

Planning and Zoning Commission

October 6, 2025

Case #: **2025-0030, 2025-0034**

Case Titles: **T21 Text Amendment - AO to create new Town Center & Transit-Supportive Development Overlay.**

Title 21 Text Amendment-AO to update Transit Supportive Development/Corridors in Anchorage 2020 Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan and Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan.

Agenda Item #: **E.1, E.2** Supplementary Packet #: **1**

X Comments submitted after the packet was finalized

Additional information

Other:

Public Comments: 2025-0030

Commenter	Email	Phone Number	Submitted
Any resident 19300 Villages Scenic Parkway Anchorage, AK 99516	nancypease2@gmail.com	9073458738	10/6/2025 1:19:16 PM
	<p>The Planning Department issued Version 6 of TSDO just now, six hours before the public hearing before PZC. This changes the boundaries yet again as well as some dimensional standards.</p> <p>Our CC members collectively spent at least 15 hours studying and critiquing Version 5 (I know I spent about ten hours myself in the past five days (reading the packet, meetings, discussion, e-mails and drafting responses). What an inconsiderate abuse of public time and energy. The public is disenfranchised from land use planning by tactics like these.</p>		

Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 1:10 PM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: TSDO Comments

RECEIVED

OCT 06 2025

FYI

From: Susan Derrera <susanderrera@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 12:13 PM
To: Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Subject: TSDO Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I have lived in the same R-1 zoned area of Spenard for going on 40 years, and I am deeply concerned about relaxing any rules on setbacks, lot size, height, and parking in our neighborhood. Just down the street from us is a R-3 zoned neighborhood where my son and his wife bought a small house two years ago. Recently, new construction of a 30 foot, two story duplex just down the street from them has ruined their privacy as the duplex windows look right into the clerestory windows of their living room. The windows from the one story triplex next door now look onto the blank siding of the first floor garages of the unit and the little garden one of the residents kept has now had its light compromised. These infringements are occurring under CURRENT guidelines.

Off-street parking requirements are a no-brainer in a northern city where show plowing, garbage pick up, and pedestrian safety are often difficult in the best of circumstances.

Additionally, I am wondering if the Anchorage Fire Department has been consulted about these proposed changes as adequate setbacks are a key tool in keeping fires contained and from spreading to neighboring properties.

Thank you for addressing my concerns,

Susan Derrera

RECEIVED

OCT 06 2025

October 6, 2025. Regarding PZC Cases 2025-030 and 2025-0034

This version of TSDO, despite recent revisions, is still not a credible, choate policy to accelerate housing.

I strongly agree that we need more housing, particularly affordable housing in transit-served neighborhoods. However, this TSDO proposal is still half-baked. This TSDO lacks policies on commercial uses; it has no data to indicate the possible rates of infill; it has undetermined boundaries; and it ignores the Municipality's financial or political ability to maintain or expand transit. Furthermore, the design and dimensional standards have flip-flopped in various drafts of the TSDO, without adequate analysis. I urge Planning and Zoning Commission to not approve 2025-0030 or 2025-0034; and to instead invite the Planning Department to produce a comprehensive TSDO policy and boundary that

- 1) can achieve the targeted densities *in the near-term, under projected demographic and economic trends*
- 2) defines the boundaries and the dimension and design standards through detailed Community Council involvement, and
- 3) advises what funding is needed for enhanced transit and pedestrian/bicycle mobility to ensure that the TSDO results in travel mode shift.

Missing data. The sponsors have presented no data to demonstrate whether this is an effective—or even a realistic-- way to achieve transit-supportive development corridors. *We know neighborhood transition involves economic and social disruption, so it's important to know how fast TSDO can achieve the target residential density.* The stated target is 36 DUA along transit corridors, which is the minimum residential density that federal agencies have shown can sustain transit and result in a travel-mode shift away from vehicle dependence. The public has asked for data numerous times, but the TSDO sponsors still haven't presented foundational data: what are existing residential densities in various parts of the TSDO? Are any neighborhoods close to the 36 DUA? With current population and economic trends, how many years will it take for various parts of TSDO to achieve 36 DUA? What transit subsidies and pedestrian upgrades do we need to fund? *If TSDO can't get to 36 DUA in the near- or even mid-term under current economic trends, then let's re-work it.* Success breeds success: so maybe the Muni should promote model infill and redevelopment projects in smaller, more-targeted opportunity areas.

Public process. The round of recent presentations doesn't make up for the lack of data and the lack of early scoping discussions with Community Councils . The Planning Department Staff is asking for "approval as-is" and warning PZC that "any changes...will make this TSDO ordinance significantly less effective in...achieving housing."

Meaningful public participation can be defined as: well-informed, two-way, reflective exchange of ideas that afford the public a chance to influence the outcome. The TSDO

process is still guilty of fast-track development based more on wishful thinking than objective data analysis and full consideration of Comprehensive Plan policies.
Dimensional and design standards.

We need further analysis of the proposed dimensional standards. A couple of specifics: Does '80 percent lot coverage' allow for adequate landscaping as well as stormwater management? Do 'no minimum setbacks' mean that buildings can forego rear placement of dumpsters, and instead place them in the side setback where they may create a health and aesthetic nuisance for the neighboring property? Does 'no minimum lot dimensions' mean more pie-shaped lots with wasted corner space? Will these 'non minimum dimensions' result in super skinny lots where owners must commit a large percentage of building footage to stairs, and where mobility-impaired residents are effectively excluded?

A broader discussion. Our current adopted plans still have good bones—the transit supportive corridors have been on the maps for 20-plus years. Regrettably, the marketplace hasn't delivered the land use pattern we adopted. It seems that the Assembly has unilaterally declared zoning and design standards as the scapegoat. Anti-zoning ideology won't cure the housing crisis or help people shift toward transit. We need a comprehensive planning approach. I'd like to see a TSDO developed through the type of community-wide process and the careful professional analysis that produced the 2020 Comp Plan and 2040 LUP.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the current TSDO. I urge that you consider it to be incomplete and defer action until you have the needed data analysis, public input from neighborhoods and Community Councils, and proposed policies for commercial uses and transit funding.

Nancy Pease
Nancypease2@gmail.com

Public Comments: 2025-0030

Commenter	Email	Phone Number	Submitted
Nancy Pease 19300 Villages Scenic Parkway Anchorage, AK 99516	nancypease2@gmail.com	9073458738	10/6/2025 12:53:35 PM
<p>October 6, 2025. Regarding PZC Cases 2025-030 and 2025-0034</p> <p>This version of TSDO, despite recent revisions, is still not a credible, choate policy to accelerate housing.</p> <p>I strongly agree that we need more housing, particularly affordable housing in transit-served neighborhoods. However, this TSDO proposal is still half-baked. This TSDO lacks policies on commercial uses; it has no data to indicate the possible rates of infill; it has undetermined boundaries; and it ignores the Municipality's financial or political ability to maintain or expand transit. Furthermore, the design and dimensional standards have flip-flopped in various drafts of the TSDO, without adequate analysis. I urge Planning and Zoning Commission to not approve 2025-0030 or 2025-0034; and to instead invite the Planning Department to produce a comprehensive TSDO policy and boundary that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) can achieve the targeted densities in the near-term, under projected demographic and economic trends 2) defines the boundaries and the dimension and design standards through detailed Community Council involvement, and 3) advises what funding is needed for enhanced transit and pedestrian/bicycle mobility to ensure that the TSDO results in travel mode shift. <p>Missing data. The sponsors have presented no data to demonstrate whether this is an effective—or even a realistic-- way to achieve transit-supportive development corridors. We know neighborhood transition involves economic and social disruption, so it's important to know how fast TSDO can achieve the target residential density. The stated target is 36 DUA along transit corridors, which is the minimum residential density that federal agencies have shown can sustain transit and result in a travel-mode shift away from vehicle dependence. The public has asked for data numerous times, but the TSDO sponsors still haven't presented foundational data: what are existing residential densities in various parts of the TSDO? Are any neighborhoods close to the 36 DUA? With current population and economic trends, how many years will it take for various parts of TSDO to achieve 36 DUA? What transit subsidies and pedestrian upgrades do we need to fund? If TSDO can't get to 36 DUA in the near- or even mid-term under current economic trends, then let's re-work it. Success breeds success: so maybe the Muni should promote model infill and redevelopment projects in smaller, more-targeted opportunity areas.</p> <p>Public process. The round of recent presentations doesn't make up for the lack of data and the lack of early scoping discussions with Community Councils . The Planning Department Staff is asking for "approval as-is" and warning PZC that "any changes...will make this TSDO ordinance significantly less effective in...achieving housing."</p> <p>Meaningful public participation can be defined as: well-informed, two-way, reflective exchange of ideas that afford the public a chance to influence the outcome. The TSDO process is still guilty of fast-track development based more on wishful thinking than objective data analysis and full consideration of Comprehensive Plan policies.</p> <p>Dimensional and design standards.</p> <p>We need further analysis of the proposed dimensional standards. A couple of specifics: Does '80 percent lot coverage' allow for adequate landscaping as well as stormwater management? Do 'no minimum setbacks' mean that buildings can forego rear placement of dumpsters, and instead place them in the side setback where they may create a health and aesthetic nuisance for the neighboring property? Does 'no minimum lot dimensions' mean more pie-shaped lots with wasted corner space? Will these 'non minimum dimensions' result in super skinny lots where owners must commit a large</p>			

percentage of building footage to stairs, and where mobility-impaired residents are effectively excluded?

A broader discussion. Our current adopted plans still have good bones—the transit supportive corridors have been on the maps for 20-plus years. Regrettably, the marketplace hasn't delivered the land use pattern we adopted. It seems that the Assembly has unilaterally declared zoning and design standards as the scapegoat. Anti-zoning ideology won't cure the housing crisis or help people shift toward transit. We need a comprehensive planning approach. I'd like to see a TSDO developed through the type of community-wide process and the careful professional analysis that produced the 2020 Comp Plan and 2040 LUP.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the current TSDO. I urge that you consider it to be incomplete and defer action until you have the needed data analysis, public input from neighborhoods and Community Councils, and proposed policies for commercial uses and transit funding.

Nancy Pease
Nancypease2@gmail.com

Public Comments: 2025-0030

Commenter	Email	Phone Number	Submitted
thomas crowley 2539 cottonwood st anchorage, AK 99508	nextdoor2539@gmail.com	9072748709	10/6/2025 12:19:38 PM
<p>Opposed to current TSDO proposals. Anchorage is not like: Atlanta, Chicago, or other cities cited in the draft submission. This project is ill conceived and not appropriate for Anchorage for many reasons. The glossy presentations are reminiscent of other failed proposals such as the H2H project and the Knik Arm bridge, both of which are not worth the price and disruption of neighborhoods, in a small city that has seen little population growth in 20 years. The main beneficiaries seem to be, besides the obviously well funded project team; developers, realtors, landlords. STOP!</p>			

Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 9:58 AM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: TSDO

RECEIVED

OCT 06 2025

FYI

From: Mel Langdon <mellenlangdon@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 8:59 AM
To: Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Subject: TSDO

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

In the draft for 21.04.070.D.4.b, please add at the end of this sentence: "... driveways for all uses shall not exceed 20 feet" the following: *in width measured at the property line.*

Thank you for your consideration.

Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 7:48 AM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: TSDO Comments: Better alternatives

RECEIVED

OCT 05 2025

FYI

From: Esther Perman <esther.perman@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 10:46 PM
To: Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Subject: TSDO Comments: Better alternatives

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To whom it may concern,

Please see the following for my response to the proposed TSDO. Views are my own, but reflect hours spent listening to the concerns of community members in North Star, Rogers Park, and South Addition. They also reflect my time spent living in other cities that tackled density and affordability through various approaches, including thoughtful zoning, and alternatively, unrestricted zoning plans like TSDO.

-Esther Perman

North Star resident

The Transit-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO) proposal brings forward ambitious changes to Anchorage's land use and zoning, aiming to foster mixed-use, affordable, higher-density urban environments aligned with corridor-based public transit investments. While the overarching objective—to facilitate more walkable, transit-oriented communities—deserves support, this response recommends a targeted approach that preserves neighborhood stability by limiting proposed zoning changes in established residential areas, and prioritizes multi-use corridor development on arterial roads as an initial phase.

Support for TSDO High-Level Goals

I recognize and agree with the high level goals of TSDO; Anchorage is ready for policies that encourage a vibrant mix of housing, commercial, and civic uses in designated Town Centers and transit corridors. And the TSDO's framework echoes national best practices in targeting density where it supports transportation outcomes and neighborhood vitality. However, Anchorage is unique from other national cities; models for cities like Seattle, Portland and other denser cities don't take into account the opportunities and challenges of our city.

Anchorage has a lot of undeveloped and underdeveloped land. Drive down the strip in Midtown and witness the vast parking lots. Notice the boarded up businesses on Fireweed. Or count the empty lots next to small businesses in Spenard, Anchorage's best "almost walkable" neighborhood. All of this within a quick bus ride or biking distance of downtown and the city's wonderful trails.

Venture into the neighborhoods behind these arterial roads, and you'll find some of Anchorage's most mixed housing. Like most of the residential streets in the current TSDO proposal, these neighborhoods are diverse in character, demographics, and housing stock. Many have seen limited redevelopment due to factors extending beyond zoning standards, such as land costs, labor constraints, and market demand. Some include historic homes that offer a glimpse of architectural styles preceding statehood, but which have been subdivided into duplexes in recent years. And others are anchored by large apartment complexes that provide affordable housing unavailable elsewhere. If we want mixed housing stock, density, and affordability, the residential neighborhoods in the current version of the TSDO are already that.

Underutilized arterial streets next to mixed residential neighborhoods isn't the vision called for in the 2040 Land Use Plan. What the plan calls for is Town Centers where people want to spend time, and maybe even want to take the bus to get to and from. Town Centers should be developed as inviting, walkable, and safe destinations that naturally attract people with vibrant amenities. Anchoring these areas with restaurants, breweries, shops, and essential services creates lively communities where residents gather and spend time. All these uses benefit from and support multi-use developments, which integrate residential, commercial, and recreational opportunities into one building. This approach not only enhances economic activity but also sets the stage for a lasting sense of place and neighborhood identity. But this type of development belongs on the arterial streets that border the neighborhoods, not on the residential streets themselves.

Recommendations for Targeted Implementation

Despite alignment with broad planning objectives, I believe that the proposed TSDO should not include established residential neighborhoods. Wholesale upzoning can erode community trust, spark opposition to changes to setback, height and design standards, and deflect attention from other effective solutions to affordable housing and infill.

Instead, I recommend that TSDO implementation begin by focusing exclusively on arterial corridors and select commercial parcels designated in the Land Use Plan as priorities for mixed-use redevelopment. The following actions support the proposal's goals without broad residential rezoning:

- Limit the TSDO overlay to arterial street parcels and commercial centers with supportive infrastructure and frequent transit routes.
- Retain existing zoning standards in stable residential neighborhoods; avoid removal of setback, parking, or height controls until after corridor pilots have demonstrated positive results.
- Allow mixed-use, multi-story, and higher-density developments by-right on selected corridors, supporting increases in housing supply.
- Monitor outcomes, including impacts on transit ridership, housing affordability, retail tenancy, and neighborhood acceptance, before considering broader residential expansion.

Anchorage's Policy Alternatives for Affordability

Anchorage possesses a range of land use and economic development tools to advance affordability and infill while respecting existing neighborhood patterns. In addition to the corridor-focused overlay described above, these include:

- Encourage more measured affordable housing incentives, including expedited permitting for accessory dwelling units in appropriate zones, without defaulting to uniform upzoning.
- Add tax incentives for adding housing units to existing home structures, making it easier for home owners to create and register duplex and multiplex long-term rentals
- Inclusionary zoning, fee reductions, or density bonuses targeting workforce and senior housing across the city.
- Targeted pilot projects, demonstration partnerships, and block-by-block redevelopment initiatives in areas with community support.

The city should coordinate these efforts with robust public engagement and market analysis, recognizing that affordable housing and successful transit-supportive development depend on more than widespread zoning changes alone.

Conclusion

In summary, the TSDO framework presents a forward-looking step toward more livable, transit-friendly neighborhoods and corridors in Anchorage. But the path to large-scale change need not begin with sweeping residential upzoning. The neighborhoods aren't the opportunity; the streets surrounding them are. Targeted implementation along arterial corridors and commercial nodes offers a logical, incremental approach that respects neighborhood stability and enables public agencies to learn, adapt and refine before wider expansion. Support for transit-supportive development and affordable housing can—and should—draw on a suite of coordinated tools and partnerships, not zoning alone.

Anchorage stands at a crossroads where thoughtful, evidence-based action can achieve lasting progress toward the principles outlined in the 2040 Land Use Plan. The revised TSDO approach outlined above will ensure that initial steps are both effective and responsive to the city's unique context.

Appendix:

Examples of "unrestrictive zoning":

1. Limited-setback dense townhomes common in Seattle. These townhomes block sunlight, cram neighborhood streets with cars, and, because lots are subdivided, prevent any future development of more efficient and affordable condos. They are also expensive, generally starting at \$700k-1M (2bed, 900 sq ft) in neighborhoods like Ballard.



Examples of thoughtful zoning, meant to encourage density and affordability:

1. 3-story mixed use development in Winslow, WA. This development is located on a main road, but includes a green space that separates housing from the street, providing a community play area and room for parking, while still being close enough to encourage foot traffic to the businesses on the ground floor. Condos are affordable for the area, starting at \$450k (2 bd, 1200 sq ft).
<https://visitbainbridgeisland.org/venue/winslow-green-2/>



2. 6-story mixed use housing built in partnership with the City of Boise's Redevelopment Agency (currently in development). Wide sidewalks and planters will encourage street-side activity while providing an

attractive alternative to the previous vacant lot. The development includes units dedicated to affordable housing on an arterial road convenient to downtown. <https://ccdcboise.com/ccdc-projects/16th-state/>



Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Babb, Melisa R.K.
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 3:43 PM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Cc: Mckenna-Foster, Daniel R.
Subject: FW: Comments re: TSDO, 2025-0030 v5

RECEIVED

OCT 03 2025

Hi Corliss,
Daniel may have already forwarded you this, but, if not, is it too late to get this into the packet?



Planning Department
MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Melisa R.K. Babb
Planning Director • Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage
Email: melisa.babb@anchorageak.gov
Phone: (907) 343-7996
4700 Elmore Road, Anchorage, AK 99507
www.muni.org/planning

From: Alexa Dobson <alexakdobson@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 2:08 PM
To: Downey, Graham P. <Graham.Downey@anchorageak.gov>; Babb, Melisa R.K. <melisa.babb@anchorageak.gov>; Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Cc: Baldwin Day, Erin <Erin.Baldwin.Day@anchorageak.gov>; Mckenna-Foster, Daniel R. <daniel.mckenna-foster@anchorageak.gov>
Subject: Comments re: TSDO, 2025-0030 v5

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello,

Please find below my comments on version 5 of the TSDO, case 2025-0030 for hearing at the PZC on 10/6/2025. Thank you!

To the Mayor's Office, Planning Department, and Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission,

I am writing to express my continued support for the Transit-Supportive Development Overlay, but also deep disappointment at how far version 5 has retreated from the bold, visionary approach originally proposed.

Earlier versions of the ordinance were designed to make transit truly viable by allowing density that supports ridership, and by permitting small-scale neighborhood businesses so that people would have the option to walk to a café, a daycare, or a corner store rather than having to always drive everywhere. Version 5 has stripped out the mixed-use component and slashed height limits from 75 feet to 40 feet. The map has been narrowed to cover a miniscule 9% of the city, and completely given up on supporting increased density or transit access in South Anchorage.

What's left is only a fraction of the original vision: It permits three-story residential buildings, no more than a quarter mile from a few of Anchorage's busiest arterials. That's it. Is it even mathematically possible to achieve transit-oriented density of 36 dwelling units per acre with these paltry allowances? Look at the comments and op-eds since the new version came out: Did giving away the core features of the original plan actually win any new supporters?

As I observed in my testimony at the last PZC hearing, much of the opposition testimony has been about the externalities of cars: Traffic congestion, parking inconveniences. But that is exactly what transit-supportive development is meant to address. Putting housing near transit reduces car dependence. Allowing small businesses within walking distance of homes means people aren't forced to drive for everyday errands. Opposing the TSDO on the grounds of car traffic while simultaneously blocking every effort to reduce car dependence is incoherent.

The drawn-out debate over lot coverage, setbacks, and dimensional standards has made one thing crystal clear: These numbers are not about health, safety, or infrastructure. They have been revised repeatedly, not because of any data or analysis, but because different groups of commenters said they liked or disliked them. That is not planning; that is legislating on vibes.

We already have building requirements elsewhere in code addressing needs like fire safety and utility access. If, beyond those, there is a specific, data-backed reason why a certain percentage of a given lot must remain unbuilt or buildings must be set back a certain number of feet from the property line, then let's see it. Otherwise, we're just making it illegal for the city to grow, on the basis of a few people's arbitrary aesthetic judgments.

You hardly need to hear it again, but Anchorage is in a housing crisis. People are leaving because of disinvestment, stagnation, and the sense that our city is not growing into a vibrant place to live. Against this backdrop, if we can't even muster the courage to say yes to three-story buildings along arterials, how can we ever hope to build a city that retains its residents and attracts new ones?

This watered-down version is still (barely) better than nothing, and so I support it. But it falls badly short of what Anchorage needs, and of the vision we set out in the 2040 Land Use Plan. Leadership means standing by the city's own comprehensive planning documents and having the courage to implement them. I believe we can do so much better than this.

Respectfully,

Alexa Dobson

Homeowner, Fairview

Public Comments: 2025-0030

Commenter	Email	Phone Number	Submitted
Gregg Schomaker			10/5/2025 11:07:20 PM
<p>I support the concept behind TSDO, but in its current updated version I cannot comprehend how it expects to meet the goals that the project says it will accomplish. How will the TSDO increase affordable housing, increase the walkability of Anchorage, and increase the use of public transportation here in Anchorage? I have read through the proposal and I don't see any studies or empirical evidence that demonstrates that this proposal will lead to the desired outcomes? How will this increase affordable housing? I understand that the project has the possibility of increasing housing, but there is nothing stating that there will be mixed income housing built to meet the demand. Developers require an ROI on their investment and they will have to charge whatever the going rate is to make the profits they require to stay in business. There's also the fact that building materials continue to increase due to tariffs and other factors. Those higher costs will be passed on to the consumer. There is no restrictions on what they can charge or the costs to the consumer, so the market will establish the rates for home ownership, or the monthly rate of a rental unit. The only benefit is to the individual who does the development as they would receive a tax incentive for the additional units built on the lot. I have not seen any evidence that this proposal will result in more affordable housing. We may have more housing, but that doesn't mean it will be more affordable. How will this proposal increase the walkability of Anchorage? Anchorage as currently constructed is not a pedestrian friendly city. In fact, per capita Anchorage has had a disproportionately high rate of pedestrian fatalities in recent years compared to many U.S. cities . One of the major factors is due to insufficient infrastructure with many parts of Anchorage lacking sidewalks and safe crossings. Nowhere in the proposal does it address how the TSDO will make Anchorage more walkable. There's no proposals for additional infrastructure to make it more safe for pedestrians. Actually, one could argue with the lack of parking restrictions in the proposal this will result in more cars being parked on the street forcing pedestrians to walk out in the street due to the limited sidewalks available. The parking issue will create its own set of problems that a number of people have already addressed (snow removal, trash, driveway blockage etc.) I find it ironic that in the Project Summary and FAQ the image for the example of a three story building is the Park Place Condominiums, as they have their own on-site parking due to the fact that there would be limited street parking to handle the number of residents who reside there. My last point is that this is called the Transit Supported Development Overlay and was presented as a way to increase public transportation. Again, I highly support public transportation but nothing in the proposal makes public transportation more appealing. I live near a People Mover stop and I see people standing in the snow during the winter, or having to post hole through the snow if the area isn't cleared for a couple days after a snowstorm. Nothing in the proposal shows that public transportation will increase just due to more people living near the bus routes. Again, this is just an assumption that the designers of the plan are hoping to see. What's the current usage of public transportation? What would be the potential increase that you would estimate with the TSDO changes? These are questions that should be addressed as this is one of the key selling points of the plan. How do you make public transportation more appealing? Are you going to increase the snowplowing to and from bus stops? I too, would like to see the trendy buildings that are presented in the other cities that have a TSDO. I also would love a pedestrian and bike friendly city that has affordable housing options for all, but I don't see how the current proposal truly meets the goals it intends to meet. I thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p>			

RECEIVED

OCT 05 2025

5 October 2025

October Note to the reader. These comments were made prior to the latest draft of the TSDO proposition, but I believe they are still applicable even if some of the proposals have changed. Please forgive my desire not to revisit the following to update them to the new proposal. I did hear that the latest draft removes allowing commercial uses in residential zones from the proposed changes. As you will read, I strongly support this idea and lament its removal. I hope it can be returned in the discussion in the future. The failure of small neighborhood commercial projects, like Rustic Goat, is not inherent to its use or incompatibility with its surroundings, but with its singularity: if there were a Rustic Goat in every neighborhood, there would not be a parking problem. Residents may object to a bakery down the street (come over to Airport Heights and see: it can work!), but what about a daycare? Surely those are welcome additions to our neighborhoods? As for objections to denser or taller housing, it highlights that not only do we have a housing problem, we have an attitude problem. I choose to live in a city with other people and that's what I want around me. If I didn't want to be near a neighbor or grocery store or hospital, I'd move to the Hillside. Our housing crisis can only be solved by more housing getting built, and I hope this proposal moves toward that goal.

Assorted Comments on the TSDO Proposition, 18 August 2025 Draft

Note to the reader: I am the Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission. My opinions here are my own, and do not reflect the position of the Commission, nor even my position as Chair.

This proposal has the potential to drastically change the character of Anchorage neighborhoods, or it has the potential to have little impact at all. As we have seen over the last several years, demand for single-family detached homes is sustained and ballooning the Mat-Su Valley where there is ample land and little regulation. Similarly, developers have gained the ears of policy-makers in Anchorage in eroding tenants of Title 21 that underwent robust public input. These were targeted responses to boon development patterns and the detritus their developers left behind. The proposal is very exciting, and could encourage a civically richer, more heterogeneous development through much of town. Nevertheless, it has its downfalls.

Unmentioned in the proposal is the correlation of the TSDO with some of the older neighborhoods in Anchorage. Many of these could now be considered historic due to their age or shared building styles and scales (although notably, Turnagain is absent from the TSDO potentially leading to some arguments that some neighborhoods were unfairly targeted). To be sure, redeveloping portions of neighborhoods with denser, taller, or more public-facing buildings—or in a word, newer—will impact this historic integrity. Many will make the argument that this will deny the efforts underway to highlight Anchorage history, and preserve buildings and neighborhoods through registering them on the National Register or Local Landmark Register. These new buildings will change the character of these established neighborhoods and may cause some to feel threatened. Still, this could be a way of preserving more houses, and creating more encompassing historic districts. If a developer replaces a single house with a four-unit condo building, that provides four new housing units to the neighborhood. This would be instead of redeveloping four lots into new single-family detached homes that likely would not have the same historic character as the neighborhood. In displacing one potentially historic building, the development has relieved pressures on three others nearby. As those older homes become rarities or incorporate into an historic district, they achieve greater value. In this way development of denser

housing could increase the value of a home and preserve the character of the neighborhood, instead of the reverse.

However, the “character” these neighborhoods have is not without issues. Predominantly, many of these subdivisions had exclusionary zoning or covenants preventing ethnicities either explicitly or implicitly. This included provisions limiting the number of dwellings, types of animals kept, and businesses. Roger’s Park is especially problematic as it was originally far more heterogeneous than it is today. During the 1950s and ‘60s in conjunction with Urban Renewal efforts, the “substandard” houses were demolished, the neighborhood was replatted, and new houses built. Those that used to live there were forced out, and not welcomed back in. This exclusion continues today through land prices, preventing access to neighborhoods to most of the population. This proposal can reverse this trend, recognize the mixed-use successes of Spenard, Mountain View, and Airport Heights, and provide new housing and commercial ventures for parts of town. Any person making the argument that this proposal will ruin their neighborhood character and threatens their property values is as culpable in the systemic exclusion of minorities and the poor as those who wrote the original covenants.

Historic preservation is not the antithesis to development. Instead, it exists to provide a tool to recognize a history and establish a character. Applying this too broadly erodes the significance of any one resource, and makes the districts less special. Preventing development does not allow that development to gain significance in its own right! While there will be impacts, applying the TSDO will not detract from the characters of its neighborhoods. However, removing the Residential Design Standards and Height Transitions for Neighborhood Compatibility could. These standards were adopted to protect existing neighborhoods and residents from neighboring developments blocking their sunlight or having untasteful or incompatible aesthetics. Developers balk at these requirements because they do not like thinking, or being creative, which the standards require them to be. Developers are no better than speculators, intent on creating as much money from as little effort as possible with little care or regard to those that live next to their building, use their building, or have to maintain their building in 30 years. For these reasons the voices of developers, though they may seem the most prominent, should not be elevated above those of the residents—especially concerning would be a scenario where they were lauded as experts or heroes. For in the end, those financing these new multifamily, mixed-use, and commercial buildings will be wanting to make money from their endeavors.

Frankly, affordable housing does not accomplish this goal. It is a fallacy to believe that enabling denser housing or commercial development will create more affordable housing. This is because there is no requirement that the housing be affordable, or provided to those it might be displacing. There is no requirement that the commercial development be owned or operated by residents of the neighborhood, meaning that money will get saved and spent elsewhere. Absentee landlords will take advantage of low land prices in some areas to reap large profits without paying back through taxes, which will harm us all. This will impact Mountain View and Fairview the most, as those residents are not well-positioned to advocate for themselves. Roger’s Park at worst would get a bakery, Mountain View at best would get a pawn shop.

Introduced commercial boutiques, yoga studios, bourgeoisie third-spaces: these types of New Urbanism or “in-fill” developments are like a neoliberal cancer, perpetuating the hegemony that grips and cripples our cities. They are not the stimulus to vibrant neighborhoods, but the isolating and segregating infrastructure that has replaced the thoroughfare to create no-man’s-land in the urban core. Relying on

developers out of the goodness of their hearts to create housing for the poor, businesses for local owners, and spaces for neighborhood residents is a fool's game. Relying on residents to redevelop their own properties without the benefits given or allowed to developers, and with no assistance from the government, is similarly foolish. Policy-makers will lament the pleas of these residents when a bar opens up next to them, or that they can't fund the required code upgrades for a crafts business in their home, but give no real comfort or protection.

There are ways a municipality can encourage affordable housing and density that is not at the expense of residents, density that does not put money in the pockets of speculators. Aside from developing its own property to accommodate housing or local businesses, a municipality can implement several tools towards creating land for developers to build, but without being held captive by market forces. The Municipality could declare a housing emergency and use the funds to extend utilities and services to vacant land. These costs are currently major hindrances to developments and in comparison, make the "costs" of private open space laughable. Additionally—or instead—the Municipality could use Imminent Domain to buy up vacant or derelict buildings, demolish those, then sell the parcels to developers with certain restrictions like rent control. Anchorage has a major problem with low-quality housing. Left to their own devices the property owners can redevelop with a new building and evict the residents. Instead of that, the Municipality could seize the properties and offer lease protections to the residents, allowing them to return to a redeveloped parcel. Relatedly, the Municipality could sell vacant parcels, condemned or abandoned buildings, or unsafe buildings to developers for \$1, like other cities in the U.S. While this sounds like a bad deal, these other cities realize the economic benefits from a better development of that land, for any income of renter or type of business, far outweighs the loss of the sale. Any of these will have greater effects than the TSDO proposition, and with the guaranteed benefit to the community.

What does the TSDO aim to do, or hope to accomplish? I believe it is to encourage greater development (read density) of the transit corridors. This will hopefully result in more housing units and businesses with greater access to more residents and generally be a benefit to everyone in creating a lively cityscape. I think these are laudable, and I think this is the correct tool to do it with. If we can approve the TSDO, we can approve other overlay districts as well, like a Historic Neighborhood Character Overlay, Natural Resource Protection Overlay, or Affordable Rent Control Overlay. In fact, I do hope the TSDO passes in some form.

However, I believe there are some edits that would benefit the amendment and retain some protections for residents of the impacted neighborhoods. See the attached PDF, and further commentary below.

- Page 1: Who are the intended benefactors of this amendment? Current residents, future residents, or tourists, wealthy and impoverished alike? Or is it just to make money for developers?
- Page 2: The code is highly flexible, with alternative compliance, minor modifications, and variances. The criticism some levy that the code is "inflexible" are unwilling to change their methods or products they deliver, and apparently unable to think creatively.
- Page 3: Looking at the available map on-line, it draws arbitrary boundaries through neighborhoods, especially older neighborhoods with robust block patterns. Consider adding west Government Hill, all of Turnagain north of Northern Lights, and all of Airport Heights (Anchor Park) to the map. Full disclosure, I live in the Anchor Park subdivision. It is particularly

useful to overlay all of Roger's Park, as this is a fantastic centrally-located area and could accommodate much denser housing and mixed uses.

- Page 3: Flexibility is an unfortunate word. Developers are self-interested greedy weasels looking to weasel out of any requirement that doesn't bring them more money. Bike parking? Too expensive. Open space? Too restricting. Snow storage? Both expensive and restricting. Windows facing the street? Who needs windows anyway! Policy should not be in the business of being flexible, and it differs from every other code that requires the most restrictive standard should apply. Consider removing "flexible" and "flexibility" from the amendment and replace with a better phrase like "least restrictive".
- Page 4: If it is the interest of the Assembly, with the consent of the residents, to remove the Residential Design Standards, then just do it. These underwent robust public involvement, comment, revision, and adoption and were in response to unsightly or unsafe building developments. These had vocal opponents at the time, because they saw the design standards as adding unneeded costs to their developments, cutting into their profits. They are inflexible? The section is full of multiple menus with many ways of complying that any developer could pick from. This results in thousands of possible combinations for how a building can appear, and what amenities the residents will have. Perhaps it is that the pre-stamped spec homes in the developer's libraries do not meet these menu options. Developers always have said this lack of "inflexibility" has hampered development. And yet, housing got built, and developers found a way to make money. In actuality, it is that each development must be bespoke and respond to the site conditions, and that requires new designs every time. New designs require designers, time, and creativity which yes, do have associated costs, but also end up with far nicer buildings than those from before the Standards went into effect. These standards ensure buildings meet Northern Design standards for snow and ice, and respect the character of adjacent properties and established neighborhoods. It is an unfortunate correlation of the TSDO with these established and often historic neighborhoods for which these Standards were intended to protect. I think we can expect developers to continue to think creatively in how to meet the Design Standards. I understand thinking creatively is hard—I have to do it every day. Still, is it not nice that new development respects human rights to light, access to recreational spaces, and the loveliness of the public way? In any case, if the aim is to exempt everywhere from the Design Standards then just get rid of them.
- Page 5: The limits on non-residential space seem arbitrary and could be more effective. It does not appear to incentivize residential development, or mixed use development. Mixed-use developments are expensive to build and difficult to finance. The commercial spaces are the primary money-generators for these once occupied. Limiting the non-residential space to less than half the building will add a further limitation, making these even more difficult to develop. If the intent is to allow only one-story commercial in the notion of a street-facing shop or business below residences, then simplify the standard to that: non-residential uses may occupy no greater than 1 story. Let them be as large a footprint as they want: the size of the lot and lot coverage will be the limiting factors.
- Page 5: Businesses catering to people who work should be open before 8:00 AM and after 10:00 PM. Imagine a daycare: how is it going to be effective for working families if it doesn't open until 8? I think we can all agree a neighborhood daycare is one ideal land use for a TSDO, but limiting its operating hours to the standard work day will make it impossible. Alternatively, a coffee shop

would have no hope of being solvent if it couldn't open until 8 on a Monday, or noon on a Sunday. Consider eliminating the operation restriction, and relying on use-specific standards for that, or allow an earlier opening time.

- Page 5: Restricting car-centered uses is not realistic in a car-centric city. There is the demand for these services, why not put them where the people are? They are already there, so making them legally nonconforming is odd. Taking a drive around the older neighborhoods in Anchorage will show gas stations (some former, some still in operation) and repair shops folded into the neighborhood fabric. If the concern is very large, noisy, smelly operations, the lot size will limit that!
- Pages 6–18: In the effort to be flexible and increase heterogeneity and walkability of our neighborhoods, it seems to me that the TSDO should have the fewest use restrictions as possible. Even if some uses require site plan reviews or conditional uses, there should be a general presumption of permission and truly laissez-faire land use. Additionally, the permitted uses should include recreational and cultural institutions where possible to improve the lives of the residents, and extend the occupancy of the spaces outside of business hours. The general problem with New Urbanist spaces is that they require constant programming and policing because they are only alive during certain times of the day. Having the least restrictions on the uses and the greatest flexibility in community activities promotes continuous use and comfort for all users. Take Piazza Navona for example. It is lively and filled with people from 6 in the morning to 2 the next morning. The plaza is not a successful community space because it is surrounded by restaurants; the restaurants are successful because they border Piazza Navona! Even in those in-between hours, the plaza has people in it, moving through, whispering sweet nothings, walking pets or insomniac children, cleaning, taking down awnings, and putting up produce stands. This is the type of space that happens, not the type that is designed. It happens through people making it happen, without gatekeeping or controls, and without many limits to what happens there.
- Page 8: It is hard for me to support something that proposes to direct development along the transit corridors with housing and businesses but denies those spaces to the unhoused. People experiencing homelessness or who are otherwise transient are the most reliant on transit supported development. For this reason there can be no excuse for excluding a Homeless shelter from the zone, at least through a conditional use. It paints a sordid picture of our humanity if we say these corridors are not for all our residents, regardless of their housing status.
- Page 8: For what reason does the Neighborhood recreation center require a Site Plan Review whereas the Adult Care Home is permitted by-right? Adult Care Homes are highly intense land uses often with specialty security and support infrastructure. Recreation centers on the other hand have operational hours and sport facilities for active recreation and community meeting. These are spaces that cultivate community and allow people to recreate towards increasing their health and production. These are spaces for gathering with others from across town, leading to a logical siting in a TSDO area. This should occur by-right.
- Page 8: With the desire to improve the city and the lives residents thereof, why are botanical gardens not permitted in the TSDO area? These are community assets that bring beauty to neighborhoods, provide habitat for animals and pollinators, and common open space for those residents provided none. As this proposal will increase that latter population, surely it is in the

interest of community health to allow the greatest number of open, natural, communal spaces within the TSDO. Or is it simply a question of only having profit-generating uses? That would be a poor legacy indeed.

- Page 12: It is troubling that the Bar use type requires only an Administrative Site Plan Review. In a state and city with problems related to alcohol and alcohol abuse, it seems that we would want greater public input for bars going into neighborhoods, many of which have few if any commercial establishments. Consider changing this to a Major Site Plan Review, to allow a robust public notice and comment period.
- Page 13: The allowed uses for Small equipment rental, auction house, and building materials store seem arbitrary. Why would an auction house be permitted under a conditional use but small equipment would not be? The TSDO areas are full of residential properties, often detached single-family. It seems to me there would be great benefits to having small hardware stores within neighborhoods, like the Ace Hardware stores on Jewel Lake and Muldoon.
- Page 13: Fueling stations should be permitted in TSDO, if only under an Administrative Site Plan Review. Every older neighborhood in Anchorage has, or once had, a fueling station and repair garage. These typologies are not out of scale, unusual, or malevolent in a residential zone. In fact, as most people will have cars anyway, it makes a great deal of sense having fueling stations as a permitted use.
- Page 22: The changes to the dimensional standards appear haphazard and arbitrary. Using this language in this way in the table makes the proposal look unresearched and more than a little silly. Earlier versions of the proposal included 0' setbacks, and a compromise of 5' has neither the audacity of the original proposal nor the intended visual and fire safety of the current standards. Reducing the front setback to 5' will create odd shadow pockets between buildings and make sidewalks nearly impassable in the winter. Most developments will have an awkward strip of no-mans-land that will not get maintenance, planting, or paving, and will look like a mistake. I understand the dream the proposer may have of street fronts lining city streets with lots of pedestrians pushing strollers from shop to shop, however this is not the way to get there. Instead, consider changing to 15' as a more happy medium between the dream of 0', and the status quo. Alternatively, commit to the proposal and accept the pushback. Houses like mine with garages converted to bedrooms could once again have a garage, built between the sidewalk and house! Where the table has percentages and lot dimensions, consider using the word "unrestricted" instead of 0' and 100%. These are both impossible to accomplish and appear absurd.
- Page 22: As for building height, consider picking a single value instead of referring to another code. If you are a developer or land owner trying to plan a project, having to look at another code can be cumbersome and annoying. Because TSDO is already focused on collector and arterial roads, pick one of those values from that plan for those classifications. Who among us want to live next to a freeway or expressway in a 6-story building? These roads don't have frontage or street access anyway, and are primarily under State ownership.
- Page 24: I implore you to preserve the height transitions as they are. Yes, this does require developers to think a little (which I know can be hard sometimes) but it really does improve quality of life. We live in a northern city with very low sun angles through most of the year. This means we can't just look at LA or Portland and say that type of development will work here. Tall buildings shade—and shade is dark, cold, unpleasant, and sometimes unhealthy. Please keep

that written standard intact. It will be a small carrot to help entice greater support for the proposal.

- Page 25: I similarly advocate that you maintain the requirement for private open space. This makes enormous quality of life improvements for residents, and ensures people have a place for their pets and children to safely play, their plants to grow, and for enjoying an outdoor aperto at sunset. How desperate is our city for housing, that the basic human right and purpose for recreation and relaxation is denied in a place of residence? If truly this is an insurmountable hurdle to development, the logjam that we must clear to welcome in a new age of housing, then at least consider a limited release. If a property is within ¼-mile of a park, then I believe we could remove the requirement. Residents could walk to the park, use the playground, exercise their dogs, and be stone-cold sober. If only we could decriminalize public drinking, then we would really be onto something.

Thank you for putting the effort into developing this proposal. Changing code is hard and involves lots of voices and people to be successful. That's the beauty of democracy even if it is frustrating sometimes. It can seem daunting to have to follow codes that seem arbitrary. I am hear to tell you they are not arbitrary: they came out of hours of study, outreach, planning, meetings, focus groups, community council meetings, and late nights. I fear it is when we forget that and the hard work of all those who came before us that we lose sight of ourselves.

-Connor Scher, NCARB

Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 10:36 PM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: TSDO Comments

RECEIVED

OCT 05 2025

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Nelson <melissatoomey@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 10:03 PM
To: Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Subject: TSDO Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Concerns Regarding New Residential Zoning Proposal To Whom It May Concern, I am writing to express my strong disagreement with the proposed new residential zoning plan. After reviewing the details, I believe it will negatively impact the community by decreasing property values, increasing snow clearing issues, congestion with parking and overall degradation of the Rogers Park neighborhood.

I respectfully urge reconsideration of this proposal and encourage the decision-makers to take into account the concerns of residents who are directly affected.

Thank you for your time and understanding. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Melissa Nelson
Rogers Park resident
907 830-7420

Sent from my iPhone

Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 10:36 PM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: TSDO Comments

RECEIVED

OCT 05 2025

FYI

From: Gail Sieberts <siebakgs1@outlook.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 4:50 PM
To: Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Subject: TSDO Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

What is MOA responsibility when they include a long-established single-family subdivision covered by covenants in their multifamily construction plan but refuse to acknowledge the rock-solid legal covenants? Are they going to reimburse the residence for their expenses when they have to resort to legal action to enforce the covenants or do they think they won't notice a 36 plex being constructed in the middle of their subdivision.

Kimmel, Corliss A.

RECEIVED

OCT 05 2025

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 3:11 PM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: TSDO boundaries
Attachments: Map, ANC Tax incentive & proposed TSDO marked.png

More comments!

From: Paul <77skywagon@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 4, 2025 9:24 PM
To: Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Subject: TSDO boundaries

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Good morning again,

I'm attaching a map for your reference, and here's the original email...

My wife and I have owned and managed apartments for over 20 years. Our buildings are aging and we want to modernize but there just isn't any newer inventory in Anchorage. We've researched building new apartments, but the return on investment just wasn't there. However, the new multi-family housing property tax incentive helps the return on investment significantly.

Even with the tax incentive, the margins are still extremely thin. The only way to make a new building pencil out is to be efficient with the use of the land. That means being able to build on at least 80% of the lot, have fewer setbacks, and be able to go higher. Without these improvements in efficiency, a new building still does not make financial sense. Banks require a profit margin that yields a 1.25% debt service ratio, and even with the tax incentives the data shows us coming up short. We need to be able to maximize the use of the land or we can't get a loan and the apartments won't be built.

That is why I'm writing you today. I urge you to do everything in your power to include our land in the new TSDO area. The difference between being able to use only 40% of the property versus 80%, and the reduced setbacks, and the taller building allowances, all enable us to be more efficient in how we use the land. This **literally** makes the difference between a project that makes sense and one that financially doesn't pencil out. Without the TSDO plan it still does not make sense to build a new building.

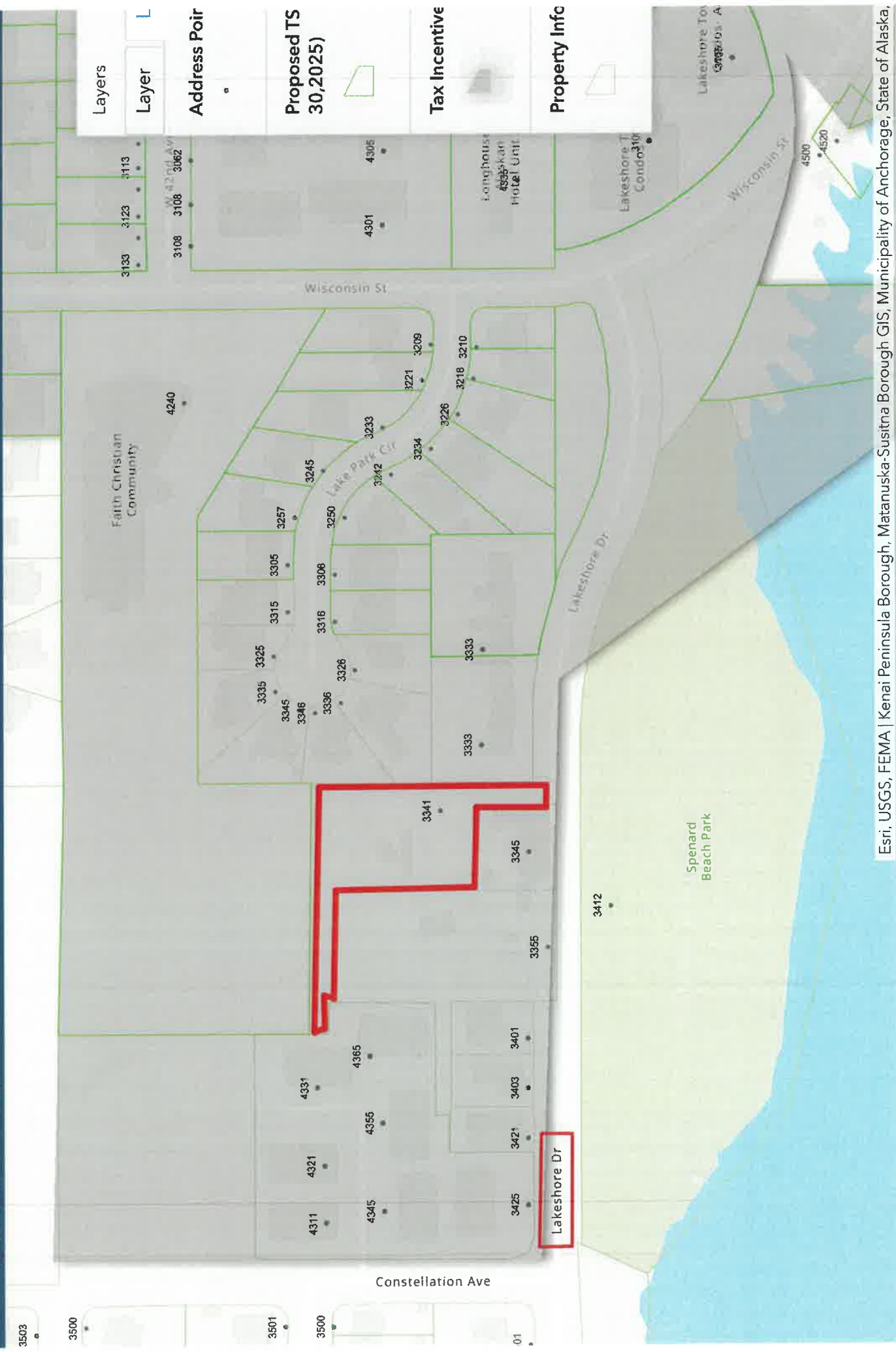
Our property, located at 3341 Lakeshore Drive, was included in the last version of the TSDO plan, but the new boundary runs along the northern edge of our property, excluding our property from the plan. This is a dealbreaker. Our plan is to build a brand new, 24 unit, affordable housing apartment building. This will help ease the housing shortage in Anchorage, but without the TSDO plan, our building is on hold.

I urge you to move the TSDO boundary south just slightly to include 3341 Lakeshore Drive in the TSTO area, and to pass the plan immediately.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Paul Beiter
Freedom Apartments LLC Owner
509-899-3795

Tax Incentive Bonus Area (AO 2025-35) / Proposed Transit-Supportive Overlay (PZC Case 2025-30)





RECEIVED

Oct. 3, 2025

OCT 03 2025

Comments re: TSDO

Graham, Melisa and Daniel,

We appreciate the focus within the TSDO on increasing housing opportunities. We have questions about the one-size-fits-all approach.

As requested see below for a technical review of the current proposal. This review is based on Anchorage code and CIHA's own development experience. We also looked at zoning codes from other cities that have recently upzoned urbanized areas outside of downtown.

First, the other cities we reviewed (Cambridge, MA; Minneapolis, MN; Portland, OR; and Tacoma, WA):

- Increase density while considering the context of adjacent lots.
- Designate/identify specific building types and bulks for different contexts, often through form-based regulations. This includes clear visuals and parameters for "missing middle" infill housing types in low-density areas.
- Generally have front setbacks varying from 5-15 feet. This serves in part to create welcoming, walkable environments as compared to a building wall right on a sidewalk.
- Require side setbacks, with reduced allowances for commercial districts. These cities commonly require a 5-foot side setback unless it is a common lot line development. If the building is above a certain height (typically 3 stories) the setback increases. **In residential areas, this supports high density housing that is also livable and allows for windows and less expensive fire separation requirements.**
- Often have blocks mostly uninterrupted by front driveways (such as alley blocks), so it's more comfortable to have buildings closer to the sidewalk. But these cities do not want to place buildings directly on the pedestrian realm.

Speaking as a housing developer: At a certain point, too much open-endedness in zoning code can be counterproductive to goals of livability and walkability.

For example, we do think providing more flexibility internal to a development is a great thing. That said, nominal side setbacks are supportive of high-density development when the development abuts a neighboring lot. Reducing but keeping front setbacks to some degree (5-10 feet) actually enhance the pedestrian realm, especially when the scale of buildings increases. And stating a minimum width of a lot that we know will be required of AWWU gets a development moving in a productive direction **before spending design and modeling efforts on a site plan that can't be approved.**

On density. Four units on a 7,000-10,000 SF lot in R1 (nearly two-thirds of R1 lots in the new TSDO area are less than 10,000 SF) achieves a density of 18-25 dwelling units per acre. The FTA study cited for





the 36 units/acre recommendation in the current TSDO draft also says “there is no one-size-fits-all density formula” – and describes residential projects within successful transit corridors adjacent to low-density/small-lot areas as having a median density of 17.4 units/acre.

With that in mind we have the following recommendations. We have written these comments with the idea that you can make distinguishing differences across zoning districts. In some cases we suggest going beyond what is currently proposed in the TSDO, particularly in R3.

- **No minimum lot size but state the minimum lot width that AWWU will allow (30 feet).** If that changes at some point, just change it. Alternative style developments such as unit lot subdivisions may yield different narrow unit configurations.
- **Lot coverage increases from current across all zoning districts but is phased from base zoning.** 50% in R1, 60% in R2, otherwise 80%, unrestricted in B3 per current code.
- **Preserve side setbacks.** 5 feet, 0 if common development (common fire wall). Consider increases if heights go over 40 feet.
- **Front setbacks.** R1/R2: 15 feet or 10 if on alley. R3/R4: 10 feet or 5 feet on alley. B-3: 5 feet.
- **Rear setbacks.** Unchanged in R1 and R2 (10 feet). R3/R4: 5 feet. B3: 5 feet or 0.
- **Height.** 35 feet and three stories in R1 and R2. Increase to 45 feet and four stories in R3 and R4. The clarification in both height and stories is helpful for designers.

Thanks.

Tyler and Devin

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

Devin Kelly
Senior Planner
Cook Inlet Housing Authority



Public Comments: 2025-0030

Commenter	Email	Phone Number	Submitted
Patrice Parker 1550 H St Anchorage, AK 99501	patrice.parker@gmail.com	907/748-3098	10/3/2025 1:57:19 PM

I oppose the TSDO, and I think the Assembly needs to start over and actually involve their constituents - the ones who live in the neighborhoods they so urgently want to change. Find out which neighborhoods want change, and start there. The Overlay covers a huge swath of Anchorage, a scattershot approach that would make it next to impossible to provide quick and easy bus service. The Assembly should choose 2-3 neighborhoods that want and need density, where good bus service. would be used and start there. It's offensive for the Assembly to toss off any objections as NIMBYism - it shuts down real conversations with the very people they are supposed to represent. TSDO is a half-baked idea and it would be a huge mistake for the Planning and Zoning Commission to give it traction before important steps are taken.

Public Comments: 2025-0030

Commenter	Email	Phone Number	Submitted
<p>Cathy L. Gleason 4211 Bridle Cir. Anchorage, AK</p>	<p>cathy.gleasantcc@yahoo.com</p>	<p>907-248-0442</p>	<p>10/3/2025 12:51:39 PM</p>
<p>Transit Supported Development Overlay (Version #5) Planning and Zoning Commission Cases 2025-0030 and 2025-0034 Turnagain Community Council (TCC) Approved Comments 10-02-2025 (14-Yes; 0-No) Authored by Jon Isaacs, Turnagain Community Council Board Member and Co-Chair of the TCC Land Use Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCC supports the concept of implementing the Transit Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO) ordinance, as outlined in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, the West Anchorage Comprehensive Plan, and the 2040 Land Use Plan; • TCC supports the need to develop more housing for Anchorage and wants to see successful outcomes; • TCC notes that these plans call for implementation of transit supported development corridors to be developed in consultation with affected neighborhoods; this still needs to be done; • Adequate consultation requires meaningfully engaging and bringing together all affected stakeholders within the community, including housing advocates, community councils, home builders and developers, real estate professionals, appraisers, and business owners within TSDO to help develop solutions compatible with both new development and existing development. To date, this has not happened, although there is a TCC Board member proposal submitted to the mayor’s office to do so. <p>Version 5 of the TSDO ordinance was released on September 22nd; TCC is in the process of evaluating the revision and the proposed changes. Because this version has just been released, and as of September 29, new information continues to be released, we support continuing the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) public hearing for one more meeting [beyond next week’s October 6, 2025, PZC continued hearing] to allow affected stakeholders to provide input.</p> <p>TCC appreciates changes in the current TSDO ordinance version that appear to be made in response to public comments. These include reduction in areas included in the overlay, reduction of height limits to 40 feet, reduction in lot coverage from 100% to 80%, and reference to design standards being retained.</p> <p>However, there remain significant questions and deficiencies regarding these changes, and other changes not made that need to be addressed. Therefore, the resolution TCC passed September 2nd, opposing the ordinance in its current form and requesting meaningful stakeholder engagement remains unchanged.</p> <p>The public engagement for developing this ordinance and notifying affected residents/ property owners remains significantly inadequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the residential parcels within the TSDO have received no public notice of this action, other than seeing one article in the Anchorage Daily News (with no map), notified by their community council or by word of mouth, or happen to know about the TSDO project website; - As written, the overlay essentially rezones the entire area to R-4 or higher residential use with no property owner notification; - The ordinance remains a moving target (Version 1 in July — Version 5 in September), making it difficult to for residents to keep up and understand the changes; - The sponsors and the administration have been meeting with community councils — including attendance at TCC’s September 22nd Land Use Committee meeting, which we very much appreciated. However, there has been no opportunity to sit down with affected housing advocates, property owners, neighborhoods, and community councils as a group to discuss alternative approaches related to the overlay map, proposed use changes, dimensional standards, and adverse effects, such as increased on-street parking and harm to neighborhood scale. There is currently a proposal for inclusive stakeholder engagement that has been submitted to the mayor’s office. 			

Map Changes. While changes to the map have been explained as being closer to the 2040 Anchorage Land Use Plan intent, this does not seem to be completely the case.

- All areas south of International Airport Road have now been deleted, even though much of it is clearly in the 2040 Land Use Plan Overlay Maps;
- Half of the Rogers Park neighborhood has now been eliminated, which does reflect the 2040 Plan, but raises questions of logic regarding the why the other half should be kept in;
- This could easily result in requests to remove other neighborhoods, establish conservation easements, or rely on covenants to restrict development, particularly where it makes no sense to put them in.

The map should be revisited with the participation of stakeholders, look at how increased density can be accomplished without impacts to neighborhood scale and congested streets, and how implementation might be phased in certain areas to assess effectiveness and adverse impacts.

Revisions to Proposed Uses. Even with the proposed changes in use and separating community/commercial uses in a separate ordinance, many of the higher density residential uses are still inappropriate throughout single/two family neighborhoods, with no requirements for onsite parking, with 80% lot coverage, without any limits on number of units, and vague reference to multi-family design standards.

- One alternative to consider is to allow conversion of existing single-family homes into tri-plexes or four-plexes as a use-by-right, helping retirees supplement incomes and first-time home buyers offset the cost of financing;
- However, adequate onsite parking should be required and lot coverage should remain at the existing 40% for single family/two family neighborhoods to reduce adverse effects on existing neighborhoods.

Anything beyond a 4-plex in single/two family neighborhoods should require a major site plan review or a conditional use.

Changes in Dimensional Requirements.

- While reduction to a 40-foot height limit is a welcome change, coupled with 80% lot coverage, structures can still be grossly out of scale with existing neighborhoods and impact sunlight access so important to a winter city for existing adjacent homes;
- People bought homes in single family/two family neighborhoods, in part because there was zoning district predictability regarding height limits, lot coverage, and setbacks. To suggest that a sunlight easement can be purchased from your neighbor is not practical on a larger scale — and is dismissive of the problem;
- Furthermore, even with 80% lot coverage, onsite snow storage is minimized, likely resulting in snow being pushed into the streets (currently illegal) and complicating snow removal by the municipality;
- It is difficult to envision what no minimum lot size even means — where would the legality and viability of this be assessed — during the site review, major site review, or conditional use? It would still be likely that some tiny-home owners will have cars, again pushing parking into the streets.

No On-Site Parking Requirements. The Assembly eliminated on-site parking requirements in part to avoid requiring an excess of unused onsite parking. However, that action caused adverse effects that initiated snow removal and right of way management studies by the municipality.

- To risk putting more cars on the street while saying “don’t worry, good developers will provide onsite parking, or this is a right-of-way management issue” is unconscionable;
- At the TSDO presentation at Airport Heights Community Council, participants recited parking, driveway blockage, pedestrian safety, and speeding traffic problems associated with the Fire Island Bakery, that has no onsite parking requirements. In the Turnagain area, inadequate onsite parking for the Rustic Goat created such traffic and safety problems (vehicles spilled onto narrow neighborhood streets to the south 2-3 blocks deep) that an additional off-road parking area was built across the street in what was Municipal parkland;
- Why create further neighborhood problems with the promise that they will be

addressed at some point in the future?

Phased/Targeted Implementation. Comments have been made at several community council meetings that there are large parcels of apparently vacant land that should be pursued for housing development before enacting the area wide changes proposed under the TSDO ordinance. Some of these parcels may be appropriately zoned for multi-story/multi-family housing development, and may be relatively close to transit corridors. In addition, some community councils are more receptive to supporting TSDO than others.

- Before this ordinance is approved in its current form, phased and targeted implementation of TSDO should be adequately assessed as part of a more inclusive stakeholder workshop process;
- This would allow seeing if the provisions of TSDO have the desired effect, while avoiding adverse consequences that will have to be addressed retroactively.

In conclusion,

- A representative group of affected stakeholders should be convened to arrive at solutions for more effective and less impactful implementation of TSDO. This approach is similar to what was done for the revising the Site Access ordinance;
- More information is needed to justify statements made by sponsors, such as the existing requirements that would prevent building out to 80% lot coverage, explain what design standards still apply to multifamily housing, and how no minimum lot size would work;
- An explanation should be provided for why areas south of International Airport Road were taken out of TSDO, while others, such as the Huntington Park neighborhood in the Turnagain area, remain in.

Home ownership is likely the biggest investment that people make in their lives, and they factor in regulatory predictability and the characteristics of their neighborhoods. Most of the home owners within the TSDO are not aware of this ordinance and the potential effects it may have on their property. A thoughtful approach, including application of design standards and incorporating an appropriate review process can accommodate both increased housing density/mixed use while maintaining neighborhood scale and avoid adverse neighborhood impacts. Inclusive community engagement and dialogue bring people together to understand perspectives, discuss alternative solutions, and build community consensus. Phased implementation targets the areas where TSDO will be more effective, without increasing avoidable adverse effects. This should happen before approving PZC 2025-0030 and PZC 2025-0034. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Public Comments: 2025-0030

Commenter	Email	Phone Number	Submitted
S. Rabinowitch & E. Barry			10/2/2025 3:58:35 PM
Anchorage, AK			<p>We have followed the evolution of the Transit-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO), case # 2025-0030 since we heard about it from a neighbor in August. There are now five versions of the ordinance, totaling over 130 pages of ordinance to review and figure out what is current. We attended the September Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) meeting, the September Turnagain Community Council (TCC) meeting, as well as a land-use committee meeting of TCC to learn about the proposal. No one from the municipality has spoken at a regular monthly meeting of TCC, despite the implication on the TSDO website that this has occurred.</p> <p>We support efforts to build more housing in Anchorage. The majority of the effort should be focused on affordable housing, not just more housing anywhere. We do not believe that just eliminating a multitude of requirements will result in more housing being built. We have talked with people with experience in related fields of expertise including a builder, a real estate agent and others in the design and build community; none believe this is a pathway to productively creating more housing in Anchorage. Our experience is that when building codes were far more lax, many buildings were poorly constructed and called T-111 boxes. We live with much of that built environment now even though it was decades ago. TSDO could result in much of the same as we currently understand version 5. Many people have said, "oh they won't do that." That comment is a failure to grasp Anchorage's development history.</p> <p>Much of our housing shortage has to do with the pandemic, the costs of labor, and building materials, shipping costs, and inflation, things the city has little control over. Additionally, as you are hearing from more and more people, the public roll-out of this effort is severely lacking. First rolled out in the summer when TCC and other community councils are on summer recess was poor timing and scheduling it for the PZC on July 14, with no notice to affected property owners, is inadequate public process even if it is now technically legal. There has been no broad public announcement by the Municipality to make these TSDO zoning changes known to the 30,000 plus property owners affected by the earlier versions of the ordinance. This is in part why some people are angry and speaking out against it. This leads not to community building, but rather to community division, and the recent decision to separate out proposed commercial uses in TSDO to a separate ordinance further erodes public trust in this process and proposal.</p> <p>You have received numerous comments addressing a number of likely consequences of various versions of the ordinance: snowplowing/storage/hauling, trash management/pickup, lack of on-site parking requirements which will result in fully parked up streets, shading of homes thereby eliminating existing daylight due to newly allowed building heights, and more. For example, our street, if fully parked up today can hold about 50 cars; if built out to version 5 ordinance standards we would expect to see 117 cars parked on the street, based on the stated goal of 36 residential units per acre (section 21.04.070 (D) (1)) and the multiplier of 1 car per housing unit. Being told that the municipality will deal with such parking issues later is not a satisfactory answer. Will our streets be safer? We have no sidewalks so we question how this will make our neighborhood more walkable and where the extra 60+ cars will go each night. If much of our neighborhood is built out to this standard, several hundred cars per night will fill adjacent neighboring streets. We do not need to bring such problems upon ourselves. If TSDO goes forward, it should be further scaled back geographically, focused on areas within 1/4 mile of high frequency transit routes with vacant and underused lands. See what works and expand the geography based upon success and need, not unrealistic goals. Next, the municipality should put significant energy into working with groups like the Cook Inlet Housing Authority and others who have actually built good examples of needed housing and development.</p> <p>Lastly, the TSDO standard is &#188; mile from a high-frequency bus route according to many municipal documents: The 2020 Comprehensive plan, Ch 4, p. 55 says "Therefore, land use policies that</p>

establish higher residential densities within one-fourth mile of the major street at the center of the transit corridor are encouraged." (Emphasis added.)

The 2040 Land Use plan (p.46 Anchorage Planning Atlas, Section 4 "Role of this Map in the 2040 LUP") says that the TSDO "are areas within 1/4 mile from high frequency transit routes...." (Emphasis added.)

The recent fact sheet handed out by the municipality and posted on the TSDO webpage titled "TSDO for Anchorage" says "This map shows where the TSDO would apply: Areas within 1/4 mile of high-frequency and high-ridership bus routes." (Emphasis added.)

In west Anchorage, within TCC boundaries the Huntington Park neighborhood and an area south of Benson still included in the TSDO map do not meet this standard. The nearest corner on Northern Lights Blvd to Minnesota Blvd./Benson Blvd is further than 1/4 mile and the bus stops even more hundreds of feet away from Huntington Park; thus this area should be eliminated from the TSDO.

Thank you for consideration of our comments,
Sandy Rabinowitch & Elizabeth Barry

C Mendenhall

10/2/2025 10:51:50 PM

I support the concept of a Transit Supportive Development Overlay. The Spenard Corridor Plan and the Mt View Neighborhood Plans, as well as the East and West District Plans (all elements of our Comp Plan) outline areas for mixed-use residential consistent with the intentions of the 2040 LUP and 2020 Comp Plan.

BUT THE PROPOSALS 2025-0030,-0035 and XXX ARE GOOFY.

1. PUBLIC NOTICE: The Muni needed to follow full public notice requirements. 21.03.160L for posting and community council notice applies only to zoning changes (not Comp Plan amendments) that are consistent with the Comp Plan, w/ no risk to health safety and w/ no conflicts to existing code, regs, ordinances. 0030 requires a comp plan amendment; we have DOT-PF expressing concerns about safety (and the need to replat w/ zoning changes); there is 21.03.160J.3 regarding Overlays yet there is the XXX; take a look at 21.03.130 Neighborhoods & District Plans, and 21.03.160G Flexibility, not to mention the narratives, priorities, action items of the Comp Plan and elements. Public Notice is core to public trust.

2. DENSITY. The proposed blanket change from 8 dwelling units/acre to 25 units/acre cite FTA0057, St Paul and CT reports as support. Each of these reports provide density requirements within a context; they range from 5 to 100+ units/acre; and provide best practices that include elements here omitted, such as design standards, phased implementation, and public-private partnerships, but which are in our Comp Plan. The reports are worth reviewing. It would be great to see our District and Neighborhood plans implemented, not this blanket one-size-fits-all approach.

3. TSD MAP. This is very squirrely.

First, the 2020 Comp Plan narratives delegate further TSD definition to district and neighborhood plans. These have maps with density and multi-use targets. It seems from comments made in public meetings that rather than do the detailed work required for implementing the plans, the Administration drew these maps just as one blanket area (YouTube 3/18/25 Work Session AO 2025-0035 (time: 22:50 - 23:30). Second: even taking away the flawed process above, the first TSDO (Tax Incentive Map) included areas outside of the TSD corridors. The new map does not include all along the TSD corridors. (And what is the origin of the "2040 LUP" TSDO map on the TSDO web page?)

4. DESIGN STANDARD EXEMPTIONS -- Are they in or out? Seems a bit deceptive to say the revised TSDO returns design standards. There is the Tax Incentive which does exempt 8+ units from design standards.

5. L1 LANDSCAPING/SETBACKS/LOT SIZES: Blanket application is inconsistent with the Comp Plan. Further, given the department responses for the proposed H.O.M.E rezone, it is odd that there are no department concerns -- particularly given the parking change. There are no concurrent capital plans for creating walkability and open spaces required in the Comp Plan, critical with increased density. We have the great implementations in

North Spenard as a model.

6. COMP PLAN AMENDMENTS - First, the State gave us the right to be a Muni, and a condition is to have a Comp Plan. We are overdue with the 2020 re-write. The last Target Plan (2040 LUP) is up in couple years, too. As it is, I think the PLZ and Assembly would be hard pressed to meet all five criteria in 21.03.070.

7. It is deceptive to say this TSDO will be a major help in addressing our housing challenges -- affordable housing for our "missing middle" Builders will enjoy the changes, but that is not what they have asked for (check out recorded Assembly work sessions and offsites): the barriers the Muni needs to address are delays, high permitting costs, outdated and burdensome design rules. It has limited impact on the biggest challenges: interest rates, available work force, and higher material-, utility- and insurance costs, and housing that is off the market due to short-term rentals. This one-size-fits-all zoning change doesn't fix the underlying issues, but certainly risks having a negative impact on some of our challenged neighborhoods, where builders don't have the incentives to build attractive, quality housing.

Bottomline: The concept of TSD is great. Our communities have consistently supported it in all of our Comp Plan elements. But these proposed ordinances misuse studies, bypass legal process, and contradict Anchorage's adopted plans. The approach is eroding public trust. It has short-circuit community-driven planning.

Real solutions must come through a proper Comprehensive Plan update—transparent, lawful, and built with full community input.

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

- X Yes
No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

The current routes are not functional for access to transit. Housing and accessible transportation are vital to our city. The tax burden for transit that doesn't meet community needs is skyrocketing.

Optional: Name
Optional: Email

John Kabeer Brown
john.kabeer@ymail.com

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

- X Yes
No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

I think TSDO is a critical step to addressing the housing crisis in Anchorage. We need denser, more multi-use spaces.

Optional: Name
Optional: Email

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

- Yes
No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

Having more dense neighborhoods of mixed-use development is essential for our city. We need more walkable streets and more multi-use spaces.

Optional: Name
Optional: Email

Shirley
shirley@ymail.com

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

- Yes
No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

I want to live in a walkable neighborhood with a spread of North (year) ideally mixed-use building.

Optional: Name
Optional: Email

John Kabeer Brown
john.kabeer@ymail.com

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

- X Yes
No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

Please pass TSDO. Please work to build neighborhoods that include mixed-use construction, addressing more families to walk from their homes to the daily needs.

Optional: Name
Optional: Email

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

- X Yes
No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

More affordable housing and walkable transportation needs not to live.

Optional: Name
Optional: Email

Alexa Johnson
alexajohnson@gmail.com

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

Let's lead to re-imagine the future of Anchorage and local communities and access to small businesses, community gardens and green spaces, vibrant public transportation use.

Optional: Name Dakota Beck
Optional: Email beckd@alaska.gov

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

A city almost entirely public transit. I am able to live and work in a city that is a challenge for me. The way we could be improved by people being able to get places.

Optional: Name Emily Smith
Optional: Email emilysmith3@gmail.com

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

I support the effort undertaken in TSDO to make our neighborhoods more walkable and make transit more accessible to all Anchorage residents. ~~Residential development in the area of the TSDO is a challenge for me. The way we could be improved by people being able to get places.~~

Optional: Name EMILY WILLIAMS
Optional: Email emilysmith3@gmail.com

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

More buses that go to areas in South Anchorage - stop making sidewalks that disappear. Safer bus stops that have seats and nearby stations.

Optional: Name JENNIFER S.
Optional: Email jspencer@alaska.edu

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

There should not be anyone stranded in Anchorage, especially in the winter. Having easier walkability to transit will encourage more community members to utilize the service. This will boost our economy and housing market.

Optional: Name LUCY LUKEN
Optional: Email lucy@stanuputaska.org

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

My home is within the proposed TSDO boundary and I strongly support increasing housing near the South Addition. Our neighborhood is walkable and more affordable so it makes total sense to maximize this existing infrastructure and proximity.

Optional: Name CHRIS BECK
Optional: Email _____

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

Affordable housing. Transit access are inter-connected.
Inseparable. Housing is not affordable if car-dependent.
Limited public transit creates a segregated city --
a weaker city.

Optional: Name _____

Optional: Email _____

Public Comment Card: Transportation-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO)

The purpose of a TSDO is to allow increased residential and mixed-use development to strengthen transportation corridors (Planning Department, MOA).

Do you support walkable neighborhoods and more housing near transit?

Yes
 No

Please share some context so that we can share that with the MOA for you:

Our future generations deserve better than
what we will be leaving them if we do not pass
TSDO.

Optional: Name _____

Optional: Email _____

Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 2:17 PM
To: Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: TSDO Comments

From: K D L <kdlkdl12@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 2, 2025 8:24 PM
To: Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Subject: TSDO Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Good Evening,

I have great concerns about increasing housing density in the manners proposed. I have particular issue with the below.

- Housing lots could be smaller. There would be no minimum, so a piece of land could be subdivided into smaller lots with a building on each, making for smaller, cheaper lots, and, in theory, more housing.
- Residential buildings would be allowed to cover a much bigger portion of a plot of land. Right now, buildings often can't cover more than 30 or 40 percent – basically requiring empty space whether that's lawn, gardens or parking. The TSDO proposal would increase that to 80%, making it possible to fit bigger, multifamily buildings onto smaller lots.

I live in Muldoon. I own a 4 plex there which my husband manages and most of our tenants have been with us for years because we keep our place clean, affordable, and well cared for. That is not what I can say about much of our neighborhood now. We have lived here for nearly 30 years and have watched our neighborhood disintegrate. We already have a very dense population in our area, lots of multiplexes and duplexes that have been built. We have one burned out 8 plex that has yet to be repaired, it's been like that for about 4 years. Fix what we already have!

-fix up the vacant buildings and utilize them. There are so many vacant spaces that just result in eye sores and safety risk across the city. You are trying to get creative, then think outside the box on those structure. The more buildings created the more to up keep and that just isn't happening and when that doesn't happen, there is even more real estate unlivable.

-Put caps on how many Airbnb/vacation housing is allowed in Anchorage. That is taking long term housing off the market.

I agree we need more housing which may include a few additional structures but I would say only very few. There are better options. Decreasing green space and just throwing more buildings up is not the answer.

I appreciate your consideration,

Respectfully,

Danielle Lecy



ENGINEERING, LLC

PHYSICAL

615 E. 82nd Ave., Suite 101
Anchorage, AK 99518

MAILING

P.O. Box 111989
Anchorage, AK 99511

OFFICE

907-561-6537

WEB

triadak.com

October 1st, 2025

Municipality of Anchorage
Planning Department
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650

Attention: Planning Department
Subject: **Support for Proposed TSDO Ordinance PZC Case 2025-0030**

To the Planning Department:

Triad Engineering, LLC would like to express our support for the proposed Transit-Supportive Development Overlay (TSDO) ordinance currently under review by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

As a locally owned and operated civil engineering firm, Triad has been directly involved in the planning and design of numerous residential subdivisions and infill projects across Anchorage, Girdwood and Eagle River. For decades, we have worked alongside municipal staff, developers, and the public to create neighborhoods that balance affordability, safety, and infrastructure needs. This experience has given us a clear view of how critical it is to have consistent and predictable development standards in place.

We believe the proposed TSDO framework not only provides consistency but also introduces greater flexibility for the Municipality and the development community. Importantly, this flexibility works in tandem with other policy shifts—such as allowing smaller lots and greater building heights—which directly support the production of more attainable housing. Together, these measures create the opportunity to increase housing supply, diversify housing types, and keep costs within reach for working families.

Developable land within the Anchorage Bowl is increasingly scarce, which makes it critical that we maximize the efficiency of the land that remains. Allowing greater building footprints and taller structures will be extremely beneficial in ensuring Anchorage can accommodate growth while keeping housing costs attainable. By making better use of the limited land base, the Municipality can reduce sprawl, improve infrastructure efficiency, and create more vibrant, livable neighborhoods.

Triad Engineering respectfully encourages the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Assembly to advance this ordinance. Doing so will provide greater clarity for project teams, help reduce delays, and support Anchorage's broader goals of attainable housing and economic vitality. Anchorage families and future homeowners benefit when residential planning is clear, consistent, and adaptable to changing needs—and when development regulations allow smaller lots and taller buildings that make housing more efficient and affordable to build. By spreading roadway and utility costs across more households, these measures reduce the per-unit cost of infrastructure, directly lowering the overall cost of housing.

October 1st, 2025

Subject: Support for Proposed TSDO Ordinance
Page 2 of 2

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your ongoing work to modernize Anchorage's land use code.

Sincerely,

TRIAD ENGINEERING, LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon Marcott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "M".

Brandon Marcott, P.E.

Comments to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) regarding Case No. 2025-0030/0034 regarding Transit Supportive Development Ordinance (TSDO)

David Wigglesworth - October 3, 2025

TSDO has potential to be a positive force in our community, but only if it is done responsibly, information driven, and in full transparency. We heard the claim that the TSDO “does not affect underlying zoning.” The reality is, **it does**— if adopted it will allow taller buildings, higher density with uncertain design standards and reduced setbacks, eventually allow commercial and community uses in residential areas by right, and execute changes in land use that directly impact existing neighborhoods. These are real, permanent changes, and we need to treat them with the seriousness they deserve and provide time to consider concerns expressed.

Many strong ideas for improving TSDO have been communicated that open the door for a constructive 2-way dialogue on what additional specifics are needed to build broad support for its implementation - support needed for the TSDO ordinance and for future budgets to support all the unmet community needs that TSDO illustrates – for example funds to address the lack of sidewalks in neighborhoods, inconsistent snow removal, etc.). Unfortunately, this “two-way dialogue” has not really happened at the community level. The ordinance has already gone through significant revisions (now at Version 5.0), and many of us have not had the opportunity to fully digest the changes. Residents are still learning about TSDO for the first time. There are important unanswered questions concerning the TSDO framework including what the design standards will be, what non-residential uses will be allowed, the rationale for the myriad map revisions (e.g. why is only part of Roger’s Park recently excluded?), or how the ¼ mile from a transit line is actually calculated to determine who is in and who is out. In addition, the format of PZC meetings does not lend itself to meaningful back-and-forth. Many Community Councils are just trying to understand the proposed ordinance and educate their memberships to provide salient comment. While very much appreciated, simply extending the PZC public comment period does not facilitate the need for actual dialogue between residents, the Planning department, and the city.

Based on the comments and conversations to date, I urge you to consider narrowing the scope of the TSDO overlay in two critical ways before moving the ordinance to the Assembly.

1. Limit Initial TSDO Implementation to Main Arterials Only and Gradually Phase in Other Areas.

Start by applying TSDO along major arterials only, with the option to expand later or phase in other areas once the community gains experience. This approach will:

- Allow us to test TSDO in practice and evaluate results before expanding it further.
- Prevent permanent adverse impacts on residential neighborhoods.
- Focus redevelopment where transit, vacant parcels, and underutilized land already offer the most opportunity.

- Better understand how design and dimensional standards will mitigate concerns raised regarding sun access, height transitions, to name a few, and
- Allow time to also thoughtfully address the second ordinance proposed that will permit non-residential uses in residential neighborhoods.

Focusing on arterials and stations is consistent with how other communities use TSDO to encourage higher-density, mixed-use development, and walkability. Fireweed Lane, for example, is a prime candidate for this kind of investment: it is underutilized, desperately needs pedestrian upgrades, and could support public-private partnerships that deliver both housing and commercial opportunities.

The ordinance needs to incorporate “softer transitions” into existing established neighborhoods to address myriad concerns expressed such as scale and sun access. Other cities have adopted separate TSDO processes for lower-density neighborhoods to address these concerns through design and dimensional standards (height, massing, setbacks, solar access, etc.). Anchorage’s ordinance should provide the same level of clarity and predictability.

While the current 40-foot height limit in TSDO is an improvement, in practice buildings will often exceed that height due to how code measures it. At 40 +feet, structures can still tower over nearby homes, block sunlight, and permanently alter neighborhood character. Homeowners, like developers, deserve predictability and fairness when making long-term investments. And it is the very scale and character (i.e. the look and feel, not demographic character) of a neighborhood that is desirable for current residents as it is for those who view TSDO as a means for more attainable housing in these same areas. Given the way building height is measured, a 30-foot height restriction, with reasonable design standards, is far more appropriate to help mitigate concerns expressed.

Anchorage has already recognized this principle: in 2022 the Assembly amended Title 21 for certain R2 districts, allowing taller buildings only in carefully defined circumstances (e.g., transitions to higher-intensity zones, adjacency to non-residential uses, and design and dimensional conditions that minimize impacts such as height and bulking). TSDO needs this same kind of specificity to protect neighborhood scale while enabling growth.

2. Exclude High-Risk Landslide and Ground-Failure Areas (Zones 4 & 5)

A fundamental purpose of zoning is to protect public health and safety. The TSDO overlay map should therefore exclude areas identified as high and very high hazard for ground failure and landslides. This would not involve many properties in the TSDO overlay and it is the right thing to do. Taller buildings and higher densities envisioned under TSDO amplify these natural hazard risks and associated public safety concerns:

- Heavier loads associated with taller buildings stress already unstable soils.

- Failures, when they occur, become far more dangerous in high density multi-story buildings.
- Engineering and site plan review can only reduce but never eliminate these risks, and promises of safety are no substitute for sound land-use decisions - particularly when the facts are clear.

Anchorage's hazard map clearly shows these risks before any new foundation is poured, and past events underscore them. In September 2022, heavy rainfall saturated soils and a landslide in a Zone 4/5 area behind North Star Elementary damaged the Ladera Villa Apartments. While lives were spared, building repairs were extensive. It was a concerning event for the neighborhood.

In addition to known seismic ground failure concerns, climate change data indicates that Southcentral Alaska will experience increased rainfall intensity and flooding. Landslide risks will only grow. Proposed TSDO provisions such as 80% lot coverage and no setbacks will compound drainage, stormwater and soil saturation problems in these areas. These conditions are simply incompatible with taller buildings and higher densities in hazard-prone zones.

Anchorage has many safer locations where mid-rise buildings and higher density development is appropriate. Hazard Zones 4 and 5 are not among them. Human nature typically waits for a catastrophe resulting in a loss of life and property damage to make change. Now is the time for more humility and not hubris. Why react once a problem occurs. It is more costly for the entire community. Removing these zones, at a minimum Zone 5, from the TSDO overlay is common-sense, consistent with the health and safety purpose of zoning, and critical to protecting lives and property.

#####

Date: October 3, 2025

To: Anchorage Planning Commission Anchorage2040@muni.org

From: Jim Mendenhall, jim@jwmendenhall.com

Re: The TSDO Ordinances 2025-0030, 2025-0034 and 2025-XX

I am a lifelong Alaska and an Anchorage resident since 1979. I am compelled to write this letter to voice my opposition to the above referenced ordinances. Last year the HOME Initiative was pushed through and changed what could be built on R1 properties. This in my opinion violated the social contract, and possibly the legal contract, between the Municipality and homeowners. I have attended several Community Council meetings and homeowners are very concerned about these proposed ordinances.

State statutes and Municipal ordinances outline steps to develop a Comprehensive Plan. The development of the 2020 Comprehensive plan was done in accordance with law, unlike the TSDO process which is extremely concerning from a public process standpoint.

Before I comment on the TSDO ordinances, I want to make a few comments about home prices. Homes in Anchorage are not cheap, but I doubt these ordinance changes will do much to lower home prices. There are a number of reasons for this. Here are three:

- 1) Permitting costs in Anchorage are high. One builder stated that a permit in the Mat-Su Valley costs \$500 and is issued quickly, while they spent over \$16,000 for a permit in Anchorage. Consequently, builders focus on higher-end homes because not only is it much easier to fold in a \$16,000 permitting charge to \$750,000 home than into a \$300,000, but the margins are also more on the more expensive models.
- 2) A quick check of AirDNA.co, short-term rental statistics, states that there are 3,167 properties in Anchorage and 86% are homes, which would be about 2,100 homes. I expect that 10-15 years ago a number of these homes would have been bought and sold rather than used as short-term rentals.
- 3) One of the arguments used by proponents of the ordinances is that homes are too expensive. That by itself is a poor argument. Homebuyers generally shop for a payment—something within their budget. The mortgage company will typically tell them that they are allowed to spend 28%-30% of their income on their payments. The largest component of a home payment is principal & interest (P&I). Below is a graph of the last 10 years of mortgage rates along with a chart of what value house a ~\$1,200 P&I payment will support. In 2014, \$1,200 supported a \$250,000 P&I payment. In 2021, at time of very low interest rates, that same payment covered a \$305,000 P&I payment. In 2024 the \$1,200 payment only covered a \$190,000 P&I payment. Additionally, inflation, tariffs and other factors contribute to the affordability issue. These ordinances won't do

anything to change interest rates. I don't think it is a secret that sellers will gladly raise the price as the market allows, but price reduction usually lags the market.

Date	Mortgage	Term	Rate	Monthly P&I
2014	\$ 252,500	30	4.000%	(\$1,205.47)
2021	\$ 305,000	30	2.500%	(\$1,205.12)
2024	\$ 190,000	30	6.500%	(\$1,200.93)

30 Year Mortgage Rate and 10 Year Treasury Rate



As I previously mentioned, I attended several Community Council meetings and have reviewed the ordinances, but the Municipality keeps moving the goal posts. Now we are on Version 5, so a review is not clear and simple. When I went online, there were 30-40 links that took me to other references.

At several of the meetings I attended, the representatives from the planning department seemed to be, in my opinion, evasive and disingenuous. Let me provide three examples;

- 1) On September 2nd, I joined an online presentation on the TDSO plan, hosted by the Federation of Community Councils. During the presentation, Assembly Erin Baldwin Day went to great lengths to tell people that the tax exemption for certain new construction would not increase property taxes for anyone. Based on my knowledge of the tax cap I thought this was misleading and not the whole truth. The next day I email a letter (copy

attached) asking for a confirmation on how the tax cap worked, and confirmation that if the tax exemption was not granted and the property was built, then individual's property tax would be reduced. The letter went to Erin Baldwin Day, Daniel McKenna-Foster and Arianna (Ari) Bellizzi. I never received a response.

- 2) On September 22nd, an information meeting was held at the Federation office. During that meeting I asked Planning Director Babb what comments the various Municipal Departments had submitted. She stated that the departments did not have any comments. I found this shocking! When the Planning Department reviewed the H.O.M.E. initiative they issued 36 pages of comments, weighing in on code and plan compliance, and including comments from other departments. How can a set of ordinances that will affect 30,000 parcels not warrant comments from any Municipal departments?
- 3) During that same September 7th meeting we were told by a representative from planning that everything regarding the TSDO Ordinance is on the Muni website. A few minutes later, I asked Planning Director Babb about an Assembly workshop item that was on the schedule for the next day. The topic was listed as, *Planning Dept to decide by 09/23/25 if Neighborhood Plans should be advisory to the Comp Plan - if so, Code changes are needed.* Director Babb, waived it off and said it wasn't happening. So, the Planning Department tells us everything is on the website, then tells us, in effect, that the information on the website isn't accurate.

Next, I will make a few general comments regarding the process, which appears to violate existing state laws and municipal ordinances.

Based on my review and speaking with other concerned citizens, the current process we are observing with existing ordinances raises concerns:

- Required public processes are not being followed.
- The proposed ordinances conflict with the Municipality's Comprehensive Plan.
- Key information has been selectively used to justify changes.

Together with recent zoning changes—such as ending single-family zoning and eliminating off-street parking—these proposals appear to be part of a broader strategy that is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Many residents throughout the Municipality are concerned that Assembly members can bypass public hearings and Planning & Zoning review by introducing late "S versions." For example, as I understand the process, it would be legal for an Assembly member to introduce a revision to

an AO and submit it (S version) on the floor the day of voting. For major zoning changes, this denies the public a voice. Additionally, with recent changes in municipal law there is no redress without demonstrated 'harm,' removing meaningful options for appeal.

The proposed ordinances and processes for approval go beyond what the law/regulations allows. They make substantive changes that are inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The ordinance sponsors cite plan priorities out of context, without balancing them against other required elements.

Public trust depends on open and lawful processes. These ordinances create the appearance that city officials may be intentionally bypassing requirements under the Charter, Codes, and State Law. To maintain trust and build consensus, zoning changes must be addressed through the comprehensive planning process—not rushed ordinances.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

1) TRANSPARENCY AND THE PUBLIC PROCESS

The city has not met legal requirements for reduced public notice on the proposed TSDO zoning overlay or Comprehensive Plan amendment. It must follow standard public notice procedures, which include; mailings, posting and community meetings.

- It should not have used 21.03.160L, *rezonings (including overlays) initiated by PZC, Administration, or Assembly*. The Administration applied a new reduced public outreach process—limited to posting on the Muni web site and informing community councils—for rezonings without meeting the required criteria.
- Per 21.03.160L.3 and 4., reduced public notice cannot be used on 2025-0030 or -0034. 2025-0030 is a zoning change that affects the comp plan. 2025-0034 is not zoning—rather a substantive amendment to the comp plan (21.03.070)
- The Planning Department stated that a companion Ordinance (2025-00XX) which would outline “Uses” would be implemented at a later date. The “Uses” cannot be left for later per 21.03.170J.3.

2) COMP PLAN AND ZONING CHANGES

The ordinances propose major changes—such as altering the Comprehensive Plan maps and removing design standards—that go beyond what the ordinances allow.

By ordinance, **rezonings** shall:

1. Be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Avoid risks to health and safety.
3. Not conflict with other codes and ordinances.

By ordinance, **substantive amendments to the Comp Plan** shall:

1. Be necessary

2. Internally consistent with the Comp Plan
3. Be in the public interest, health, safety, and welfare of the community
4. Have land use designations equal or more supportive to the Comp Plan
5. Have map amendments consistent with and suitable to Comp Plan land use designations.

Comp Plan defined in 21.01.080 (table 21.01-1) includes the District and Neighborhood plans, 21.03.130, which already outline—consistent with 2020 Comp and 2040 LUP plans—areas for higher densities, zoning changes, etc. within TSD corridors.

The proposed ordinances fail or are not substantiated on all points. They conflict with neighborhood and district plans, raise safety and livability concerns, and are inconsistent with adopted maps and policies.

If the city believes conditions have changed, the proper step is to begin the overdue rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan—not push through piecemeal changes.

3) TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY (TSDO)

An overlay ordinance must be complete at introduction. The current zoning package is incomplete—split into AO 2025-0030 (zoning) and a future AO 2025-00XX to define land uses (zoning refinement).

- The TSDO does not define mixed-use “uses.”
- Map issues: The first draft included transit corridors not in the Comp Plan. The current version omits corridors that are in the Comp Plan.
- The Muni is not being transparent: saying design standards, initially exempted, are again included; yet design standards are exempted for 8+ units within the TSDO under the recent Multi-Family Tax Incentive.

4) ANCHORAGE BOWL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The city is overdue for a full rewrite of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan (last adopted in 2001) and should already be reviewing the 2040 Land Use Plan adopted in 2017. Current proposals skip this required process, instead redefine plans through ordinances.

The Comp Plan clearly requires that TSD zoning changes be guided by neighborhood and district plans, with boundaries defined through community engagement. Eliminating design standards and applying broad zoning overlays that originated from within the Administration directly contradicts this approach and the Comp Plan.

5) MISUSE OF STUDIES AND JUSTIFICATIONS (SEE EXAMPLES BELOW)

The proponents of this ordinance cite a federal study and Outside examples to justify higher housing densities while ignoring Anchorage’s own neighborhood and district plans, which already provide specific, community-driven strategies for growth. They misuse density data from larger cities, overlook the real barriers faced by builders, and ignore proven best practices. The ordinances selectively cite data while ignoring Anchorage’s own adopted neighborhood and district plans, which already provide detailed guidance for growth.

1. Misuse of Comprehensive Plan

- The Comp Plan is a dynamic document made up of many elements that are consistent with the high level 2020 Anchorage Bowl plan.
- The Comp Plan envisioned Town Centers with compact, walkable, mixed-use housing.
- Ordinance preambles cite this vision but ignore how the Comp Plan requires detailed refinement of District/Neighborhood Plans before zoning changes.
- Existing District and Neighborhood Plans (East 2014, Mt. View 2016, West 2013, Spenard 2020) already provide maps, density goals, and strategies for neighborhoods, including locations of mixed-use development. These plans emphasize walkability, safety, compatible design, and phased improvements—yet they are disregarded in the ordinances.
- Reference to the Anchorage Climate Action Plan is misplaced; while it supports small mixed-use centers, it is not part of the Comprehensive Plan. These other plan elements are.

2. Misuse of Density Studies - Ordinance preambles cite three studies to justify 25–36 units per acre for its TSDO, up from 8 units per acre for transit-supportive development.

- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Report No. 0057 states there is no one-size-fits-all standard; successful projects ranged widely (5–100+ units/acre), depending on context.
- St. Paul Metropolitan Council’s Transit Policy sets housing density by transit type: along high-frequency bus routes, new projects should have at least 10 units/acre, with a goal of 15–60+ units/acre.
- Connecticut’s Capitol Region sets TOD density goals: 5–40 units/acre, varying by block size and whether in a core or ring area.
- In Anchorage, the Comprehensive Plan delegates density decisions to District and Neighborhood Plans, not the administrative staff at the Municipality.
- Best practices match density goals with neighborhood character—just as Anchorage’s Comp Plan does.

3. Misappropriating the Lack of Progress in Adding to Housing Stock

- Despite the Comp Plan, Town Centers and transit corridors have not experienced significant new development because of multiple factors.
- Builders have reported at Muni work sessions Muni barriers that include delays from zoning inconsistencies, permitting costs significantly higher than other Southcentral communities, and overly restrictive design standards.
- Ensuring barriers are addressed by the Administration in alignment with the Comp Plan should be in the Assembly's Work Plan but few are.

4. Ignoring Best Practices

- Instead of following the Comp Plan's collaborative approach to improving building standards, the proposed TSDO quietly removes design standards for new housing of 8+ units using a previously approved Multi-Family Tax Incentive program.
- National studies show that successful Transit-Supportive Developments usually involve Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), phased investments, and local coordination.
- Even experienced builders like CIHA have told the Assembly that mixed-use projects are difficult to manage under current conditions.

Bottom Line:

If these ordinances are approved, they will short-circuit the legal planning process, create confusion, and undermine public trust. Anchorage has award-winning planning traditions. The Muni should honor the correct process by engaging the community through a proper Comprehensive Plan update.

What Should Happen Instead

The right path is clear:

- Begin the required rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Use neighborhood and district plans as the basis for zoning updates.
- Revise, but don't eliminate, design standards to balance community goals with builders' needs.
- Ensure transparent public notice and genuine community participation.

September 3, 2025

TO: Erin Baldwin Day

Erin.Baldwin.Day@anchorageak.gov

Copy: Daniel McKenna-Foster
daniel.mckenna-foster@anchorageak.gov

Copy: Arianna (Ari) Bellizzi
info@communitycouncils.org

Ms. Baldwin Day,

I am a life-long resident of Alaska, a 46-year resident of Anchorage and have been in my current house for 32 years. I zoomed in the Federation of Community Council meeting yesterday to learn more about the Transit Supported Development issue.

First, I would like to thank you, Planning and the Federation for taking time to talk with participants about the issue. I did learn a few things yesterday. One issue that was raised is still unclear to me: how the multi-family tax exemption program affects other property owners. You said there is some misinformation that you would like to correct.

You wanted to clarify the way tax incentives work in Anchorage. If I heard correctly, the misinformation is that the tax exemptions shift a tax burden to other tax payers, and the correction is that is not how the tax abatements happen. Rather, if units are added, the property owner would continue to pay the same amount of property tax. Abated would be on the increased value, which would not be assessed or added to the tax cap.

I want to be certain in my understanding of your statements: an increase in multi-family housing under the tax exemption will not shift the tax burden to other tax payers. After 10 years the full value is assessed on the additional structure.

Here is my understanding: The tax exemption does not affect the tax cap, since the primary factors are population and CPI. But the exemption results in a higher mill rate for the remaining tax payers and therefore results in a higher tax bill.

It appears your position is that the tax exemption does not raise my tax bill. With my understanding, that argument is disingenuous: increasing the tax base should lower my tax bill, however, the exemptions require the remaining tax payers to cover the share the exempted property owners would normally cover. The properties and their residents

will still use municipal services: Fire, Police, ASD, Parks & Rec, etc. however the property owners and residents are not paying their proportional (e.g., “fair”) share.

Tax exempt property reduces the overall taxable property value within the municipality. While the municipality cannot exceed the revenue limit set by the cap, a smaller taxable base means the tax burden is shifted onto the remaining, non-exempt properties. I believe we have about \$50B of property value in the municipality and roughly \$20B is exempted.

Based on my review of the tax cap formula, this is how I believe the tax exemptions affect property tax.

- **Shrinking the taxable base:** The Anchorage tax cap limits the total amount of property tax revenue the municipality can collect. The revenue is generated by applying a mill rate (tax rate) to the total assessed value of all taxable property. Exemptions, such as those for senior citizens, disabled veterans, non-profits, and property exempted to create a financial incentive remove a portion of the total property value from being taxed.
- **Increasing the mill rate:** To collect the maximum revenue allowed under the cap from a smaller tax base, the municipality must raise the mill rate. This shifts the tax burden to non-exempt properties, meaning individual taxpayers may pay more even if overall city revenue stays constant.
- **Growing exemptions shift the burden:** A 2025 analysis of a proposed business property tax exemption highlighted this effect, noting that exemptions shift costs to the remaining tax base via higher mill rates. A growing trend of exemptions, such as those for seniors, means the tax base for others is consistently shrinking, potentially contributing to higher taxes on other properties over time.

To demonstrate the effect of the impact, consider this simplified scenario:

- **Total Municipal Revenue (Tax Cap):** \$100 million
- **Total Taxable Property Value (before exemptions):** \$10 billion

Initially, the mill rate would be calculated as:
Mill Rate=Total Revenue/Total Taxable Value=

\$100 million/\$10 billion= 1% or 10 mills

If new exemptions are introduced, reducing the taxable property value:

- **Total Taxable Property Value (after exemptions):** \$8 billion

The municipality still needs to generate the same \$100 million to fund services, so the new mill rate is calculated as:

\$100 million/\$8 billion = 1.25% or 12.5 mills, an increase of 25%

This higher mill rate applies to all remaining taxable properties, so owners of non-exempt properties pay a higher percentage of their property's value in taxes.

I respectfully ask if my interpretation is correct and if not, please provide me with the information so I can understand how tax exemptions work.

Also, I would ask the Federation to host another Zoom meeting that involves presenters who are opponents of the ordinance, so that residents and tax payers can learn more about the pros and cons of this issue.

Below, I have included a short summary of the tax cap formula.

Regards,

Jim Mendenhall

jim@jwmendenhall.com

The tax cap formula is relatively simple: $L = (T - d - e) \times (1 + C + P)$

L – The allowable tax increase due to population and inflation growth factors.

T - The total amount of: 1) Real property and personal property taxes to be collected for the current fiscal year, 2) Municipal payments in-lieu of taxes paid or to be paid by any municipality of Anchorage utility, department, agency, public corporation or authority (MPILT), 3) Auto fees, and 4) State and federal payments in lieu of taxes levied in the current fiscal year in current-year dollars.

d - The total amount of municipal tax levied in the current fiscal year to fund the cost of judgments entered against the municipality and to pay principal or interest on bonds, including revenue bonds.

e - The total amount of municipal tax levied in the current fiscal year to fund the cost of emergency ordinances enacted pursuant to Charter [section 10.03](#).

C - The average percentage increase in the federal consumer price indices (CPI) for the municipality during the preceding five years computed according to a prescribed formula.

P - Relates to the population over the past 5 years and is computed according to a prescribed formula.

Certain exclusions, which are defined, do not enter into the tax cap formula.

The comments below are for current version of the proposed TSDO ordinance, version 5, dated 18 September 2025:

What is liked:

The proposal is evolving toward what should be the goal for this major zoning/land use revision: adjusting land use zones and densities to encourage housing density increases, while still resulting in development that is compatible with existing family- and senior- friendly neighborhoods and works for all ages and generations. Some people desire and should have options to live in a quiet neighborhood with safe, walkable streets and adequate space and sunlight on the property to enjoy sitting outside in their yards, enjoying hobbies such as gardening, or having a space for young children to play outdoors within earshot of their parents.

The recent map changes in some northern neighborhoods (such as Turnagain and Rogers Park) reduced the TSDO zone. LaFrance's staff explained that these changes were made to match the 2040 Land Use Plan, and that is appropriate and welcome.

What falls short, with associated recommendations:

A) Allow time for recent changes to take effect for previously single-family zones: Not scaling the proposal to fit the character of existing (especially older) neighborhoods such as Rogers Park still falls far short of the goal I mentioned above. All R-1 zones were "upped" one zoning class by the HOME Initiative adopted only a year ago in June 25, 2024, which was preceded by the ADU ordinance adopted in January 2023. Allowing three dwelling units per R-1 lot has already tripled the dwelling unit capacity of any R-1 lot. This is accomplished within existing height limits and slightly larger lot coverage (from 30%, to 40% or 50% depending on proposed building heights).

Recommendation 1: Although the current TSDO proposal's goal, across the board, is 36 dwelling units per acre (up from previously stated goal of 25 DUs/acre), the national transit-supported development target is typically cited as requiring 25 DUs/acre. Revise the ordinance back to the nationally recognized transit-supportive goal of 25 DUs/acre

Recommendation 2: With three dwelling units per lot, Rogers Park property owners are currently eligible to build 16 DUs/acre. I recommend that these recent density-inducing revisions be given a few years to play out, with a plan to revisit the progress achieved in five to ten years. Higher densities suggested by the TSDO ordinance as currently proposed could be introduced as needed later.

B) More modest approaches have been initiated in other cities We should follow their lead and learn from their experience. For example, Calgary used up-zoning one class across the board, resulting in tasteful and attractive mixed development (typically 2 to 3 dwelling units) in older housing areas near their downtown district.

The current Anchorage proposal has zero setbacks on all sides, and 80% lot coverage, so for a 7,000 sq ft lot, a footprint of 5,600 sq ft is allowed. A previous version had five-foot setbacks on all sides and 100% lot coverage, so for a 7,000 sq ft lot, a 5,200 sq ft footprint would be allowed. The net change between version 4 to 5 is to increase the allowable footprint by 400 sq ft, resulting in building bulks and opportunities for streetscape amenities even more out-of-character with these neighborhoods, while accentuating the height impacts on adjacent neighbors.

Recommendation 3: For smaller MOA lots (6000-7000 sq ft), the nationally recognized transit-supportive goal of -25 DUs/acre could be easily achieved with a modest increase from 3 DUs to 4 DUs per acre with 4 single-story, 1000 sq foot DUs per lot, and a combination of lot coverage of 40%. and 5-foot set-backs on all sides. To help stimulate growth in R-1 zones, decrease the number of units required for tax abatement to 4.

C) Issues Precluding Ability to Provide Minimum Infrastructure Needs for Winter City Realities

The Planning Department and Administration staff's insufficient public involvement effort to date hasn't enabled the public to grasp the interplay and end result of how fire code, on-street parking capacity, on-site snow clearing and storage (if parking will be planned by a developer), and garbage collection (to name a few) would be managed for new multi-family units in small R-1 lots. The current TSDO ordinance version could lead to -a maximum Dwelling Unit footprint of 5600 square feet (four 1,400-square foot units per floor) and building height 40 feet (3 to 4 stories), theoretically accommodating 16 to 20 units. A 3-story building with 12 units a typical R-1 lot would yield 84 units per gross acre, 230% of the current ordinance version's stated goal of 36 DUs per acre in our neighborhood.

Highlight on Parking Infrastructure Capacity. We have been assured by the Administration and Assembly Member Baldwin-Day (the co-sponsor) on numerous occasions, that any development would most certainly provide parking, but the developer should decide how much. For Rogers Park, this would likely be off the alley. Alley parking on a 50-foot lot could accommodate 5 compact cars, assuming 10-foot width per space. The street ROW in front of a Rogers Park lot would accommodate 3-4 cars.

We have also been informed of a ROW study being conducted to develop a parking strategy, but no details are yet available. However, it does not require sophisticated math or a parking study to figure that the spillover of parked cars from each such apartment building could realistically

result in 11 more cars needing on-street parking (even unrealistically assuming each DU occupant of a 16-unit building would have only one car).

Duluth, Minnesota (another winter city comparable to Anchorage) restricts on-street residential year-round to one side of the street at a time (alternating each week) to accommodate street maintenance and snow removal. I expect the MOA ROW study, if implemented, will cause a similar reduction in parking capacity to accommodate necessary MOA operations.

Looking to on-street parking as the solution for the additional cars ~~that of higher-~~ density apartment buildings will bring into Rogers Park is of utmost concern to me and my neighbors. Maximum use of ROW for car parking will reduce sight distances and create a safety hazard for pedestrians (especially children), ~~including and the~~ several streets in our neighborhood without sidewalks. Fire code access, snow removal and management, and garbage collection are likely to have similar issues, but there has been no public forum for relaying information to understand these aspects.

Recommendation 4: Recommendation 3 above would also apply to handling the infrastructure shortfalls.

Closing Thoughts: The housing issue has sometimes been framed as a generational issue. I can't fathom why the MOA is promoting this "throw spaghetti on the wall and see if it sticks" approach to achieve housing for the young professionals in the "missing middle", given the gross impact to small-lot, single-family neighborhoods that are desirable for families and senior citizens. The consequences will complicate necessary city services, while pre-empting the property rights of those who may have invested time, money, and emotional energy in their hobbies, personal private spaces, and solar panels.

This approach is certain to harm some, and create an anxiety toward what their neighbors might do; people like me who have invested 30-plus years economically and socially - improving my little plot of ground and slowly cultivating neighbors (who were strangers at first) into family. I have lived with my neighbors twice as long as I have lived with my siblings, and that is not an unusual situation for Alaska. Take these recommendations to heart, and achieve housing goals with reasonable impacts and compromise.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Diana Evans

KimmeL, Corliss A.

From: Anchorage2040
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 2:20 PM
To: KimmeL, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: Comments re: TSDO, 2025-0030 v5

From: Alexa Dobson <alexakdobson@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 2:08 PM
To: Downey, Graham P. <Graham.Downey@anchorageak.gov>; Babb, Melisa R.K. <melisa.babb@anchorageak.gov>; Anchorage2040 <Anchorage2040@muni.org>
Cc: Baldwin Day, Erin <Erin.Baldwin.Day@anchorageak.gov>; Mckenna-Foster, Daniel R. <daniel.mckenna-foster@anchorageak.gov>
Subject: Comments re: TSDO, 2025-0030 v5

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello,

Please find below my comments on version 5 of the TSDO, case 2025-0030 for hearing at the PZC on 10/6/2025. Thank you!

To the Mayor's Office, Planning Department, and Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission,

I am writing to express my continued support for the Transit-Supportive Development Overlay, but also deep disappointment at how far version 5 has retreated from the bold, visionary approach originally proposed.

Earlier versions of the ordinance were designed to make transit truly viable by allowing density that supports ridership, and by permitting small-scale neighborhood businesses so that people would have the option to walk to a café, a daycare, or a corner store rather than having to always drive everywhere. Version 5 has stripped out the mixed-use component and slashed height limits from 75 feet to 40 feet. The map has been narrowed to cover a miniscule 9% of the city, and completely given up on supporting increased density or transit access in South Anchorage.

What's left is only a fraction of the original vision: It permits three-story residential buildings, no more than a quarter mile from a few of Anchorage's busiest arterials. That's it. Is it even mathematically possible to achieve transit-oriented density of 36 dwelling units per acre with these paltry allowances? Look at the comments and op-eds since the new version came out: Did giving away the core features of the original plan actually win any new supporters?

As I observed in my testimony at the last PZC hearing, much of the opposition testimony has been about the externalities of cars: Traffic congestion, parking inconveniences. But that is exactly what transit-supportive development is meant to address. Putting housing near transit reduces car dependence. Allowing small businesses within walking distance of homes means people aren't forced to drive for everyday errands. Opposing the TSDO on the grounds of car traffic while simultaneously blocking every effort to reduce car dependence is incoherent.

The drawn-out debate over lot coverage, setbacks, and dimensional standards has made one thing crystal clear: These numbers are not about health, safety, or infrastructure. They have been revised repeatedly, not because of any data or analysis, but because different groups of commenters said they liked or disliked them. That is not planning; that is legislating on vibes.

We already have building requirements elsewhere in code addressing needs like fire safety and utility access. If, beyond those, there is a specific, data-backed reason why a certain percentage of a given lot must remain unbuilt or buildings must be set back a certain number of feet from the property line, then let's see it. Otherwise, we're just making it illegal for the city to grow, on the basis of a few people's arbitrary aesthetic judgments.

You hardly need to hear it again, but Anchorage is in a housing crisis. People are leaving because of disinvestment, stagnation, and the sense that our city is not growing into a vibrant place to live. Against this backdrop, if we can't even muster the courage to say yes to three-story buildings along arterials, how can we ever hope to build a city that retains its residents and attracts new ones?

This watered-down version is still (barely) better than nothing, and so I support it. But it falls badly short of what Anchorage needs, and of the vision we set out in the 2040 Land Use Plan. Leadership means standing by the city's own comprehensive planning documents and having the courage to implement them. I believe we can do so much better than this.

Respectfully,

Alexa Dobson

Homeowner, Fairview