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# Community Board No. 2

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## **Queens Community Board 2**

### **Statement on Proposed City Council Redistricting**

Queens Community Board 2 (CB2) is dedicated to making sure people who live within CB2 boundaries, our neighbors, are represented; have a voice in decisions that impact their lives; and have needed resources. While we are not a partisan political body, we know our community is directly impacted by redistricting.

As Chairperson, I have created an ad hoc Redistricting Task Force to urgently address the Council District proposed maps and to inform and encourage the public to participate in the redistricting process.

We are concerned about the City Council redistricting process, specifically that there will only be one hearing on August 16th in western Queens for all Queens residents to testify. Queens is a large, diverse, and growing borough, it is impossible that one hearing will be enough for everyone who wants to testify. Furthermore, this hearing is in mid-August when many residents are away which ultimately means many will not have the chance to engage in the City redistricting process.

We call on the NYC Redistricting Commission to hold additional hearings throughout the borough of Queens or virtually in September and beyond. We understand the desire to get City redistricting finalized and in place expediently but taking our time to get it right and basing decisions on public input should be the priority.

Since D26 overlaps with the boundaries of Queens Community Board 2 (CB2), we oppose the first map proposal for the following reasons:

1. It does not comport with the New York City Charter.
2. Adverse impact on CB2.
3. Adverse impact on D26.

*“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”*

## **The Redistricting Does Not Comport with the Charter**

CB2Q's NYC Redistricting Task Force has reviewed the new district lines proposed by the Commission for D26 and has concluded that the proposed boundaries of D26 do not comport with the Commission's own redistricting criteria for the following reasons:

The NYC Charter identifies five ranked districting requirements:

1. Keep neighborhoods and communities intact
2. Keep districts compact
3. Limit crossover districts
4. Avoid splitting voters of the same political party for purposes of diminishing effective representation of such voters
5. Avoid oddly shaped districts

The proposed D26 would establish a new crossover district between Queens and Manhattan for the first time since the Council was expanded to 51 members.

The Commission's proposal to add a portion of Manhattan and all of Roosevelt Island to a Queens-based Council District, D26, violates the City Charter Districting requirement in the following ways: (1) it fails to keep neighborhoods and communities intact; (2) fails to keep the district compact; (3) it creates an oddly shaped crossover district. The new D26 received a failing score of 27.4 for compactness where 0 is the least compact and 100 the most compact ([Center for Urban Research \(CUR\) at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York](#))

The practical difficulties of having a two Borough Queens-Manhattan district cannot be ignored; two-borough districts that have existed in the past have been comprised of neighborhoods that are contiguous, have similar demographics, share similar public transportation, public education and other services, while the Queens and Manhattan areas of the proposed D26 do not have these similarities.

The proposed D26 violates the City Charter Districting requirement to keep neighborhoods and communities intact by dividing Woodside, Queens into four Council districts.

## **Impact on CB2**

The 2020 Census revealed that NYC's population had grown to 8,804,190, and D26 has grown by over 15% from 2010 and 2020. With the increased City population, the ideal district size is now 172,882. The proposed map increases D26 to 183,926.

The proposed maps have the following impacts:

- shift the racial and cultural demographics of D26 towards majority white, 29% percent white non-Hispanic currently to 44% white non-Hispanic, meaning further

disenfranchisement and DE prioritization of communities of color and immigrants who live in CB2Q;

- inflates the average income of D26, from \$80,000 in the current district and CB2Q, to \$110,000, meaning the income is overstated for the majority of D26 and CB2Q.
- the proposed D26 would make Manhattan east side hospitals part of D26 but CB2Q would still have no hospitals or place to give birth within its boundaries, as ambulances will not cross a bridge or go through a tunnel unless one is paying privately, meaning healthcare remains inaccessible and inequitable for many CB2Q residents.
- causes small communities in CD2Q, like Blissville and Wynwood Gardens, to have even less representation and resources.
- impacts the resources available CB2Q's unhoused residents and specifically to the small, transit-desert community of Blissville where the population has doubled with the creation of shelters.
- the proposed D26 would gain schools meaning CB2Q schools would compete for already decreased funding and longstanding problems of overcrowding and the need for new schools to be built, especially in growing areas like Hunters Point and Court Square, would continue to be unmet for years.
- the proposed D26 would divert attention and funding from environmental concerns unique to CB2Q, including Newtown Creek cleanup and access and health issues related to "Asthma Alley" in northwestern Queens.
- the proposed D26 would increase the amount of open public park space in D26 but that space would all be in Manhattan and on Roosevelt Island which is a cause for concern regarding funding for existing and new parks.
- the Commission proposes that 36,000 Manhattan Island residents and 12,000 Roosevelt Island residents – which equates to 48,000, 27.7% of the 173,000 people in the proposed D26, meaning the people of CB2Q in D26 will have less representation, attention, resources, and discretionary funding.
- the proposed D26 would count amenities that exist in Manhattan and on Roosevelt Island as part of D26 but would not be accessible without water crossing, tolls, ferry expense, congestion pricing;

### **Impact on the Council District**

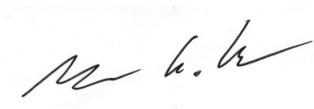
The D26 Council Member would:

- oversee multiple Community Boards meaning less representation, attention, resources, and funding for CB2Q.
- be responsible for multiple land use and rezonings meaning the D26 Council Member will spend significant time and have significant influence on development across two boroughs.
- have to travel outside the district to get to other parts in the district.

- have three district offices in Queens, Roosevelt Island, and Manhattan meaning a significant portion of the D26 Council Member's budget goes to rent instead of staffing for constituent services.

In summary, CB2 is deeply concerned about the impacts to our community that the draft redistricting scheme may produce, we urge our neighbors to participate in this process by [registering to provide oral testimony](#) or submit written testimony ([PublicTestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov](mailto:PublicTestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov)) to the Commission and by encouraging your friends and neighbors to participate. It is critical that our voices are heard loud and clear to ensure proper representation, prevent disenfranchisement, and to ensure marginalized communities are not divided and diluted.

Morry Galonoy



Chairperson,  
Queens Community Board 2