

NYC Redistricting Commission

City Council District 38

A Community Proposal

August 20, 2012

Dear Esteemed Commissioners,

As vested members of communities within the current boundaries of City Council District 38 in Brooklyn, we felt it important present a plan that addressed the concerns and desires of people who actually live, work and spend most of their time in the area.

While we appreciate the attention being paid to our District by various large organizations, we feel that groups based elsewhere, despite their well intentions, should not be the only voices in the discussion for what happens in our corner of Southern Brooklyn. Therefore, as local residents, workers, leaders and community activists, our coalition would like to present a plan that genuinely reflects the will of the local community.

Firstly, the neighborhoods of Sunset Park and Red Hook should remain as part of a single City Council District, as has been the case historically and as it remains at the present time. Both neighborhoods share a common working waterfront, are serviced by many of the same community-based organizations, and have some striking similarities in their demographic composition: both Sunset Park and Red Hook's Latino population stand at approximately 43%.

Secondly, the Sunset Park Chinatown should remain intact as part of the District that encompasses the rest of Sunset Park. A number of proposals have suggested dividing Sunset Park in order to separate the predominant immigrant groups in the area: Latinos and Asian-Americans. We do not believe in creating "separate but equal" communities. We do not adhere to the philosophy that we need to separate ethnic groups in order to give them a voice. Sunset Park is an immigrant community and has seen significant demographic shifts over the past century: from Northern European to Caribbean to Central American and Asian. We embrace that identity and want to remain a melting pot for new immigrants seeking the American Dream.

Our proposal would create a contiguous District 38 that is inclusive of its immigrant identity, currently reflected in the Latino and Asian populations. It would unify the Sunset Park Chinatown, which

is currently shared by multiple Council Districts. This would allow for the creation of a second Council District with a significant Asian population that includes the areas of Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst. In essence, instead of the current scattering of the Brooklyn Asian population into four Council Districts, they will be consolidated into two. Should population growth in the Asian American community continue to grow along current trends, this would actually allow for the potential of two Asian representatives in the City Council rather than the one under some proposals.

The Sunset Park Chinatown would be in one District and would bring together 8th Avenue (right now, most of 8th Avenue is in District 38 and some of it is in District 39). While the heart of Chinatown is 8th Avenue, it continues to expand well west. Indeed, within the next decade, we can anticipate a higher concentration of residents in the western portion of Sunset Park will be from the Chinese community. Those residents will utilize the same shops, schools, and transportation network and should stay as part of District 38. In order to accommodate this population, the neighborhood of the Gowanus, at the northern end of District 38, can be absorbed into District 39.

We thank you in advance for your serious consideration of our proposal, which respects the historical, cultural, and ethnic ties of the neighborhoods in District 38. We hope that the will of those who have cared for and loved District 38 for so many years is reflected in your final plan.

Respectfully,

Paul Mak

President, Brooklyn Chinese-American Association

Dr. Gabriel Rincon

President, The Mixteca Organization

Sunny Mui

President, Brooklyn Chinese-American Business Association

Shui Kam Leung

Chairman, Brooklyn Community Development Corporation

Ray Chen

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District 38 Business Owner/ Sunset Park Lions/ Sunset Park BID

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District 38 Resident/ Member, Community Board 7

Gladys Bruno

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Cleopatra Martinez

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District 38 Resident

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