

Lloyd Feng

Addressed to: NY Independent Redistricting Commissioners

Testimony opposing IRC's draft proposal for Williamsburg and Greenpoint communities of interest

Thank you, Commissioners, for your time today. My name is Lloyd Feng and I come before you as a member of the Williamsburg and Greenpoint community. Although I am a member of Brooklyn Community Board 1 that encompasses Williamsburg and Greenpoint, I am here only in a personal capacity as a resident.

To ground my testimony, I define the Williamsburg and Greenpoint community of interest as within the boundaries of Brooklyn's Community District 1 (see below). The eastern border of our district is Seneca Avenue extended to Onderdonk Avenue and the Newtown Creek that empties into the East River. The northern border is also this body of water. The western border is the East River. The southern border is defined as Flushing Avenue extended to Kent Avenue where they meet at the BQE. Currently, our community falls within two Assembly districts: AD 50 (Emily Gallagher) and AD 53 (Maritza Davila).

Our community is filled with immense racial, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and religious diversity. Williamsburg is the longtime home of an historic Italian American community. You can find many of the community's houses of worship (there are many Roman Catholic churches in the area), restaurants, butcher shops from Grand Street moving north past Metropolitan to McCarren Park and as far east as Morgan Avenue. There is a thriving, historic Polish American community to the east of and north of McCarren Park throughout Greenpoint. The community also extends east past McGuinness Boulevard. The main thoroughfares include Manhattan Avenue, Nassau Avenue, and Greenpoint Avenue. There's also the historic Puerto Rican and other Hispanic communities of Southside that are as far east as Berry Street and mostly south of Grand Street to Flushing Avenue. South Williamsburg (between the Williamsburg Bridge/Grand Street and Flushing Avenue) is home to a vibrant Hasidic Jewish community. There's also a growing Chinese community that is working-class and immigrant, and includes senior citizens and multigenerational households clustered around the Mitchell-Lama public housing development by the Hewes and Lorimer JMZ subway stations. There are Polish, Spanish, Hebrew, and Chinese speakers who call these neighborhoods home.

Knowing the aforementioned context, I must oppose the IRC's draft map for Williamsburg and Greenpoint.

- The proposed map splits our community on the east-west axis of McGuinness Boulevard, keeping Greenpoint east of that boulevard together with Williamsburg to a few blocks south of Grand Street in the new AD 50. South Williamsburg remains within the proposed AD 50, but loses several blocks on the western and eastern side

to the south. This proposed AD 50 takes on more of the historically Puerto Rican core of the Southside with Havemeyer Street and the CTown as the new border.

- The new AD 53 maintains its Hispanic plurality, but gives up many blocks in Bushwick and takes on new parts of Ridgewood and Fresh Pond. It also loses several streets worth of blocks west of the BQE that represent the core of the Southside Puerto Rican community.
- East Williamsburg and the parts of Greenpoint east of McGuinness are included in this new mega-district AD 38. This district makes zero sense as it combines parts of our community with Maspeth, Ridgewood, Glendale, and Rego Park. I'm sure residents in these other areas see little in common with our community and likewise. It appears that they grouped the 'scraps' from their plans to draw other communities nearby into this strange creature of a district.

Please revert to the 2022 Assembly district maps as much as possible. The bottom line is that our communities of interest should *not* be joined with any Queens communities in a crossover district.

Thank you so much for your time.

Lloyd Feng