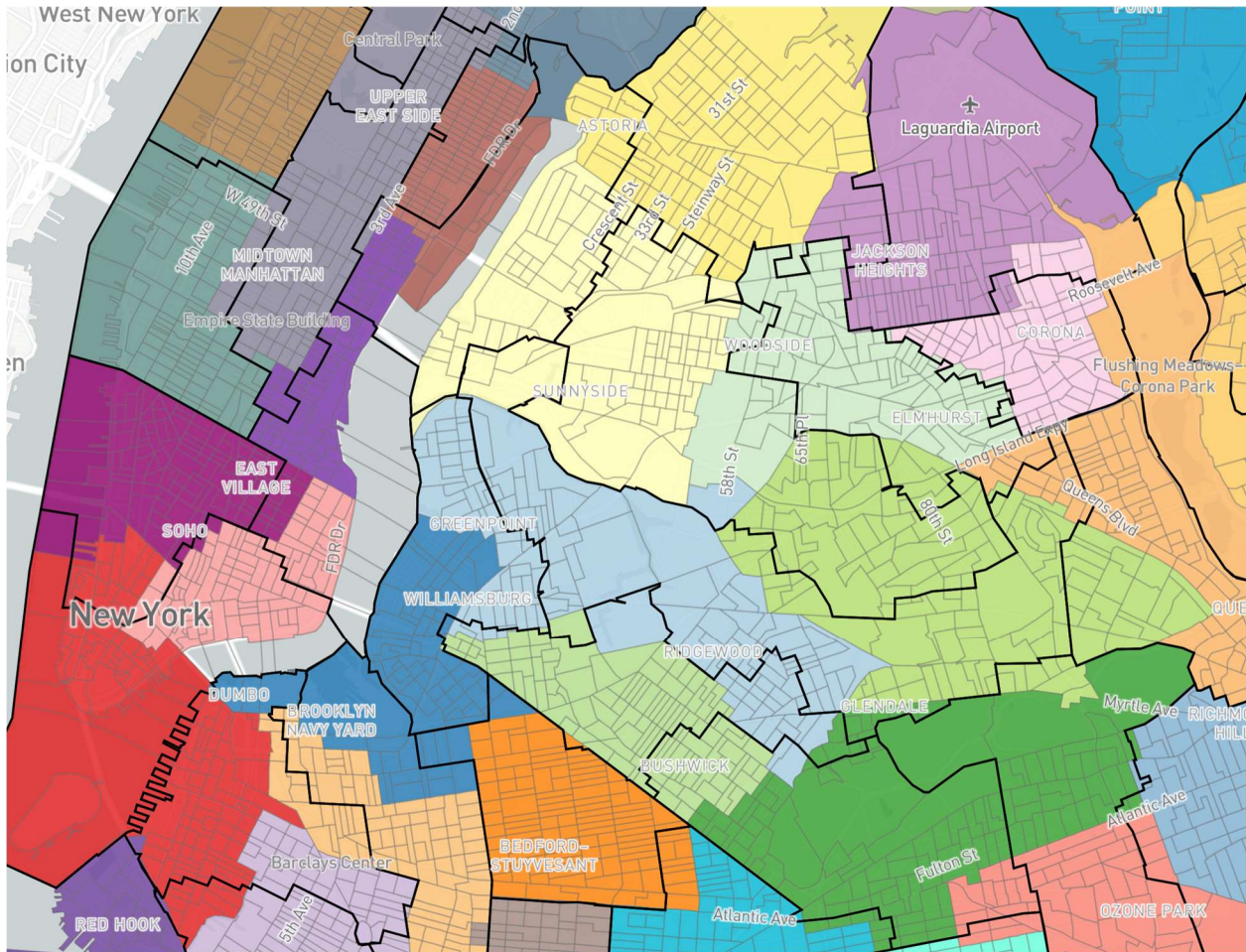


My comments reference a map proposal which includes downstate districts from Long Island to the northern suburbs. The districts are all within a 5% population range and try to account for communities of interest. So I'm not suggesting anything impossible.

<https://districtr.org/plan/175151>



Districts 30, 34, 35, 39

Because the IRC received recent testimony from individuals and groups linked to incumbents, I feel compelled to correct the record. The IRC proposal for Districts 30, 35 and 39 fairly divides the area into compact districts. They allow Asian and Latino voters an opportunity to elect representatives of their own choice in Districts 30 and 39. You properly confined Astoria to District 34 and the Jackson Heights Historic District to District 35, preventing those much higher turnout gentrification transplants areas from overwhelming districts meant to protect extremely low turnout Latino and Asian immigrants in Elmhurst, Woodside and Corona.

The 2022 Legislature drawn map wasn't about improving Asian and Latino representation here, it was a blatant gerrymander that carved up our neighborhoods for the benefit of incumbents. And the so-called Unity Map proposal is just more of the same chicanery.

The District 39 drawn by the 2022 Legislature is shaped like a Y with prongs joining sections of Middle Village, Corona and Jackson Heights. These three very different areas are joined by a narrow corridor cutting through a heavily Chinese part of Elmhurst. The Middle Village prong of District 39 is clearly intended to crack a Republican leaning area of Queens. The Corona prong is the district's source of heavily Latino population. And the Jackson Heights prong is a densely populated historic district, whose garden co-op residents turn out heavily in Democratic primaries and thus decide local elections. The gerrymander only benefits the residents of that affluent subsection of Jackson Heights. Similarly, the 2022 lines for District 34 joined areas of Astoria to immigrant heavy sections of Jackson Heights and Corona. The arrangement drowned out low turnout immigrants with much higher turnout from gentrification transplants in Astoria. Adjacent District 35 joined East Elmhurst and LeFrak City, two distant and dissimilar areas. East Elmhurst is a middle-class homeowner community of one to three family homes. LeFrak City is a high rise apartment development with working class renters. Given the distance between these two areas, there isn't much interaction between residents. The 2022 Legislature map in western Queens is not compact and has no connection to any communities of interests.

Districts 23, 54

The IRC should consider joining Woodhaven and Cypress Hills in District 54 to create a district that's more weighted toward Latino homeowners. These adjacent areas along the BMT Jamaica Line have interests distinct from renters in Bushwick, which are already well represented by District 53.

That change would entail shifting the heavily Bangladeshi neighborhood of City Line to District 23, which makes sense as that community spans the Brooklyn-Queens border into western areas of Ozone Park. The Bangladeshi community straddles the borough line but they still shop at the same stores and attend the same mosques. Creating a borough crossing district there would help keep that community more intact.

District 44

Incumbents and their nonprofit affiliates keep pushing maps that join part of Park Slope to Kensington. Park Slope is an overwhelmingly wealthy White neighborhood. Splitting it between multiple districts extends its high turnout voter influence over a wider area. But what does it have in common with Kensington, a far more diverse neighborhood with working class Bangladeshi, Pakistani, West Indian, and Orthodox Jewish communities. How is Park Slope and Kensington a community of interest. Do South Asian immigrants travel north to shop at the Park Slope Food Coop. You have the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey data. Kensington's South Asian communities are growing within that neighborhood and southward along Coney Island Avenue toward Midwood. Kensington can just as easily be drawn into a Flatbush, Midwood or Borough Park based district given the overlapping communities.

Why shouldn't Park Slope voters be drawn into a single district with similar adjacent neighborhoods like Windsor Terrace, South Slope and Boerum Hill. Normally, neighborhoods and communities ask to be kept together as much as possible.

