

**Town of Clarkstown**  
**Proposed**  
**Four Ward Map**

**February 8, 2017**

## **Overview**

In the November 2015 Elections, voters in the town of Clarkstown approved a resolution to establish a Ward system. A proposal to increase the number of Town Council members from four to six was rejected.

Based on discussions with local government officials, we established basic criteria for these new wards to be drawn. The four wards were to be compact, contiguous and substantially equally populated. The voting-age population would be equalized as much as possible. We would not split the existing Election District unless it was necessary to preserve equal population. We would attempt to preserve hamlet boundaries where possible

## **Equal Population**

Using the Census 2010 population data, Clarkstown's population is 84,187. Therefore the ideal district size is 21,047 people. Numerous Federal and State court decisions indicate that except for Congressional districts, a deviation is allowed from the ideal district size. Plans with total deviations of 10% or less have been presumed to be substantially equal and comply with one-person-one-vote. Deviations above 10% can be allowed if justified by a rational government policy.

Under this proposed ward plan, the largest district would have 21,596 residents; the smallest would have 20,738 and the total deviation would be 4.08%. This plan achieves the fundamental equal-population requirement of redistricting.

Looking at voting-age population, the largest district would have 16,670 Voting-age population; the smallest would have 15,866 and the total deviation would be 4.99%.

We feel that the wards as drawn meet the primary criteria that the wards be substantially equal population.

## **Compact and Contiguous**

All four districts are contiguous. Contiguity is relatively easy to define and there are no instances of "point-contiguity" or "line-of-sight" contiguity that some consider controversial.

Compactness is a more subjective measure. There are different formulas to measure relative compactness, but because this will be the first time wards are created there is no benchmark we can use to compare against. Usually, the "Eye-test" is often considered to be as valid as any statistical measurement. If the districts look compact, they are considered to be compact. There are no districts that have convoluted boundaries and the proposed plan certainly passes this test.

## **Preservations of Hamlet Boundaries**

As natural communities of interest, it was decided that the hamlets within the town should be preserved, if possible. Many of the comments in the public hearing and emails sent to the town indicated that people identified with a specific hamlet or neighborhood. We used the Census Bureau's Census Designated Places (CDP) file to determine hamlet boundaries. Some of the ED boundaries were split by hamlet boundaries, so it is not possible to perfectly preserve all of the hamlets.

West Nyack, Upper Nyack, Valley Cottage and Congers are substantially whole in this plan. As are the Clarkstown portions of Nyack and Spring Valley which are also in parts of other towns. 91% of Bardonia is in the WEST ward and 76% of Nanuet is in the SOUTH Ward.

## **Preservations of Existing Election**

In 2016, Clarkstown had seventy-seven Election Districts, numbered 1 through 82 with EDs 7, 26, 39, 56 and 78 being unused. We assigned Census Population values to the Election Districts and used them as the primary building blocks of this plan. No Election District is split in this plan.

## **Voting Right Act**

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act protects a minority community's right to equal opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice. There is not sufficient population of any covered racial or ethnic group that would require Section 2 to be applied.

## **Evolution**

We met with each member of the town board and gave an overview of the drawing process at an informational meeting in early January 2017. We attended the public hearing in late January and read all of the Ward-related emails sent to the Town and created this first proposal based upon meeting the primary criterial of equal population and incorporating many of the ideas suggested by the public and town board. We feel this proposal meets all of the criteria established by the Board, but further public comment is expected and may be incorporated in a final plan if necessary.

## **Conclusions**

Based on our analysis of the proposed plan, we believe it adheres to Local, State and Federal laws and regulations and follows other traditional redistricting criteria such as compactness and contiguity. It also minimizes disruptions to election district boundaries and preserves hamlets as much as possible.

## **Appendix/Attachments**

- 1- This Overview Report
- 2- District Statistics
- 3- Ward ED Assignments
- 4- Town-wide Ward Maps– 11 x 17 and 34 x 44
- 5- Town-wide Ward Maps with Streets– 11 x 17 and 34 x 44