



Municipality of Anchorage
Community Development Department
Planning Division



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 18, 2015

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Tom Davis, Senior Planner

Subject: Code Study of Northwood Apartments Compliance with the New Title 21 with Amendments Recommended in PZC Case 2015-0049

Summary of Findings: Northwood Apartments Building A would meet or exceed most regulations under the new Title 21 as adopted, including most of the Residential Design Standards. The new Title 21 does not have the majority of the impacts suggested in the 11-19-2014 letter from the developer of Northwood Apartments.

Site: The Residences at Northwood, Apartment Building “A”, located at 7020 Northwood St. south of Raspberry Rd. in Sand Lake Community Council, was designed under the “old” Title 21, and permitted in 2011. Building A is the initial phase of a larger development. Building A is on its own lot, and its entrance driveway is shared with the second phase lot.



Apartment Building A, view from southwest (Municipality of Anchorage, 2012)

Land Use Permit Review and Planning Division staff performed a code compliance test of how Building A, as it was permitted and constructed, would have performed under the “new” Title 21. Staff incorporated the potential effects of the draft proposed amendments in Case 2015-0049.

A summary of test results follows on the next page. Detailed test documentation follows afterward. Lastly, responses to the list of concerns of a letter dated 11-19-2014 from the developer of Northwood Apartments is attached at the end.

Test Results Summary:

1. Northwood Apartments Building A would meet or exceed most regulations under the new Title 21 as adopted, including most of the Residential Design Standards.
2. The new Title 21 does not have the majority of the impacts suggested in the 11-19-2014 letter from the developer of Northwood Apartments. A comparison of the letter and staff test results is attached at the end of this memorandum.
3. The new Title 21 would require the project's designers to incorporate the following list of features which Northwood Building A did not provide:
 - a. A parking lot snow storage or removal plan, with stamped calculations for the snow storage or snow removal needed, would be required. **If plowed snow will be stored on-site 25 more square feet of area would need to be designated in the site plan.** *The site plan could designate the back (west) row of parking spaces. The draft proposed amendments would allow the snow storage area to overlap with the required private open space by-right, without administrative site plan review. (21.07.040F.)*
 - b. The landscape plan would require a licensed landscape architect's stamp (21.07.080).
 - c. The site perimeter landscaping bed along Northwood Street would need to increase in width from 6-feet to 8-feet to meet L1 Visual Enhancement Landscaping *The development could meet this without shifting the building or other site features, by reducing the width of its front lawn by 2-feet to accommodate the wider bed. (21.07.080E.).*
 - d. Parking lot perimeter landscaping bed in rear along west property line facing R-1 would need to increase from 10-feet to 15-feet wide to meet the Buffer Landscaping standards (21.07.080E.).
 - e. Evergreen tree plantings used to meet the landscaping requirements would need to increase from 5- to 6-feet in height. Evergreen shrub plantings would need to increase from 15- to 18-inches. (The deciduous plantings comply.) Density of tree and shrub plantings in perimeter beds was not tested.
 - f. Curb stops, a 6-inch raised curb, or other barrier would need to be installed at the edge of all landscape areas abutting vehicle parking.
 - g. A landscaping survival warranty would need to be provided at c.c.o.
 - h. Four (4) bicycle parking spaces would need to be provided. (21.07.090)
 - i. A five foot wide foundation landscaping bed with shrubs would need to be provided along approximately 80-feet of the south façade abutting parking stalls.
 - j. Mechanical and electrical utility equipment in the front yard of the building would need to be screened with landscaping, to meet the requirements of 21.07.110C.10d.

The proposed amendments in Case 2015-0049 resolves other issues that would have arisen for this development under the new code. Issues resolved by this ordinance include: a requirement for accessory storage areas, the applicability of parking garage articulation requirements to below grade parking levels; administrative review of transferring façade window area to from the street façade; a restrictive wall articulation requirement; and a requirement to undergo administrative site plan review for overlapping snow storage areas with required private open space. The proposed amendments would result in the Building A conforming to the window area and building articulation standards by-right.

Despite the assertions of the developer, a community meeting would NOT be required. It is also the understanding of the Planning Division staff that the Traffic Engineer already has the power to request a TIA under old code.



Street-facing Façade of Northwood Apartments Building A (Municipality of Anchorage, 2012)



Satellite image of Building A site under construction (Municipality of Anchorage, 2012)

Exhibit A: Title 21 Plan Review Checklist for Northwood Apartment Building A

Code Section	Regulation	Result
Chapter 21.04	Zoning District	RO SL – AO 2007-73
	District-specific standards	Complies. The development earns 0.68 bonus FAR from its below grade parking. Its proposed FAR of 1.4 is therefore within the allowed 1.0 + 0.68 FAR. <i>The proposed amendments increase the FAR allowed by-right from 1.0 to 1.5, eliminating need to earn bonus floor area for this development.</i>
Chapter 21.05	Use Type	Dwelling, Multifamily.
	Use Permitted in District ?	Permitted by right.
	Use-specific Standards	Subject to Section 21.07.110C., Residential Design Standards for Multifamily, covered below.
Chapter 21.06	Lot size and width	Complies with minimum size of 6,000 square feet, and minimum width of 50’.
	Lot coverage	Complies. Coverage is less than 50 percent.
	Front setback	Complies. Minimum front setback is 10-feet. Proposed front setback is 20-feet.
	Side setback	Complies. Minimum side setback is 5 + 2 = 7 feet, because of building height. Proposed side setback is 12-feet.
	Rear setback	Complies. Minimum setback is 10-feet. Proposed rear setback is 60-feet.
	Building height	Complies. Proposed building height is 42-feet, including three residential stories with top floor clerestory ceilings, plus a partially above grade parking level. Height allowed by-right is 45-feet.
21.07.010B	Constructed Access	Complies.
21.07.020C.	Addressing	Complies.
21.07.020	Natural Resource Protection	Not applicable.
21.07.030B	Open space requirement	120 square feet of private open space per dwelling is required in RO district, as adopted. See reduction

		<p>incentive below reducing this to 90 square feet.</p> <p><i>The draft proposed amendments would reduce the private open space requirement to 100 square feet, with the reduction incentive resulting in a requirement as low as 75 square feet.</i></p>
21.07.030D	Common private open space standards	<p>At least half of required private open space shall be contiguous. The open space shall be connected by walkway to a primary entrance on the facing façade or façade around the nearest corner of the building. The minimum inside dimension is 18-feet.</p> <p><i>The draft proposed amendments would limit the amount of open space required to be contiguous to no more than 3,000 square feet. It would also reduce the minimum dimension from 18- to 15-feet where abutting site perimeter landscaping.</i></p>
	Physical delineation	<p>Under the code as adopted, a linear landscape feature shall separate ground-level private open space from abutting streets. <i>The draft proposed amendments would eliminate the requirement to separate common open space from streets with landscaping.</i></p> <p>L1 visual enhancement landscaping shall separate open space from refuse collection areas.</p>
	Indoor private open space option	<p>Up to 25 percent of the total required open space area may be in an indoor space. One square foot of window area must be provided per two square feet floor area.</p>
	Incentive for high quality spaces	<p>Open space area requirement is reduced to 90 square feet of private open space per dwelling if the largest common open space area has a minimum inside dimension of 25-feet and it receives sunlight access on majority of its area for 4 hours on March/Sept. 21.</p> <p><i>The draft proposed amendments reduce the open space area requirement to 75 square feet per dwelling under this provision.</i></p>
	Private Open Space RESULT	<p>Complies. The Building A provides more than 2,750 sq. ft. of lawn area to the west of the building and spanning the space between the parking lot and north side lot line, that complies with the private common open space dimensional standards. This space also meets the standards of the incentive for</p>

		<p>high quality spaces, and therefore reducing the private open space area requirement to 90 square feet per dwelling, or 2,430 square feet total. Additionally, Building A provides an entrance plaza seating area of 500 sq. ft. whose narrowest side as constructed is within approximately 1-foot of meeting the minimum dimensional standards. Therefore, Building A exceeds the adopted Title 21 private open space requirement by 320 to 820 square feet.</p> <p><i>With the draft proposed amendments, the applicable private open space requirement falls to 75 square feet per unit, or 2,025 square feet total. Building A would exceed the amended requirement by between 725 and 1,225 square feet—ie., by approximately half.</i></p>
21.07.040F.	Snow Storage and Disposal	<p>A snow storage and disposal plan is required.</p> <p>If snow will not be removed regularly, then snow storage area equal to at least 10% of the surface area of vehicle parking and circulation shall be designated for snow storage. Vehicle surface area serving Building A is approximately 11,500 square feet, which would result in need for 1,150 square feet of designated snow storage area. (Half the surface area of the main circulation driveway—3,500 sq. ft.—is not included, as it will be addressed by Phase B of the development.)</p> <p>The proposed site plan designates snow storage areas on either side of refuse container area that total 500 square feet. The site plan indicates another 625 square feet of snow storage area which overlaps with main private open space and therefore would be subject to administrative site plan review.</p> <p>The plan could designate the back row of parking, consisting of approximately 7 spaces in excess of the minimum parking requirement, comprising 540 square feet, as additional snow storage area. This combined with the 500 and 600 square foot areas would total 1,640 thereby exceeding the snow storage area requirement.</p> <p><i>The draft proposed amendments proposed by the Assembly Title 21 committee would eliminate the administrative site plan review requirement for overlapping designated snow storage areas with</i></p>

		<i>required private open space. The amount of snow storage area would appear to comply by-right under that proposal.</i>
21.07.060E.	Pedestrian Facilities	Plan submitted for permit in 2011 indicates a continuous pedestrian walkway with a marked driveway crossing, per code. The plan as permitted complies with walkway and driveway crossing standards.
21.07.080C	Landscaping Plan	Landscaping plan is not stamped by a licensed landscape architect.
21.07.080E.1	Site Perimeter Landscaping abutting R-1 and R-2m zones	Complies with dimensional standard. L2 Buffer landscaping required along west lot line. Shall be either 15-feet wide or 10-feet with a 6-foot high ornamental sight-obscuring fence. Proposed plan provides 10-feet and sight-obscuring fence.
	Site Perimeter Landscaping abutting B-1A zone	No site perimeter landscaping is required. Complies.
	Site Perimeter Landscaping abutting Northwood Street (collector)	8-foot wide L1 Visual Enhancement landscaping required along collector street. Proposed: 6-feet. Would need to increase bed width by 2-feet to comply. <i>This does not appear difficult, as widening the bed would merely reduce the width of the front lawn.</i>
21.07.080E.2.b	Parking Lot Perimeter Landscaping	Does not comply on west lot line. West (rear) parking lot is 12 spaces. The number of spaces could be reduced to 10, or 15-foot wide L2 Buffer landscaping would be required along west lot line. 10-feet of L2 Buffer is provided. Five more feet needed.
21.07.080E.2.c	Parking Lot Interior Landscaping	Not applicable. Surface parking lot is less than 40 spaces.
21.07.080E.3	Site Enhancement Landscaping	Complies.
21.07.080E.4	Trees for Residential Developments	Complies. 20 trees per acre required. The lot for Building A is 0.72 acres and therefore 14 trees are required. The site plan provides at least 18 trees.
21.07.080F.	Plant Materials	Evergreen tree height must increase from 5 to 6-feet.

		Evergreen shrub ht. must increase from 15 to 18-in. Deciduous tree and shrub height and caliper comply.
	Protection of Landscaping	Concrete curbs or alternate barrier required to maintain separation between vehicle areas and required landscaping areas.
	Planting locations – utility easements and visibility clearance areas	Complies.
	Guarantee of Landscaping Survival	Owner would need to provide a warranty guarantee such as a letter of credit, escrow, bond, or other surety.
21.07.080G. Screening	Refuse Collection Location	Complies.
	Refuse Collection Screening	Complies. 3-sided fencing provided. Gate not required as the opening is not visible from Northwood Drive.
	Off-street Loading	Complies. Not visible from street. Screening fence and buffer landscaping provided along property line with abutting residential lots.
21.07.090	Parking Plan	Complies
	Spaces required.	Exceeds requirement by more than 10 spaces. Less than 40 spaces required. More than 50 provided.
	Bicycle spaces	Four spaces required. None provided on the plan.
	Parking structure	Façade treatment may be required on east façade facing Northwood Drive, interpretation unclear under the adopted code. <i>The Municipality is making a separate technical amendment to clarify that façade treatment is not required for below grade parking levels.</i>
21.07.110C.3 Multifamily Standards	Windows	South facing main façade provides 460 square feet more window area than required. East end wall facing Northwood Drive provides 369 square feet of window or entrance area, which is 56 less than the 425 square feet required. Applicant may transfer this 56 foot deficit to south facing façade by-right under the proposed amendments.

		Also, the façade wall area of the below grade parking, if determined to be a story below grade plane, would longer be counted as part of the wall area considered for the windows requirement. In such case, the window area would exceed the minimum amount required for the east façade.
21.07.110C.4	Building Spacing	Complies.
21.07.110C.6	Building and Site Orientation Menu	Complies. Overall development plan including Phase B complies new Title 21 as amended. It achieves menu choices c. (windows), e. (parking beside or behind building), and j. (separated walkway). Menu choice j. is met by the walkway and primary entrance shown in the plan on the east building façade. The development could provide more elements of an enhanced site entry to also achieve menu choice h. (site entry feature).
21.07.110C.7	Building Articulation Menu	Complies. The south (main) facade complies, achieving five menu choices: a., d., e., h., and i. in the proposed amended version. Wall articulation in a. is met by right under the new amendments. Detail elements in e. were wide window trim and canopy eave features provided in plan. Another option would be design innovation credit. The east (Northwood Drive) end wall complies, achieving four menu choices, more than required under the amended version. These include a., wall articulation; d., variation in exterior finish; e., detail elements; and j., no garage doors. Other features almost achieved or in potential range include i., and k.
21.07.110C.8	Weather Protection and Sunlight Menu	Complies, achieving 4 menu choices a., h., and g., with g. counting as achieving two choices. Additional menu item c., would be achieved as well by complying with bicycle parking requirement with four bicycle spaces in the garage.
	Accessory Storage	As adopted, would need to provide 30 square feet of accessory storage area per unit. <i>The draft proposed amendments would delete or reduce this requirement.</i>
21.07.110C.9	Entryway Treatment	Complies, achieving menu choices a., b., c., and d., as amended.

21.07.110C.10	Landscaping	Subsections a. and b. do not apply. In subsection c., A landscaping bed five feet in width planted with 10 shrubs every 20-feet would need to be provided along south façade where parking spaces are provided. Shrubs planted every 20-feet would need to be provided along west façade of building facing parking lot in back.
21.07.080G.4.	Mechanical and Electrical Equipment	Ground and wall-mounted mechanical and electrical equipment on street-facing side would need to be screened from Northwood Street by sight-obscuring shrubs or fencing.

Review and Response to 11-19-2014 Letter from Developer

The following items are numbered to correspond to the numbered list of impacts that the developer claims on pages 4 – 9 of his letter dated 11-19-2014.

1. In fact, open space area required for this development would be 90 square feet per dwelling, or 75 under the proposed amendments. Only common private open space is required, although developers may choose to use individual private open spaces specific to individual units toward this total requirement.
2. In fact, snow storage area requirement would apply to only half of the main circulation driveway, as half of the main driveway in front of the building could be addressed by snow storage on the phase B side of the development later. Since the applicant provides more parking spaces than required, the applicant can designate parking spaces in the back row as part of his snow storage area.
3. Staff questions if this is a new regulation. It is the understanding of Planning Division staff that Traffic Engineer already has the power to require a TIA when there is a rezoning, under current title 21. We are confirming.
4. The plan as permitted in 2011 indicated a marked paved pedestrian crossing would be provided. Therefore, the plan reviewer would have approved the pedestrian access as the plan indicated.
5. Yes, a licensed landscape architect's stamp would need to be provided.
6. Yes, an enhanced Visual Enhancement Landscaping (L1) would need to be provided along Northwood Street.
7. In fact, no parking lot interior landscaping would be required. Phase I (building A) has no surface parking lot with 40 spaces. The largest parking lot has approximately 12 spaces..
8. In fact, the development plan provides trees as constructed. The site perimeter and parking lot perimeter landscaping may count toward the tree requirement.
9. Yes, concrete curbs or other barriers would need to be provided.
10. Yes, a licensed landscape architect must stamp the landscaping plan.
11. In fact, the dumpster screening fence complies and a gate would not be required, as the refuse receptacle will not be visible from Northwood Street.

12. This claim is unclear. The parking lot plan provided with the permitted development seems to be adequate to review the development under the new parking requirements. Not sure exactly what “enhancements” the developer thinks would be required to further clarify the plan information submitted.
13. It is the applicant’s choice to provide as many parking spaces as required under old code. 50 spaces is higher than Census data or parking demand studies in suburban outlying parts of the Municipality indicate is needed in a typical suburban multifamily apartment project for this number of 2-bedroom units.
14. Yes, four bicycle parking spaces would need to be provided.
15. The code as adopted was unclear whether this applies. It is being amended to clarify.
16. The code as adopted was unclear whether this applies. It is being amended to clarify.
17. In fact, the entrance into the parking garage has in excess of 30-feet.
18. In fact, no changes to the building would be required for it to comply. Under the amendments the building would comply by-right without administrative review.
19. Yes, a 5-foot wide foundation landscaping bed with shrubs would need to be provided along about 80-feet of length of the south façade where parking stalls abut the building.
20. In fact, the development complies as constructed with the building and site orientation menu.
21. Building articulation menu would apply to the south and east facades, both of which comply.
22. In fact, the entryway treatment complies.
23. In fact, the development complies with the weather protection menu.
24. Yes, 30 square feet of storage would need to be provided per dwelling, for a total of 810 square feet in the building. However, under the proposed amendments, this requirement would be reduced or deleted.
25. In fact, the development complies, as the garage entry is not located between the building and a street frontage.
26. Yes, mechanical and electrical equipment on the east façade facing the street would need to be screened with sight obscuring plantings or fencing.