



**NYS Assemblymember Barbara M. Clark-33AD**

**Statement to Redistricting Commission**

**Submitted October 9<sup>th</sup> 2012**

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It is my understanding that the draft mapping proposed by the NYC Redistricting Commission was intended to give a more 'concrete' plan to which citizens might more narrowly respond with concerns for how the proposed district lines would impact community character, delivery of services, and voting.

It is in that context that I ask the Commission to reconsider the proposed separation or division of the Cambria Heights Community into both the 27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Council Districts. The core of this community spans more than a mile east along 121<sup>st</sup> Avenue to the Cross Island Parkway and north to Murdock Avenue and west to Francis Lewis Blvd. A review of the current lines will show that the man-made boundary; Montefiore/Springfield Cemetery has been the principal dividing line between the 27 and 31<sup>st</sup> Council Districts over the course of the last two redistricting commissions. Leaving that boundary in place will maintain the integrity and cohesiveness of the Cambria Heights community.

The Montefiore/Springfield Cemetery has been a continuously operating cemetery since 1908. It runs for more than a mile along 121<sup>st</sup> Avenue principally dividing the Laurelton and Cambria Heights communities into separate districts. This man-made division or boundary has also shaped shopping, traffic and transportation patterns for more than two decades. Many residents of Cambria Heights travel north towards Linden Blvd and east towards the Cross Island Parkway for shopping, gas and public transportation (Q84, Q4) and Q-Express 64). While Laurelton, in the 31<sup>st</sup> District has made Merrick Blvd more of its shopping and transportation hub.

The proposed change would in fact separate the Cambria Heights community from its representatives and interests with the remainder of the Cambria Heights community. The change would also deny its alignment with the Laurelton community because of the physical barrier created by the Montefiore/Springfield Cemetery. It should not be the intent of redistricting to contort districts so that previously compact, contiguous communities become isolated and disconnected from other residential communities. Shifting the boundary along 119<sup>th</sup> avenue, rather than 121<sup>st</sup> Avenue, for fifteen (15) blocks and then edging north to 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue for six (6) more blocks and then north again one (1) block to Linden Blvd will split approximately 420-450 homes, as well as one of only two Public Schools (PS 176), away from the 27<sup>th</sup> Council District.

In terms of delivery of police services, the proposed map would not alleviate the response time issues experienced by either 105 or 113 Precincts. However, the 105 Precinct has a more direct travel route to Cambria Heights via Springfield Blvd, or 223<sup>rd</sup> Street enabling a quicker response time for its residents. NYC Charter Regulations requiring co-terminality would shift responsibility for that portion of Cambria Heights placed in the 31<sup>st</sup> to the 113 Precinct, potentially delaying response times for one part of the same neighborhood and not another.

For the above reasons I ask the Commission to reconsider and leave the Montefiore/Springfield Cemetery as the boundary between the 27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Districts thereby leaving the Cambria Heights community intact.

Barbara M. Clark