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COMMUNITY

**Chinese-American Planning Council
Testimony Before the NYC Districting Commission
May 26, 2022**

Good afternoon Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the redistricting process for city council lines. My name is Ashley Chen and I am a Policy Fellow with the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC). The mission of CPC is to promote the social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC is a proud member of APA Voice Redistricting Task Force, which is a non-partisan coalition of community-based organizations seeking fair and equitable access to the redistricting process.

CPC is the largest AAPI social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 125,000 people per year in all 51 Council districts. CPC has more than 50 programs at over 30 sites primarily across the Lower East Side and Chinatown in Manhattan, Sunset Park in Brooklyn, and Flushing in Queens. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. Our programs range from early childhood and afterschool, summer youth employment program, senior services, adult literacy, benefits and healthcare navigation and enrollment, housing assistance, immigration services, workforce development, emergency food services, COVID-19 support and more. The redistricting process needs to be transparent as well as accessible so all voices can be heard and to keep our communities of interest intact.

As we learned from the recent 2020 Census data, AAPI communities are the fastest growing racial group in the City. There has been an incredible [210% increase](#) in the Asian population in Brooklyn over the last ten years and [361% increase](#) in the Asian population in Queens. Responsive and effective representation for the needs of the APA community is especially vital at this time where many in our communities are recovering from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and navigating the few resources that have been provided by the government. There needs to be serious consideration given to ensuring that those numbers, and the communities in which they share multiple interests, are respected and kept whole. CPC strongly supports AALDEF's community of interest maps and asks that these communities of interest be kept whole to the extent possible, in the new district configurations. Our communities should be able to have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect the candidates of their choice. We urge the Commission to ensure that every aspect of the input

process is language and physically accessible so that the voices and interests of our most marginalized communities are heard. There must be full transparency with the general public to foster a collaborative effort among the community and ensure an accountable process.

Unfair redistricting will divide rapidly growing communities, minimize their concerns, and deprive them of effective representation for years to come. We remind the NYC Districting Commission as you begin to draw council district lines that you are required to:

- Keep ethnic, racial and language minority communities intact to guarantee fair and effective, equal political representation, as required by the federal Voting Rights Act and the New York City Charter.
- Identify communities of interest and other crucial information.
- Avoid racial and partisan gerrymandering.
- Continue to seek public opinion and input. During the map-drawing process, any member of the public should be able to submit maps and/ or provide comments for consideration by the Commission.

CPC appreciates the opportunity to testify on these issues that so greatly impact the communities we serve.