

10,000 HOMES IN TEN YEARS

**CONSTRUCT
AND REPAIR**



**CUT POLICY
BARRIERS**



**SYSTEMS &
PROCESSES**



BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Mayor Suzanne LaFrance Housing Strategy

10,000 HOMES IN TEN YEARS

December 5, 2024

BACKGROUND

THE PROBLEM

Our community needs more housing. The Municipality of Anchorage needs to see at least 1,000 units of housing built or rehabilitated each year to meet the needs of residents. For 2024, our records show just over 500 units. Housing security requires more housing of all different types, from multi-family to first-time buyer. To make Anchorage a sustainable place to live for the long-term, we need to take action.

HOW LACK OF HOUSING HURTS US

Lack of adequate housing undermines our economy, shutting out workers and business owners. It's a major contributor to outmigration and homelessness. It makes it harder for families to invest in our community or stay close to home.

WHERE WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Housing availability isn't entirely within our control: We're a local government, not a construction company! But there is creative action we can take now to relieve pressure. We can't add land to the Anchorage Bowl, but we can use the land we share more efficiently. We can't set interest rates, but we can speed permitting to limit costs. We can start by setting an ambitious goal, and creating a road-map to accomplish it, knowing we'll continue to adapt as we go.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Three specific strategies will immediately improve our community's housing situation. We can incentivize the repair and maintenance of existing housing options, and the building of new ones. We can make sure our regulations reflect our most important priority: making it easier, not more difficult, to build. And we can streamline internal operations so permitting and approval processes are predictable, consistent, and reliable for all users.

GOAL

Anchorage needs 10,000 units of housing built or rehabilitated over the next 10 years.

STRATEGY

1. Incentivize construction and repair.
2. Cut red tape. Remove regulatory barriers to building housing.
3. Streamline municipal systems and processes for permitting and approval.



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GOALS		TARGET COMPLETION: DEC. 31, 2024	JUNE 30, 2025	JUNE 30, 2026	JUNE 30, 2027
1 CONSTRUCT AND REPAIR 	1a. Close the feasibility “gap” in residential development and reuse	Expand geographic scope and timeline of property tax abatements for multi-family housing. Modify requirements to better align with housing goals. Fix issues identified by current recipients.		Strengthen code and enforcement to address dilapidated, vacant, or abandoned properties.	Incentivize repair and reuse using a combination of tax incentives, state funds, and federal grants. Promote weatherization and energy efficiency.
	1b. Reduce the cost of infrastructure		Create flexibility in offsite requirements so they can be waived when the adjacent infrastructure is already publicly maintained.	Identify funding for AWWU to promote utility connections within the water and sewer service districts.	Update Design Criteria Manual. Eliminate redundant and conflicting standards in zoning code.
	1c. Leverage public-private partnerships to build housing	Issue a request for proposals to build housing or mixed use on the former Archives site in Midtown.	Obtain title and redevelop vacant and abandoned properties to prepare land for development, using federal grants.	Support Heritage Land Bank partnerships in Girdwood that create public value for the local and broader community.	Activate Anchorage Community Development Authority to develop attainable workforce and market-rate housing in Midtown and Downtown.
	1d. Increase the supply of housing units for low-income and unhoused people	Apply for the HUD PRO grant to research & test new approaches such as modular and manufactured housing for cold climates.	Use MOA resources and convening power to leverage federal & philanthropic funds to produce housing units for people experiencing homelessness.	Incentivize more hotel conversions, single-room occupancies, efficiencies, and other housing options for people at 60% of area median income or below.	
2 CUT POLICY BARRIERS 	2e. Simplify the zoning code to make it more usable and effective	More consistent communication between the Planning Department, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Community Councils.	Identify common reasons that existing buildings don’t conform to current code. Assess whether those aspects of code create public value.	Institute a regular review process to inform a yearly clean-up of ordinances. Empower staff to raise issues. Develop clear systems for tracking process and problems.	Eliminate reliance on old versions of Title 21. Address cross-references and Special Limitations to make zoning code more self-contained.
	2f. Make it easier to build more cheaply; promote the efficient use of land	Convene working group with the Assembly to draft ordinance(s) to fix Site Access issues.	Reform design standards, including Site Access, especially when they discriminate against multi-family homes.	Allow denser development in transit corridors.	Legalize manufactured & modular housing in more residential areas. Decrease min. lot sizes and setbacks, increase heights and max. lot coverage.
	2g. Increase the diversity and vitality of Anchorage’s neighborhoods		Remove remaining barriers in code to recent housing reforms passed by the Assembly: HOME Initiative (duplexes), triplex/fourplex, ADUs, parking, etc.	Review the Comprehensive Plan and consider updates to better align goals with actions.	Remove barriers to residential uses in commercial zones. Allow small-scale, low impact commercial uses in some residential zones.
3 SYSTEMS & PROCESSES 	3h. Increase the predictability and speed of the permitting process		Conduct an external review of the permitting process. Publish accurate and accessible guides for the public, including a map of the entire permitting process. Scope improved software.		Increase use of “by-right” rather than discretionary approvals by: (a) reducing number of decision points; and (b) identifying commonly granted discretionary approvals that could be approved by-right.
	3i. Continuously improve internal systems and processes	1. Build internal systems that empower front-line staff to raise and fix common issues. 2. Hire a Building Official and other key positions.	1. Improve customer survey to increase response rate and transparently track feedback. 2. Create a phone tree for internal and external use; include clear job and departmental descriptions.	Review and remove institutional barriers to filling jobs at the Permit Center. Strengthen the career ladder for all Permit Center staff.	Create check-in system to welcome people to the Permit Center. Have a monitor display available staff, or when they’ll return.