

# UNITED COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE

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## CONSENSUS STATEMENT OF THE UNITED COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE & REDISTRICTING COALITION

### TO THE NYS INDEPENDENT DISTRICTING COMMISSION

November 14, 2021

**Proposed Assembly District “AL” complies with the law, the census data and other criteria, but State Senate District “P” is unacceptable and the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission must also unite Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park as a community of interest in the State Senate, while uniting Howard Beach within its Congressional District (CD 8), in the Queens-Brooklyn area**

Dear Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

We are a non-partisan group of community leaders, advocates and activists, interested in fighting for what is best for our community. Map “AL,” unites us in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park as a community of interest in the proposed State Assembly legislative district “AL,” (**Exhibit “A”**), and we are grateful for this. However, we cannot accept the proposed State Senate district, “P.” It horribly divides and marginalizes us. **Exhibit “B.”**

The State Senate District has injudiciously excluded South Ozone Park, and included Howard Beach, which is an aberration. You should keep all of these communities of interest whole, similar to the State Assembly and Congressional districts. Here’s why:

Howard Beach belongs more naturally in the adjoining Congressional district, because it has **NO** compactness, community of interests, commonality, characteristics, nor contiguity with Richmond Hill and/or Ozone Park and/or South Ozone Park, whatsoever.

Indeed, Howard Beach’s Congressional District is wholly included, 100%, in the Queens-Brooklyn Congressional District, CD 8, presently occupied by Congressman Hakeem Jeffries. **Exhibit “C.”** There is every reason, therefore, for Howard Beach to be kept together, in a subset of CD 8 in its State Senate District, and be similarly configured within Queens and Brooklyn. In fact, it is the logical and right thing to do, so that the Howard Beach community can also speak with a common voice. Howard Beach deserves representation also.

Moreover, there is minimal interaction between Latinos and South Asians, who

populate Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park and residents of Howard Beach. They are separate and distinct communities.

**Accordingly, we cannot agree with your State Senate map, unless Howard Beach is removed, configured into its Congressional district, and South Ozone Park added instead, as per attached map, *Exhibit "D."***

**Whereas the Congressional and Assembly districts achieve the goals of keeping these communities of interest united, the State Senate does not, and divides them right down the middle, and should be redrawn accordingly. Consequently, we respectfully ask that the commission add the excluded portion at the bottom of your draft leading to the Van Wyck Expressway and to the North Conduit Avenue in South Ozone Park, as a vital part of this community of common interests that must be kept compact, contiguous and whole with the included portion.**

We therefore respectfully request that you keep South Ozone Park united with Richmond Hill and Ozone Park in the Senate District, as per the consensus map, attached. (*Exhibit "D."*) This represents the largest numbers of constituents in South Queens, namely Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park. This is where proud and patriotic Latinos and South Asians, most of whom are essential workers, live in harmony and unity, with our families, side by side in these historically indivisible, compact and contiguous neighborhoods.

This is our home, built up by our blood, sweat and tears, and constitutes one uniquely diverse community, serving side by side with fellow Americans, in every endeavor of life, including in the armed forces. We serve, and die in service, together. Please do not divide us any longer.

Further, while preventing conflict with other communities like Howard Beach, this proposed district will keep our neighborhoods and communities intact, with established ties of common ownership and association, grounded in historical, racial, economic, ethnic, religious, and other roots.

We are the largest group in New York City, and the largest settlement and conglomeration of folks who can trace their ancestry to South Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean and the West Indies, whereas Howard Beach residents trace their history and heritage mainly to Italy.

Please help us attain a better life. We should not have to go to 4-7 different Assembly representatives (ADs 23, 24, 31, 38 mainly), 2-4 different State Senators (mainly SDs 10, 15), to deal with issues like when both of our major high schools were threatened with closure, when we suffered as the area with the highest COVID infection and mortality rates, when we are unfairly treated by law enforcement and governmental agencies, and/or when we need solutions to our issues and problems, like high foreclosures and poor government services.

We need a district where the elected officials will be familiar with our priorities, heritage and culture, who are from this neighborhood and who will work with the

community on our needs, such as improvement in graduation rates, help with homework, institute programs for students to benefit from after school, cooling centers, better police relations, minimizing hate crimes, domestic violence counseling, more sports grounds, etc.

We strongly urge you to keep these neighborhoods together in a single district for the State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with your mandate, sworn duties, data, facts and the law.

We are very invested in the IRC's mapping process. We are happy with the AL letters map but the Senate maps have left us confused, and disappointed. How can you keep a community of interest whole in the Assembly and then completely ignore those boundary lines in the Senate?

We also urge you to develop one set of maps and a formulation we hope the entire IRC can support. As a second alternative for the State Senate in this area, we also submit the Unity Map for your consideration for the State Senate District. **Exhibit "E."**

Moreover, by releasing two sets of maps, the IRC has obfuscated the process and it looks like you will not have the seven votes among yourselves to approve any of these maps before the Jan 1, 2022, deadline. This will be an absolute travesty, and a shame, especially since this is the first time that an independent redistricting commission has been allowed to draw the maps.

Any such failure will strike at the heart of democracy, and will be a gigantic travesty and disappointment. It will also sound the death knell for future non-partisan redistricting commissions. If you cannot find common ground, how do you expect our children, and others, to?

Thank you for consideration and courtesies,

Respectfully submitted,

*Albert Baldeo*

Albert Baldeo (Chairman)

**Assembly  
District AL  
accepted by  
consensus**

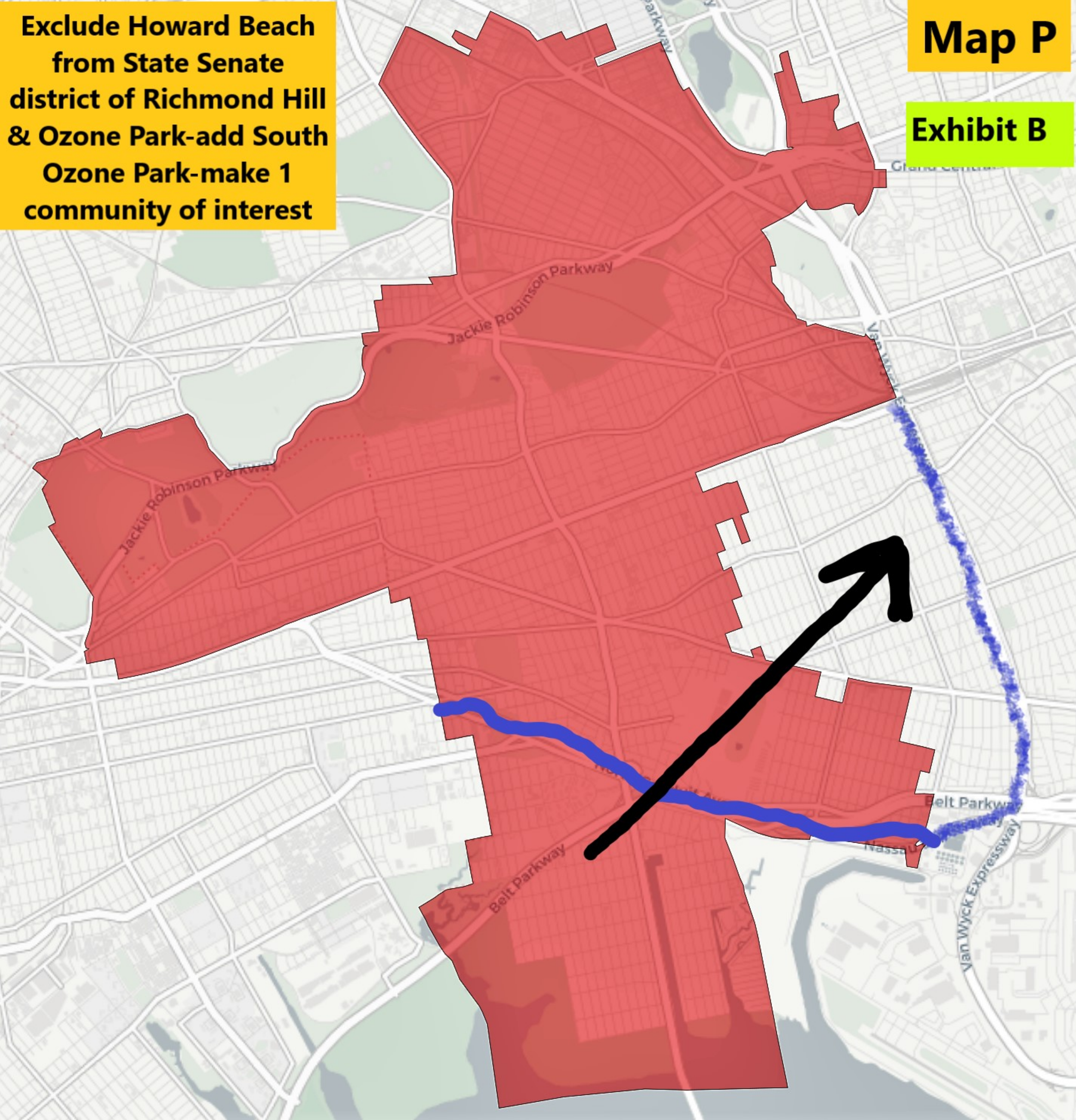
**Exhibit A**



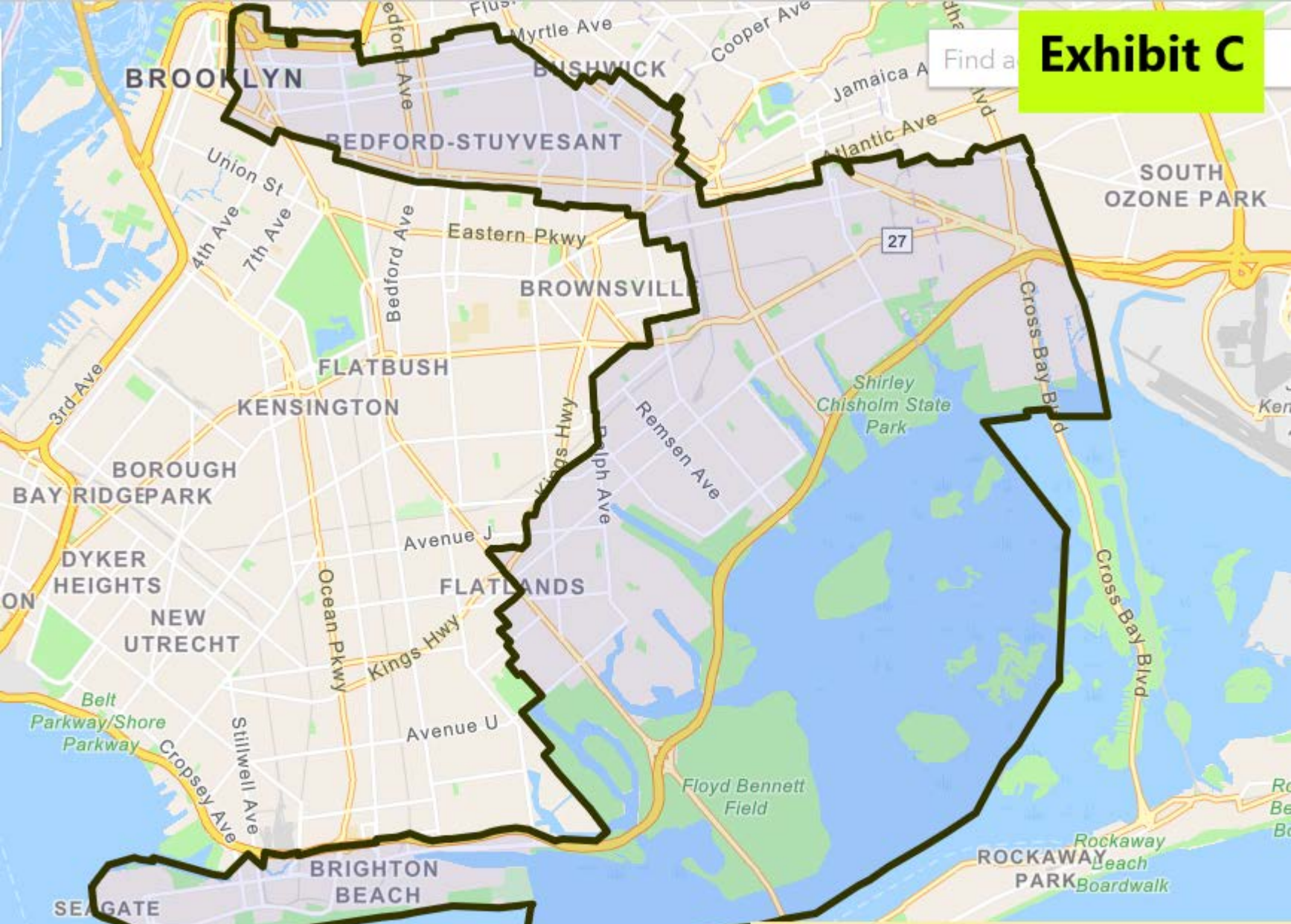
**Exclude Howard Beach  
from State Senate  
district of Richmond Hill  
& Ozone Park-add South  
Ozone Park-make 1  
community of interest**

**Map P**

**Exhibit B**

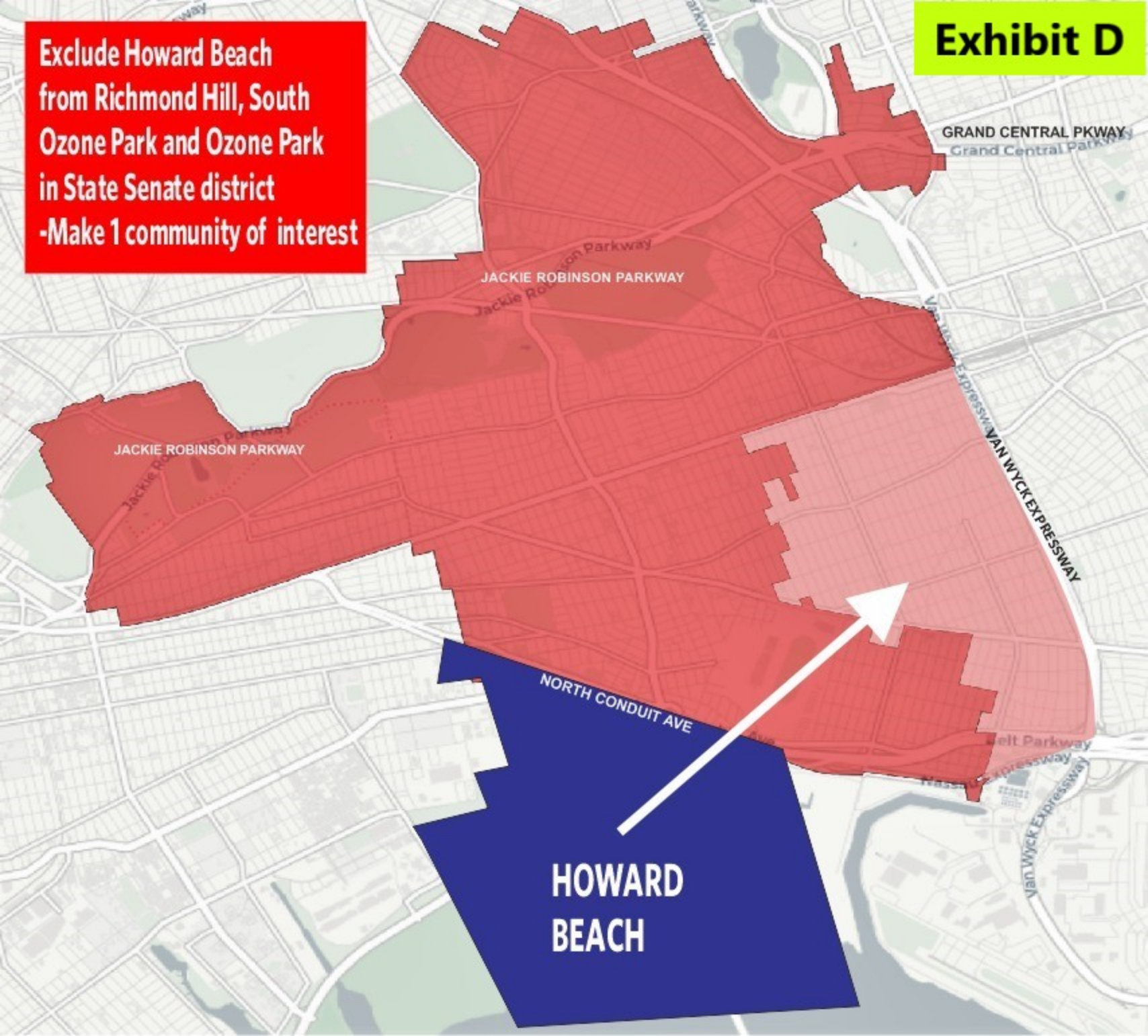


**Exhibit C**



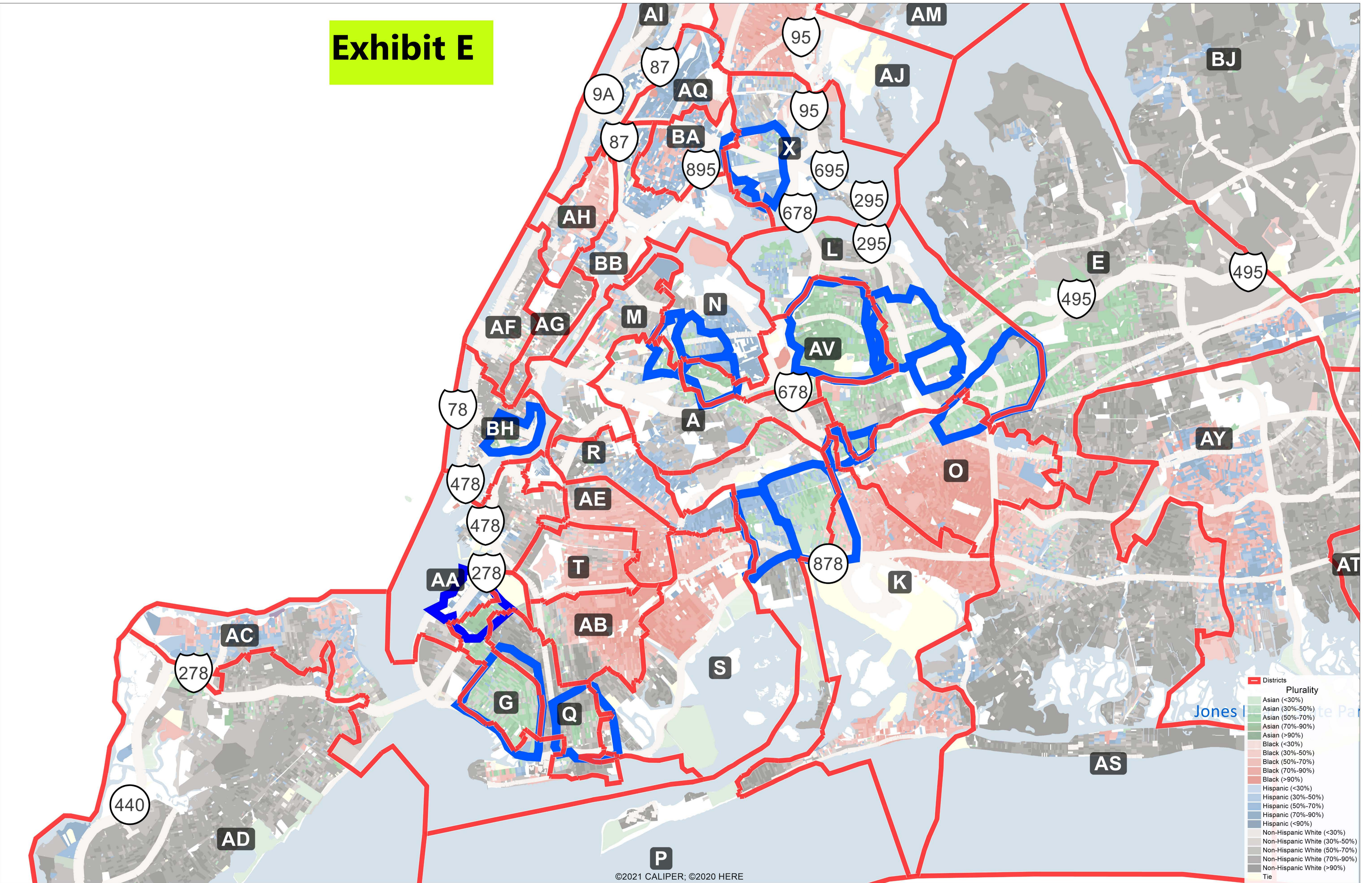
**Howard Beach is 100% located in Brooklyn in its Congressional District, CD 8**

**Exclude Howard Beach  
from Richmond Hill, South  
Ozone Park and Ozone Park  
in State Senate district  
-Make 1 community of interest**



**HOWARD  
BEACH**

# Exhibit E



Districts	Plurality
[Light Green]	Asian (<30%)
[Medium Green]	Asian (30%-50%)
[Dark Green]	Asian (50%-70%)
[Olive Green]	Asian (70%-90%)
[Dark Olive Green]	Asian (>90%)
[Light Red]	Black (<30%)
[Medium Red]	Black (30%-50%)
[Dark Red]	Black (50%-70%)
[Olive Red]	Black (70%-90%)
[Dark Red]	Black (>90%)
[Light Blue]	Hispanic (<30%)
[Medium Blue]	Hispanic (30%-50%)
[Dark Blue]	Hispanic (50%-70%)
[Olive Blue]	Hispanic (70%-90%)
[Dark Blue]	Hispanic (>90%)
[Light Grey]	Non-Hispanic White (<30%)
[Medium Grey]	Non-Hispanic White (30%-50%)
[Dark Grey]	Non-Hispanic White (50%-70%)
[Olive Grey]	Non-Hispanic White (70%-90%)
[Dark Grey]	Non-Hispanic White (>90%)
[Yellow]	Tie