

Proposal for the 46th Legislative District – 2021 Redistricting

Optimal Map for the 46th Legislative District

The 46th District should retain the bulk of its current boundaries, with Lake Forest Park and Kenmore remaining intact as whole cities and within the 46th Legislative District.

The 2011 Commission got the map right for the 46th, with specific *communities of color* along the State Route 522 corridor brought together. The *communities of interest most affected by transit and other transportation considerations along that same arterial* would be able to collectively lobby – access to reliable, inexpensive transportation will be a great economic equalizer and boon for both people and businesses if done well in the near future. And lastly, this would be the least disruptive to existing citizen groups, such as PTAs, special issue groups, political groups, and others who are already organized along legislative district lines to lobby their lawmakers.

Thr Northeast Seattle precincts, probably in the Green Lake or Roosevelt neighborhoods would need to be added to the current 46th district boundaries to increase the population by 2,700 residents, to reach within the allowable variance of 157,251 residents required for balance.

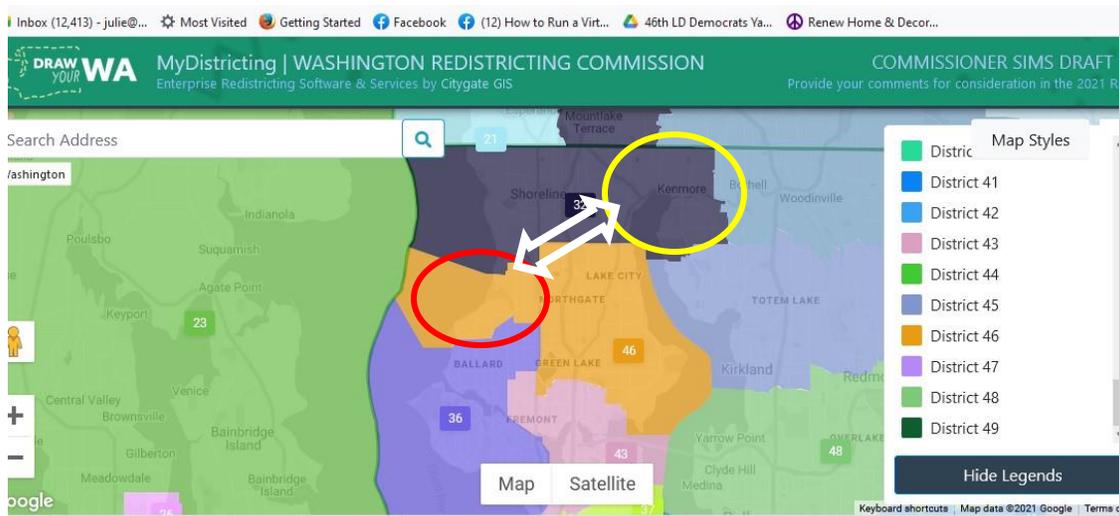
Commissioner Sims’ and Walkinshaw’s are good, but can be improved

Commissioner Sims’ map adds precincts in northwest Seattle, and moves the cities of Lake Forest Park and Kenmore to the 32nd District. Otherwise, this map retains the current boundaries of the 46th which encompasses all of northeast Seattle, and a portion of north central Seattle.

Commissioner Walkinshaw’s map adds precincts in northwest Seattle, and a few in Ravenna, Roosevelt, and east Green Lake.

Of the four maps proposed by the commissioners, **Commissioner Sims’ is the best**, followed by Commissioner Walkinshaw’s, which is also fairly good, but would require more complicated adjustment to achieve optimal boundaries.

However, Commissioner Sims’ map can be improved with just one key adjustment.

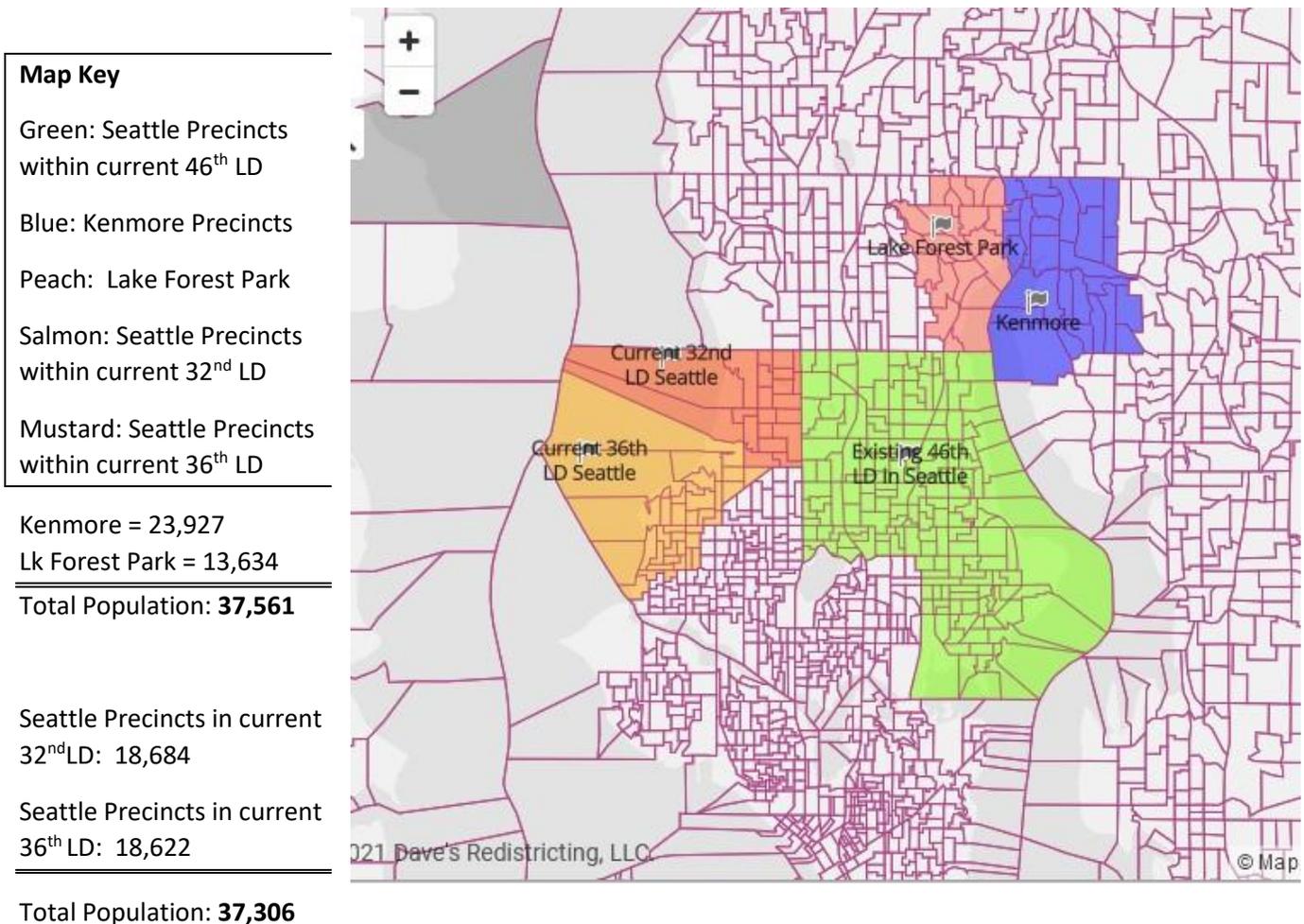


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Commissioner Sims’ map can be optimized with one easy adjustment

Of the two most appropriate Commissioners’ maps, we recommend using the Sims map, and making one easy, but significant adjustment. One swap of territory can make Commissioner Sims’ map the best it can be – moving Lake Forest Park and Kenmore back to the 46th, as they currently exist, and moving the precincts in northeast Seattle newly assigned under Sims’ proposed map back to the 32nd Legislative District, which would restore the current Seattle precincts existing within the 32nd Legislative D, and then add a few more precincts from the existing 36th Legislative District, which must shrink quite a bit, drawn from the Crown Hill/Carkeek Park area.

The trade we propose is a nearly exact population land swap on the proposed Sims map. The map below shows how the two sections of precincts in Seattle are a nearly exact match in terms of population for the cities of Lake Forest Park and Kenmore.



Variation between the two cohorts of precincts proposed to be swapped: **255 residents**, which could be addressed by adding a small precinct in the Green Lake or the Ravenna area, as the 43rd Legislative is the most oversized District in the state currently due to growth from 2011 – 2020, and needs to shrink.

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Why is this change important?

The 2011 Commission got the map right for the 46th, and the 46th Legislative District would be best served retaining the bulk of the boundaries that already exist. The 46th Legislative District has grown less than adjoining districts to the south, and in 2021 is about 2,700 residents short of the 157,271 target population.

The 46th Legislative District currently encompasses has two full suburban cities, Kenmore and Lake Forest Park, and the northeast portion of Seattle, which represents about one-sixth of the population of Seattle.

The 2011 boundaries, and these proposed 2021 boundaries accomplish:

- Two full cities and a balanced portion of a city that cannot fit in a single District (Seattle) are the municipal divisions.
- The District is entirely within a single County (King)
- The District does not cross any natural geographic barriers
- There are several **Communities of Interest** along the State Route 522 corridor brought together.
 - A large population of Hispanic households with Spanish spoken as the primary language at home in the Lake City neighborhood of Seattle, along SR522 in Lake Forest Park, and in downtown Kenmore
 - A small but significant population of people of Ethiopian descent, with Amharic spoken as a primary language at home, connected to an Ethiopian center in the Pinehurst neighborhood with shops, Ethiopian restaurants, and an Ethiopian church with services in Amharic.
 - A population of persons who practice the Muslim faith, with a the Idris Mosque just blocks from SR522.
- The suburban cities and Seattle neighborhoods along SR522 are the **communities most affected by transit and other transportation considerations along that same arterial**. Leaving these communities together and in the same Legislative District would continue to enable this larger community of interest to collectively lobby – access to reliable, inexpensive transportation will be a great economic equalizer and boon for both people and businesses if done well in the near future.
- Communities along the north western shore of Lake Washington have **common environmental concerns**, from some of the last undeveloped marshland near Husky Stadium, to the former Sand Point Naval Airstation (now Magnussen Park), to the concrete plant and St. Edward’s Park in Kenmore.
- And lastly, this would be **the least disruptive to existing citizen groups on all points of the political spectrum**, such as school parent groups, citizen lobbyists, political groups, and other stakeholders who are already organized along legislative district lines to continue the relationships previously built with lawmakers and other mutual stakeholders.

Impact to the communities of color

Representation matters. It is not insignificant that with the population of Hispanic voters within the communities along SR522, that an Hispanic State Representative was elected from the 46th District in 2018. Changing the makeup of the electorate by eliminating Lake Forest Park and Kenmore, and replacing it with whiter and wealthier precincts within Seattle does not well serve the voters of these communities, nor the greater population as a whole.

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This proposal also reunites a significant community of interest in the 32nd LD

The existing 32nd Legislative District also has *a very significant Korean population* which extends from the west side of Aurora on SR99, on north into Snohomish County. This proposal keeps this community together. Again, representation matters. It is important to note that the 32nd LD, with this population of interest together, elected a state representative of Korean descent who continues to serve.

Leaders of community organizations in the 32nd have agreed that this land swap with the proposed 32nd map is also good for the 32nd District.

Respects the districts of interest identified by Redistricting Justice for Washington coalition, particularly LD 21

Redistricting Justice of Washington is a coalition of good government organizations who are pursuing maps which supply more opportunities for voters of color to have members of their communities serve in the Legislature and Congress.

The number one priority for RJW in Snohomish County is to create a majority-POC population district in the 21st legislative district. This proposal does not affect the boundary with the 32nd LD that the 21st shares on the maps the RJWC has proposed, and thus, respects this goal.

Impact to the suburban cities

It is very beneficial for suburban cities to be within a legislative district with a section of Seattle. This proposal helps both Lake Forest Park and Kenmore, as well as the suburban cities which would be in the 32nd District.

The cities of Lake Forest Park and Kenmore were previously in a district with only other suburban cities, and found that their collective voice as a municipality took a backseat to a much larger suburban city in the cohort.

With Seattle divided among six legislative districts, the inclusion of a section of Seattle gives the District's Olympia delegation a powerful voice in the region, while not overshadowing the smaller suburban cities. This configuration makes for an excellent combination of municipalities receiving appropriate attention from their legislators, and effective representation.

Leaders of both Kenmore and Lake Forest Park have expressed their strong preference to remain in the 46th District, due to the better advocacy for their cities in Olympia in the past decade.

Conclusion

We would ask the Commissioners to consider the request to use Commissioner Sims' map of the 46th, with the important change of bringing Lake Forest Park and Kenmore into the 46th District, as they are currently, and trading precincts in northwest Seattle assigned to the 46th on Commissioner Sims' map for Lake Forest Park and Kenmore. This precinct swap would be with the proposed 32nd District boundaries.