

1. August 24 Public Hearing Notice

Documents:

[REAPPORTIONMENT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE.PDF](#)

2. August 24 Public Hearing Presentation

Documents:

[PUBLIC HEARING 8.24\\_WITH MAPS \(1\).PDF](#)

3. August 24 Public Hearing Testimonies

Documents:

[ALBANY CITY REAPPORTIONMENT HEARING 8.24.22 FINAL.PDF](#)

[LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS 7-26 TESTIMONY.PDF](#)

[UPPER WASHINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION TESTIMONY.PDF](#)

4. August 24 Public Hearing Minutes

Documents:

[REAPPORTIONMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES\\_220824.PDF](#)

This meeting is being held in accordance to Governor Hochul's signed legislation allowing municipalities to resume remote meetings. If the legislation is revoked, then it will be an in-person meeting. Please stay up to date with the status of our meetings by going and following us on Facebook. This meeting will be held using Zoom and streamed through the Reapportionment Commission's Facebook page



## Reapportionment Commission Public Hearing Notice

Notice is hereby given that a Reapportionment Public Hearing will be held on the following dates **August 24, 2022 and September 7, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.** These meetings will be hybrid allowing for registrants to participate in-person or remotely, in person participants will be in the Albany Common Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor City Hall. Parties interested in speaking must register in advance by emailing [reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov](mailto:reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov).

This public hearing is being held pursuant to guidelines established in the Open Meetings Law and any applicable legislation signed by Governor Hochul.

### Commission Members

**Brenda Robinson, Member**

**Carol June-Washington, Member**

**Dale Getto, Member**

**Dylan Carey, Member**

**Emily Loughlin, Member**

**Judith Mazza, Member**

**Scott Allardice, Member**

**Shawn Morris, Member**

**Charles Williams, Member**

**Paul Webster, Member**

**All meetings will be live-streamed on Facebook. If there is an adjustment in the meeting date and time it will be posted to the Facebook page. In the event that the Executive order for remote meetings is not extended the meetings will be entirely in person**

These meetings will be conducted remotely for updates please visit our Facebook at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/ReapportionmentCommission/> The meeting will be held using Zoom and streamed through the Reapportionment Commission Facebook page.

# City of Albany Reapportionment Commission

Public Hearing  
August 24, 2022

Draft



Reapportionment  
Commission

# Process: Commission's Charge

Create wards that:

- Are close to equal in population: 6,676
- Maximize the voting strength of minority communities
- Are compact and contiguous
- Maintain communities of interest

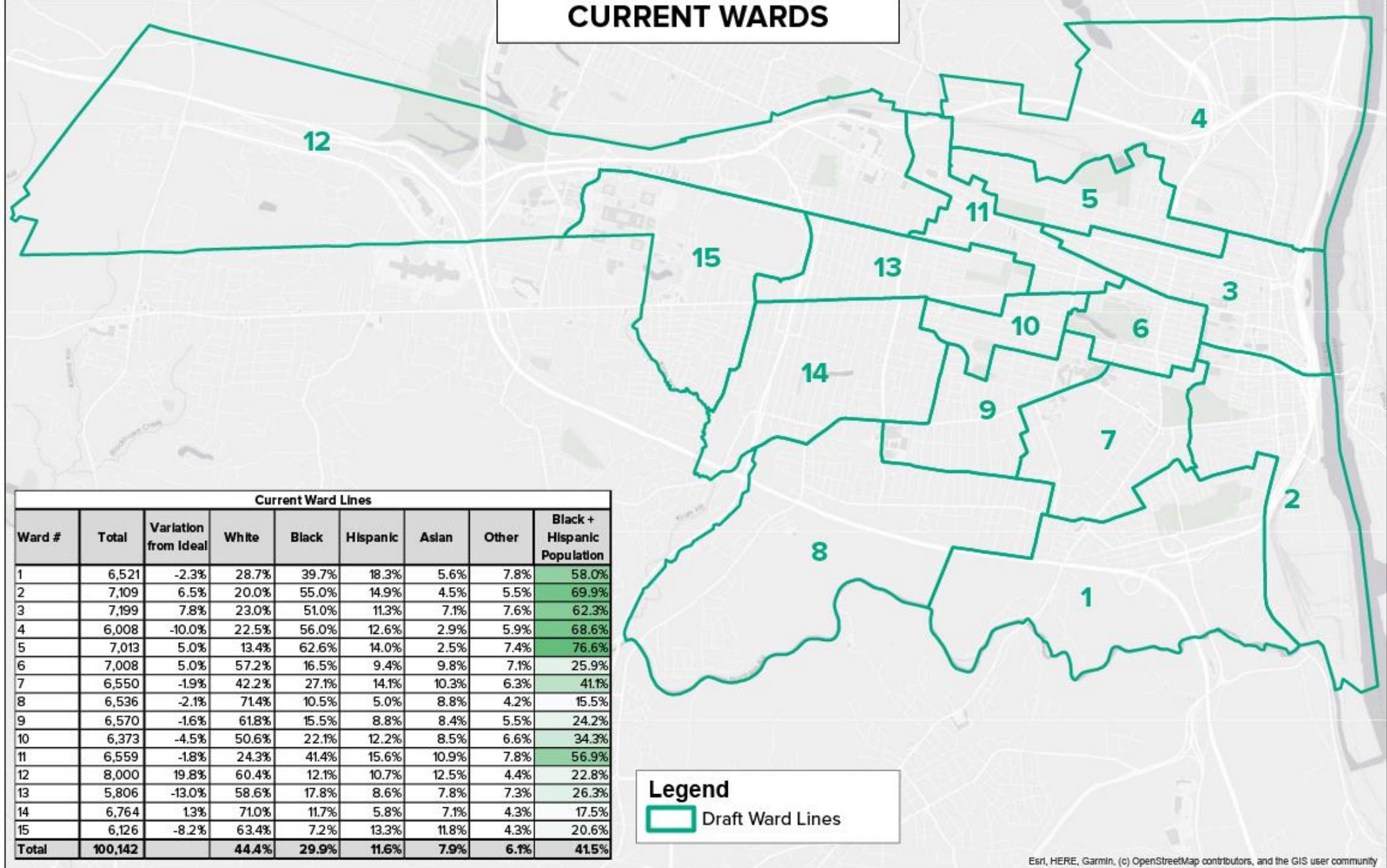
# Process: Discussion Points

- Population growth and shifts left existing wards uneven.
- Growth of minority population could mean additional minority-majority wards.

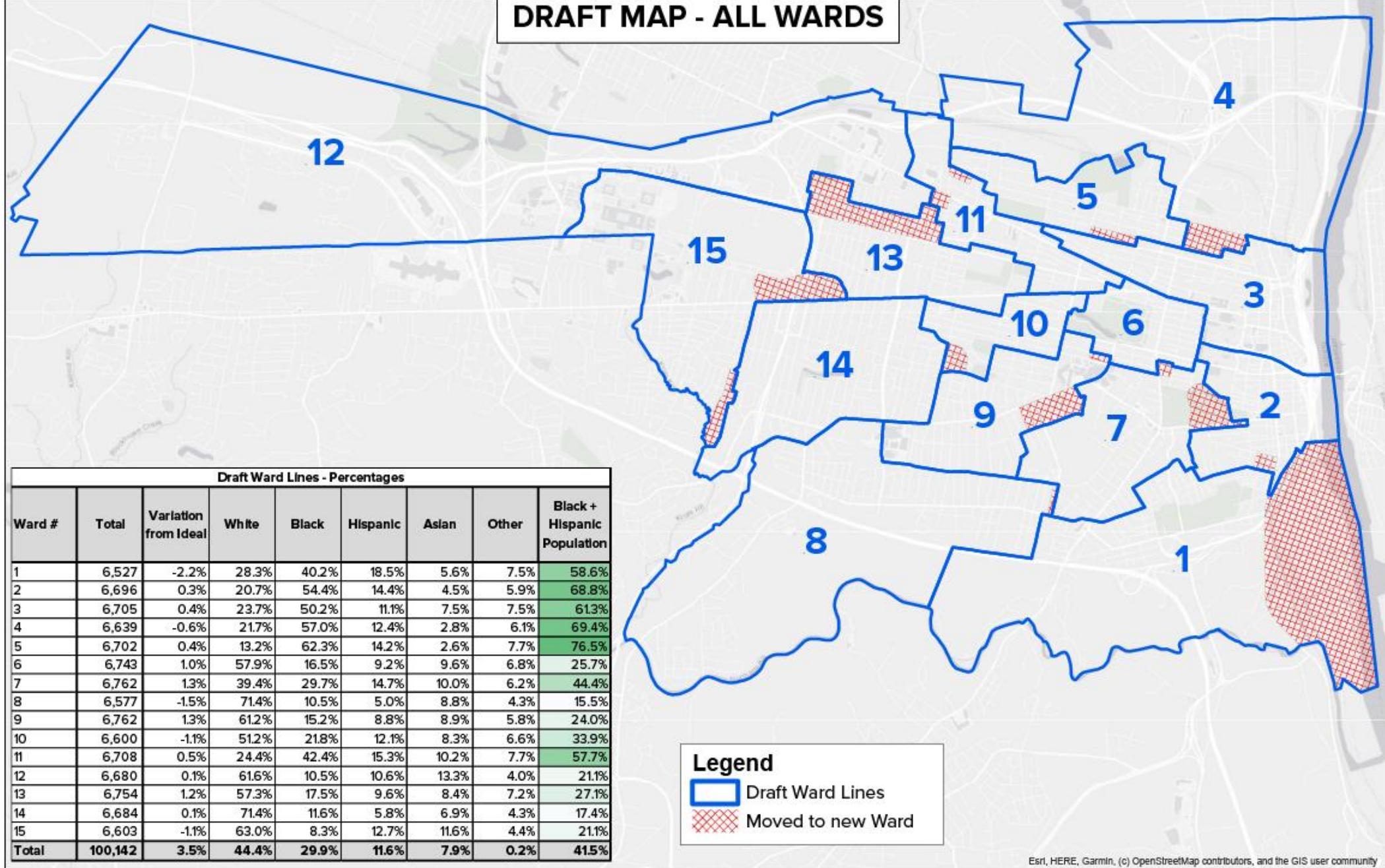
# Challenges

- Must use whole census blocks to shift lines.
- Must use streets as boundaries or other fixed line, like a river.

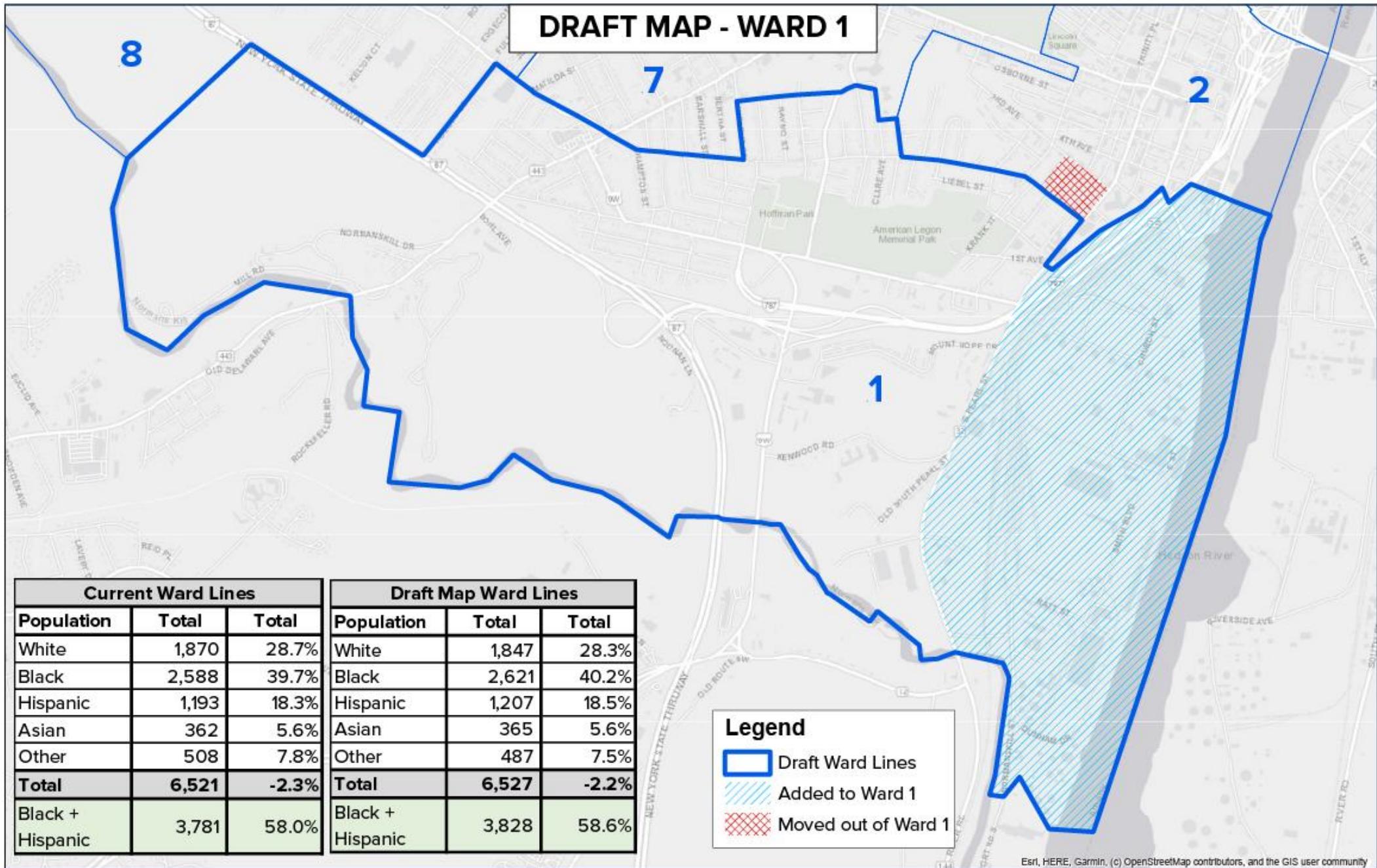
## CURRENT WARDS

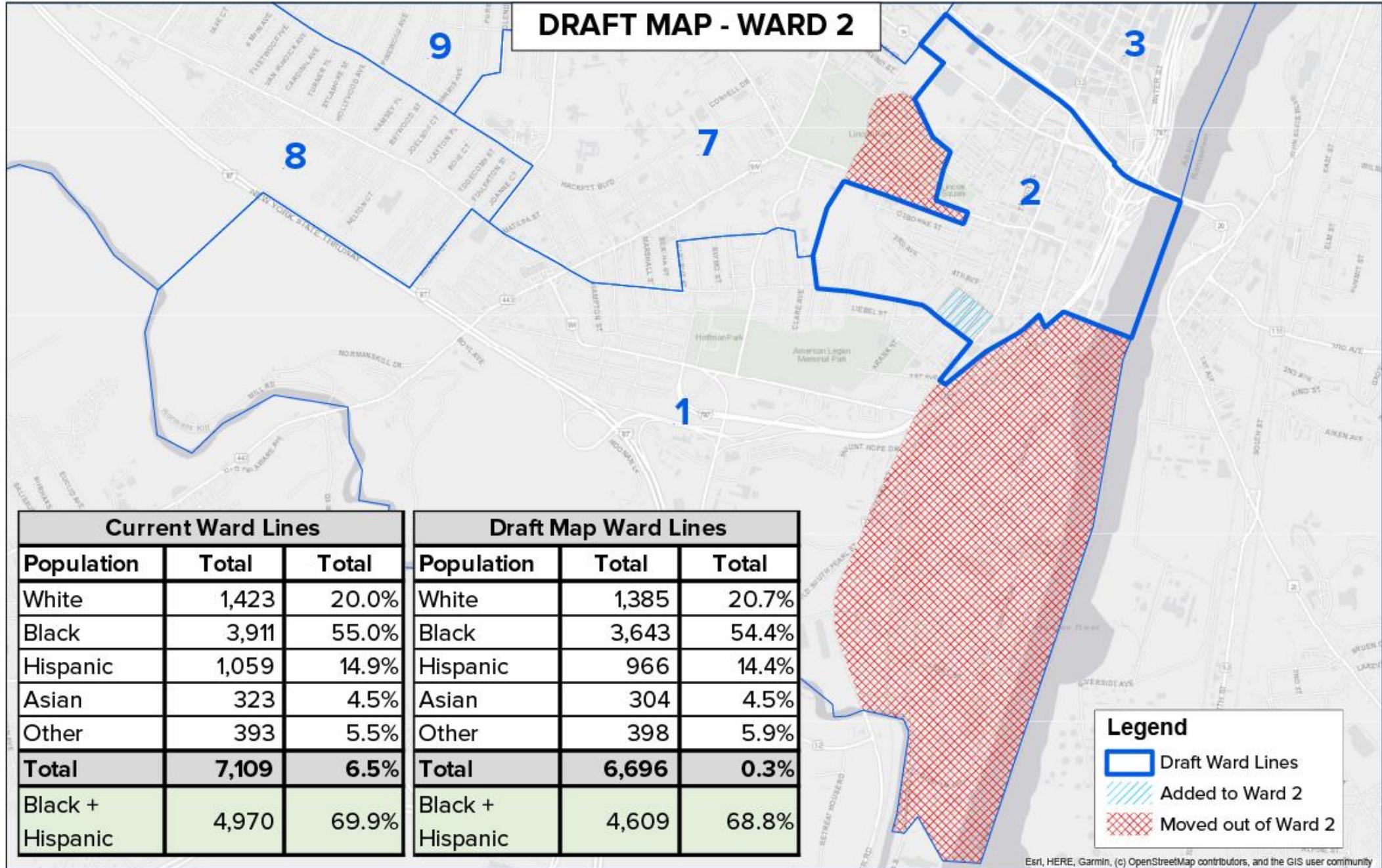


## DRAFT MAP - ALL WARDS

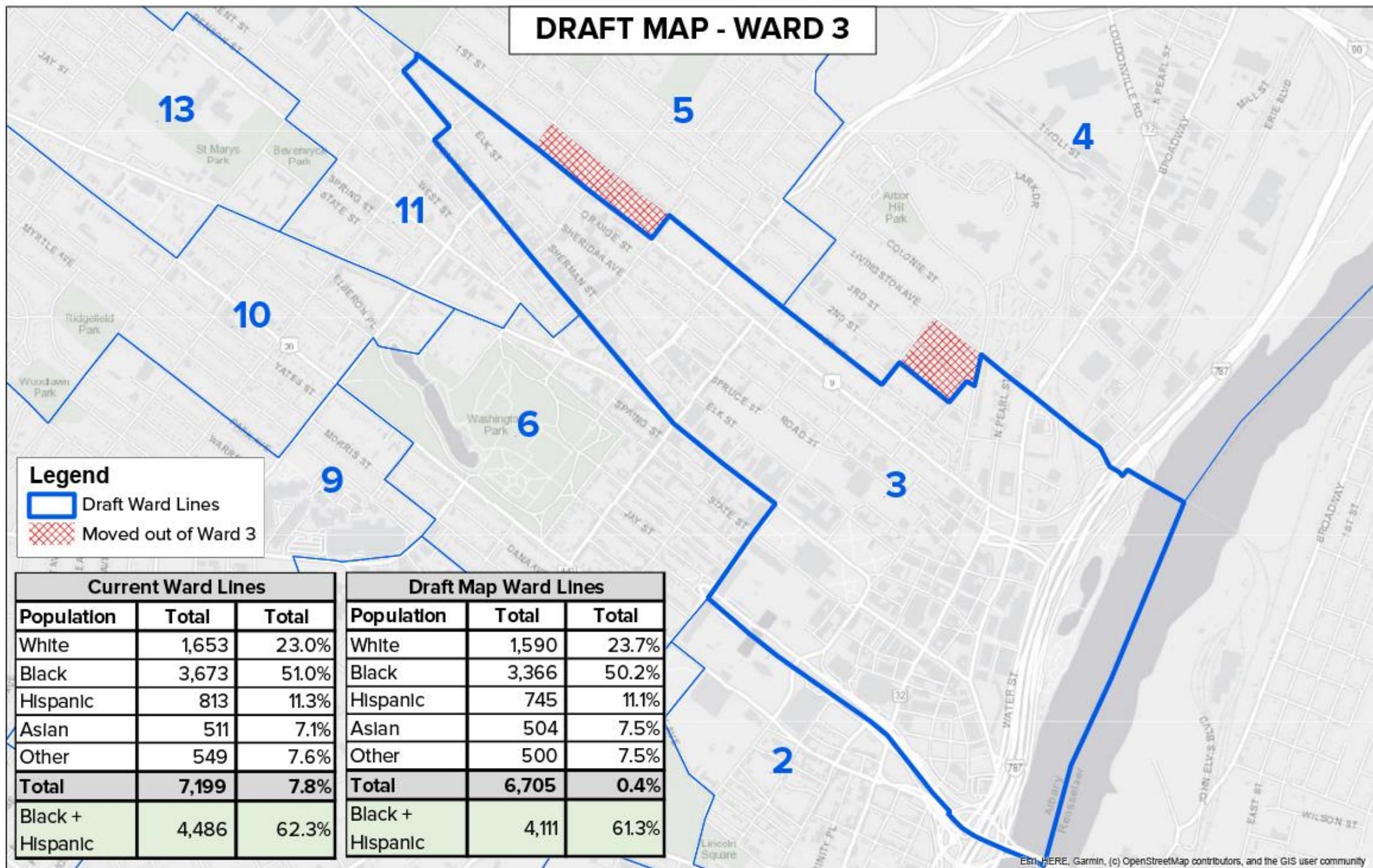


## DRAFT MAP - WARD 1

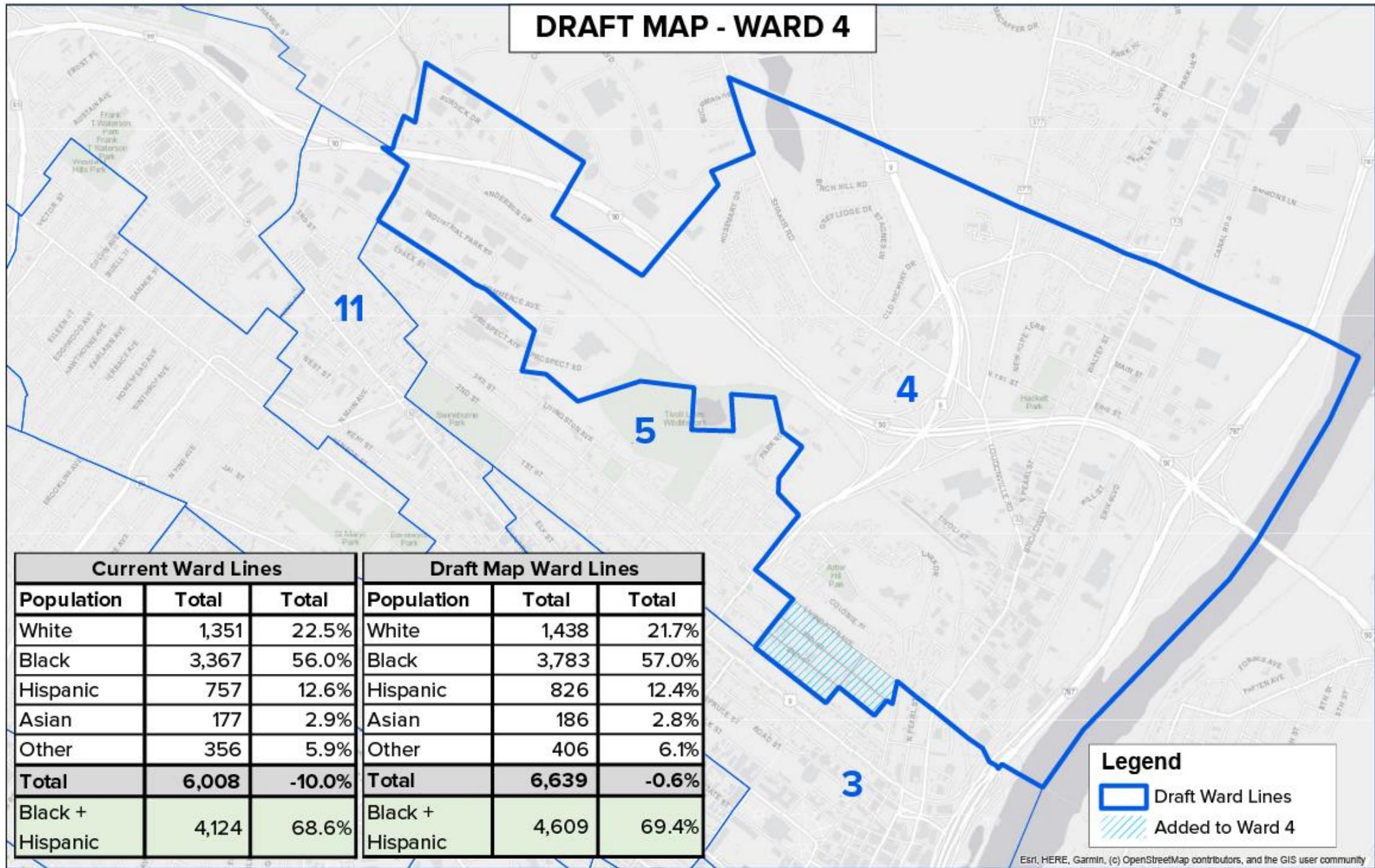




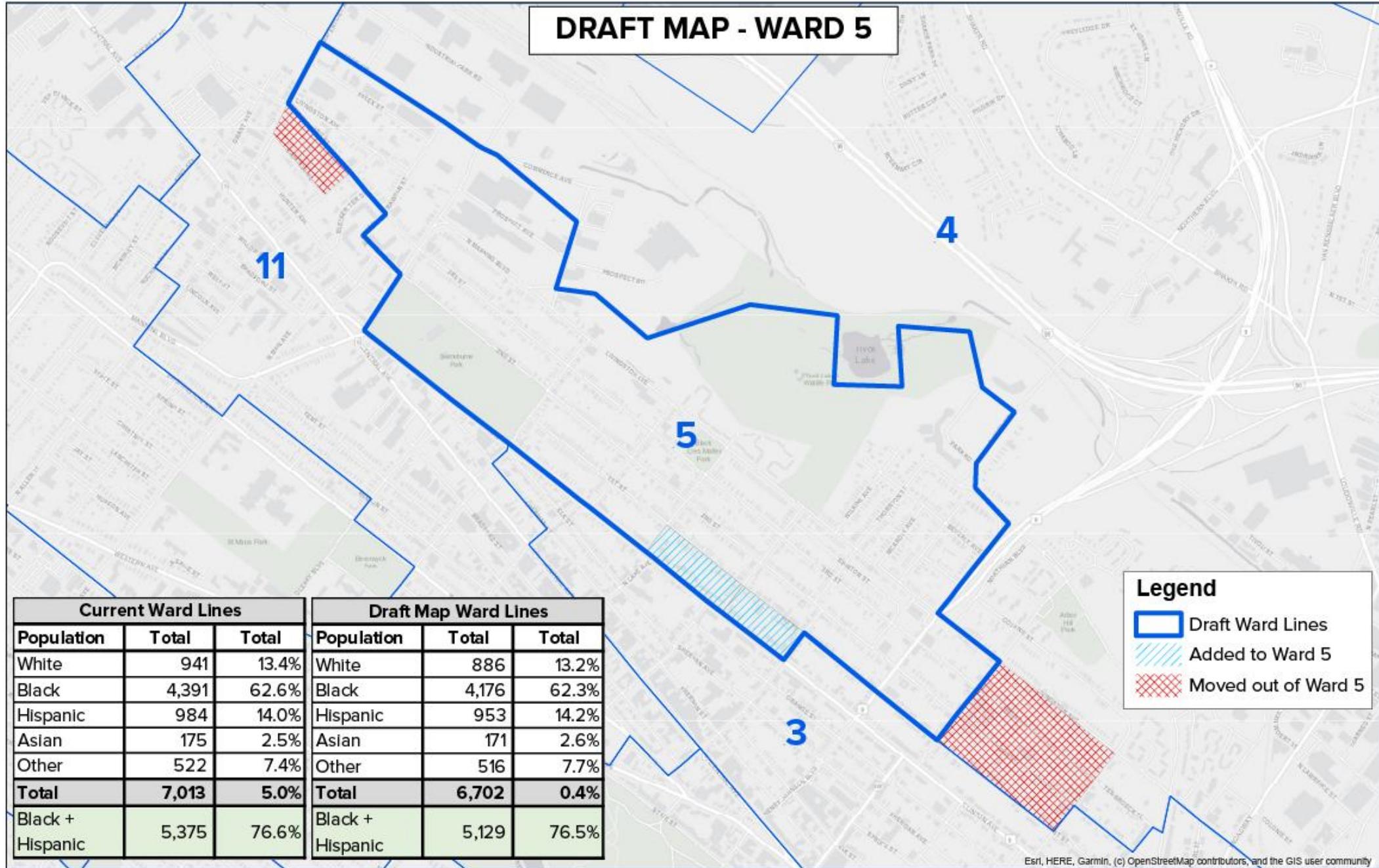
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 3



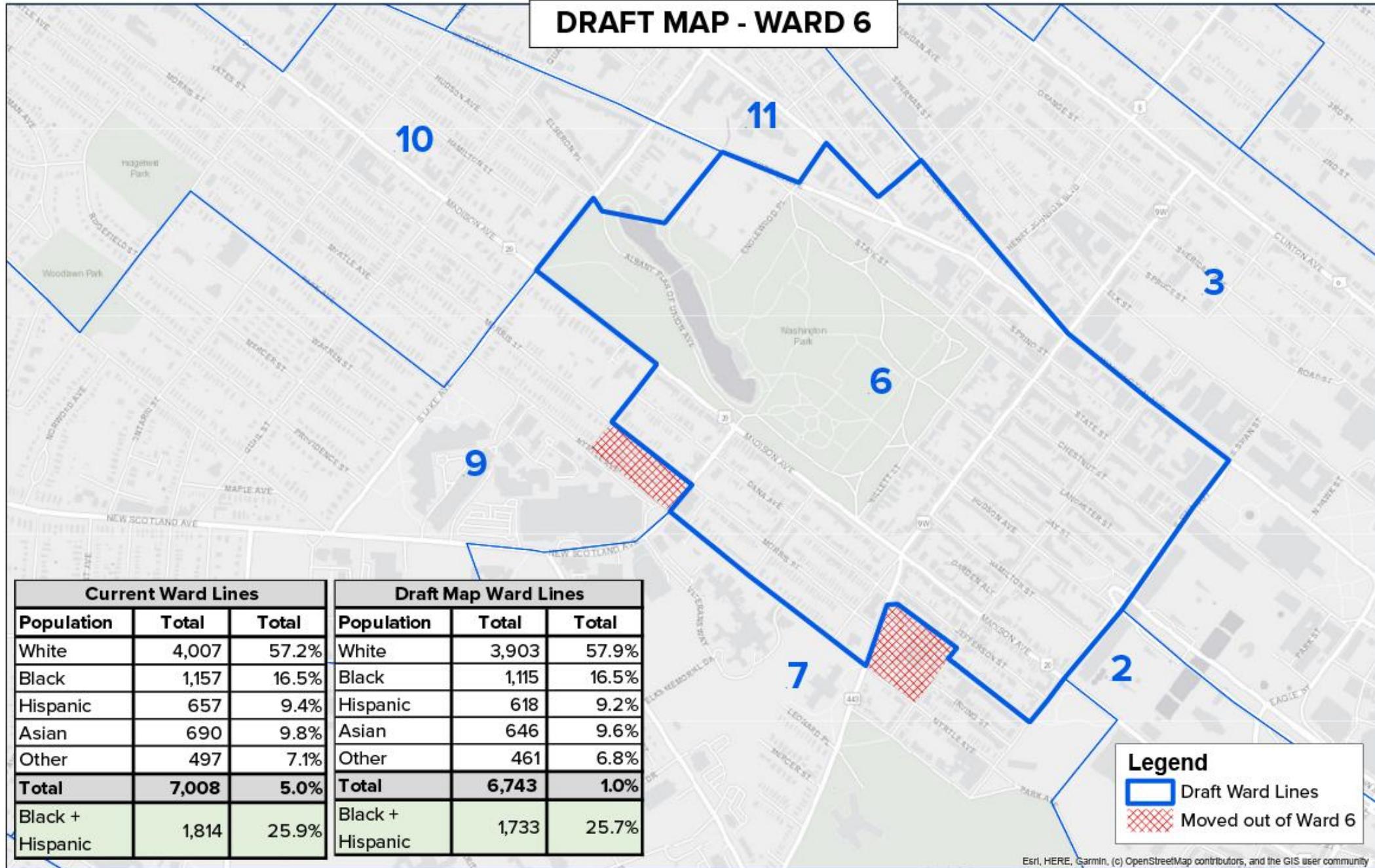
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 4



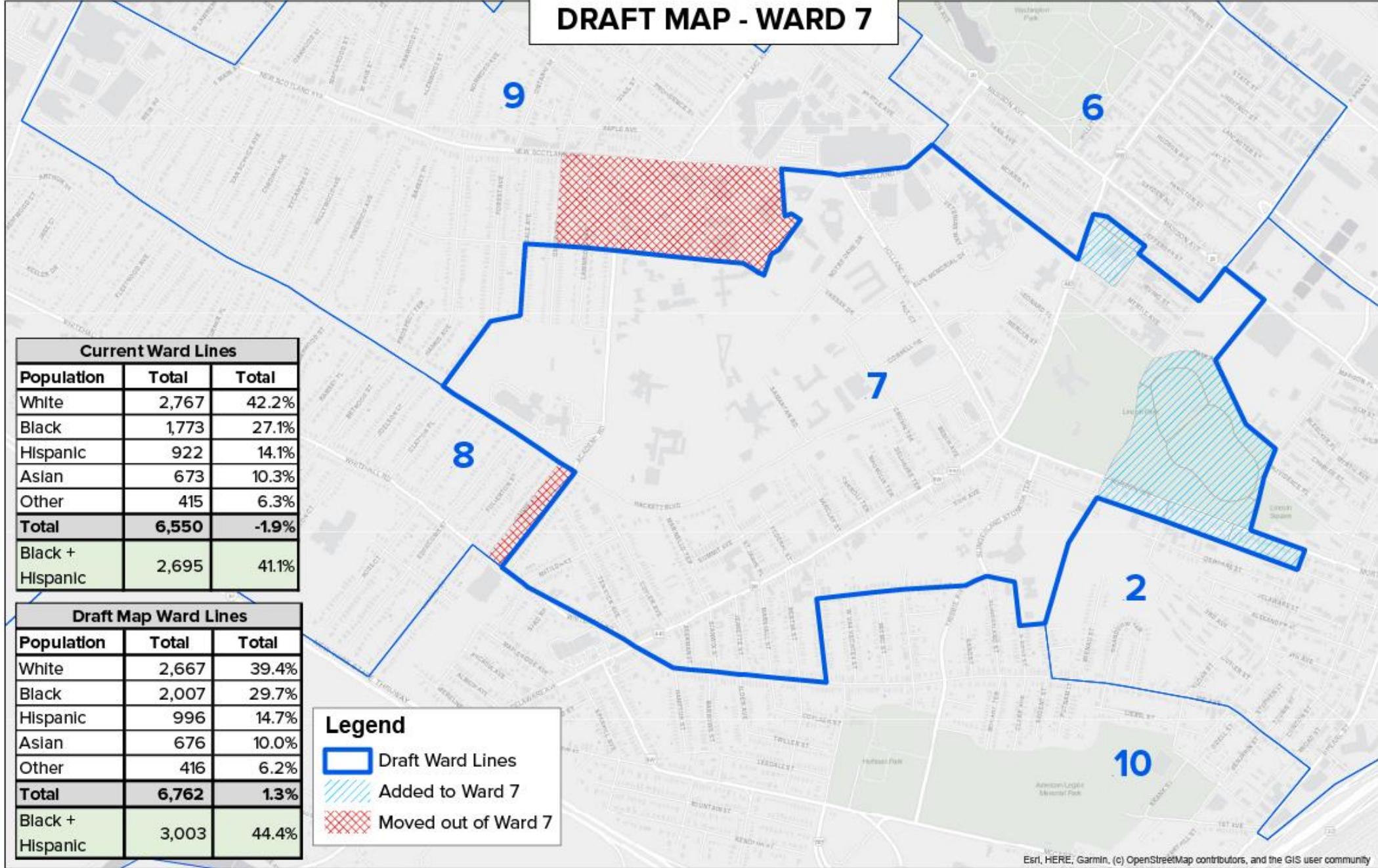
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 5



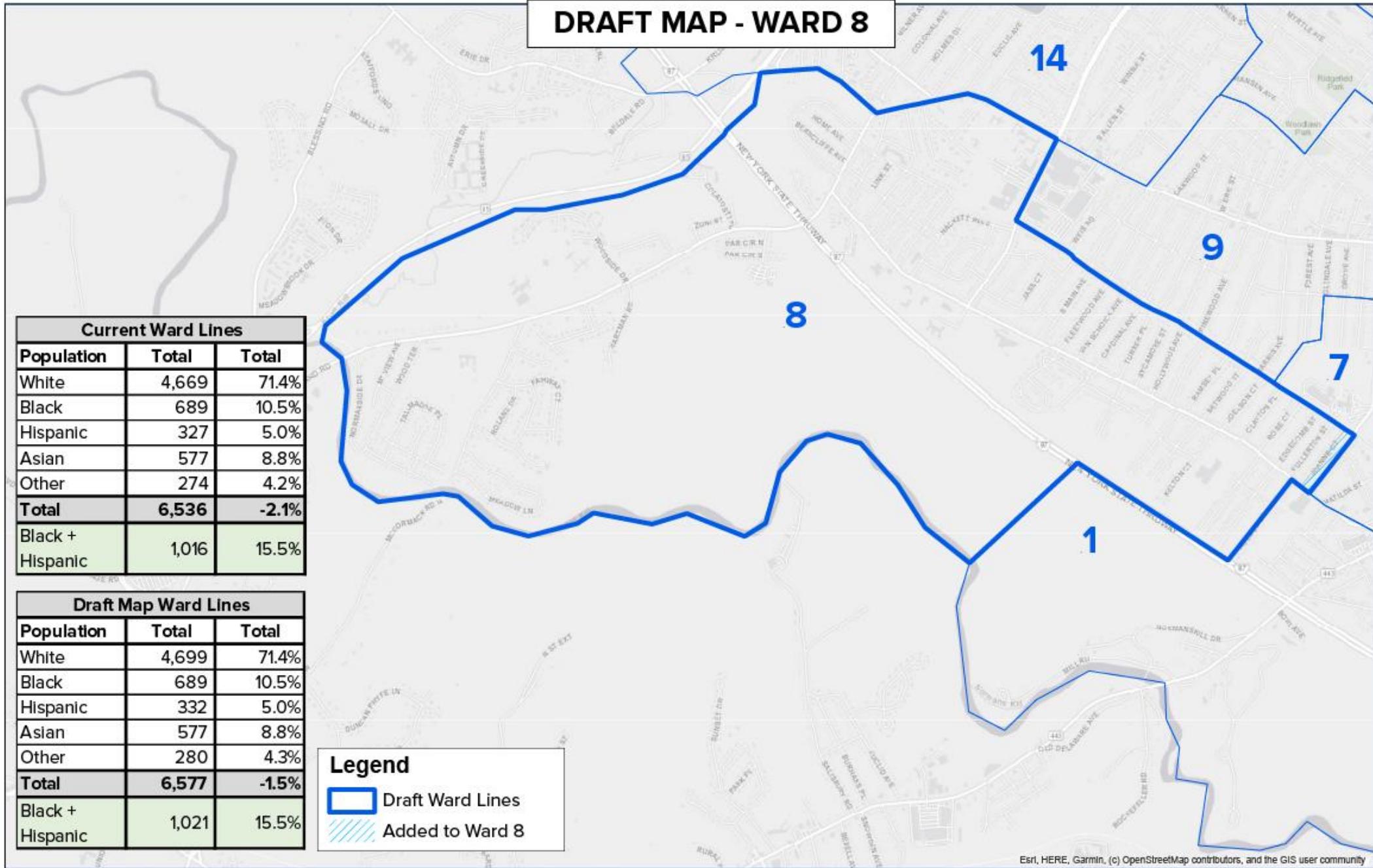
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 6



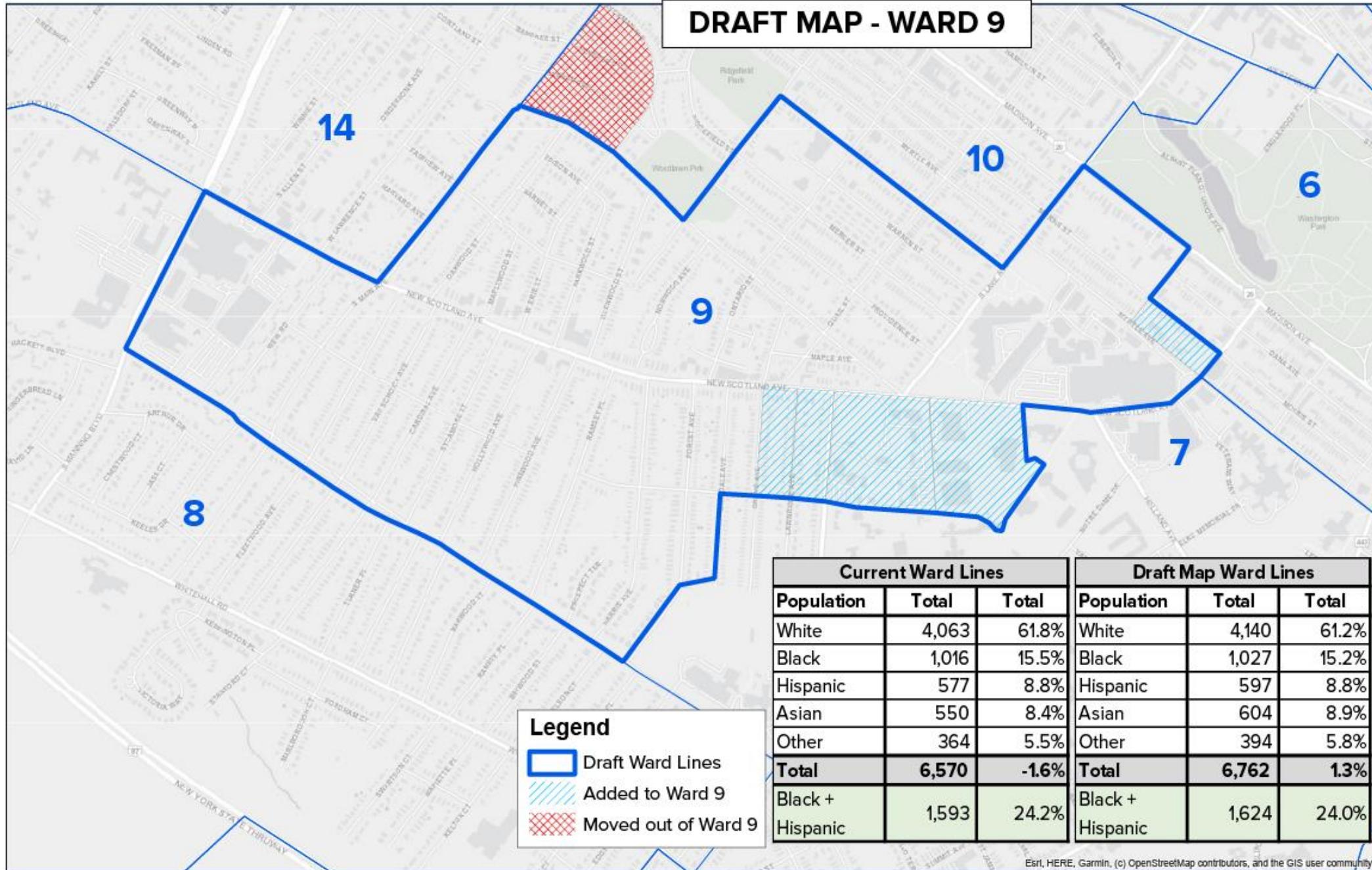
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 7



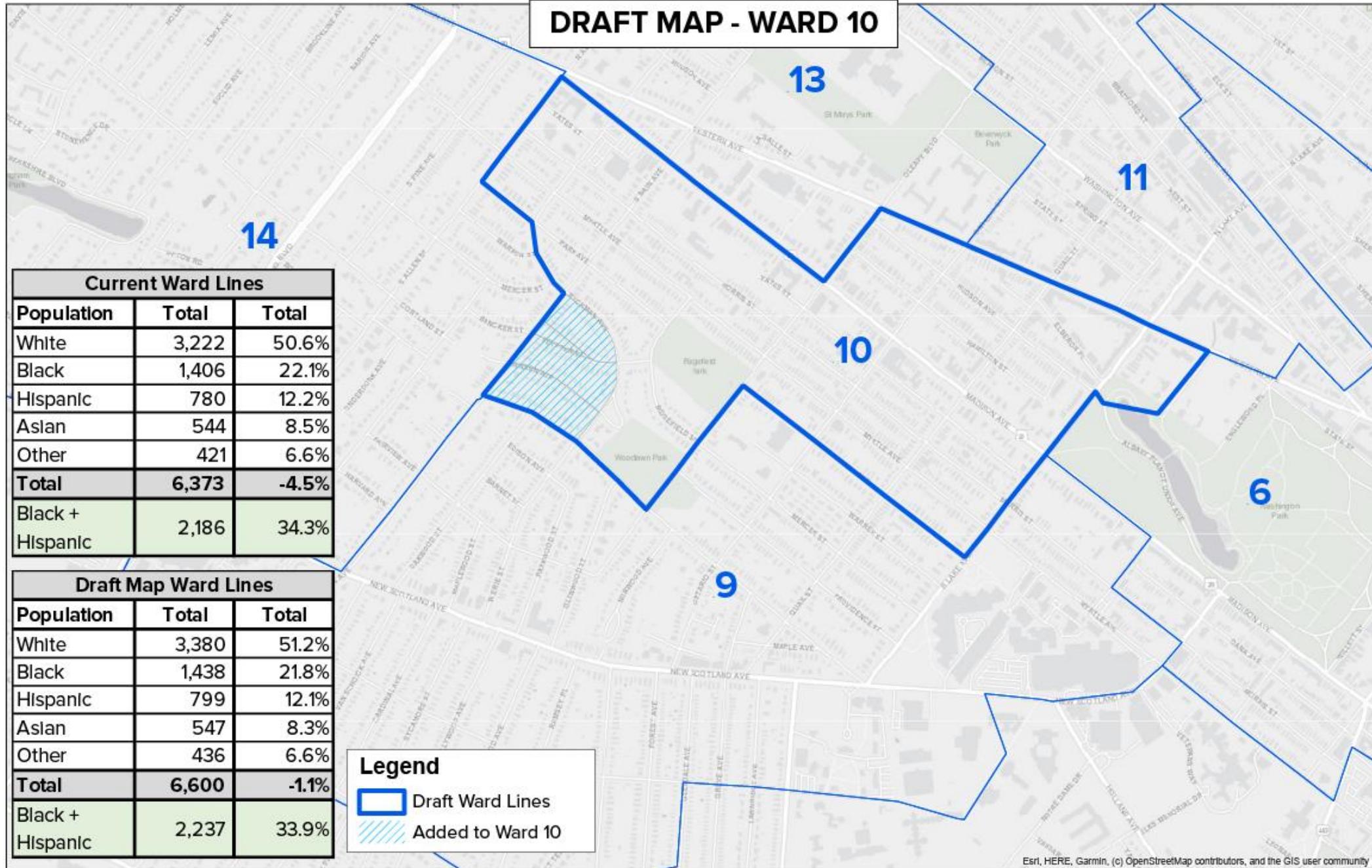
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 8



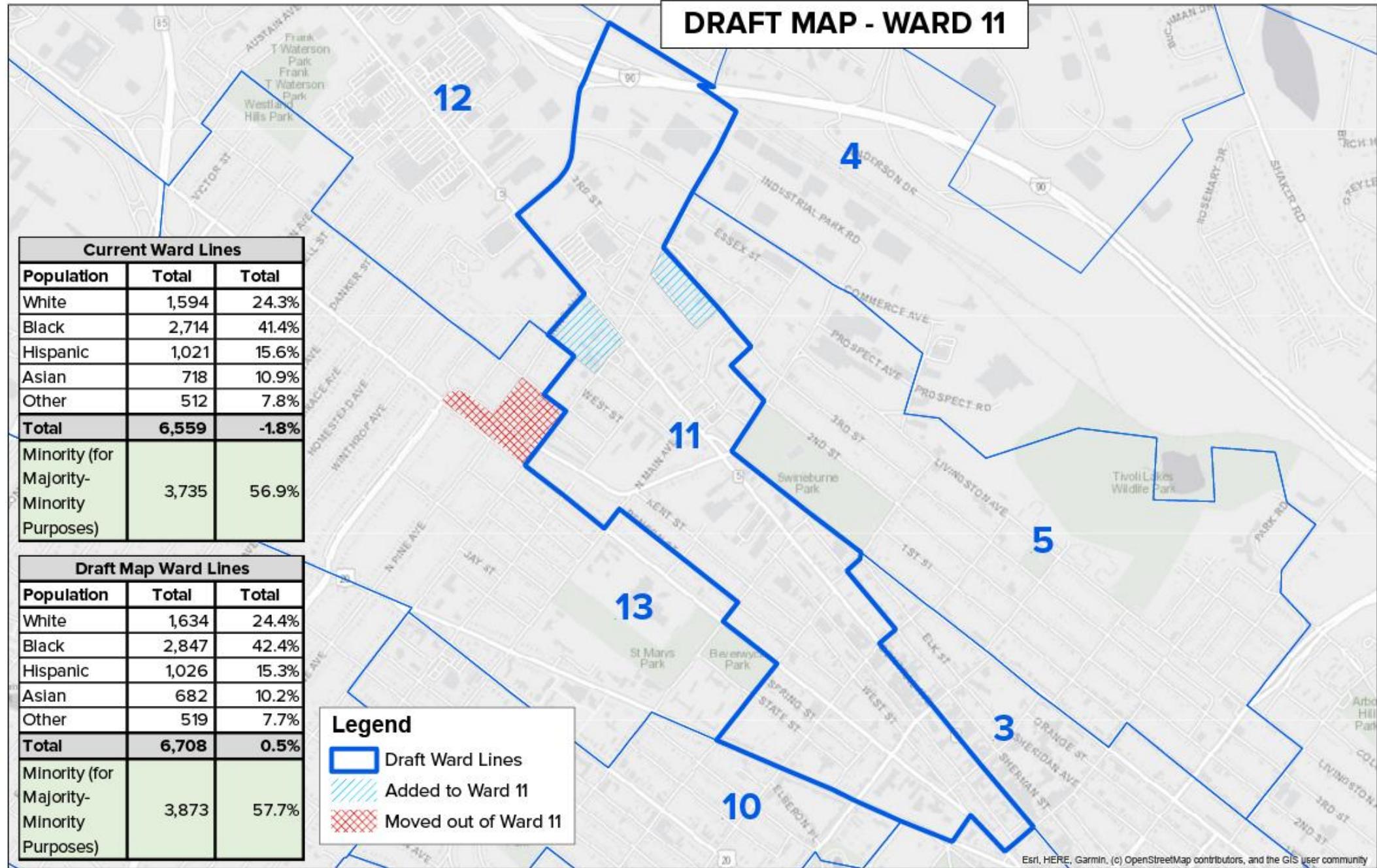
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 9



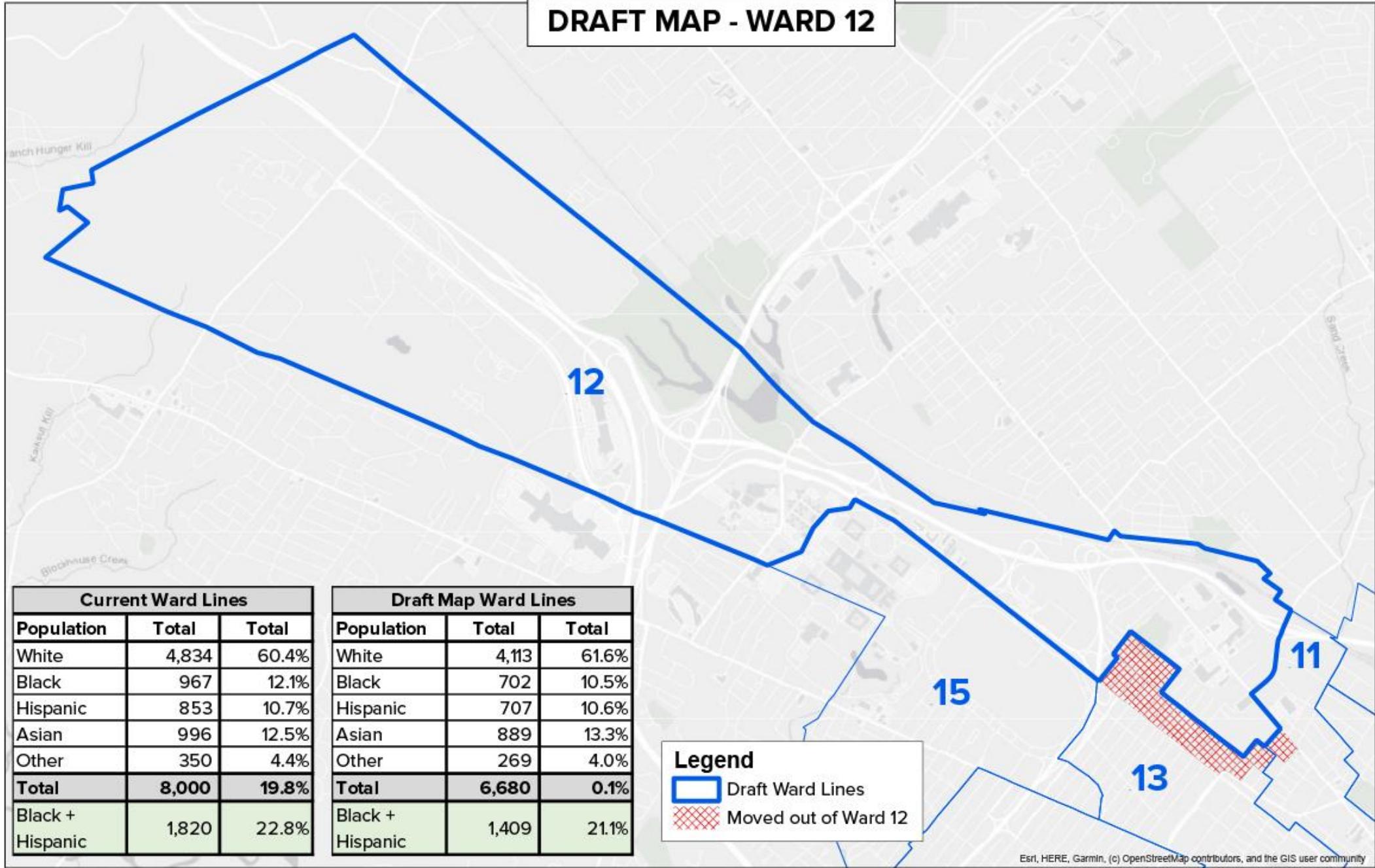
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 10



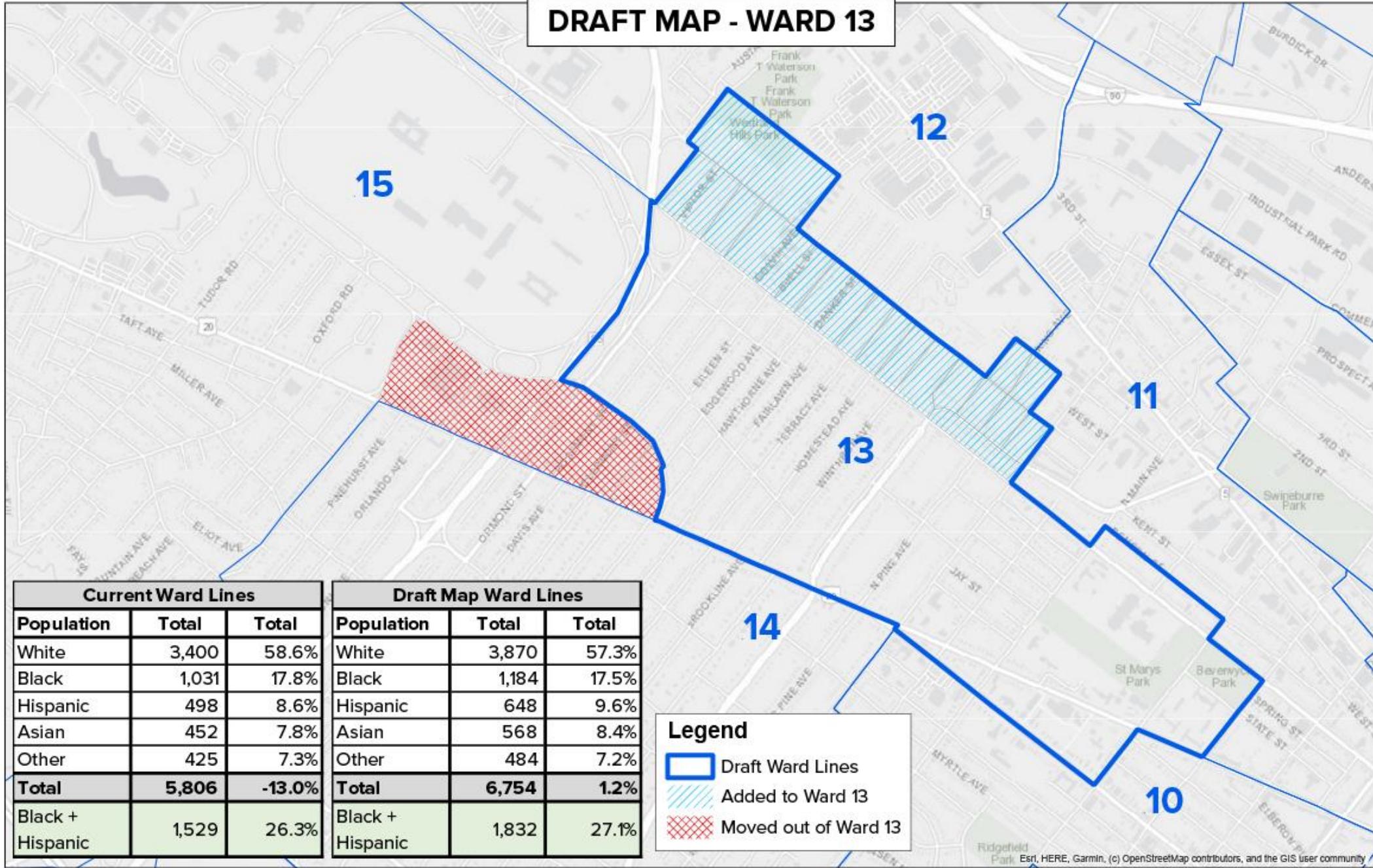
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 11



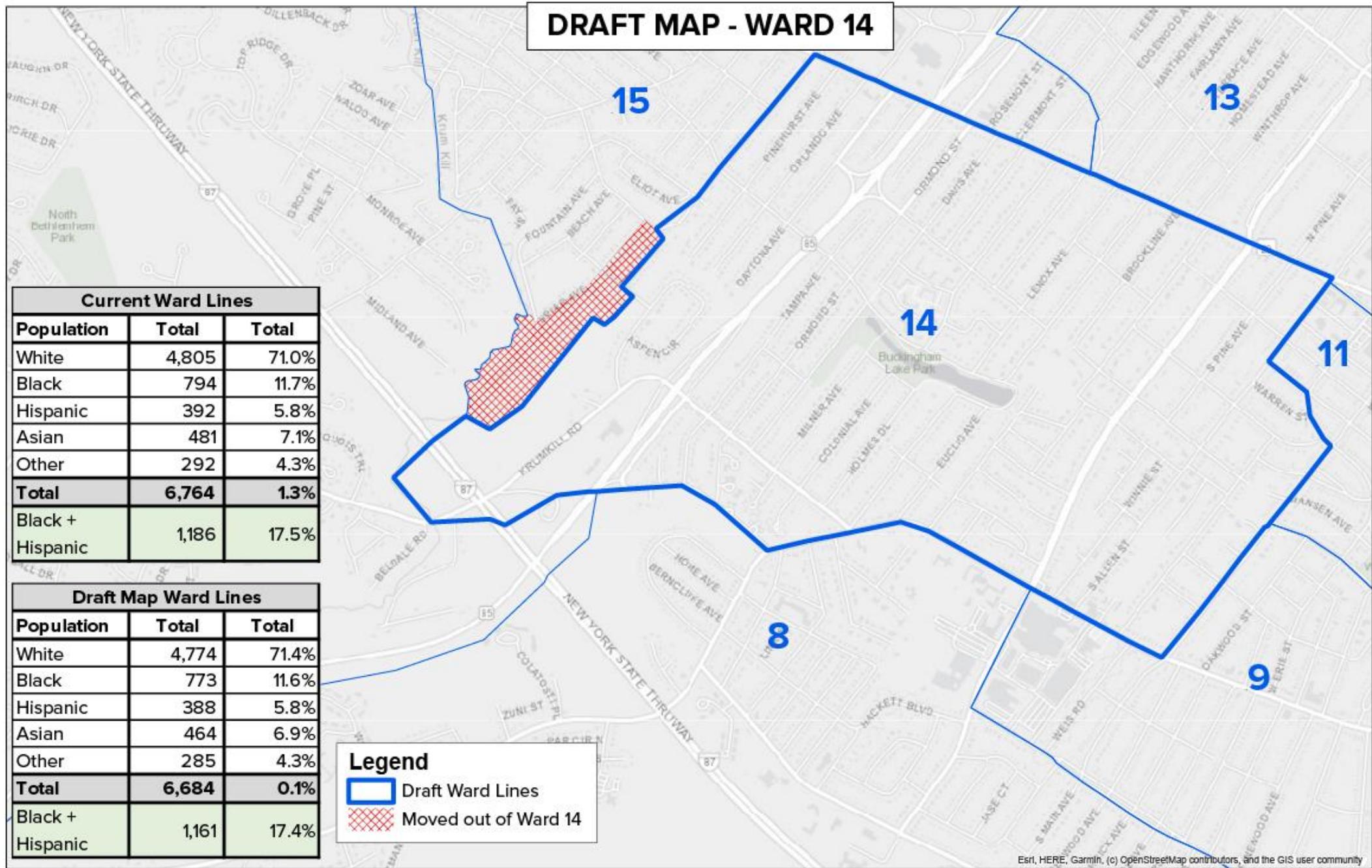
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 12



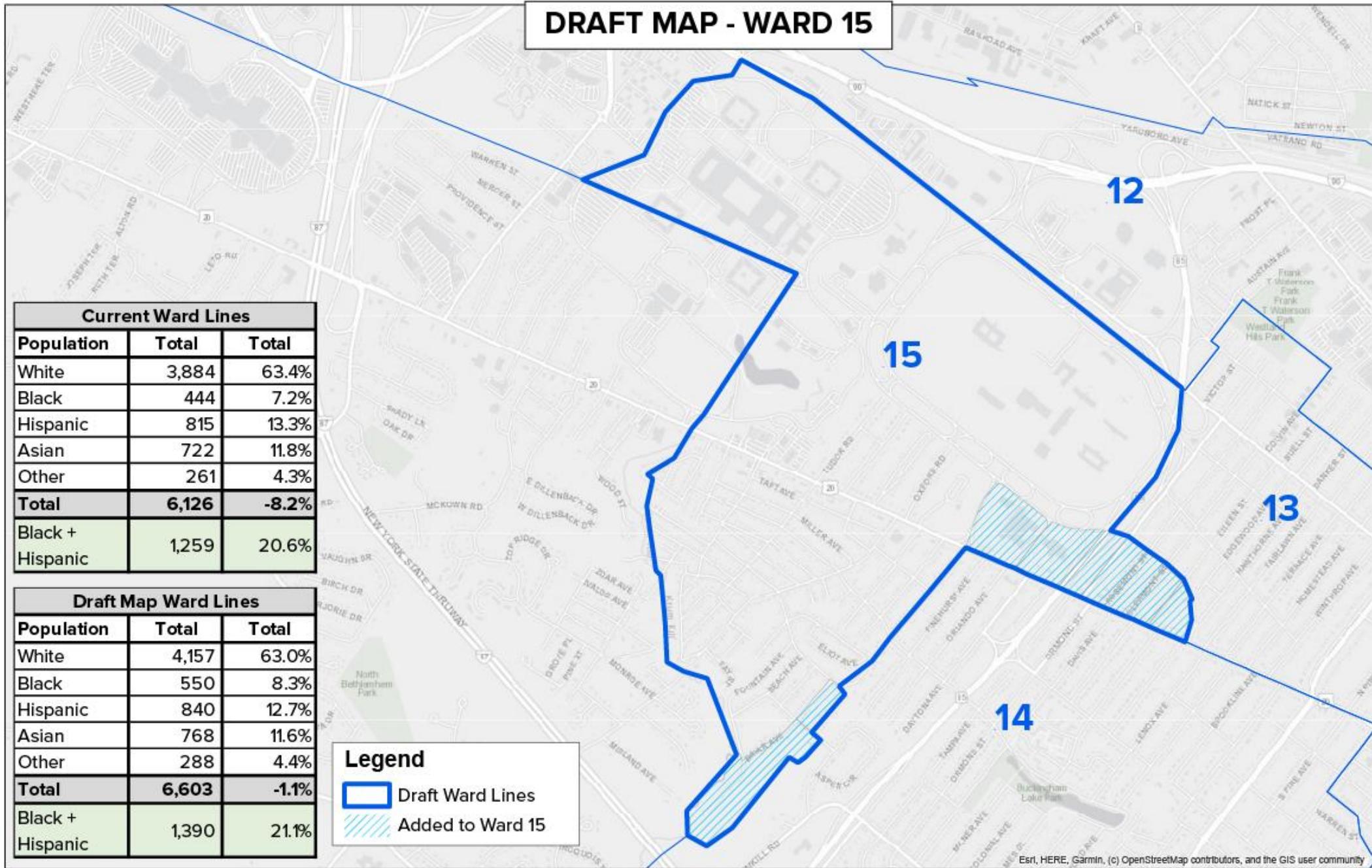
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 13



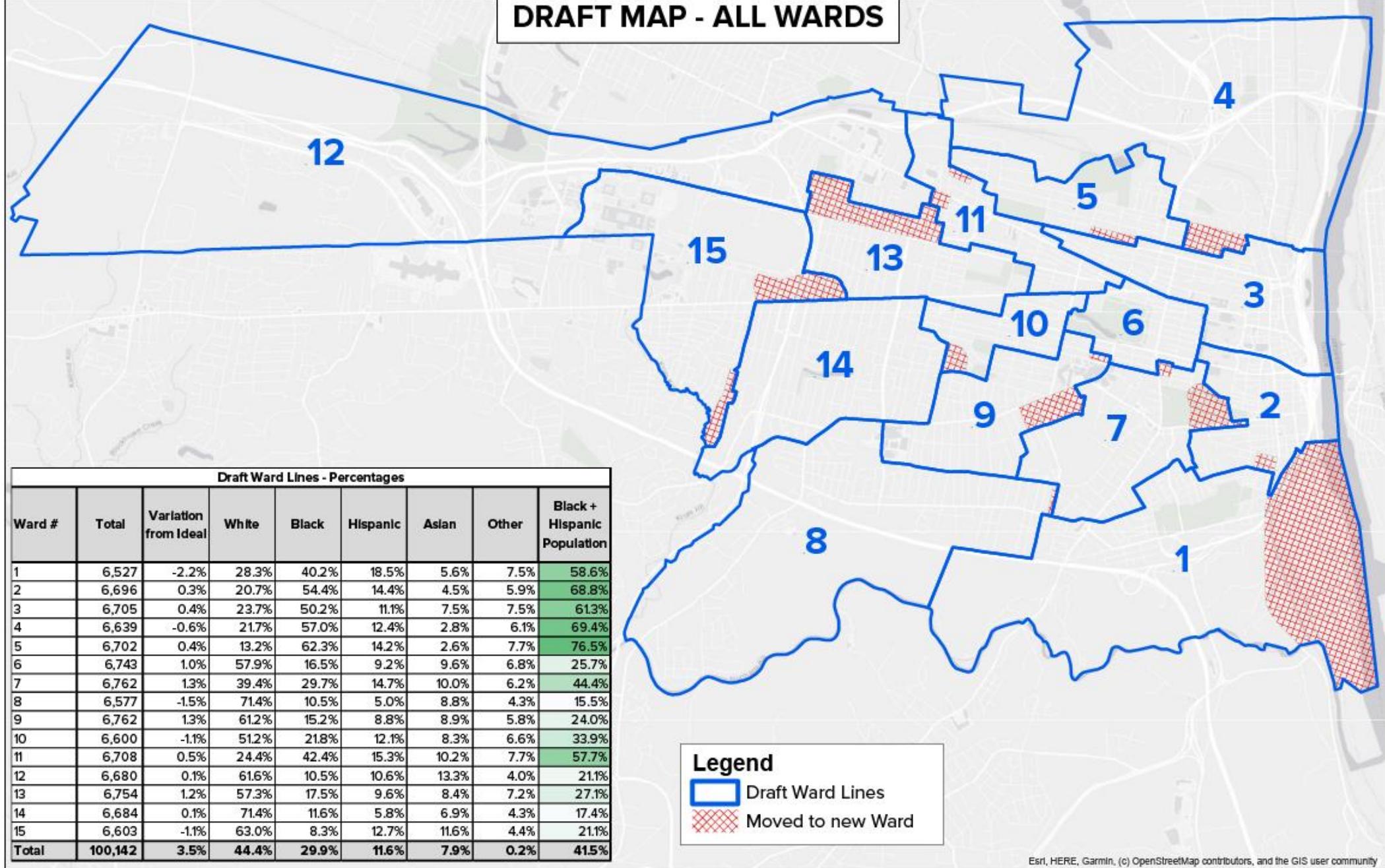
## DRAFT MAP - WARD 14



## DRAFT MAP - WARD 15



## DRAFT MAP - ALL WARDS



# Schedule

## Commission Meetings

All at 5:30 via Zoom

September 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>

## Public Hearing

September 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30

Common Council Chamber and via Zoom

Public comment welcome

Email to register:

[reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov](mailto:reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov)

# Find More Information

- [www.albanyny.gov/2084/City-of-Albany-Redistricting-Reapportion](http://www.albanyny.gov/2084/City-of-Albany-Redistricting-Reapportion)
- [www.facebook.com/ReapportionmentCommission](http://www.facebook.com/ReapportionmentCommission)

# Let Us Know What You Think

- Take our survey: available on our website or copies available in City Hall, library branches and other sites.
- Email Us:  
**[reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov](mailto:reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov)**

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**City of Albany Redistricting Commission**  
**August 24, 2022**

**Statement of Richard Conti**

My name is Richard Conti. I currently reside at 151 Chestnut Street in the City of Albany. I am also a previous member of the Albany Common Council representing the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward. My comments tonight are general in nature and focus on factors the Commission should take into consideration as you undertake your redistricting charge. At this point I have not seen specific draft maps for this hearing to comment on.

As a 24-year member of the Common Council prior to retiring at the end of 2021, I experienced two Common Council redistricting processes after the 2000 and 2010 US Census findings. In each case, the Commission overseeing redistricting of the Common Council in accordance with those respective Census reports took into consideration then existing Ward lines and neighborhood boundaries in adopting a final plan in accordance with population and demographic requirements. This process provided a level of continuity in representation rather than upending ward lines in a way that disrupted established relationships. As a result of the current lines, the Common Council that was elected in 2021 is the most diverse in the history of the City of Albany.

Absent the availability of proposed draft redistricting maps, the following comments are meant to outline general considerations for the Commission to consider in developing its proposed plan.

**Continuity of Representation and Communities of Interest**

It's important to understand that district boundaries are more than lines on a map with population figures. Each district represents a community with real people, shared interests and neighborhoods that reflect communities of interest. Understanding that there have been population shifts that will necessitate adjustments to current ward lines, please seek to maintain current districts to the extent possible. Maintaining continuity of representation is important, as over a ten-year period constituents develop relationships and understandings of ward lines. Upending those ward lines can impact civic engagement and voter participation in the electoral process.

**Ward Residency Requirements and Incumbent Protection**

Last year voters adopted a Albany Charter amendment establishing a one-year residency requirement within a ward as a condition for running for office within a particular district. Prior to this amendment the residency requirement was a more general one-year residence anywhere within the city. During a redistricting year there is an exception for incumbents who may see their existing districts changed or eliminated in which case an incumbent may run in any district abutting their residence without meeting a residency requirement. This exception is applied on a discriminatory basis and does not apply to non-incumbents who may have been considering a run for elective office in the prior district. I call this incumbency protection. I raise this issue to caution that you not redraw lines in a way that it might be perceived that potential opponents to

an incumbent are being drawn out of a district to the advantage of an incumbent. This is especially relevant to the extent that district lines might be drawn to split neighborhoods.

### **Equity Agenda and Redistricting**

In 2019 the Common Council adopted an Equity Agenda ordinance (Chapter 183 of the Albany City Code). The ordinance seeks to measure equitable investment in neighborhoods (capital projects, street repairs, infrastructure etc.) based on city ward lines. The measurement includes a retrospective four-year look back on capital project investments and road reconstruction etc. Because these investments are based on ward lines and not neighborhood boundaries (which are on file with the Planning Dept.), redistricting will require a retrospective adjustment in past capital investments to reflect new ward lines. Maintaining the continuity of existing ward lines will minimize the need for retrospective adjustments and investment measurements. Significant redrawing of ward lines could distort investment measurements, especially if neighborhoods with high investment levels are mixed with neighborhoods with traditionally lower investment levels. So I'd just caution to be cognizant of the impact of redistricting on how the Equity Agenda ordinance operates.

### **LGBTQ+ Political Voice**

As an added observation, from someone who's been pretty involved in city politics since 1986, the four neighborhoods which form the core of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward (Center Square, Hudson/Park, Park South and Washington Park) have been the heart of progressive politics in the City of Albany that challenged existing political orders and opened new opportunities for civic involvement and responsive government. They have also, and continue to be, the home of a large LGBTQ+ voting population that made those past victories possible and has been able to amplify the voice of LGBTQ+ people in our local political system.

The Albany County Redistricting Commission has put forth a plan that eliminates the 5<sup>th</sup> County Legislative District which is pretty much coterminous with the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward. The County plan dilutes the political voice of the LGBTQ+ community. I don't know if that is intentional, but that is the impact of the proposal in how it divides the existing 5<sup>th</sup> LD. This comes at a time when the LGBTQ+ community is facing new challenges nationally, and even locally, and needs to have a strong political voice. The County plan sends the wrong message. Frankly, I'm astonished that a plan to dilute the LGBTQ+ political voice is even being put forward on the County level. Afterall, this isn't Florida or Texas!

I strongly urge the City Commission to recognize the LGBTQ+ population as a community of interest with a concentration in the four neighborhoods that constitute the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward and to take no action which would dilute the political voice of the LGBTQ+ community.

### **The 6<sup>th</sup> Ward**

Finally, as the former 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Council Member, a ward leader prior to that and a 36 year resident of the ward, I have a keen interest in maintaining the four core neighborhoods that constitute the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward as a continued single unit of representation. These four neighborhoods, on both the County and City levels, have traditionally shared the same unit of representation, represent similar communities of interest, are bound together by Lark Street as a uniting mixed-use commercial corridor and have a strong working relationship with each other. The Lark Street BID is the only one of the three City of Albany BIDs that is wholly contained within one City

Ward or County Legislative District, this has provided a level of cohesion in representation with city and county government that benefits its membership. The 6<sup>th</sup> Ward is unique in how these neighborhoods share the same unit of representation and work closely together on issues of public safety and neighborhood quality of life issues. Please maintain the existing 6<sup>th</sup> Ward as an identifiable unit of representation.

### **Conclusion**

In the absence of draft maps, these comments are general and designed to outline considerations the Commission should take into consideration in finalizing its proposed redistricting plan. As draft maps become available I will most likely offer specific comments on those proposals.

Thank you for consideration of the issues I have raised here in this statement.

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Albany County, I am submitting this testimony for your review.

The League has been a leading voter advocacy organization for over 100 years. It is our goal that on every level of government, there will be fair maps in place that represent different communities of interests in Albany. We also believe that it is extremely important that the maps proposed by the commission respect the rights of minority voters. The aim should be to increase diverse representation in city council and keep the city in line with the Federal Voting Rights Act.

It is challenging to identify how effective MMDs are so we recommend that the commission start by drawing sufficient MMDs first and start having conversations about what it would take for a district to become an effective MMD now. The commission may want to hire a voting rights expert who could use statistical techniques to prove which districts are effective.

The League also agrees with the commission that the remaining two people who are chosen to join the commission represent different communities, experiences and background than the current members. More diversity on the commission will help create better maps that reflect all the different communities in our city. We look forward to seeing the commission fulfill the promise of more diversity and encourage members of the commission to continue outreach.

Another thing for the commission to consider is making better use of the website. The League recommends that the commission post the meeting minutes, public comments, the existing districts, future draft maps and in general, more information about how redistricting works in addition to the biographies that are currently on the website. Providing more information will help commission members and the public keep track of the process and will further increase the transparency of the commission. At a recent meeting, the commission seemed to like the idea of setting up sub-committees and creating a website subcommittee would be useful.

Besides engaging the public through the website, the League also encourages the commission to attend public gatherings and different festivals within the city. Tabling at these events is a good way to engage members of the public who are unfamiliar with the process and don't know that wards are being redrawn. Tabling also will bring your website information to the public's attention.

Our last recommendation is that the commission continues to stream all of its meetings and also stream the drawing of the maps. Members of the public will be less confused as to how commission choices are made with regard to drawing the maps. Streaming the map drawing session will also give the public a better idea of the trade offs that the commission is considering. If the public knows what choices are considered, they will be able to comment about which trade offs they prefer.

To summarize, the league would like the commission to increase its diversity. We also recommend that the commission start having conversations about what makes an effective MMD now and begin to sign up to table at public events. Finally, we would like to see the

commission add more information to its website and to stream mapping sessions once they begin. The League has confidence in the commission and we look forward to seeing the progress you will make.

Lars Dahl  
Albany County League of Women Voters  
Redistricting Specialist

## Danielle Gillespie

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**From:** Zachary Simpson <zacharyemmottsimpson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 24, 2022 4:34 PM  
**To:** Reapportionment Commission  
**Cc:** Janel Carver; michael obrien; Bernice Aviza; Karen Cunniff; Edward Clarke  
**Subject:** Written Comments for August 24th Public Hearing

***ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.***

Dear Sir/Madam:

*Please accept the following written comments on behalf of the Upper Washington Avenue Neighborhood Association and Former 12th Ward Common Council Member Michael O'Brien for today's public hearing. Kindly acknowledge receipt via return email.*

*Dear Albany City Redistricting Commissioners and Members of the Reapportionment Commission,*

*We write on behalf of the Upper Washington Avenue Neighborhood Association (UWANA), local leaders, neighbors and Stakeholders to express our deep concern regarding the redistricting map, specifically the changes to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Wards in the City of Albany.*

*We are concerned that the proposed map was developed without UWANA input and disregards the unique neighborhood needs and alliances that strengthen our individual community within the City of Albany.*

*The newly proposed district negatively impacts UWANA in that it will inhibit progress and safety in our neighborhood. For example:*

- *The division of the Upper Washington Neighborhood, into the new 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Wards, will completely eliminate a business corridor in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward.*
- *The division will diminish traffic safety and business collaboration as long established relationships will have to be transferred.*
- *Splitting UWANA essentially in half fails to understand our neighborhood and recognize UWANA as a community of interest in our corner of the City of Albany.*
- *As the Albany City Redistricting Commission is tasked with creating Majority Minority Districts (MMDs), they are also required by law to maintain communities of interest. These include schools, parishes and particularly neighborhood associations.*

*Due to these critical flaws in the newly proposed redistricting map, we oppose the proposed map and urge you to instead call for the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Ward boundaries to remain largely intact as they exist today.*

*Sincerely,*  
Zachary Simpson, President  
Upper Washington Avenue Neighborhood Association

Janel Mirel, Vice-President  
Upper Washington Avenue Neighborhood Association

Michael O'Brien  
Former Common Council 12<sup>th</sup> Ward Representative

## **City of Albany Reapportionment Commission**

Hybrid Public Hearing

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

6:30 PM

<b>Members Present</b>			
Shawn Morris, Chair	Scott Allardice	Dylan Carey	Dale Getto
Carol June-Washington	Emily Loughlin, Secretary	Judith Mazza (joined at 7:13 PM)	Dr. Brenda Robinson
Paul Webster (joined at 7:05 PM)			
<b>Members Absent</b>			
Charles Williams			
<b>Staff Present</b>			
Danielle Gillespie, City Clerk			

- Shawn Morris called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.
- Shawn Morris then reviewed the process of the Commission, general population trends observed in the 2020 Census, and the challenges the Commission is working through to make a representative map.
- Dylan Carey presented the current ward map, the overall draft ward map created by the Commission, and the detailed draft changes to Wards 1-7.
  - In the draft map, 95% of the City's population remains in the same ward as before. All districts, except Ward 1, are within 100 people of the ideal population of 6,676 people per district.
- Emily Loughlin presented the detailed draft changes to Wards 8-15 and the overall draft map again.
- Shawn Morris invited comment from the members of the public in attendance.
  - Lars Dahl expressed concern about Arbor Hill being split from Sheridan Hollow, felt Sheridan Hollow does not have the same interests as Downtown Albany, said the border of Wards 2 & 7 could be smoother, and felt Ward 11 was not compact enough. They also mentioned that the threshold for a majority-minority district should have a black population of 45% and a combined black and Hispanic population of 55%, although a stringent threshold has not been established.
  - Zachary Simpson spoke of the Upper Washington Avenue neighborhood and promoted that the boundaries of Wards 12 & 13 remain the same to promote the community of interest there. They also mentioned that the Commission should review a more up-to-date map of the City's neighborhood associations when drafting its next map.

- E. Hyde Clarke also spoke in favor of maintaining the current boundaries of Wards 12 & 13.
- Hon. Derek Johnson, current Ward 2 councilmember, expressed concern that more changes were made in the lower wards compared to the upper wards. They were also concerned about excessive changes to the boundaries of Wards 1 & 2.
- Shawn Morris read a written statement submitted by Richard Conti that spoke of the need to keep communities of interest united, incumbency rules, the City's equity agenda in relation to redistricting, the LGBTQ+ political voice, and Ward 6.
- Shawn Morris presented ways to get in touch with the Commission and its upcoming meetings.
- Dr. Brenda Robinson motioned to adjourn, and Scott Allardice seconded at 7:23 PM.