



Times Square Alliance
1560 Broadway, Suite 1001
New York, NY 10036
T 212 768 1560 F 212 768 0233

www.tsq.org
info@tsq.org

President

Tom Harris

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NYC Districting Commission Public Hearing, Manhattan
Monday, August 22, 2022
Testimony

My name is Tom Harris and I am the President of the Times Square Alliance, the business improvement district that has kept Times Square clean, safe, and enjoyable for all who visit since 1992. I respectfully submit this testimony to urge the New York City Districting Commission to modify the redistricting map by extending the boundary lines for Council Districts 3 and 4 from Broadway and 42nd Street to Columbus Circle. This will create a more equitable representation for our commercial and cultural district.

The Times Square district, the area from 40th Street to 53rd Street between 6th and 8th Avenues, and Restaurant Row on 46th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues, comprise one of the City's most vital economic engines. The eastern portion of the district is largely characterized by office use and hotels and serves as a transition point between the Midtown East commercial core and the entertainment district west of Broadway, which includes the Theater District and more residential uses.

Times Square's western portion has been culturally and politically aligned with the Hell's Kitchen community for decades. However, in the current draft of the redistricting map, Times Square loses critical representation with constituencies west of Broadway. We believe a more equitable solution can be achieved by continuing the boundary lines along Broadway from 42nd Street to Columbus Circle.

This will ensure the Times Square area can continue to work in partnership with and would establish an alignment of interests between residents, businesses, and the theater community, and be more representative of the diversity of these constituencies at the City Council, which has been vital to the success of Times Square for nearly a decade.

The partnership between Times Square and its surrounding communities has led to the successful passage of legislation that has eased pedestrian congestion, expanded public plazas, and improved the quality of life for people who live, work and visit the Times Square area.

It is critical that the City Council boundary lines be redrawn in a way that includes the diversity of commercial and residential interests that have helped make Times Square the economic engine it is today. It will also help ensure a more equitable recovery for the area in the years ahead.

Thank you for considering this recommendation to modify the district lines for the Times Square district.

Sincerely,

Tom Harris
President
Times Square Alliance