



BOUNDARY REVIEW PRINCIPLES MOA COMMUNITY COUNCILS 2013



The following neighborhood planning principles are intended to offer a fair, objective and consistent methodology for resolving boundary issues during the 2013 Community Councils Boundary Review. Community councils are established by charter and municipal code to provide “a direct and continuous means of citizen participation in government and local affairs” and they exist to afford maximum community involvement and self-determination. Redistricting of community council boundaries provide a once in a decade opportunity for neighborhood residents to address community council concerns, and determine if boundary descriptions are accurate and up-to-date.

1. **Preservation of adopted community council boundaries will be followed unless there is a compelling reason or need to change.**

2. **Community council boundaries should strengthen existing neighborhoods and natural communities.** Natural communities are defined by Anchorage Municipal Code as areas that are divided from each other by physical or traffic barriers, with common interests, and that have a distinct identity by reason of geography, history, population, transportation or other factors, including:
 - A shared elementary school attendance area, improvement district, or community-oriented service area;
 - A shared geographic focus, activity center, or anchoring institution. For example, important community “anchors” could include a commercial street, town center, park or prominent civic institution;
 - A distinctive pattern of physical features that define a neighborhood, such as neighborhood amenities, mix of uses and activities, size of buildings and lots, scale and character of streets;
 - A shared sense of history, experiences, traditions and interests that continues to the present while welcoming a diversity of attitudes and opinions;
 - A shared focus based on adopted comprehensive or district plans;
 - A level of interest and ability from neighbors and other stakeholders within the community to support a community council.

3. **Community council boundaries should be clearly identifiable and easy to relate to.** Neighborhood residents should be able to understand their community council’s boundary and be able to discern important physical features, such as:
 - Important transportation links that include streets, railroads and highways;
 - Breaks in street connectivity, and notable local landmarks such as a stream or a park;



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- Natural physical features such as streams, creeks, creek corridors, valleys and ridge lines;
 - Regional parks, greenbelts, natural open space or lakes that can separate or isolate neighborhoods;
 - Airports and large scale commercial or institutional uses.
4. **Community councils should reflect neighborhood desires and aspirations.**
 5. **Population size is not a criterion for community council formation.** Councils should have an optimal size that encourages community involvement and participation.
 6. **Community council boundaries should allow for vital neighborhood cohesion based on Census Blocks and Census Groups:**
 - Census boundaries will be used when they are easy to follow and available to form district councils. Census blocks are small units of area that follow major physical features and traffic barriers, and accommodate most any boundary configuration.
 - The use of census boundaries where important neighborhood information is at stake. For example, a local park, school or other unpopulated area allows for deviation from census lines, without impacting demographic data collection.
 - Where there is a conflict with a boundary, actual neighborhoods shall take precedence. Where census blocks do not coincide with the way residents define where they live, the census should not override natural communities.
 7. **All residential and neighborhood commercial areas should be located within a council.** Neighborhood residents and business owners have an opportunity to take part in neighborhood decision making through their community council. “Undesignated” areas with residences or neighborhood commercial uses are discouraged.
 8. **Regional facilities with a regional function should remain separate and distinct from Community Councils.** Regional public facilities such as airports or state and regional parks are important to the entire community. No single council or limited group of councils should “own” a major regional facility that serves and impacts the entire municipality. Community councils exist to represent local residential and business interests. Regional facilities have their own forms of representation.



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9. **Community councils are expected to hold regular meetings within their designated boundaries.** Each community council should have an identified location to meet and conduct their business.