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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan**

February 16, 2023

Ken Jenkins, Chair
Attention: Submissions
Independent Redistricting Commission
250 Broadway, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

RE: Response to Independent Redistricting Commission Proposed NYS Assembly Maps

Dear Chair Jenkins,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan, held on February 15, 2023, the board **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED** the following resolution by a vote of 39 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions and 0 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS, the New York Independent Redistricting Commission (the “Commission”) is in the process of redrawing Assembly district boundaries to reflect population and demographic changes; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is seeking public input into the redistricting process from different stakeholders which includes Community Boards; and

WHEREAS, Assembly District 73 and Assembly District 76 overlap with the boundaries of Community Board 8 Manhattan; and

WHEREAS, CB8M’s Voting Reform Task Force has reviewed the new boundary lines proposed by the Commission for 73rd and 76th Assembly Districts and has concluded that the proposed 73rd and 76th Assembly Districts boundary lines do not comport with the Commission’s own redistricting criteria; and

WHEREAS, the Commission’s proposal to add a portion of Manhattan and all of Roosevelt Island to a Queens based Assembly District does not conform to the requirements of the State Constitution. Such requirements include:

- Voting rights protections where districts cannot deny or abridge racial minority voting groups
- An equal population standard where districts must contain equal numbers of people (one-person, one-vote);
- Requirements that all districts consist of contiguous territory and be as compact in form as practicable;
- A prohibition on drawing districts that discourage competition or that or disfavor incumbents or pastina candidates; and

- A requirement to consider maintaining the cores of existing districts or pre-existing political subdivisions and to consider “communities of interest”; and

WHEREAS, the Commission proposes that thousands Manhattan Island residents and 12,000 Roosevelt Island residents be moved to 36th Assembly District where these residents will not receive the representation, attention and funding to which they are entitled due to their small percentage of the total 36th Assembly District population; and

WHEREAS, CB8M understands that restoring the Manhattan areas currently drawn into the 36th Assembly District into the 73rd and 76th Assembly districts will likely require the 73rd and 76th Assembly Districts to be larger than average and to exceed the re-districting ideal population, which we are willing to accept in the interest of keeping those areas in Manhattan districts; and

WHEREAS, the eastern portion of the East Side and Roosevelt Island have major differences with 36th Assembly District such that the proposed combination may result in a significant diminution of services to, amongst others, senior citizens and people with disabilities which populate a large share of those areas; and

WHEREAS, the practical difficulties of having a two borough Queens-Manhattan district cannot be ignored; and

WHEREAS, the areas being proposed to be moved to the 36th Assembly District contain numerous parks and green acres, which are critical open spaces for the neighborhood and which would be separated from most of the neighborhood residents who use them; and represented by an assembly member with no long term connection to the residents and their prized parkland and open spaces, and

WHEREAS, there are several ongoing issues affecting the East Side, including congestion pricing and the historical zoning in the neighborhood, and residents and the community would be disserved by having a part of their community of interest combined with other neighborhoods in a different borough that do not share these issues; and

WHEREAS, Roosevelt Island was created to be part of Manhattan and historically has always been considered and treated as part of the Borough of Manhattan and it should remain in 76th Assembly District; and

WHEREAS, the only public elementary and middle school on Roosevelt Island, PS/IS 217, a Manhattan District 2 school, can only cater to 600 out of several thousand local children – with only 15 seats for 3k and approximately 34 seats for 2k, 6th , 7th and 8th graders – and with the rest of the public school children attending District 2 schools in the 76th Assembly District – the proposed map fails to give Roosevelt Island’s children equal representation in the Assembly and separates an important community of interest; and

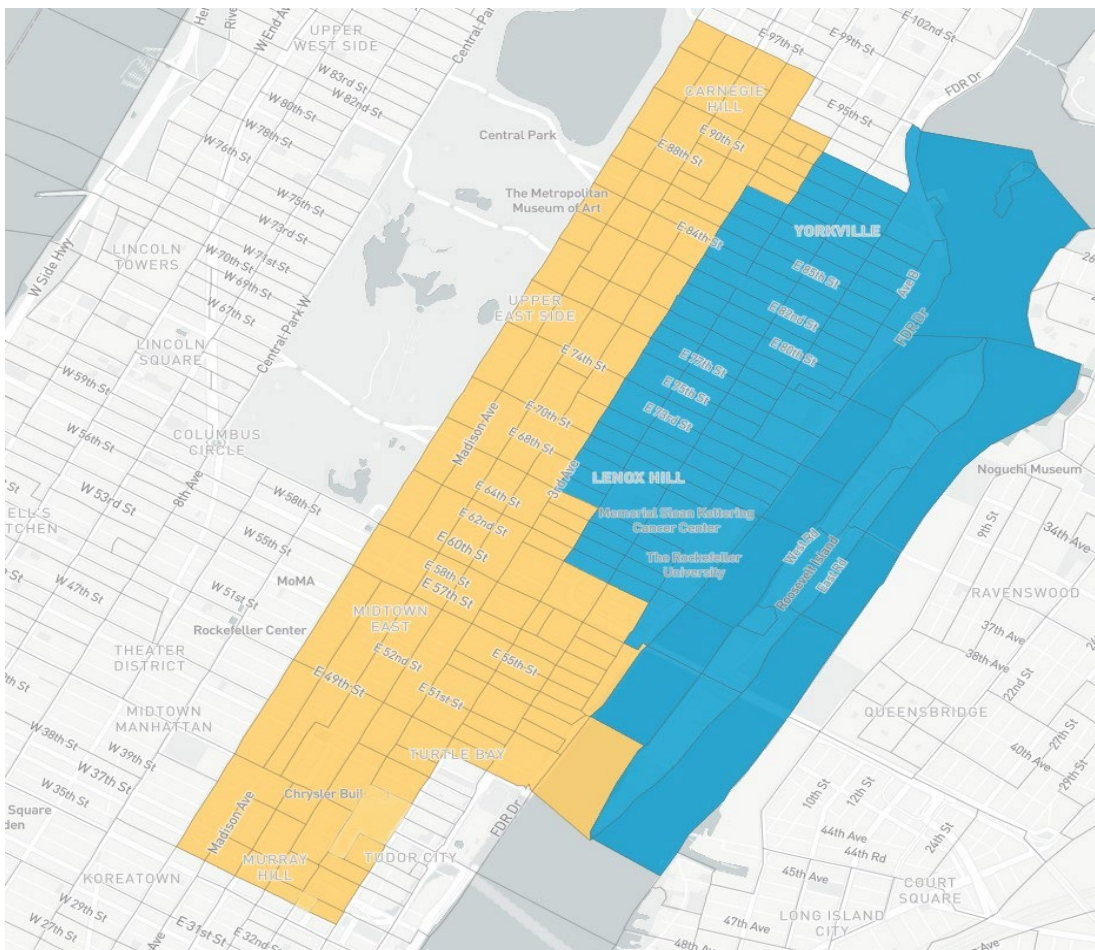
WHEREAS, self-identity is very important. Historically, all residents of the East Side and Roosevelt Island have considered themselves to be Manhattanites. They have bought their residences on Roosevelt Island with the expectation that they would be represented by a Manhattan Assembly Member who would be locally accessible, would give their complaints and concerns priority and provide the necessary municipal services; and

WHEREAS, two-borough districts that have existed in the past have been comprised of neighborhoods that are contiguous, have similar demographics, share similar public transportation,

public education and other services, while the Manhattan and Queens areas of the proposed 36th Assembly District do not have these similarities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 **disapproves** of the Commission’s proposed redistricting map which removes a large area of the easterly side of the East Side and Roosevelt Island to a Queens-based City Assembly District, a similar proposal which was just recently rejected by the New York City Districting Commission Redistricting City Council Districts, and strongly urges that these areas remain in Manhattan-based Assembly Districts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, CB8M proposes the enclosed map of the 73rd and 76th Assembly Districts, which are substantially similar to the 2022 district maps, except that the 73rd Assembly District is proposed to extend further North to take in more of Carnegie Hill to join that area with the larger Upper East Side neighborhood of which it has historically been a part.



Please advise our office of any actions taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Russell Squire

Russell Squire
Chair

Anthony Cohn and Sharon Weiner

Anthony Cohn and Sharon Weiner
Co-Chairs, Voting Reform Task Force

cc: Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York

Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District