



**Municipality of Anchorage
Geotechnical Advisory Commission**

A G E N D A

**Tuesday, March 26, 2024
12:00 Noon – 1:30 p.m.**

**Regular Meeting
(Hybrid format)**

In-Person Physical Location

Planning Conference Room 170
Planning and Development Center
4700 Elmore Road
Anchorage, Alaska

or

via Microsoft Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#):

Meeting ID: 238 552 937 650, Passcode: rSL6pw

Or call in (audio only): +1 907-519-0237

Conference ID: 309 649 142#

- I. CALL TO ORDER
 - A. Establishment of Quorum
 - B. Disclosures
- II. MINUTES
 - A. February 27, 2024
- III. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. Scope of Potential Project for Seismic Hazard Analysis and Mapping
 - B. Discussion: 2023 50-State National Seismic Hazard Model
- IV. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. H.O.M.E. Initiative, AO 2023-87(S)
 - B. Discussion: AMC 23.85.R401.4 Soil Tests – Existing Amendment Regarding Seismic Hazard Zones 4 and 5 (Daniel King)
- V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (3-minute limit)
- VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS
 - A. Communications Committee
 - B. Hazard Mitigation Committee
 - C. Seismic Hazard Committee
- VII. OTHER BUSINESS
- VIII. STAFF REPORTS
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting – April 23, 2024



II.A.

Municipality of Anchorage
Geotechnical Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

12:00 Noon – 12:31 p.m.

Regular Meeting
(Hybrid format)

Commissioners	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dennis Berry• Kyle Brennan• Steven Halcomb, Vice Chair• Dave Hemstreet• Cody Kreitel• Keri Nutter• Amy Steiner• John Thornley, Chair [EXCUSED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daniel Mckenna-Foster, Long-Range Planning• Ryan Yelle, Long-Range Planning Manager• Wayne Bolen, Plan Review Engineer, Development Services• Daniel King, Plan Review Engineer, Development Services• Grant Gephardt, Plan Review Engineer, Development Services• Tim Huntting, Geotechnical Lab Manager, PME

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Establishment of Quorum: Quorum established.

B. Disclosures: No disclosures.

II. MINUTES

A. December 19, 2023: Commissioner Steiner moved to approve. Commissioner Kreitel seconded. Passed unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Scope of Potential Project for Seismic Hazard Analysis and Mapping: Tim Huntting reported. If anyone has any desire to comment informally, contact him. Question about whether reviewing would preclude looking in the future. Commissioners Halcomb, Hemstreet, and Steiner expressed interest.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion: Strong Motion Stations at Terminal 1 for the Don Young Port of Alaska. Tabled for next month.

- B. Discussion: 2023 50-State National Seismic Hazard Model.** Thick paper; discussion of insights. They put a lot of effort into site-specific amplification standards. Discussion of costs, risk-based design.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (none)

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Communications Committee.** Report from Commissioner Nutter. Sue provided information that the letter will be dated today and should be before the Assembly at their March 5th meeting. Planned committee meeting for March 5th. Make sure to invite Daniel King.
- B. Hazard Mitigation Committee.** No report
- C. Seismic Hazard Committee.** No report.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS. Daniel King discussed recent changes to 3- and 4-plex construction rules. He can send around rules that might affect geotechnical issues. Discussion of implications, size limits on triplex, etc.

Commissioner Kreitel mentioned that March 19th is the ASCE (Alaska Society of Civil Engineers) luncheon. Commissioner Berry will be presenting on the 1964 Earthquake.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS Report on the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan Update.

IX. ADJOURNMENT Commissioner Kreitel moved to adjourn; Commissioner Steiner seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting – March 26, 2024

Mckenna-Foster, Daniel R.

From: Brawley, Anna B.
Sent: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 9:47 AM
To: Zaletel, Meg; Volland, Daniel R.; Mckenna-Foster, Daniel R.
Cc: Hartman, Allie M. ; Ross, Clare E. ; Jonathan Lang
Subject: Geotechnical Advisory Commission and HOME
Attachments: HOME Initiative_IntroLetter+Invite_CommunityGroup.pdf

Hello,

I'm writing as a follow up to the very helpful letter the Geotechnical Advisory Commission submitted to our agenda (item #10 F 3) – was great to have a brief explanation of their work, and the invitation to engage them in projects.

Please also share with your chair & vice chair:

The sponsors of the HOME Initiative (AO 2023-87 S + documents in PZC Case # 2024-0006) would like to request time on the GAC's agenda to present our ordinance, get feedback, and in particular consider issues like slope and other environmental constraints around building housing, and how we could strengthen this draft ordinance – or any other considerations. We know there will be a lot of discussion about Hillside & the zoning category LLR (Large Lot Residential) which combines a few similar but distinct zones, many of which are in areas with steep slopes and grades. We also know the Planning Dept has funding for a land study from perspective of hazard mitigation etc., but we don't know when that will be completed... so in the meantime, any guidance on this issue as we contemplate simplifying zoning would be really helpful.

It looks like this group meets end of the month, so we could aim for a presentation late March, then they could have a month to review & deliberate further, and potential (advisory) action in late April? Or, whatever you all think is appropriate timing. We would include the sponsors (assuming we all 3 are available) and our consultant Jon Lang, also on this email.

And I've also attached a copy of the letter we prepared and have sent out to a variety of groups and organizations in town – it is geared toward residents, so it is asking for public comment and providing info on the PZC hearing, but it also has some background and reference info on HOME that would be helpful as initial context. We also held a webinar last night, and can share that link with members before our meeting, which would also allow us to shorten our presentation to the GAC & give more time for Q&A and discussion in that meeting.

Thanks again!

A



Anna B. Brawley

Assembly Member serving West Anchorage | District 3

Municipality of Anchorage

Anchorage Assembly

e anna.brawley@anchorageak.gov

p 907.343.4116

Dena'inaq elnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu (Dena'ina). *I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina (English).* Translation by Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart and Joel Isaak



DANIEL VOLLAND
DISTRICT 1 | NORTH

ANNA BRAWLEY
DISTRICT 3 | WEST

MEG ZALETEL
DISTRICT 4 | MIDTOWN

INVITATION: LET'S TALK ABOUT THE **HOME INITIATIVE!**

DATE March 5, 2024

SUBJECT **HOME Initiative (AO 2023-87 S): Public Engagement Process, Upcoming Meetings, Request for Feedback & Conversations**

Dear Anchorage Community Group,

We want to talk about housing, and how we can improve our residential zoning code!

The 3 Assembly sponsors of the HOME Initiative (Volland, Brawley, Zaletel) are reaching out directly to make sure you have the information about our ordinance to simplify residential zoning code in the Anchorage Bowl, upcoming meetings and public hearings scheduled as it moves through the process, and to request some time with your leadership and/or members at a future meeting. There are 2 goals for our outreach meetings:

1. We want to share what's being proposed and why, and answer your questions.
2. We want your feedback on this idea, and what residential zoning rules should be.

More about our **meeting request** is below. This letter also includes:

- **Details about the HOME Initiative**, AO 2023-87(S) and detailed draft code changes
- Information about our upcoming **informational webinar on Monday, March 4**
- Details about how you can participate in the **Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing scheduled for Monday, March 18**, including how to submit written public comments
- How you can **contact us** to learn more.

Meeting Request: Presentation and Conversation about HOME

In addition to our webinar and the Planning and Zoning Commission hearing, we are scheduling a series of meetings with stakeholders across Anchorage to talk about the ordinance in the next few months – ***we want to meet with you!***

We understand you may have monthly or regularly-scheduled meetings, and would ask for time on your agenda to give a brief overview of HOME, with time for discussion, anytime from March to May. If you don't have regular meetings, or would like to schedule a one-

time special meeting to allow for more time on this topic for your members, your executive board, a committee, etc. - we are happy to work with you!

Please reach out to Legislative Services to request scheduling, or contact the sponsors (our e-mails are at the end of this letter).

[Learn More about HOME at our Webinar on March 4!](#)

The sponsors will host a [webinar on Monday, March 4 from 6 – 7:30PM](#) on Microsoft Teams.¹ (No registration is needed, just use the link to connect.) We will present an overview of the ordinance, and also a walk-through of the proposed zoning rules for each new district, compared with current zoning. While we will have limited time for questions, we will also be collecting questions and preparing an FAQ to share back.

The webinar will be recorded for later viewing and posted to the [Muni's YouTube channel](#),² where you can also find Assembly and committee meetings. We will also post the slides.

First Public Comment & Testimony Opportunity: [Planning & Zoning Commission](#)

IMPORTANT: The first official public comment opportunity is to the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC)! Please see below for how to submit comments to PZC.

The sponsors will present the latest version of [AO 2023-87 \(S\)](#) to the Planning & Zoning Commission on Monday, March 18 at 5:30PM, followed by a PZC public hearing at 6:30PM. Both meetings are open to the public and, during the public hearing, the Planning & Zoning Commission will hear public testimony on the HOME Initiative, [Case 2024-0006](#).³ To testify in person, please arrive by the start of the meeting (or attend the work session and stick around for the meeting to start).

Planning and Zoning Commission HOME Initiative Work Session and Public Hearing

Monday, March 18, 2024 | Work Session 5:30PM | Public Hearing 6:30PM

Location: Loussac Library Assembly Chambers (1st floor), 3600 Denali Street, Midtown

To submit comments on the proposed ordinance to the Planning & Zoning Commission, submit using the CityView Portal: [click here for online comment page](#).⁴

¹ Web link: <https://www.muni.org/PublicNotice/Pages/HOME-Initiative-Webinar.aspx>

² Web link: <https://www.youtube.com/@municipalityofanchorage9648>

³ Web link: <https://www.muni.org/CityViewPortal/Planning/Status?planningId=17913>

⁴ Web link: <https://www.muni.org/PZComments/?casenum=2024-0006>

If you have any trouble using the CityView Portal, please direct comments to staff contacts in the MOA Planning Department:

- Tom Davis, tom.davis@anchorageak.gov
- Ryan Yelle, ryan.yelle@anchorageak.gov

NOTE: The sponsors always welcome comments to us, and you can always send public comments on any topic to the full Assembly. Because this ordinance is being heard by PZC, you need to submit comments through the CityView portal if you would like the commissioners see your comments and they are included in the packet.

What Happens After Planning and Zoning's Recommendations?

Once the Planning & Zoning Commission votes on their findings and recommendations (on or after the March 18 meeting), the ordinance will move out of PZC and back to the Assembly and is scheduled to come back for a public hearing at the Assembly's regular meeting on June 11.

The sponsors will send out a press release and brief update to stakeholders about the timeline at that point, with more details. In the meantime, we want to give a general timeline, and why we are looking to schedule community meetings in April and May, well in advance of the anticipated public hearing before the Assembly.

Background: What is the HOME Initiative, and What's Happened So Far?

Late last summer, we introduced an ordinance called the HOME (Housing Opportunities in the Municipality for Everyone) Initiative, introduced as AO 2023-87(S). It proposes reorganizing and simplifying residential zoning districts (part of Title 21 or AMC 21, our city's zoning code), to give more flexibility to property owners what they can build or develop on their land, to make the code somewhat easier to understand and use for developers and builders, people trying to figure out what they can build on their property, and also reduce administrative burden on staff by simplifying code.

What Does the HOME Initiative Propose?

AO 2023-87(S) puts forward a general policy: reduce the number of residential zoning districts in the Anchorage bowl⁵ from 15 to 5, ranging from large-lot houses (like Hillside) to dense urban neighborhoods (like Downtown). The 5 zoning districts proposed:

1. LLR – Large Lot Residential
2. STFR – Single Family and Two-Family Residential

⁵ The proposed changes do not impact zoning rules for Girdwood and Chugiak/Eagle River, which each have their own separate zoning chapter in Title 21.

3. CMRL – Compact Mixed Residential, Low
4. CMRM – Compact Mixed Residential, Medium
5. URH – Urban Residential, High

The original ordinance does not address all of the details necessary to enact these change: there are more detailed code changes needed to convert existing zoning districts into the new set listed above. This is what the sponsors, along with their technical consultant and advisors, worked through to prepare for the 2024 public process. The draft new code accompanying the original ordinance is our first-draft proposal of how to fully implement the policy changes first put forward in the HOME Initiative in 2023.

[Guiding Principles for Policy Choices proposed in the HOME Initiative](#)

When reviewing current residential zoning districts and how they can be simplified, the sponsors followed these guiding principles for policy decisions in the draft code:

1. Make the code shorter, simpler, consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan & 2040 Land Use Plan, for policies related to housing and neighborhoods.
2. Define residential zoning districts that follow the general intent of the land use designations in the 2040 Land Use Plan.
3. Keep the least restrictive dimensions & policies of zones being consolidated, as much as possible and feasible.
4. For dimensional changes (lot setbacks, etc.), use dimensions consistent with those in the equivalent existing zones.
5. While other parts of AMC 21 are impacted by this ordinance, retain or relocate other parts of code in this ordinance; revisit potential further changes at another time.
6. Make the zoning code more flexible and easier regulatory structure to administer, interpret, and update over time.

[Process So Far, from Introduction to Next Steps](#)

The Assembly postponed this ordinance to summer 2024, because the sponsors proposed taking time to work through the details to bring back to the public: what would the dimensions (setbacks, height limits, etc.) be for each new district? What other parts of code need to be looked at, and updated with these new districts? Will this require any amendments to the comprehensive plan, which often happens when there are zoning changes? The ordinance was referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission in March 2024, and scheduled to come back to the Assembly in June 2024.

After taking time to work through the detail with technical consultants and advisors, the sponsors have brought back a new draft set of code changes with our proposed answers to these questions: this full draft included in the PZC packet, along with the original ordinance. The Planning and Zoning Commission will review this packet, including the details to implement the changes, and adopt their findings and recommendations in the form of an advisory resolution to the Assembly.

The sponsors will then work with staff to prepare a new draft ordinance, incorporating all the proposed code changes in a single ordinance, as well as an ordinance with any necessary amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and 2040 Land Use Plan, which typically accompanies any proposed changes to zoning, when it also requires a plan amendment. This full package is what will be brought back before the Assembly for consideration and approval in summer 2024.

Consistency with the 2040 Land Use Plan

The sponsors are engaging in this process according to the following policies in the 2040 Land Use Plan (LUP):

1. **LUP 1.4:** Use the 2040 LUP and area-specific plans in conjunction with other elements of the comprehensive plan to determine appropriate zoning in the Bowl, and evaluate proposed changes to land use regulations (pg. 16).
2. **LUP 1.8:** Engage Anchorage residents, businesses, and property owners in predictable and transparent process leading to the adoption of plans that guide growth. Engage affected communities when making long-term land use decisions, with particular communities that are historically underrepresented (pg. 17).

Sponsor Contacts

Daniel Volland, District 1

daniel.volland@anchorageak.gov

Anna Brawley, District 3

anna.brawley@anchorageak.gov

Meg Zaletel, District 4

meg.zaletel@anchorageak.gov

IV.B.

Per Daniel King – Existing amendment on soil tests in the AMC:

The language as it's currently written would still require geotechnical services for triplexes, since it's actually written for exceptions **only** for single-family or duplex construction. So, it could be okay as is without changes. It could still be reviewed for the next code cycle though to see if this recommendation should change to a square foot limitation.

As we've found there is no limit on the size of a structure in the IRC, just on the number of stories of construction. So, it could be unlimited area. Seems unlikely that they'll get too big on most of the lots we have that meet zone 4/5.

[23.85.R401.4 - Soil tests. | Code of Ordinances | Anchorage, AK | Municode Library](#)

23.85.R401.4 - Soil tests.

Add the following subsection:

R401.4.3 Areas of high and very high Seismically induced ground failure susceptibility. The construction of a dwelling or accessory structure in seismically induced ground failure zones 4 or 5 (as delineated on the Municipality of Anchorage, Geotechnical Hazard Assessment Map) requires a site-specific geotechnical investigation in accordance with section 1803 of the 2018 IBC. The site-specific geotechnical investigation shall be prepared by a professional civil engineer, qualified in the field of Geotechnical Engineering, registered in the State of Alaska. The structure shall be designed and sealed by a structural engineer registered in the State of Alaska.

Exceptions:

1. A geotechnical report is not required for an addition to a **detached single-family residence or duplex** where all the following conditions apply:
 - a. The footprint of the addition does not exceed the footprint of the existing building;
 - b. The addition does not increase or exceed the number of stories of the existing building; and
 - c. Structural analysis demonstrates that new foundation elements can match existing.
2. A geotechnical report is not required for a detached accessory structure less than 400 square feet in area.
3. Unless required by a plat note, a registered engineer does not need to design either the structure or its foundation if the geotechnical report is based on site-specific soils information where all the following are true:
 - a. Slope Stability: A submitted pseudo-static slope stability analysis has a minimum factor of safety of at least [1.10](#) for seismic loading conditions in accordance with AMC 23.15.1803.5.11.
 - b. Liquefaction: The potential for liquefaction and soil strength loss evaluated in terms of peak ground acceleration, earthquake magnitude, and duration is unlikely.
 - c. Lateral Spreading and Pressure Ridges: The potential for earthquake induced lateral spreading and pressure ridges is unlikely.