



Eaglexit Draft Proposal Review

Description

What MORE do you need to know about this effort?



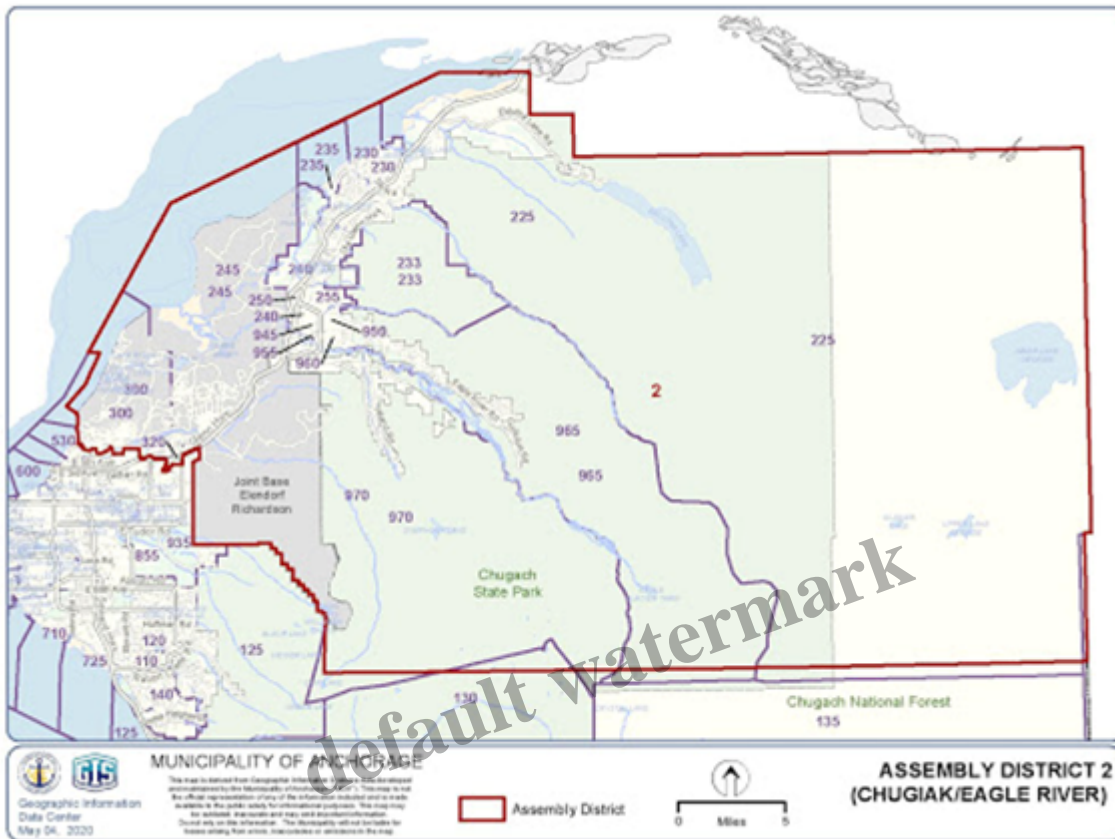
This writer walked the 2-1/2 miles of the *Independence Day* parade with the *Eaglexit* float.

The citizen's group known as *Eaglexit* declares in its current *Draft Proposal* for detachment (04/24/22) that residents of the *Chugach-Eagle River Area* are not well-served by the *Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)* and they want the constitutionally established *Alaska Local Boundary Commission (LBC)* to allow detachment and formation of a new borough.

I have described the citizen's group efforts in this process of detaching Assembly District 2 (AD2) in

previous stories which I will link individually here.

Go bold or go home! 1,008 Sq Miles from the northern part of the MOA!



The MOA from Girdwood to Eklutna is currently 1,947 sq. miles.

Specifically the 104-page plan proposes detachment of 1,008 Sq Miles from the northern part of the MOA, and throwing in another 5,292 Sq Miles of an area not in any borough including the *City of Whittier*, to form what is proposed as the *Chugach Regional Borough*, using the local option method. ((Section 4. General Description of the Nature of the Proposed Boundary Changes. 3 AAC 110.420(b)(4). The Petitioner requests that the commission approve detachment of the area defined in the Petition, and concurrently approve incorporation of that area plus the *City of Whittier* and land between as the *Chugach Regional Borough*. Incorporation is subject to approval by voters of the proposed borough area per AS 29.05.110 and 3 AAC 110.410))



Michael Tavoliero presented the initial case for detachment of **Assembly District 2 (AD2)** during a public meeting four years ago at the **Eagle River Lion's Park Clubhouse** in May 2019. He estimated then it would cost \$1 million.

The whole deal depends upon residents of this area understanding and caring enough to vote for what this group has designed during exclusive weekly meetings in a Eagle River real estate office located over the business known as **Extreme Heating and Air.**

[Introducing EaglExit: Is Eagle River ready for a divorce?](#)

During some of that time this writer attempted, with support from two Eagle River businesses ((Initial Supportive Advertisers for my independent journalistic efforts: Read Alaska Chalet BB story here: <https://donnliston.net/2021/02/alaska-chalet-bed-breakfast/> Read Cozy Interiors story here: <https://donnliston.net/2021/01/destiny-happens/>)) to let residents know about the *EaglExit* effort with stories beginning in October of 2019. Recognizing the devil is in the details, with this draft proposal we can examine closely what they have propose to present to the LBC and ultimately to the voters of this region.

[2019 EaglExit Overview: Can Local Government be better for Us?](#)

Lofty goals from the Draft Proposal: *The Northern communities of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) are petitioning to detach from the Municipality and incorporate as a nonunified borough. Our goal is self-determination — the ability to be self-governed and to pursue our community’s goals and priorities. This principle of self-determination is not currently possible in any meaningful way, as part of the Municipality of Anchorage.*

Irreconcilable differences ((The existence of significant differences between a married couple that are so great and beyond resolution as to make the marriage unworkable, and for which the law permits a Divorce.)) are justification for divorce.

From the proposal:

Section 5. General Description of the Area Proposed for Detachment and Concurr

The greater Chugiak-Eagle River area is a homogeneous group of communities with
Eklutna and the Native Village of Eklutna is located at our northernmost exten

Reportedly the LBC cannot remove one portion of an existing borough without adding another area not contained in the borough to the new entity. Description of the Whittier land area is yet to come.

[A Vision For Chugiak Eagle River: What kind of future do we want?](#)

The big gripe with MOA: Lack of Representation

From the report: *Our needs vary greatly from those of the Anchorage bowl, and with two Members on a 12-seat Assembly, even widely-held community priorities cannot move forward without the support of the larger Assembly. Lack of meaningful representation hurts our community, and places undue burdens on our citizens to remain vigilant against decisions not consistent with our needs, goals, or desires.*

Examples:

1. **Our (2) Assembly Members proposed an ordinance to survey our community on its support for detachment from the MOA (AO 2022-18, introduced and defeated on 1/11/2022).** The proposal, *widely embraced* in our community, was voted down by the remainder of the Assembly. (emphasis added)
- Included in the MOA Charter is the *Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board (CERAB)*, to which all land use decisions affecting our area are to be referred. This provision is purposed to ensure our community has input and oversight regarding what happens here. However, **the Municipality has not been referring all relevant land use decisions to CERAB, denying our community the ability to provide the oversight the Charter requires. This ongoing violation denies us of the right to be heard, to consent to the actions being taken, and to provide input to the Assembly and administration.**

[Eaglelexit's New Validation: Financial Study by Northern Economics](#)

- Common to all Municipal residents are **Community Councils**, which are established in the Charter to *afford citizens an opportunity to maximum community involvement and self-determination*. **The Assembly does not recognize Community Councils as the proper body to consult and confer with, as evidenced by listening sessions or town hall meetings held within the community, but not at established Community Councils meetings.** ((Purpose of Community Councils: AMC 2.40, the purpose of the establishment of community councils is to provide a direct and continuing means of citizen participation in government and local affairs. Ad hoc listening sessions and town hall meetings are not the method by which our Charter and Code dictate public participation and feedback should be gleaned. ? April 9, 2021 – American relief plan funding and town hall ? June 2, 2021 – Town hall on B3 zone change and shelter licensing ? June 16 and August 4, 2021 – Listening session regarding APD body-worn camera policy ? July 30 and August 13, 2021 – Listening session renew transit ridership, transit roundtable ? April 13 and April 25, 2022 – Listening session on proposed navigation center ? February 3, 2022 – Reapportionment town hall.))
- **Our area is distinct from the Anchorage bowl both geographically, and culturally, in how we want to use our land. Residents choose to live in Eagle River and to be separated from the Anchorage bowl by choice because of those differences.** Municipal Code recognizes this distinction in theory, with Title 21 providing for a separate and distinct land use regulation for Chugiak-Eagle River. ((Need for distinct Building Codes: Even with our separate zoning and land use regulations, in September of 2020 the Administration proposed building regulations that, due to the Municipality not building out the hydrant system in our area, would add \$20-40,000 dollars per dwelling for building cost. (AO 85-2020 to Adopt Various Codes and Local Amendments)))
- **Our community continually strives to educate its children to be proficient and good citizens in our community. We are saddled with a school district that fails at producing high academic outcomes, at containing costs, and is too large to respond to parents or educators.** ? Standardized testing shows for 2020-2021, the Anchorage School District (ASD) overall has 28.1% of its students at-target or above proficiency for English Language Arts, and 15.8% of students at-target or above proficiency for Math. **This is well below what our community considers acceptable for its children.** ((ASD Education Services inadequacies: **Need for distinct Building Codes:** (2022 School Bonds: <https://www.asdk12.org/bonds/>) ? ASD is one of the largest school districts in the US, with 43,500 students encompassing 2,000 square miles, yet. Its size alone makes it unwieldy and a place where teachers and parents don't feel their needs are listened to and changes are not made to improve student experience. (About ASD: <https://www.asdk12.org/aboutasd/>) (2020-2021 Alaska District Level Results scores: <https://education.alaska.gov/tls/Assessments/Results/2021/DLMDistrictResults.xlsx>) ? The Anchorage School District currently has millions of dollars in approved bonding capacity that has yet to be utilized for its intended purpose. In the Municipal election this spring, ASD presented a bond for \$110 million, when there was \$96 million in bonding capacity already approved but not yet issued. Much of the bonding requested could be annual budget items, rather than typical infrastructure maintenance (roof replacement, deferred maintenance).))

[Our ASD Public Education Challenge: Parents in Eagle River/Chugiak Deserve Local Control](#)

- **Our area is fiscally conservative. Two residents of our area, along with a third from Anchorage, proposed the tax cap that was passed by voters in the MOA to control spending. This voter-mandated tax cap has been increased on a regular basis by the Assembly with legislation authorizing expenditures that circumvent the intent of the measure.** Bonds are funded to pay for routine maintenance such as roof replacement, expendable items such as police body cameras, and bonds rejected by voters are reintroduced on future ballots approved by the Assembly. The Northern communities, with just two votes on a 12-member Assembly, will never be able to bring spending in line with our conservative government spending goals and desire to lower property taxes. The bonding process effectively skirts the tax cap and the intent of voters to control spending

[Visions of EaglExit](#)

- **Services provided to our community by the Municipality of Anchorage are sometimes nonexistent, sometimes inadequate and fall far short of what is offered in the Anchorage bowl.** Our community's public health nursing was located at our Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center. Very important to our community, it served not only seniors who were residents, but individuals at large in our area. This service was defunded. **Our community needed fire apparatus and requested that funding be requested by our State Legislative delegation to purchase the apparatus.** Our delegation included the apparatus in their personal allotment for spending, the apparatus was put into service in our community, and then moved to Anchorage by the Anchorage Fire Department, without our consent.
- **Chugiak-Eagle River used to have People Mover (public transportation) service that was widely used by commuters who worked in Anchorage and students going to school.** While our ridership numbers did not match Anchorage's, it was an important community asset that determined where people bought houses, where they worked. Public transit in our community has been reduced from over a dozen routes a day going all throughout our community to service only at the downtown Eagle River Transit Center. We still pay for this service, but no longer enjoy it to the extent it is employed in Anchorage. The northern extent of our community is greater than 10 miles away from the Transit Center. This lack of services is a severe hardship for public transit users in our community, including disabled individuals. ((Existing People Mover Route: Current Route 92 schedule for People Mover public transit system))

[EaglExit: The "Cityhood Movement" Moves North](#)

- **Especially evident in lack of services provided by the Municipality was witnessed during the COVID pandemic.** The MOA receives public health nursing funds from the State of Alaska to perform that work. With 20% of the residents of the Municipality and being a 30-minute drive from the Anchorage bowl, our community members pleaded for a COVID testing site here. As of

August 2020, there were over 19 Muni testing locations in the Anchorage bowl and zero in our community. A full nine months after COVID testing began in our community, lobbying by our State legislators and Assembly members, a testing location was finally established in Eagle River. This withholding of services from our community surely cost lives, with the inability of sick residents to travel an hour total, plus wait time, to be tested. ((**Covid Funding:** August 9, 2020 – Municipality receives \$3.2M in COVID testing funds from the State of Alaska for community health nursing (AR 2020-281 Appropriation from the State of Alaska for the provision of Public Health Nursing Services in the Anchorage Health Department). ? August 25, 2020 – Municipality designates another \$5.56M to temporary COVID mobile testing (AIM 120-2020 Emergency Procurements Awarded under AMC 7.20.090). ? December 13, 2020 – Municipality establishes testing site in Eagle River (AIM 11- 2021 Emergency Measures taken by Mayor Under Emergency Proclamation). The Challenge: As provided for in 3AAC110.410(a)(9), petition for detachment by election may be initiated by at least 25% of the persons registered to vote in the area proposed for detachment by election. As provided in 3AAC110.410(a)(10) and AS 29.05.060(7), incorporation as a home rule borough must include the signature and resident address of 15% of the voters in the area. This petition seeks to both detach by election and incorporate as a home rule borough. The signatures of the residents of the proposed borough included with this Petition represent the signors acknowledgement of these actions and consent to detach and concurrently incorporate as a new borough.))

1. **Changes proposed recently to the Municipality's AMATS transportation plan made it impossible for our rural community to have its projects pursued.** The scoring mechanism for choosing projects included points for a factor that does not exist in our community, thereby automatically reducing the priority of projects in our area across the board. The citizens of the Northern communities of the Municipality of Anchorage are disenfranchised and not served by their current inclusion in the MOA.

[The Important Role of Local Government: Opportunities to Exploit](#)

Eagle River today seems to be like this writer remembers Anchorage as a youth running between cars on 4th Avenue selling newspapers in an All-American city serving as support for two military installations. Today smart military personnel who live off base are in Chugiak-Eagle River. The city that Anchorage has become is the result of the people elected to public office. Persons with an Anchorage School District education cannot be expected to understand these consequences from their actions.

Having watched and written about the EagleExit effort during this time, I fear what began as a legitimate effort to differentiate our community from Mother Anchorage may appear now to be little more than a land grab, having nothing to do with what the people of Whittier want. The effort to detach Sandy Springs from Fulton County, GA took two years to accomplish (without having a legal mechanism in the State Constitution to allow that to easily happen).

I have long advocated for putting up a simple proposal to the LBC, asking for the opportunity to put it to a vote of the people, and seeing if appointed members of the LBC will allow it to be voted on by members of this community. If detachment has merit for the people of Chugiak Eagle River I trust the goodwill of Alaskans who deserve government closest to the people to allow it without having to spend much more money to study it.

It is my fervent hope that my reporting has provided insight into this issue. Now, let the games begin!

NOTE: A number of other local businesses were also featured in stories in which they expressed support for the concept of detaching Chugiak Eagle River from MOA on an independent enterprise basis.

? April 13 and April 25, 2022 – Listening session on proposed navigation center ? February 3, 2022 – Reapportionment town hall.



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