



Municipality of Anchorage
Planning Department
Memorandum



E.1.

Date: March 10, 2025
To: Planning and Zoning Commission
Thru: *MB* Mélisa Babb, Director
From: *TD* Tom Davis, AICP, Senior Planner/Urban Designer
Subject: PZC Case No. 2024-0100, 10-Year Review of Community Council Boundaries – Staff Report Memo and Updated Public Comments for March 10 Public Hearing

This memorandum provides staff recommendations in response to the public comments that have been received since November 1, 2024, regarding the 10-Year Review of Community Council Boundaries and the public hearing draft recommended boundaries. The Planning Department recommends six changes to the public hearing draft in response to the public comments. The recommendations are followed by a brief summary of:

- The public hearing draft materials, which include Attachments 1-6 that the Commission received on January 6, 2025;
- Attachment 7 (updated) and Attachment 8 (new) that supplement this memo;
- The public review period and comments received; and
- Comments from the public and from staff that propose changes to the public hearing draft.

Community council districts are established in Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) Section 2.40, *Community Councils*. This project, the *10-Year Review of Community Council Boundaries*, fulfills a requirement set forth in AMC 2.40.040 for the Municipality to review the community council boundaries every 10 years to determine if any boundaries should be adjusted, and include a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission. The public hearing for this case was opened on January 6, 2025. The findings and recommendations from the Commission will be forwarded to the Assembly, which will also hold a public hearing before taking final action.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Department requests the Planning and Zoning Commission to make its recommendations to the Anchorage Assembly regarding proposed amendments to community council district boundaries. The Planning Department recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend to the Assembly APPROVAL of the October 2024 Public Hearing Draft Assembly Ordinance (Attachment 1) and its Exhibit A Community Council District Maps (in Attachment 2), with the following changes¹:

1. In Boundary Study Area #21, regarding Sitka Street Park, change the recommendation to Option B, to transfer the western half of the Merrill Field Airport open space south of 15th Avenue from Airport Heights Community Council to Fairview Community Council, as shown on the map on page 4 of Attachment 8, *Comment-Response*. Retain the eastern half including the Sitka Street Park playground in Airport Heights.

¹ The numbered Boundary Study Areas referenced in the recommended changes are described in Attachment 3, *Report and Recommendations*, which the Commission received on January 6.

2. In Boundary Study Area #23, change the recommendation for the boundary between Fairview and South Addition Community Councils west of Cordova Street to Option C, to transfer the vacant blocks south of 13th Avenue between A Street and Cordova Street, north of Central Lutheran Church, from South Addition to Fairview, as shown on the map on page 4 of Attachment 8, *Comment-Response*.
3. In Boundary Study Area #33, change the recommendation regarding the boundary between Taku Campbell and Bayshore/Klatt Community Councils to Option A, to retain the existing boundary at 92nd Avenue between Minnesota Drive and Seward Highway. The existing boundary to be retained is shown in Attachment 6, Boundary Study Area Map 11.
4. Transfer the portion of Far North Bicentennial Park south of Campbell Airstrip Road, east of the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead, and north of the South Fork of Campbell Creek, from Hillside Community Council to Basher Community Council. Additionally, shift the western boundary of Basher Community Council with Hillside and Campbell Park Community Councils to become a combination of the trail connecting from the pedestrian bridge over Campbell Creek to the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead and the trail that runs along the west side Campbell Airstrip Road between the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead and Tudor Road. These landmarks are depicted on the map on page 20 of Attachment 8, *Comment-Response*.
5. Transfer the 40-acre quarter-section east of Michael Road between Upper Huffman Road and Upper De Armoun Road/Canyon Road, from Hillside Community Council to Glen Alps Community Council, as shown on the map on page 22 of Attachment 8, *Comment-Response*.
6. Adjust the Government Hill Community Council boundary where the Port of Alaska adjoins Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, to follow the management boundary between the two facilities, as shown on the map on page 15 of Attachment 8, *Comment Response*.

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT MATERIALS

The October 2024 public hearing draft recommendations were provided to the Commission on January 6, 2025, and are listed as follows. Attachments 7 and 8 are new with this packet.

- Attachments 1 and 2, public hearing draft Assembly ordinance.
 - Attachment 1: Text of the draft ordinance amending the list of recognized community council districts and the list of district maps in AMC Section 2.40.
 - Attachment 2: “Exhibit A” of the ordinance, providing recommended maps of the amended community council boundaries to replace the existing maps in AMC Section 2.40.
- Attachment 3, the public hearing draft *Report and Recommendations*, documents the public process and provides the analysis and recommendations for the 40 Boundary Study Areas identified during the project. The analysis and recommendations of this report provide the basis for the public hearing draft code and map amendments in Attachments 1 and 2 above.

- Attachments 4, 5, and 6, are Appendices A, B, and C of the *Report and Recommendations*.
 - Appendices A and B document public comments and meetings.
 - Appendix C (Attachment 6) provides the “Boundary Study Area Maps.” The Boundary Study Area Maps in Attachment 6 show all 40 Boundary Study Areas in relation to existing community council boundaries and highlights the areas where boundary changes are recommended.
- Attachment 7, Updated, attached to this memo, are public comments received regarding the public hearing draft. It is updated to include all comments that have been received as of March 7, 2025.
- Attachment 8, a *new attachment*, is a Comment-Response to provide staff answers to public comments that proposed changes to the public hearing draft recommended boundaries. Attachment 8 is attached.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD AND COMMENTS RECEIVED

The public hearing draft materials were released for public review on the [project webpage](#) on October 30, 2024.

- Notification of the release and public hearing schedule was emailed to the officers of all community councils and the Federation of Community Councils on November 1, 2024.
- The public hearing draft materials were then posted on the Planning Department’s *Planning Cases Online* website, distributed for agency and public review on November 15, 2024, and scheduled for the January 6 Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing.
- The public hearing schedule was announced on the Municipality of Anchorage Public Notices webpages.
- Since the release, staff has been appearing at community council meetings upon request and providing technical assistance.

The Planning and Zoning Commission opened the public hearing for Case 2024-0100 on January 6 and continued the public hearing to February 3, 2025.

The February 3 continued hearing was postponed to March 10 to give community councils enough time to deliberate and submit resolutions for the Commission’s consideration.

All written comments from reviewing agencies and the public that have been received as of March 7 are provided in the Updated Attachment 7 (attached).

- 6 agencies responded indicating they have no objections or comments.
- 2 members of the public submitted comments supporting specific boundary changes.
- 1 community council president submitted comments expressing no objections.

- 1 community council president submitted results of a questionnaire survey of residents' preferences.
- 22 community councils submitted comments in the form of resolutions adopted by their membership stating their positions concerning their boundaries.

Any additional public comments that the Planning Department receives after March 7 will be provided to the Planning and Zoning Commission in a supplemental packet by the March 10 public hearing.

COMMENTS THAT PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

Most of the public comments received (updated Attachment 7) support the public hearing draft recommended boundaries. However, 9 community councils and 2 members of the public submitted comments that recommend changes to the public hearing draft recommended boundaries.

Following is a summary of the 11 proposals and the staff recommendation in response to each. In addition, staff recommends a boundary correction, which is listed as a twelfth proposal. Attachment 8, *Comment-Response*, provides a detailed staff response to each proposal, with references to the public comments in Attachment 7.

1. In Boundary Study Area #8 (Area Map 6 in Attachment 6), University Area Community Council does not support the public hearing draft recommendation for Option B, to transfer the area east of Boniface Parkway to Baxter Road from University Area to Scenic Foothills Community Council. University Area instead recommends Option A, to retain its existing boundary with Scenic Foothills at Baxter Road.
The Planning Department recommends moving forward to the Assembly with the public hearing draft recommendation for Option B, for further discussion regarding community preferences.
2. In Boundary Study Area #21 (Map on page 4 of Attachment 8), Fairview Community Council does not support the public hearing draft recommendation for Option A, to retain existing boundaries with Airport Heights. Fairview instead recommends Option B, to transfer the western half of the Merrill Field Airport open space south of 15th Avenue from Airport Heights Community Council to Fairview.
The Planning Department supports this change.
3. In Boundary Study Area #23 (Map on page 4 of Attachment 8), Fairview Community Council does not support the public hearing draft recommendation for Option A, to retain its existing boundaries with South Addition west of Cordova Street. Fairview instead recommends either Option C, to transfer all areas east of A Street (between A and Cordova Streets) from South Addition to Fairview; or Option D, to transfer the vacant block south of 13th Avenue between A Street and Cordova Street (north of Central Lutheran Church) from South Addition Community Council to Fairview.
The Planning Department supports changing the public hearing draft recommendation to Option D.
4. In Boundary Study Area #32 (Area Maps 7 and 7a in Attachment 6), Spenard Community Council does not support the Department's public hearing draft recommendation for Option A, to retain Spenard Beach Park within Turnagain. Spenard instead recommends

Option C, to share Spenard Beach Park between Turnagain and Spenard by including it in both community councils, overlapping their districts.

The Planning Department does not support this change and recommends moving forward with Option A, to retain existing boundaries.

5. In Boundary Study Area #33 (Area Maps 10 and 11 in Attachment 6), Taku Campbell Community Council no longer supports the public hearing draft recommendation to transfer the area south of Dimond Boulevard to 92nd Avenue, between Minnesota Drive and Seward Highway, from Taku Campbell to Bayshore/Klatt Community Council. Taku Campbell now recommends Option A, to retain its existing southern boundary with Bayshore/Klatt at 92nd Avenue.

The Planning Department supports this change to the public hearing draft recommendation.

6. In Boundary Study Area #40 (Area Map 9 in Attachment 6), Basher Community Council does not support the public hearing draft recommendation for Option B, to remove a 40-acre Chugach State Park tract which was once a private inholding and is now a part of Chugach State Park, from the Basher Community Council district. Basher recommends Option A, to retain this 40-acre tract of Chugach State Park in Basher's boundaries.

The Planning Department does not support this change and recommends moving forward with Option B, to remove all the several parcels of Chugach State Park in Basher, Glen Alps, and Rabbit Creek Community Councils from those districts.

7. In Boundary Study Area #40 (Area Maps 2, 5, 7, 11, and 13 of Attachment 6), the coastal community councils of Birchwood, Government Hill, Old Seward/Oceanview, and Turnagain do not support the public hearing draft recommendation for Option C, to adjust the coastal boundaries of all community councils along Cook Inlet from "mean low or lower water" to "mean high water" (i.e., to mean high tide so that the tidal mudflats are no longer in the community council districts). The four community councils recommend Option A, to retain their coastal boundaries at "mean low or lower water," so that the tidal flats remain in the community council districts.

The Planning Department does not support this change and recommends moving forward with Option C, to adjust the coastal boundaries of community councils along Cook Inlet to follow "mean high water."

In addition to comments about the Boundary Study Areas in the public hearing draft, several community councils and individuals submitted new proposals for boundary changes, as follows:

8. Government Hill Community Council recommends that the Small Boat Launch pier area south of the mouth of Ship Creek and seaward of the Alaska Railroad tracks be transferred from Downtown Community Council to Government Hill, as depicted on the map on page 15 of Attachment 8.

The Planning Department does not support this change and recommends retaining the existing boundary.

9. North Star Community Council recommends that Valley of the Moon Park be transferred from South Addition Community Council to North Star, as depicted on the map on page 4 of Attachment 8, or that the two community councils share the park.

The Planning Department does not support this change and recommends retaining the existing boundary.

10. Basher Community Council proposes that Far North Bicentennial Park south of Campbell Airstrip Road to South Fork Campbell Creek, and the park and public lands for 200 feet west of Campbell Airstrip Road, be transferred from Hillside and Campbell Park Community Councils to Basher, as depicted on the map on page 20 of Attachment 8.

The Planning Department supports this change with a modification to use the trail along the west side of Campbell Airstrip Road as Basher's western boundary.

11. Glen Alps Community Council proposes that the 40-acre township quarter-section east of Michael Road between Upper Huffman Road and Upper De Armoun Road/Canyon Road be transferred from Hillside Community Council to Glen Alps, as depicted on the map on page 22 of Attachment 8.

The Planning Department supports this change.

12. Lastly, the Planning Department and chair of Government Hill Community Council identified a needed correction to Government Hill Community Council's boundary where the Port of Alaska adjoins Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The community council boundary should be adjusted to more accurately follow their management boundary, as depicted on the map on page 15 of Attachment 8.

The Planning Department supports this change.

Attachments: Attachment 7, Updated, *Comments Received* (updated from January 6 version)
Attachment 8, *Comment-Response* (new)

(Note: Attachments 1 through 6 were provided on January 6, 2025.)