

Subject: Opposition to the State proposal for Redistricting Roosevelt Island

To: Members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Thank you for considering Roosevelt Island's needs when determining the redistricting map for New York State's Assembly.

I strongly oppose the current proposal which removes Roosevelt Island from Manhattan's District 76 and places it in Queens District 36.

Briefly: When you are determining the redistricting map of New York State's Assembly, I implore you to refrain from making politically expedient decisions that will hurt the Roosevelt Island community. We belong to Manhattan, we have strong ties to Manhattan via transportation links, work and educational communities, and we need to be able to maintain our Manhattan representation. **This topic is disturbing our entire community, and we stand united in our request to not allow this redistricting to take place.**

New York State's redistricting rules require:

Districts must consist of contiguous territory and shall be as compact in form as possible.

- a. Our Manhattan Island's contiguous territory is Manhattan, not Queens.
- b. The proposed change to our district is sprawling, not compact.

The commission must take into account the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, towns, and communities of interest.

- a. Roosevelt Island is being severed from long established communities of interest. Our political subdivision is not being respected.
- b. The City Charter of New York City recognizes Roosevelt Island as a Manhattan community.

With the redistricting rules above, please consider the following issues and circumstances affecting the Roosevelt Island residents, including me personally:

1. Roosevelt Island is located in the Borough of Manhattan. Our transportation links, used daily by me and my family – and the majority of the Roosevelt Island's working population and school children - directly connect us to 63rd Street and 2nd Avenue (the next stop on the F train) and 60th Street and 2nd Avenue (a 3.5 minute ride by tram, one I take every day to get to work at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center). Both stops are in District 76, our most contiguous point of connection point.
2. Our tramway is operated by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) to link residents with Manhattan destinations. All maintenance, repairs, and capital improvements must be made by this state agency by connecting with mainstream Manhattan authorities. It is not part of the MTA system. Our tramway is a vital

transportation link used each day by commuters in order to get to work, and by school children, most of whom attend school in mainland Manhattan. It has no connection to Queens and is of no consequence to a Queens Assembly Member. Again, I take this tram EVERY DAY and entirely rely on it being fully operational and maintaining a very regular, reliable, and frequent schedule in order to get to work.

3. Many of our children go to public and private schools in Manhattan, not Queens. I am about to become a Mom in several months, and I am particularly worried about the implications of redistricting on the school options my child will have – and school funding sources for the RI school. PS/IS 217, the only public school in our community, is only available on a limited basis to children through the 8th grade. Confirmed by the school’s principal, Mandana Beckman, the school can only accommodate 33 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Therefore, the vast majority of our public, middle school children attend District 2 schools in Manhattan. The mandated DOE District 2 school, which has the highest volume of Roosevelt Island middle schoolers, is Robert S. Wagner Middle School, located in the 76th AD. In addition, PS/IS 217 can only accommodate 15 of our 3K children, and 36 PreK2 children. The majority of our early learners, who PS/IS 217 cannot accommodate, attend DOE District 2 schools in the 76th AD. Our District 76 Assembly Members have all had long, established relationships with schools in our required school district. **We need to retain this invaluable Manhattan “community of interest.”**
4. Our first responders for emergencies and crimes are NY State Peace Officers employed by the Public Safety Department (PSD), under the unelected management of RIOC. They are not employed by the NY Police Department, (NYPD). Since our local policing is managed by RIOC, and operates outside the control of NYPD, we need the combined efforts of our Manhattan legislators to assure proper law enforcement and intervene on the community’s behalf when the need arises.
5. Since our inception almost 50 years ago, Roosevelt Islanders have established enduring relationships with many Manhattan based communities of interest. Due to our proximity to the United Nations, we have a large immigrant and non-resident population who retain close ties with the United Nations. The housing quarters for the staff of Weill Cornell Medical School, NY Presbyterian Hospital, and Memorial Sloan Kettering (all belonging to District 76) are located on Roosevelt Island. A significant portion of our population work at other nearby Manhattan hospitals in District 76. Most of our working population commute to Manhattan for employment every workday – including myself.

The Constitution of New York State specifically provides two State legislators for each district, a Senator and an Assembly Member. Roosevelt Island, a Manhattan community, has a unique form of local governance. We are governed by an unelected, State appointed Public Benefit Corporation, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp (RIOC). All of our local services are administered by RIOC, not by New York City. The Board of Directors for RIOC is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor of NY. Because of this unique relationship with the State of NY, in which our residents do not have a voting voice in their local government, it is imperative that we, **a Manhattan community**, have the combined efforts of both of our

Manhattan based representatives, working together on our behalf, to provide us with responsive and fair dealing by RIOC.

To summarize and reiterate: **I strongly oppose the current proposal which removes Roosevelt Island from Manhattan's District 76 and places it in Queens District 36.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Olga Lyudovyk

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'O. Lyudovyk', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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