

I am an Anchorage citizen that lives downtown because it is more walkable, closer to work and trails, and more livable than the rest of Anchorage. In my perfect world, I envision all of Anchorage as a walkable, vibrant, wild community...like the perfect European or Pacific Northwest city, only better. I see everywhere useful shops for groceries, videos, wine, restaurants, and the other niceties of city life topped with a couple of stories of comfortable flats for affordable, near-work dwelling. I see walk and bikeways winding everywhere, separated by beautiful groves of trees and bushes from streets that are less fast and hectic than the current ones. In keeping with this vision, here are my comments, actually an endorsement of ACC's Title 21 comments: Title 21 should follow Anchorage's adopted comprehensive plan and protect wildlife habitat in city limits (birds and small mammals as well as bears and fish), mature trees and groundcover, public open space, especially in new subdivisions.

In addition:

- o parking requirements should support compact development and walkable streets, and
- o The 21 approval process should provide additional outreach and education so that interested persons understand how effectively Title 21 implements Anchorage 2020.

Hundreds of citizens helped write Anchorage 2020, the city's comprehensive plan, and they developed a clear vision of what they wanted the city to become. Title 21 should fulfill that vision.

Developers should set aside public open space in new construction 21.07.030 B The current draft eliminates public open space set asides in new development even though the municipality's zoning experts, Clarion Associates, explain set asides of ten acres per 1000 new residents or "fees in lieu" are typical across the nation. Standards for public open space should be restored and ensure that 50 percent of the space is relatively flat and dry and "useable," especially for children.

Private open space standards should be restored. 21.07.030 Private open space standards were reduced from 800 square feet per housing unit to 600 square feet in the latest draft, and development in the central business district is exempt from setting aside private open space. In urban areas, while not every building will have its own open space, open space should be available within walking distance of most homes and businesses.

Mature trees, shrubs and groundcover should be preserved 21.07.080 Mature, native trees and plants provide important wildlife habitat. Tree retention standards were eliminated and folded into "landscaping," but the standards do not place enough value on mature trees. The landscaping point system should be revised to place higher value on mature trees, shrubs and undisturbed native groundcover.

Wildlife habitat protection needs to be restored 21.07.020 E Anchorage's magnificent natural setting and wildlife make this city special and unusual among other cities The 2005 Draft limits focuses on bear protection, leaving other species at risk, especially birds, small mammals and other flora and fauna that is part of the local food chain. Please restore wildlife habitat protections.

Stream setbacks should be expanded from 25 feet to 100 feet 21.07.020 B.4.a.iii to protect properties from eroding and flooding, streams from contamination and wildlife from habitat destruction.

Anchorage's current NPDES (National Pollution Discharge and Elimination System) permit requires expanding or enhancing stream setbacks. Where landowners have legally built inside the 100 foot setback, incentives such as tax abatement and waivers of platting and permit fees can encourage stream and wetland restoration.

Wildlife Hazard Areas 21.07.020 F

This draft eliminates the 2004 concept of Wildlife Hazard Areas, that protected wildlife based on the "Urban-Wildland Interface Code" This section needs to be included in Title 21.

Parking requirements should support Anchorage 2020 goals of compact, walkable, healthy communities 21.07.090 When parking is excessive, it creates "dead zones" in neighborhoods and commercial districts that should be filled with people, buildings and landscaping.

In its January 2006 publication, Public Spaces / Community Places, the US EPA criticizes national traffic engineers' calculations of parking, saying For more compact, mixed-use, walkable places, these standards end up calling for far more parking than is needed. Anchorage uses those national standards.

Anchorage should hire an independent contractor experienced in developing parking standards for compact, mixed use development and older residential districts to work with citizens and traffic engineers to develop appropriate Title 21 parking standards.

Thanks for your attention.

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