

# **Opposition to the State proposal for Redistricting Roosevelt Island**

Date: January 8, 2022

To: Members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Thank you for considering Roosevelt Island's needs when determining the redistricting map for New York State's Assembly. I strongly oppose the current proposal which removes Roosevelt Island from Manhattan's District 76 and places it in Queens District 36.

New York State's redistricting rules require:

- Districts must consist of contiguous territory and shall be as compact in form as possible.
  - a. Our Manhattan Island's contiguous territory is Manhattan, not Queens.
  - b. The proposed change to our district is sprawling, not compact.
- The commission must take into account the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, towns, and communities of interest.
  - a. Roosevelt Island is being severed from long established communities of interest. Our political subdivision is not being respected.
  - b. The City Charter of New York City recognizes Roosevelt Island as a Manhattan community.

The Constitution of New York State specifically provides two State legislators for each district, a Senator and an Assembly Member. Roosevelt Island, a Manhattan community, has a unique form of local governance. We are governed by an unelected, State appointed Public Benefit Corporation, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp (RIOC). All of our local services are administered by RIOC, not by New York City. The Board of Directors for RIOC is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor of NY. Because of this unique relationship with the State of NY, in which our residents do not have a voting voice in their local government, it is imperative that we, a Manhattan community, have the combined efforts of both of our Manhattan based representatives, working together on our behalf, to provide us with responsive and fair dealing by RIOC.

In addition.....

Our tramway is operated by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) to link residents with Manhattan destinations. All maintenance, repairs, and capital improvements must be made by this state agency. It is not part of the MTA system. Our tramway is a vital transportation link

that is used each day by commuters to work and school children. It has no connection to Queens and is of no consequence to a Queens Assembly Member.

Our first responders for emergencies and crimes are NY State Peace Officers employed by the Public Safety Department (PSD), under the unelected management of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. They are not employed by the NY Police Department, (NYPD). Since our local policing is managed by RIOC, and operates outside the control of NYPD, we need the combined efforts of our Manhattan legislators to assure proper law enforcement and intervene on the community's behalf when the need arises.

Since our inception almost 50 years ago, Roosevelt Islanders have established enduring relationships with many Manhattan based communities of interest. Due to our proximity to the United Nations, we have a large immigrant and non-resident population who retain close ties with the United Nations. We have many UN officials, UN staff, and their families living in our community. The living quarters for the staff of Cornell Weill Hospital, in District 76 are located on Roosevelt Island. Also, a significant portion of our population work at other nearby Manhattan hospitals. Many of our residents are actively engaged with religious institutions in Manhattan. Most of our working population commute to Manhattan for employment every workday.

Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

*Joyce Short*

Forty Seven Year Roosevelt Island Resident  
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