

# 1 Redistricting 2021 – Preserving Our Border Community

## 2 State Senate and Assembly Districts Must Respect County, Town and Municipal Lines

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4 Elmont is a diverse minority community situated on the western border of Nassau County. Its  
5 western most geographic boundary is the Cross Island Parkway.

6 Further, Elmont’s local taxing authorities include Nassau County, The Town of Hempstead, The  
7 Elmont Union Free School District, The Elmont Public Library District, The Sewanhaka Central  
8 High School District, Sanitation District 6, etc.

9 We, the residents of Elmont in collaboration with NYIC, a lead facilitator of the Mapping Our  
10 Future coalition object to State Senate and Assembly District maps that include our western  
11 neighbor, Queens County. Mapping Our Future is a statewide coalition of advocates dedicated  
12 to mobilizing the grassroots to get involved in redistricting and advocate for a fair process and  
13 fair maps.

14 Elmont’s demographic data shows that its neighbor to the west share a common demography  
15 in that we are generally middle-class, two income household, minority communities.

16 Geographically, we share the Cross Island Park as a common north/south throughway and  
17 boundary. We also struggle with common environmental injustice issues and share a mutual  
18 interest in John F. Kennedy Airport air traffic noise.

19 It is well known and accepted that reapportionment must consider, in fact, must give great  
20 weight to existing county, town and other municipal district demarcations. These boundaries

21 form the basis of common interest and are central organizing principals of State Senate and  
22 Assembly districts.

23 However, Elmont's dissimilarities from its Queens County neighbor are voluminous. For the  
24 purpose of focusing our concerns as it relates to State Senate and Assembly districts, we  
25 enumerate the following though it must not be construed as a full accounting of our  
26 differences.

27 1. A September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 article published on taxfoundation.org notes, "The six [US]  
28 counties with the highest median property tax payments all have bills exceeding  
29 \$10,000—Bergen, Essex, and Union Counties in New Jersey, and Nassau, Rockland, and  
30 Westchester counties in New York."

31 a. Approximately 78% of Elmont's property tax is school district taxes. For this  
32 reason, residents have acute concerns about the impact on state school aid and  
33 member grants to the Elmont Union Free School District, The Sewanhaka Central  
34 High School District and the Elmont Public Library District. Living in a high tax –  
35 low wealth district heightens the awareness and put residents at risk of losing  
36 aid that help defray the high costs of maintaining high performing local public  
37 schools.

38 b. Cross county districts, especially for districts with public education structures like  
39 Elmont's can adversely impact school state aid; cause school district insolvency;  
40 spur homeowner migration and worse, bankrupt homeowners who may be living  
41 on fixed incomes. This is especially true of the communities with large single  
42 head-of-house whole families and older homeowners.

43 c. What do we mean when we say, “districts with public education structures like  
44 Elmont’s”? Elmont has two public school districts. The Elmont Union Free  
45 School District is a PreK-6 district. The Sewanhaka Central High School District is  
46 a grades 7-12 district. Both districts have independent taxing authority and  
47 residents vote on separate budgets annually (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of May). In the State  
48 of New York there are only three such public-school structures and all of them  
49 are in Nassau County.

50 2. Elmont is a clearly defined middle class, vibrant, progressive minority community within  
51 the Town of Hempstead and the County of Nassau. Its geographic borders are roughly  
52 defined by the Cross Island Parkway on the west; the Southern State Parkway on the  
53 south; the community of Franklin Square on the east and Floral Park/South Floral Park  
54 on the north. The common interest shared by the communities immediately east and  
55 north of Elmont must not be ignored. The Sewanhaka Central High School District  
56 encompasses Elmont, South Floral Park, Floral Park; Franklin Square and New Hyde  
57 Park/Garden City Park. These communities have a shared interest in the public schools  
58 as they are linked by public education. Southeast Queens is not.

59 We join with the Elmont Cultural Center in presenting to you State Senate and State Assembly  
60 maps that better serve our community’s common interests and strongly encourage you to set  
61 aside partisan instincts intended to advantage one party over another. The Western most  
62 border of Nassau County must not be conjoined with our Queens County neighbors.