

Comments to the Albany County Redistricting Commission Public Hearing 5 PM June 30, 2022

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To:

- Redistricting Commission <RedistrictingCommission@albanycountyny.gov>

Cc:

- Andrew Harvey <aach598@gmail.com>

My name is Andrew Harvey. I have resided at 271 Myrtle Avenue in the City of Albany for over 35 years. For the last 28 years, I have been President of the Park South Neighborhood Association. The comments that I share with you today are informed by my experience in that capacity.

The commercial Lark Street corridor, which extends from Washington Avenue on the north and Madison Avenue on the south, is an integral component of the catchment area of the Lark Street Business Improvement District (BID) which then extends further south on Delaware Avenue to Myrtle Avenue, and west on Madison Avenue to Willett Street. The Lark Street BID's geographical area constitutes the spine of the neighborhoods that have made up the boundaries of the 5th Legislative District for many years. This commercial; corridor, along with Albany's crown jewel park, Washington Park, comprise a community of interest that have thrived by the cooperative relationships that have been forged by the shared priorities of the adjacent Center Square, Hudson/Park, Washington Park, and Park South neighborhoods. Our collective progress has transpired from our long-standing cooperation not just with each other, but also with our 5th Legislative District County Representative and our 6th Ward Common Council Member, as the boundaries of these political districts highly align with each other. This broad symmetry has enabled effective cooperation between our neighborhoods and both city and county government agencies. The value of this coordination must not be undervalued. The existing boundaries of the 5th Legislative District reflect these realities; the proposed ACRC Final Draft with MMD Plan D runs roughshod over these realities.

There is a further cultural aspect to this matter that needs to be recognized. The catalyst for the recognition of the human rights of the LGBTQ+ community has been sparked by the residents of the 6th Ward and 5th Legislative District. The proposed ACRC Final Draft with MMD Plan D will dilute the voice of the LGBTQ+ community. This calls out to be remedied.

In light of our collective community of interest, please adopt a plan that recognizes these realities and holds to the existing boundaries of the 5th Legislative District to the greatest extent possible.

Thank you for your consideration.