

Begich to locals: Have patience in Title 21 process

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Editor's note: The following letter was sent Dec. 8 by Anchorage mayor Mark Begich to the presidents of Chugiak-Eagle River's six community councils.

I understand that most of the community councils in Chugiak-Eagle River have asked that the Title 21 Rewrite include a separate chapter for the community, or that a place in the proposed code be reserved until a chapter can be prepared. This is an idea that has been under consideration, along with other options, as work on the update of the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan continues.

As you know, the Planning Department is working with your Citizen Advisory Committee to complete the Comp Plan Update. The work of the committee will help determine how best to address Chugiak-Eagle River's place in the code, whether it be as unique zoning districts, different standards or provisions in existing chapters, or a wholly separate chapter.

However, while the committee continues its work on the Comp Plan Update, I urge the community councils to continue working with the Planning Department on the Title 21 Rewrite to identify issues of concern in your area and how they might be addressed in the code. Whatever the outcome, the alternative of a separate chapter or placeholder for a chapter will remain a viable option as the Title 21 Rewrite progresses up to and through the Assembly public hearing process later in 2006.

Some work in response to community concerns about Title 21 has taken place already. After hearing from Chugiak-Eagle River residents and from your Assembly representatives, Planning staff has drafted two new zoning districts for Chugiak-Eagle River. These districts will be reviewed by the Citizen Advisory Committee next week, so we will have a better idea if issues we are hearing are being addressed. The intent is to include the new zoning districts in the next draft of Title 21, which will be released for public review after the holidays.

I want to emphasize that the Planning Department's efforts to date - be it the draft land use plan map for the Comp Plan or draft zoning districts for Title 21 - are part of works in progress and not final recommendations. Updating the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan and rewriting the municipality's land use code are part of an iterative process as we continue to respond to public comment.

I ask that you have patience and let this process proceed before deciding that a separate chapter in Title 21 is the only way to address Chugiak-Eagle River's concerns. When this decision is made, you will be fully involved. I look forward to continuing our work together on these extremely important community projects.

- Mark Begich

mayor

Anchorage