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THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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COUNCIL MEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT, BRONX

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TASKFORCE
TWIN PARKS CITYWIDE TASKFORCE
ON FIRE PREVENTION

TESTIMONY OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBER PIERINA SANCHEZ AT THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

AUGUST 17, 2022

Good evening, I am Council Member Pierina Sanchez, representing District 14. I want to thank the Commissioners for allowing me time to again testify today about the district where I was born and raised, and have the honor of representing.

First, I am happy to report that I have brought a new resident into District 14 since we last were together!

As time is limited, I will share brief remarks now and submit longer testimony. Screenshots of the proposed District 14 lines are found at the end of this document in Exhibit 1. In sum, I am **deeply concerned about the preliminary lines.**

Kingsbridge

In describing our community, I begin with Kingsbridge, not only because it is the northernmost part of our community, but also because it is iconically representative of District 14. For the last decades, the Kingsbridge Armory has been at the heart of our community's fights for investment in our economic development. Thus, it is deeply concerning that the first draft maps introduce Kingsbridge Road as a northern boundary for three reasons:

- The people of District 14 have fought for the Kingsbridge Armory for decades: First, the Kingsbridge Armory has been at the heart of the struggles of this community for decades, as we strive for inclusive economic development with community at the center.
- The largely immigrant-owned small businesses on Kingsbridge Road should have one representative, not be split in half: Second, Kingsbridge Road is home to a vibrant commercial district owned largely by immigrant New Yorkers, similar to businesses across corridors in District 14 – including Burnside Ave, 183 Street, 176th Street and 170th Street. These merchants and their clients are a community of common interests with those merchants in neighboring corridors. It would be detrimental to divide this commercial corridor in half.
- Kingsbridge Heights is a community of common interest with others in District 14: At present, District 14 encompasses the Northwest Bronx neighborhoods of Kingsbridge, Fordham, University Heights, Mount Hope: 98% are people of color, 94% of residents are renters, our median worker earns just \$21,000 per year (vs. \$36,800 citywide), and a full 33% of our families

live below poverty, compared to 16.2% citywide, and with lower rates of formal educational attainment. The Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood is also a largely Latinx, lower-income district, home to mostly renters who shop together, worship together, and study together. Moving Kingsbridge Heights out of District 14 and into a wealthier, whiter neighboring district would represent a dilution of voting power for a protected class (Latinos) and a community of common interest with respect to socio-demographics. The Kingsbridge neighborhood should remain in District 14, from the area of the Armory to Kingsbridge Heights.

South and East of District 14

Next, the Southern portions of District 14 have been bounded by Grand Concourse to the East, and (mostly) the Cross Bronx Expressway to the South over the last decade, which continues to make sense. Thus, rather than cut Kingsbridge in the North and add new sections in the South, the present boundaries should remain intact.

Citywide Fairness

Lastly, in a Citywide context, districts must be balanced. It is not fair for Staten Island to house fewer residents than other districts, and I urge the Commission to revisit their lines.

Listening to Community

In closing, I want to again thank the Commissioners for allowing this time for testimony and implore you to continue to listen to the community directly – listening to the many present here today, visiting communities, reviewing submitted testimony, and more. Many of my neighbors will testify here today and more will submit testimony. I hope you will listen to them carefully, and center community voices in the next drafts.

Thank you.





A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Pierina Sanchez', with a stylized, cursive script.

NYC Council Member Pierina Sanchez, District 14

Exhibit – Proposed Lines for District 14:

Image 1: The Kingsbridge Armory and Heights, including the Bronx Section of Marble Hill Houses, should be united with District 14.

Image 2: Proposed District 14 lines as discussed among District 11, 14, 15 and 16 Council Members

			
Council Member, D14 Pierina Sanchez	Council Member, D11 Eric Dinowitz	Council Member, D15 Oswald Feliz	Council Member, D16 Althea Stevens

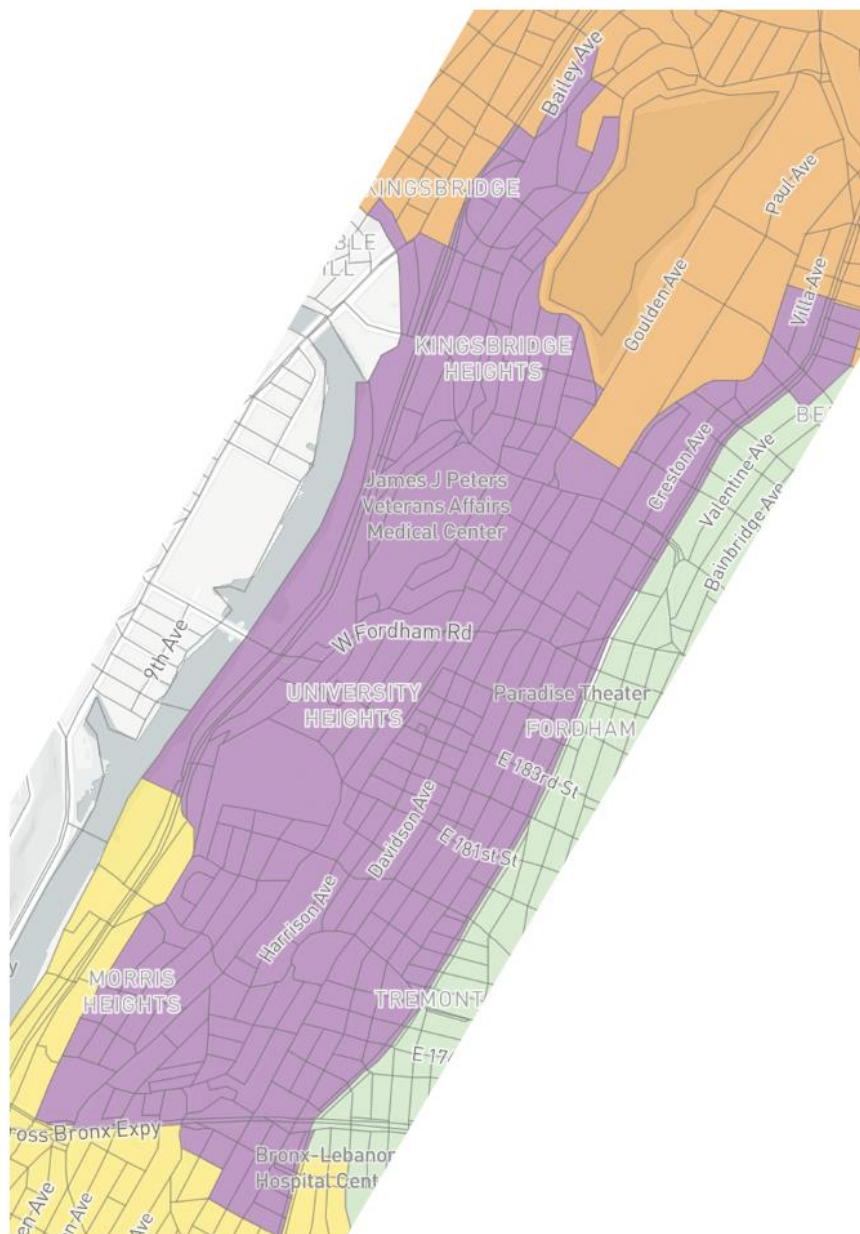


Exhibit 2 – CM Sanchez Testimony Submitted on 7/6/2022

TESTIMONY OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBER PIERINA SANCHEZ AT THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

JULY 6, 2022

Good evening, my name is Pierina Sanchez and I am the City Council Member representing District 14, encompassing the Northwest Bronx neighborhoods of Kingsbridge, Fordham, University Heights, Mount Hope and others – presently home to about 170,000 people. I want to thank members of the New York City Independent Redistricting Commission for the time to testify today about the District where I was born and raised, and have the distinct honor of representing.

Since taking office this January, and opening our brick and mortar office in March, we have welcomed and served nearly 2,000 constituents – I’d wager that rivals many of my colleagues. ~30 or 1% came by email, ~450 or 23% by phone, and ~1,400 or 70% in person.

That’s right, 1,400 individuals have come to our office this year in person, during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. Allow me to place that in context.

First, the Bronx has the highest percentage of residents without home broadband of any borough at 38%, and our community has one of the lowest rates of all.¹ Thus, many of our low-income residents and seniors without access at home rely on in person services. This is how they interact with and relate to government.

Next, with 45% of our community foreign born, language access is critical. District 14 is over 70% Latinx, including from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Mexico and other countries in Central and South America, 20% of African and African American descent, and 3% of Asian/Pacific Islander descent. In this district, 94% of residents are renters, our median worker earns just \$21,000 per year (vs. \$36,800 citywide), and a full 33% of our families live below poverty, compared to 16.2% citywide, and with lower rates of formal educational attainment.

These realities are reflective of decades of racialized disinvestment and blocked access to wealth building opportunities for people of color.

Yet despite these disinvestments, District 14 has been cohesive and moved together. Over the last 10 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the Latinx, African and Black populations. These communities share languages, places of worship (like Our Lady of Angels and the Islamic Cultural Center), schools, small businesses that offer community serving products, and healthcare providers that provide language access and culturally appropriate care. Drawing new Council lines must ensure the power of these communities – Latinx, African, African American – communities of interest, are protected.

¹ https://tech.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/NYC_IMP_1.7.20_FINAL-2.pdf

In my first six months representing this district, coupled with my life living in it, I know that across this district are shared interests, aspirations and goals for betterment and advancement. Our neighbors enjoying this district have spent a great deal fighting for further reinvestments as a community, for example at the Kingsbridge Armory and Aqueduct Walk. A largely immigrant District, coming from the Caribbean, South and Central America and Africa, this community learns together – at Bronx Community College and Lehman College -- and struggles together working so hard to make ends meet.

Thus, as the Commission commences its initial drawing of the NYC Council Districts, it is critical that lines are drawn to ensure that the power of these communities of interest are not diluted. As the Commission deliberates, please take into account the way voter turnout rates differ by race, ethnicity, geography, income as illustrated in Figures 1-4 on the subsequent pages. Even as community based organizations and grassroots leaders continue the difficult work of increasing civic engagement among historical marginalized communities, we know that lower turnout demographics and communities of interest cannot be paired with higher turnout communities without further diluting their already weaker power.

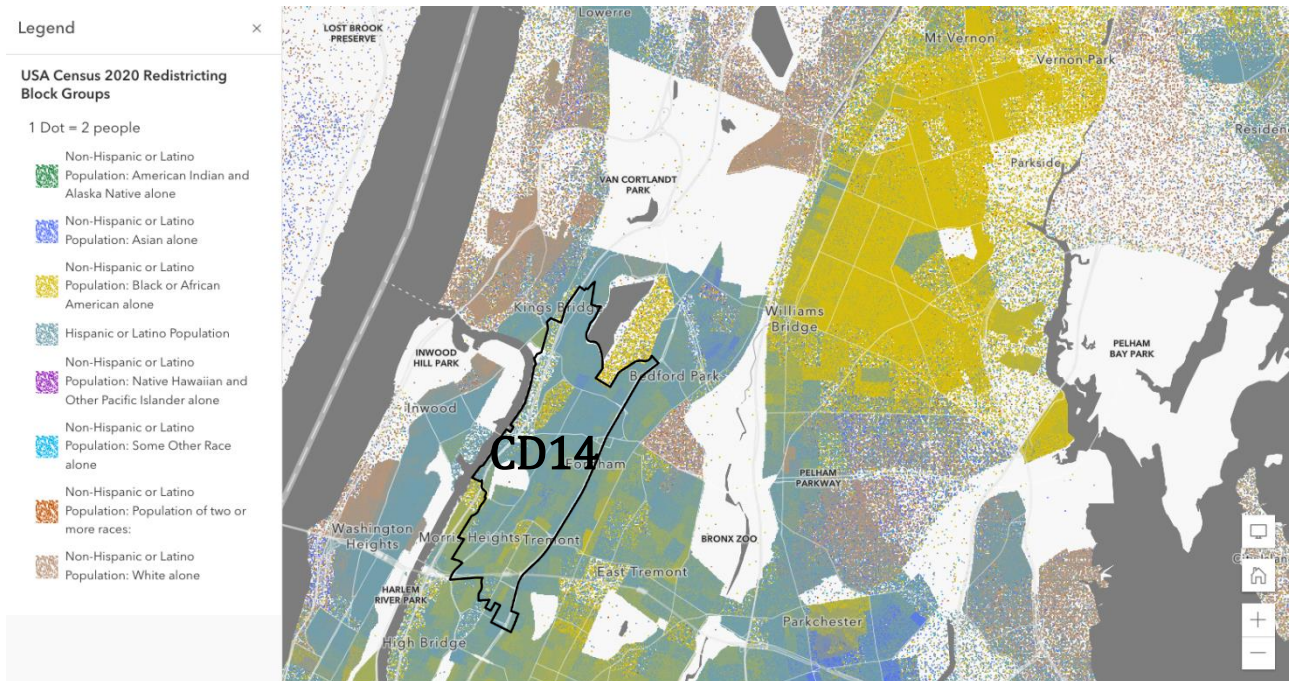
Fairness must be at the center of the redistricting process.

Thank you.

Exhibits:

Figure 1: Racial Dot Density Map of the Northwest Bronx

- 1 dot represents 2 people
- *CM Sanchez note:* Map illustrating the racial composition of the Northwest Bronx, with Council District 14 being overwhelmingly comprised of a Latinx and African/African American constituency.

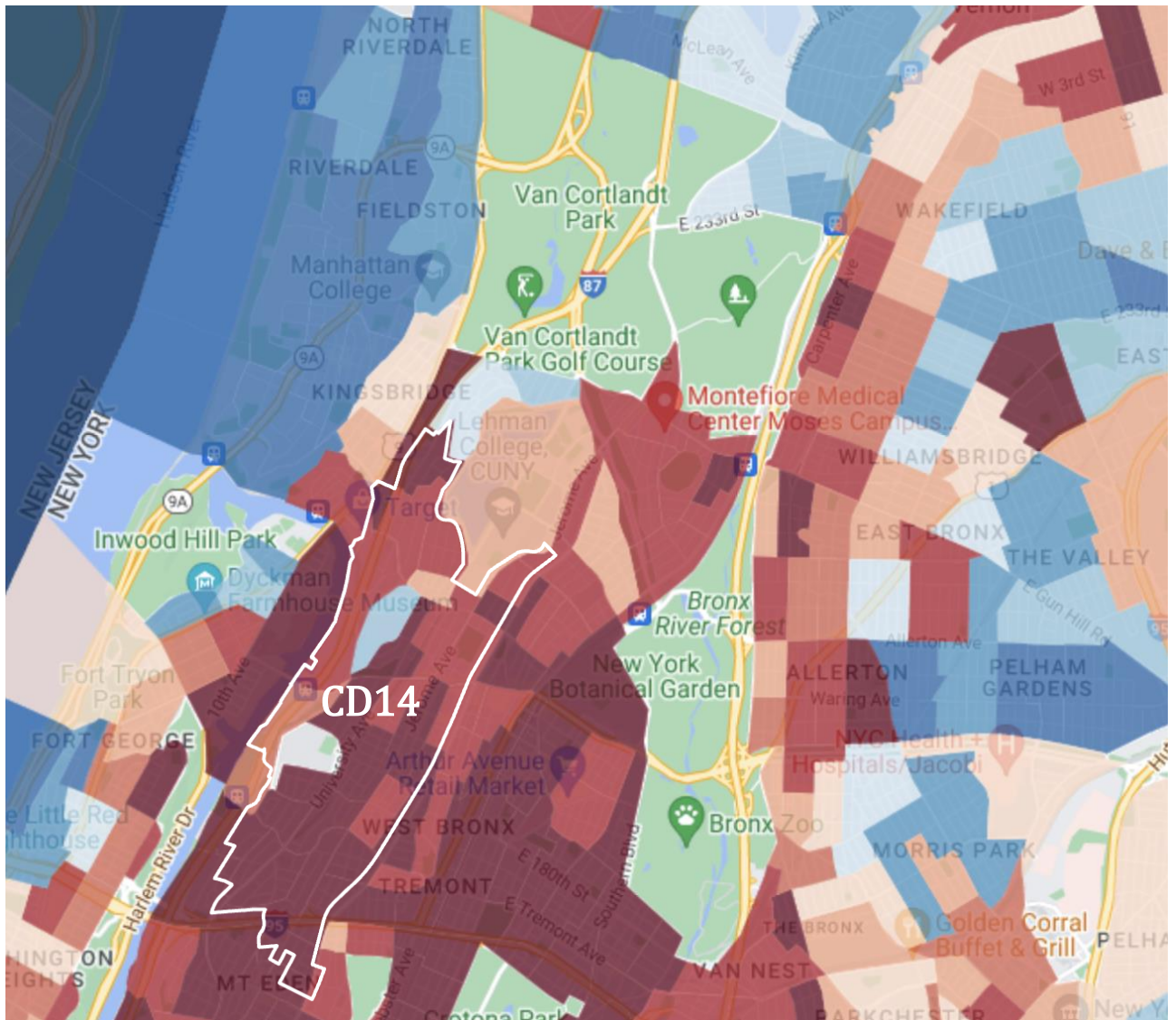


Data Source: US Census 2020, as mapped by Esri,

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=30d2e10d4d694b3eb4dc4d2e58d5bb5a5>

Figure 2: Income Map of the Northwest Bronx

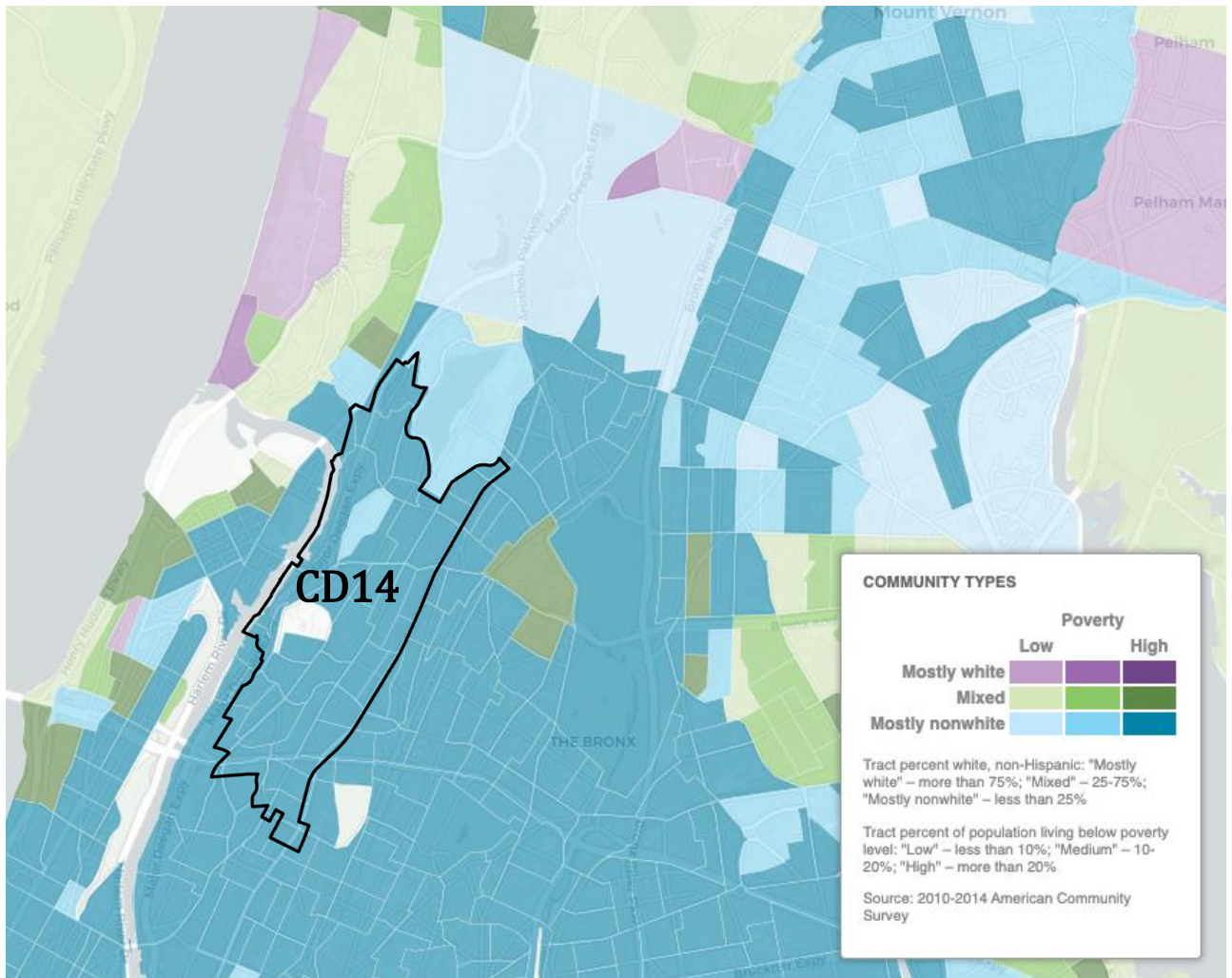
- *CM Sanchez note:* Map illustrating the income composition of the Northwest Bronx, with Council District 14 being overwhelmingly comprised of lower income households, with neighboring districts home to more affluent households at its northern boundaries.



Data Source: 2020 Census, as mapped by <http://www.justicemap.org/>

Figure 3: Racial and Income Segregation in the Northwest Bronx

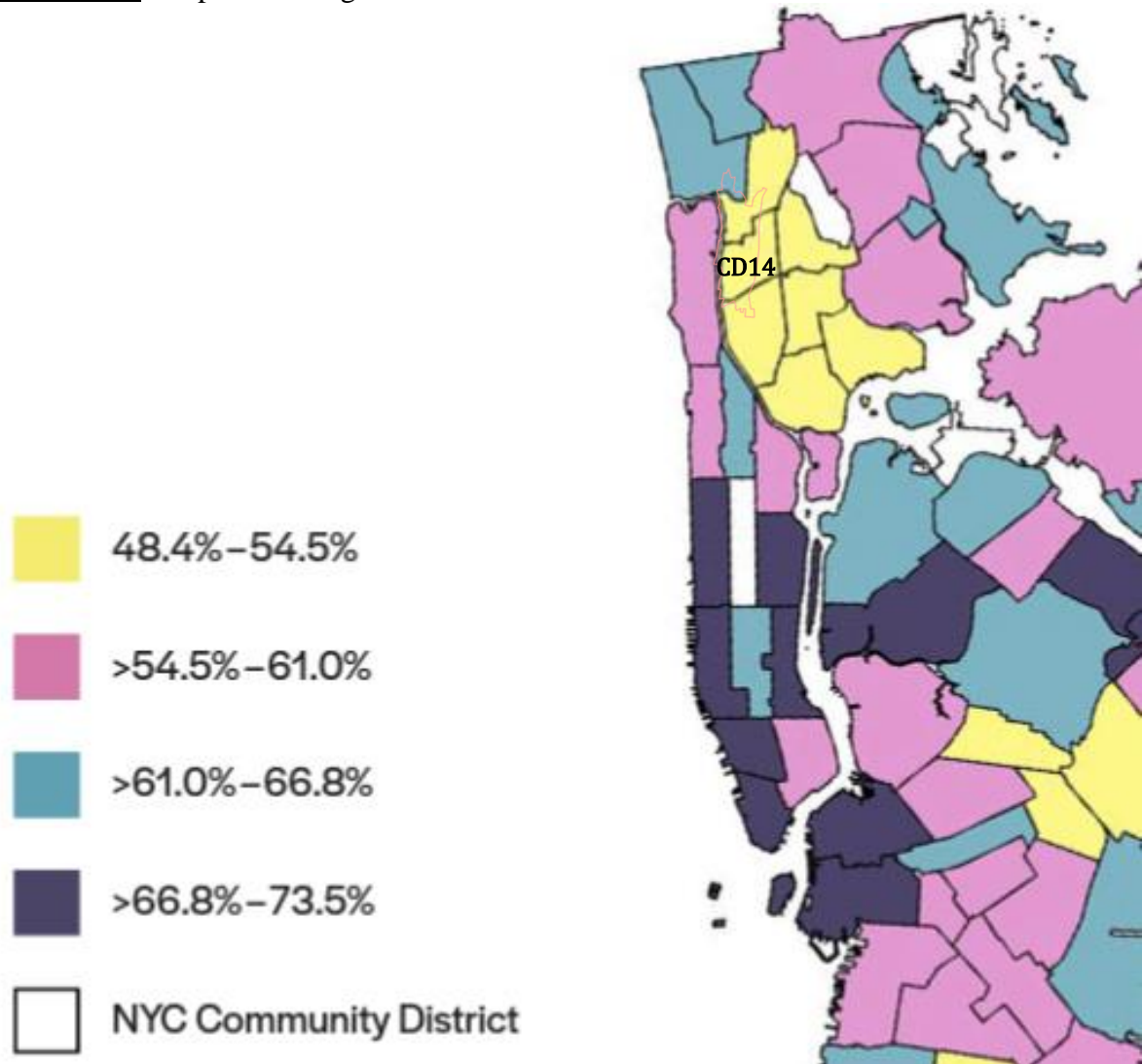
- *CM Sanchez note:* Map illustrating the segregation present in the Northwest Bronx, highlighting CD14 as a lower-income community of color, with neighboring communities comprised of higher income households.



Data Source: American Community Survey 2010-2014, as mapped by Regional Plan Association, https://rpa.carto.com/viz/a9ef1014-550a-11e6-bcfe-0ee66e2c9693/public_map

Figure 4: Voter Turnout by Community District in the 2020 General Election in the West Bronx

- *CM Sanchez note:* Map illustrating the low voter-turnout rates of the West Bronx.



Data Source: NYC Campaign Finance Board,
<https://www.nyccfb.info/media/reports/voter-analysis-report-2020-2021/>