

3309 Spenard Road
Anchorage, AK 99503

October 2, 2002

Planning Department, Municipality of Anchorage
Attn: Ms. Sue Fison
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

Dear Ms. Fison

The Spenard Community Council met on September 4, 2002 and took up the issue of Community Council District Boundaries. We voted to support a boundary as follows:

1. The south boundary to International Airport Road.
2. The east boundary to be the Seward Highway.
3. The north boundary to be Fireweed Road except for that portion from Spenard Road to Minnesota Drive. The boundary between Spenard Road and Minnesota Drive would be the north property line of the lots facing 25th Avenue.
4. The west boundary should be from the rear property line on the lots facing 25th Avenue on the North to Northern Lights Boulevard, and from Northern Lights Boulevard at Fish Creek, following the Creek to the tributary of Fish Creek from Spenard Lake, to Spenard Lake. Follow the boundary of Spenard Lake to the east taking in the private property in and around the intersection of Spenard Road and International Airport Road to include the West Coast International Inn and the National Guard Armory.

The above west boundary description is in accordance with Planning Department, Department Study Areas: Report and Recommendation study area 23. Spenard – Turnagain: Spenard Road Corridor/Fish Creek vicinity Option A and Option B. We feel that these options, as recommended by the Planning Department comply more closely with the Neighborhood Planning Principles outlined in the Department's Report.

Currently the west boundary of the Spenard Community Council is from International Airport Road following Spenard Road to the Alaska Railroad Tracks to Cook Inlet. We have agreed with Turnagain Community Council the areas of Forrest Park Drive/Huntington Park/West High School/Romig Middle School should become part of the Turnagain Community Council. We feel that these areas are more closely aligned with Turnagain Community Council in studying the Neighborhood Planning Principles than they are with the Spenard Community Council.

We also concur with Planning Staff that the boundary from Northern Lights Boulevard to International Airport Road should be changed from the current boundary to Fish Creek and the Tributary of Fish Creek to Spenard Lake. We have supported this part of the community for years and have struggled with what the west boundary should be. We feel the Planning Staff proposal 23 Option A and B is a stroke of genius and one that I wish I would have thought of. Fish Creek is extremely important to both Community Councils and to make it the dividing line will insure that both councils stay invested in it's upgrade.

The Anchorage International Airport should be part of the Spenard, Turnigain, and Sand Lake Community Councils and an entity of the whole with no internal lines drawn.

Midtown has been a portion of the Spenard Community Council since the start of Community Councils. We feel that we have adequately represented the area during that time and have instrumental in many issues in that area. The consensus of the Spenard Community Council that the area remain., For study area 24 we therefore recommend a new option which would be to leave midtown as part of the Spenard Community Council with the east boundary as the New Seward Highway from Fireweed Lane to International Airport Road.

As a council Chair Person and the past Chairman of the Federation of Community Councils I have watched the evolution of the Community Councils and the evolution of Anchorage from 1974 to present. Midtown has grown from basically nothing in 1974 to the center of commerce in Anchorage today. I realize that a sense of place (Midtown) has evolved defining Midtown. Northstar Community Council has suggested that they "take" part of Midtown. I oppose that suggestion. The combination of Northstar Community Council and Midtown does not comply with Neighborhood Planning Principles. I also realize that some of the Planning Principles would dictate a Midtown Council over a continued pairing with the Spenard Community Council.

I would recommend that if a Midtown Council is created that the council be bounded by:

1. Fireweed Lane on the north.
2. Arctic Boulevard on the west.
3. Dowling Road and Potter Drive on the south.
4. The New Seward Highway on the east.

The reason for the south boundary is based on my experience. Taku/Campbell seems to direct its attention toward the south rather than the north. The areas from Tudor Road to Dowling/Potter are more industrial rather than residential. In fact, the Spenard Community Council has taken up issues in these areas in the past because no other council has shown interest. If you look at Neighborhood Planning Principles,

1. These boundaries would strengthen the area.
2. The council boundaries would be clearly identifiable and easy to relate to since most of the area is commercial or industrial.
3. The boundaries would clearly define the community desires to be a leading commercial and industrial area.

4. The population of this area would be small enough so as not to inhibit involvement but large enough insure self determination.
5. These are clear boundaries that would not split neighborhoods and definitely make some areas more closely aligned with the whole.
6. There are numerous community facilities in the area in which to hold meetings.

It is still the desire of the Spenard Community Council to include the midtown area but if that is not to be we are concerned that a council be identified without a way to implement the council. If the Midtown Council were to be created a mechanism should be put in place to insure adequate bylaws are implemented and an executive committee be in place to insure viability of the council. I would suggest co-operative meetings with the Spenard Community Councils for a short period of time so that the procedures for meetings, etc. could be learned by the new council,

I would like to thank the Federation of Community Councils, Community Council Boundary Review Committee, the Planning Department of the Municipality of Anchorage, The Planning and Zoning Commission and the Anchorage Assembly for undertaking this process to realign and I feel ultimately strengthen the Community Council process.

Sincerely:

Thomas J. McGrath
Chair Person, Spenard Community Council

