
Planning Department

Anchorage: Performance. Value. Results.

Purpose

The Planning Department provides professional, technical and analytical expertise that assists the community in identifying goals, policies and objectives governing growth and future development within the Municipality of Anchorage. It guides the development of a livable northern community, facilitating development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations and preparing long range land use plans based on the community's goals and aspirations, economic assets and opportunities, and environmental attributes.

Core Services

- Produces area-wide, regional, and neighborhood plans that meet community expectations for our winter city community. This includes Assembly-adopted comprehensive and sub-area plans for Chugiak-Eagle River, Anchorage Bowl, Girdwood and Turnagain Arm.
- Provides planning for long-term multi-modal transportation needs.
- Ensures new developments adhere to adopted plans.
- Provides a public processes for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezonings, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.

Current Planning Division Planning Department

Anchorage: Performance. Value. Results.

Purpose

Facilitate land use development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations.

Direct Services

- Respond to public inquiries regarding land use development regulations and how regulations apply to given situations.
- Provide public processes for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezonings, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes, etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.

Accomplishment Goals

- Provide timely, clear, and accurate information about zoning and platting cases to the general public and to the citizens serving on Anchorage's four land use regulatory boards: Planning and Zoning Commission, Platting Board, Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals, and Urban Design Commission.
- Examine and track the level of tax subsidy for the processing of zoning and platting cases.

Performance Measures

Progress in achieving goals will be measured by:

Measure #1: Average number of business days to complete initial reviews of land use determinations (*Land Use Review*)

Average Number of Business Days to Complete Initial Reviews of Land Use Determinations

2016	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days to Complete	4	13	10	9	7	12.5	13	8.4	9.8	16.6	17.2	8.5
Total # Completed	3	11	20	15	42	29	20	21	12	19	19	16
# of Staff	2	1	2	2	3.5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2015	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days to Complete	17	12	19	16	13	15	14	13	14	27	14	13
Total # Completed	22	9	14	21	14	18	24	13	16	17	16	10
# of Staff	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Yearly	2014	2013			2012							
Average # of Days to Complete	25	16			9							
Total # Completed	205	225			160							
# of Staff	2	2			2							

NOTE: February 2016, short staffed. Overtime and extra staff utilized in May due to Spenard Rd. project work. There was a large influx of nonconforming determinations for commercial properties for proposed marijuana facility sites during Oct and Nov.

Measure #2: Average number of days to complete initial reviews of administrative land use permits. (Land Use Review)

Average Number of Days to Complete Initial Reviews of Administrative Land Use Permits

2016	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days	3	4	8	6	1	5	5	2	4	7	18	2
Total # Completed	20	30	24	8	9	23	14	30	11	9	5	22
# of Staff	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2015	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days	9	0	27	8	0	4	0	1	28	36	6	3
Total # Completed	8	0	1	6	0	2	1	1	3	5	4	19
# of Staff	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Average by Year	2014			2013			2012			2011		
Average # of Days	23			4			16			11		
Total # Completed	105			22			91			141		
# of Staff	1			1			1			2		

NOTE: Increased time in March due to 2 permits, A161047 and A161048, held pending information from applicants. Oct and Nov had a significant increase in B&B inquiries due to Land Use Enforcement action where 40 B&Bs were sent enforcement letters for lack of a required administrative permit.

Measure #3: Number of New Planning Applications Received in the Quarter (Current Planning)

New Applications in 2016 by Quarter

Type of Case	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016
AMATS Review	0	0	0	0
Platting Cases	36	18	24	29
Administrative Cases	6	5	8	3
Zoning Cases	15	17	29	24
TOTAL CASES This Quarter	57	40	61	56

Former Performance Measure for 2010 - 2014

	Average Number of Days to Process a Case*			
Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2014	51.1	Not available	Not available	Not available
2013	50.5	46.8	53.6	49.7
2012	53	50.5	50.4	45.0
2011	55	48	51	54
2010	77	61	69	61

Info about the Former Performance Measure and Why It Changed:

During 2014, the legacy Cityview software used to manage planning cases was modernized to a web-based version. Given the change in software, some of the reports that used to be generated from the old database are no longer available. The good news is that the querying capabilities in the new database are much stronger. The change in software requires modifications to Current Planning's performance measures.

Formerly, Current Planning reported on the average number of days to process a case using a report from the old database that is no longer available. Note that the average number of days also has only limited meaning. There are cut-off dates that applicants must meet to have their cases heard at the next board or commission meeting. Generally, if the applicant submits by the cut-off date, his or her case will be scheduled for the next meeting. If an applicant submits an application early (several days before the cut-off), the case is still heard on the same date as the ones submitted on the final cut-off date. Cases generally take longer than other cases if they are postponed. Often the applicant is the person deciding to postpone hearing of a case if an application is unlikely to be approved as is. An applicant will request a postponement so that he or she can make modifications that may make it more likely that the case will be approved. In other cases, a board or commission runs into the same problem that the Assembly does: not enough time to get through the whole agenda at a meeting, especially if there is a controversial item on the agenda that takes lots of time. Thus, a board or commission may postpone a case to the next meeting simply because meeting time ran out. That planning staff requests a postponement is very rare, less than 5% of all postponements. Thus, case duration data, as presented in the former performance measure, has only limited use in that cases generally run longer because an applicant or a board postponed cases.

Measure #4: Average Cost, Fee Revenue, and Tax Subsidy per Case Processed (Current Planning)

Annual figures are the most reliable ones. The following breaks down figures by quarter, but direct costs and revenues are cumulative (2nd quarter includes figures for 1st quarter.) Given that revenues and expenditures are not evenly spread over all days of the year, the annual summary figures are more informative than the quarterly figures.

Cumulative Figures by Quarter for 2016				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Average direct cost per case	10,199	10,259	9,223	8,784
Average revenue per case	3,858	4,287	3,916	3,778
Tax subsidy	6,341	5,972	5,308	5,007
Cumulative Figures by Quarter for 2015				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Average direct cost per case	6,766	6,313	5,463	7,989*
Average revenue per case	2,623	2,353	2,467	3,599
Tax subsidy	4,143	3,960	2,696	4,390*
Annual Figures – Prior Years				
	2014	2013	2012	2011
Average direct cost per case	N/A Due to Cityview	4,687	5,273	5,358
Average revenue per case	Upgrades in 2014. Reports were unavailable during this timeframe.	3,257	2,684	3,080
Tax subsidy		1,430	2,589	2,278

Measure #5: Planning Case Action Statistics by Quarter (Current Planning)

This new performance measure tracks level of planning activity occurring by summarizing the actions taken by the department director on administrative cases, by the Assembly on cases requiring Assembly approval, and by planning board and commissions.

Planning Case Actions in 2016	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Planning Case Actions – Anchorage Assembly					
Approved	3	7	4	3	17
Postponed (indefinitely or date certain)	8	0	0	0	8
Denied or Protested	0	1	1	1	3
Planning Administrative Case Actions – Department Director					
Approved	2	4	3	1	10
Denied	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Case Actions – Planning Boards & Commissions					
Approved	44	36	44	39	163
Denied	1	2	3	2	8
Postponed (indefinitely or date certain)	25	11	13	5	178
Returned for redesign	0	0	0	0	0
Information item only – no action required	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	0	1	1	1	3
Resolution Actions – Planning Boards & Commissions					
Approved	21	14	20	14	69
Postponed	6	3	3	0	12
Planning Case Recommendations Made to Assembly by Planning Boards					
Approval Recommended	3	5	5	10	23
Denial Recommended	0	1	1	2	4
Recommendation Postponed (indefinitely or date certain)	8	4	2	3	17
Case Withdrawn by Applicant/No Recommendation	0	1	0	0	1

Performance Measure Methodology Sheet
Current Planning Division
Planning Department

Measure #1: Average number of business days to complete initial reviews of land use determinations. (<i>Land Use Review</i>)

Type

Effectiveness

Accomplishment Goal Supported

Provide timely and accurate services for:

- o Land use reviews/determinations;
- o Administrative land use permits;
- o Business facility reviews and inspections;
- o Assignment of new addresses; and
- o Maintenance of GIS map data layers for roads and addresses.

Definition

This measure calculates the average number of calendar days elapsing between receipt and completion of land use determination requests. A property owner, realtor, or financier, etc., may request a land use determination for a particular property parcel. Land use review staff will identify the zoning, allowable land uses, parking and landscaping requirements for the property and provide a written determination as to whether the property is in compliance with municipal land use regulations.

Data Collection Method

Each determination will be logged when received and logged out upon completion in an Excel spreadsheet. The log will provide data needed to compute average number of days to complete land use determinations.

Frequency

This measure will be updated at the end of each calendar quarter.

Measured By

The land use review manager will calculate and display results quarterly.

Reporting

Planning Department will incorporate results into its performance measure reports.

Used By

The land use review manager, director, and municipal administration will use results to monitor average wait times, to allocate staff resources appropriately, and to identify problems with processes, research methods, or staff training needed.

Performance Measure Methodology Sheet
Current Planning Division
Planning Department

Measure #2: Average number of days to complete initial reviews of administrative land use permits. (<i>Land Use Review</i>)
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Type

Effectiveness

Accomplishment Goal Supported

Provide timely and accurate services for:

- o Land use reviews/determinations;
- o Administrative land use permits;
- o Business facility reviews and inspections;
- o Assignment of new addresses; and
- o Maintenance of GIS map data layers for roads and addresses.

Definition

This measure tracks the number of calendar days elapsing between receipt of administrative land use permit applications and initial review of permits. Land Use Review processes administrative land use permits for bed & breakfasts, rooming houses, commercial kennels, antenna tower sites, adult entertainment facilities, and premises where minors are not allowed.

Data Collection Method

Each permit application will be logged upon receipt and again upon completion of initial review in an Excel spreadsheet. The log will provide data needed to computer average number of days to complete permits.

Frequency

This measure will be updated at the end of each calendar quarter.

Measured By

The land use review manager will calculate and display results quarterly.

Reporting

Planning Department will incorporate results into its performance measure reports.

Used By

The land use review manager, director, and municipal administration will use results to monitor average wait times, to allocate staff resources appropriately, and to identify problems with processes, research methods, or staff training needed.

Performance Measure Methodology Sheet
Current Planning Division
Planning Department

Measure #3: Number of New Planning Applications Received in the Quarter
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Type

Effectiveness

Accomplishment Goal Supported

Support economic growth and community development by processing planning applications.

Definition

This measure tracks incoming planning applications as a measure of planning activity levels. Land use regulations apply area-wide. Before a new structure may be built, a land use review is a required step of the building permitting process for projects located inside the Building Safety Service Area (BSSA). Projects located in areas such as Eagle River, Chugiak, and Girdwood that are outside the BSSA do not require a building permit but must have a land use permit, verifying that the proposed project confirms with zoning and other land use requirements for the given project location. Planning applications are generally submitted in the earliest stages of preparing for new development. An applicant may wish to divide a land parcel into smaller parcels or may need a "variance" from a land use regulation to be approved or perhaps need a conditional use to be approved in order for a land use permit to be issued.

Data Collection Method

When an applicant submits a zoning, platting, or other planning application and pays the applicable fees, the application records in the Planning Division's CityView database. Data tracking incoming applications is extracted from CityView.

Frequency

This performance measure will be updated each calendar quarter.

Measured By

Administrative staff will query CityView data to update this performance measure.

Reporting

Planning Department will incorporate results for this performance measure into its performance measure reports.

Used By

The Planning Department Director and municipal administration will use the results to monitor planning activity in the community. Changes in planning application levels help to reflect on the health of the local economy.

Performance Measure Methodology Sheet
Current Planning Division
Planning Department

Measure #4: Average cost, fee revenue, and tax subsidy per case processed.

Type

Efficiency

Accomplishment Goal Supported

Examine and track the level of tax subsidy for the processing of zoning and platting cases.

Definition

The Current Planning Section processes zoning and platting cases. Dividing total direct costs for the section by the number of cases yields average cost per case. Dividing total revenues for the section by the number of cases yields average revenue per case. The average tax subsidy per case processed equals the difference of average cost minus average revenue divided by the number of cases. Fees paid by zoning and platting applicants do not fully cover the direct operating costs of this division; this performance measure tracks the level of tax subsidy provided.

Data Collection Method

Data extracted from the Municipality's financial management system and zoning and platting case management system will be used to calculate costs, revenues, number of cases, and average cost, revenue, and tax subsidy per case processed.

Frequency

Average cost, revenue, and subsidy per case processed will be calculated at the end of each calendar quarter.

Measured By

Department's administrative staff will work with the Current Planning Section Manager to extract needed data, perform calculations, and display results using graphs and narrative.

Reporting

Planning Department will incorporate results for this performance measure into its quarterly performance measure reports.

Used By

The Planning Department Director and municipal administration will use the results to monitor whether tax subsidy levels are holding steady, increasing or decreasing and keep policy makers informed.

Performance Measure Methodology Sheet
Current Planning Division
Planning Department

Measure #5: Planning Case Action Statistics by Quarter

Type

Effectiveness

Accomplishment Goal Supported

Support economic growth and community development by processing planning applications (same as PVR #15).

Definition

Municipal land use regulations apply area-wide. Although a few land use applications may be processed administratively, the vast majority of land use applications go to the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Platting Board, the Urban Design Commission or the Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals for hearing and decision. While an applicant will want his or her application for zoning, platting, or other land use action to be approved, other persons may oppose an application for a variety of reasons. Whether a board or commission approves or denies an application cannot be labeled as a “good” or “bad” outcome. Thus, the Current Planning is able to quantify planning activity levels but cannot qualitatively label the results. Quantifying activity levels, however, is helpful given that upticks or downturns in planning activity levels reflect on overall economic activity in the community.

Data Collection Method

All information about planning applications is maintained in the CityView database.

Frequency

Performance measure is updated at the end of each quarter.

Measured By

Department’s administrative staff queries the CityView database to compile planning case action statistics for the quarter.

Reporting

Planning Department will incorporate results for this performance measure into its quarterly performance measure reports.

Used By

The Planning Department Director and municipal administration will use the results to monitor planning activity levels, as reflective of current planning workloads as well as local economic health.