



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 Zion Court Townhomes Compliance with the New Title 21 with Amendments Recommended in PZC Case 2015-0049

Summary of Findings: Zion Court would meet or exceed most regulations under the new Title 21, including nearly all of the Residential Design Standards, under the proposed amendments in PZC Case 2015-0049. The residential design standards would require an administrative site plan review, pedestrian facilities, and additional landscaping.

Site: Zion Court Townhomes, located at 2580 Zion Court fronting the west side of Lake Otis Parkway one block north of Lore Road in Abbott Loop Community Council, was designed and permitted under the “old” Title 21 in 2008, and constructed in 2011. Zion Court is a horizontal (or “site”) residential condominium development on a 1.38-acre infill lot in the RO zoning district. It is comprised of 19 townhouse dwellings in two-, three-, and four-unit townhouse-style structures (six buildings total). The development abuts three streets. It forms the southeast corner of O’Brien Street and East 74th Avenue, and abuts Lake Otis Parkway at its intersection with 74th to the east. The front entries, garages, and addresses of the units are on Zion Court, a private street accessed from 74th, with dead-end at Lake Otis and secondary access from O’Brien Street.

The development is an infill project in context of R-5 residential properties to the west and northwest, R-2A to the north, and R-2M and RO lots abutting to the south.



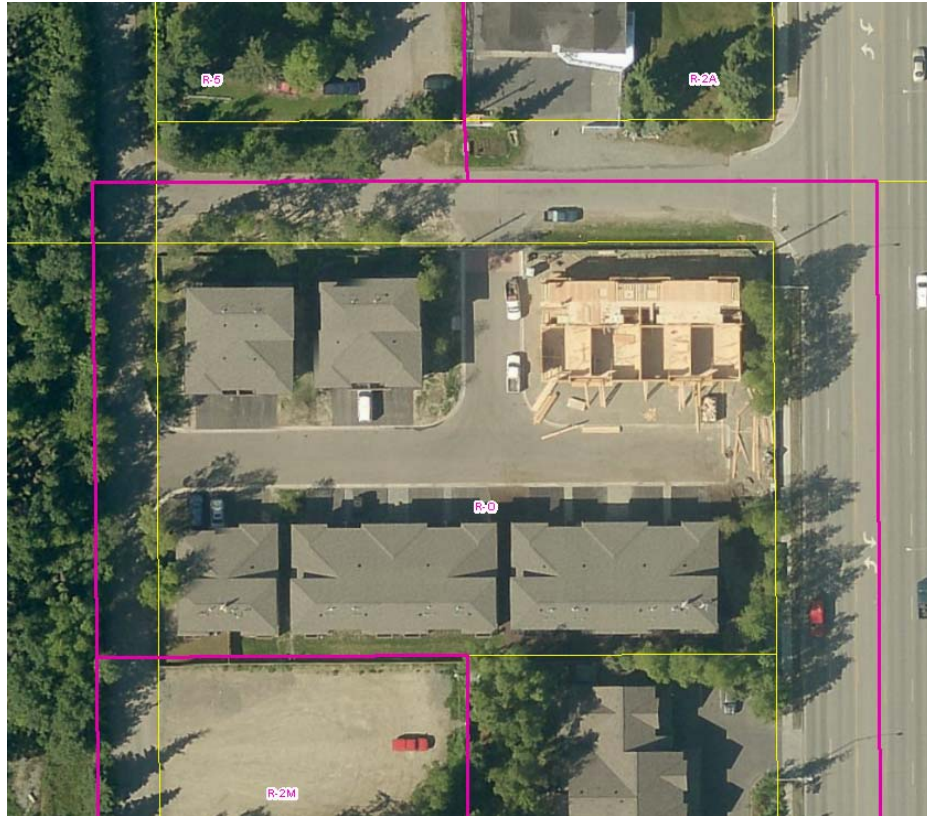
Zion Court units 16 – 19 (Municipality of Anchorage, 2014)

Planning Division staff performed a code compliance test of how Zion Court, as it was permitted and constructed, would perform under the “new” Title 21 including the April 7, 2015 draft proposed amendments.

A summary of test results follows on the next page. A series of photos of the project comprises pp. 3 – 8. Detailed test documentation starts on p. 9.

Test Results Summary:

1. Zion Court would meet or exceed most regulations under the new Title 21, including nearly all of the Residential Design Standards.
2. The new Title 21 would require the project's designers to incorporate the following list of features as changes in the Zion Court Townhouses permit application:
 - a. As amended the new code would require an administrative site plan review process, pursuant to 21.07.110F.2., Multiple Structures on a Lot. This replaces a major site plan review requirement that would have required a community meeting and a public hearing, with discretionary approval criteria applied by UDC.
 - b. A parking lot snow storage or removal plan, with stamped calculations for the snow storage or snow removal needed, would need to be provided. If plowed snow will be stored on-site 2,000 square feet of area would need to be designated in the site plan. Photograph on page 8 indicates guest parking is used for snow storage. (21.07.040F.).
 - c. Pedestrian access walkways would need to be provided entering into the site, and along both sides of Zion Court providing entry access and address. These could consist of a 5-foot sidewalk into the site from 74th, and 3-foot sidewalks on both sides of Zion Court. Alternatively, the private street and driveways could be re-designed as a parking courtyard/shared court.
 - d. The landscape plan would require a licensed landscape architect's stamp (21.07.080).
 - e. L1 Visual Enhancement site perimeter landscaping would need to be provided along the property lines fronting 74th Avenue, O'Brien Street, and along the western half of the south property line abutting an R-2M zoned lot. Minimum average width of 8-foot (21.07.080E.).
 - f. Curb stops, a 6-inch raised curb, or other barrier may 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. A tree and additional shrubs would need to be planted in the landscaped driveway breaks provided in front of each dwelling.
 - i. The mechanical and electrical utility equipment on the western street-facing end wall of Unit 16 would need to be screened with landscaping, approximately 10-feet.



Satellite image of Zion Court, lot lines in yellow (Municipality, 2012)



Front side of Units 16 and 17, in four-unit structure on Zion Court (2014)



Front of Units 1 and 2, in two-dwelling structure at corner of O'Brien Street (2014)



Private street entrance into Zion Court from E. 74th (2014)



Zion Court view from its dead end near Lake Otis, toward O'Brien Street (2014)



Back of units fronting on E. 74th (2014)



Frontage along Lake Otis Parkway (2014)

Photos this page: 15-foot wide individual private open spaces in rear of units (2014)





Overflow / guest parking spaces at dead end of Zion Court (2014)



Use of overflow parking area for snow storage (April 2015)

Title 21 Plan Review Checklist for Zion Court Townhomes

Code Section	Regulation	Result
Chapter 21.04	Zoning District	RO
	District-specific standards	Complies. Limitations on retail or hotel uses do not apply. Site FAR is 0.86, well below the by-right 1.5 FAR as amended, based on estimated 51,000 sf gfa total all buildings.
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 and Townhouse, covered below.
Chapter 21.06	Lot size and width	Complies. Lot with 1.38 acres exceeds minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. Lot dimensions exceed minimum width of 50'.
	Lot coverage	Complies. Coverage is approximately 34 percent, which is below maximum allowed.
	Front setback	Complies. Minimum front setback is 10-feet. Setback from O'Brien Street is 10-feet; from 74 th is 14-feet or more; from Lake Otis is 17-feet or more.
	Side setback	Complies. Minimum side setback is 5 feet along south lot line. 15-feet is provided.
	Rear setback	Not applicable.
	Building height	Complies with 45-foot height limit. Proposed building height is 31-feet, including three residential stories up to midpoint of 4:12 hipped roof plane.
21.07.010B	Constructed Access	Complies.
21.07.020C.	Addressing	Not tested.
21.07.020	Natural Resource Protection	Not applicable.
21.07.030B	Open space requirement	100 square feet of private open space per dwelling is required in RO district, as adopted. See reduction incentive below reducing this to 90 square feet.

		<i>The proposed amendments would change the private open space requirement to 100 square feet, with the reduction incentive resulting in a requirement as low as 75 square feet.</i>
21.07.030D	Areas Not Credited	Setbacks with slopes over 10 percent do not count toward private open space requirements.
	Individual private open space	Individual private open space shall have a minimum dimension of 15-feet, except that the draft amendments would reduce this to 12-feet where abutting required site perimeter landscaping. Balconies shall have a minimum dimension of 4 feet under the draft amendments. A linear landscape feature is no longer required to separate ground-level individual private open space from abutting streets, under the amendments.
	Common private open space	The draft amendments exempt townhouse-style structures from the requirement in the adopted code that open space be in common or contiguous. See also 21.07.110.F.2., Multiple Structures on One Lot. It would also reduce the minimum common open space dimension from 18- to 15-feet abutting site perimeter landscaping. <i>The April 7, 2015 draft proposed amendments would eliminate the requirement to separate common open space from streets with landscaping.</i>
	Indoor private open space option	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. No indoor area is provided.
	Incentive for high quality spaces	Under the adopted code, the 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. <i>The proposed amendments reduce the open space area requirement to 75 square feet per dwelling under this provision.</i>
	Private Open Space RESULT	Complies. Each unit has a second floor balcony that provides 43 square feet of individual private open

		<p>space. The nine units backing up to 74th Avenue each have 24'x15'=360 square feet of individual private open space that meets the standards, for a total of 3,240 square feet. Two of those units have an additional 150 square feet, and two others have an additional 100 square feet, for an additional 500 square feet. The sum total is 240 square feet per dwelling, on average.</p> <p>The RO district as adopted would require 120 square feet per dwelling, and under the draft amendments only 100 square feet per dwelling.</p> <p><i>This development would also comply with (and exceed) the R-3 district requirement for 280 square feet per unit under the draft amendments, provided the row of individual private open spaces on the south lot line were re-graded from its 1:2 slope to avoid the steep drainage swale through this space. All individual private open spaces meet the dimensional requirements.</i></p>
21.07.040F.	Snow Storage and Disposal	<p>A snow storage and disposal plan is required. The development does not seem to have on-site snow storage space, and would therefore need to record an agreement indicating snow will be removed.</p> <p>If snow will not be removed regularly, then a 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 on individual driveways is approximately 7,700 square feet, and on the private streets is 12,300 square feet, which would result in need for 2,000 square feet of designated snow storage area. This is equal to a 20x100 sized area. Some of this needed space appears to exist in landscaping at the east end of the site.</p> <p>The bottom photo included on page 8 indicates the overflow guest parking area is used for snow storage, even in a light snow year.</p> <p>The draft amendments as proposed by the Assembly Title 21 Committee would eliminate the administrative site plan review requirement for overlapping designated snow storage areas with required private open space.</p>
21.07.,060E.	Pedestrian	<p>A 3'-wide continuous pedestrian walkway with marked driveway crossings as needed would be</p>

	Facilities	<p>required to extend to the frontage of each dwelling as a sidewalk along the main private street, where the sidewalk is access to no more than 4-units. A 5—wide main entry sidewalk would be required on one side of the short street access into the development. Individual private driveways may serve as walkway to individual unit entries.</p> <p>An alternative to providing sidewalks would be to re-design part of the private street and driveways to comply with the shared parking court standards of 21.07.060F.18.</p>
21.07.080C	Landscaping Plan	Landscaping plan stamped by a licensed landscape architect would need to be provided.
21.07.080E.1	Site Perimeter Landscaping	<p>L1 site enhancement landscaping would be required along the perimeter property line facing all three streets and the half of the south lot line that is abutting the R-2M district. Minimum average planting bed width is 8-feet on each lot line, with a minimum bed width of 5-feet at any point.</p> <p>As constructed, the development appears to comply only along Lake Otis Parkway. Existing stands of trees seem to exceed the requirements. However, no shrub plantings seem to be provided.</p> <p>The L1 landscaping bed and plantings would need to be added along the property lines of the two streets and lot line abutting R-2M to the south.</p>
21.07.080E.2.b	Parking Lot Perimeter Landscaping	Not applicable.
21.07.080E.2.c	Parking Lot Interior Landscaping	Not applicable.
21.07.080E.3	Site Enhancement Landscaping	Complies.
21.07.080E.4	Trees for Residential Developments	Appears to comply. 20 trees per acre required. The lot is 1.38 acres and therefore 28 trees are required. The site as constructed provides at least 24 trees, by cursory windshield count, plus additional trees in setback along Lake Otis.
21.07.080F.	Plant Materials	Planting list with dimensions not available. Existing stands of trees and shrubs were used in abundance

		and would comply. Only one cottonwood observed.
	Planting locations – utility easements and visibility clearance areas	Not tested.
	Protection of Landscaping	Concrete curbs or alternate barrier may be required to maintain separation between vehicle areas and required landscaping areas.
21.07.080G. Screening	Refuse Collection Location	Complies. Household sized refuse containers stored in garages.
	Refuse Collection Screening	Complies. Containers stored indoors.
	Off-street Loading	Not applicable.
21.07.090	Parking Plan	A site plan with a parking layout stamped by an engineer does not appear to be provided, although a grading plan does give the general street and driveway dimensions.
	Spaces required.	Exceeds the minimum parking requirement by nearly two times. 38 spaces are required for the individual 3-BR dwellings, and 3 guest spaces required in addition. Individual dwellings provide 4 parking spaces each (2 in garages) for a total 76 spaces (38 indoors and 38 on driveways), and the Zion Court dead end seems to provide for 3 guest spaces—these appear to be used for snow storage (see photo). Also, the development does not take advantage of the 5% parking reduction applicable along Lake Otis Parkway, which would reduce the parking requirement to 40 spaces, total.
	Bicycle spaces	Not applicable to townhouse-style developments.
	Parking structure	Not applicable to individual garages.
21.07.110C. Multifamily and	Windows Facing the Street	Complies. The buildings are required to provide windows and entrances comprising 15 percent of the wall area of the structures along up to two of the

Townhouse Standards		<p>street frontages (including the private street). Under the draft amendments, window area in excess of the standard may be transferred by right from one façade to another.</p> <p>Building front elevation walls facing Zion Court private street comply, consisting of 25% windows/entries. Building rear elevation walls facing 74th Avenue consist of 15% windows/entries.</p>
	Building Spacing	Complies.
	Pedestrian Access	This requirement refers to 21.07.060E. See testing above.
	Building and Site Orientation Menu	<p>Achieves 2 menu choices and would be required to provide one more, under the new code as adopted. Under the draft amendments, it would achieve 4 menu choices and comply as constructed, by receiving credit a front garage standard that is changed into a choice in this menu.</p> <p>Achieves menu choice c. Achieves menu choice e., parking not located in front of rear and side street facades. Achieves menu choice h. Achieves menu choice j., visible entries.</p> <p>Almost meets menu choices a. and b., if added more windows to the four end elevations fronting Lake Otis and O'Brien.</p> <p>Could also provide a more enhanced site entry feature to achieve menu choice l., by incorporating landscape treatment, ornamental fence, and a pedestrian scale feature.</p>
	Building Articulation Menu	<p>Complies, all buildings meeting the standard on main front entry facades and side (end) facades.</p> <p>Buildings are required to be articulated facing up to two of the street frontages, by incorporating menu choices or other features designed by the applicant.</p> <p>Main front façade achieves 6 menu choices: complies with a., wall articulation on each of the first and second floors, at intervals greater in number than the dwellings; c., cantilever and step back; e., detail elements (brick highlights and wide trim); f., balconies; h., additional window area (25% of wall area); i., entry articulation.</p> <p>Side end facades achieve 3 menu choices: a. wall</p>

		<p>articulation; e., detail elements (brick highlights and wide trim); j. no garage doors. Under the proposed amendments, end facades must provide only 3 menu choices.</p> <p>Rear façades facing 74th Avenue achieve two menu choices: e., detail elements (detail modulation and wide trim); and j., no garage doors. Would need to provide trim and greater contrast in paint colors required to achieve menu choice d., variation of exterior finish.</p>
	Weather Protection and Sunlight Menu	<p>Complies or almost complies, achieving credit for 3 menu choices for certain, and a fourth menu choice uncertain—subject to clarification of a menu item.</p> <p>Achieves a. weather protected entrance; e. year-round sunlight access which counts for two. Likely achieves menu choice f. It also may achieve g. daylighting, subject to interpretation regarding whether to consider likely future development on abutting parcel to the south.</p>
	Storage	<p>Complies, providing more than 200 square feet of covered, enclosed, and secure bulk storage area per dwelling unit.</p> <p>The draft proposed amendments would delete or reduce this requirement.</p>
	Entryway Treatment	<p>Complies, providing sheltered landing areas with a. sheltering overhangs; b. wall modulation; and d. front steps; as well as possibly c. entry detail elements.</p>
	Landscaping – Semi-private Front Transition Space and Front Driveway Separations	<p>Complies with the area, width, and location requirements. Would need to provide tree and shrub plantings, amount needing to be clarified.</p> <p>Landscaping requirements for common parking facilities do not apply to this development.</p>
	Mechanical and Electrical Equipment Screening (21.07.080G.4.)	<p>Wall-mounted mechanical and electrical equipment on street-facing end walls would need to be screened by sight-obscuring shrubs or fencing.</p>
21.07.110F.2. Multiple Structures on a	Applicability and Review Process	<p>The development includes six buildings, and is therefore subject to this section. Under the proposed amendments, the development would be</p>

Lot		subject to an administrative site plan review process, instead of a major site plan review including the UDC as adopted.
	Approval Criteria i.	Complies – distinguishes between streets and driveways.
	Approval Criteria ii.	Complies – dwelling units are oriented toward the private street within the development.
	Approval Criteria iii.	Seems to comply in part – landscaped breaks provided, however plantings are minimal. Also, snow storage space not adequate. Did not test on-street parking provision.
	Approval Criteria iv.	Seems to comply, but this is a discretionary requirement.
	Approval Criteria v.	Does not comply, as there are no pedestrian facilities.
	Approval Criteria vi.	The development retains existing trees in some areas, and a landscaped area next to Lake Otis. This is a discretionary requirement.
	Development Agreement requirement	Not determined if there was a development agreement under the permit.
	Minimum Standards – Open Space	<p>Did not comply under the code as adopted. This required a contiguous common open space of 1,140 square feet that is designed and placed to serve all the residences.</p> <p>The development does not provide a common open space that fully meets the standards of 2.07.030. However, it does include a landscaped area 15-foot wide x 80-foot long (1,200 square feet) next to Lake Otis Parkway which meets the dimensional requirement abutting L1 perimeter landscaping along Lake Otis, and which have been designed to meet the requirement. However, pedestrian access or more central placement in the site would probably be necessary to meet the intent of the standard.</p> <p>The common open space requirement no longer applies under the proposed amendments.</p>
	Minimum Standards – Building	Not applicable. See Building Spacing subsection of multifamily and townhouse section, above.

	Spacing	
	Minimum Standards – Vehicle Plug-ins	Not applicable, as all units have garages.

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