

Testimony to the County Council regarding Redistricting
Public Hearing, November 16 & 18, 2021

I am concerned that the map you are considering for adoption has been compromised by creating a Rockville-Gaithersburg district in the center of the county, making it difficult to accomplish the goals of the commission in some of the remaining areas.

Specifically, the North Bethesda area, between Rockville and Bethesda, has community interests along the Rockville Pike and I-270 corridors. The map's bowtie district that would include North Bethesda is oriented along the CSX railroad line, which is a completely artificial axis for this district. The commission has created a "leftover" district that extends from I-270 all the way to the Prince Georges county border. While this includes a wonderfully diverse, socially, economically, and culturally population, it will not, however create appropriate representation for North Bethesda on the county council.

North Bethesda should be included in a district with Rockville and Twinbrook. It would then have the diversity we all desire, along with shared concerns.

The commission's goals were sixfold: equal populations of approx.. 150,000, compactness, contiguity, minority representation, preservation of incorporated cities, and preservation of community interest. The map you are considering violates three of the six goals, insofar as North Bethesda is concerned:

1. Compactness, this is by no means a singularly-shaped district
2. Contiguity, technically, it's one piece, but the 180 foot string that connects the two bowtie parts is disingenuous, at best
3. Preservation of community interest, there is no common thread across these communities other than the humanity ties that bind all Montgomerians. North Bethesda, as a community, is highly involved in the developments along Rockville Pike and the transportation challenges posed by Gov. Hogan's I-270 widening plans.

I urge you to require the commission to return to the drawing board and create a map that reflects community needs so that each district can elect a councilmember who understands his/her district fully.

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