



August 16, 2022

NYC Redistricting Commission
253 Broadway, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10007
via email to PublicTestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov

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**232 EAST 11TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10003
212-475-9585
VILLAGEPRESERVATION.ORG**

RE: Proposed New City Council District Boundary Lines

Dear Chair Walcott and Members of the Redistricting Commission:

Village Preservation is the largest membership organization in Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo. Our mission is to document, celebrate, and preserve the special architectural and cultural heritage of these neighborhoods, which are among the oldest and most historic in New York City. We are a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) organization which interacts with city government and agencies extensively. We encourage our members and the communities we represent to do the same, and we help facilitate their doing so. As such, we have a great interest in ensuring that new NYC Council districts are drawn fairly and in a way that facilitates equitable participation by and representation of all parties.

In this regard, we have no objections to the proposed changes to the Council district boundary lines in the areas we represent, which would solely involve moving several blocks around Washington Square and in NoHo from the 1st to the 3rd Council District.

One important change in the currently proposed new maps we do strongly support is the correction to the current severe imbalance in population in City Council districts, which was put in place by the 2013 redistricting and then exacerbated by the uneven rate of population growth in some districts as compared to the others over the last ten years. The 2013 redistricting left City Council Districts 1, 2, and 3 (which include the areas we represent) with as much as 10% more people per district than some other City Council districts, and 5% more than the citywide average. This means in 2013, residents of these districts had 10% less voting power than New Yorkers living in the least populous voting districts, and 5% less than the average New Yorker. Because of easily predictable differential patterns in population growth, City Council District 3 now has 30.56% more residents than the least populous Council district in the city, and 17.34% more residents than the citywide average for Council Districts, while District 1 has 19.45% more residents than the least populous district, and 7.36% more than the citywide average. Thus that already substantial gulf in representation and voting power for residents of

District 3 grew over the last ten years to more than 30% less than their counterparts in some other parts of the city and more than 17% less than the average New Yorker, and for residents of District 1, to just shy of 20% less than their counterparts in other parts of the city, and nearly 7.5% less than the average New Yorker.

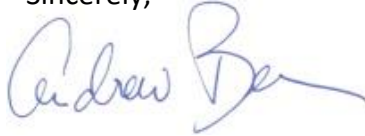
The new proposed maps largely correct this egregiously unequal arrangement, leaving almost all districts with a less than 1% deviation in population from the average (the exception is the glaringly unequal three Staten Island City Council Districts, which would have about 4.3% fewer residents than the citywide average and almost 5% fewer than the most populous district, giving those residents unequal and greater voting power compared to all other New Yorkers – an imbalance which would seem to still warrant correcting). We are pleased that the proposed new maps finally give residents of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd City Council districts proportional representation roughly equal to *most* of their fellow New Yorkers.

We do though recognize that these proposed maps are not final, and various proposals are being considered to make changes to the current draft maps. We are not aware of any proposals to make further changes to the boundary lines in Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo, and we do not have an opinion about any proposed boundary changes in other neighborhoods.

However, changes elsewhere in district boundaries can have ripple effects, including changing the population of proposed districts throughout the city, and the relatively balanced and equal population distribution of the current proposal. While we will not opine upon any particular proposed boundary change outside of our neighborhoods, **we would strongly object to any changes which would make the populations of our districts more unequal, or in general make the inequality of population and therefore representation between districts greater.** As many of our residents have been subjected to 10-30% less representation in the City Council than their fellow New Yorkers over the last ten years, we feel strongly that it is imperative that our neighborhoods no longer get the same short shrift in terms of voting power that they have for the past decade. **If any changes are to be made to the lines from the current draft map, we believe they must at least maintain the same currently proposed balance of populations among districts, or improve upon it – further narrowing the relatively modest deviations between most districts, and narrowing the still relatively large deviations proposed for the three Staten Island districts** (all of which, it should be noted, were also drawn to be underpopulated, and therefore overrepresented, in the last redistricting).

We strongly urge you to prioritize ensuring equality of representation, and to be guided by the principle of one person, one vote, as you consider any potential changes to the current or draft proposed City Council district lines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Berman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Mayor Eric Adams

City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams

Manhattan Borough President Robert Levine

City Councilmember Christopher Marte

City Councilmember Carlina Rivera

City Councilmember Erik Bottcher