



May 18, 2022

Submitted via email

Dennis Walcott, Chair  
John L. Faletau, Executive Director  
New York City Districting Commission  
253 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Hold Public Hearings Before Releasing First Draft of City Council Redistricting Plan

The Districting Commission's discussion during the May 11th meeting suggested that the Commission does not plan to hold public hearings before releasing a first draft of the New York City Council redistricting plan on June 7th. We urge you to reconsider that decision and hold one or more preliminary public hearings ahead of the publication of the initial draft maps.

Citizen input is essential to achieve fair and representative maps that abide by City Charter rules on keeping communities of interest and neighborhoods intact. Although preliminary hearings, sometimes called "listening tours," are not required by the Charter, they have been the practice of prior districting commissions, as well as the state's Independent Redistricting Commission. They inform commissioners of the people's views on the current council district configuration and improve the map-making process. They also keep residents engaged in the process from early on, raise public awareness, and strengthen outreach efforts. The organizations below have been engaging with New Yorkers to inform them about the redistricting process and prepare them to provide their input. The feedback we received indicates that people are eager to participate in the process before the first maps are drafted.

We acknowledge that the Commission is under tight schedule constraints due to recent Charter-mandated timeline changes. However, we believe there is still ample time to hold preliminary hearings. We note that the Commission is only required to provide 30 days between the June draft maps and the following Charter-mandated hearings; preliminary hearings are under no such rule. Indeed, both the 2012 Commission and the 2002 Commission held five preliminary hearings with less than a month's notice.

Considering how vital public input is to the redistricting process, we urge you to open up every avenue possible to allow citizen engagement. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Citizens Union

LatinoJustice PRLDEF

APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force:

Academy of Medical & Public Health Services  
Asian American Bar Association of New York  
Asian Americans for Equality



Caribbean Equality Project  
CHHAYA CDC  
Chinese-American Planning Council  
Chinese Progressive Association  
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families  
DRUM Desis Rising Up and Moving  
Homecrest Community Services  
Immigrant Social Services  
Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York  
Little Manila Queens Bayanihan Arts  
MinKwon Center for Community Action  
National Federation of Filipino American Associations New York Chapter  
OCA-NY Asian Pacific American Advocates  
South Asian Council for Social Services  
South Queens Women's March  
United Chinese Association of Brooklyn  
Woodside on the Move  
  
Central Queens Redistricting Coalition

CC:  
Joseph Maligno, Deputy Executive Director  
Ali Rasoulinejad, Chief of Staff