

# MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



## ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM

No. AM \_\_\_\_-2022

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

1 **From: Assembly Members Cross and Sulte**

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3 **Subject: AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY**  
4 **AMENDING BUILDING CODES AT ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL**  
5 **CODE CHAPTER 23.10, ANCHORAGE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**  
6 **2018 EDITION, TO ALLOW OPTIONAL INDEPENDENT PLAN**  
7 **REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN FOR COMMERCIAL**  
8 **BUILDING PERMITS.**  
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10 This proposed ordinance will provide for optional independent structural plan review  
11 for commercial buildings in the Municipality, and review of all plans for residential  
12 three-family buildings. Currently optional independent plan review is limited to  
13 residential one- and two-family dwellings, as an alternative to having Municipal  
14 Building Department conduct the plan review and approve them. Originally enacted  
15 ten years ago by passage of AO 2012-62(S-1), this option has been successful and  
16 beneficial to the residential building industry and has not sacrificed or compromised  
17 the safety of residential construction built under its provisions. This ordinance would  
18 extend the option to all commercial building permits, with a few differences.  
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20 Currently the Code limits optional independent review to plans for one- and two-  
21 family dwelling structures. A building with three-family dwelling units within it is not  
22 a commercial structure under the applicable state and Municipal Code definitions,  
23 so this ordinance includes them with the one- and two-family dwelling plan review  
24 process. Buildings with four-family dwelling units are, by definition and state law,  
25 covered by state law building code requirements and considered commercial in  
26 nature. Residential structures for four or more dwelling units must have plans  
27 reviewed under commercial permit applications, and this ordinance provides for  
28 optional independent plan review for structural plans only, for all commercial  
29 projects. Reviews of fire, electrical, plumbing and other plans and drawings will  
30 continue to require Municipal plan reviewers.  
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32 In addition to the above, the other differences between the optional independent  
33 review of one- and two-family plans and commercial plans are:

- 34 - There is no option to submit a waiver of all claims against the Municipality as  
35 an alternative to providing proof of maintaining professional liability  
36 insurance. In the AO, *compare* AMC subsection 23.10.104.9.A.5.c. *with*  
37 104.9.B.5.c.
- 38 - The required minimum amount of professional liability insurance is  
39 \$1,000,000 for independent commercial plan reviewers, compared to  
40 \$250,000 for residential plan reviewers.
- 41 - The Municipal plan review fee based on valuation has a different multiplier  
42 for commercial permits than residential. This new optional independent plan  
43 review fee uses the same multiplier of 0.0017 that is in current Code for pre-

1 approved plan review for new buildings; which mirrors the structure for  
2 residential plan review where the optional independent plan review multiplier  
3 is the same as that for pre-approved residential plans.  
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5 There are significant and substantial benefits to offering optional independent plan  
6 review. The main benefit is the efficient and shorter turnaround time for the design  
7 phase of a construction project. An independent plan reviewer may possess greater  
8 flexibility in scheduling working hours that allow them to meet and discuss the plans  
9 and drawings with the developer or owner quickly and at hours when Municipal plan  
10 reviewers may not be available. This may reduce the time and communications that  
11 occur in the Municipal plan review process where comments on submitted plans are  
12 sent back for correction and modification for code compliance, a process that may  
13 go through several rounds before a plan is approved by the Building Official. An  
14 owner or developer may need to pay more for an independent plan reviewer  
15 compared to the Municipal plan review fees, but save on time and associated cost  
16 savings. It is a choice always up to the owner or developer whether to engage a  
17 private, qualified independent plan reviewer or engage in the Municipality's plan  
18 review process.  
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21 **We request your support for the ordinance.**  
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23 Prepared by: Assembly Counsel's Office  
24 Respectfully submitted: Kevin Cross, Assembly Member  
25 District 2, Eagle River, Chugiak and Eklutna  
26  
27 Randy Sulte, Assembly Member  
28 District 6 – South Anchorage, Girdwood & Turnagain  
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