

**CENTRAL NEW YORK
WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

CHRISTINE M. FIX
329 Wheaton Rd., Syracuse, NY 13203

January 20, 2023

Independent Redistricting Commission
250 Broadway, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioners,

I am very troubled by the first draft of the Independent Redistricting Commission's (IRC's) proposed plan to reconfigure Assembly District boundaries in the City of Syracuse.

For decades, the City of Syracuse has been represented by two members in the State Assembly. The IRC's proposal effectively cuts the representation of the City in half. Like many rust belt cities, Syracuse faces a litany of challenges due to rapid suburban growth that began in the era immediately following World War II, as well as the decline of manufacturing jobs. Syracuse's population has declined by about 33% since 1950. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Syracuse has a child poverty rate of 48.4%, the highest figure in the nation among cities with at least 100,000 people. Overall, about 30% of City residents live below the poverty line.

Having two Assembly members helps Syracuse to obtain the resources it desperately needs to confront the many challenges it faces in neighborhoods across the City. These challenges include widespread poverty, housing stability, workforce participation, transportation and internet access. I believe that two voices are louder than one, and if nearly the entire City is drawn into one Assembly District, it will have a negative impact on the neighborhoods that require significant State investments to improve the quality of life for residents of these communities. We cannot afford to make this mistake.

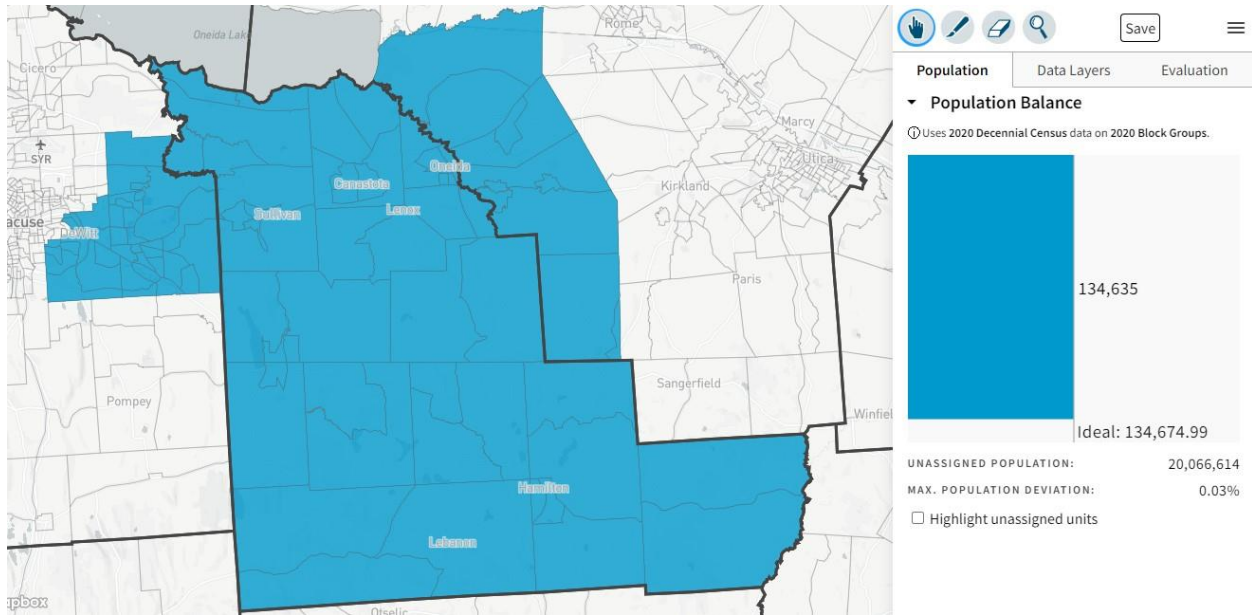
Also, I would like to point out that the draft map removes the City neighborhood of Eastwood from the proposed City-centric 129th District, and places it in the new 128th District with wealthier suburbs of Cicero, Manlius, Dewitt, and Onondaga. From a socioeconomic perspective, Eastwood has very little in common with these suburban communities. It is more diverse, younger, has a much higher percentage of rental housing and a lower median income than the rest of the proposed district. How would Eastwood's constituent voices be heard amongst the influence of Syracuse's two wealthiest suburbs, Dewitt and Manlius? I believe their voices would be drowned out and the Eastwood community would be marginalized. It is integral that Eastwood remains in an Assembly District with other parts of the City.

Thank you for allowing me to share my comments on this matter. I hope that the IRC realizes that it has made a significant error and divided the City of Syracuse in an unprecedented way. The IRC must reconfigure the City of Syracuse so that it can continue to be split between two Assembly Districts and re-group the Eastwood neighborhood with other City neighborhoods. We desperately need the resources that two members of the Assembly would be able to continue to bring home to our City. Syracuse's future depends on it.

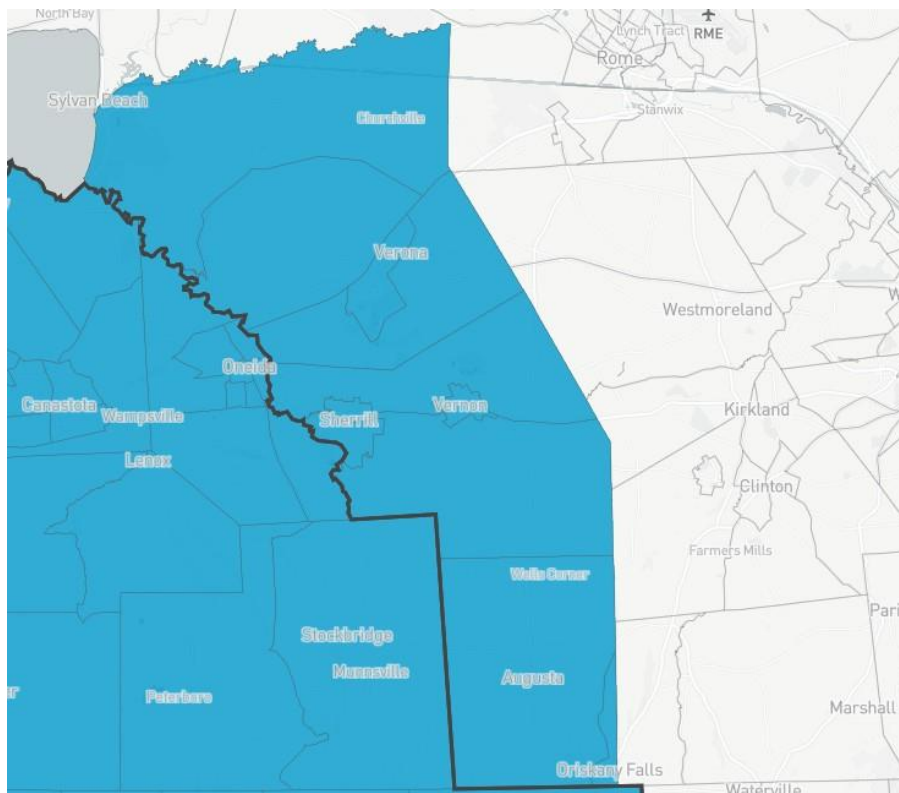
Sincerely,

Christine M. Fix
Syracuse City Resident
Chair 4th Ward Democratic Committee representing Northside including Eastwood

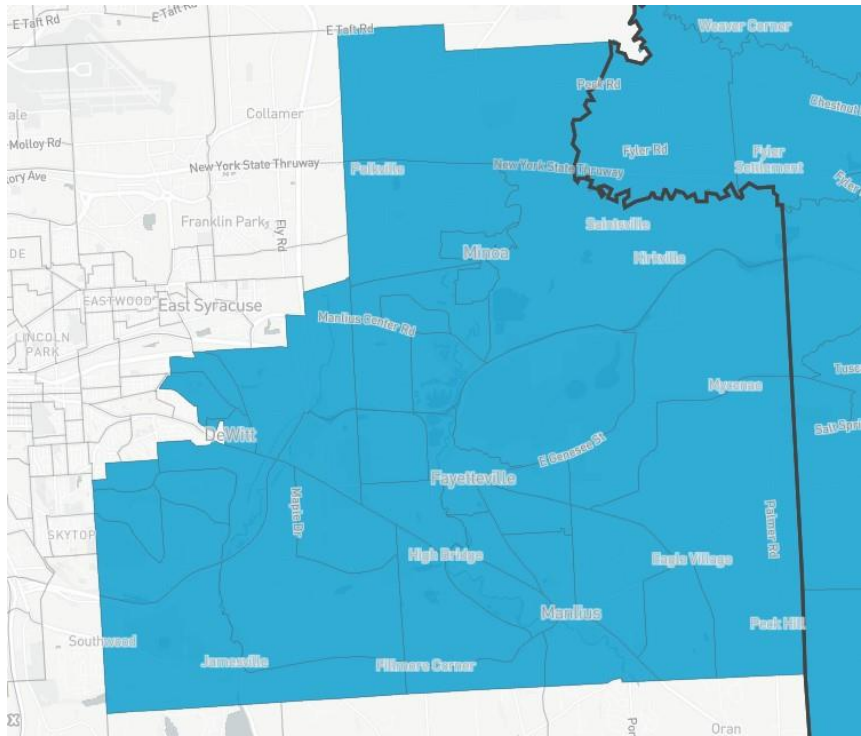
The Overall Map (with an overall deviation of 0.03%):



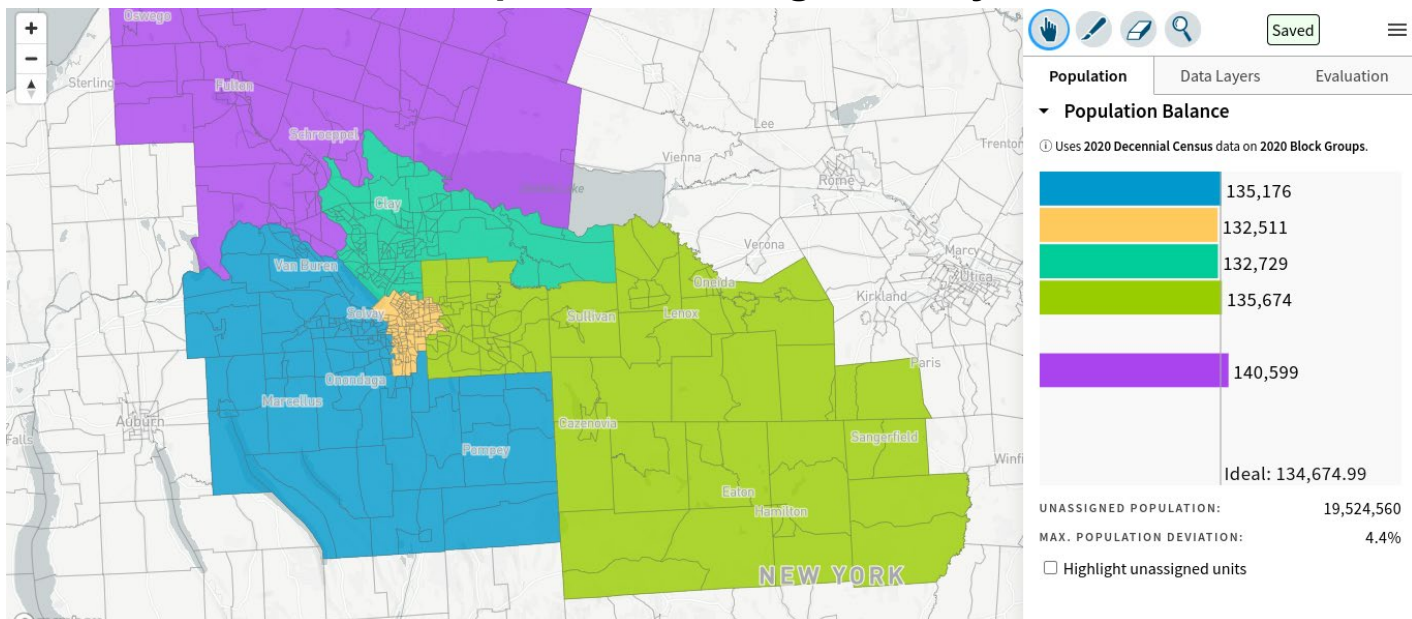
Zoom in on Oneida County (which includes Vernon, Verona, and Augusta):



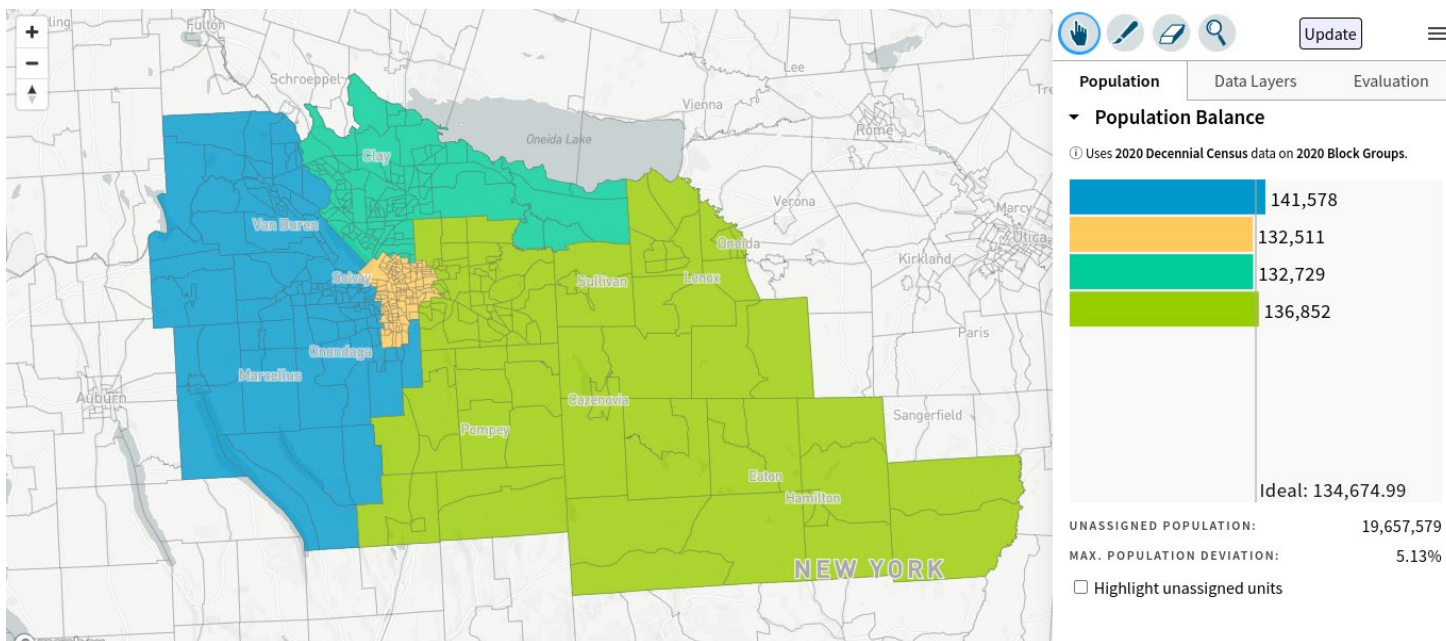
Zoom in on Onondaga County (which includes Manlius and southern Dewitt):



Most Favorable Maps for Onondaga County - Liam O'Connor

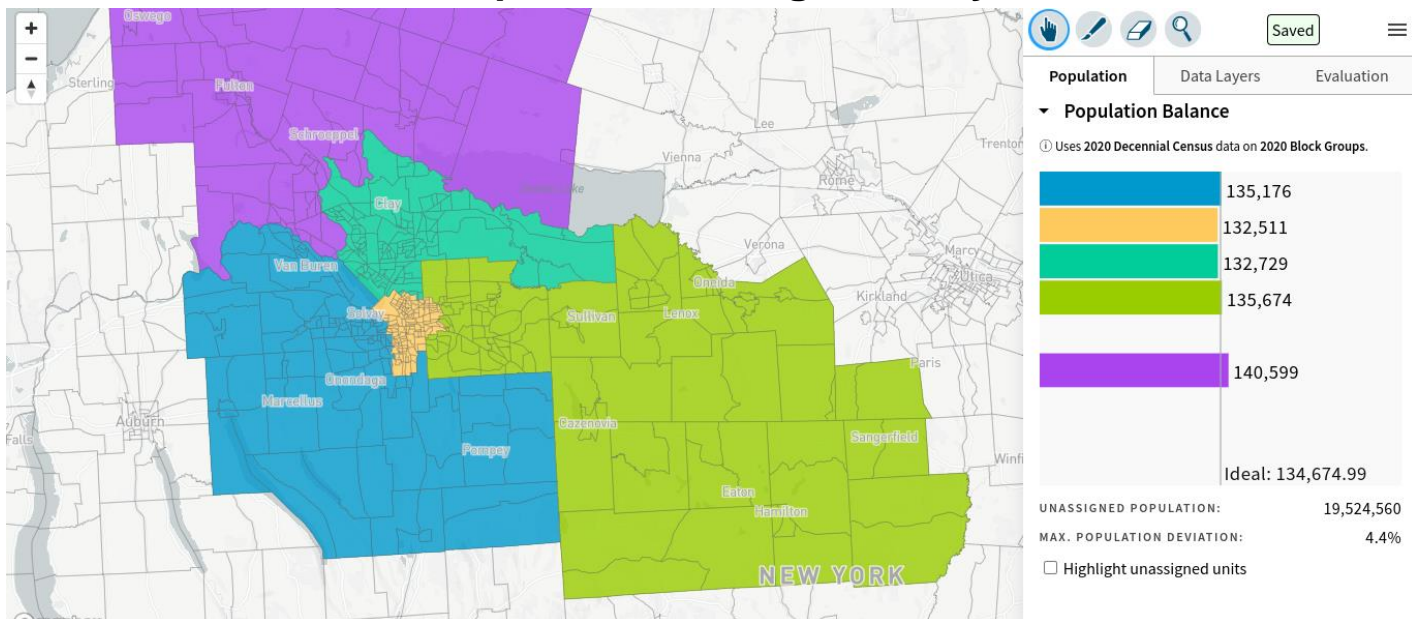


Description of Merit: Places City of Syracuse into a unified voice in which the excess population goes into the area with the most community ties (West End Suburbs with West End neighborhoods of Syracuse City have a very strong regional identity) Preserves Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Suburbs Identities as much as possible within realism of the need to conform to population and external district factors. Allows the entirety of Oswego County to remain united with the Town of Lysander as they have for at least a decade. This also creates an opportunity to restore a nearly-unified Madison County assembly district that was lost between the 2012-20 and the 2022 maps.

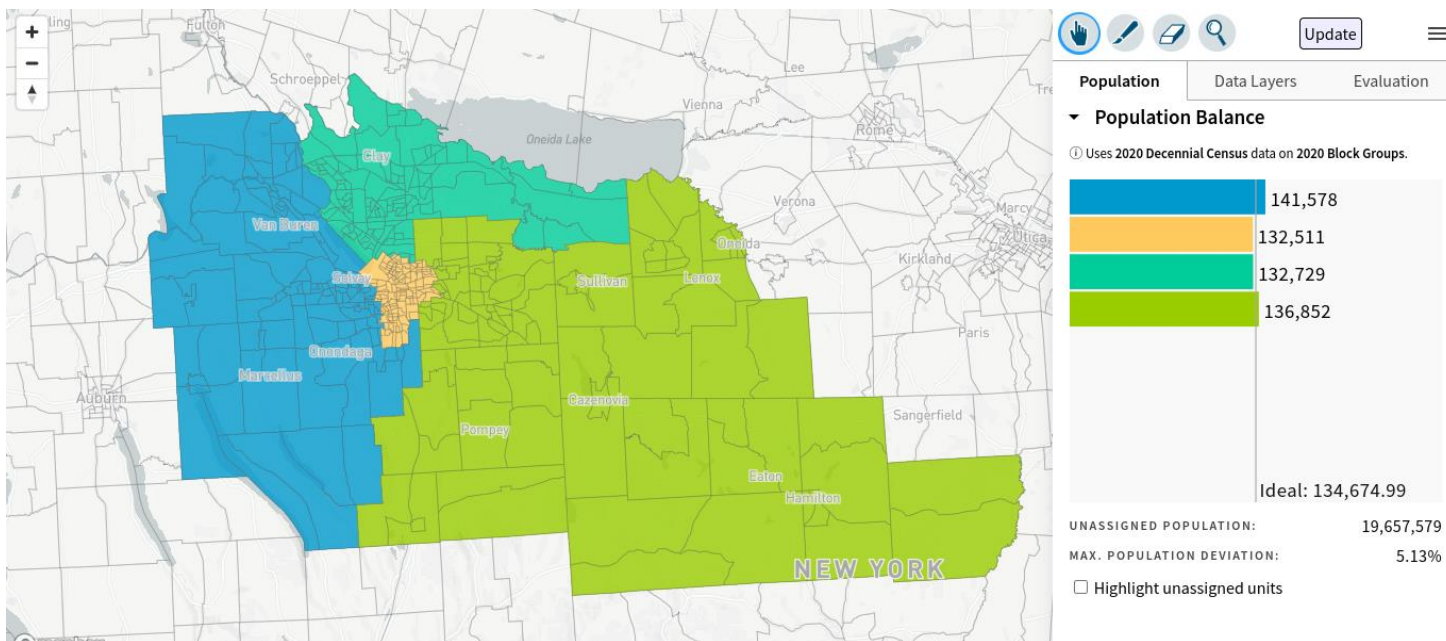


Description of Merit: Places City of Syracuse into a unified voice in which the excess population goes into the area with the most community ties (West End Suburbs with West End neighborhoods of Syracuse City have a very strong regional identity) Preserves Northern, Eastern, and Western Suburbs Identities as much as possible within realism of the need to conform to population and external district factors. Maintains a united Village of Baldwinsville and Greater Baldwinsville Identity that was split having Lysander in an Oswego district. This also creates an opportunity to restore a nearly-unified Madison County assembly district that was lost between the 2012-20 and the 2022 maps.

Most Favorable Maps for Onondaga County - Liam O'Connor



Description of Merit: Places City of Syracuse into a unified voice in which the excess population goes into the area with the most community ties (West End Suburbs with West End neighborhoods of Syracuse City have a very strong regional identity) Preserves Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Suburbs Identities as much as possible within realism of the need to conform to population and external district factors. Allows the entirety of Oswego County to remain united with the Town of Lysander as they have for at least a decade. This also creates an opportunity to restore a nearly-unified Madison County assembly district that was lost between the 2012-20 and the 2022 maps.



Description of Merit: Places City of Syracuse into a unified voice in which the excess population goes into the area with the most community ties (West End Suburbs with West End neighborhoods of Syracuse City have a very strong regional identity) Preserves Northern, Eastern, and Western Suburbs Identities as much as possible within realism of the need to conform to population and external district factors. Maintains a united Village of Baldwinsville and Greater Baldwinsville Identity that was split having Lysander in an Oswego district. This also creates an opportunity to restore a nearly-unified Madison County assembly district that was lost between the 2012-20 and the 2022 maps.

In the first presentation, I focused on the **US Constitution, Article 4, Section 4**, that begins,

“Every State is guaranteed a Republican form of government.”

And reminded everyone that **a republican form of government is nothing more than regional representation in the legislature.**

In the presentation **last night**, I explained why the **14th amendment does not negate Article 4, Section 4 of the US Constitution.**

Today, I would like to focus on **one aspect of the New York State Constitution.**

Article III, Section 4, discusses “... *the **apportionment of members of the Assembly and the readjustment or alteration of senate districts***”

This wording emphasizes the fact that **the procedures to be used to establish representation in each legislative body are different.**

1 minute

The word “**apportionment**”, back in 1788, in 1964, and today, still means, “**to distribute proportionally**”.

Section 4 contains a section that stresses:

“Subject to the requirements of the federal constitution and statutes and in compliance with state constitutional requirements, the following principles shall be used in the creation of state senate and state assembly districts:

Article III, Section 5

follows with

“The members of the assembly shall be ... apportioned pursuant to this section and sections four ... among the several counties of the state, as nearly as may be according to the number of their respective inhabitants, excluding aliens.

Note that the **recipients of the apportioned Assembly seats** are identified as the **NYS counties**.

2 minutes

The NYS Constitution also guarantees:

Every county heretofore established and separately organized, except the county of Hamilton, shall always be entitled to one member of assembly, ...

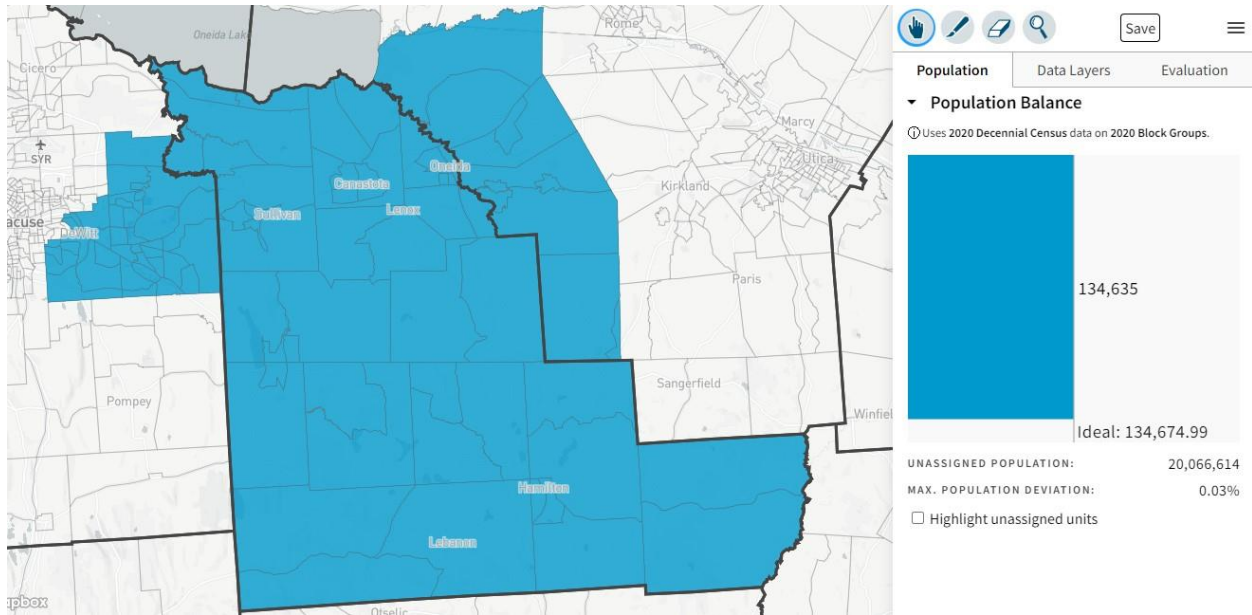
The **specific instructions** pertaining to the distribution of the assembly seats among the counties **begin with:**

One member of assembly shall be apportioned to every county, including Fulton and Hamilton as one county, containing less than the ratio and one-half over.

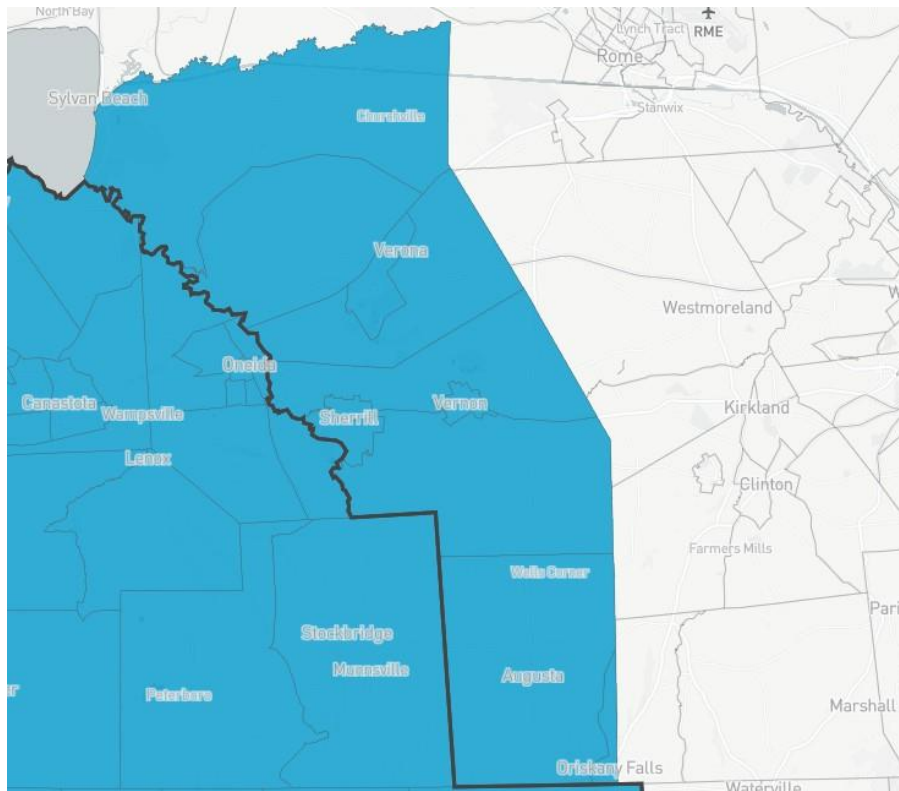
The remaining Assembly seats are to be distributed by the formula provided in the NYS Constitution.

While the voters of New York state agreed to allow the Independent Redistricting Commission establish legislative and Congressional districts, they did not at the same time authorize the IRC to ignore the NYS Constitution.

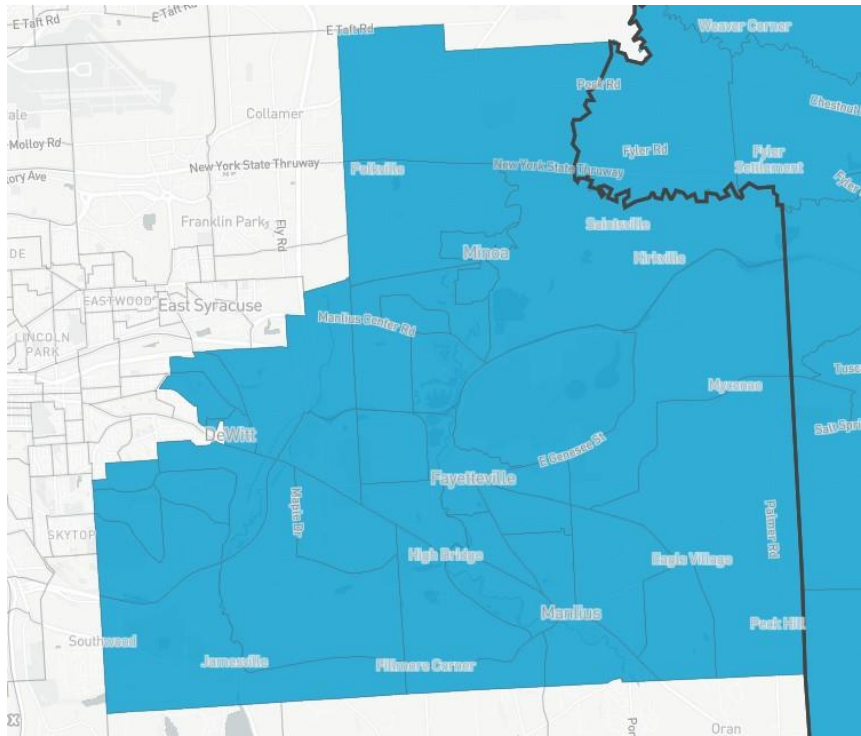
The Overall Map (with an overall deviation of 0.03%):



Zoom in on Oneida County (which includes Vernon, Verona, and Augusta):



Zoom in on Onondaga County (which includes Manlius and southern Dewitt):





OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
OSWEGO COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Phone (315) 349-8230

Fax (315) 349-8237

COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING - 46 EAST BRIDGE STREET OSWEGO, NEW YORK 13126

JIM WEATHERUP
CHAIRMAN
EMAIL: james.weatherup@oswegocounty.com

BETSY SHERMAN-SAUNDERS
CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
EMAIL: betsy.saunders@oswegocounty.com

Good afternoon Commissioners:

My name is James Weatherup and I am the Chairman of the Oswego County Legislature. I write today to provide comments on your latest proposed Assembly plan and suggestions for how the County of Oswego should be included in the drawing of your next Assembly plan in April.

As you all know, keeping community of interest's whole is a primary principle of redistricting. Few things would better represent this than by keeping the County of Oswego whole in any Assembly plan. That is what was done in the current map, what was undone in the latest IRC proposal, and what should be fixed in the IRC's next proposal.

The 2020 Census population of Oswego County is 117,525. This number is smaller than the average Assembly population. Because of this, I would suggest that the County of Oswego be kept wholly within one district for all future proposed Assembly plans.

Oswego County is a county with its own unique issues and concerns. We would like to have a single Assemblyperson who would be dedicated to those issues that the residents of Oswego County care most about.

On behalf of the undersigned Oswego County Legislators Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michael G. Yerdon
Leg. Michael Yerdon, District 1

Herbert Yerdon
Leg. Herbert Yerdon, District 2

Edward Gilson
Leg. Edward Gilson, District 3

David Holst
Leg. David Holst, District 4

Roy Rechil
Leg. Roy Rechil, District 5

John Martino
Leg. John Martino, District 6

Frank Bombardo
Leg. Frank Bombardo, District 7

Paul House
Leg. Paul House, District 8

James Weatherup
Leg. James Weatherup, District 9

Mary Ellen Chesbro
Leg. Mary Ellen Chesbro, District 10

Linda Lockwood
Leg. Linda Lockwood, District 11

Richard P. Kline
Leg. Richard Kline, District 12

Frank Castiglia
Leg. Frank Castiglia, District 25

Patrick Twiss
Leg. Patrick Twiss, District 13

Stephen Walpole
Leg. Stephen Walpole, District 14

Nathan Emmons
Leg. Nathan Emmons, District 15

James Scanlon
Leg. James Scanlon, District 16

Laurie Mangano
Leg. Laurie Mangano, District 17

Robert Wilmott
Leg. Robert Wilmott, District 18

Marie Schadt
Leg. Marie Schadt, District 19

Tim Stahl
Leg. Tim Stahl, District 20

Noelle Beckwith-Salmons
Leg. Noelle Beckwith-Salmons, District 21

James Karasek
Leg. James Karasek, District 22

Michael Soltow
Leg. Michael Soltow, District 23

March Greco
Leg. March Greco, District 24



WILLIAM B. MAGNARELLI
Assemblyman 129th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Transportation

COMMITTEES
Economic Development, Job Creation,
Commerce and Industry
Education
Rules
Oversight, Analysis and Investigation
Steering
Ways and Means

January 20, 2023

Submissions
Independent Redistricting Commission
250 Broadway, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed “Draft Assembly Plan” of the Independent Redistricting Commission. As a lifelong Syracuse resident and Assembly representative of the City since 1999, I strongly believe this plan violates Article III, Section 4 of the NYS Constitution for the drawing of Assembly districts. Most notably, it ignores the requirement that districts “*shall consider the maintenance of cores of existing districts, of pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, and towns, and of communities of interest.*” This plan needlessly cuts off a key Syracuse neighborhood from the rest of the City, reduces the representation of the City of Syracuse and needlessly splits the Towns of Geddes and Van Buren.

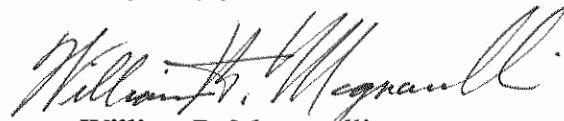
This proposal blatantly ignores the “cores of existing districts” and “pre-existing political subdivisions”. Most egregiously it takes the Syracuse neighborhood of Eastwood and places it in a suburban dominated district. The interests of these City residents would be lost in a district dominated by the wealthier suburban towns of Manlius, Dewitt and Cicero. Eastwood must remain in an Assembly district centered in the City of Syracuse.

Additionally, the plan effectively cuts the representative power of the City of Syracuse in half. Since at least the 1992 redistricting cycle, Syracuse has maintained two representatives in the Assembly representing significant portions of the City. Under this map, the City would be effectively reduced to one member. This would do significant harm to a major urban center in Upstate New York that has ongoing issues with poverty, equitable school funding and infrastructure needs. It also ignores the diversity of the City’s neighborhoods and its unique communities of interest.

The proposed map also harms the two towns I have represented for over twenty years, Geddes and Van Buren. These two towns have been part of the same Assembly district since 2002 and have a strong community of interest. Under the proposed plan, Geddes would be split off from the neighboring City of Syracuse and placed in a district that includes the northern suburb of Clay. Van Buren would be placed in a district that wouldn’t even center on Onondaga County. The proposal would put Van Buren in a district that centers on Chenango, Madison and Cortland Counties. I fail to see how either draft district preserves “communities of interest”.

Again, I strongly oppose the initial draft plan shared by the Commission. It should reject this plan and draft a new map that better protects the cores of the existing districts and keeps together communities of interest in Syracuse and Onondaga County.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William B. Magnarelli".

William B. Magnarelli
Member, NYS Assembly
129th District

Oswego County Conference of Mayors
175 E. 7th Street
Oswego, NY 13126

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Millard Murphy, and I am writing on behalf of the Oswego County Conference of Mayors.

I am writing to express our strong support for keeping the County of Oswego whole in your next proposed Assembly plan. The principle of maintaining continuity within communities of interest is a critical aspect of redistricting, and there is no better example of this than the City of Oswego.

As you are aware, Oswego County's population is smaller than the average Assembly District. Because of this, it would be in the best interest of the residents of Oswego County to have a single Assemblyperson who is dedicated to addressing the specific issues that are important to them. Keeping the County whole would allow for a more effective and efficient representation of the residents' needs and concerns.

I urge you to consider the importance of keeping Oswego County whole in your next proposed Assembly plan. The residents of Oswego County deserve a representative who is able to fully understand and address their unique concerns and keeping the County whole is the best way to ensure that they have that representation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. W. Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

M. W. Murphy, Executive Director

Oswego County Conference of Mayors

175 E. 7th Street
Oswego, NY 13126

VILLAGE OF HANNIBAL

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS 1860 -2010

Mayor
Ronald Greenleaf
Drawer B
824 State Route 34
Hannibal, NY 13074

Elizabeth Quaile Clerk/Treasurer

Board of Trustees
Charles Fadden
Terry M. Wilbur
Wendell Blanchard
Gordon Kellogg

TDD 1(800) 795-3272
Telephone (315) 564-6037
Fax (315) 564-7379

February 6 ,2023

Independent Redistricting Commission
250 Broadway ,22nd Floor
New York ,New York 10007

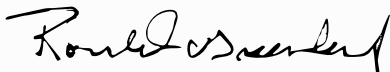
Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to Express our strong support for keeping the County of Oswego whole in your next proposed Assembly plan .The principle of maintaining continuity within communities of interest is a critical aspect of redistricting ,there being no better example than the City of Oswego . Here in Hannibal we were split prior to the formation of the present district and really felt separated from our neighbors to the east whom we had close ties with.

As you are aware ,Oswego County's population is smaller than the average Assembly District . Because of this , it would be in the best interest of the residents of Oswego County to have a single Assemblyperson who is dedicated to addressing the specific issues that are important to them . Keeping the County whole would allow for a more effective and efficient representation of the resident's needs and concerns .

I urge you to consider the importance of keeping Oswego County whole in your next proposed Assembly plan. The residents of Oswego County deserve a representative who is able to fully understand and address their unique concerns and keeping the County whole is the best way to ensure that they have that representation. Thank you for and your time and consideration .

Sincerely ,



Roanld Greenleaf
Mayor Village of Hannibal

The Village of Hannibal is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 1(800) 795-3272(voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD)

Village of Parish

2938 East Main St., PO Box 308, Parish, NY 13131
Phone: (315) 625-4592 ~ Fax: (315) 625-4791
www.villageofparish-ny.us
TDD: 711

February 8th, 2023

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Kathryn Perkins, Mayor of Parish NY.

I am writing to express our strong support for keeping the County of Oswego whole in your next proposed Assembly plan. The principle of maintaining continuity within communities of interest is a critical aspect of redistricting, and there is no better example of this than the City of Oswego.

As you are aware, Oswego County's population is smaller than the average Assembly District. Because of this, it would be in the best interest of the residents of Oswego County to have a single Assemblyperson who is dedicated to addressing the specific issues that are important to them. Keeping the County whole would allow for a more effective and efficient representation of the residents' needs and concerns.

I urge you to consider the importance of keeping Oswego County whole in your next proposed Assembly plan. The residents of Oswego County deserve a representative who is able to fully understand and address their unique concerns and keeping the County whole is the best way to ensure they have that representation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Perkins
Mayor