

**Written Testimony on Bill No. 220003
Proposed City Council District Map
City Council Committee of the Whole
January 26, 2022**

When redrawing political districts, there is no perfect map that achieves all objectives and satisfies every stakeholder. Even legitimate and desirable goals in the map-making process can come into tension, requiring some number of unavoidable tradeoffs.

Drawing a state legislative or congressional map for Pennsylvania where districts are both compact and highly competitive, for example, is impossible given the political geography of the state; and, further, prioritizing either of these goals too heavily comes at the cost of dividing counties, municipalities and communities. Redrawing 10 Council districts involves the same fundamental challenge, albeit on a smaller scale and with fewer partisan dynamics. But even in this current redistricting cycle, where proposed adjustments to district boundaries would appear to be relatively minor when considering a citywide map, we urge caution in every change made. Moving individual or small groups of divisions from one district to another may not stand out in the full map, but any potential change can matter a great deal to the residents and businesses being shifted.

A Public Priority in Council Districts: Keep Communities of Interest Whole

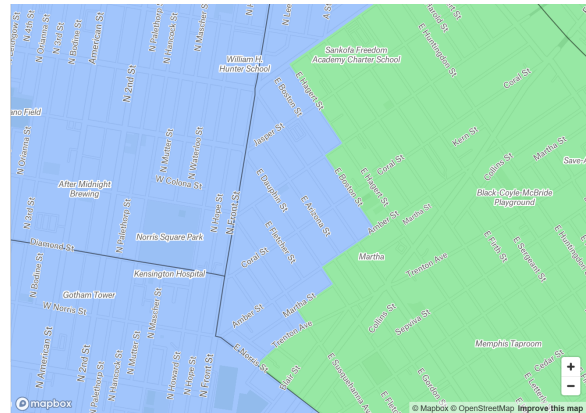
We submitted to City Council on January 10 a [Preliminary Report on Public Input and Priorities](#), which attempted to summarize findings from an outreach effort from September to December 2021 regarding current district boundaries. As we acknowledge in the report, its contents are not exhaustive of all perspectives or opinions, but the overarching takeaway was to prioritize keeping communities of interest¹ together. In most instances, meeting participants and survey respondents were referring to neighborhoods, many of which have distinct and well-known boundaries; but ethnic and language groups, and business corridors were also frequently cited.

This key finding was not surprising. To prioritize keeping communities whole—and keeping similar communities together—within districts is consistent with years of advocacy and public engagement around state legislative and congressional redistricting. Bearing this in mind when reviewing the proposed Council districts outlined in Bill No. 220003, the following observations may be helpful as you consider further changes to the boundaries.²

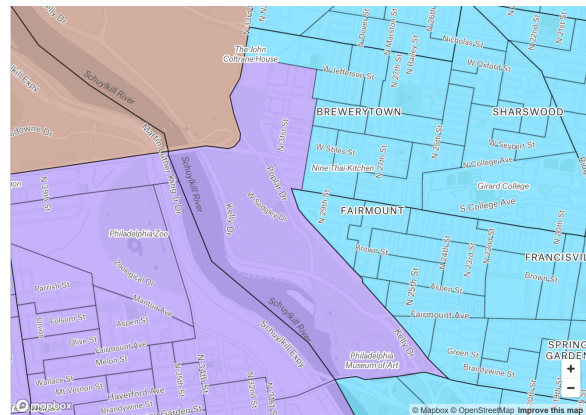
¹ For more on communities of interest, see All About Redistricting, hosted by Loyola Law School: <https://redistricting.lls.edu/redistricting-101/where-are-the-lines-drawn>

² Mapping images were captured from a DistrictBuilder version of the City Council mapping plan described in Bill No. 220003. See: <https://app.districtbuilder.org/o/philly-public-redistricting>

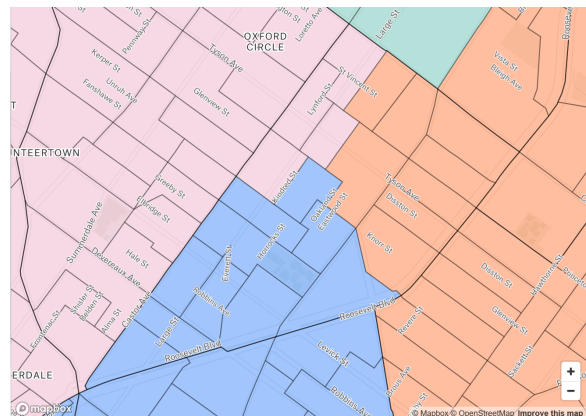
East Kensington: All of East Kensington with the exception of division 31-09 is currently included in the 1st District. The proposed map would split the neighborhood further by adding division 31-01 to the 7th District and creating another unintuitive boundary along several small streets from Norris St to Boston St. Adding both of these divisions to the 1st District would both keep the neighborhood more whole and utilize Front St and Kensington Ave as district boundaries.



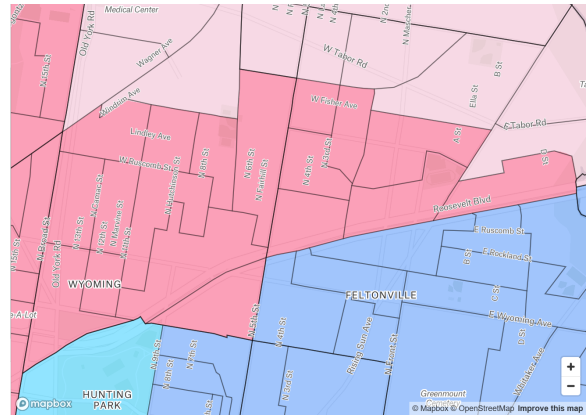
Brewerytown: The proposed map inexplicably transfers division 29-10 from the 5th District to the 3rd District, splintering a piece of Brewerytown south of Jefferson St and west of 30th St. The change would also pull out a section of Fairmount Park from the Art Museum to Girard Ave into the 3rd District.



Oxford Circle and Castor Avenue: Community feedback in Oxford Circle and around the Castor Avenue business corridor was consistent in seeking to minimize the splits currently between the 6th, 7th and 9th districts. These divisions affect multiple communities of interest—the neighborhood of Oxford Circle, the business corridor and the growing AAPI and Latino communities in the area. One solution sought by local stakeholders was to extend the 9th district to Roosevelt Boulevard.

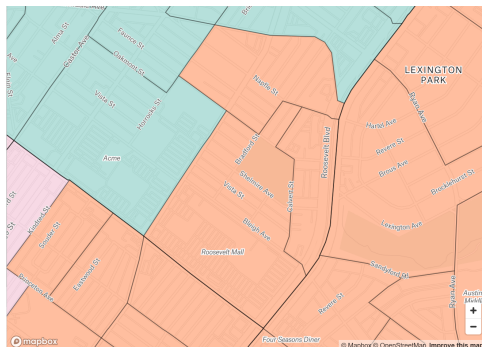


Logan and Olney: The neighborhoods of Logan and Olney continue to be divided in the proposed map, although there's a rationale for the extension of the 8th District across Broad St due to its need to gain population in the new map. But the proposed iteration of this extension consists of several unintuitive boundaries from Broad St to Tacony Creek. Adding divisions 12-14, 16, 17, 20, and 21 in the 42nd ward back to the 9th District would make more of Olney whole and limit the number of splits to the 42nd ward.



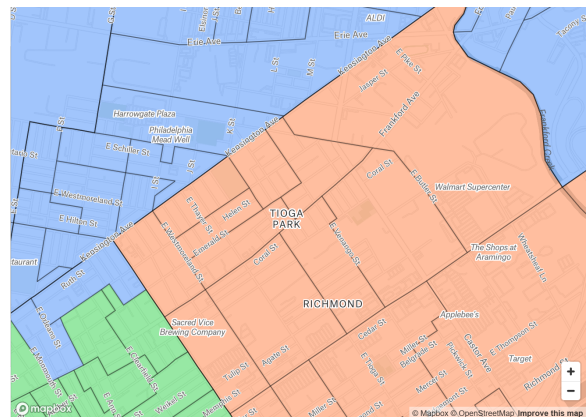
Another option could be to enlarge the extension and use Olney Ave as an easier-to-recognize boundary between the 8th and 9th districts.

One division south of Roosevelt Blvd (49-01) is also added to the 8th District in the proposed map. Although this re-attaches the southeast corner of the 49th ward, most of which is north of Roosevelt, this comes at the cost of splitting Hunting Park residents and removing from the 7th District a division that is 58% Hispanic.



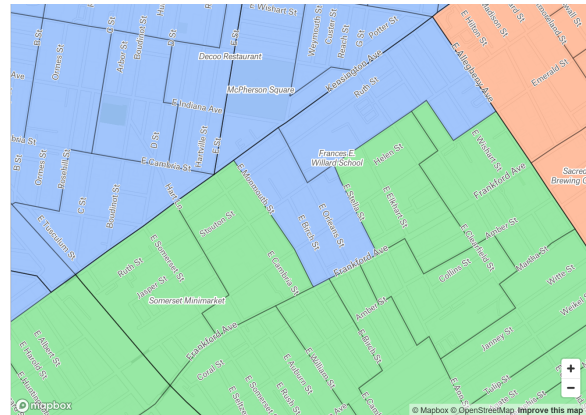
Rhawnhurst: The proposed map transfers three divisions (56-01, 56-34, 56-40) including Roosevelt Mall, Bradford Park and residences from the 10th to 6th District, which appears to unnecessarily split Rhawnhurst when the 6th District does not have to add population.

Harrowgate: One of the largest geographic changes in the proposed map shifts 14 divisions from the 1st District to the 6th, which both keeps more of Port Richmond together and continues to utilize Kensington Ave as a recognizable boundary. This change also makes the 1st District significantly more compact, increasing its Polsby-Popper score from 20 to 28 percent, according to DistrictBuilder. But this proposal

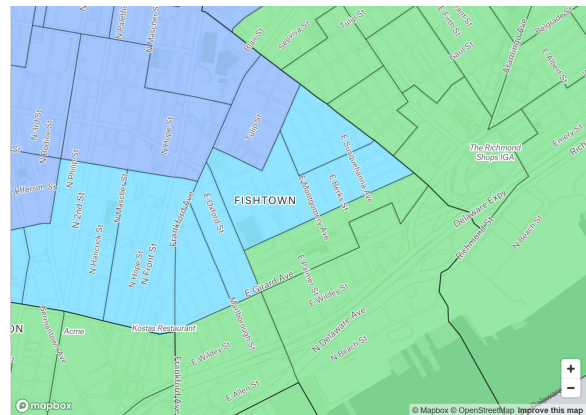


would also split in a different way the neighborhood known to many as Harrowgate, generally the area east of H St, south of Sedgley Ave and north of Allegheny Ave and Aramingo Ave—another example of tradeoffs in a specific area.

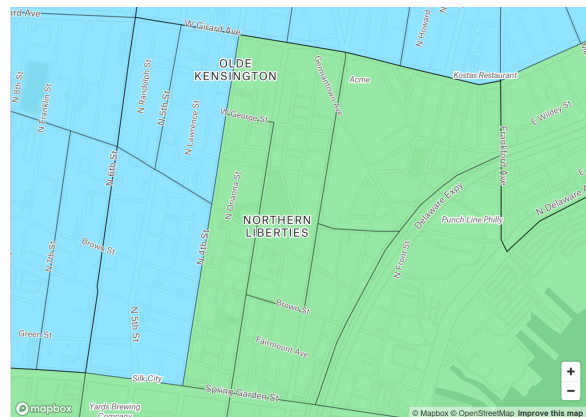
Somerset and Kensington: The proposed map makes some progress close to Somerset Station in utilizing Kensington Ave as a main boundary where divisions 25-14 and 25-15 are shifted from the 7th to the 1st District. This is consistent with residents' understanding of Kensington Ave as an easier-to-recognize boundary. Adding divisions 25-19 and 25-20 to the 1st District as well would complete this preference.



Fishtown: Although division shapes would not allow for Front St as district boundary, adding six divisions in the proposed map (18-02, 18-04, 18-07, 18-10, 18-11, 12-12) east of Frankford Ave to the 1st District would keep the neighborhood whole of Fishtown whole.



Northern Liberties: The proposed map improves the circumstances for Northern Liberties, adding divisions 05-17 and 05-32 to the 1st District, keeping more of the neighborhood whole and including the 2nd Street business corridor up to Girard Ave solidly within one district. Adding divisions 05-15, 05-20 and 05-23 to the 1st District as well would keep the entire neighborhood whole.



Population equality issues, including ‘one-person, one-vote’, must be addressed

Drawing Philadelphia’s ten Council districts to achieve the ‘one-person, one-vote’ principle while avoiding the division or split of any community in the city, unfortunately, cannot be done. But we should be striving to minimize such splits to the greatest extent possible while staying within the 5 percent deviation from the ideal district population that is generally understood to be legally defensible. Using redistricting data that has not been adjusted for Philadelphians held in correctional facilities during the 2020 Census, the ideal Council district population is ~160,400 (found by dividing the city’s total population by 10) with an upward bound of ~168,400 (5% above the ideal) and lower bound of ~152,400 (5% below).

We strongly recommend making further changes to the proposed mapping plan to ensure that every City Council district would have a population that falls within the aforementioned range. Currently, the 4th District does not, including only 150,217 people according to the legislation. The options for fixing this issue are limited, given that additional divisions can only be transferred from the neighboring 3rd, 5th and/or 8th districts (See Appendix A). It would also be prudent to consider which sections of the city may grow fastest over the next 10 years and attempt to apportion fewer people to Council districts covering those areas. Not accounting for projected growth may contribute to the need for far more dramatic changes in the 2031-32 redistricting cycle.³

End Prison Gerrymandering in Philadelphia

The proposed map does not appear to use Census data that has been adjusted for Philadelphians who were counted in city- or state-run correctional facilities during the 2020 Census. The Legislative Reapportionment Commission is already using data that reallocates “on paper” nearly 30,000 people who were held in state-run prisons across Pennsylvania back to their home communities for the purposes of state legislative redistricting. If City Council were to use this same dataset, which is readily available, nearly 7,000 Philadelphians who were incarcerated in state prisons in 2020 would be reallocated back across the city, marginally increasing the population count in each Council district.

Implementing the same practice for Philadelphians who were held and counted in city-run prisons in 2020 would require asking the Kenney administration to review the home or last-known addresses of those individuals. We believe the total figure to be between 4,000 and

³ The sample City Council map included in Appendix B demonstrates how a more robust set of changes in this 2021-22 redistricting cycle can attempt to prioritize communities of interest, utilize major roads as easy-to-recognize boundaries, and consider population growth in districts over time.

5,000 people, all of whom would have been counted in two divisions (65-07 and 65-12) in the 6th District. Similar to the state-level adjustment, these individuals would be reallocated back to their home communities, the most significant effect of which would be to eliminate the artificially inflated population of the 6th District.

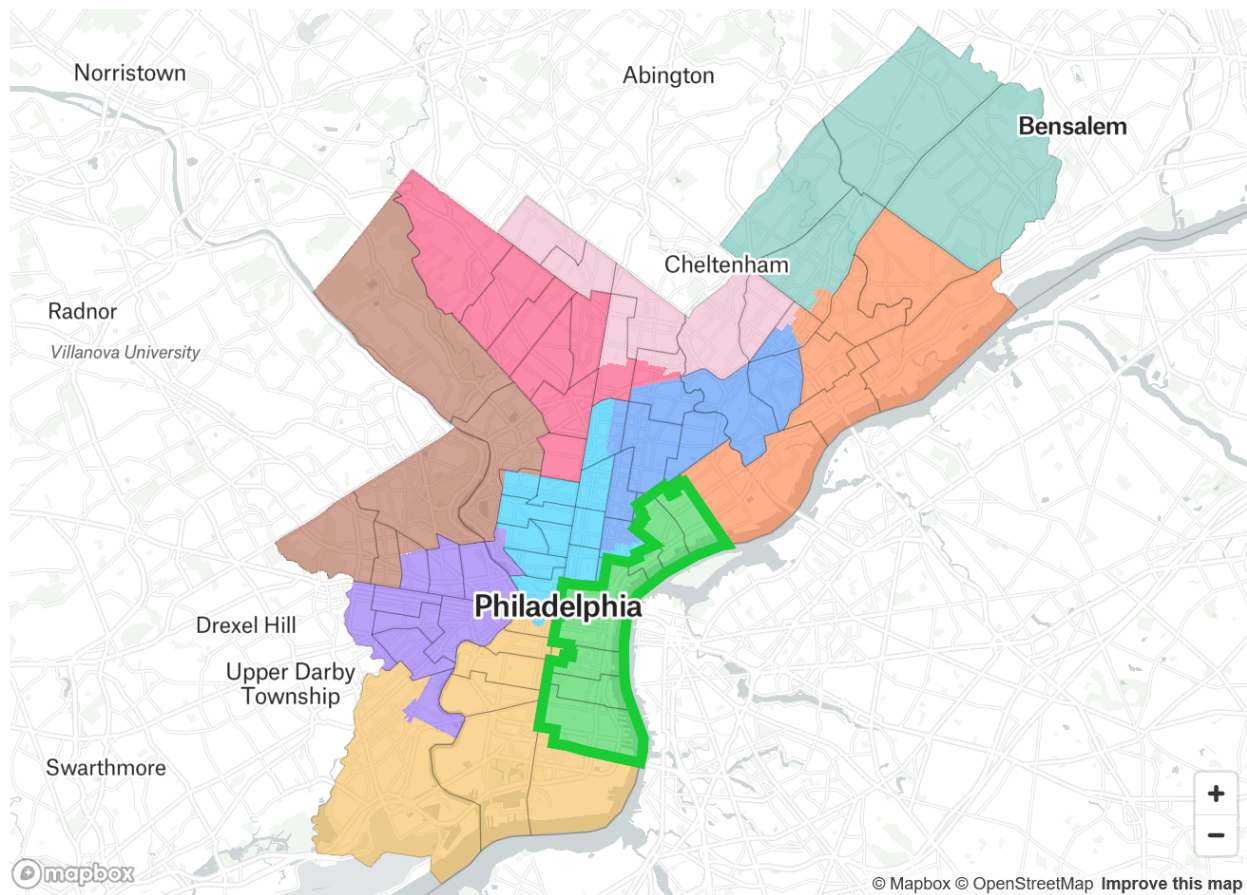
These data adjustments may not spur major changes in a proposed map, but when each division-level shift will impact a community, the specific data being used matters as does taking every possible step towards a racially equitable map. Most of these Philadelphians are people of color, and they were being held in facilities located in areas that are predominantly white—whether elsewhere in the Commonwealth or along State Road in Northeast Philadelphia—unfairly giving those areas additional voting power as a result.

Redistricting is an inherently complicated process with no perfect outcomes. But some maps, when evaluated on a range of criteria—population equality, communities of interest, compactness, etc.—are unequivocally better than others. Philadelphians will be represented in City Hall through these districts for 12 years, from 2024 to 2035. We would urge this City Council to ensure the final mapping plan that emerges in the coming days or weeks is a step forward rather than a step back.

Thank you.

Pat Christmas
Policy Director
Committee of Seventy

Appendix A: Proposed City Council Map (Bill No. 220003)



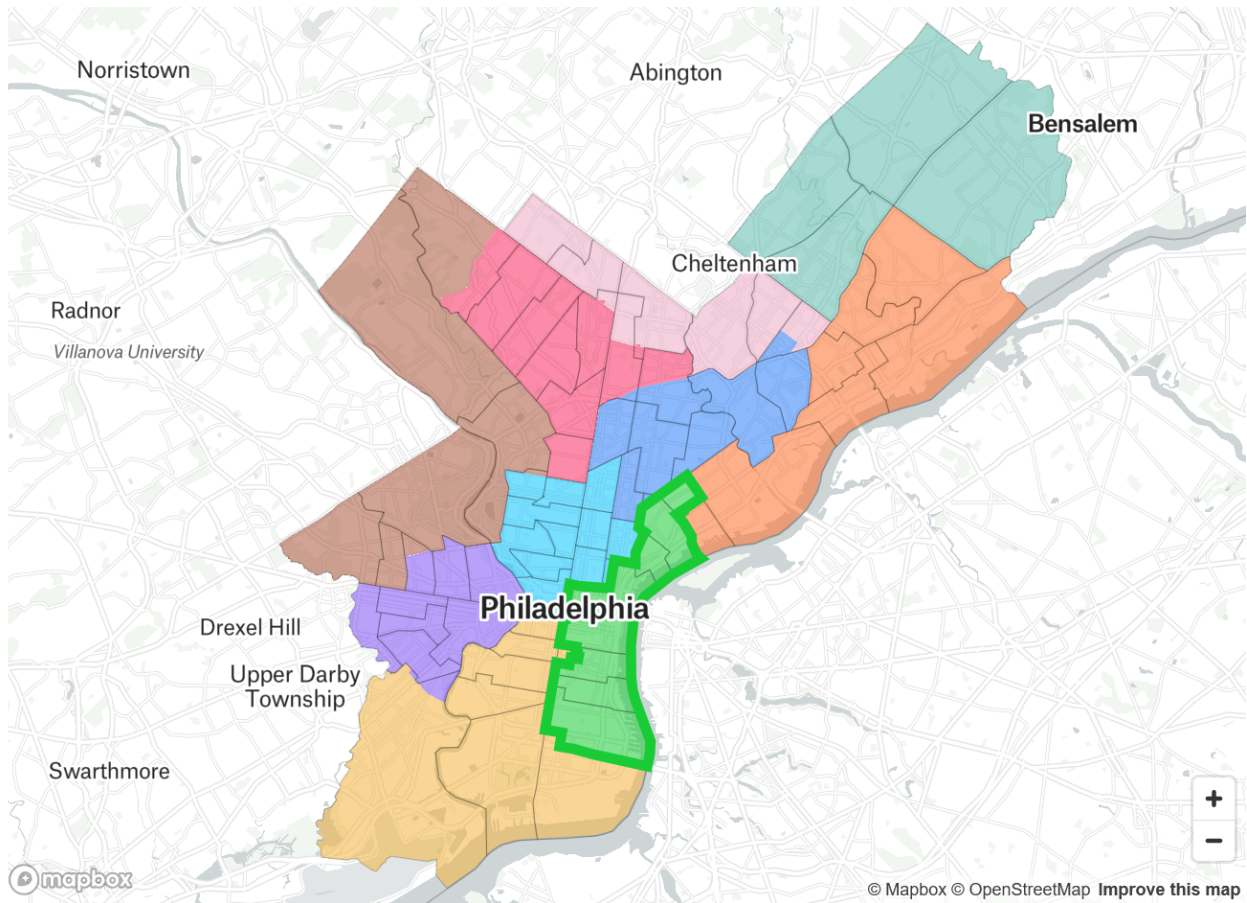
City Council Districts (Clarke proposed 2022-01-20) by Daniel McGlone

Districts

Number	Population	Deviation	Race	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native	Pacific	Majority race
0	0	0		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
1	164,662	+3,581		61%	7%	13%	14%	0%	0%	White
2	157,361	-3,720		41%	39%	6%	10%	0%	0%	Minority coalition
3	156,164	-4,917		21%	60%	5%	9%	0%	0%	Black
4	150,882	-10,199		32%	56%	4%	3%	0%	0%	Black
5	163,439	+2,358		36%	43%	11%	6%	0%	0%	Minority coalition
6	167,014	+5,933		48%	17%	20%	9%	0%	0%	Minority coalition
7	167,644	+6,563		13%	26%	53%	5%	0%	0%	Hispanic
8	157,480	-3,601		15%	70%	8%	2%	0%	0%	Black
9	161,520	+439		9%	62%	16%	9%	0%	0%	Black
10	164,650	+3,569		65%	9%	9%	13%	0%	0%	White



Appendix B: Sample City Council Map



City Council Districts v1 ...

Share

Districts

Number	Population	Deviation	Race	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native	Pacific	Majority race
0	0	0		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
1	163,152	+2,071		61%	7%	13%	14%	0%	0%	White
2	162,383	+1,302		41%	38%	6%	11%	0%	0%	Minority coalition
3	153,439	-7,642		21%	61%	5%	9%	0%	0%	Black
4	158,993	-2,088		35%	54%	4%	3%	0%	0%	Black
5	156,188	-4,893		35%	43%	11%	7%	0%	0%	Minority coalition
6	166,019	+4,938		51%	17%	20%	7%	0%	0%	White
7	159,920	-1,161		10%	29%	54%	4%	0%	0%	Hispanic
8	156,103	-4,978		11%	72%	9%	3%	0%	0%	Black
9	166,958	+5,877		10%	59%	17%	10%	0%	0%	Black
10	167,661	+6,580		64%	9%	9%	13%	0%	0%	White