

Dear NYC Redistricting Commission:

District 26 is our home. We are a diverse community where people of color and immigrants make up the majority — according to the 2020 census, 66% of the respondents of District 26 identified as Latin American, Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI), and Black — the very communities of interest protected by the Voting Rights Act. District 26 is currently the home to Little Manila, Little Bangladesh, Tibet Way, Little Bhutan, and Little Taiwan.

The second draft of the map cuts out the Tibetan Community Center:

57-12 Tibet Way, 32nd Ave, Woodside, NY 11377

The Tibetan Community center is the place of worship and communal gathering for the 15,000 Tibetan Americans who live in Long Island City, Sunnyside, Astoria, and Woodside. Please make sure it is NOT severed from the rest of the district. The Tibetan community is a geopolitically protected group due to the discrimination and displacement they have historically faced. I ask that you make Woodside whole so that the entire neighborhood is not divided into four council districts and I would like to return Maspeth back to council district 30 to ensure that Maspeth is not divided and remains whole as it is today. The Tibetan Community Center is the largest community center for the Tibetan community in the entire country.

I ask that the redistricting commission protects those who fall under the VRA: the Asian American Pacific islander, Latin American, and black community by keeping Woodside whole and keeping the NYCHAs together as they have been over 20 years.

Please ensure that the following locations remain in district 26:

- **Little Manila (Roosevelt Ave between 68-70th St, Woodside)**
- **Little Bangladesh (36th Ave between 29-31st St, Long Island City)**
- **Tibet Way / Tibetan Community Center (57-12 Tibet Way, 32nd Ave, Woodside, NY 11377)**
- **Adhikaar - Nepalese Community (71-7 Woodside Ave, Queens, NY 11377)**
- **Queensbridge Houses (10-25 41st Ave, Long Island City, NY 11101)**
- **Ravenswood Houses (21-20 35th Ave, Astoria, NY 11106)**
- **Woodside Houses (50-51 Broadway, Woodside, NY 11377)**

Sunnyside and Woodside, in addition to the Asian American Pacific Islander community, is also the home to the Colombian community, Ecuadorian community, Peruvian community, Mexican community, and so many other Latin American immigrants who make up 29% of our district. From Long Island City, Astoria, Sunnyside, to Woodside, there is not a corner of our district that does not have

Spanish-speaking Catholic churches, Mexican taquerias/delis, Colombian bakeries, Peruvian chicken joints, Spanish-speaking arts organizations like Thalia Spanish Theater and Manhatitlan Mexican Folkloric Dance club, and non profits like NICE, which serve our new immigrant neighbors. District 26 is also the home to the Ecuadorian Consulate of NYC. The preliminary map from the redistricting commission would divide Woodside into four council districts fracturing the Latin American communities from where they reside, worship, work, and gather. The fracturing in representation would negatively impact the Latin American community's ability to effectuate public policy for public interest.

When speaking of people of color that make up our district, we cannot forget the residents of Queensbridge Houses, Ravenswood Houses, and Woodside Houses. Queensbridge Houses, the largest public houses in the country, has been a part of this district since the 1940s. These three NYCHAs have been together in the district for over 20 years and provide consistency and continuation in receiving public resources such as capital investments and benefits. Many of the students from our NYCHAs attend school in District 26 — predominantly in Long Island City — and the current school district is in the midst of a rezoning to integrate our Black and brown schools with predominantly white schools. Cutting them out of the district they traditionally have been a part of will disrupt their education accessibility, capital funding projects, and their ability to receive services when there are two separate council members for their school district.

The proposed map would remove six schools from our district in Community Education Council 24 and Community Education Council 30: PS 111, Voice Charter, PS 76, PS 152, The Woodside Community School, and PS 12 hurting our students and families.

To summarize, preliminary maps proposed by the NYC Districting Commission would break up our immigrant communities and Black communities into FOUR different City Council districts, severely limiting their political power. The new district would shift from majority people of color protected by the Voting Rights Act to predominantly white violating the NYC City Charter:

- **White population increases from 29% to 44%**
- **Hispanic population decreases from 29% to 22%**
- **Asian population decreases from 31% to 25%**
- **Black population decreases from 6% to 4%**

The preliminary map fails to comply with the City Charter's requirements of fair and effective representation; keeping neighborhoods and communities intact; keeping

districts compact; limiting crossover districts; and avoiding oddly shaped districts. In the borough of Queens, we already have two crossover districts — District 22 and District 34. If the preliminary lines were to stay for District 26, we would add a third cross over district to Queens. The preliminary map is also not contiguous; in order for a District 26 resident to travel to Roosevelt Island, they would have to leave District 26 and cross over to District 22 to take the only land bridge to Roosevelt island in the neighboring district.

In addition to the illegal shift of our population from majority people of color to majority white — our average income level would double in the preliminary map from an average of \$70-80k to \$140-150k. In essence, the redistricting commission has dissolved a working class, predominantly people of color district to create a wealthy, white district, violating the requirement to keep neighborhoods and communities of interests intact as well as the requirement of fair and effective representation of those protected by the VRA.

As a resident of District 26, I ask that the redistricting commission uses this proposed map: <https://districtr.org/plan/138001>, which reaches our ideal population of ~172k residents by removing outer edges of our district without dividing the communities protected by the Voting Rights Act (Black, Latin American, and Asian). We ask that you keep Woodside whole as part of District 26 so that we don't fracture the immigrant community's ability to effectuate public policy for public interest. If divided, our AAPI and Latin American communities will be served by four council members instead of being advocated by one council member with greater community impact. We would also like to highlight that the Tibetan Community, who have been discriminated against in geopolitical issues, must be placed together in District 26 connecting them to Sunnyside, Astoria, Long Island City with Woodside where they reside and organize. The Tibetan community center, which is the home to 15,000 Tibetan Americans, is located in Woodside. We also ask that you allow the NYCHAs to remain in the district as they have been and undivided — Queensbridge, Ravenswood and Woodside Houses together.

Warmly,

Julie Won

Council Member • District 26

Pronouns: She/Her

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