

Turnagain Community Council

This comment is re-affirming Turnagain Community Council's priorities and position on AO 2022-37, Municipal Reapportionment, and amendments to be considered at this Wednesday's special meeting. Our original testimony is re-attached, expressing concerns with the current map under consideration (Map 11 v.2, Constant Amendment S-1) and also with Map 12, which has since been archived. Our original testimony at the March 1, 2022 meeting is attached for reference.

Turnagain Community Council supports the proposed changes in the Constant amendment to restore the West High and Forest Park area of Turnagain in District 3, and opposes the increased amount of community council area removed from District 3 in the Kennedy amendment. We urge the Assembly to adopt the Constant amendment in the final map.

Our reasons for supporting the Constant amendment are outlined in our original testimony, because we support keeping our community council area within the same district, and this particular area is strongly integrated with and identified as an important part of West Anchorage. Similarly, while the Kennedy amendment does not go as far as the prior Map 12 did in splitting up our district, it removes more of our council area from District 3, which conflicts with keeping our council area within one district.

Again, we urge the Assembly to adopt the Constant amendment, then promptly approve that amended map as the final Reapportionment maps for Anchorage for the next decade.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in this thorough and complex process, and finding a balance that promotes fair representation in Anchorage.

Turnagain Community Council Testimony: Proposed AO 2022-37, Muni Reapportionment

This letter was ratified by the Council at our regular meeting Thursday, March 3.

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

Thank you for engaging in a thoughtful process to draw new district boundaries, required for Reapportionment. We know that it is challenging to balance the interests of everyone in the Municipality to meet legal requirements and intent for fairly-apportioned districts. Tonight I'm testifying on behalf of the Turnagain Community Council Executive Board, as we have not had the opportunity to bring a resolution to the council. We intend to do so on Thursday, March 3, and will send our official written Council comments if they are approved at our meeting.

We understand the need for balance in drawing new district boundaries, but we do have concerns with some of the proposed maps put forward.

First, our overall priority is to keep our council boundary in a single Assembly district. We are one of the most active councils in the city, and represent a significant portion of the area generally referred to as West Anchorage. We appreciate having both our Assembly members regularly at meetings, who are also able to focus on our local issues. And we know with 38 councils, all 11 Assembly members (soon to be 12) are busy attending meetings throughout each month. Splitting members' time further by having to attend more community councils, and requiring us to have up to 4 Assembly members reporting back to our council, may sound like "more" representation, but is actually less effective for everyone. We highly recommend taking into account community council boundaries when drawing reapportionment lines for West Anchorage, and keeping Turnagain in one district.

Second, when looking at the specific maps and proposed districts, we have two major areas of concern, and urge the Assembly to amend the final map as follows. I am sharing written comments by map, but will summarize by saying we oppose the following parts of both Map 11, version 2 and Map 12:

1. Excluding portions of North Turnagain, including the West High / Romig Middle School Campus, out of our West Anchorage district, and
2. Shifting our boundaries to include significant portions of South Anchorage (Oceanview, Bayshore) that do not reflect what we and most people understand to be West Anchorage.

Map 11, Version 2: Map 11 would remove a portion of North Turnagain—West High and Romig Middle Schools, Hillcrest and Forest Park Drive, the area east of Fish Creek estuary—from District 3 to District 1. We understand the need to make District 1 bigger, but Map 11 is not create a logical boundary for our neighborhood. This would put West High, our in-person meeting place, and many families whose children go to Romig or West into a different district.

Additionally, Map 11 shifts our district significantly farther south, including multiple neighborhoods that we all think of (and, likely these residents also think of) as South Anchorage, near Bayshore and Klatt. While the area south of the Airport, Sand Lake, is logically considered West Anchorage, this extends the boundaries much further than our current district. We believe it is more appropriate to pair this area with other South Anchorage neighborhoods.

Map 12: Map 12 makes the same problematic changes noted above (removing the West High and Romig Middle School, shifting the district south), but goes further, removing the entire North neighborhood (all the way west to Earthquake Park) from our district. This effectively splits our area in half. We strongly oppose bisecting our neighborhood. There are many issues impacting our area as a whole: the Coastal Trail, to Fish Creek Estuary, to traffic on W. Northern Lights.

Map 12 also extends the "West" Anchorage district even further south than Map 11, encompassing a larger set of South neighborhoods such as Oceanview. While our district's western boundary is Cook Inlet, we have less in common with South Anchorage neighborhoods, who typically shop, recreate and identify with other South areas (such as around O'Malley and Old Seward.)

To sum up: we respectfully request that the final reapportionment maps take into account community council boundaries, and that District 3 remain truly a West Anchorage district.

Anna Brawley
President, Turnagain Community Council

