

# Planning and Zoning Commission

August 11, 2025

Case #: **2025-0083**

Case Title: Review and Recommendation by Planning and Zoning Commission of an Ordinance of the Anchorage Municipal Assembly amending Anchorage Municipal Code Title 21 Chapter 9.040 and Table 21.09-2 to allow office and most retail uses in the GC-10, Upper Alyeska Highway Commercial District.

Agenda Item #: **G.4** Supplementary Packet #: **1**

Comments submitted after the packet was finalized

Additional information

Other:

Sent by email:            yes             no



**Municipality of Anchorage**  
**Planning Department**  
**Memorandum**



**RECEIVED**

**Date:** June 26, 2025  
**To:** Corliss Kimmel & Lori Blake  
**From:** Daniel Mckenna-Foster, Long Range Planning Manager  
**Subject:** Comments on PZC Case 2025-0083, expanding uses in the GC-10 zone in Girdwood

AUG 11 2025

Case 2025-0083 is a review and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission of an Ordinance of the Anchorage Municipal Assembly amending Anchorage Municipal Code Title 21 Chapter 9.040 and Table 21.09-2 to allow office and most retail uses in the GC-10, Upper Alyeska Highway Commercial District. Long Range Planning has reviewed this draft ordinance and has the following comments:

**1. Processing text amendments:**

Long Range Planning recommends processing text amendments that implement Comprehensive Plans on a standardized schedule and not for a specific project or area, if possible. In cases where an amendment will be moving forward anyway, Long Range Planning recommends using any amendment as an opportunity to solve any other related fixes as practicable. This allows for a better use of resources and more comprehensive implementation. Recommendations for approval or denial of an amendment should be considered in terms of how they implement a plan.

**2. Use table correction:**

Table 21.09-2 in the draft AO shows "Office, business or professional" as being an added use under "(4)". Current code shows that this use is currently allowed under "(3)", so the AO should reflect this deletion and addition using the formatting of "(4)[(3)]".

**3. Expand the scope of this amendment to better utilize public resources and further implement the desire for more commercial space as outlined in the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan:**

The GC-10 zoning district comprises only 3 parcels for a total of around 9 acres of total area. In comparison, the other commercial zones in GC-1 through GC-9 comprise over 132 acres across 231 parcels. A Title 21 text amendment similar to this one consumes considerable time and resources, especially for the benefit

of a small number of properties. Considering this, it might be of benefit to the community to make the most of this opportunity to go further to implement Girdwood's recently-adopted Comprehensive Plan and allow more commercial use flexibility in all of Girdwood's commercial zones. The Girdwood Comprehensive Plan provides support for expanding economic activity in Girdwood:

*GOAL E:* Economic Diversification and Sustainability

- **POLICY E1.1:** Increase commercial space (office and retail).
- **POLICY E1.2:** Provide space for light industrial.
- **POLICY E1.3:** Girdwood is business-friendly – Girdwood has opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators.
- **POLICY E1.4:** Girdwood increases opportunities for cottage craft.

**4. Use this opportunity to implement other sections of the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan:**

As noted above, text amendments to Title 21 take time and resources. Opening the use table through this amendment could be maximized to further implement the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan by allowing both more mixed use and also more childcare facilities in more zones. Updating the use table to allow more "dwelling, mixed-use" in areas identified by the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan's land use plan map would also be supported by plan's goals and policies:

*GOAL H:* Encourage a broad range of new housing development that is consistent with Girdwood's community character, natural character, and Girdwood's housing vision, needs, and cost challenges.

- **POLICY H2.1:** Girdwood encourages mixed-use residential and multi-family housing developments where appropriate.

The effort could also update the use table to expand permissions for other uses such as childcare facilities, which would also be supported by the plan's goals and policies:

*GOAL E:* Girdwood has a broad range of support services within the community.

- **POLICY E5.1:** Encourage the expansion of childcare facilities to promote the family atmosphere of people living and working in Girdwood.

**5. Simplify the amendments in this proposal by keeping any proposed changes in uses to P (Permitted), S (Administrative Site Plan Review), M (Major Site Plan Review), or C (Conditional Use):**

Including use-specific standards as footnotes in the use table creates an additional section of use-specific standards, while also leading to complexity for staff and the public in reading and interpreting code.

Overall, Long Range Planning recommends that the Girdwood Board of Supervisors provide additional use table changes to make the most of this case number and this particular text amendment process in order to implement the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan.