

Many Neighbors, One City

Anchorage may be one municipality, but with more than 280,000 residents, its neighborhoods, covering nearly 2000 square miles, reflect the individuality of those who have made their homes here. In the late 1970s, a unified Municipality with a mayor and an 11 member Assembly overseeing local government operations was created out of the former city and borough governments. Because of the Municipality's diversity and a desire to ensure that all Anchorage residents have the maximum input in their local government, the Charter creating the Municipality included a new vehicle for citizen participation: Community Councils.

Abbott Loop	Girdwood	Rogers Park
Airport Heights	Glen Alps	Russian Jack Park
Basher	Government Hill	Sand Lake
Bayshore / Klatt	Hillside East	Scenic Park
Bear Valley	Huffman / O'Malley	South Addition
Birchwood	Mid-Hillside	South Fork
Campbell Park	Midtown	Spenard
Chugiak	Mountain View	Taku / Campbell
Downtown	North Star	Tudor Area
Eagle River	Northeast	Turnagain
Eagle River Valley	Old Seward / Oceanview	Turnagain Arm
Eklutna Valley	Portage Valley	University Area
Fairview	Rabbit Creek	

Neighbors to Neighbors: The Federation of Community Councils

“The mission of the Anchorage Federation of Community Councils is to assist community councils to involve citizens in the governmental process at the neighborhood level”

Community councils increase their effectiveness by sharing common interests and proposals through the Federation of Community Councils (FCC). The FCC is a voluntary non-profit association of the 38 local community councils in the Municipality of Anchorage. It was organized in 1976 to provide a vehicle for community councils to tackle both unique and common problems in Anchorage neighborhoods. The FCC manages a grant from the Municipality to operate the Community Councils Center.

Each recognized community council holds a vote on the FCC Board of Delegates. Councils can choose to have the chair or designated representative attend the monthly meetings. These gatherings focus on neighborhood issues and Municipal policies toward the councils, as well as discussions on the operations of the FCC.

FCC Board meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month in the Training Room at the Planning Department Permit Center (4700 S. Bragaw Street).

The FCC:

- Assists with organizing and reorganizing councils;
- Acts as a resource and provides training and encouragement so that citizens learn to help themselves;
- Helps councils become stronger and more effective by providing tools and resources at the request of the councils;
- Enhances cooperation between the Municipality and the community councils.

Grass-Roots: Community Councils

Anchorage residents, like those of any other large city, frequently feel distanced from those they elect to office and disenfranchised by a government too large for town meetings. During discussions in 1973 to develop the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan, citizens voiced their desires for “more citizen input in government” and community councils were born.

Community councils were authorized in both the city and borough governments which governed Anchorage until 1975, and architects of the unified Municipality of Anchorage included language in the Municipal Charter that provided citizens “the right to establish local Community Councils to assure the maximum community self-determination, exercised in conjunction with others and without infringement upon the rights of other persons.”

Community councils are non-profit, voluntary, and self-governing neighborhood groups that officially represent public opinion in that particular area. Members include individuals, property owners, non-profit organizations, and representatives of businesses operating within the council boundaries.

Some community councils have nominal dues (up to the \$15 per year limit), but most have unrestricted participation reflecting the goal of maximum citizen involvement.

Publications available to the public at the Community Councils Center include:

- The Anchorage Handbook: A Guide to Effective Citizen Participation in Your Community
- The Language of Platting, Planning and Zoning
- Municipal documents such as transportation studies, master plans, the Municipal Charter, and land use change permit applications
- Roberts Rules of Order
- Many other reference materials helpful to those interested in the workings of the Municipality of Anchorage

Neighborhood Central: The Community Councils Center

The Community Councils Center provides neighborhood organizations in Anchorage with the resources they need to be strong, effective, grass-roots groups.

Available for community council use are:

- Computers and printers
- Copiers
- Email and postal mail services

Center staff can offer suggestions on how to better educate everyone about community councils and local government.

Also available are copies of:

- The Municipal Charter and Code
- Bylaws for each community council
- Boundary maps for each community council
- Lists of contacts for council and government leaders

Councils do more than just react ...
THEY INITIATE!!!

- Councils have worked with Municipal, state and federal governments, as well as private interests, to create citizen participation plans for major projects
- Councils have worked to develop alternate land-use plans for their areas in conjunction with a master plan document developed by the Municipality
- Councils have helped to determine how money from HUD Community Development Block Grants would be spent in Anchorage neighborhoods

For more information about community councils in Anchorage, to join your local council or subscribe to a council newsletter, please contact the Community Councils Center.

Community Councils Center hours: Monday – Friday 8 AM – 4 PM

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