

FOR: NYC Redistricting Commission

FROM: New York City Council Member Robert Holden

SUBJECT: Draft Plan

This memo will summarize the problems with the initial draft plan and make recommendations on the 30th Council District borders. The draft plan splits neighborhoods comprised of one to three family homes out of the 30th district, thus dividing communities which have the same housing stock. As part of the initial draft, a substantial amount of Woodside was added to the 30th Council District, adding a vastly different housing stock and adding a portion of that neighborhood with arbitrary borders. My recommendations for the new 30th Council District will maintain a consistent housing stock throughout the district, keep natural borders of major highways and boulevards, all the while meet the target population of 172,881 voters.

Problems with the Draft Plan

The Draft map extends the 30th Council District north of Queens Boulevard, removes the Liberty Park section of Glendale out of the district and removes arbitrary streets north of Myrtle Avenue out of the 30th Council District as well.

Adding large Woodside apartment complexes into the 30th District makes no sense, especially when Woodside is split from Sunnyside, which has similar housing stock. The natural border of the 30th Council District should be Queens Boulevard, not arbitrary streets, and avenues in Woodside. There is little overlap in regards to civic associations, community boards, and police departments between Woodside and the heart of the 30th Council District. The challenges, needs and resources of Woodside are not similar in any way to the challenges faced in the rest of the 30th Council District. Adding Woodside to the 30th Council District would ultimately be a disservice to these residents and the rest of the Council District.

In the southern part of the district, a section of Glendale known as Liberty Park is separated from the 30th Council District and is added to the 32nd Council District. Liberty Park housing stock is similar to housing in the rest of Glendale. Considering Liberty Park is already in the 30th Council District and their civic associations, Police Department and Community Board are all tied to the 30th Council District, it makes more sense to keep these residents in the new 30th district, rather than lumping Liberty Park residents into the same Council district as the Rockaways.

Besides removing Liberty Park, the draft plan also removes Election District 014 in the 38th Assembly District which is in Glendale. This ED comprises streets north of Myrtle Avenue and essentially removes arbitrary blocks in the heart of Glendale out the 30th Council District. This type of arbitrary line drawing is what draws the ire of voters and ultimately results in legal challenges that prolongs the redistricting process. Under the current draft plan, Glendale is split three different ways. We should keep Glendale united in the final draft map.

Proposed Modifications

My proposal, which is supported by civic organizations and residents, is to keep Glendale united, extend the northern boundary of the 30th Council District to Queens Boulevard and include the “Elmhurst Triangle” in the district. The triangle is currently part of District 25, which is north of the Long Island

Expressway and south of Queens Boulevard, with Grand Avenue heading north through the center. Additionally, the section of Rego Park known as the Crescents, should be part of the 30th Council District. The Rego Park Crescents are comprised of single-family homes, which makes the housing stock more like Middle Village and less like the rest of the 29th District.

As described earlier, Liberty Park should remain in the 30th Council District. This neighborhood seamlessly blends into the rest of the district, with similar housing stock and civic associations that address the same needs throughout the neighborhood. Civic associations from these neighborhoods will also submit testimony asking that they remain part of the 30th Council District. In the west, the border would be Forest Avenue, keeping one to three family homes of Ridgewood in the 30th district. Ridgewood residents would like to keep as much of their neighborhood as possible in the same district. The 30th District would only have a small portion of Ridgewood and those Ridgewood residents would live in similar housing as the rest of the district.

To expand the 30th Council District, I urge the commission to extend the northeast Border to Queens Boulevard and include what is known as the “Elmhurst Triangle.” The three corners of the “triangle” include Grand Avenue and 57th avenue intersection in the south, the intersection of Woodhaven Boulevard and the LIE in the northeast and Queens Blvd. and Kneeland Street in the northwest. The northern border of the triangle is Queens Boulevard. This neighborhood is considered Elmhurst, however, the housing stock and neighborhood is more reflective of Maspeth. The residents attend the same civic meetings as Maspeth residents, not Elmhurst residents. Including this neighborhood in the 30th Council District will empower these residents and bring them into the greater Maspeth Community.

Finally, I urge the Commission to include the section of Rego Park north of Woodhaven Boulevard, known as the Crescents in the new Council District. Although part of Rego Park, this neighborhood has housing stock similar to Middle Village. The needs and challenges are like the rest of the 30th Council district. The new border would run the length of Alderton Street, which encompasses all of the Crescents.

The plan I outlined meets the target population goal, keeps the same housing stock throughout the district and ensures the residents of the 30th Council District have similar interests. Rather than arbitrary lines to meet population goals, my proposal will have natural borders that keep communities together.