

BROAD CONSIDERATIONS

- Majority Minority districts – Current maps have two – districts 1 and 5. It is an important VRA consideration to maintain two majority minority districts in the new maps.

From the link provided:

“In practice, Section 2 essentially requires that at least the same number of minority opportunity districts in a previous redistricting plan must be drawn in a new redistricting plan. There are two exceptions:

1. In areas where minority populations have grown, such as Latino communities in Texas, more minority opportunity districts may be required under Section 2. The Supreme Court has ruled that it is permissible for states and localities to draw such districts to avoid litigation.
2. In areas where minority populations have decreased, it may be impossible to draw a minority opportunity district. In this case, a minority opportunity district may not be required.”

<http://www.publicmapping.org/what-is-redistricting/redistricting-criteria-the-voting-rights-act>

- Smaller deviations more closely follow one person/one vote principles.
- Maps should give weight to socio-economic considerations, compactness, deviation and contiguity.

THE MAPS

1. Matt Greene

A Girdwood and Eagle River pairing does not make a lot of sense due to the driving times across the district as a whole. Map does have low deviations, two majority minority districts and pairs similarly rural areas.

2. Muni map 1

This map has unacceptable deviations at 7.75%. It also takes out what appears to be about 1/3 of the historical midtown, including University area.

3. Muni map 2

By moving district 5 down into South Anchorage this map loses the second majority minority district by a wide margin. Midtown and East Anchorage are both changed significantly in character and communities of interest are not respected.

4. Muni map 3

District 5 is not compact and oddly shaped where it reaches in and grabs a section of midtown. Part of East Anchorage is unacceptably placed in an Eagle River district with which it is not socio-economically integrated. The portion of East Anchorage that is combined with Eagle River includes a large census block with median incomes of just \$21,000 per year. Much of Eagle River is over \$150,000 per year. For more on the socio-economic considerations of combining parts of East Anchorage with Eagle River please see my previous public comment.

5. Muni Map 4

This is a terrible map. I could write pages why but I think everyone knows it. It is another map that loses the second majority minority district by a large margin.

I will now skip maps 6-8 and come back to those last.

9. Denny Wells Map A replacement map found in public comments.

This map badly damages West Anchorage, placing the bulk in with downtown and creating what are essentially 2 South Anchorage Districts. One testimony I heard often with respect to statewide redistricting is that Turnagain/Spennard residents did not want to be paired with downtown.

10. Denny Wells Map B

Good deviations and compact shapes. Moves Midtown further south than I would like to see, removing University as well Airport Heights and Rogers Park.

11. Mayors Map

This is another map that Damages West Anchorage communities of interest as well as cuts Anchorage down to one majority minority district. This map also has deviations above 5 at 5.47%

6. Map 6 Anchorage Action

This map was created with community input and with the initial prerequisite that Anchorage not cross into Eagle River. This stipulation is not without drawbacks, the most obvious of these being that going with the status quo completely ignores that JBER is also a part of Anchorage, and that Elmendorf in particular is quite far removed from Eagle River. It is unlikely that the people residing here and utilizing the Government Hill Gate go to Eagle River on any regular basis, nor are they socio-economically integrated with District 2. JBER is urban in nature, diverse and residents have a median household income of \$61,000 annually.

We tried to stretch District 1 fairly equally into districts 3, 4, and 5 so as to do the least amount of harm to communities of interest but you will find that it is impossible not to pull parts of these into District 1 with downtown doubling in size. A small section of Spenard is removed from 3, Rogers Park and Airport Heights from 4 (although we were able to keep University area in Midtown) and parts of the NW section of East Anchorage from 5. I would have liked to have kept Independence Park with its traditional district 6, but the density of population there coupled with Midtown and Downtown both being slightly underpopulated made that difficult.

Nevertheless, I believe this map is the best of the options that follow the status quo with regards to District 2 and most closely keeps the districts as they have been. In tightening the deviations of this map, we inadvertently dropped district 5 slightly below a majority minority district. To fix this issue as well as tighten the deviations further, I would go back and place Basher/Stuckagain Heights in with South Anchorage.

7. Map 7 Robert Hockema

In map 7 Robert addressed some of the issues that inherently arise from trying to maintain the status quo of one district while doubling the size of another into the remaining districts. Elmendorf is reunited with the Government Hill community with which it is most socioeconomically integrated while Fort Rich remains with Eagle River. This allows less impacts on districts 3, 4, and 5 but does represent a change for district 6, which has some of its Chugach Mountain areas combined with Eagle River. This is the area of Anchorage that is most socio-economically similar to Eagle River. This also allows for tighter deviations and more socioeconomic integration than there is with the status quo, which pairs diverse, urban, lower income communities on public utilities with rural, large lot, less diverse and more affluent communities largely using well and septic. This map has low deviations and two majority minority districts.

I want to discuss one further issue with respect to the higher deviations of the status quo maps. These deviations are mostly the result of Eagle River being significantly underpopulated, which begins to move away from the one person/one vote principle. Underpopulation results in a greater strength of district 2 votes. This unequal voting power is further magnified by being paired with an area where the majority of its residents vote in their home states. JBER had a population of 12,915 as of 2019 census data. In the 2020 assembly election JBER had 515 votes cast. This in combination with the underpopulation of district 2 creates significant disparities in voting power between district 2 voters and voters in Anchorage's other 5 districts. This map addresses this issue by allowing Eagle River to be less underpopulated and by splitting JBER with another district.

8. Map 8 AFFR

The AFFR map appears to have also recognized and addressed some of the issues discussed above but places all of JBER in with district 1, as well as the areas outside of the JBER gates with high proportions of service members. It achieves remarkable deviations and includes two majority minority districts.

Conclusion

In conclusion I want to say that you have a tough job ahead of you and I am glad I am not doing it. This will be a difficult decision of whether to go with a map that attempts to sustain the status quo, which undoubtedly some people may be happier with, or to go with a map that proposes more change but, in the end, may prove to be a fairer and more equitable map for all of Anchorage.

<https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Clerk/Elections/Pages/ResultsAndHistory.aspx>
[x](#)

<https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/AK/JBER-Demographics.html>

<http://www.city-data.com/city/Alaska.html#boxMAPborder>



