Toward More Effective Representation

# The Final Report of the Ward Boundary Commission

May 25, 2020

# Introduction

**Overview of Presentation**

1. Summary of Process and Outcomes
2. Recommendations: *Ward Boundaries*
3. Recommendations: *Design Policy*
4. Future Reviews

## Commissioners

Levi Bjork

Sean Lee (Vice Chair)

Maya Pungur-Buick

Stephen Raitz

Alayne Sinclair

Kai So

Jared Wesley (Chair)

# Process Summary

1. **Commission Formation** (Sep-Oct)
2. **Concept Development** (Oct-Nov)
3. **Public & Stakeholder Engagement** (Dec/Jan)
4. **Concept Refinement** (Feb-Mar)
5. **Final Report** (Apr-May)



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# Outcomes Summary

**Effective Representation requires Ward boundaries to balance the *rights of individual residents*, first and foremost, with the need to *preserve communities of interest*.**

**Definition** (page 25):

Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation.

Effective representation and good government compel that other factors, such as geography and community interests, be taken into account in setting electoral boundaries to represent the diversity of the social mosaic.

However, there cannot be wide variations in population size among the Wards...

# Outcomes Summary

**Effective Representation requires Ward boundaries to balance the *rights of individual residents*, first and foremost, with the need to *preserve communities of interest*.**

**Definition** (page 25):

...A system that dilutes one citizen's vote unduly as compared with another citizen's vote runs the risk of providing inadequate and unfair representation.

The ability of elected officials to effectively represent the population in their Wards is included in this definition.
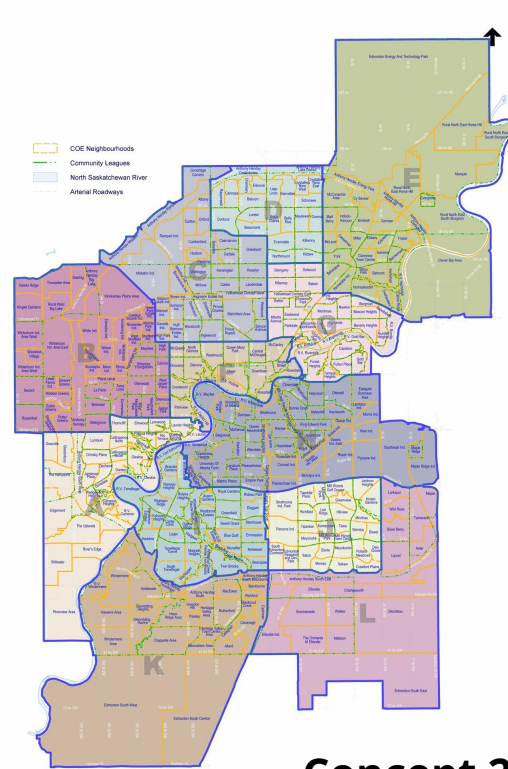
# Recommendations: Ward Boundaries

**Policy Criteria**

- Population vs. Number of Electors
- Future Growth
- Respecting Community League Boundaries
- Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards
- Easily Identifiable Boundaries
- Least Number of Changes
- Block-shaped wards

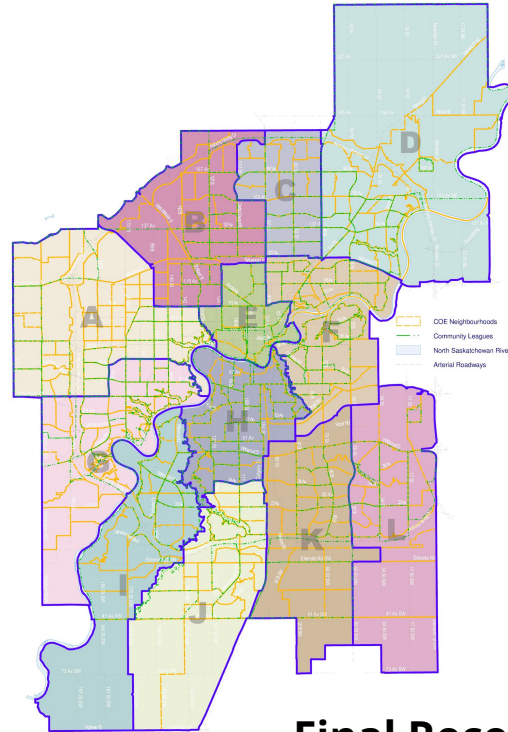# Recommendations: Ward Boundaries
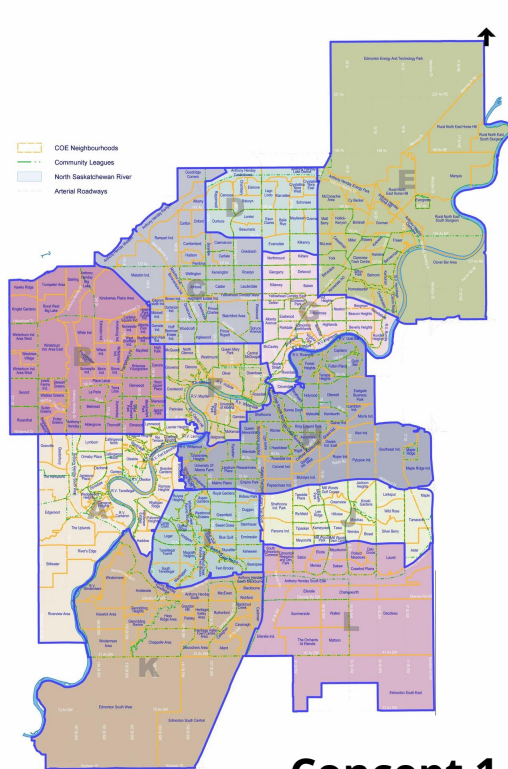


Concept 1



Concept 2

# Recommendations: Ward Boundaries

**Considerations for Recommended Boundaries**

1. Equal representation based on population
2. Low population variance
3. Resilience
4. Basic unit is the neighbourhood
5. Natural/human-made boundaries important, not impermeable
6. Representing communities of interest and diversity within wards

# Recommendations: Ward Boundaries



**Final Recommendation**

# Recommendations: Design Policy

**Overview - Structural Changes**

Goals

- A level of consistency from review to review
- Longevity - 12 year horizon for boundaries
- Consistent with common practice for boundary reviews
- Governance policy not operational/procedural

The policy is streamlined and clarified

- Extensive definitions of key terms - clarity, interpretation
- Criteria prioritised - aids/directs policy application
- Secondary considerations - lense to fine tune boundaries
- Expectations outlined

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# Recommendations: Design Policy

**Approach**

- Key concept is **Effective Representation** - Supreme Court of Canada, 1991 Reference re Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)
- Common practice review of other jurisdictions - federal, provincial, municipal

**Policy**

"Ward boundaries shall be reviewed and adjusted periodically to maintain Effective Representation. Effective Representation requires that boundaries are drawn with primary regard to Voter Parity, while considering Communities of Interest and other Criteria and Considerations that enhance Effective Representation."

# Recommendations: Design Policy

**Highlights**

Key Definitions

- Effective Representation
  - Primacy of voter parity
  - Must consider other factors e.g., communities of interest, geography, history, minority interest without unduly diluting voter parity
- Communities of Interest
  - Includes community leagues, school catchment areas
  - Mix of established vs growth neighbourhoods
- Neighbourhood is the discrete building block of wards

# Recommendations: Design Policy

- Voter parity
  - Average rather than optimum as benchmarks
  - Variance: 10% in established wards, 20% in growth wards

Considerations

- Readily identifiable boundaries
- Mix of zones

Dropped

- Least number of changes
- Block shaped wards

# Recommendations: Design Policy

Engagement & Consultation

- Apply City's Public Engagement Framework
- Community Leagues added to stakeholders to be consulted, and any other that may self identify

Periodic Reviews

- Resident Commission for major boundary review
- Administration to do minor adjustments
- When: post election, trigger events, as needed

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# Future Reviews

1. **Use of a Residents' Commission**
2. **Process and Commission Timeline**
3. **City Administration Support**
   - City Planning/Mapping/Data Analytics
4. **Public Engagement**

# Questions

# Supplementary Materials

# Policy 469A Ward Boundary Design

**Policy Statement**

Clear, distinct and easily identifiable ward boundaries are essential to the municipal election process. Ward boundary design should also respect the democratic principle of "one-person, one-vote" by striving to keep ward populations substantially equal.

Criteria

1. Population vs. Number of Electors
2. Future Growth
3. Respecting Community League Boundaries
4. Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards
5. Easily Identifiable Boundaries
6. Least Number of Changes
7. Block-Shaped Wards

# Current Ward Boundaries



Map of City of Edmonton
12 Ward Boundary
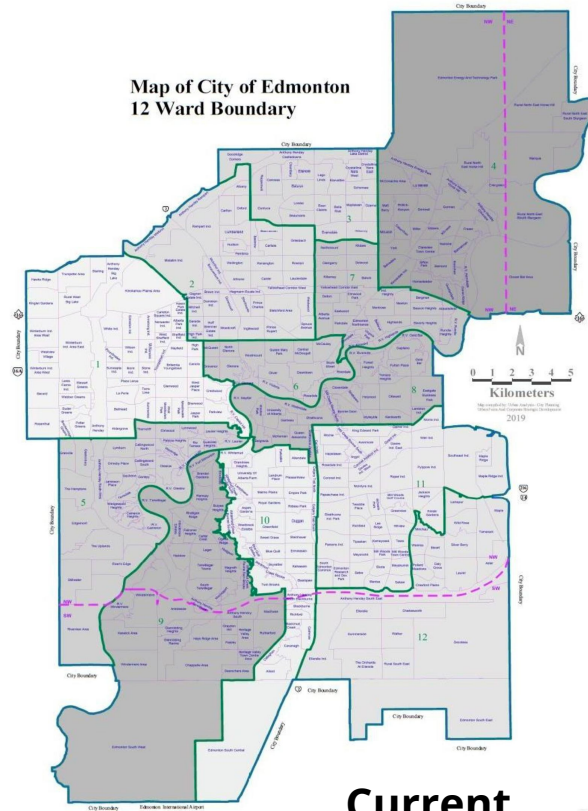
**Current**

# Comparison of Ward Boundaries
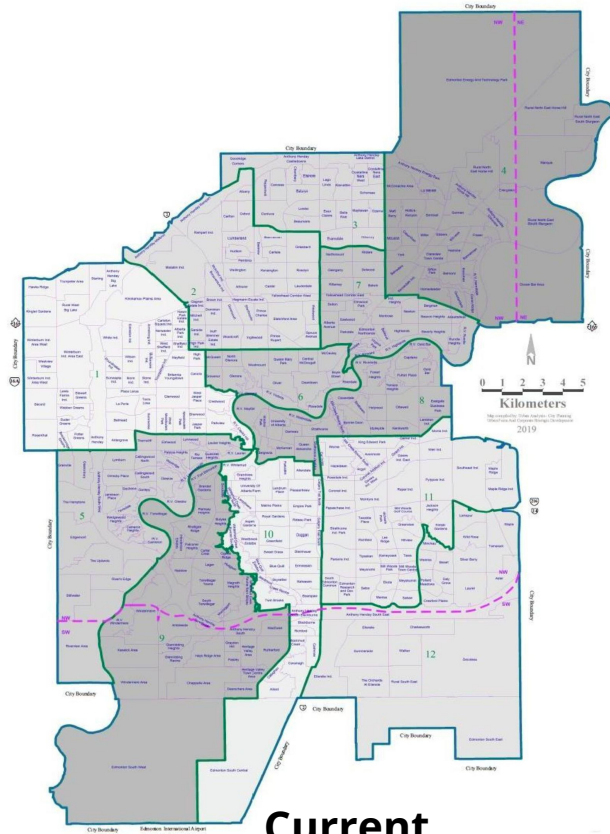


**Current**
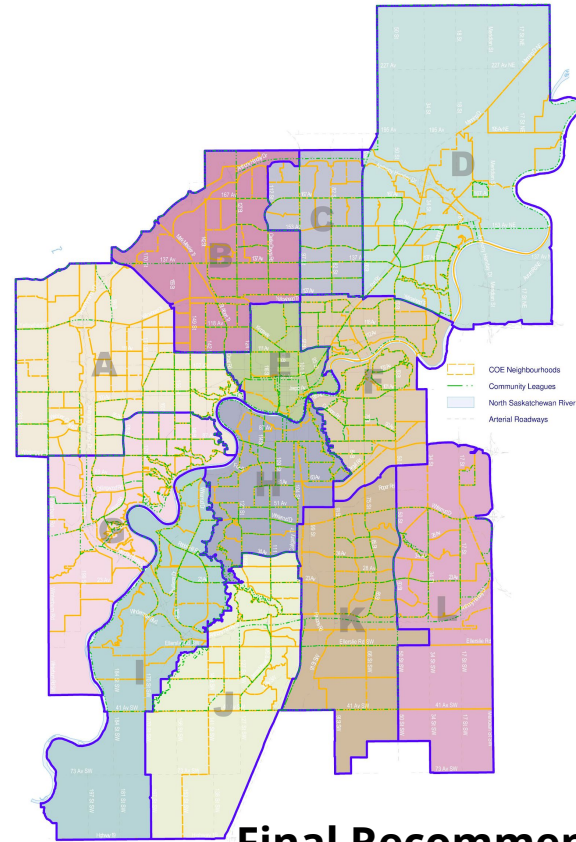
**Final Recommendation**

# Recommendations: Ward Boundaries
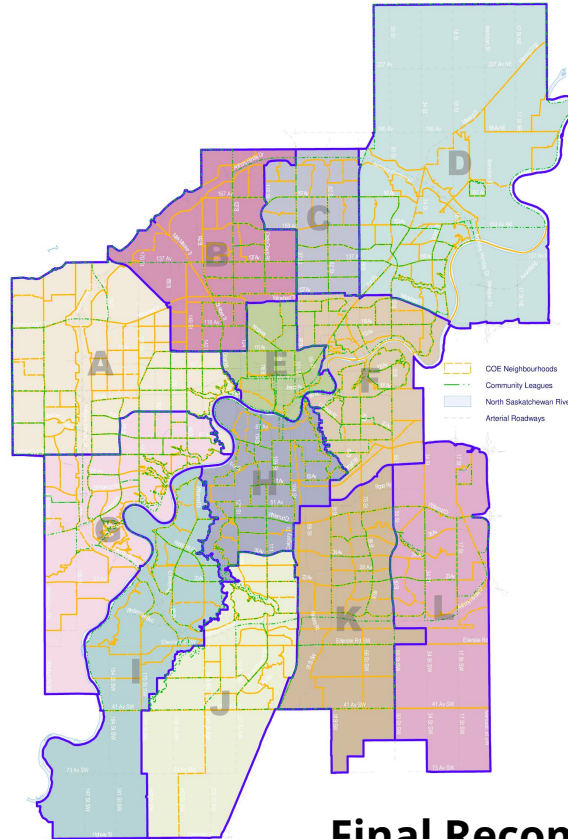


**Final Recommendation**
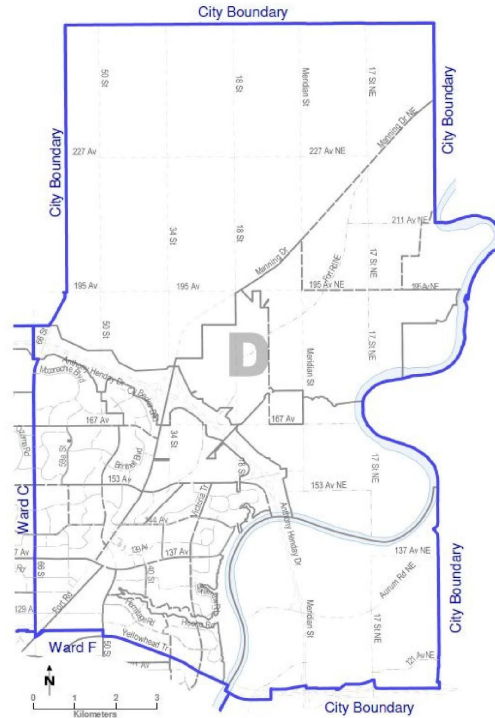
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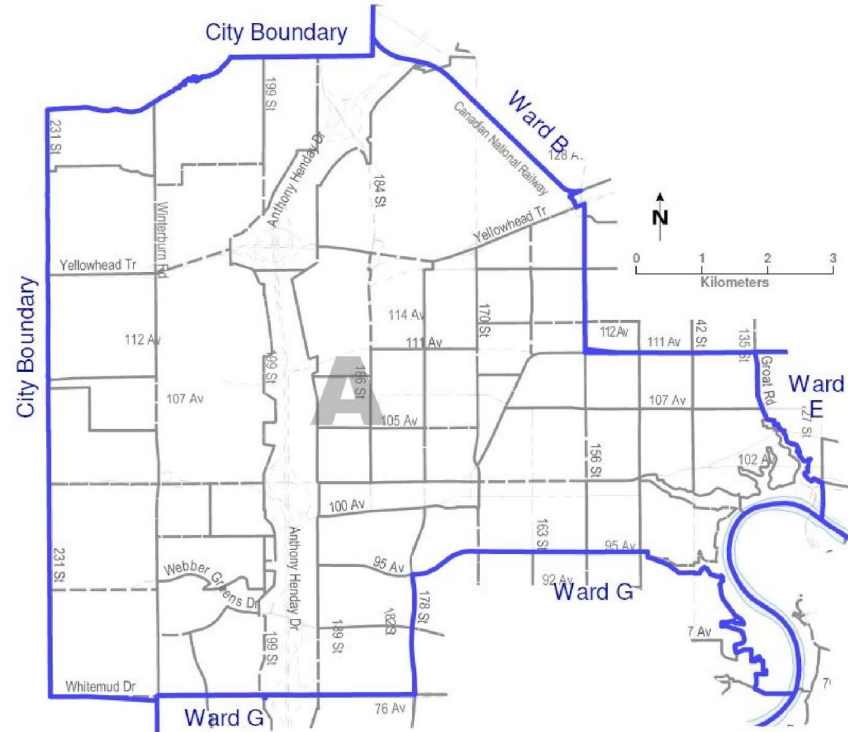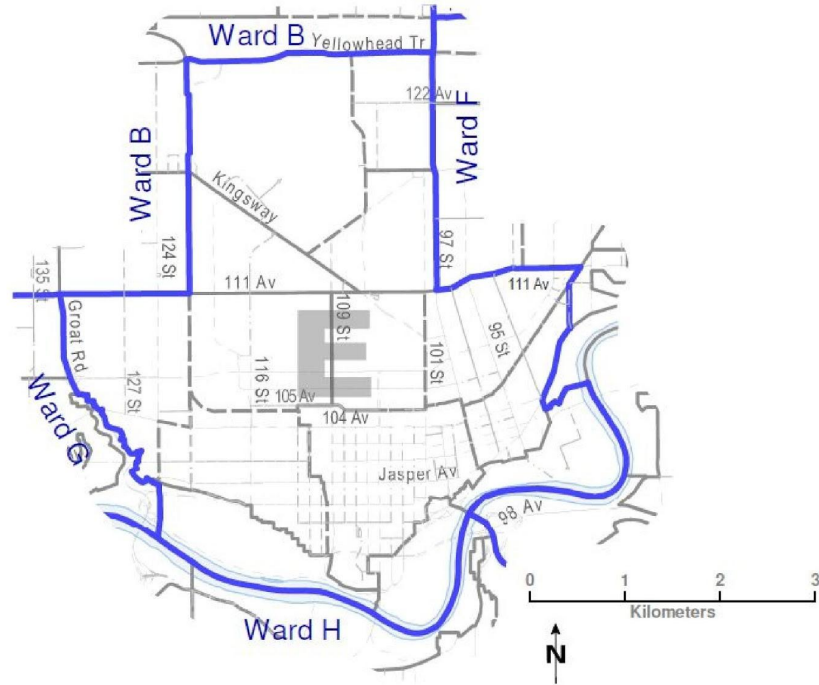
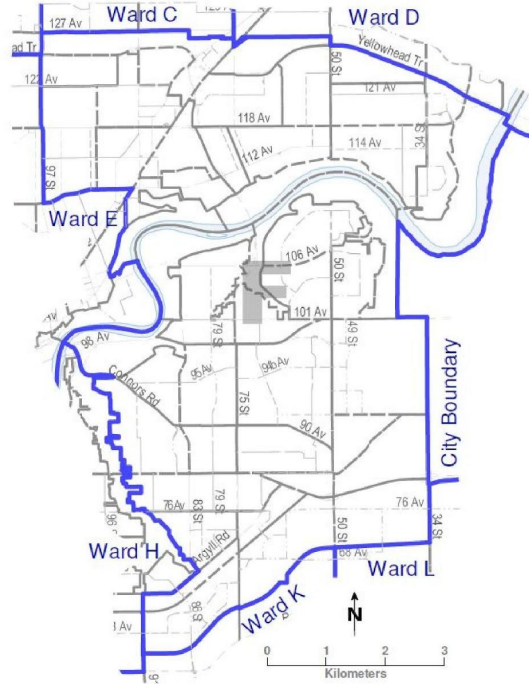# Recommendations: Ward B
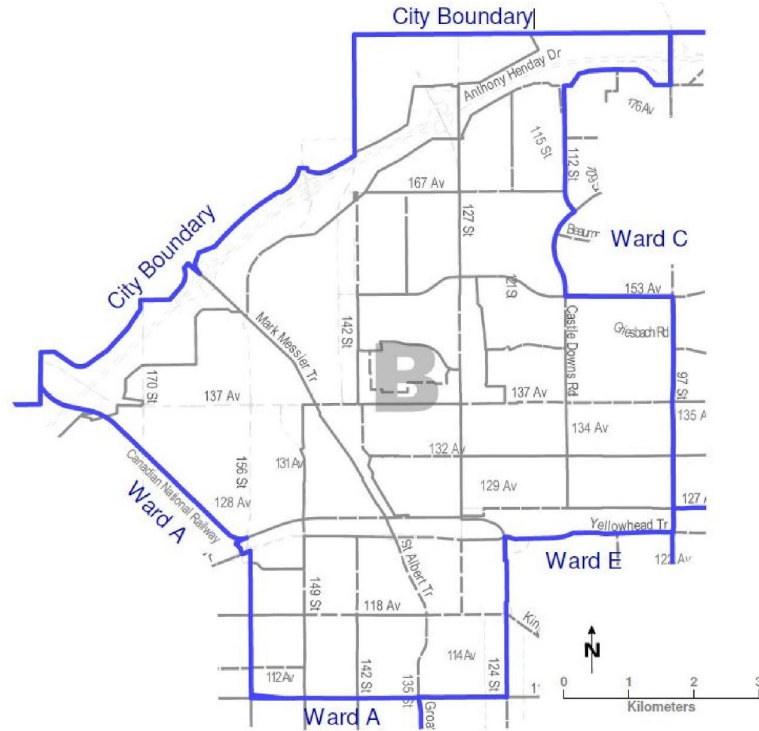
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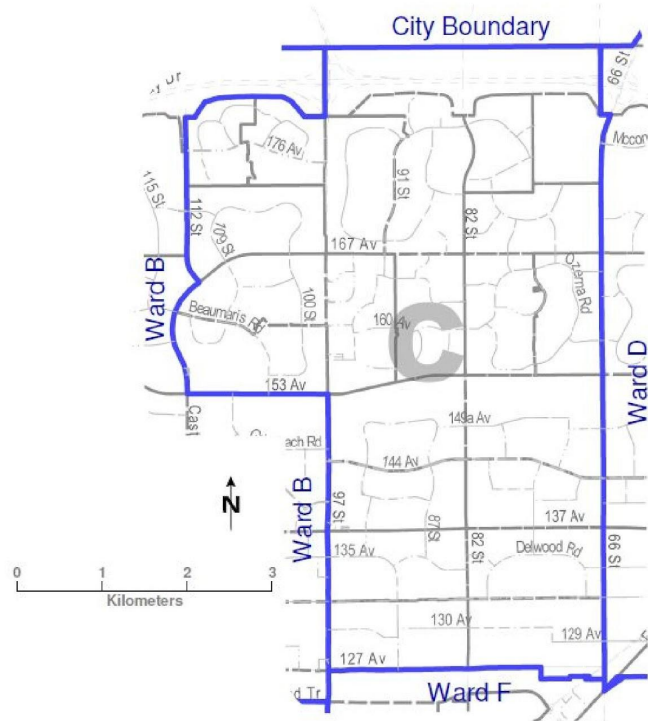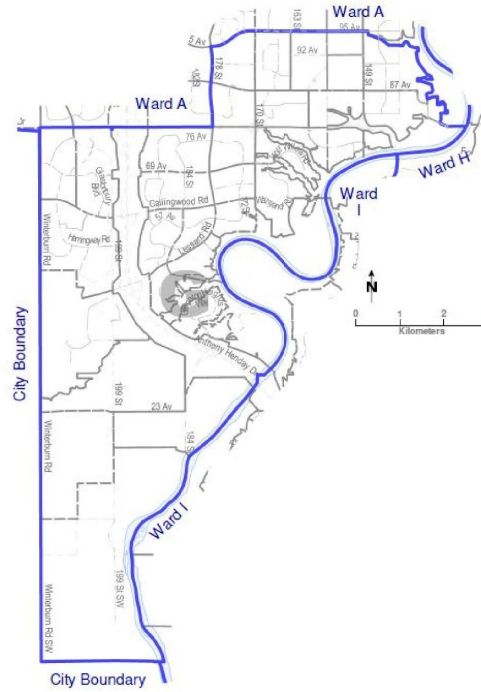
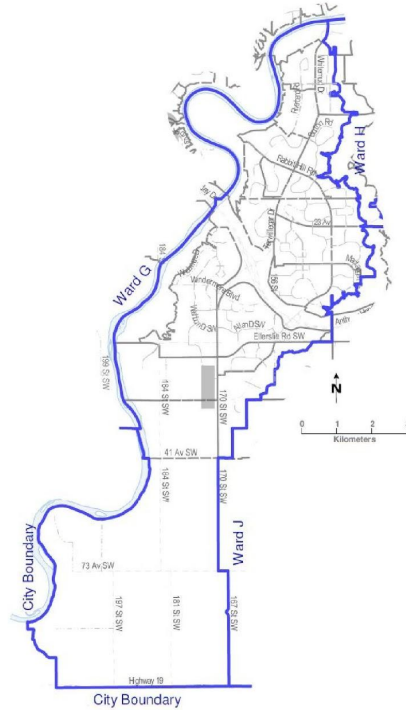# Recommendations: Ward D

# Recommendations: Ward E
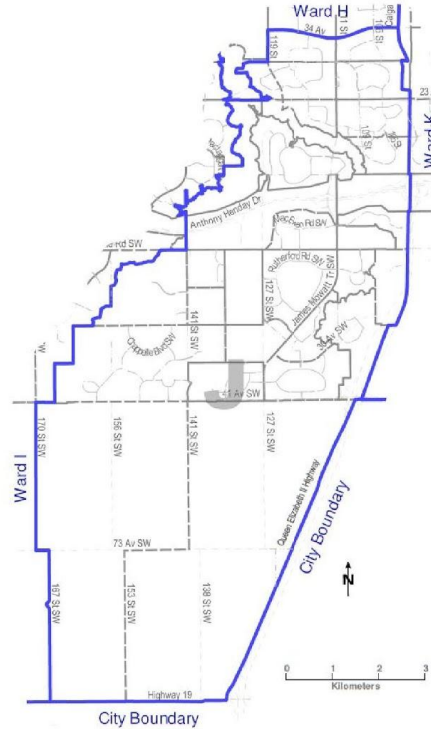
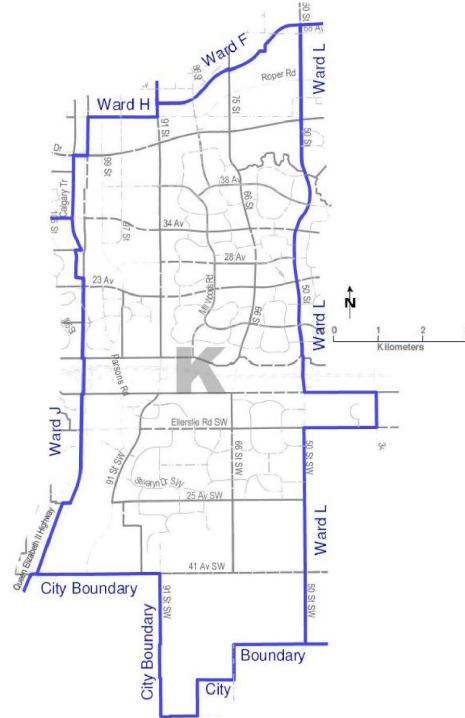# Recommendations: Ward F

# Recommendations: Ward G

# Recommendations: Ward H

# Recommendations: Ward I

# Recommendations: Ward J

# Recommendations: Ward K

# Recommendations: Ward L