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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan**

July 25, 2022

Dennis M. Walcott, Chair
New York City Districting Commission
253 Broadway, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10007

RE: Response to NYC Districting Commission Preliminary Plan #1 Map for UES City Council Districts

Dear Chair Walcott,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on July 20, 2022, the board **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED** the following resolution by a vote of 43 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions and 0 not voting for cause:

WHEREAS, the New York City Districting Commission (the “Commission”) is in the process of redrawing City Council district boundaries to reflect population and demographic changes; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is seeking public input into the redistricting process from different stakeholders, which includes Community Boards; and

WHEREAS, City Council District 4 (“D4”) and City Council District 5 (“D5”) overlap with the boundaries of Community Board 8 Manhattan (“CB8M”); and

WHEREAS, prior to the Commission’s release of the Preliminary Plan #1 Map, CB8M submitted a resolution approved by the Board calling for the Commission to keep the blocks within CB8M, including Roosevelt Island, part of Manhattan-based districts; and

WHEREAS, out of the 59 Community Boards citywide, CB8M was one of only a few Community Boards citywide to provide testimony to the Commission in advance of the release of the Preliminary Plan #1 Map; and

WHEREAS, CB8M’s Voting Reform Task Force has reviewed the new boundary lines proposed by the Commission for D4 and D5 and has concluded that the proposed D4 and D5 do not comport with the Commission’s own redistricting criteria; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Census revealed that NYC’s population had grown to 8,804,190, meaning that the ideal district size is now 172,882; and

WHEREAS, districts should be roughly equal in population pursuant to the one person one vote doctrine of representation; and

WHEREAS, districts cannot vary from the ideal district size by more than 5%, or roughly 8,644; and

WHEREAS, the draft map identifies three districts in Staten Island, with no crossover into other boroughs; and

WHEREAS, the three proposed Staten Island districts would represent between 165,470 and 165,491 individuals, or all approximately 7,400 below the ideal district size; and

WHEREAS, the proposed map vastly overrepresents Staten Island compared to the 48 other districts and does not ensure fair representation of residents across the five boroughs, violating the one-person one-vote doctrine; and

WHEREAS, the NYC Charter identifies five ranked districting requirements:

1. Keep neighborhoods and communities intact.
2. Keep districts compact.
3. Limit crossover districts.
4. Avoid splitting voters of the same political party for purposes of diminishing effective representation of such voters
5. Avoid oddly shaped districts

WHEREAS, the proposed Queens-based Council District 26 (“D26”) would divide the Upper East Side neighborhood and the communities of interest in Community Board 8 Manhattan;

WHEREAS, the proposed D26 would establish a new crossover district between Queens and Manhattan for the first time since the Council was expanded to 51 members; and

WHEREAS, the Commission’s proposal to add a portion of Manhattan and all of Roosevelt Island to a Queens-based Council District, District 26, violates the City Charter Districting requirement in the following ways: (1) it fails to keep neighborhoods and communities intact; (2) fails to keep the district compact; (3) it creates an oddly shaped crossover district; and

WHEREAS, the Commission proposes that 36,000 Manhattan Island residents and 12,000 Roosevelt Island residents – which equates to 48,000 of the 173,000 people in the proposed D26, or 27.7% – be moved to D26, where these residents will not receive the representation, attention, and discretionary funding to which they are entitled due to their small percentage of the total D26 population; and

WHEREAS, the eastern portion of the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island have major differences with D26 such that the proposed combination may result in a significant diminution of municipal services to, amongst others, senior citizens and people with disabilities which populate a large share of those areas; and

WHEREAS, the practical difficulties of having a two Borough Queens-Manhattan district cannot be ignored; and

WHEREAS, the proposed lines would separate the representation of numerous medical and research facilities with sprawling, densely populated campuses from the neighborhood in which they reside and where most neighboring residents live; and

WHEREAS, the areas being proposed to be moved to the D26 district contain numerous parks and green acres including, amongst others, John Jay Park, portions of the East River Esplanade and Andrew Haswell Green Park, which are critical open spaces for the neighborhood and which would be separated from most of the neighborhood residents who use them; and

WHEREAS, numerous public schools including P.S. 183, P.S. 158, P.S. 217 and M177 are located in the area being proposed to be placed in D26 and would be adversely affected by being separated from the rest of the neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, Hunter College, a major educational institution, would have its main campus at 68th Street and Lexington Avenue separated into two council districts, with a skybridge connecting two buildings in two separate council districts; and

WHEREAS, the Upper East Side contains numerous historic districts and zoning features that are common to it and distinct from the Queens portions of the proposed D26; and

WHEREAS, by separating part of the Upper East Side and placing it in D26, the Commission has divided a neighborhood and communities of interest in direct violation of the Charter mandate; and

WHEREAS, Roosevelt Island was created to be part of Manhattan, is in New York County, and historically has always been considered and treated as part of the Borough of Manhattan and it should remain in D5; and

WHEREAS, two-borough districts that have existed in the past have been comprised of neighborhoods that are contiguous, have similar demographics, share similar public transportation, public education and other services, while the Manhattan and Queens areas of the proposed D26 do not have these similarities; and

WHEREAS, Manhattan already shares one crossover district with the Bronx, and the two boroughs have a combined population of roughly 3,169,000, or 176,000 spread across 18 districts, approximately 2.6% above the target district size; and

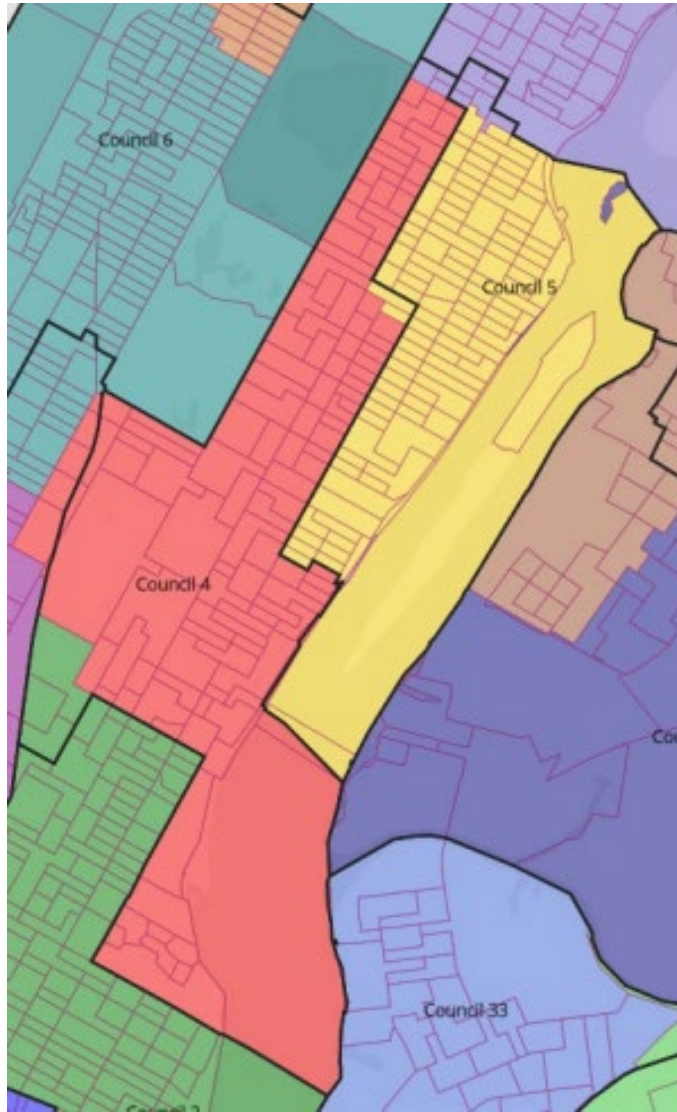
WHEREAS, the Bronx already shares one crossover district with Queens that includes Rikers Island, which accounts for approximately 3,775 and if included with population of the Bronx and Manhattan would give the two boroughs a combined population of roughly 3,173,000 and could be distributed into 19 districts of approximately 167,000, about 3.5 percent below the target district size and around 1,500 closer than the currently proposed districts for Staten Island;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 of Manhattan **DISAPPROVES** of the Commission's proposed Preliminary Plan #1 redistricting map which moves approximately 54 blocks of the easterly side of the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island to a Queens-based City Council District and strongly urges that these areas remain in a Manhattan-based City Council District; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CB8M urges the Commission to keep the population of Manhattan and the Bronx contained with no new crossover districts from Queens, Brooklyn, or Staten Island into either borough;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CB8M proposes the following redistricting boundary lines which would result in District 4 having a population of 177,446 and District 5 a population of 177,176 (see proposed map below):

- Give D4 back the area between Stuy Town and 34th Street east of 1st Avenue • Give D2 (from D4) the blocks between Broadway and 5th Avenue south of 39th Street. • Incorporate the proposed westward expansion of D4 out to 8th Avenue to cover the Broadway core instead of leaving it divided between two districts.
- Trace that up 8th Avenue to Columbus Circle, where D4 currently ends.
- Give D5 back Roosevelt Island, Sutton Area, and the parts in the East 60's and 70s, with minor modification of the area just south of 79th so the new line would be 78th (Lexington to 3rd) and 77th (3rd-2nd).
- Keep the previous district lines for D4 and D5 along Lexington from 79th up to 96th. • Give D8 all of the area north of 96th Street from D4 and D5.



Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Russell Squire

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Chair

Anthony Cohn and Shari Weiner

Anthony Cohn and Shari Weiner
Co-Chairs, Voting Reform Task Force

Cc: Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly
District Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District