

**Planning and Zoning Commission
Resolution No. 2023-003**

Title 21 Text Amendment to Site Access Regulations

PZC Case No. 2023-0011

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Exhibit A

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2023-003

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING TO THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF TITLE 21 TEXT AMENDMENTS TO SITE ACCESS STANDARDS.

(Case No. 2023-0011)

WHEREAS, the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (2040 Plan)* assesses the housing and employment needs of current and future Anchorage residents and includes goals, policies, and actions to address these needs; and

WHEREAS, the *2040 Plan* calls for Anchorage's neighborhoods and commercial districts to accommodate a range of additional housing opportunities and new business growth, through infill and redevelopment, in a more efficient, accessible development pattern that is compatible with the valued characteristics of the neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, wide site access driveway and vehicle circulation aisle requirements, combined with inadequate treatment of pedestrian access needs, impact the cost and range of housing, business developments, and choices for travel mode; and

WHEREAS, Action 4-6 of the *2040 Plan* calls for amendments to Title 21 for internal site circulation for vehicles and private lanes for compact infill housing; and Action 7-2 of the *2040 Plan* calls for amendments to Title 21 for infill housing development to incorporate neighborhood compatibility standards; and

WHEREAS, the *2040 Plan* and area-specific plans like the *Spenard Corridor Plan* and *Fairview Neighborhood Plan* recognize traditional urban neighborhoods and transit-supportive development corridors in certain parts of the Anchorage Bowl as having greater street grid connectivity, smaller block and lot sizes, and better access to public transit and sidewalks, which merit alternative driveway, parking facility, and other site access regulations tailored to their urban contexts; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) *2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* sets forth policies and actions under Goal 3 to develop an efficient multi-modal transportation system to reduce congestion, promote accessibility, and improve system reliability; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Department received and incorporated public comments on the policy direction before writing the proposed Title 21 text amendments, and incorporated comments on the drafts of the proposed Title 21 amendments; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Department received and incorporated feedback from dozens of stakeholder consultations and public meetings with the general public, private-sector development experts, design/architectural professionals, business organizations, neighborhoods, public agencies, and municipal committees and commissions; and

WHEREAS, while the amendments can improve pedestrian accessibility standards throughout the Municipality, there is also the opportunity to increase pedestrian standards even further in urban neighborhoods where there is a rational nexus to do so; and

WHEREAS, following a six-week review period, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a work session with staff on February 6, 2023, and staff provided written responses to Commissioner questions; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing, reviewed the draft ordinance and the staff responses to comments and questions, and concluded its deliberations on February 13, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission that:


- A. The Commission makes the following findings of fact:
1. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments meet all three approval criteria for text amendments to Title 21 in 21.03.210C., *Approval Criteria*.
 2. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments respond to forecast housing needs and Goal 4: Neighborhood Housing in the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (2040 Plan)* to accommodate the housing needs of Anchorage residents through infill and development that is compatible with the neighborhood.
 3. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments respond to actions, policies, and design principles in the *2040 Plan*, including Goals 2 and 3 for growth through infill, redevelopment, and mixed-use centers.
 4. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments respond to the unique development characteristics of urban neighborhoods and identifies these neighborhoods in a manner that enables appropriate, contextual development standards in Title 21.
 5. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments respond to AMATS transportation planning policies and strategies for pedestrian access as important components of transportation infrastructure and factors in congestion management and equitable access.
 6. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments are consistent with district and area-specific plans, including the *Spenard Corridor Plan* and the *Fairview Neighborhood Plan*.
 7. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments reflect a significant public involvement effort that worked well to inform, engage, and incorporate input from stakeholders, experts, and the public to develop and revise the ordinance.
 8. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments align with both the practical realities of development and best practices in urban design.
 9. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments strike a balance in making changes that can be done easily and efficiently, while endeavoring

to meet the bigger picture goals of the Municipality, and provide benefits to public health, economic development, and community-building that result from pedestrian-oriented design.


10. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments increase pedestrian standards throughout the community while also achieving flexibility where able.
 11. The Title 21 Site Access Amendments improve pedestrian access throughout the Municipality, while setting a higher standard in urban neighborhood areas where it is feasible.
 12. This action does not preclude the future use of zoning districts, when improved, to further effect these and similar changes.
 13. The Planning Department held a thorough work session and responded to Commissioners' comments, providing a better understanding of how this amendment fits within the greater context in the Municipality's direction ahead.
 14. The Planning Department staff responded to Commissioner questions that it can potentially make the municipal Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) requirements more inclusive of other modes of transportation in the future.
- B. The Commission recommends to the Anchorage Assembly approval of the Title 21 text amendments to the site access standards as provided in:
1. The draft ordinance in the February 13, 2023, case packet.
 2. The Planning Department's recommended amendments 1 through 11 on pages 10, 11, and 12 of the February 13, 2023, staff report memorandum, included as Attachment A.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission on the 13th day of February 2023.

ADOPTED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission this 6th day of March 2023.



Craig H. Lyon
Secretary



Jared Gardner
Chair

Attachment: A—Recommended Amendments

(Case No. 2023-0011)

eia/tgd

Attachment A
of
Planning and Zoning Commission Resolution No. 2023-003

Amendments 1 to 11 of February 13, 2023, PZC Case No. 2023-0011 Staff Report

Five of the amendments are non-substantive clarifications, purpose statements, or technical corrections. Two amendments (1 and 8) adjust the approval process for administrative relief from the alley access requirements. The remaining four (5, 6, 9, and 10) are substantive adjustments to add more flexibility to some garage and front driveway development standards.

In the following amendments, proposed additions to the public hearing draft code language are shaded and underlined. Proposed deletions are [SHADED AND ALL-CAPITALIZED IN BRACKETS].

1. Amend current Title 21 Chapter 3, Subsection 21.03.180J., *Administrative Variances*, to move an alley access administrative exception from subsection 21.07.090H.9.b.iii., *Alley Access Requirement*, to the *Administrative Variances* section of Title 21 to become a new administrative variance, as shown below. (See also related amendment 8 on page 12.)

This amendment changes the approval process for administrative exceptions from the alley access requirements to require mailed public notice and to allow for public comment.

To support this amendment, also revise the title of the public hearing draft ordinance to include “Chapter 21.03, Review and Approval Procedures” in the list of amended chapters.

J. Administrative Variances

7. For Front Driveways on Multifamily and Townhouse Lots with Alleys

Where a multifamily or townhouse development site is served by an alley in the Urban Neighborhood Development Context (21.07.010E.), the director and traffic engineer may grant an administrative variance from subsection 21.07.090H.9.b., *Alley Access Requirement*, provided:

- a.** There exist physical circumstances of the subject property such as topography, absence of alley improvements, exceptional lot configuration not shared by landowners in general, or adjoining street traffic patterns, and the traffic engineer determines that alley improvement and/or vehicle access are not feasible or would create a traffic impact or safety hazard;
- b.** Because of these physical circumstances, the strict application of the alley access requirement in 21.07.090H.9.b. would create an exceptional or undue hardship upon the property owner, and would deprive the owner of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district;
- c.** The hardship is not self-imposed, the conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant, and such conditions and circumstances do not merely constitute inconvenience; and
- d.** The administrative variance granted for additional driveway access shall be the minimum the traffic engineer determines is necessary to provide access for the development.

2. Clarify Subsection 21.07.010E.3., *Urban Neighborhood Development Context Area Established*, **Map 21.07-1** (Attachment 3, page 5), by labelling the streets and other landmarks in the map that delineate the boundaries of the Urban Neighborhood Development Context Area. Edit the text of the map description in E.3. (Attachment 3, page 4) as necessary to assist with the clarifications.
3. In Section 21.07.060F., *Pedestrian Frontage Standard*: Revise the illustration and Row A of *Table 21.07-2* in Subsection 21.07.060F.4., and Row A of *Table 21.07-3* in Subsection 21.07.060F.5. (Attachment 3, pages 9 and 10), to clarify the intent of what Row A in the tables allows and prohibits between the building façade and the street, as follows:
 - i. Adjust the left-hand illustration above *Table 21.07-2*, to depict the intent for there to be pedestrian space and landscaping rather than parking in front of the building.
 - ii. Revise the left-hand column of Row A in *Tables 21.07-2* and *21.07-3* as follows:

Site Elements for Pedestrian-Oriented Frontages	Standard
A. Minimum required ground-floor, street-facing building elevation <u>with on-site walkways, pedestrian amenities, or landscaping in front—and no off-street automobile parking or circulation [WITHOUT DRIVEWAYS OR PARKING FACILITIES IN FRONT].</u>	50% of building elevation width ¹ Lost with alley access: no parking allowed in front of building except in driveways for individual dwellings

4. Amend Subsection 21.07.060F.4., *Table 21.07-2*, in footnote 1 at the bottom of the table (Attachment 3, page 9), by revising the exception for duplexes from the standard in Row A to be more flexible, by changing the footnote wording as follows,

¹ Exception: On lots without alley access in R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts, two-family (duplex) developments may have a minimum of <u>20%</u> [25%] in A. above and a maximum of 67% in B. above.

5. Amend Subsection 21.07.060F.4., *Table 21.07-2*, in Row C, right-hand column (Attachment 3, page 9), to remove the prohibition against projecting garages in urban neighborhoods with alleys, as follows:

Site Elements for Pedestrian-Oriented Frontages	Standard
C. Maximum allowed distance a garage may project out in front of the rest of the street-facing residential building elevation <i>(No change to this language in right-hand column.)</i>	[NONE ALLOWED ON LOTS WITH ALLEY ACCESS] <i>(No change to the rest of the standard in right-hand column.)</i>

6. Amend current Title 21 Section 21.07.090A., *Off-Street Parking and Loading – Purpose*, by adding the following objective regarding the public hearing draft driveway regulations. This objective was originally recommended in A.O. 2022-80 as approved by PZC:

5. Manage the width and frequency of driveways along street frontages to reduce conflicts with traffic and provide space for street snow clearing and storage, on-street parking (where appropriate), and pedestrian facilities.

7. Amend Subsection 21.07.090H.9.b.iii. (Attachment 3, page 19, lines 21-18), which is an administrative exception from the *Alley Access Requirement*, by replacing its content with a reference to the Title 21 *Administrative Variances* section, as follows. The content of iii. is proposed to become an administrative variance (See amendment 1, above).

iii. The director and traffic engineer may approve an administrative variance from the requirements of this subsection, as provided in 21.03.180J.7.

8. Amend Subsection 21.07.090H.9.d., *Paired Residential Driveways Allowed* (Attachment 3, page 19, lines 37-40), by changing the maximum combined width of the paired driveway from 24 feet to, “28 feet, provided other standards of this section are met.” This relaxation of the proposed standard reflects existing/past practices in Traffic Engineering administrative review of paired driveways, in consideration of street snow clearing operational needs.

9. Amend Subsection 21.07.090H.9.e., *Residential Garage Setback* (Attachment 3, page 20, lines 5-9), by replacing its content with the language below. The first replacement sentence below improves the flexibility of the proposed standard, clarifies its intent, and makes it generally applicable. The second sentence below clarifies the current practice of the Municipality to require garage doors to be set back four-feet from streets and alleys to ensure adequate site distance.

e. *Garage Door Setbacks.* Street-facing garage bay doors that are proposed to be set back from the public right-of-way by less than the length of a standard parking space (as defined in table 21.07-8, *Parking Angle, Stall, and Aisle Dimensions*) shall be reviewed and approved by the Traffic Engineer, unless there is a sign posted for “no parking”. Garages shall be set back from public rights-of-way including alleys by at least four feet unless the traffic engineer approves otherwise, to ensure adequate site distance for turning and maneuvering.

10. Clarify Subsection 21.07.090H.11.d.vi., *Minimum Driveway Width* (Attachment 3, page 23, lines 35-38) by adding the following reference to other applicable codes to the end of the provision:

Minimum driveway widths are also subject to other applicable codes, including the Fire Code.

11. Correct the ordinance’s depiction of existing Section 21.07.110E.4., *Alleys* (Attachment 3, Page 39, line 6) by inserting existing subsections a. and b. from current code. Show a. and b. as being deleted along with the rest of Section E.4., as follows:

[A. THE INTENT OF THIS SECTION IS TO PROMOTE VEHICLE DRIVEWAY ACCESS FROM REAR ALLEYS AND REDUCE THE IMPACTS OF FRONT YARD DRIVEWAYS IN OLDER URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS.]

[B. THIS SECTION APPLIES TO RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS LOCATED IN THE TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN AREAS DESIGNATED ON MAP 2-1: ANCHORAGE 2040 LAND USE PLAN MAP, IN THE ANCHORAGE 2040 LAND USE PLAN.] (Correct the numbering of the subsequent subsections of E.4. in the draft ordinance.)