



Municipality of Anchorage

Planning Department

Memorandum



Date: October 29, 2021

To: Anchorage Community and Review Agencies

Subject: Title 21 Parking and Site Access Amendment – Community Discussion Draft
Request for Public Comment

SUMMARY

The Planning Department is seeking public and agency review of proposed text amendments to the parking and site access regulations in Title 21. This text amendment proposes to streamline approvals for reductions in parking requirements for developments that experience lower parking demand. It proposes a lower, area-specific parking requirement in central, urban parts of the Anchorage Bowl that were developed before modern parking requirements; are served by pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit facilities; and experience lower parking demand. These amendments will improve site access for pedestrians and bicyclists and allow narrower vehicle access driveways into multi-unit residential developments to preserve neighborhood character. The amendments comprise six main proposals:

1. **Streamlined Approvals for Administrative Parking Reductions:** Streamlines the review process of administrative reductions to required parking by making approvals non-discretionary (i.e., “by-right”) up to a certain percentage reduction, without need for parking studies or discretionary reviews by department directors.
2. **More Complete Menu of Available Parking Reduction Strategies:** Adds more parking management strategies available to developers for receiving administrative parking reductions.
3. **Area-specific Lower Parking Requirements in Urban Neighborhood Contexts:** Replaces five (5) existing area-specific administrative parking reductions with area-specific lower parking requirements tailored to traditional urban neighborhood contexts near Downtown and for transit-supportive development corridors extending from Midtown.
4. **Improved Site Access for Pedestrians, Bicyclists, Ride-share, and Public Transit:** Shifts site development regulations toward encouraging alternative modes of site access: ride-share, walking, bicycling, transit. Consolidates Title 21 provisions for pedestrian-oriented building frontages.
5. **Reforms to Residential Site Access Driveway Standards:** Allows and promotes narrower driveways and less area paved for on-site vehicle turnarounds in small multi-unit housing developments of 3 to approximately 6 units. Focuses the existing alley access requirement on urban neighborhoods only, and places limits on driveway width in front setbacks in those areas.
6. **Smaller Dimensions of Parking Spaces and Circulation Aisles:** Allows more parking spaces to be smaller for residential, offices, and other uses with lower-turnover parking utilization.

These changes consolidate, clarify, and shorten many development regulations, for a net reduction to the length of Title 21. More information about these changes is provided in Attachment 1 and Attachment 3.

CODE AMENDMENT METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE

On-site parking and driveway access standards are often the costliest and most land-consuming zoning requirements for multi-unit and mixed-use developments. When more parking spaces are required than are used, excessive parking can result in loss of housing unit construction, increased rents on remaining units to pay for building the parking, stymied economic reinvestment, discouragement of transportation alternatives, increased road congestion, constraints on good design, degraded quality of life, and lost small business opportunities. Data indicates that more parking is being required than needed in some parts of Anchorage, and it is more difficult than necessary for projects to receive approvals for parking reductions. In addition, the site access needs of pedestrians and bicyclists are deemphasized in favor of wide and costly site access driveways.

An interagency project team reviewed the code language for clarity and researched trends in local parking utilization and car ownership rates by neighborhood along with Anchorage's track record with approvals of project-specific parking reduction strategies. The team studied parking reform experiences of peer cities and evaluated various parking demand reduction strategies. The team sought feedback and guidance from developers, designers, businesses, and the public in public meetings and consultations during fall 2020 through summer 2021. Supporting documentation of much of the research and public feedback that have guided the Community Discussion draft is available on the project website.

This project carries out Actions 4-3 and 4-6 of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan* and achieves the following goals:

- Reduce cost of development and enable new housing and business growth.
- Support infill development, redevelopment, and walkability in urban neighborhoods.
- Support alternative travel modes such as rideshare, walking, bicycling, and transit.
- Provide more site planning options and flexibility to yield better design outcomes.
- Simplify and make regulations easier to use and save time in review processes.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Feedback from dozens of consultations and public meetings with private-sector development experts, design/architectural professionals, business organizations, neighborhoods, public agencies, and municipal committees and commissions helped shape the Community Discussion Draft text amendments. Supporting Document #1 documents the consultations, questionnaire responses, and public feedback. The project team held three public design workshops with community professionals and two open houses for anyone to attend. In addition, the project team discussed the proposed Code amendments at an Anchorage Chamber of Commerce "Make it Monday" forum, which included an interactive live poll regarding policy choices.

Presentations with opportunity for comments and questions were given to 14 community councils and the Federation of Community Councils (FCC) Board of Delegates. Staff provided brief updates at two more FCC meetings and attended additional council meetings in Fairview and South Addition. Presentations were provided for other community and business organizations, including Bike Anchorage, the Anchorage Homebuilders Association, the Anchorage Community Land Trust, and the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Municipal Activity Committee.

An online survey questionnaire covering all aspects of the potential range of amendments was offered to meeting attendees and made available on the project website from March through June 2021. The [project website](#) included a copy of the project slide presentation, project background and objectives information, and contact information for project staff.

Feedback and comments indicated overall support for lowering parking requirements in specific areas, streamlining approvals of site-specific parking reductions, reforming some residential driveway requirements, and improving site access for bicyclists, pedestrians, ride-share, and public transit. Some commenters recommended that the Municipality lower parking requirements more than proposed, such as eliminating parking requirements or lowering them for the entire Municipality. Others were concerned about parking spillover effects on neighboring streets and properties. Concerns heard for municipal capacity to maintain streets and sidewalks and enforce parking, potential spillover parking, and car ownership data led the project team to propose lowering minimum Title 21 parking requirements primarily in urban neighborhood contexts that experience lower parking utilization, while still streamlining Code and parking reduction processes across the Anchorage Bowl. Summaries of feedback at public meetings and the responses to the online questionnaire are available on the [project website](#).

Consultations were held with municipal agencies, including Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS), Traffic Engineering, Development Services, Public Works, Street Maintenance, Right-of-Way Enforcement, Land Use Enforcement, Public Transportation, Police, and Fire. Additional consultations were held with the AMATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, AMATS Technical Advisory Committee, AMATS Policy Committee, the Mayor’s Resilience Sub-Cabinet, and the Housing, Homeless and Neighborhood Development (HHAND) Commission. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA), and the ACDA EasyPark (Parking Authority) were also consulted. The Community Discussion Draft merges recommendations from individuals and organizations during the pre-consultation phase of the project.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED TITLE 21 TEXT AMENDMENTS

Your feedback on the Community Discussion Draft will help the Municipality to prepare a Public Hearing Draft to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission in the first quarter of 2022. Please submit comments by **Friday, December 17**, in one of the following ways:

by email: Anchorage2040@muni.org

by mail: Long-Range Planning Division
MOA Planning Department
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

For more information, visit the [project website](#). If you have questions, please contact Elizabeth Appleby at 343-7925 or elizabeth.appleby@anchorageak.gov. The project website URL is as follows:

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/Projects/AnchLandUse/Pages/Actions4-3%264-6.aspx>

- Attachments:
1. Project Information Summary
 2. Annotated Draft Title 21 Amendment Language
 3. Clean Version with Proposed Amendments (Non-annotated)