

ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

MAPPING CHALLENGES

Balancing Constitutional Choices

NORTH WESTER
PUBLISHED

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COMPILED FOR THE DEPARTMENT

A DELICATE DANCE

Alaska's Constitution establishes 4 redistricting principles for new districts. They are to be:

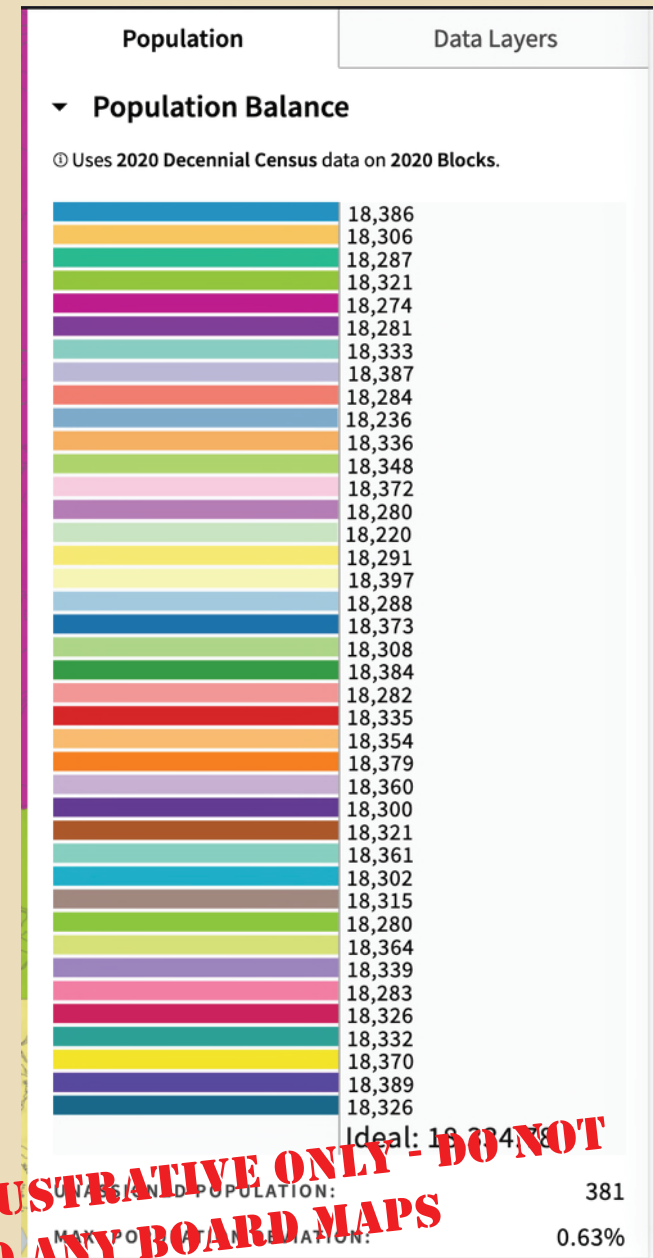
1. **Compact** – having a small perimeter in relation to the area encompassed. Compact districting should not yield bizarre designs. The Alaska Supreme Court looks to the relative compactness of proposed and possible districts in determining whether a district is sufficiently compact.
2. **Contiguous** – reachable from every other part of the district, islands allowed but open sea is not without limit
3. **Socio-Economically Integrated** – where people live together and work together and earn their living together. It has been described as occurring when a group of people live within a geographic unit, following, if possible, similar economic pursuits.
4. **Equal Population** – $733,391 / 40 = 18,335$ “as near as practicable” for Alaska law, 10% total deviation allowed under Federal law,

A DYNAMIC TENSION

- **In some cases the 4 Constitutional criteria collide as the following challenges and map examples will show**
- **Only the Board can determine how best to resolve the dynamic tension between competing redistricting requirements**
- **Legal Counsel is on-hand to assist as needed**
- **Case law has clarified some points, but many tradeoffs are matters of judgement**

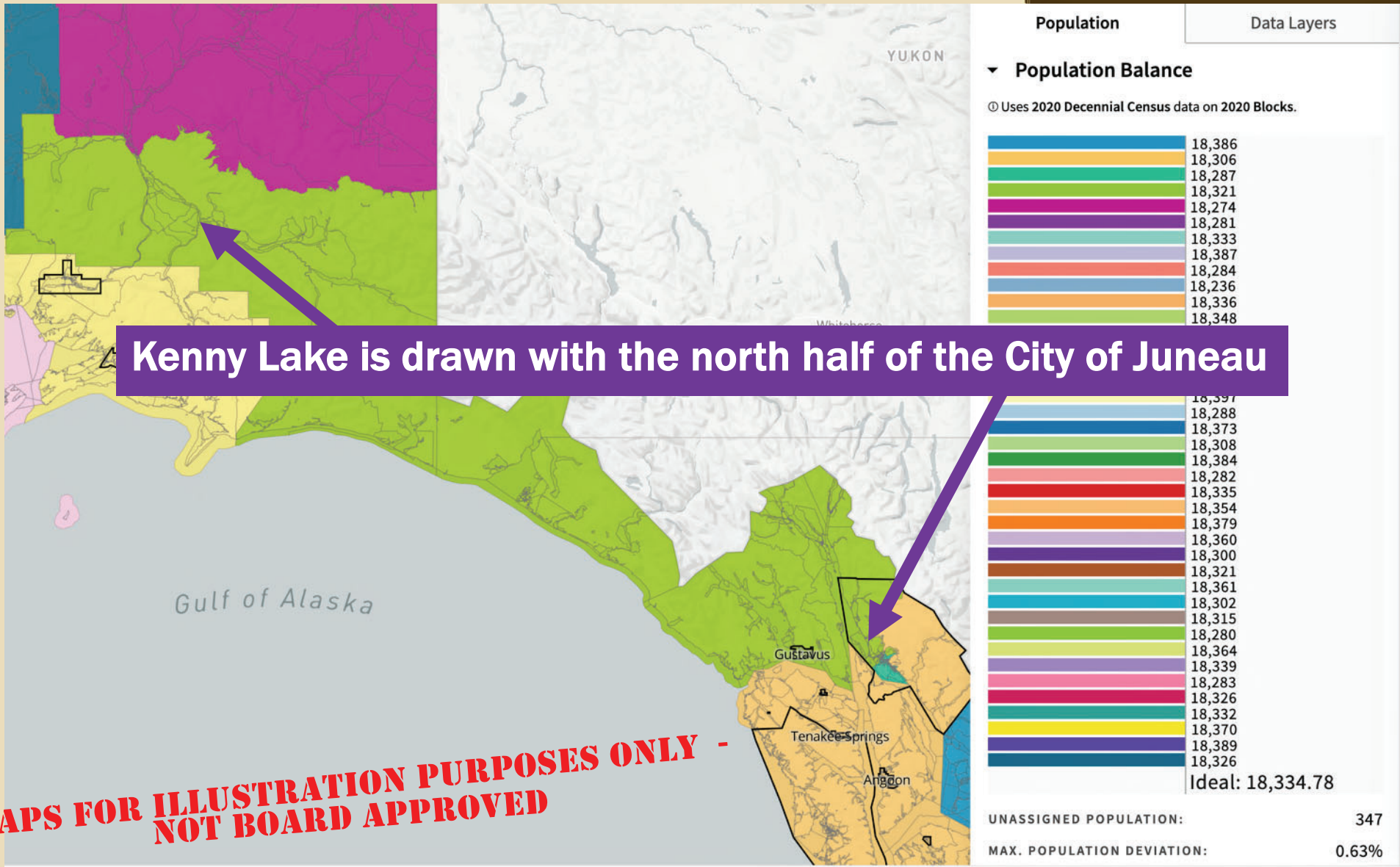
A NATURAL TEMPTATION

- Because population numbers are empirical and precise, it's natural for map drawers to focus on "getting the numbers right" and look past the more nuanced criteria which require experience, judgement and reflection to properly assess: no simple answers
- Our first public map submission (anonymous) is a perfect example:
- Excellent population deviations, just 0.63% total deviation across all 40 districts
- Likely that this is the smallest possible deviation given the Census blocks contain more than one person each

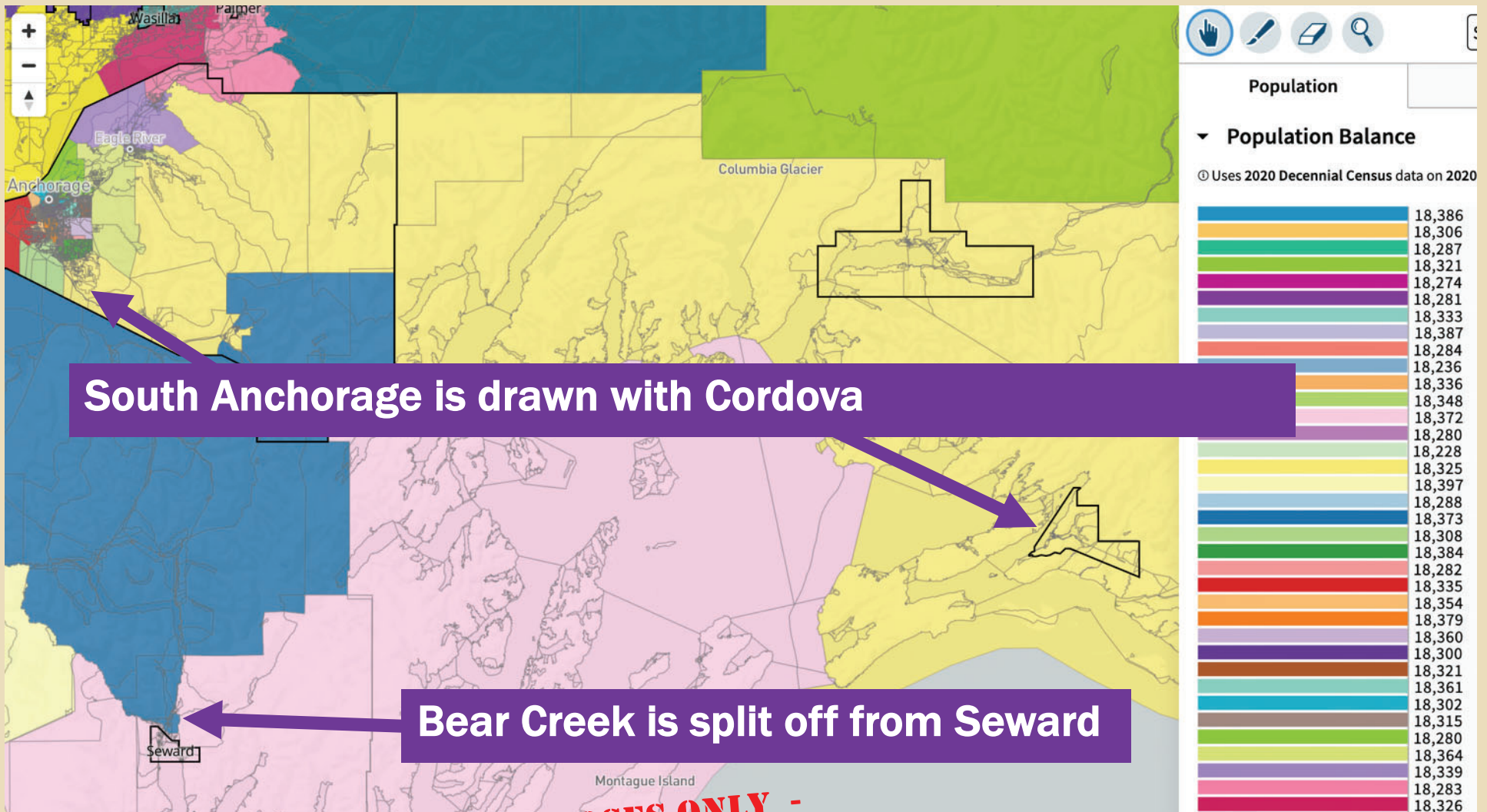


**COUNTS ARE ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY - DO NOT
APPLY TO ANY BOARD MAPS**

THE COST OF “PERFECTION”



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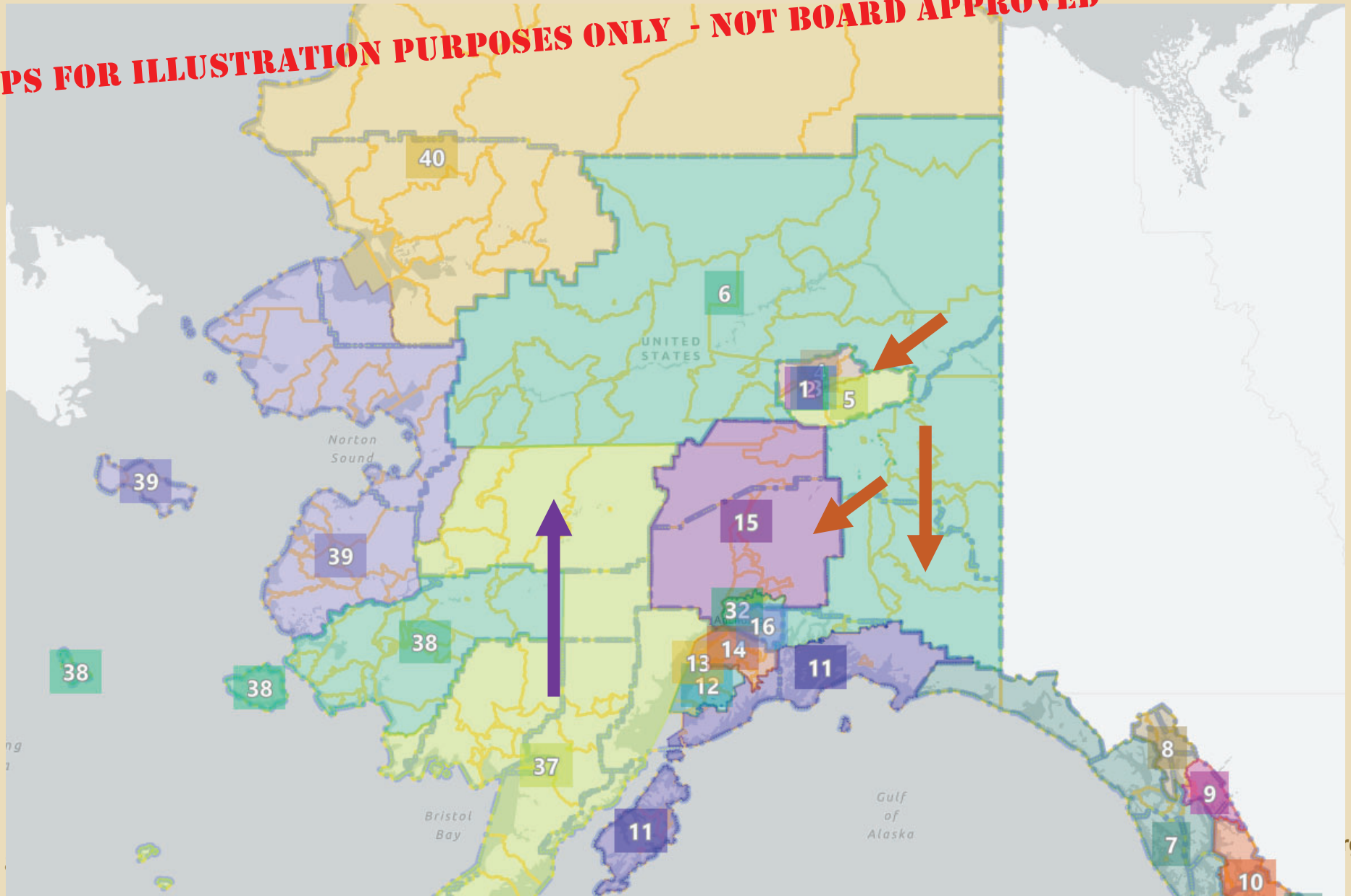
**MAPS FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY -
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IT'S ALL CONNECTED

- **Making a change in one area forms population waves which ripple outward to other districts, and even regions of the state**
- **Consider Alaska's vast interior:**

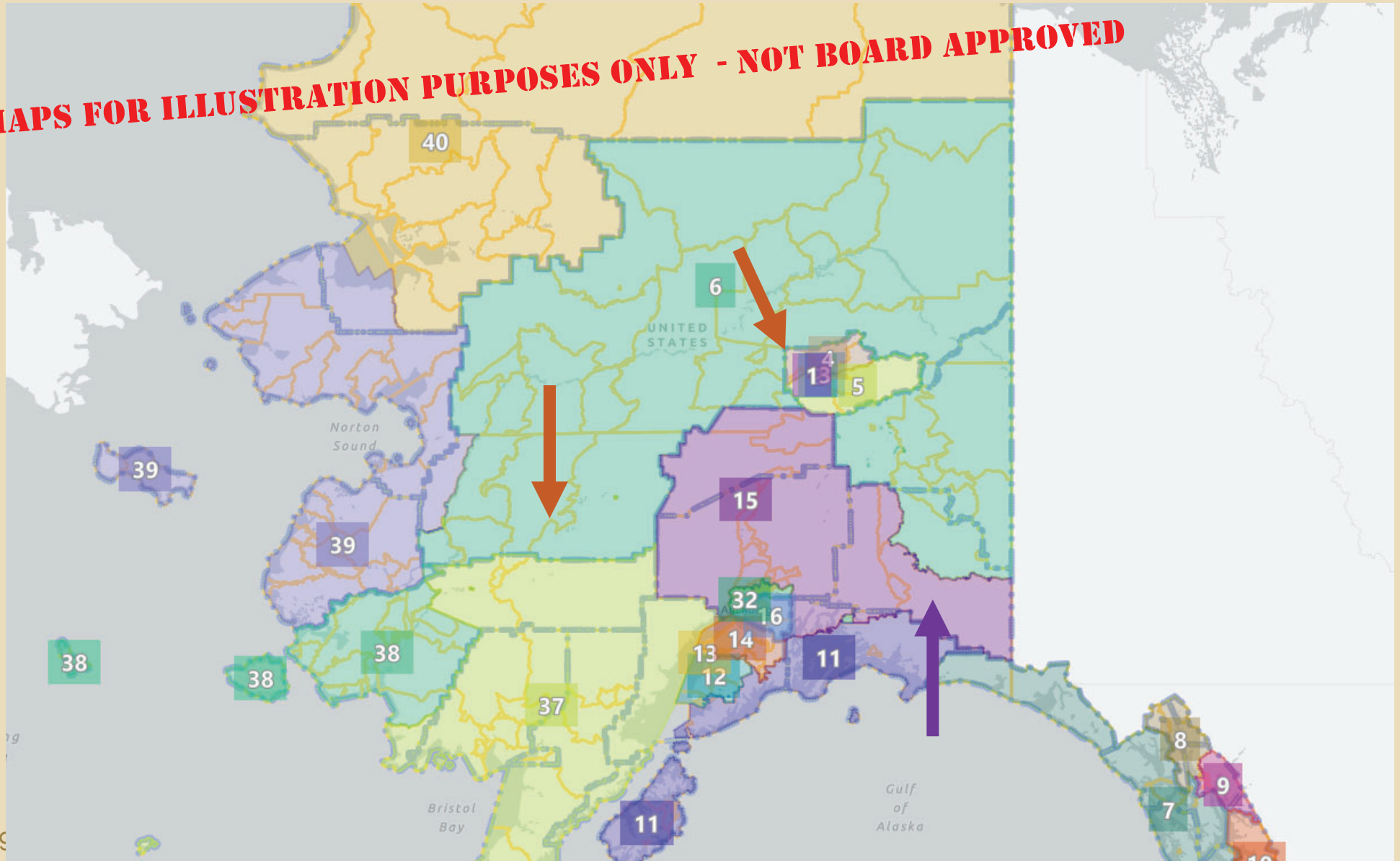
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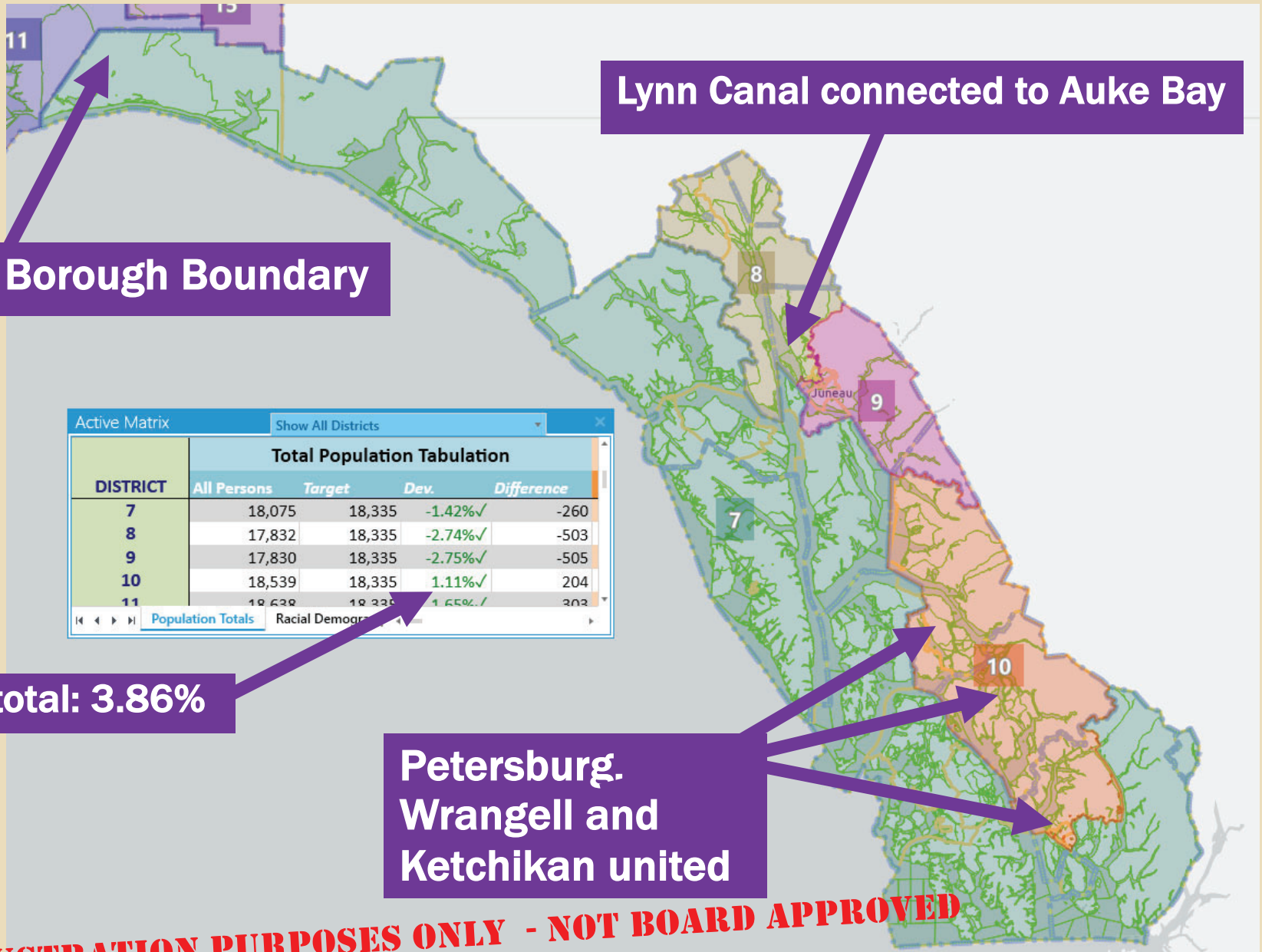
EXPERIENCE COUNTS

- **There are 28,568 Census blocks in Alaska**
- **Technically there are millions of possible plans**
- **Alaska's vast size means there are many distinct socio-economic regions**
- **Alaska's vast size poses significant compactness challenges**
- **These factors restrict the number of Constitutionally balanced and practicable plans to few**
- **These practicable plans hinge on a short list of key challenges**
- **Board guidance on these points will reduce the number of possible plans from thousands to dozens or less**

SOUTHEAST CHALLENGES

- **Southeast Alaska as a region contains 72,254 people, enough for 3.91 seats.**
- **Results in an under population of 1,050 people total**
- **Spread across 4 districts mean each district would need to be 260 persons low, or 1.4% below ideal**
- **Do we combine population from Cordova with Southeast?**
- **Do we include population from the Copper River Valley?**
- **Cordova has 2,600 people. Adding to Southeast results in over-population of 1,500+, or about 2% above ideal per district**
- **Copper River Valley socio-economically distinct from Southeast**

A DYNAMIC DANCE



GULF COAST CHALLENGES

- **Cordova has 2,600 people, Valdez has 4,000, Seward has 5,000, Kodiak has 13,000: Total 24,600 = not possible to combine**
- **Cordova, Seward and Kodiak combined is 20,600**
- **Combining the Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak, and Cordova results in overpopulation of about 1.9% per district (+340 average across 4 districts)**
- **The neighboring Aleutian Islands district to the west is underpopulated**
- **Assigning Tyonek/Beluga to the Aleutians district reduces the overpopulation in the Kenai area by 600 people (350 overage averages down to 200 per district for an overpopulation average decrease from 1.9% to 1.2%).**
- **Do we include Tyonek/Beluga with the Aleutians district?**

A DYNAMIC DANCE

Tyonek could be drawn in rural district

Kodiak, Cordova together

Active Matrix Show All Districts

Total Population Tabulation				
DISTRICT	All Persons	Target	Dev.	Difference
11	18,638	18,335	1.65%✓	303
12	18,717	18,335	2.08%✓	382
13	18,573	18,335	1.30%✓	238
14	18,558	18,335	1.22%✓	223
15	18,334	18,335	0.00%✓	-1

Population Totals Racial Demograph

District average 1.6% high, but Cordova is not with a road system community

MAPS FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES
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NORTHWEST CHALLENGES

- **Growth in the North Slope, Bethel and Nome regions is offset by losses in the Interior and Dillingham and Bristol Bay areas.**
- **Hooper Bay requests to be added to Bethel district, but adding 1,000 people to Bethel, which is already over populated, necessitates losses of other upriver Bethel region communities.**
- **The Dillingham/Aleutian Islands district lost population. Additional population may be found to the East (Tyonek), North (Kaltag, Galena, Ruby, Nulato) or West (Good News Bay, Platinum).**
- **Is it possible to redistrict some areas to better reflect historical socio-economic ties between interior communities while re-balancing the population changes?**

A DYNAMIC DANCE

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Hooper Bay with Bethel

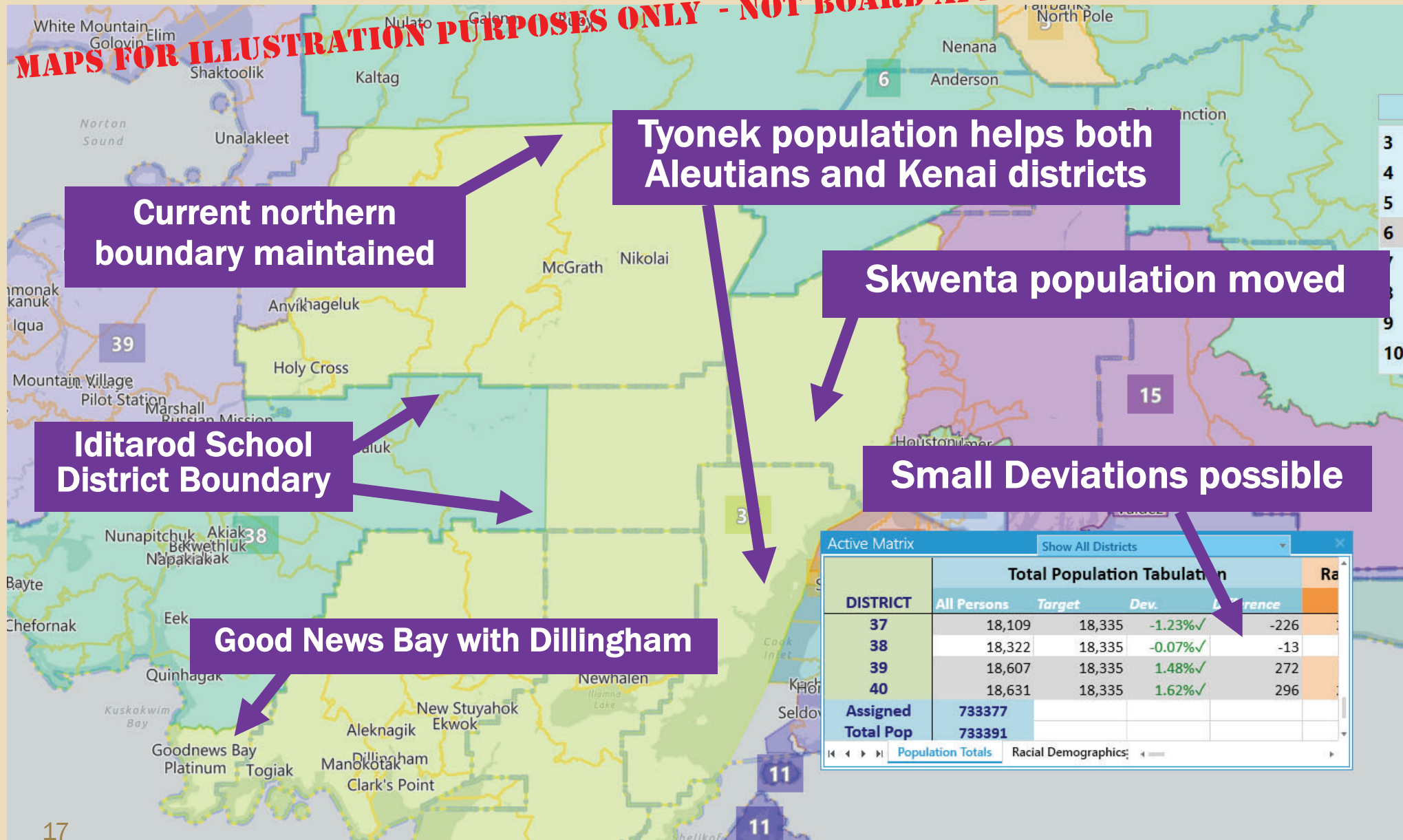
Bethel up river communities must move to new district

Good News Bay with Dillingham

Active Matrix					
Show All Districts					
Total Population Tabulation					
DISTRICT	All Persons	Target	Dev.	Difference	Ra
37	18,255	18,335	-0.44%✓	-80	
38	18,320	18,335	-0.08%✓	-15	
39	18,463	18,335	0.70%✓	128	
40	18,631	18,335	1.62%✓	296	
Assigned	733377				
Total Pop	733391				

A DYNAMIC DANCE

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A DYNAMIC DANCE

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**Tyonek changes districts
Kenai district pops higher**

**Interior communities
change districts**

Good News Bay with Bethel

37 & 38 Deviations reduced

Active Matrix					
Show All Districts					
Total Population Tabulation					
DISTRICT	All Persons	Target	Dev.	Difference	Ra
36	0	18,335	-100.0%▲	-18,335	
37	18,369	18,335	0.19%✓	34	
38	18,318	18,335	-0.09%✓	-17	
39	18,607	18,335	1.48%✓	272	
40	18,631	18,335	1.62%✓	296	
Assigned	733377				

A DYNAMIC DANCE

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Active Matrix					Show All Districts
Total Population Tabulation					
DISTRICT	All Persons	Target	Dev.	Difference	
37	18,109	18,335	-1.23%✓	-226	
38	18,322	18,335	-0.07%✓	-13	
39	18,607	18,335	1.48%✓	272	
40	18,631	18,335	1.62%✓	296	
Assigned	733377				
Total Pop	733391				

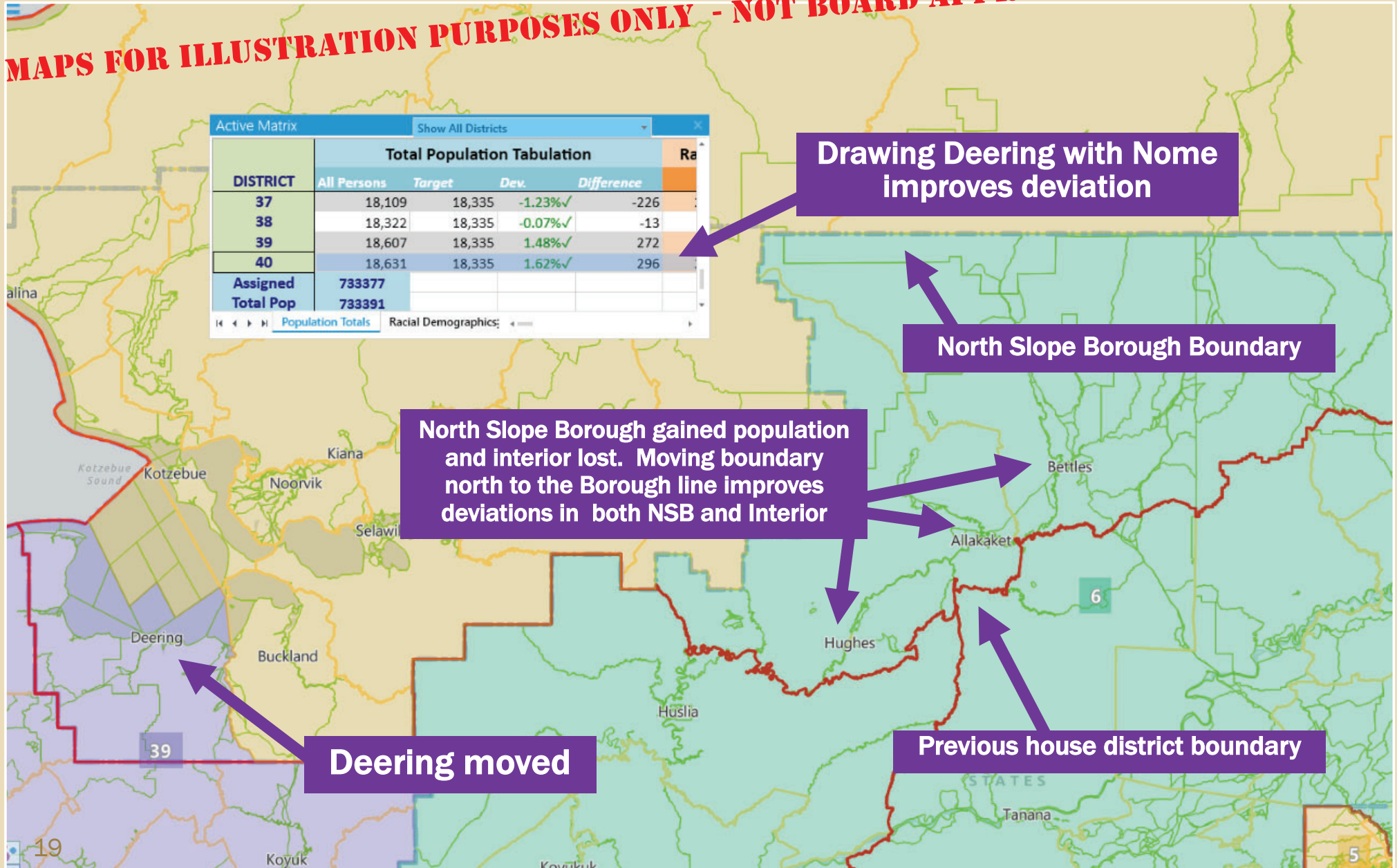
Drawing Deering with Nome improves deviation

North Slope Borough Boundary

North Slope Borough gained population and interior lost. Moving boundary north to the Borough line improves deviations in both NSB and Interior

Deering moved

Previous house district boundary



A DYNAMIC DANCE

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Active Matrix

Show All Districts

DISTRICT	Total Population Tabulation				Ra
	All Persons	Target	Dev.	Difference	
37	18,109	18,335	-1.23%✓	-226	
38	18,322	18,335	-0.07%✓	-13	
39	18,414	18,335	0.43%✓	79	
40	18,824	18,335	2.67%✓	489	
Assigned	733377				
Total Pop	733391				

Population Totals

Racial Demographics:

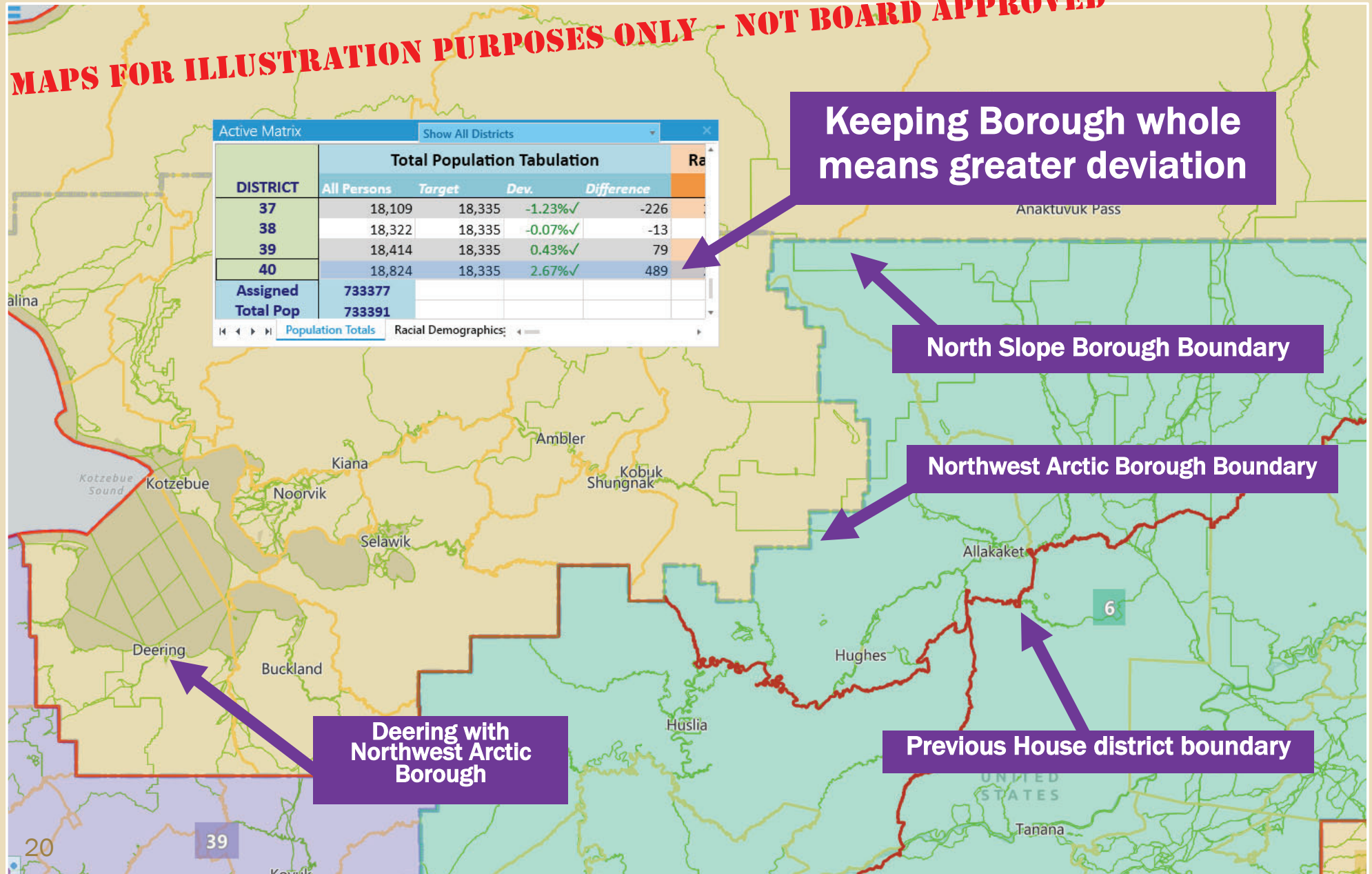
Keeping Borough whole means greater deviation

North Slope Borough Boundary

Northwest Arctic Borough Boundary

Deering with Northwest Arctic Borough

Previous House district boundary



CONCLUSION

- **Staff encourages the Board to focus on high level questions as we review member drawn map options**
- **Prepared list of key questions is available if requested**
- **Should guidance on key questions be provided, map drawing will proceed with increased focus and efficiency**
- **Any direction can be re-considered or adapted should new information come to light**