



Sept. 28, 2022

New York City Districting Commission

Districting Commission

253 Broadway, 3rd Floor

New York, NY 10007

via email to PublicTestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov)

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the West 55th Street Block Association, which has represented the residents of West 55th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues (estimated at 1,500 people) for the past 45 years.

Thank you for your hard work on redrawing the City Council district lines to reflect the population changes found in the 2020 Census. Thank you also for hearing the testimony of our community to keep Hell's Kitchen whole at the August 22 public hearing in Harlem. The West 55th Street Block Association was part of the "Keep Hell's Kitchen Whole" group, which testified at that meeting.

Clearly some of what was said must have gotten through to you since the revised map which you presented on Sept. 22 came much closer to keeping Hell's Kitchen whole—although you voted not to send it along to City Council. But even this map, had it been accepted, would still have divided West 55th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues from its community of interest: Hell's Kitchen.

We hope you will listen to the community again as we ask you to **extend the northern border of City Council District 3 to West 57th street between Tenth Avenue and Broadway**. The border should then follow a line down Tenth Avenue to West 54th. From the intersection of West 54th and Tenth Avenue, the border should travel west along West 54th to the Hudson River. We have created a map in District R to show you what we mean. It's the green map labeled "CD-3/Northern Hell's Kitchen" It can be found at <https://districtr.org/plan/142685>. I've also added a picture of the map to the end of this letter.

The district as drawn would have 177,230 people and a racial ethnic makeup of 6% Black, 15.4% Hispanic, 15.5% Asian American and 58% White. It is compact and follows natural boundaries.

We have very specific reasons for this request. As I noted above, the West 55th Street Block Association has been in existence for more than 45 years. (I hasten to add that I wasn't there in the beginning. I've been president for only 12 years.) We have gone through several redistricting cycles in which we have been bounced back and forth between City Council District 3 and 6. This has made advocating for issues in our neighborhood very difficult. We identify with our Hell's Kitchen neighbors and have benefited from making common cause with them. That is why we were so happy when we finally became part of City Council District 3.

Please keep us in City Council District 3. Not only do we wish to remain in City Council District 3 but we also want to keep northern Hell's Kitchen as whole as possible—particularly since it includes the [Clinton Special Purpose District](#). The West 55th Street Block Association has made common cause with residents of the Parc Vendome (340 West 57th Street on the south side), the owner of Rise Bar (859 Ninth Avenue), the Ailey School (405 West 55th Street) and the High School for Environmental Studies (444 West 56th Street). We've worked cooperatively and effectively over the years on a variety of issues from noise pollution, liquor license applications, the re-opening of Borsley Park (W57 and Ninth Avenue), parking lane variations to benefit the Ailey School and travel scholarships for high school juniors at HSES. Please don't separate us now—after we have worked so hard to stay together.

As double-wide avenues, both West 57th and Tenth Avenues make natural neighborhood boundaries. You may wonder why we're asking for the northern border of CD-3 to run down Tenth from West 57th to West 54th and then along West 54th to the Hudson River. Our neighbors at the Harborview Terrace Apartments have publicly expressed their desire to remain in City Council District 6. As I understand it, this is because they have strong historical and practical ties to the Amsterdam Houses (West 61st to West 64th between Amsterdam Avenue—contiguous with Tenth Avenue—and West End Avenue). It makes sense for these two residences, which together constitute a community of interest, to be in the same City Council District—namely District 6.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Christine Gorman

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CC:

Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President

Erik Bottcher, City Council Member, City Council District 3

Gale Brewer, City Council Member, City Council District 6

