

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment regarding the redistricting of the City Council District I reside in, District 32.

District 32 has always been a district rich in cultural diversity. Immigrants from across the world have called it home and over the course of many decades have opened their businesses here. From Ireland to Guyana, you can find every culture, race and religion in our district. When one looks at the racial diversity ratio two of the current Community Board districts that have sizeable areas within Council District 32 have been described as among the Community Board districts in this city that are the most racially diverse.

Over the course of decades Council District 32's composition has insured that it reflects what all sorts of "good government" groups across the nation say should be the ultimate goal of reapportionment – competitive districts where no single political party has a gerrymandered advantage.

Over the course of decades residents of District 32 have been represented by persons of different parties along the way, pre-1993 it was represented by a Democrat. From 1993-2001 it was represented by a Republican who was followed by a Democrat who was followed by a Republican. It's a competitive district, which is a good thing from the perspective that the people who reside in the district evaluate and elect candidates based on their views of candidates' strengths and their ability to work to address issues and concerns in a manner beyond just party politics here in what is for the most part a one-party city.

One thing has always remained constant in Council District 32. The needs and values of all have always been represented by the person residents chose to represent them. Geographically our borough is comprised of many neighborhoods with a strong sense of community within each individual neighborhood and collectively with neighborhoods surrounding them.

The retail strips within the district have people from all parts of the district shopping in them no matter which part of the district people reside in. Our children may live in one part of the district but attend school, whether public or parochial, in another part of the district. The same is true of all the diverse religious institutions across the district – people often live in one part of the district, yet they worship in another. Youth groups and sports leagues also draw their participants from all parts of the district.

As adjustments are considered to the proposed map for Council District, I would urge that you evaluate how better to keep communities of interest intact from a perspective of common interests and concerns. For example, East Glendale and Woodhaven share similar transportation interests as the Woodhaven Blvd. corridor runs through both and one of the city's flagship parks abuts both neighborhoods and needs and concerns would be better addressed from a governmental standpoint if they were both in District 32. Adding East Glendale to the district as opposed to Liberty Park would make the District more compact and more contiguous. The neighborhoods of Woodhaven and the eastern portion of Glendale are connected by Woodhaven Blvd versus neighborhoods of Woodhaven and Liberty Park which are separated by Forest Park and would isolate Liberty Park and the Ridgewood portion, currently included in proposed District 32, from the rest of the district. Under the current map, one would literally have to pass

through District 30 (or through Brooklyn) to get to the Liberty Park/Ridgewood piece of the proposed 32nd Council District map. The two communities share a common bus and driving route and the traffic problems associated with it, and both neighborhoods would be affected by proposed QueensLink/Greenway/Rockaway Beach line reactivation, and are both underserved by public transportation and have a common interest in seeing north to south transportation options improved.

Another example would be retaining the area in South Ozone Park south of Rockaway Blvd. that is currently in Council District 32 between 114 St. and generally Lefferts Blvd. Community concerns, housing stock, density in that diverse area are far more similar to Howard Beach than to areas north of Rockaway Blvd. Transportation, sanitation, policing, and many other city issues are also similar. I urge that you consider the common interests regarding the 2 examples above. They make sense.

Additionally we have seen a proposed map known as the Unity Map. This map draws lines that marginalizes communities and was drafted by a coalition of groups with members who do not live in the neighborhoods. These groups did not come into the communities of District 32 to discuss their needs and concerns. This map does should not be considered as it does not reflect the majority of the community.

Joann Ariola
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