Council Redistricting Training 2022

Who We Are:

Citizens Union Foundation is committed to reforming New York City and State government by fostering accountability, accessibility, transparency, honesty and the highest ethical standards. Always nonpartisan, since 1897, we have devoted ourselves to holding our government accountable and the enfranchisement of all New Yorkers.

We have been monitoring the city and state redistricting process for decades, advocating to make it more open, fair, and independent.

Agenda

1) What is redistricting and what criteria is used to draw the maps?
2) Why is redistricting important?
3) How does the process work?
4) Testifying Logistics
5) Analyzing Maps
6) How to give an effective testimony

What is redistricting?

Redistricting is the process of drawing new district boundaries.

The process is mandated by the City Charter to happen every 10 years (after the census).

The new district boundaries should take into account population and demographic changes.

These new districts should ensure all voices are represented.
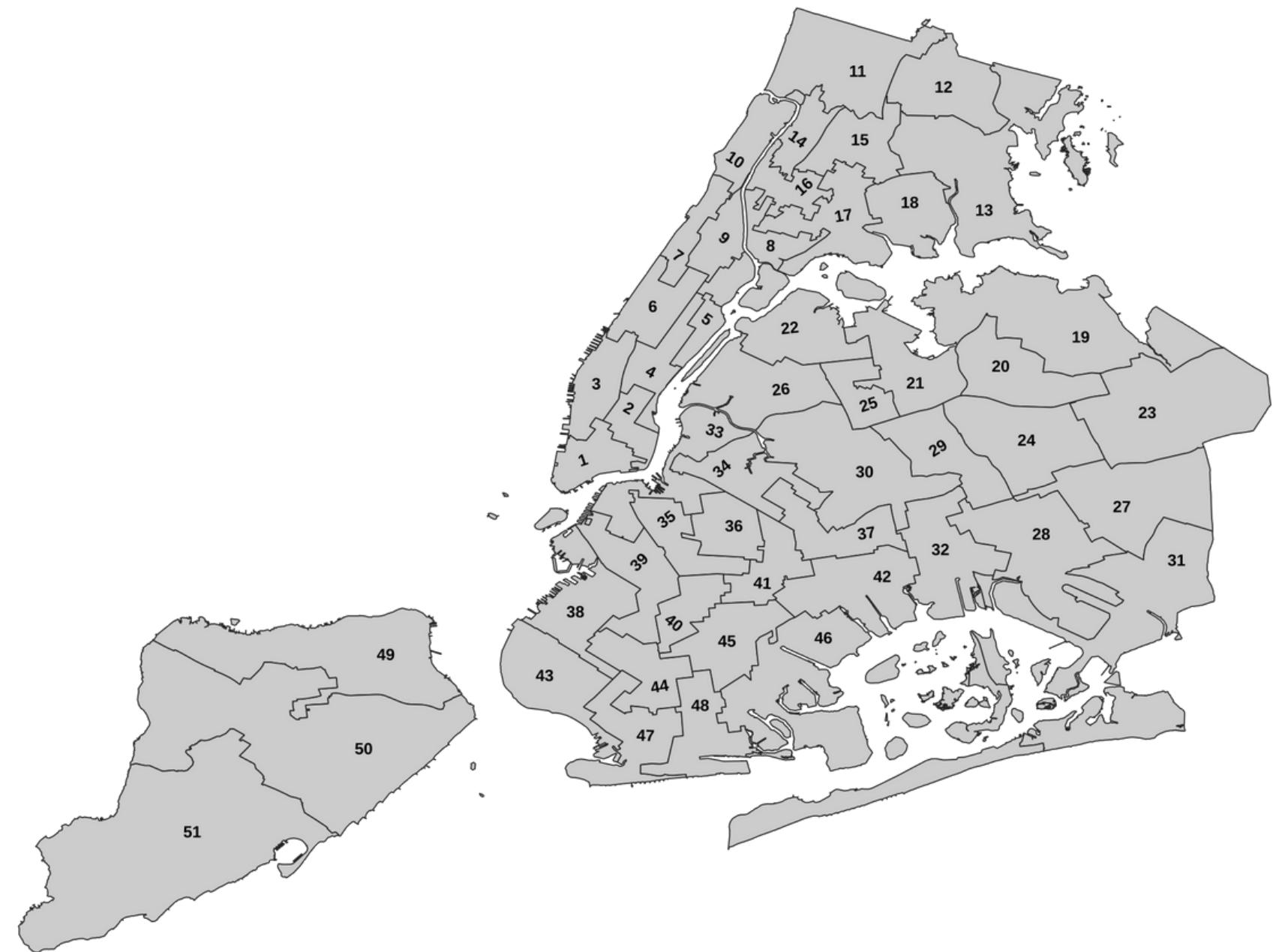
New maps must follow:

1) One person one vote

2) Protect minority votes

3) Contiguous districts

4) Not have more than one crossover district per set of two boroughs

One Person One Vote

Basics: Individuals should have equal representation, therefore districts should be roughly equal in size

Ideal Population = Total population/Number of districts
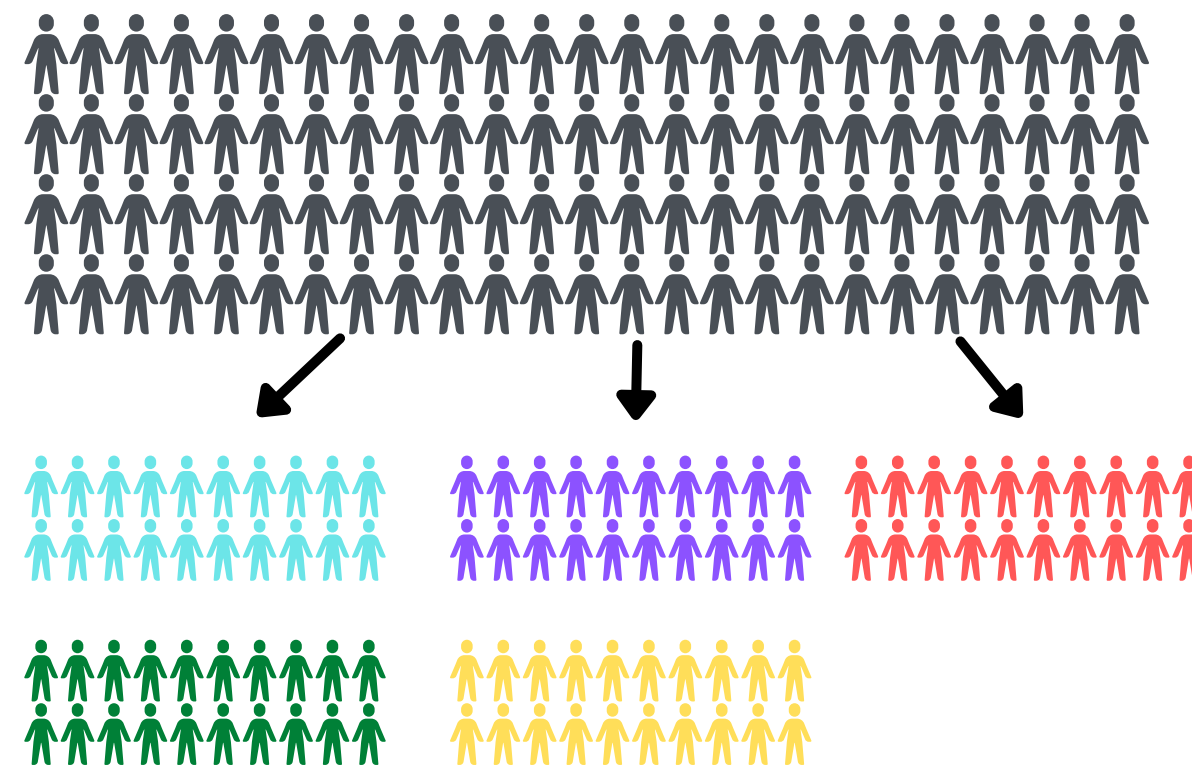
One person one vote cont'd

- New York City's population after the 2020 census is 8,804,190. NYC has 51 council districts.
- This means the ideal district population is 172,881 people.*
- A 5 percent deviation is permitted or a difference of 8,644 people
- The largest district (2.5 percent above ideal population) can have **177,203 constituents**
- The smallest district (2.5 percent below ideal population) can have: **168,559 constituents**

*Numbers may end up varying slightly

Example - Council District 33
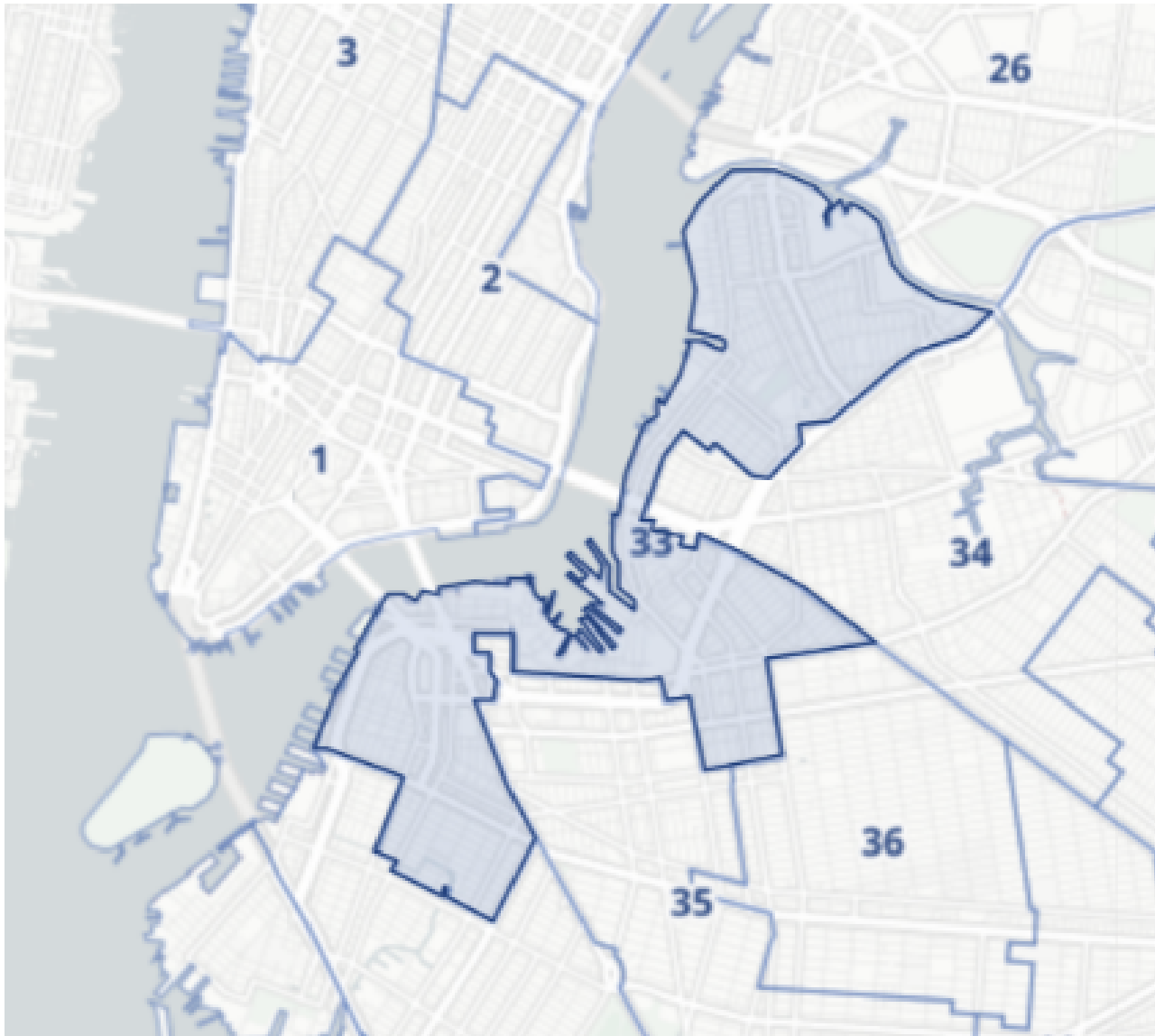
Neighborhoods: Boerum Hill, Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn Navy Yard, Downtown Brooklyn, Dumbo, Fulton Ferry, Greenpoint, Vinegar Hill, Williamsburg

	Population	Population Deviation Number
2010	161,372	662 (.41%)
2020	208,066	35,185 (20.4%)

Protect Minority Voters

The 1965 Federal Voting Rights Act forbids the new district maps to dilute the voting power of racial and language minority groups. The City Charter also includes a similar provision that ensures "fair and effective representation" for minority groups.

Example
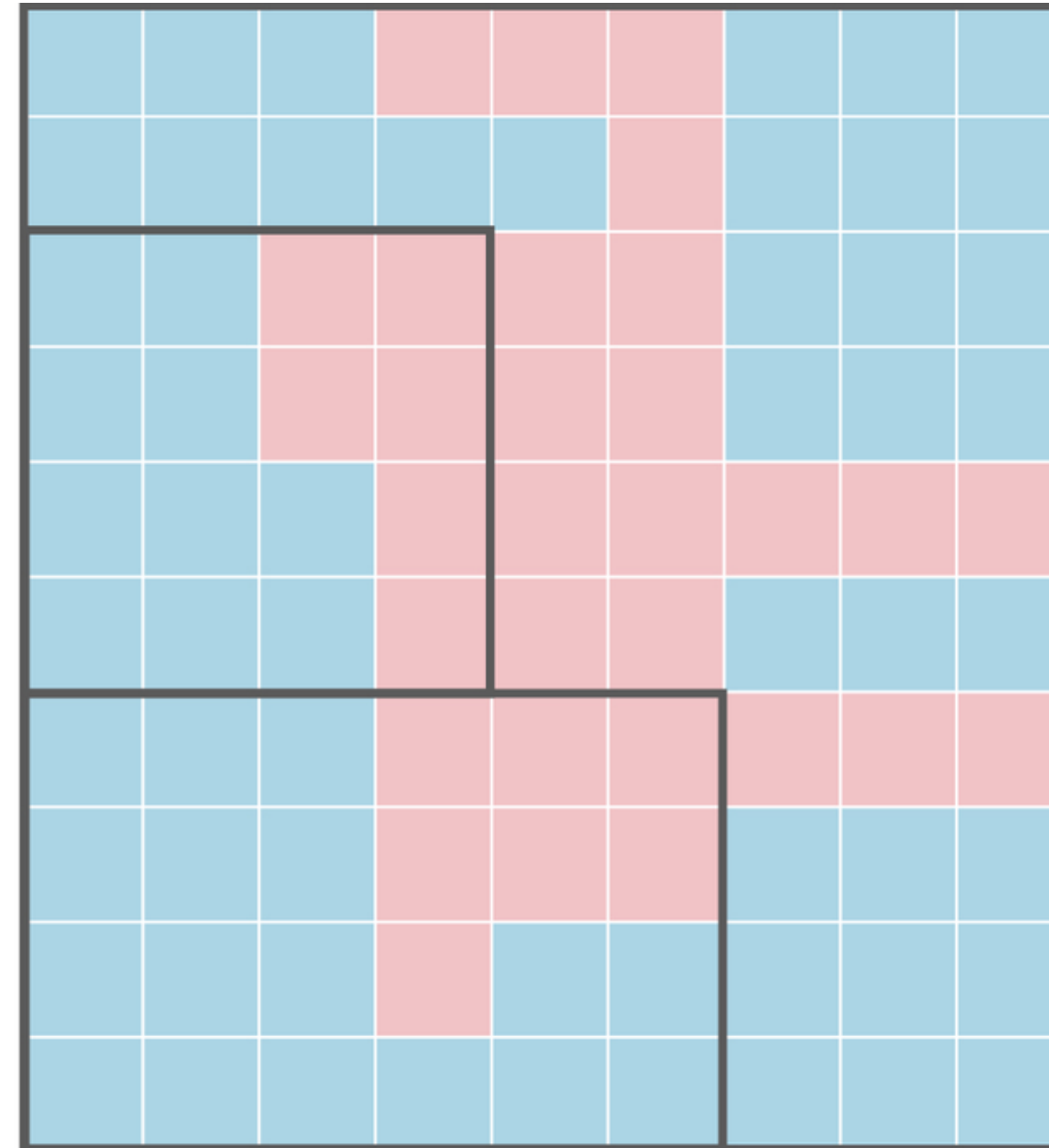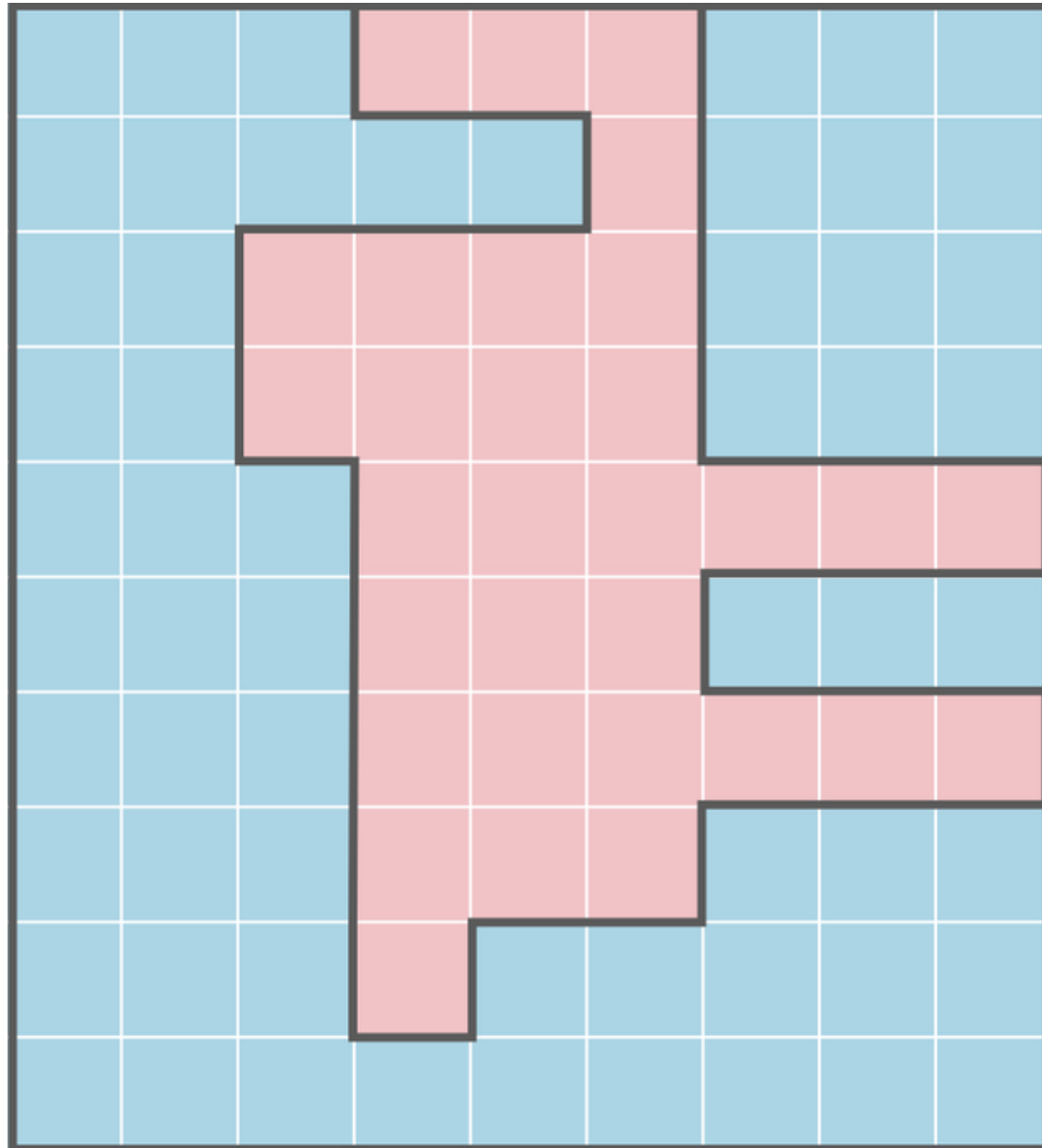
Voting Rights Act - Current Context

- The 1965 Voting Rights Act set up "preclearance" which meant that jurisdictions with a history of discrimination were prohibited from implementing any change affecting voting without receiving preapproval from the DOJ.
- In the 2013 Shelby decision, the supreme court scrapped the federal "preclearance" requirement from the Voting Rights Act.

SUBMISSION UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT
(42 U.S.C. § 1973c)

**CITY OF NEW YORK
2012-2013
DISTRICTING COMMISSION**

Submission for Preclearance
of the
Final Districting Plan
for the
Council of the City of New York

Plan Adopted by the Commission: February 6, 2013
Plan Filed with the City Clerk: March 4, 2013

Dated: March 22, 2013

Contigious Districts

Each council district must be contiguous.
If parts of a district are separated by a body of water there must be a bridge, a tunnel, a tramway or regular ferry service connecting the areas
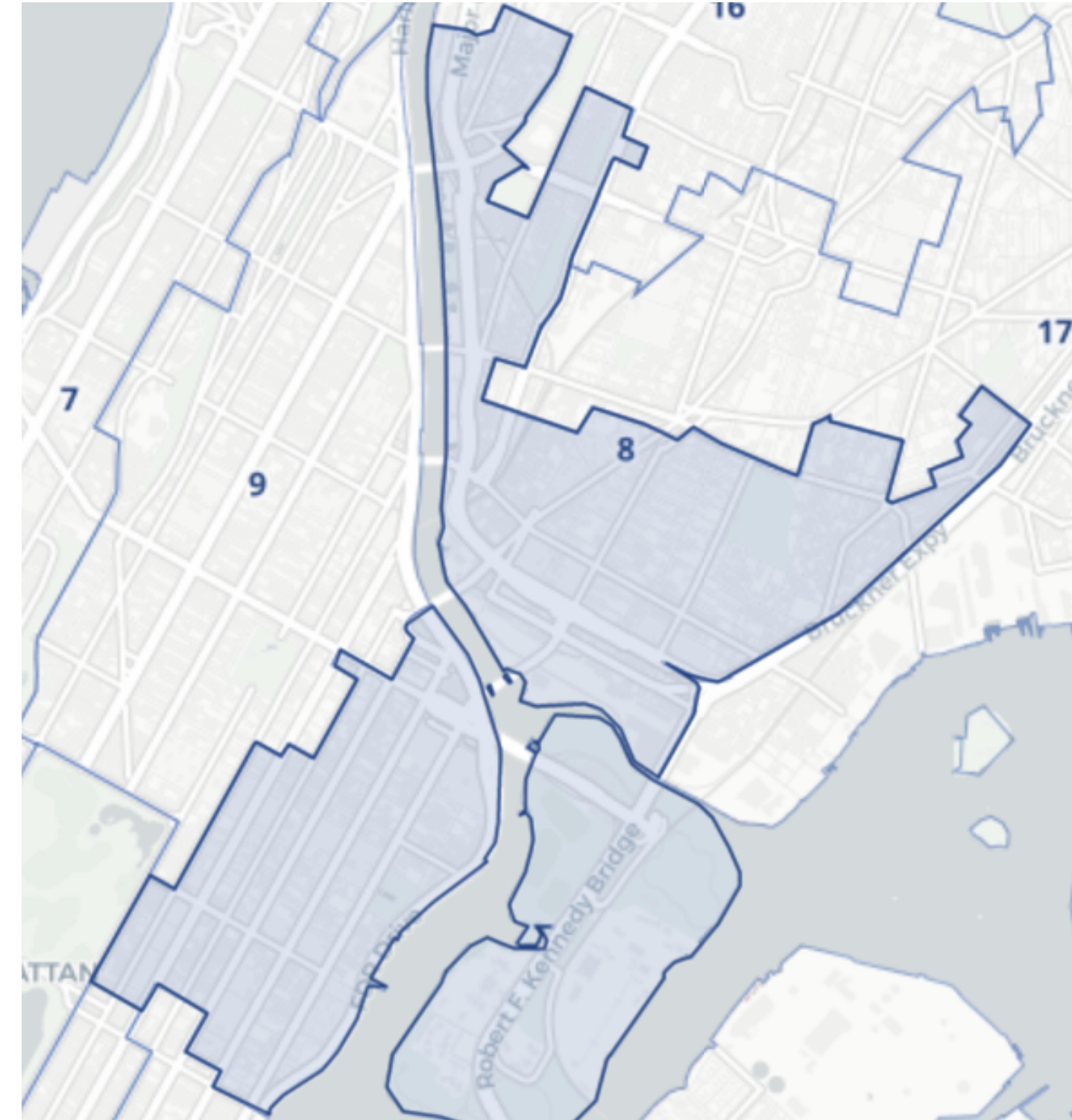
Cross Over Districts

The Charter states that a district shall not cross borough or county boundaries, "to the greatest extent possible". If there is need to create a district that crosses two boroughs, as has been the case in previous redistricting cycles, then it may only occur once per set of boroughs.
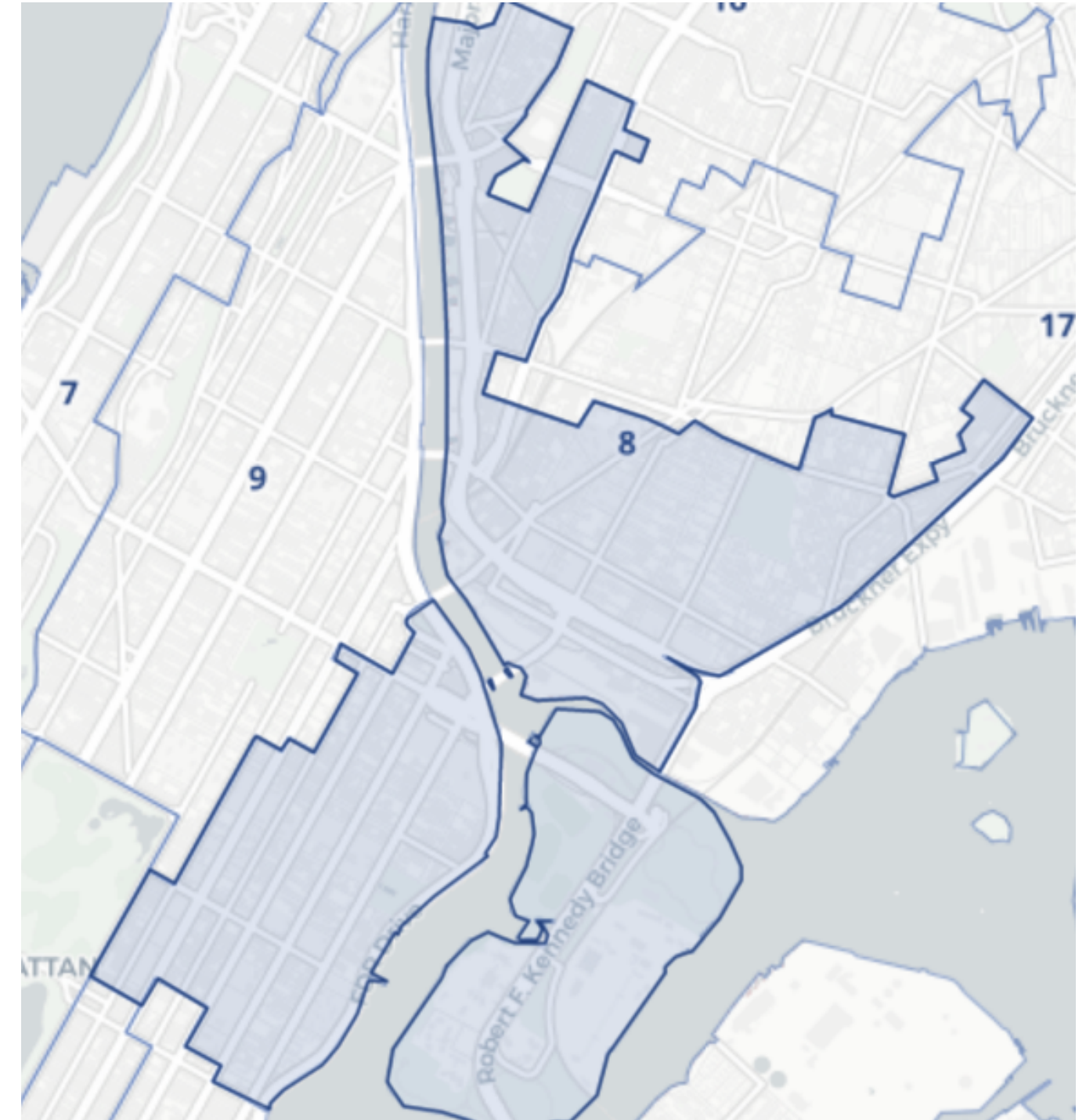
As much as possible, maps should:

1) Keep neighborhoods and communities of interest intact.
2) Keep districts compact.
3) Prevent partisan gerrymandering.
4) Avoid oddly shaped districts.

Community of interest

Definition: A community of interest is a neighborhood, community, or group of people who have common policy concerns and would benefit from being maintained in a single district. Another way of understanding a community of interest is that it is simply a way for a community to tell its own story about what neighbors share in common, and what makes it unique when compared to surrounding communities. They are defined by the local community members.

Community of interest - examples

- Ethnic, racial, and economic groups*;
- Places that share religious affiliations;
- Areas within a single school district;
- Areas with shared public transportation;
- Communities that share similar professions
- It is up to *you* to define what your community of interest is

*Race alone cannot be a community of interest.

Identifying your community of interest

Ask yourself these questions:

- Where do I live?
- Where do my kids go to school?
- Where do I shop for groceries?
- Where do I work? Do others around me work in a similar profession?
- Where is the closest hospital to me?
- Where will I go to socialize?
- Where do I go to worship?
- Do I take public transit?
- Which station is closest to me?
- Can I walk to essential stores?
- What public services do I rely on?
- Am I or my community affected by a certain environmental concern (eg bus transfer stations, waste transfer stations etc.)
- Do I share a certain economic concern that others in my community feel as well?
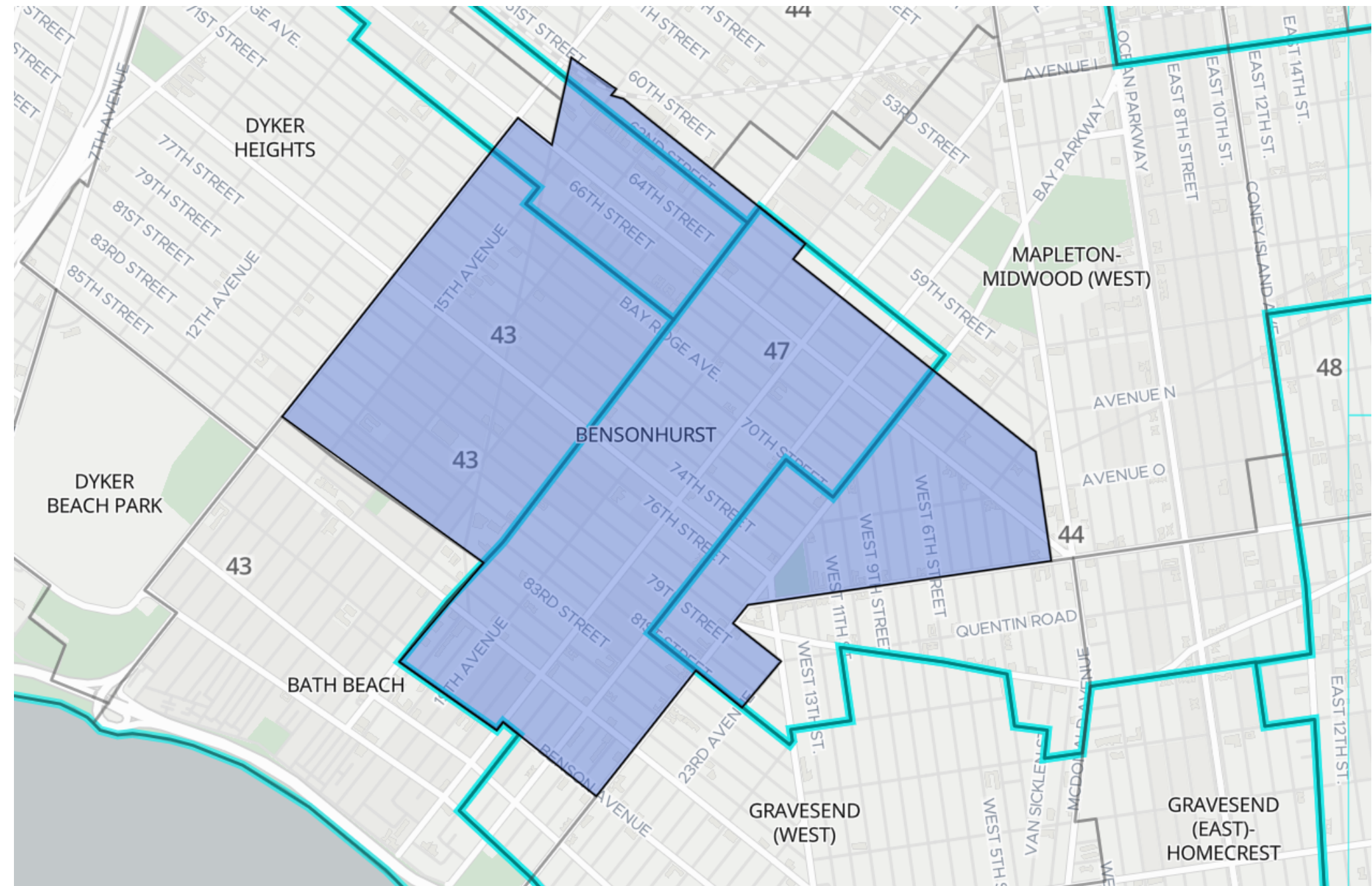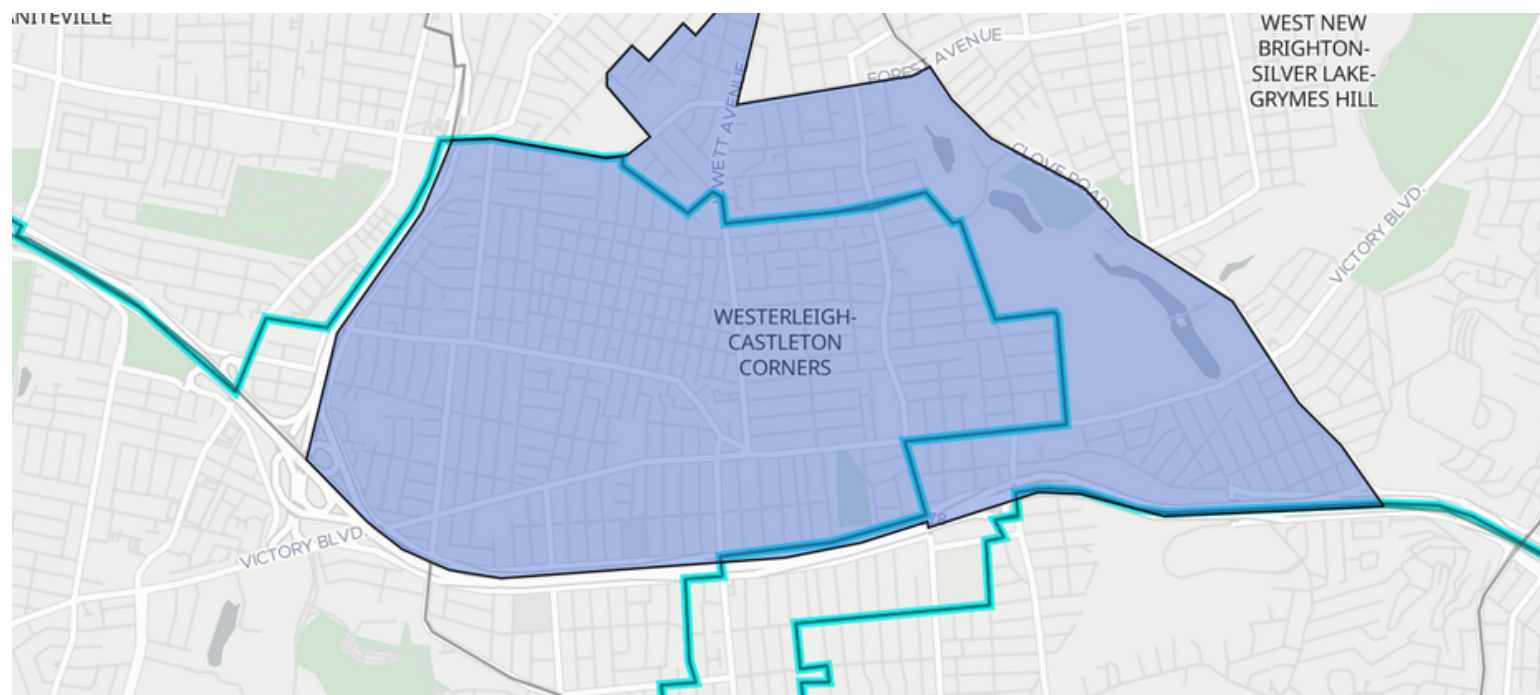
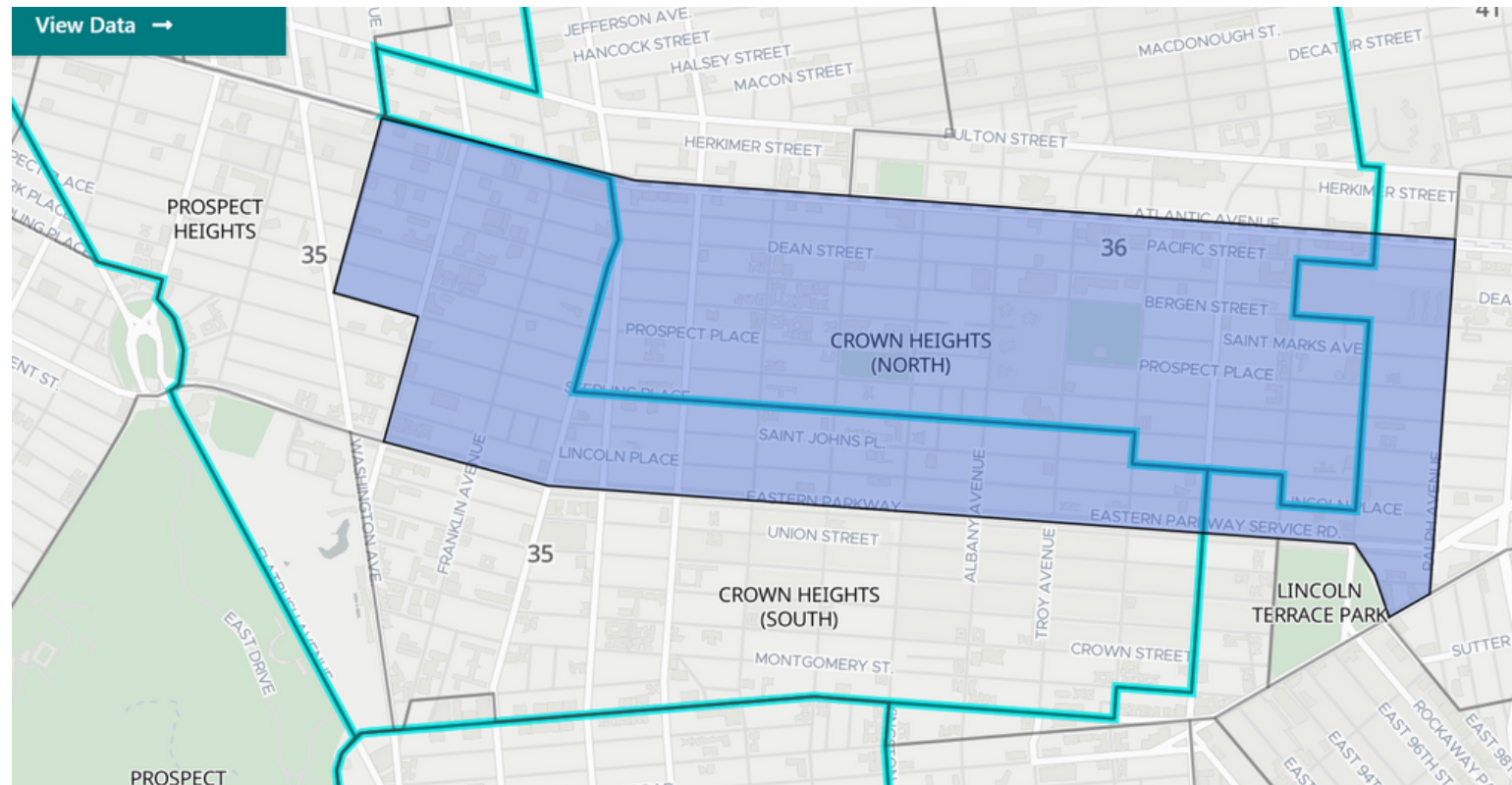# Community of interest example
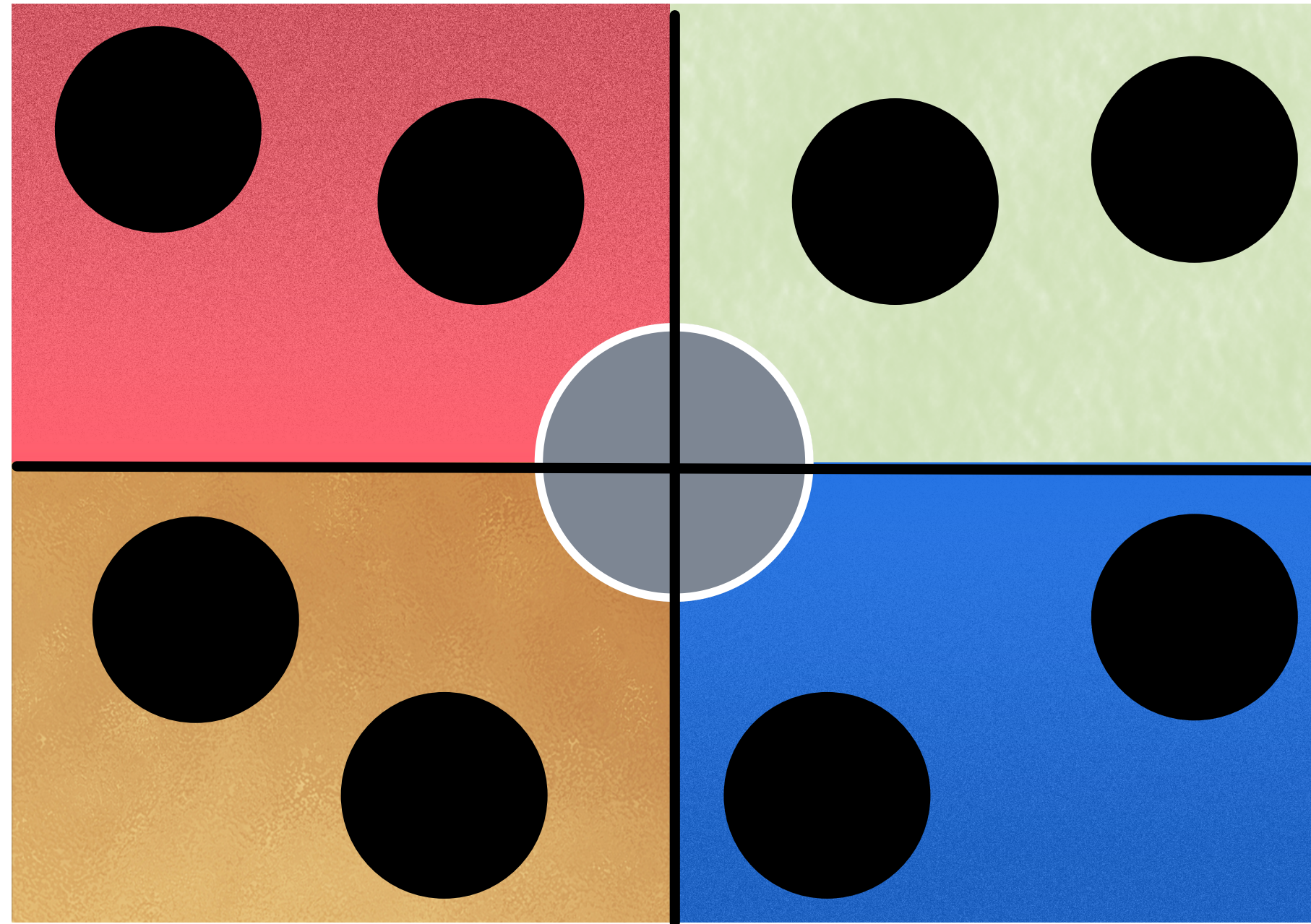
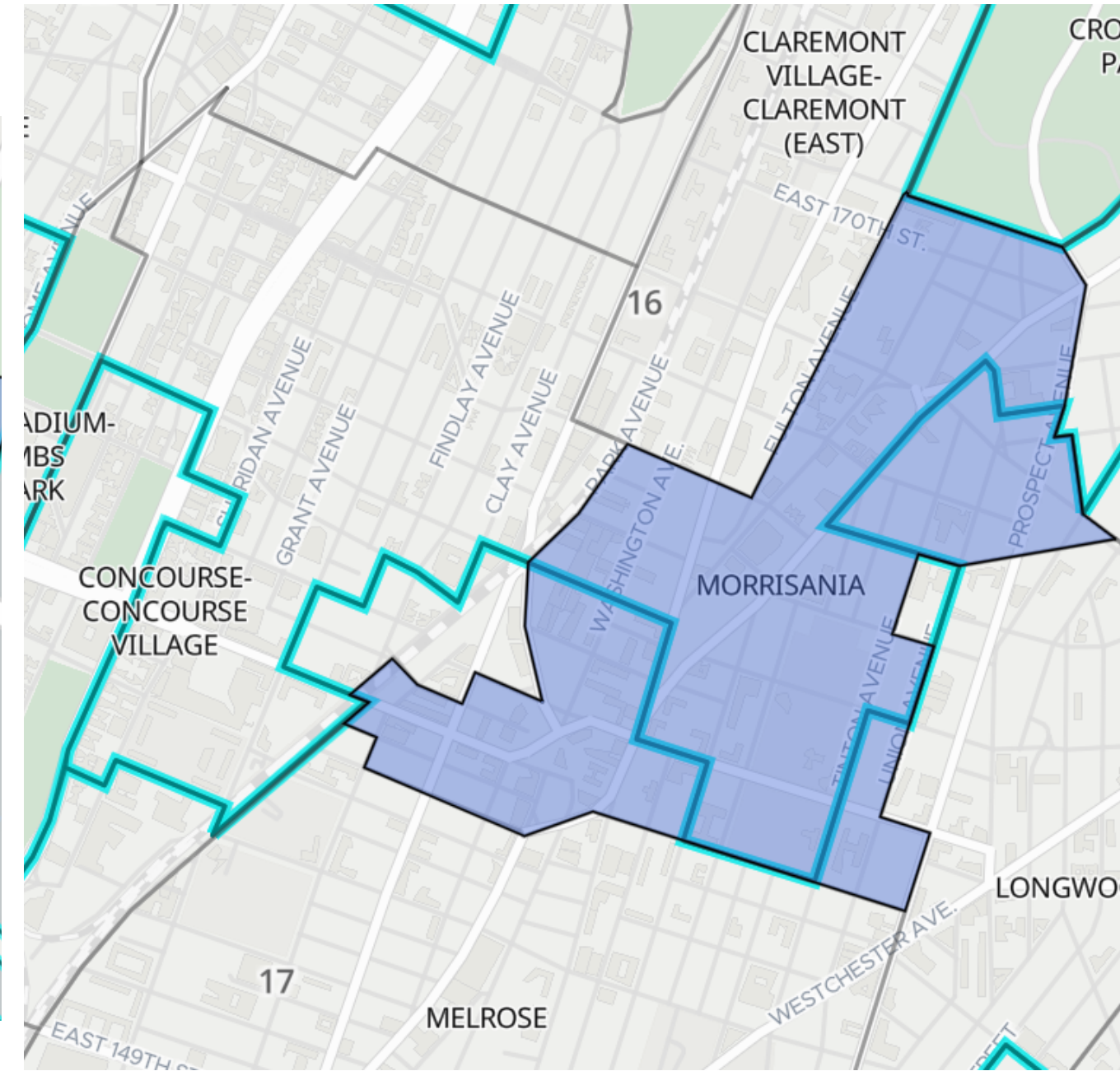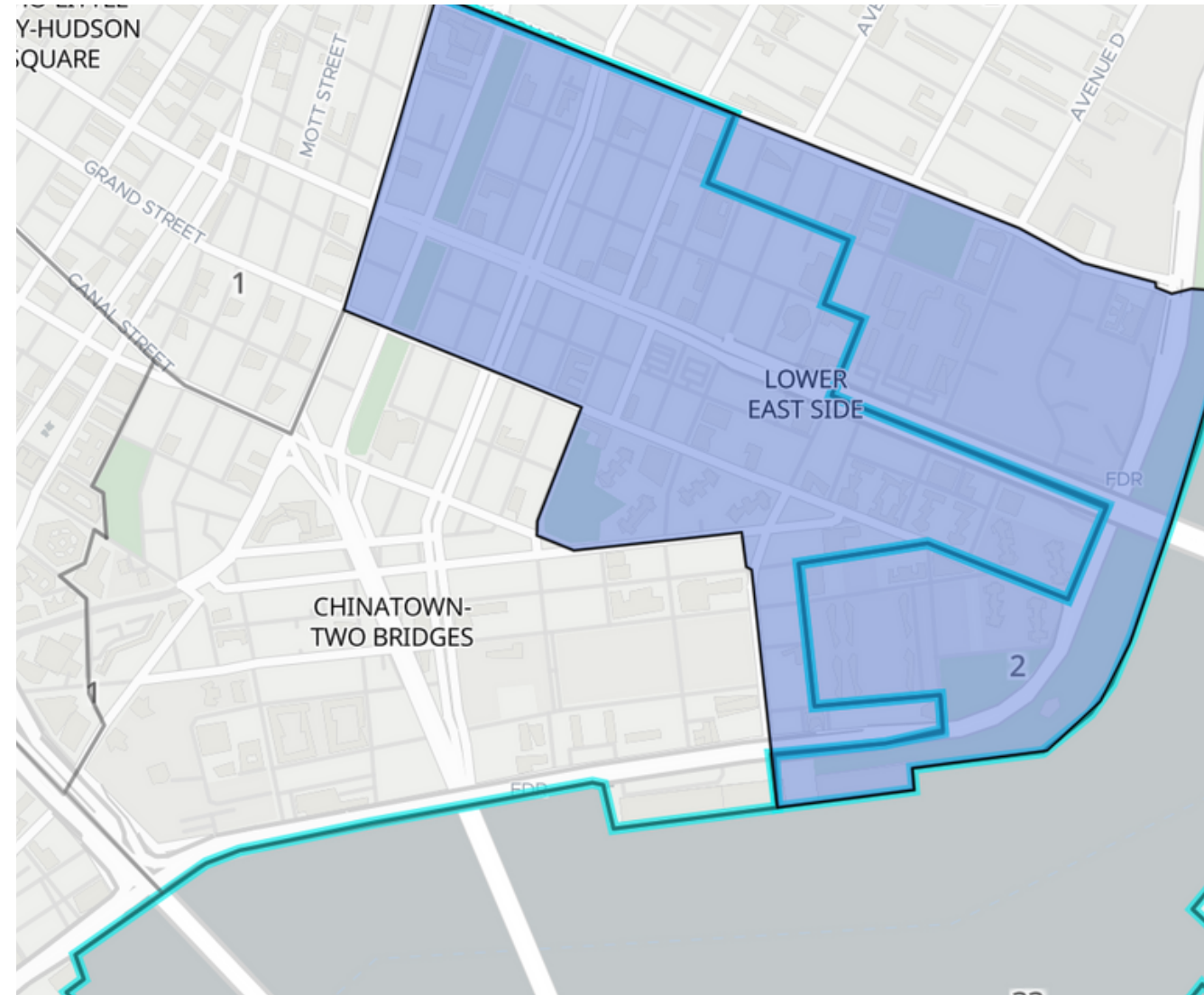# Community of interest example
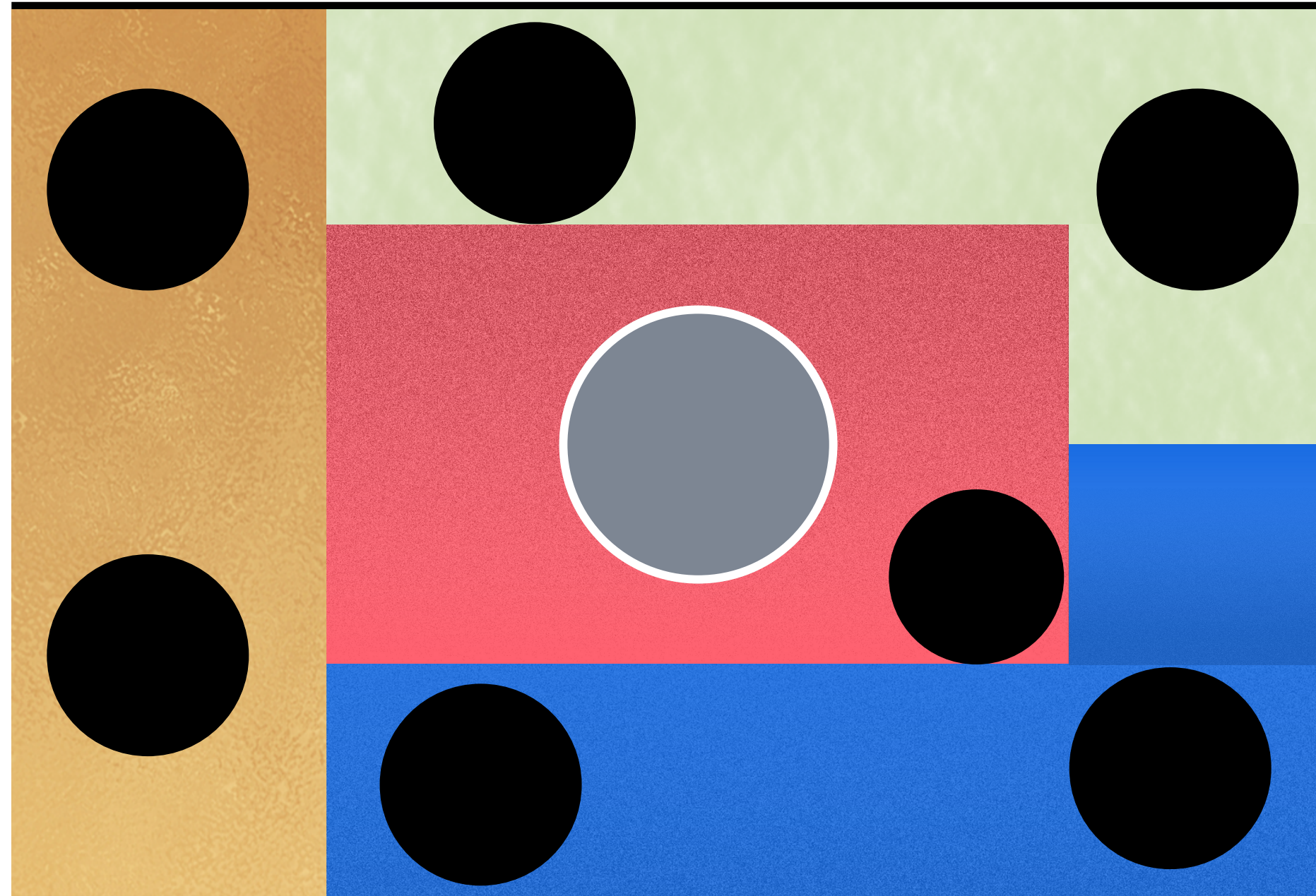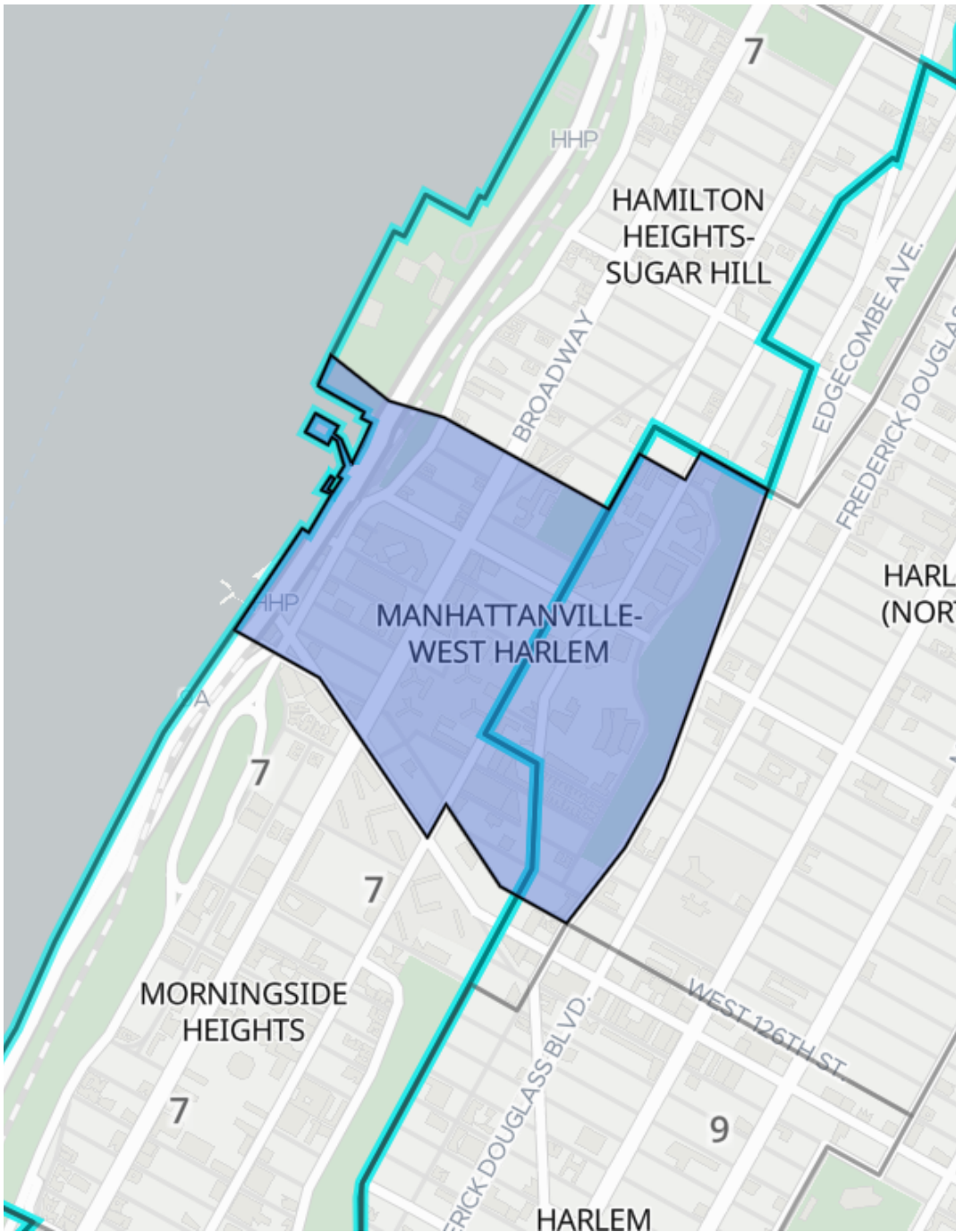
Keeping Neighborhoods Intact
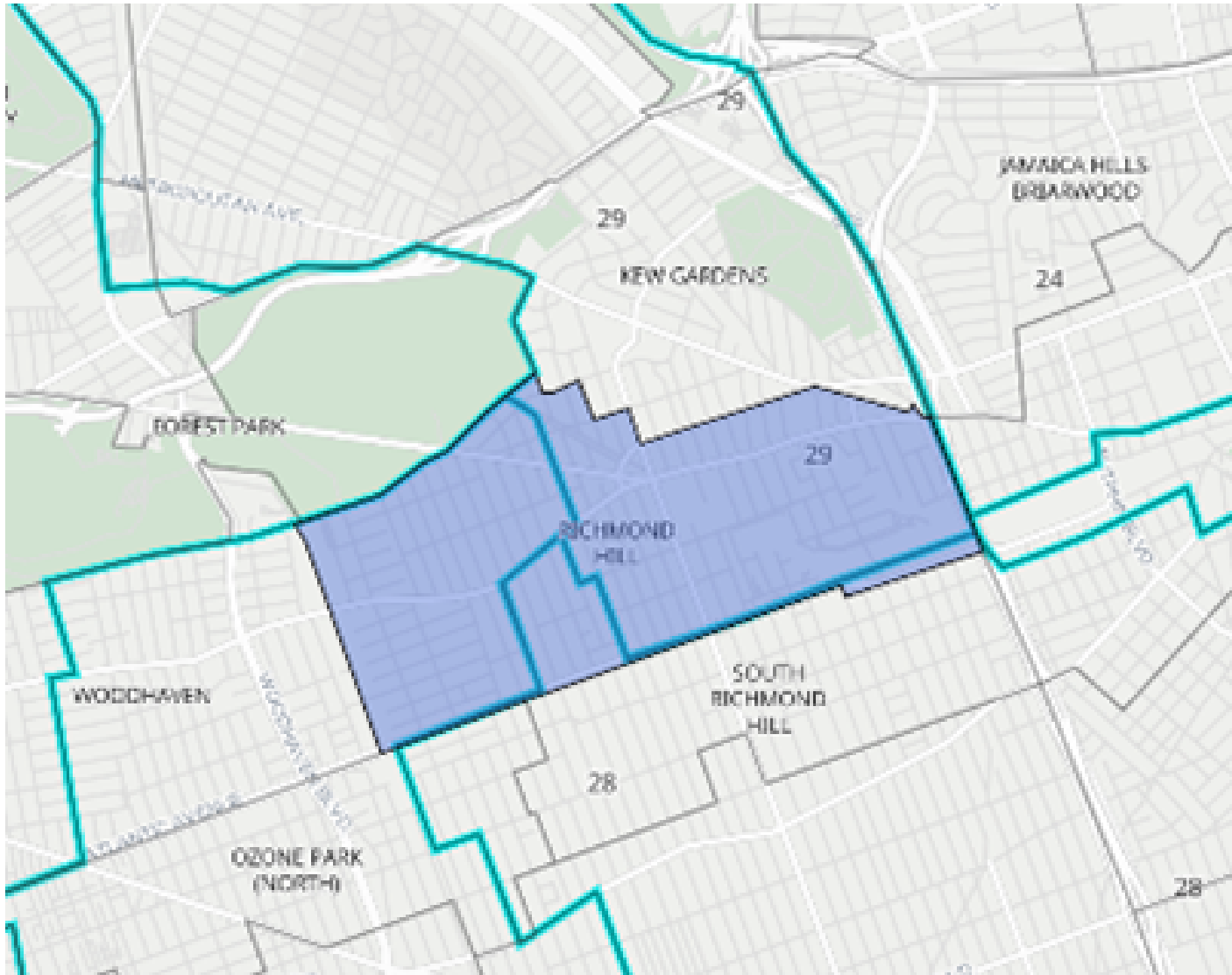
Richmond Hill is divided between three council districts, each branching out to a different part of Queens. This issue is heightened by the rapid growth of the South Asian community in the area.

Keeping Neighborhoods Intact - Examples

Keeping neighborhoods intact - examples

Compactness

No district is drawn to be more than twice as long as it is wide.

Prevent Partisan Gerrymandering

Districts cannot be drawn in order to diminish the effective representation of voters enrolled in the same political party.

Rather than partisan gerrymandering in this mostly Democratic city, New York City's redistricting troubles stem from attempts to draw lines to favor or oppose sitting legislators or presumed candidates for office.

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NEW YORK CITY Politics

Districting Commission Agrees to Withdraw Vito Lopez-Friendly Lines

By Jill Colvin | November 30, 2012 6:27pm
@colvinj

NEW YORK CITY — The city's Districting Commission has agreed to withdraw the City Council district maps it submitted earlier this month, at the request of City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and following outrage over a last-minute change that would have benefited disgraced Assemblyman Vito Lopez.
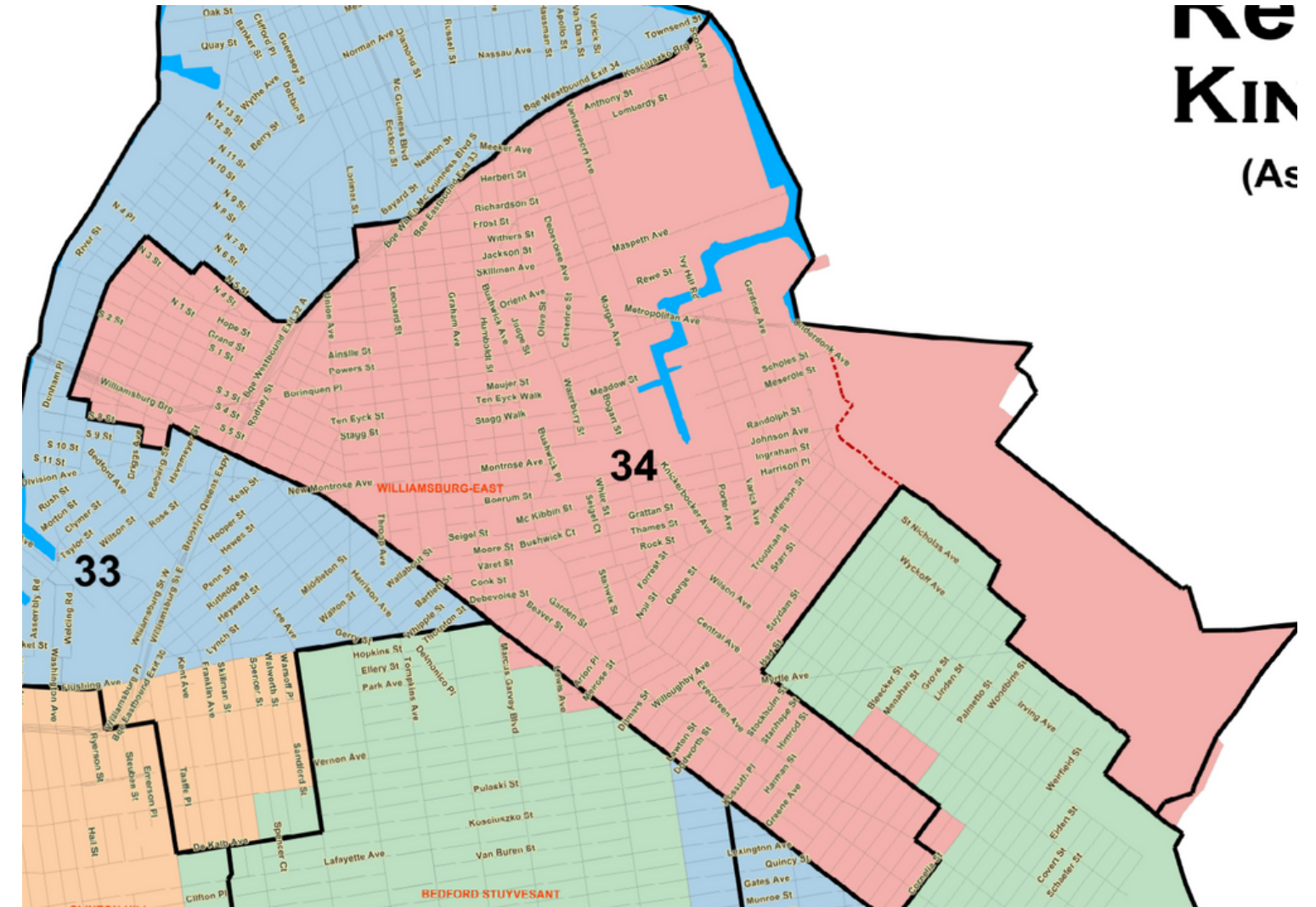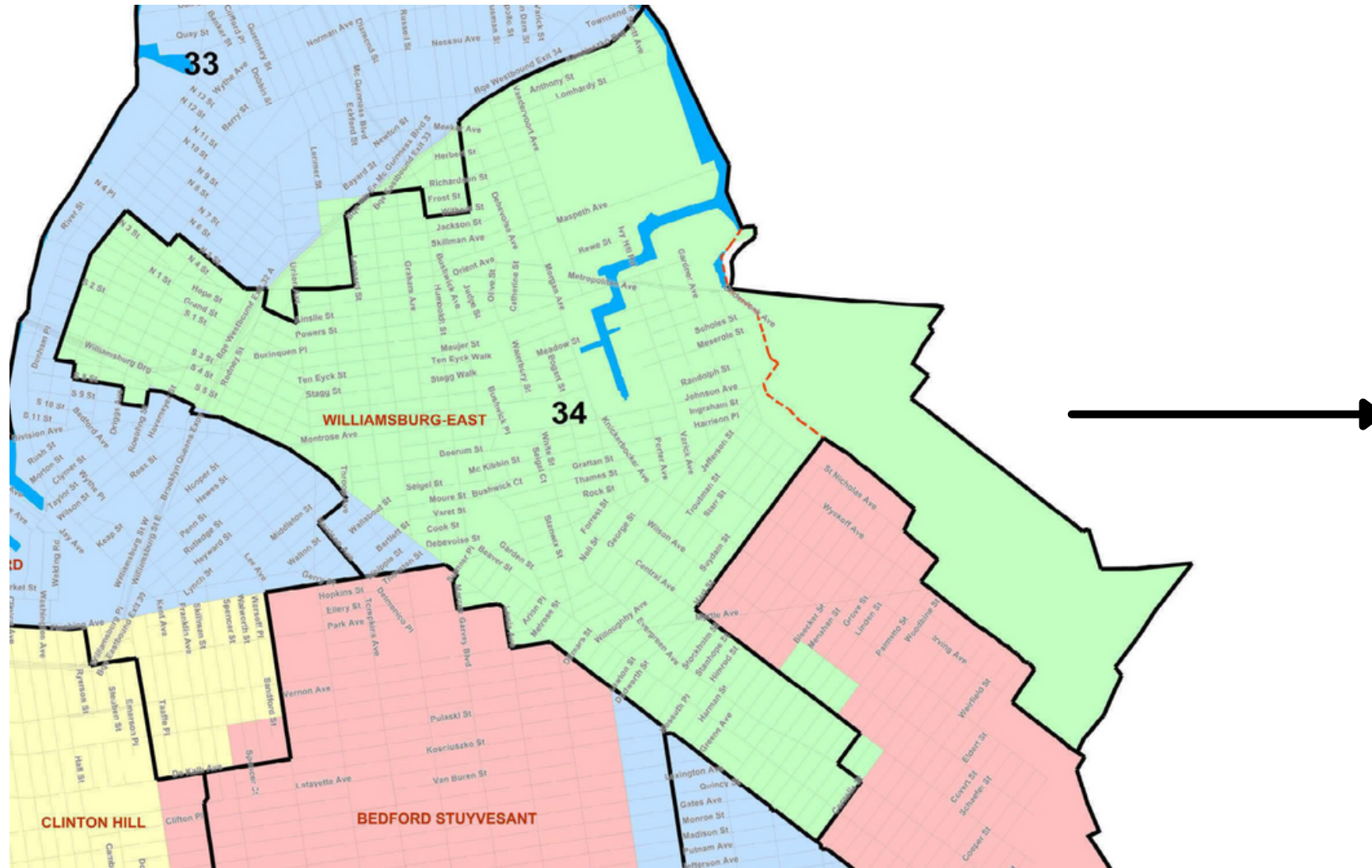
Recommended

PARK SLOPE ▸
Here's How Much it Costs to Start a Tiny Food Stand Business

CENTRAL HARLEM ▸
Too Hot or Too Cold: How to Survive Winter in Your Apartment

INWOOD ▸
5 Takeaways From the

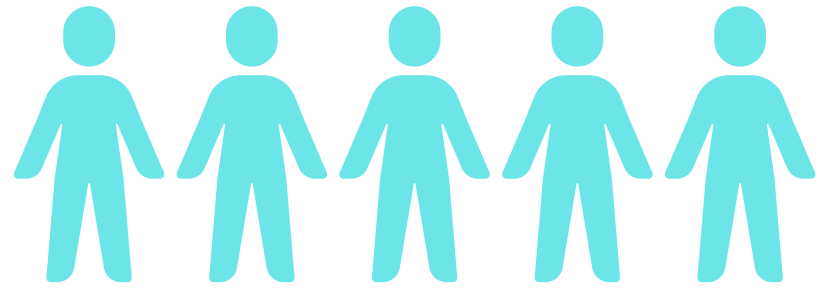# NYC "Vitomandering"

What does my Council Member do?

Council members have broad powers over:
- Land use
- Discretionary funds
- Legislation that governs the city
- Budgetary oversight
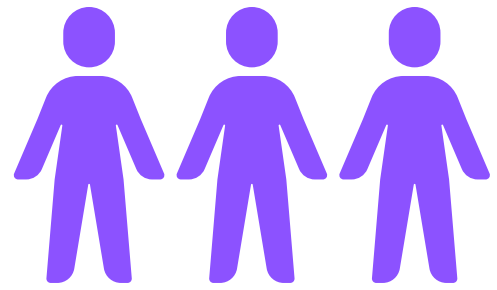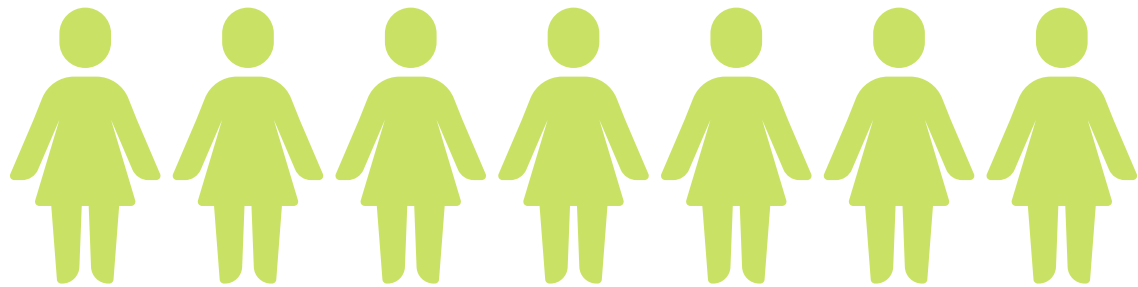- Constituent services at most local level

The Process

The Districting Commission

The majority conference in the City Council appoints five members.

The minority conference in the City Council appoints three members.
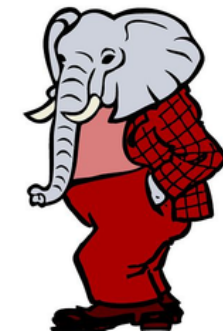
The mayor appoints seven members.

Once appointed, the 15 commissioners will elect their own chair, hire an Executive Director and start recruiting staff.

Who is on the commission?

The Commission must be representative of the city
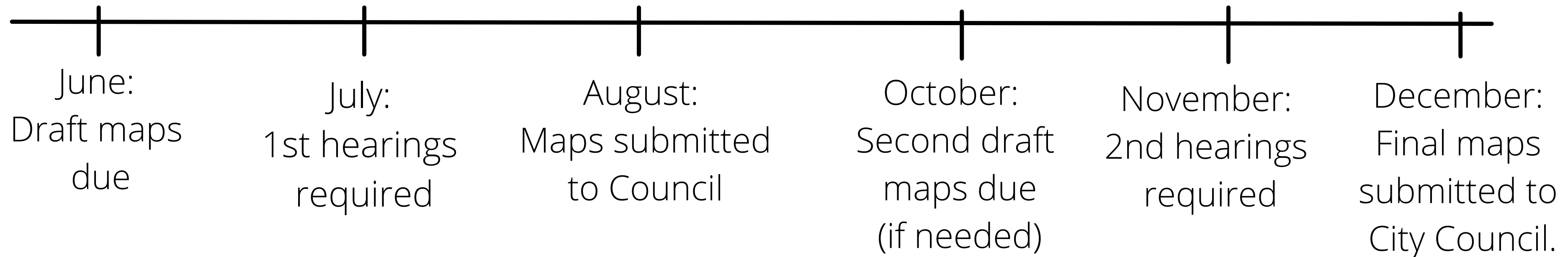
The Commission cannot be controlled by one party

The Commission must have at least one member of each borough

Commissioners cannot be government or political party officials

2022 Timeline

June:
Draft maps
due

July:
1st hearings
required

August:
Maps submitted
to Council

October:
Second draft
maps due
(if needed)

November:
2nd hearings
required

December:
Final maps
submitted to
City Council.

Testifying Logistics

How to sign up to testify

https://www1.nyc.gov/site/districting/index.page

Hearing dates and locations

Analyzing Maps

Finding your current district lines

Go to

https://council.nyc.gov/districts/

↓

Type your address into the search bar

More details on your district

Go to

https://council.nyc.gov/districts/

↓

Type your address into the search bar

↓

Click on your council member for more info

Citizens Union Foundation, 2022 Council Redistricting Training

Demographic data on your district

Go to https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/planning-level/nyc-population/2020-census.page

↓

Click "city council district profiles"

Decennial Census Data Profile, 2010 to 2020
City Council District 1*

	2010		2020		Change, 2010-2020		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percentage Point
POPULATION							
Total population	168,247	100.0	185,331	100.0	17,084	10.2	0.0
Population in households	159,575	94.8	175,253	94.6	15,678	9.8	-0.2
Population in group quarters	8,672	5.2	10,078	5.4	1,406	16.2	0.2
Institutionalized population	2,111	1.3	1,799	1.0	-312	-14.8	-0.3
Average household size	2.10		2.03		-0.07		
Population per acre	90.6		102.1		11.5		
AGE							
Total population	168,247	100.00	185,331	100.00	17,084	10.2	0.0
Total persons under 18 years	22,488	13.4	25,620	13.8	3,132	13.9	0.4
MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE RACE / HISPANIC ORIGIN							
Total population	168,247	100.0	185,331	100.0	17,084	10.2	0.0
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	20,048	11.9	23,027	12.4	2,979	14.9	0.5
White non-Hispanic	76,760	45.6	87,273	47.1	10,513	13.7	1.5
Black non-Hispanic	6,677	4.0	8,441	4.6	1,764	26.4	0.6
Asian non-Hispanic	60,414	35.9	57,294	30.9	-3,120	-5.2	-5.0
Some other race, non-Hispanic	685	0.4	1,616	0.9	931	135.9	0.5
Non-Hispanic of two or more races	3,663	2.2	7,680	4.1	4,017	109.7	1.9
HOUSING OCCUPANCY							
Total houing units	84,285	100.0	97,415	100.0	13,130	15.6	0.0
Occupied housing units	76,166	90.4	86,317	88.6	10,151	13.3	-1.8
Vacant housing units	8,119	9.6	11,098	11.4	2,979	36.7	1.8

*2013 City Council District boundaries
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary Files
Population Division, New York City Department of City Planning

Statement on Data Accuracy

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau is legally bound to protect the privacy of individuals participating in the decennial census. To adhere to the law and to avoid the disclosure of information about individual respondents, the Census Bureau has historically applied a host of techniques, such as top- and bottom-coding, imputation, table- and cell-suppression, and data swapping. The Census Bureau is employing a new technique with the 2020 Census, referred to as the Disclosure Avoidance System (DAS), based on differential privacy. With this approach, the Census Bureau "infuses noise" systematically across census data and

How to find the draft maps

What to look for

- Neighborhoods cut in half (or more)
- Excessively long districts
- Oddly shaped districts
- Where your representative's office is in relation to you?
- Where is your neighborhood in the district?
- Is your community of interest in the district?
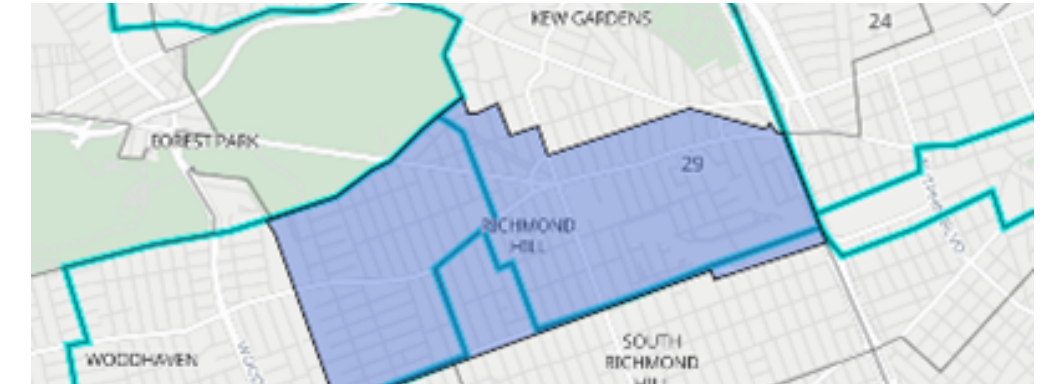
Creating your own map
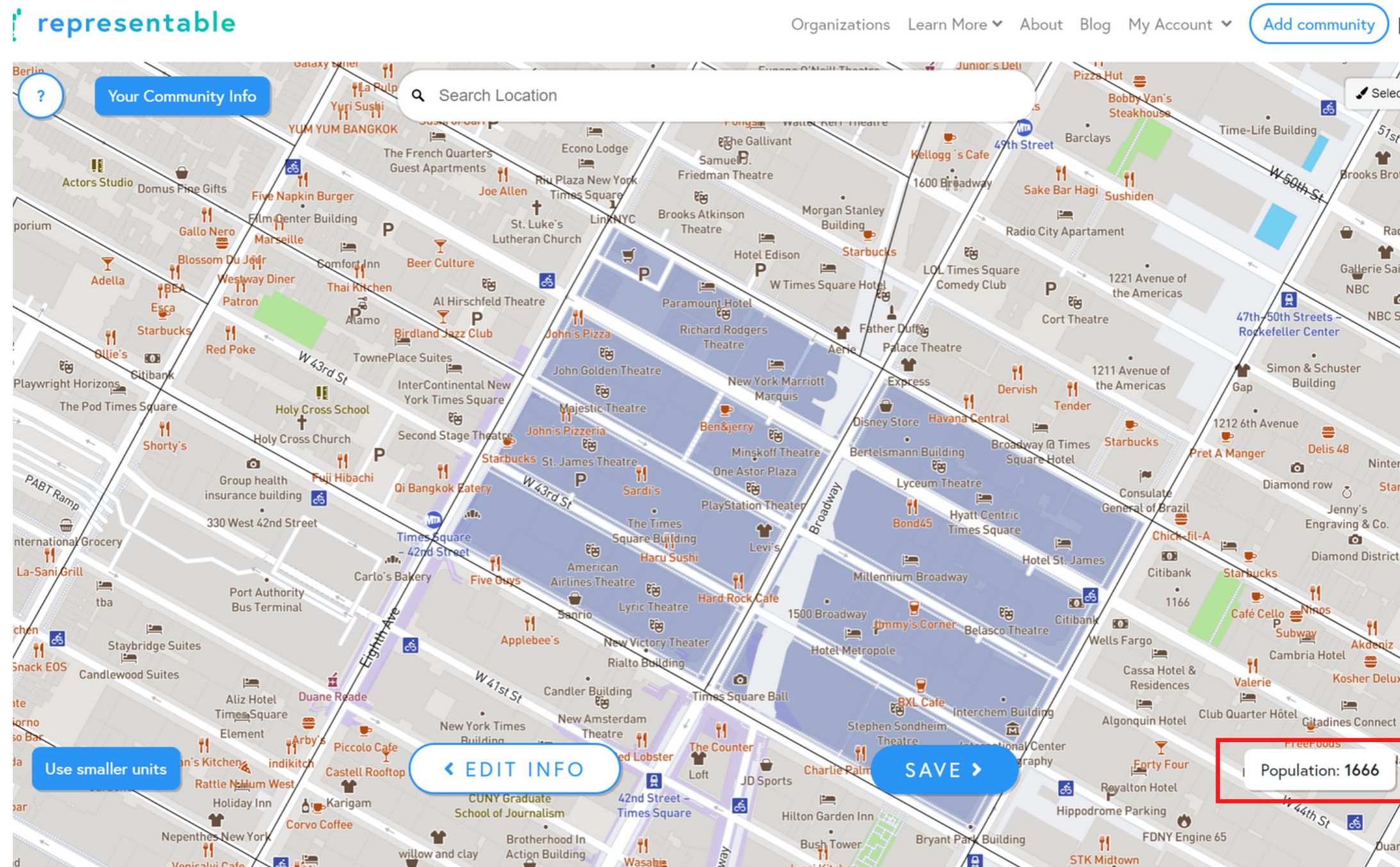
www.representable.org

*Ideal population per district is 172,881 people.

Creating your own map cont'd

Population: 172678

SAVE ›

Creating a map cont'd

Download this map

Map downloads include the community information below.

GeoJSON **PDF** **CSV**

Or copy the link to this page to share.

Submit to an organization.

Many organizations in your state are collecting community maps. Submit yours to one of their collection drives.

League of Women Voters of the City of New York ⇕

Submit
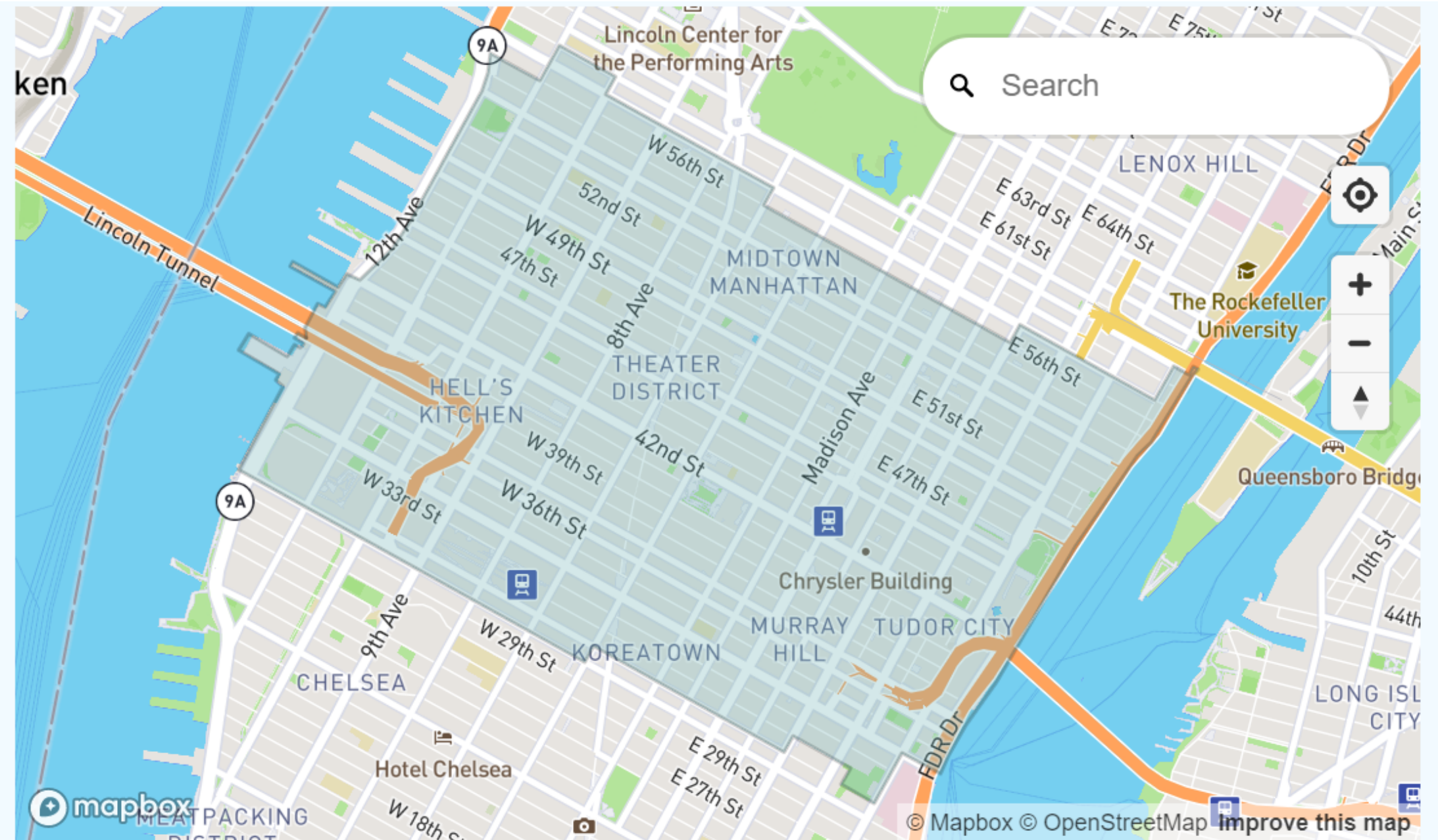
Check out other community maps in this area →

Additional mapping resources

https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/

Elements of an effective testimony

The basics - who, what, why & how

Who are you?

What is the issue?

Why is this an issue? What evidence exists for this issue?

How should this issue be resolved?

Who

1) Name

2) Where you live

3) Personal Background - Keep brief!

4) Organizational affiliation if relevant

Who - example

Good evening. My name is ██████████. I have been a Queens resident for more than 10 years and live at ██ ████████ Rego Park. I am a counselor at Baruch College. I am testifying as a 10-year member of OCA-NY. OCA-NY, formerly known as Organization of Chinese Americans, is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the political, economic, social, and cultural rights of Asian Americans. OCA-NY is a founding member of ACCORD-Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy.

What (aka main point)

1) Why are you here?

2) What is the issue or concern?

3) What is the ONE thing you want the Commission to remember about your testimony?

Main point examples

- I live in City Council District XYZ
- The current maps split [my community of interest] into multiple council districts
- I am here because I want to ensure that [my community of interest] is in one council district
    - Alternatively: The old map kept my community of interest all in one district, I am here because I want to ensure the lines remain similar to keep my community together.
    - Alternatively: The new maps remove the hospital from my district. I am here because I want the hospital to remain in my council district.

Proposed District 25

Proposed District 25 divides Elmhurst primarily at the district's southwestern boundary. This boundary excludes an active part of Elmhurst that stretches all the way to the LI Expressway.

Why

1) Why does this matter to you?

2) How does this issue affect you or your community?

3) Is there any evidence to show why this is an issue?

Why this matters -- evidence

Data & Facts

- Demographic Data
- Census Data
- Data from budgets and organizations
- Maps

Anecdotal Evidence

- Comparisons to other districts
- Stories from neighbors/friends
- News stories

Personal impact evidence

- My community of interest is split (provide maps)

  ↓

- This means lack of funding when compared to other communities of interest in the district (provide numbers)

  ↓

- This lack of funding has meant xyz issues our community cares about has gotten worse (provide information)

How should the issue be resolved?

1) What do you want the Commission to do?

2) What do you want them to consider?

3) What do you want them to change?

Example

Please consider lowering the south west border of ___ district, to include avenue xyz so that all of the _____ community can be included in the district.

Sample Testimony from 2021

YouTube

Search

Queens Public Meeting - July 22, 2021

290 views • Jul 24, 2021

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NYS Independent Redistricting Commission
202 subscribers

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On July 22, 2021, The New York Independent Redistricting Commission held a public meeting to hear input from the residents of Queens County

Putting it on paper

Who are you? Where do you live? Do you have any relevant organizational affiliations?

What is the central issue or concern? What is the main point that you want the commission to take away?

Why is this an issue to you or your community? How does this issue impact you and your community?

What evidence can you provide to show that this is an issue? Researched, fact-based responses work best here.

How should this issue be resolved? What do you want the Commission to consider or change?

Best Practices

- In verbal testimony, be concise and to the point - you do not get much time!
- Practice ahead of time, and time yourself.
- Speak clearly and make eye contact when possible.
- Try to remain relaxed
- Provide a copy of written testimony and fully elaborate there.
- Provide a map
- Thank the commission
- Try not to be accusatory.
- There is strength in numbers! Organize your community to testify as well!
- Something is better than nothing.

Now time to register

Resources and final notes

1) For more info, please go to our website

2) If you have any questions please email me at dkaminsky@citizensunion.org

3) If you know anyone at all who might benefit from this training, please pass along my contact information, or connect us.

4) Share this training, the slides, the website with anyone you know who may be interested