

Planning and Zoning Commission

March 3, 2025

Case #: **2025-0018**

Case Title: **Title 21 Site Access Update**

Agenda Item #: **G.1.** Supplementary Packet #: **3**

Comments submitted after the packet was finalized

- Cook Inlet Housing Authority-Tyler Robinson and Devin Kelly

Additional information:

Other:

Sent by email: X yes no

Mckenna-Foster, Daniel R.

From: Devin Kelly <DKelly@cookinlethousing.org>
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 2:07 PM
To: Perry, Susan; Mckenna-Foster, Daniel R.
Cc: trobinson@cookinlethousing.org; Babb, Melisa R.K.
Subject: PZC comments re: site access

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Sue and Daniel,

Here's our comments on the site access case coming up Monday – is it too late to be sent along to the PZC commissioners? I'm also planning to attend the meeting and can read.

Thanks,
Devin

Devin Kelly
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Dena'inaq etnen'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 & Joel Isaak

Feb. 28, 2025

Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission
Re: Case 2025-0018, Text Amendment to Title 21 Updating Standards for Site Access

Dear Commissioners,

Please accept this letter of support for the text amendments to Title 21 updating standards for site access. Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) is an Alaska Regional Housing Authority and Tribally Designated Housing Entity in the CIRI region. Our organization owns and operates more than 1,700 units of housing in Southcentral Alaska. We estimate we have built nearly half of all new multi-family construction (three units or more) in Anchorage since 2015.

Despite good intentions the original “site access” ordinance, AO 2023-50, broke the code for housing. The ordinance was so complicated that even experts like CIHA had trouble making sense of it. It was only after approval that we realized there were significant issues. Stringent restrictions on parking in front of buildings – at

any point between the building and street, regardless of landscaping buffers – made most Cook Inlet Housing Authority projects non-conforming. These developments are good for Anchorage and implement our comprehensive plan goals. They include CIHA’s first project in South Anchorage on the Old Seward Highway and major redevelopment efforts in Spenard and Muldoon. These projects strategically sited parking to account for issues like topography; the noise and condition of nearby roads; snow removal needs, funding availability, and surrounding streets with no on-street parking.



In 2017 CIHA built two triplexes in South Addition on East 12th Avenue. These triplexes illustrate the ideal type of development imagined by site access. There is no parking in front of the buildings on East 12th Avenue, just a walkway connecting front doors to the street. The parking is located behind the building on the alley. With an alley, site access is easy.



The reality is that about 90% of Anchorage lots are not on alleys. For comparison, CIHA built a duplex in 2015 on Wilshire Street in Central Spenard, a very narrow street with no alley (the lot backs up to 36th Avenue) and no on-street parking. CIHA provided two one-car garages that face the street and a little extra room for parking for the larger households that would be renting each unit. The building has about the same number of parking spaces as each of the triplexes on E. 12th Avenue. Yet this design failed the front parking design rules of the original AO 2023-50.



If CIHA were to change the Wilshire Street duplex or change the designs of our larger projects to meet the original AO 2023-50, that would mean smaller buildings, fewer places for people to live, or a lack of vehicle storage for people who often rely on cars. That in turn affects whether it even makes financial sense to build the project in the first place. These are policy decisions.

We appreciated the opportunity to participate in the 2024 working group. The amended site access proposal before you reflects a collaborative process, resulting in a much simpler set of rules that we can all understand. This effort balanced desires for safe, attractive and walkable neighborhoods with the realities of housing construction in Anchorage. It was a better process and resulted in better code.

Thank you for your time,



Tyler Robinson
V.P., Community Development and Real Estate
Cook Inlet Housing Authority



Devin Kelly
Senior Planner, Housing Initiatives
Cook Inlet Housing Authority