

Assembly Committee Document

7.4.D

Planning Department Proposed Amendments
To Sections 21.07.120 and 21.07.130, PZC Amendments (Document 7.4.A, dated 8-10-09)

Underlined with no highlighting – language added to public hearing draft
[CAPITALIZED AND BRACKETED] – language deleted from public hearing draft
Underline and yellow highlighting – language that Planning Department proposes to add
[CAPITALIZED, BRACKETED, AND GRAYED OUT] – language that Planning proposes to delete

Summary of Proposed Amendments:

Most of the Planning Department proposed amendments are based on follow-up site testing of the August 10, 2009 draft Section 21.07.120, *Public/Institutional and Commercial Design Standards*. Most amendments are intended to simplify the organization and make the menu choices more flexible. They would provide more latitude while continuing to achieve the community design objectives for the section.

The two menus for “Building Massing and Articulation” are recommended to be combined into one menu containing the full array of building articulation choices. The two menus for “Northern Climate Design” are also recommended to be combined into one menu, which would provide all the choices for weather protection and sunlight. This would reduce the number of menus from five to three—ie., one menu for each of the three subjects. Site tests suggest that these amendments would give applicants a bit more latitude to determine the right mix of articulation or northern design features for a building, and ease the review process, without undermining the intent of the standards.

As a result of these and other proposed changes, Table 21.07-13 (page 4, line 33) of Assembly Document 7.4.A would be simplified to the following:

TABLE 21.07-13: BUILDING SIZE AND MINIMUM NUMBER OF DESIGN FEATURES			
Design Feature Menus	Less than 7,000 square feet of gross floor area	7,000 to 25,000 square feet of gross floor area	Greater than 25,000 square feet of gross floor area
Building Orientation Choices	2	3	3
Building Articulation Choices	2	4	5
Weather Protection / Sunlight Choices	2	3	4

Several additional amendments herein are based on comments by architect members of the Urban Design Commission, which would also increase flexibility and latitude.

Several amendments are proposed which would clarify and strengthen certain menu features that site testing indicates are too vague or redundant to other menu choices. Finally, several ineffective or unlikely menu choices are proposed to be deleted or replaced.

Proposed Amendments:

1. **Amendment to allow fabric membrane as a façade or roof material.** The UDC recommended against an outright prohibition against all tension fabric structures.

Page 2, lines 27 – 29, amend as follows:

1. **Fabric Structures [INFLATABLE DOMES]**
Frame supported, arch-supported, or inflated tension fabric or membrane structures [INFLATABLE DOMES] are prohibited in all commercial and mixed-use districts, **except that a portion of a building's roof or wall membrane may consist of non-inflated tension fabric based on a site-specific architectural design, subject to an administrative site plan review.**

2. **Amendment to relocate the *Tall Buildings* subsection to Section 21.07.130, Large Establishments.** The provisions for tall buildings in Subsection 21.07.120D.4 would more logically fit in section 130, *Large Establishments*. They are not specific to commercial uses. They address large buildings including residential high-rises.

Page 3, line 5 through page 4, line 8, move all of subsection D.4., *Tall Buildings*, to line 34 on page 18, to become subsection 21.07.130C., *Tall Buildings*, in the *Large Establishments* section.

3. **Amendment to remove the requirement for buildings to achieve additional menu choices beyond what is required in the individual menus.** Site testing indicates that buildings can adequately meet the intent of the section if they achieve the minimum number of choices required in each of the building orientation, articulation and weather protection menus. The additional design features required in the public hearing draft appear unnecessary, add complexity, and would make reviews and compliance difficult.

Page 4, lines 15 – 19, amend as follows:

1. **Minimum Number of Design Features**
The minimum number of design feature choices required from each menu is provided in Table 21.07-13. [DEPENDING ON BUILDING SIZE, THE APPLICANT SHALL ALSO PROVIDE BETWEEN ONE AND THREE ADDITIONAL DESIGN FEATURES, WHICH THE APPLICANT MAY SELECT FROM ANY OF THE MENUS.]

Page 5, before line 1, amend Table 21.07-13 by deleting its last two rows entitled “Additional Choices” and “Total Number Required”.

4. **Amendments to simplify the window choices in the building orientation menu.**

This is intended to reduce the length of the “Windows and Entrance” menu choice, in conjunction with ongoing revisions to Chapter 14 definitions (currently before PZC).

In addition, based on site tests, an amendment is proposed to lower the required window coverage for the “Additional Window Area” menu choice.

Page 5, lines 11 – 16, delete the entire paragraph under the subsection b. title.

Page 5, lines 17 – 20, amend the first sentence of the menu feature, as follows:

- i. *Windows and Entrances*
Provide visual access windows and/or primary entrances on street-facing building elevations on the ground floor for at least 35 percent[%] of the length and 25 [15] percent[%] of the ground-floor[level] wall area. Qualifying windows shall be no more than four feet above finished grade.

Page 6, lines 17 – 22, replace the content of menu choice vi. with the following:

- vi. *Additional Window Area*
Achieve menu choice i., *Windows and Entrances*, and increase the coverage to 67 percent of the ground floor wall area, and if there is more than one story also achieve menu choice v., *Upper Level Windows*, and increase the coverage to 34 percent of the upper floor wall area.

5. **Amendment to add another building orientation menu choice.** A new menu choice is recommended to allow credit for enhanced pedestrian connections and wayfinding between the street and building entrance. It makes use of the “primary pedestrian walkway” and “site entry feature” established in previous sections.

Page 6, after line 7, add the following menu choice and renumber the subsequent menu items accordingly:

- v. *Primary Pedestrian Walkway with Site Entry Feature*
Provide a primary pedestrian walkway that meets the requirements of 21.07.060F.4, *Primary Pedestrian Walkway*, between a primary entrance and the abutting street, and that is highlighted with a site entry feature using three or more of the gateway elements in 21.07.110C.5.g., *Site Entry Feature*.

- 6. Amendment to combine the two menus for “Building Massing and Articulation” into one menu providing the full array of options.** This amendment is intended to simplify the building articulation menu and increase the latitude as to selection of massing and articulation features choices. For example, it enables small buildings to get credit for features such as wall or roofline modulation.

Page 6, lines 26-36, amend as follows:

1. Building [MASSING AND] Articulation

a. Purpose

The design choices for building [MASSING AND] [] articulation are intended to reduce the apparent bulk of large buildings, encourage compatible building scale with the surrounding community, and achieve a comfortable human scale by providing variation in large building volumes and visual variety on façade surfaces, especially at or near ground level. [ARTICULATION SHOULD EXPRESS ELEMENTS SUCH AS FLOOR AND CEILING LEVELS, WINDOW HEIGHTS, STRUCTURAL COLUMN SPACING, OR INTERNAL DIVISIONS.]

b. Building Articulation [MASSING] Choices

The required number of building articulation features is established in Table 21.07-13. If the building has 7,000 or more square feet of gross floor area, a building massing or wall modulation feature from choices b.i. through b.vi. shall be required as one of the selected choices.

i. Building Massing – Upper Story

Page 8, delete line 1 and renumber the subsequent menu choices to become a continuation of the newly renamed “building articulation” menu.

Page 4, Table 21.07-13, combine the building massing and façade articulation rows into one row entitled “building articulation choices”. Require two features for buildings less than 7,000 square feet, four features for buildings 7,000 to 25,000 square feet, and five features for buildings greater than 25,000 square feet.

- 7. Amendment to allow a building elevation less than 140 feet long to receive credit for “Wall Modulation – Overall Building Massing”.** This amendment is based on site testing. It also removes the requirement to modulate the foundation.

Page 7, lines 6-12, amend as follows:

ii. Wall Modulation – Overall Building Massing

Modulate the length of each building elevation abutting a street, a PR zone, or a residentially zoned lot[S]. Offset the wall with one or more wall plane projections or recesses [AND FOUNDATION LINE AT INTERVALS, SO THAT THERE IS AT LEAST ONE OFFSET EVERY 140 FEET OF WALL LENGTH] that vary [VARIES] the depth of the building wall by a minimum of 12 feet. Offsets shall comprise at least 20 percent[%] of the length of the building elevation, for at least 60 percent[%] of the building height, with no interval between offsets exceeding 140 feet.

- 8. Amendments to the menu choices for cantilevers, step-backs and terraced building forms.** A new menu choice is recommended for cantilevers and step-backs in the vertical rise of the building wall plane. Meanwhile, the menu item for upper floor-step backs is clarified and adjusted for flexibility and effectiveness. The proposed new menu choice would essentially replace item vi., “*Upper Story Step Back—Corner Building*”, which is recommended to be deleted since it is likely to be rarely used if ever, and may not always the best solution for a street corner.

Page 7, after line 25, add a new menu choice as follows:

- v. *Wall Modulation - Cantilever or Step-back*
Provide overhangs or step backs in the wall plane along at least half of the length of the building elevation, with a change of wall plane of at least four feet.

Page 7, lines 26 - 30, replace the title and first sentence with the following:

- vi. *Building Massing – Terraced Building Form*
Provide a terraced building form with upper story step backs above the first, second, or third floor, on a building elevation facing a street or public park.

Page 7, line 32, change the line to read, “one foot of run for every **one foot** [TWO FEET] of rise”.

Page 7, lines 35-38, delete vi., *Upper Story Step Back – Corner Building*.

- 9. Amendments to revise the façade articulation menu choices.** Based on testing, these amendments eliminate redundant choices and avoid favoring any particular architectural style.

Page 8, lines 6 – 11, amend the *Façade Articulation Choices* menu as follows:

- (A) Changes in siding color, texture, and/or material;
- (B) Wall plane p[P]rojections, recesses, or [AND] reveals that do not meet b.ii. above [, EXPRESSING STRUCTURAL BAYS OR OTHER ASPECTS OF THE ARCHITECTURE WITH A MINIMUM CHANGE OF PLANE OF 12 INCHES];
[WINDOWS AND PRIMARY ENTRANCES;]
- (C) Wall plane p[P]rojections or breaks in the vertical rise of the building elevation, that do not meet item b.v. above.
- (D) Projecting roof overhangs, canopies, marquees, or similar pedestrian shelter;

Page 9, lines 2 – 14, replace with the following:

Provide at least three kinds of architectural detail features, continuously or at intervals, along ground floor street facing building elevations, such as architectural bays or projecting ribs dividing windows; decorative pilasters or columns; pedestrian scale building lighting; projecting window sills; accent tile work, belt courses of distinct color or texture; or other detail features that meet the intent of the standards, as approved by the Director.

10. Amendment to adjust the standards for the entrance feature menu choice. Based on testing, this amendment increases clarity and flexibility. It helps ensure the item will be an effective articulation feature and visually highlight the entry.

Page 8, lines 17 - 25, amend *Entrance Feature* as follows:

- (A) Permanent canopies, porticos, overhangs, arcades or similar permanent pedestrian shelter projecting outward at least 6 feet from the wall plane of the building;
 - (B) Recessed or projected entrance with a change in wall plane of at least two feet;
 - (C) Arches, peaked roof forms, roofline modulation, or an architectural feature above the entry;
- [PEAKED ROOF FORMS;]
- (D) Outdoor patios or plazas;
 - (E) Transom or clerestory windows, along with double entry doors or sidelight windows;
 - (F) Architectural detail features such as tilework or moldings integrated into the building design; or

11. Amendment to revise the building articulation choice related to transparent windows and ground-floor activity. This amendment removes the prerequisite that the “street oriented entrance” item from the building orientation menu be achieved, and instead focuses on the appearance of the street-facing façade and avoidance of long blank walls.

Page 9, lines 15-18, replace the content of menu choice v. with the following:

- v. *Ground Level Transparency and Activity*
Achieve menu item 4.B.i., *Windows and Entrances*, from the building orientation menu, and avoid blank walls so that no portion of the street-facing, ground floor wall area above four feet in height has a horizontal length greater than 20 feet which does not include a visual access window or primary entrance.

Page 9, lines 19-24, amend as follows:

As an alternative to the menu choice above, provide windows and/or primary entrance doors comprising at least 75 percent of

the ground floor wall area and 34[50] percent of the wall area of the upper floors of street-facing building elevations. [(THIS OPTION IS ALSO OFFERED UNDER THE ORIENTATION DESIGN CHOICES MENU, BUT IF USED, SHALL ONLY COUNT AS A DESIGN FEATURE CHOICE FOR ONE MENU.)]

12. Amendment to consolidate the two Northern Design menus into one menu. This simplifies the subsection and provides more flexibility. The applicant will be able to choose among the full range of weather protection and sunlight choices. Weather protection, wide ice-free walkways, wind protection, and sunlight access are inter-related elements of a hospitable pedestrian environment.

Page 9, lines 31-40, amend as follows:

1. **Weather Protection and Sunlight [NORTHERN CLIMATE DESIGN]**
 - a. **Purpose**

The design choices for **weather protection and sunlight [NORTHERN CLIMATE]** address the combined effects of Alaska’s northern climate, including snow, ice, rain, temperature, wind exposure, long and dark winters, and the low and seasonal sunlight conditions. Building design should maximize the use, comfort, convenience, and accessibility of public spaces and walkways;[,] optimize relationships to sunlight and wind;[,] and consider microclimatic impacts on the site and surrounding community.
 - b. **Weather Protection and Sunlight [DESIGN] Choices**

The required number of features is established in Table 21.07-13.

Page 10, delete line 29 and renumber the menu choices below it so that they are a continuation of the previous menu (i.e., item i on line 30 becomes item vi., etc.).

Page 4, Table 21.07-13, combine the weather protection and sunlight and wind mitigation rows into one row entitled “weather protection and sunlight”. Require two features for buildings less than 7,000 square feet, three features for buildings 7,000 to 25,000 square feet, and four features for buildings greater than 25,000 sf.

13. Amendment to consolidate the sheltered façade walkway menu choices, and add a menu choice for a primary pedestrian walkway. The amendments clarify and raise the standards for a sheltered walkway; remove a redundant and unclear second menu item called “Protective wall projections”, and replace that with a new menu choice for a winter-enhanced “primary pedestrian walkway”.

Page 10, lines 13-18, amend as follows:

- iii. **Sheltered Façade Walkway**

Provide pedestrian shelter **meeting the requirements of subsection 21.07.060F.9** or a pedestrian arcade **meeting the requirements of subsection 21.07.060F.10.** The shelter shall **extend** over a minimum of **50 [35] percent [%]** of the length of ground-floor [LEVEL] building facades that contain a primary entrance or] abut a [STREET] sidewalk or [PEDESTRIAN]

walkway. [THE MINIMUM PERCENTAGE IS 50 PERCENT [%]
IN MIXED-USE DISTRICTS.]

Page 10, after line 18, add the following new menu choice and renumber the subsequent menu items accordingly:

- v. *Primary Pedestrian Walkway*
Achieve the *primary pedestrian walkway* menu choice from the building orientation menu, with pedestrian-scale lighting and protection from vehicle parking and back-splash.

Page 11, lines 15-23, delete the menu item “Protective Wall Projections”.

14. Amendments to Section 21.07.130A., Large Commercial Establishments. Based on site testing, recommend applying the commercial building standards of Section 120 to the secondary buildings located at the edge of a large retail site next to a street.

Page 16, lines 15 – 23, amend by inserting an additional subsection, as follows:

- iii. *Applicability of Large Commercial Establishment Regulations*
Building and site design standards for large commercial establishments in this section, unless stated to apply specifically to principal buildings, apply to both principal and secondary buildings on any commercial tract within a large commercial establishment site or site master plan area, except as provided in iv. below.
- iv. *Usage of Public/Institutional and Commercial Design Standards*
As an alternative to meeting the building orientation requirements of subsection v. below, and the requirements of Mandatory Standards subsections 5.a. through 5.n., and subsection 6., Optional Standards Menu, the design of individual secondary buildings with less than 25,000 square feet of gross floor area may instead be approved through compliance with the standards of Section 21.07.120., Public/Institutional and Commercial Design Standards.
- v. *Secondary Building Orientation to Public Streets*
Peripheral secondary buildings located at the edge of the site next to a public street or street corner shall provide windows on the street-facing elevation as established in 21.07.120E.4.b.i, and provide at least one customer entrance facing each abutting public street.