

Independent Redistricting Commission  
250 Broadway, 22nd Floor  
New York, NY 10007  
submissions@nyirc.gov

November 7, 2021

Re: Keeping the Village of Tarrytown and Its Communities of Interest Within a Single Congressional District

Dear Commissioners:

My name is Verity Ann Van Tassel Richards. I live in the Village of Tarrytown, Town of Greenburgh, which is currently in the 17th Congressional District. My family has resided in this area since the 1600s. I respectfully ask the Commission to keep Tarrytown and the Town of Greenburgh within a single congressional district. Further, in drawing the Congressional map for this area, I ask the Commission to keep together the following communities of interest: (1) the Westchester Rivertowns and Rockland; (2) Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow; and (3) the villages and towns of Hastings-on-Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Tarrytown, Sleepy Hollow, Briarcliff Manor, Ossining, Croton-on-Hudson, and Peekskill. I believe there are several compelling reasons to do so.

1. **Keep the Westchester Rivertowns with Rockland.** The towns and villages along the banks of the Hudson River are a community of interest, with many connections between them, tracing back hundreds of years.
  - a. Tarrytown serves as a transportation hub connecting Westchester and Rockland Counties with New York City. Historically, Tarrytown and Rockland County were connected by ferry.<sup>1</sup> Now the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge (formerly the Tappan Zee Bridge) connects South Nyack in Rockland County to Tarrytown in Westchester County. Interstate 287, Westchester's major east-west highway, runs across the bridge.<sup>2</sup>
  - b. The Tarrytown Metro North train station is the primary train station for residents of Rockland County. Hudson Link commuter buses bring residents of Rockland County to and from Tarrytown several times every hour, traveling through Tarrytown's downtown.

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Map: "Plan of Beekmantown, Tarrytown, and Irving," F.W. Beers (1868) indicating the ferry route from Tarrytown to Nyack in Rockland County *available at* [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1868\\_Beers\\_Map\\_of\\_Tarrytown\\_\(Sleepy\\_Hollow\)\\_\(New\\_York\\_-\\_Geographicus\\_-\\_Tarrytown-beers-1868.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1868_Beers_Map_of_Tarrytown_(Sleepy_Hollow)_(New_York_-_Geographicus_-_Tarrytown-beers-1868.jpg).

<sup>2</sup> Tessa Melvin, "If You're Thinking of Living In/Tarrytown; Rich History, Picturesque Setting, *New York Times* (August 21, 1994), *available at* <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/08/21/realestate/if-you-re-thinking-of-living-in-tarrytown-rich-history-picturesque-river-setting.html>.

- c. Residents of Tarrytown frequently cross the Bridge by bike or car to dine and shop in the Rockland towns along the western side of the Hudson River. Speaking from years of personal experience, I am much more likely to cross the Bridge to shop and dine in Rockland County than I am to travel east to the Sound/Shore part of Westchester County.
2. **Keep Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow Together.** Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow form a single community of interest dating back over 300 years.
- a. According to Sleepy Hollow historian Henry Steiner, “Many influences from early times, such as family ties, intermarriages, and topography have given the inhabitants of both villages the sense of living in one community.”<sup>3</sup>
  - b. Sleepy Hollow and the majority of Tarrytown share a single public school district. Children residing in one village attend school and spend their days with classmates who may live in the other.<sup>4</sup>
  - c. Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow have shared recreation areas, including Patriot’s Park, which literally straddles the village boarder. The park is home to the Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow farmer’s market (“TaSH”), held weekly on Saturdays from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving. TaSH attendees seeking a cup of coffee to accompany their breakfast likely don’t know they’ve crossed from one village to another.
  - d. The villages have a single Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, and Rotary Club. Several churches have congregations spanning both Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, until as recently as 1996, Sleepy Hollow’s formal municipal designation was North Tarrytown.
3. **Keep the Rivertowns Together.** Hastings-on-Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Tarrytown, Sleepy Hollow, Briarcliff Manor, Ossining, Croton-on-Hudson, and Peekskill form a single community.
- a. These villages have a shared interest in the Hudson River, its watershed, and related flooding issues.

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Steiner, “The Place Names of Historic Sleepy Hollow & Tarrytown,” *Heritage Books*, 2008 (“the Tarrytowns” pp. 145-146.)

<sup>4</sup> C.J. Hughes, “Tarrytown, N.Y.: A ‘Quiet and Idyllic’ Place With Notable Diversity,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 2021, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/29/realestate/tarrytown-ny-a-quiet-and-idyllic-place-with-notable-diversity.html>.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., The Reformed Church of the Tarrytowns website, which states “The Reformed Church has been engaged in the Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown community since 1697,” <https://reformedchurchtarrytowns.org/>.

- b. The villages share Route 9/9A, the main north-south road in the area.
- c. Historically, we have all been considered part of a single community of villages in the lower Hudson Valley. For example, the Hudson Independent newspaper covers Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Irvington, and Dobbs Ferry. The River Journal newspaper covers Irvington, Tarrytown, Sleepy Hollow, Briarcliff, Ossining, Croton, and Peekskill.

For all of these reasons of shared history, geography, and community, I respectfully ask the Commission to keep Tarrytown, the Town of Greenburgh, Sleepy Hollow, Hastings-on-Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Tarrytown, Briarcliff Manor, Ossining, Croton-on-Hudson, Peekskill, and the Rockland County river towns within a single congressional district.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Verity Ann Van Tassel Richards