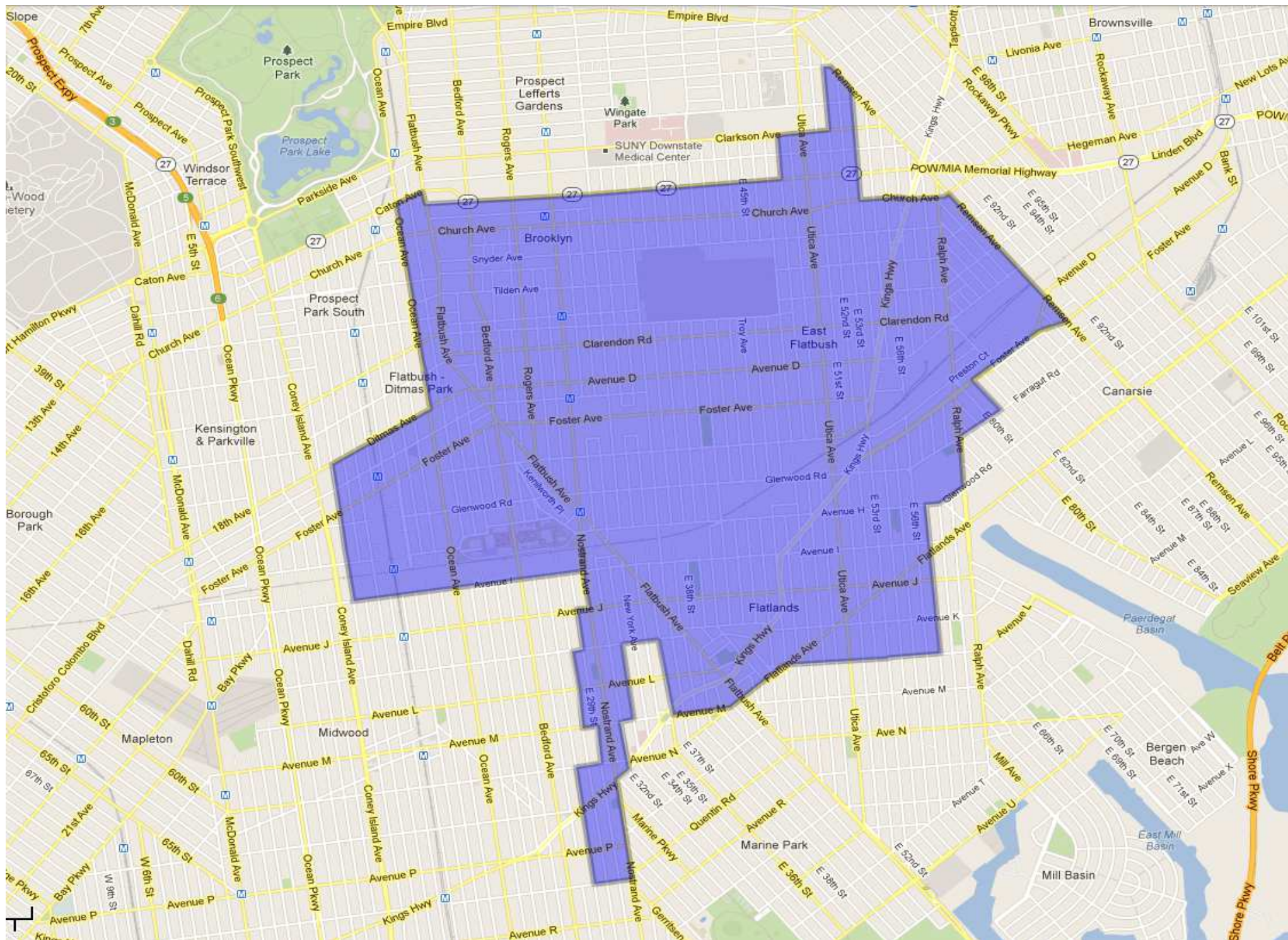
Indeed, diversity should be a top priority at every stage of the redistricting process. This at its core is an exercise in demographics, but on a personal level it is about

protecting and maintaining the voices of common communities. Our government performs best when the range of those voices citywide is reflected by the elected officials who serve and advocate for them.

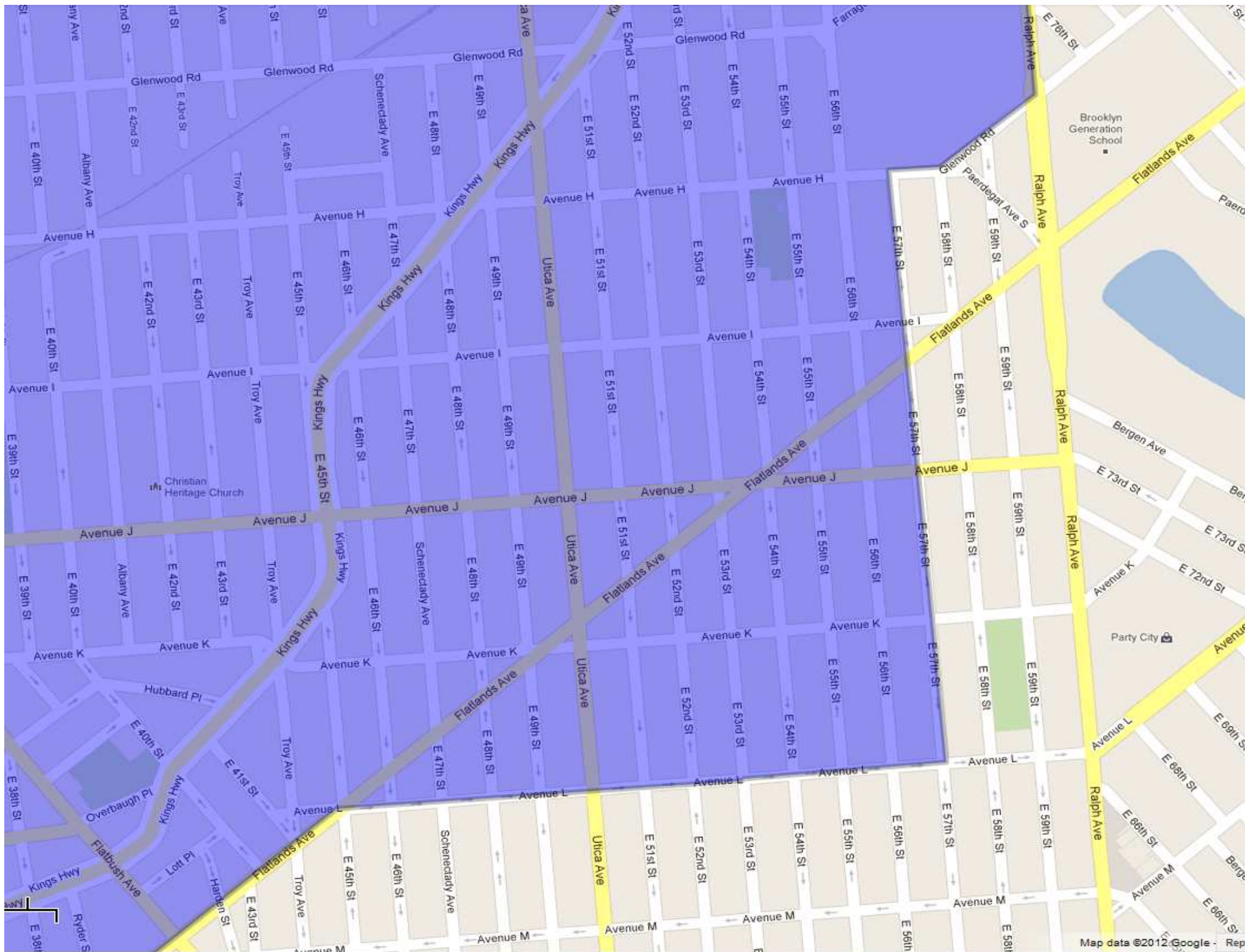
Political considerations alone cannot be the determinative factor in how the Commission draws the lines. Trust in government was seriously damaged by the state redistricting process this year due to the blatant gerrymandering that Senate Republicans concocted. As an elected official, my personal interests pale in importance to the interests of my constituents, who seek compact and culturally cohesive districts. To further ensure that this is achieved, as well as to eliminate any specter of malfeasance, I call upon the Commission to expand public access to data and technology that will allow everyday New Yorkers to observe the redistricting process and to offer their own input that will offer a more complete picture of how our city has changed over the last ten years.

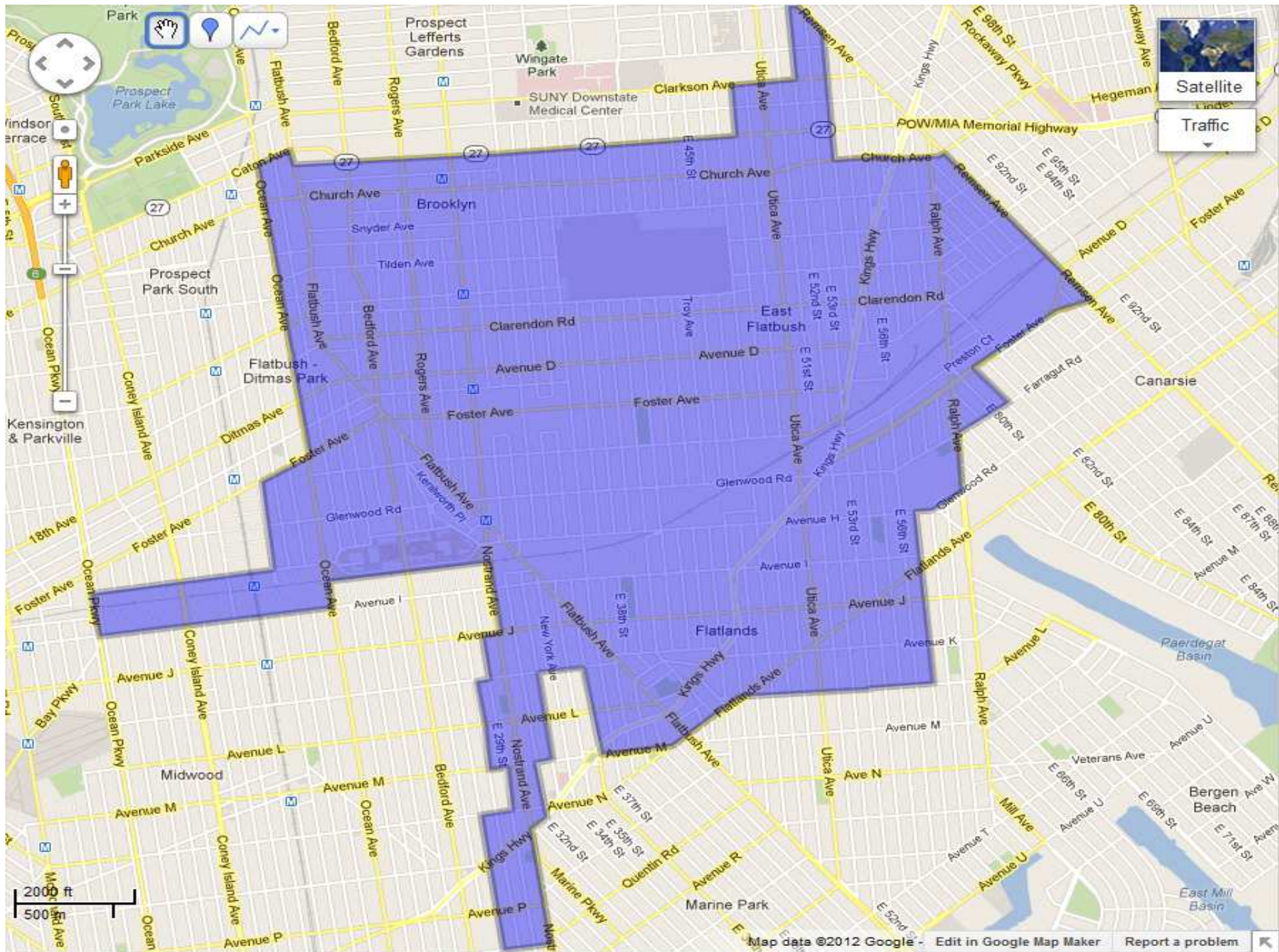
I also hope that the Commission will properly account for the voice of our incarcerated population. Last December, the State Supreme Court upheld a law that ensures prisoners will be counted in their home communities, not where they are jailed. It seems clear that this decision governs over population counts for both state and city redistricting. Prison-based gerrymandering has been used to artificially dilute the electoral influence of certain communities in the past, but I am confident this Commission will affirm the Court's ruling and the concept of fair representation.

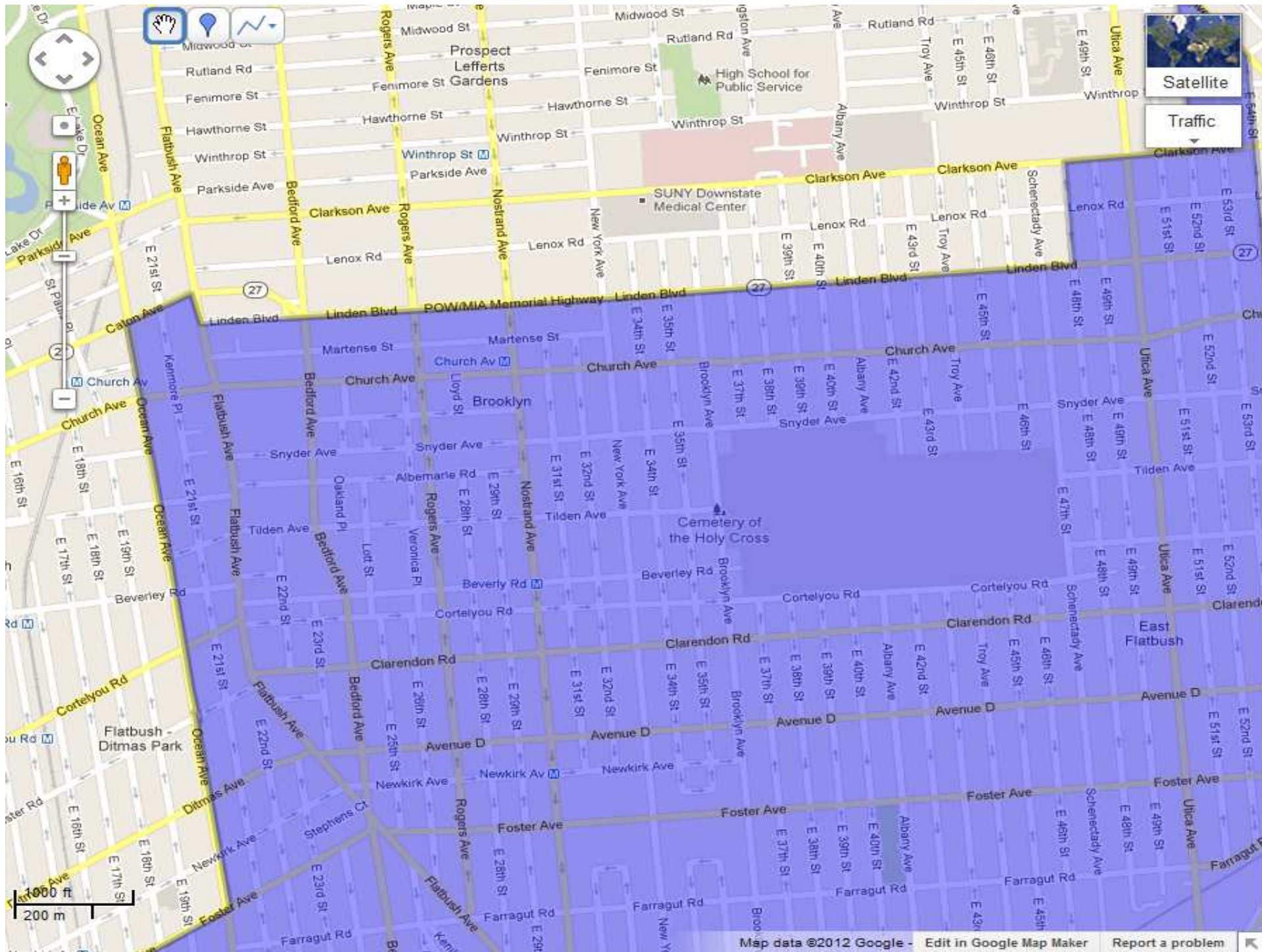
Thank you again for allowing me to testify today. I am additionally submitting draft maps for the 45th Council District for the record. Please feel free to reach out to me or my office for any and all follow-up as we go forward in this process.

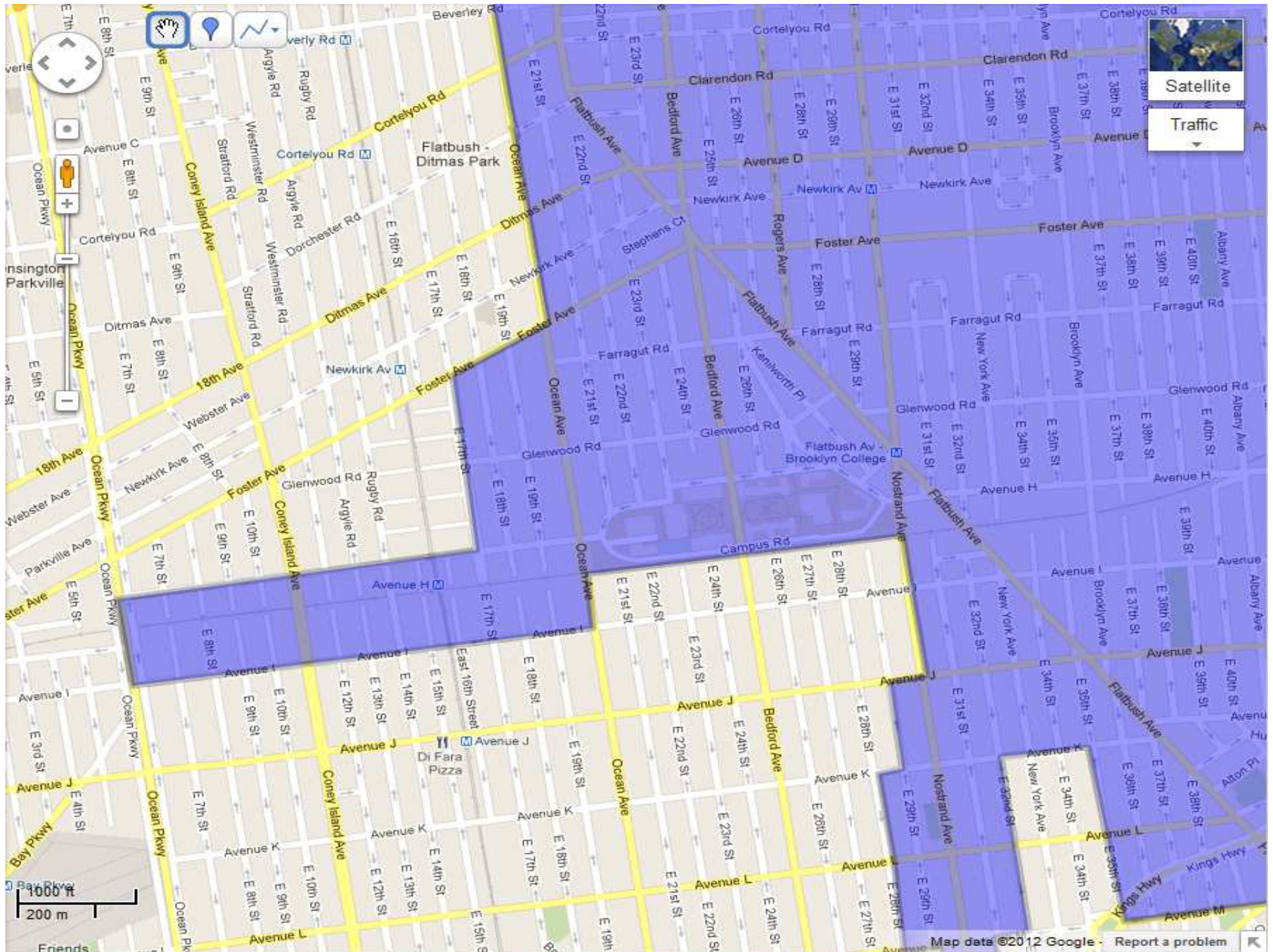






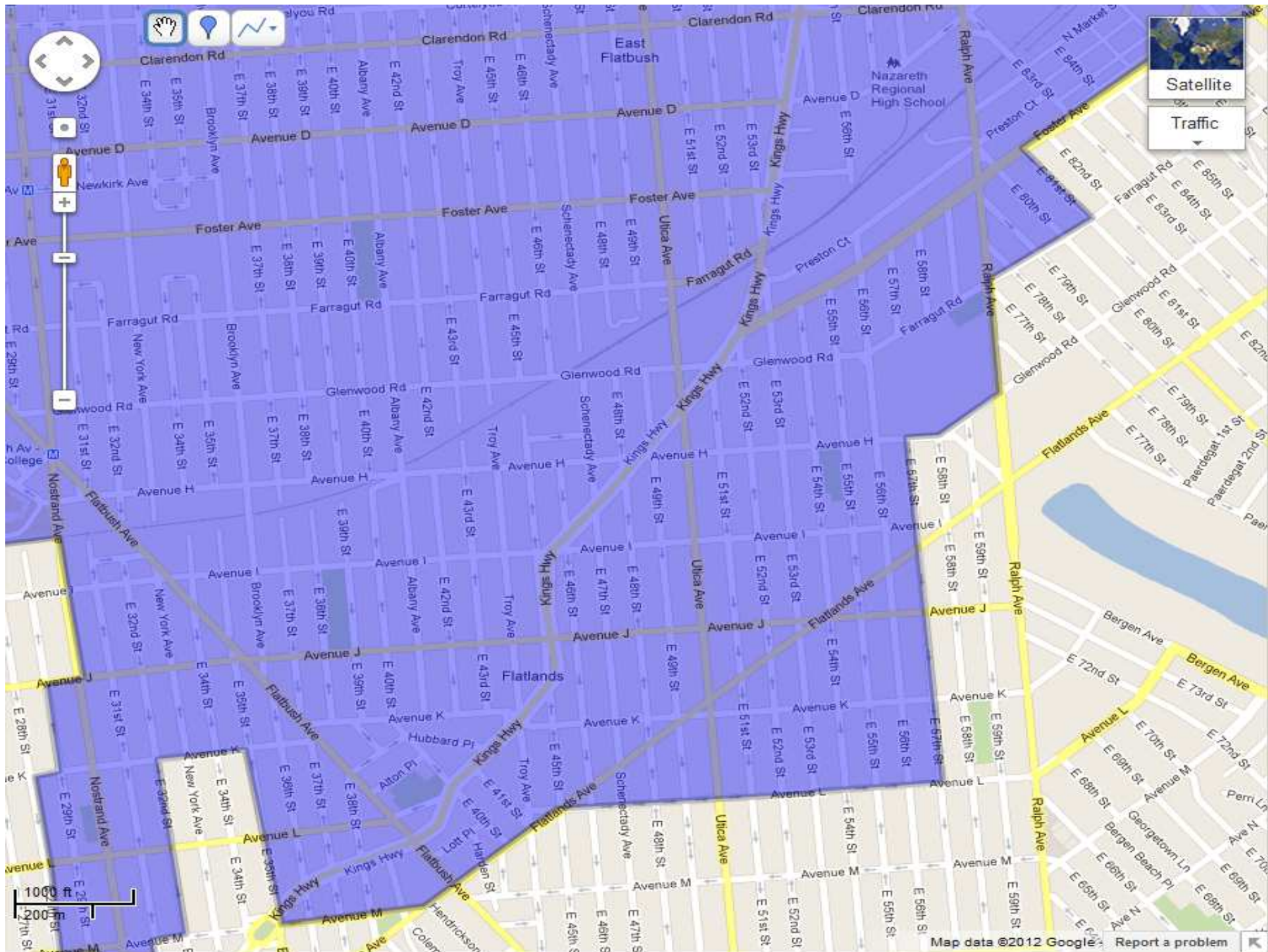


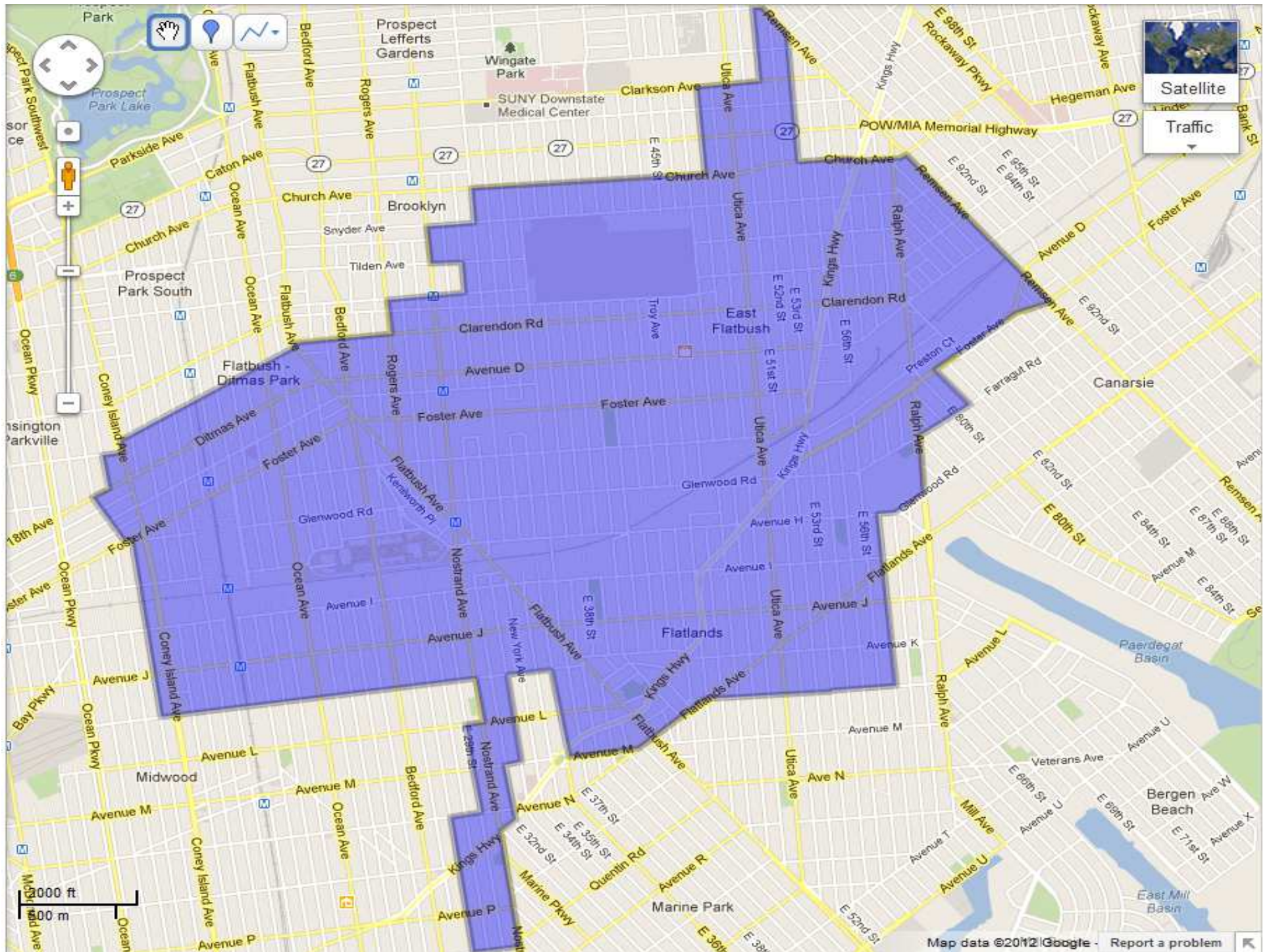


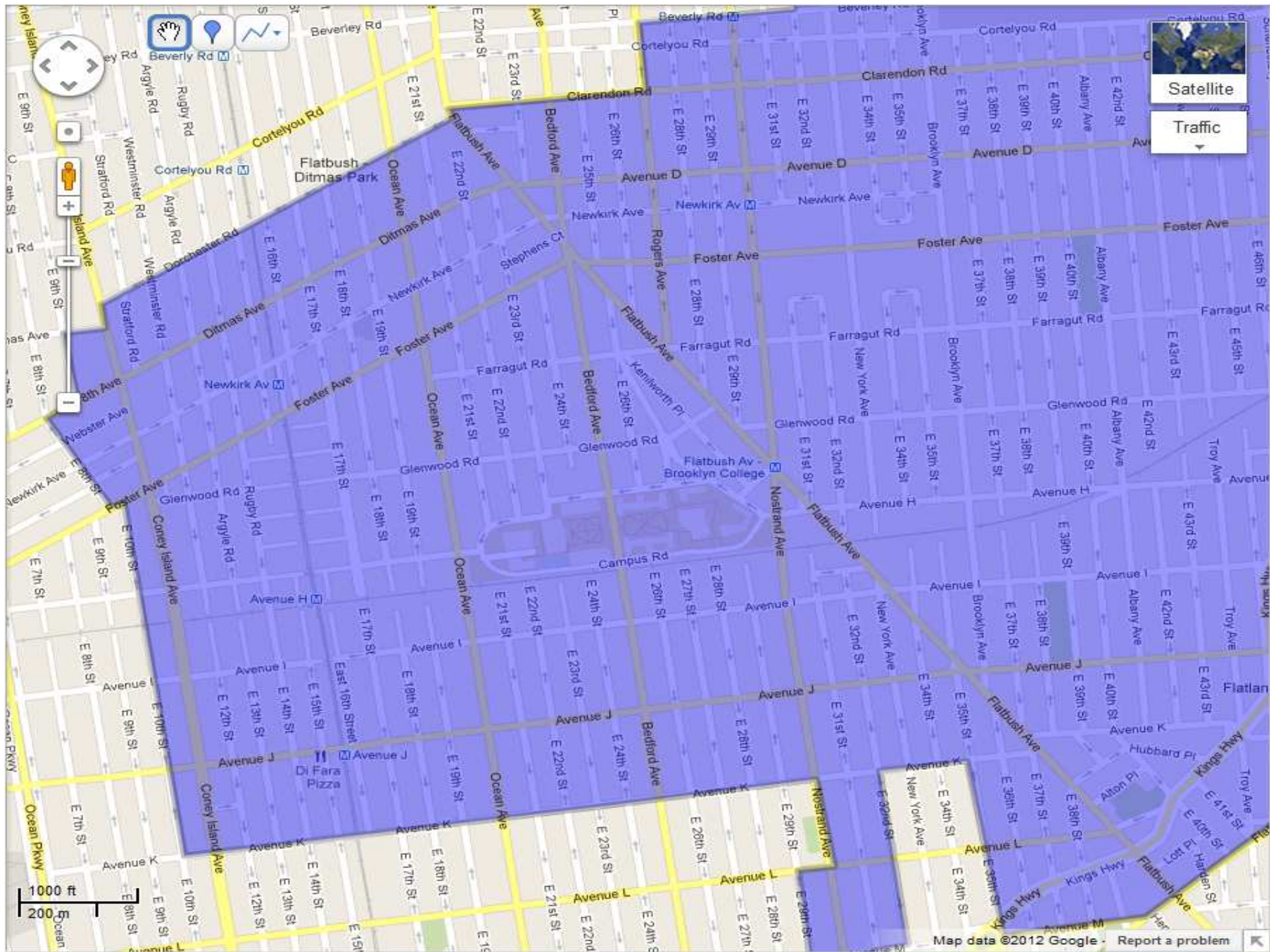


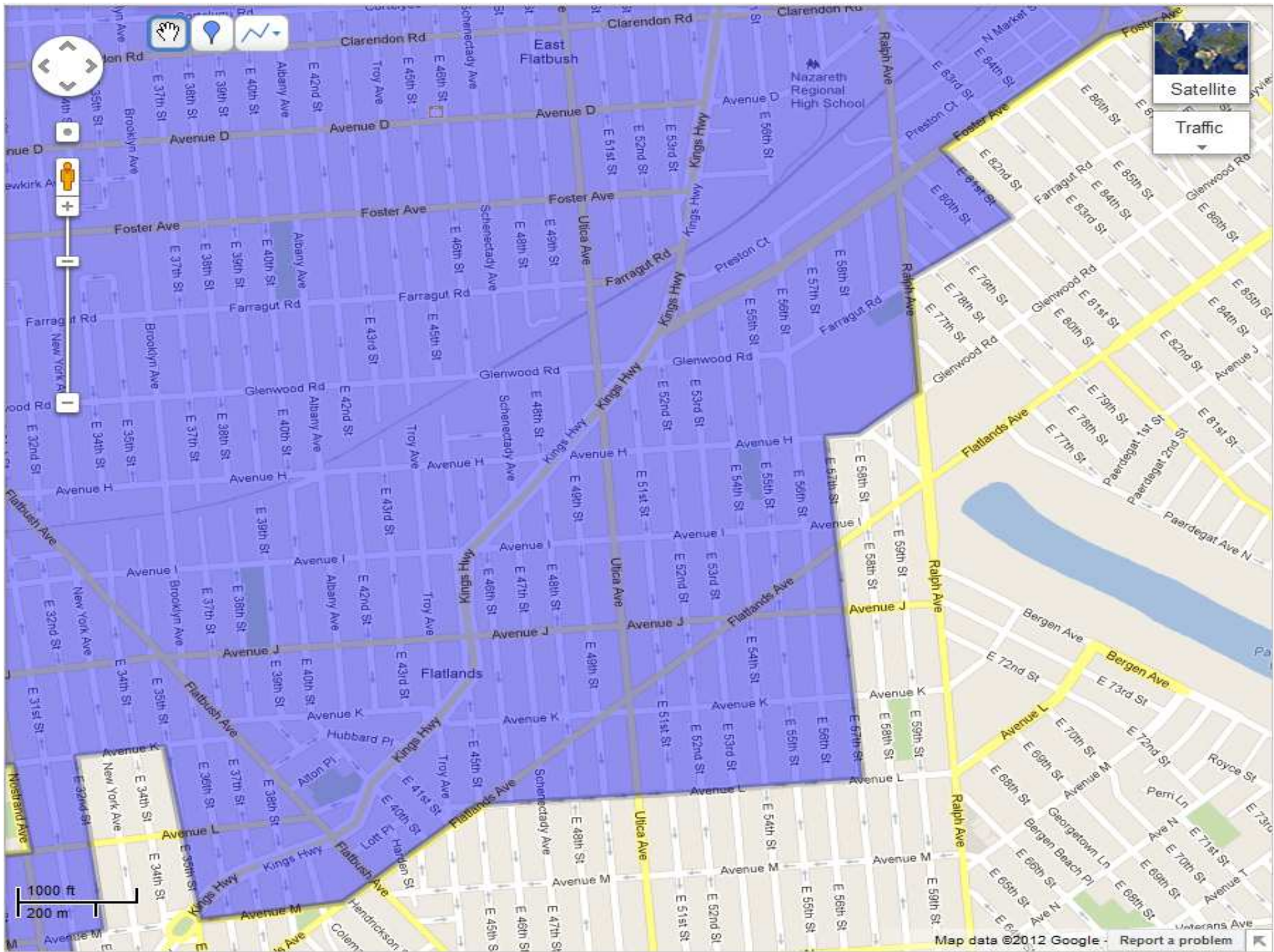
Satellite

Traffic











OCA | EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

New York Chapter

STATEMENT OF OCA-NY

Written Statement for the Redistricting Commission of the City Council

By Dr. Wah Lee

August 11, 2012

My name is Dr. Wah Lee. I am testifying on behalf of OCA-NY. I have been a Board Member of OCA-NY since 2010. OCA-NY is a founding member of ACCORD. Founded in 1976, OCA-NY, formerly known as Organization for Chinese Americans, is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the political, economic, social, and cultural rights of Asian Americans. OCA-NY represents the five boroughs of New York City. Our work in Brooklyn includes voter registration at citizenship swearing in ceremonies at the Federal Courthouse and in Sunset Park, taking victims of hate crimes to the Kings County District Attorney's office, and participating in Asian American heritage festivals in McKinley Park. In 2010, we co-sponsored a successful census event at Sunset Park Recreation Center. We've partnered with United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park, Brooklyn's Chinese American Planning Council, Chinese Brooklyn Association, and United Chinese Association of Brooklyn on OCA-NY's hate crimes prevention art project and the 2010 census. OCA-NY has served on the Brooklyn Borough President's Committee to celebrate Asian American Heritage Month and has received awards from Kings County District Attorney Charles Hynes, the Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, and Brooklyn State Senator Eric Adams.

My statement focuses on the communities of Sunset Park, Bensonhurst, and the neighborhood between those communities. Support for my statement is based on other OCA-NY Brooklyn members, data from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, 2010 Census, and my personal and work experience. I am 40 years old. I grew up in Bensonhurst where I worked in my parents' dry cleaner and attended PS 247. I completed my medical internship in Sunset Park's Lutheran Medical Center, where I am still affiliated as a physician.

I have witnessed my neighbors, the local restaurants, storefronts, and the community centers change within the past 10 years. Just around the corner from my home, a local diner became a Chinese restaurant named Fu Kee. The 86th Street Jewish Deli became a Chinese restaurant named 86 Wong, and more than three Asian style grocery stores opened. Also, the sharp rise in Asian patronage resulted in the Brooklyn Federation of Italian-American Organizations to offer immigration assistance, and the Bensonhurst Jewish Community Center to hire Chinese-English bilingual case managers.

The 2010 Census revealed Asian Americans now comprise 13% of New York City's population. The number of Asian Americans has reached a million, with over a quarter million in Brooklyn alone. We urge the City Council to keep communities of interest in Brooklyn that contain a high concentration of Asian Americans together. The Asian American population in Brooklyn grew by 41% since 2000; linking Sunset Park with Bensonhurst underscores the pattern of growth of the Asian American community in Brooklyn.



OCA-NY supports a City Council District that contains parts of Bensonhurst and Sunset Park linked by a similar community of common interest living approximately between 60th and 71st Streets. These three localities have shared economic ties, resources, and social networks.

2010 census data shows Sunset Park is 35% Asian and Bensonhurst is 37% Asian. The American Community Survey (2005-2009) shows 80% of Chinese speakers in Sunset Park speak English less than very well, similar to 61% in Bensonhurst. Brooklyn Asian Voice Organization, based in Sunset Park, conducts regular "clean-up" efforts in Bensonhurst. Asian Community United Society, based in Bensonhurst, often does community outreach in Sunset Park. Libraries in both neighborhoods have programs that specifically cater to Brooklyn's Asian residents. Asians in Sunset Park and Bensonhurst, usually go to Lutheran Medical Center in Sunset Park, especially after Victor Memorial Hospital in Bay Ridge shut down. I have attended weddings of Bensonhurst friends in Sunset Park because Chinese restaurants in Sunset Park are larger and more established.

The Asian plurality community approximately between 60th & 71st Streets links the Asian neighborhoods of Sunset Park and Bensonhurst and caters to both of them. For instance, when I organized funeral services for my father-in-law, we chose the funeral home Ralph Aievoli and Son Inc., located on 65th Street, for the geographic convenience of my in-laws' family who are scattered throughout Sunset Park and Bensonhurst. This business recognized the changing demographics of these interconnected neighborhoods: they have hired Chinese-speaking staff and offer funeral services in Chinese. My neighbor, who is Chinese-American and has lived in Bensonhurst all his life, also used this funeral home on 65th Street when his father passed away.

Both Sunset Park and Bensonhurst face the same problems. I have personally treated 3 victims of violence and harassment in Sunset Park who were Asian. I myself have been targeted for racially motivated harassment in both neighborhoods. The two areas have their share of rampant graffiti and littering. Additionally, one of the most pressing problems is the unavailability of low-cost access to language instruction. Although I was born in America, the language I speak at work is Chinese because many of my patients who are from Sunset Park, Bensonhurst, and the Asian plurality community approximately between 60th & 71st Streets speak English "less than well."

OCA-NY proposes that the Asian population in Sunset Park be linked by the Asian plurality community approximately between 60th and 71st Streets, to the Asian population in Bensonhurst. These populations have similar social needs and have much in common other than race. These three communities, while geographically contiguous, are currently divided by multiple districts. These three communities have similar needs regarding bilingual access to healthcare, quality of ESL options in public education, transportation to employment opportunities, culturally competent services, and hate crimes prevention. State Assembly District 49 recognizes the communities of common interest in Sunset Park and the Asian plurality community approximately between 60th and 71st Streets which extends to Bensonhurst. State Assembly District 47 recognizes and keeps intact the community of common interest in Bensonhurst. Since City Council Districts are larger than State Assembly Districts, a City Council District encompassing the Asian plurality communities in Sunset Park and Bensonhurst linked by the Asian plurality community approximately between 60th and 71st Streets should be created. Thank you.

SYLVIA WHITESIDE,LMSW
2085 ROCKAWAY PARKWAY, 6D
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11236

August 15, 2012
NYC Districting Commission
Att. Jonathan Etricks
253 Broadway , 7th Floor
New York , New York 10007

Dear Mr. Etnicks :

As a past President of Bay View Houses, a resident of this development for over 55 years and a member of Community Board 18 I am writing to request that our Development be included in the Councilmatic District lines with the rest of Canarsie and not EXCLUDED as we were the last time. We were included in the district along with East New York and Brownsville .

Bay View Houses is a development located in Canarsie. The boundaries are Rockaway Parkway, Seaview Avenue , East 102nd Street and Shore Parkway. It was opened in September .1955 and has a multiethnic population of 4,100.

Our residents provide economic stability for this community. They are an important part of the fabric that makes Canarsie a desirable community to live in. The children go to the local schools and families are members of the local religious institutions. Some participate in local civic organizations.

Our Councilman was supportive of us, however it was very difficult for him since we were so far away and his constituents resided in Brownsville and East New York. The responsibility of the elected official for Canarsie should provide us with assistance as was done prior to this current redistricting.

We are an important part of this community and should be INCLUDED In the New Council District Lines along with our Neighbors for Canarsie.

I can be reached at 718-444-4351 should you have any questions.

Sincerely

Sylvia Whiteside
CC; Roxaine Persuade

Statement of Steve Chung

United Chinese Association of Brooklyn
To the
New York City Districting Commission
Public Hearing, Aug 13th, 2012
Brooklyn, New York

My name is Steve Chung, president of United Chinese Association of Brooklyn (UCA). UCA was founded in 2002 and its goal is to improve the well being of the Chinese immigrants and families in Bensonhurst. UCA is a member of The Asian American Community Coalition On Redistricting and Democracy (ACCORD) and we will endorse one of our member organization's map, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund's (AALDEF's) proposed city council district map called the Unity Map.

Current Districts in Bensonhurst

According to the 2010 census data, Asians Americans (AA) have the fastest growth rate, 32%, among all the racial groups in New York City since 2000. The AA population has surpassed the one million mark and constitutes almost 13% of the city's total population.

My testimony will focus on the Brooklyn neighborhood which our organization serves, Bensonhurst. Currently, Brooklyn's Sunset Park and Bensonhurst, are known as Brooklyn's Chinatown due to the recent spate of increase growth rate of more than 50% of AA population. Currently, AA constitutes more than 40% of the population in Sunset Park and 32% in Bensonhurst. Despite all this significant increase of population, no Asian American has ever been elected as a public official from Brooklyn.

Dilution

Currently, Sunset Park is divided into three city council districts - 38, 39, 43 and Bensonhurst is also cut into four city council districts -- 43, 44, 47 and 50. These district lines severely split up the Asian American community diluting their voting strength and preventing them from electing a single candidate that can represent them. This dilution will further discourage an already low turnout in AA voting engagement because their vote will not impact the final election result.

Propose New Re-districting

In 2011, the State Redistrict task force (LATFOR) created the first ever AA majority political district in Brooklyn - Assemblyman District (AD) 49. AD 49 is 51% AA and unites the similar communities of interest of Sunset Park East and Bensonhurst West. UCA would like to propose a new AA influential district which basically builds on AD 49's 130,000 population and simply extends its district lines to cover the entire neighborhood of Sunset Park East and Bensonhurst West. As such, the new city council district (CD) will reach the required city council district population of 160,000 with an AA population of 69,000 which constitutes 43% of the total population. Consistent with the Voting Right Act and communities of interests, the AA

community in Sunset Park and Bensonhurst should be grouped together in one district so that they can elect a candidate of their choice.

Propose New Council District:

Neighborhood Area	2010 Asian Population	Total Population	Asian % Chg from 2000	% Asian in 2010	% of Asian to Total CD 43's population
Sunset Park East	37,281	72,340	62%	52%	23.1%
Bensonhurst West	31,917	88,727	57%	36%	19.8%

Huge disparity in receiving legislative grants

In New York City, even though Asian Americans constituted 10% of the city's population in 2000, Asian communities received less than 1% of public funds. In 2011, after months of rallies, briefings, press conferences, and lobby visits from the 12% And Growing Coalition, (alliance of more than 40 Asian advocacy organizations in which UCA is one of the members), discretionary funding for Asian led groups was just under \$1 million dollars which represent 2.7% of the total \$36.4 million City Council Discretionary funding. This is still a significant disparity compared to the population ratio of 13% in New York City's population.

In Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, the city council legislative grants allocation are controlled by the four CDs of 43, 44, 47 and 50. According to the City Council 2011 budget data base , the four respective council members control an overall average of \$800,000 in legislative grants. Despite the AA population of 33% of the total population in Bensonhurst, all three AA nonprofit organizations in Bensonhurst receive a total of \$86,000 from the four council members. The \$86,000 grant represents 10.8% of the total legislative grants which is significantly under its population ratio of 33%.

Many of the nonprofit organizations like us rely heavily on legislative grants to sustain their operations. By creating an AA population majority or an influential district, the council members in this district will likely allocate legislative grants fairly to the AA nonprofit organizations since the AA voters can determine their election result.

Conclusion

In Bensonhurst and Sunset Park, the AA new comers continue to inject new economic liveliness into the declining business left behind mainly by the Italian American community. AAs turned many of the empty warehouses into supermarkets and restaurants. They pump in new business and bring in millions of tax income into our city. Their economic contribution cannot be denied but their political engagement needs to be encouraged. The new proposed CD should create an AA influential political district. This will motivate the Asian population to participate more eagerly in voting or even run for public positions since their involvement would finally impact the election results.