



Municipality of Anchorage
Planning Department
Memorandum



Date: January 12, 2026
To: Planning and Zoning Commission
Thru: *HB* Méliisa Babb, Planning Director
From: *DM* Daniel Mckenna-Foster, Long-Range Planning Manager
Subject: PZC Case No. 2026-0003, Title 21 Amendment to Ease Restrictions on Agricultural Uses and Food Production in the Anchorage Bowl

ORDINANCE BACKGROUND

- The Administration is seeking ways to strengthen food security and the local food production economy in Anchorage.
- Recent policy-level discussions in Anchorage have also included how to expand food production and strengthen food security, including AO 2025-55; AO 2025-62(S); 2025-72(S), As Amended; and AO 2025-114.
- This proposed ordinance allows more flexibility across the Bowl for a number of uses related to food production, food access, and agriculture. One of the most significant changes in this proposal would be allowing food and beverage production as an accessory use in residential areas.
- Allowing "dwelling, mixed use" does not introduce new uses to a zone, but rather only allows the non-residential uses already permitted in that zone to be used in conjunction with a residential use.
- Title 21 is based on regulating uses; this approach attempts to prevent adverse impacts by prohibiting any activities expected to be inconsistent with the area. While it provides a strong degree of control, this method can also limit uses that might create positive impacts for the community. Moreover, it is difficult to measure the cost of these regulations as there is no data about what never gets built. In contrast, using other parts of Anchorage Municipal Code to directly regulate harms like noise, light, glare, or vehicle storage in the right-of-way, is easier to define, measure, and enforce. This ordinance reflects a focus on that more direct and responsive style of regulation.

The Planning Department submitted this case for agency review in November 2025 and amended the proposal based on comment received during this period.

GENERAL CHANGES PROPOSED IN PZC CASE 2026-0003

Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new accessory use: Accessory Food and Beverage Production, which would include the production, but not sale, of alcoholic beverages. This would be allowed in all residential zones, commercial zones, and I-1 and I-2. • Allow commercial horticulture as a conditional use in more zones. • Allow farmers markets as a permitted use in RO. • Allow grocery stores as a permitted use in RO. • Allow manufacturing and food production as a permitted use in B-3, I-1, and I-2. • Allow hobby farms as an accessory use in more zones. • Allow beekeeping as an accessory use in all residential zones. • Specify use restrictions on delivery vehicles (added after agency review). • Removed additional allowances for grocery stores in R-3 (as proposed in the version circulated as part of agency review). This proposal may return with a later ordinance.

SPECIFIC CHANGES AND RATIONALE BY AO SECTION

Code Section	Change	Rationale
Section 1: Table 21.05-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow commercial horticulture as a conditional use in a wider range of zones. • Allow a farmer’s market as a permitted use in the RO zone • Allow Grocery stores as a permitted use in R-4A and RO zones. • Allow Commercial food production as a permitted use in B-3, I-1, and I-2. • Allow commercial food production as a permitted use in the B-3, I-1, and I-2 zones. • Allow convenience stores as a permitted use in the RO district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adding additional uses allows for more opportunities for selling and producing food.
Section 2: 21.05.070 Accessory Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exempt accessory food and beverage production from the specific requirements for home occupations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accessory uses are only allowed alongside a primary use. These uses could complement existing activities. This provides

Code Section	Change	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow beekeeping as an accessory use in the R-3A and R-4A districts. • Allow hobby farms as an accessory use in all residential and commercial zones. • Allow accessory food and beverage production as an accessory use in all residential zones, commercial zones, and two industrial zones. • Change a reference to the new added section. • Add an additional use-specific standard to limit deliveries between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. 	<p>some flexibility without changing the fundamental character of the district.</p> <p>➤ Based on staff comments, the Planning department added an additional use-specific standard that limits deliveries so that they are only allowed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.</p>

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Nine comments were received. Two were in support, and five stated “no comment” or “no objection.” Comments from the Land Use Enforcement Division of the Development Services Department resulted in a more specific use standard about when deliveries would be allowed for food and beverage production as an accessory use.

Planning staff’s responses to the Anchorage Health Department’s questions (1-7) and other comments from the general public (8 & 9) are provided in the table below.

Comment	Response
<p>1. Does homemade food equate to “Commercial Food Production”?</p>	<p>No, commercial food production is defined by 21.05.060B.1.</p>
<p>2. Does making homemade food meet the standards of “home occupation”?</p>	<p>This proposal creates a separate type of food production activity with a separate type of standards and restrictions from the “home occupation” use.</p>
<p>3. Will people operating under AMC 16.60.105 fall into “Food and beverage Production Accessory”, Residential on Table 21.05-3?</p>	<p>This proposal only addresses uses as they are regulated in Title 21. People operating under 16.60105 “Cottage food license required” may be required to follow these standards, if they meet the definition of “Accessory Food and Beverage Production.”</p>

Comment	Response
<p>4. <i>If an alcohol license is issued for a private residence will they still be required to acquire a food establishment permit?</i></p>	<p>Permits will be required for all uses in the zoning table. This proposal does not change alcohol licensing requirements.</p>
<p>5. <i>If a food establishment permit is issued to a private residence will they be allowed to acquire an alcohol permit?</i></p>	<p>This proposal does not change alcohol licensing requirements.</p>
<p>6. <i>Is it expected that the AHD EH inspectors will inspect private dwellings? Will AMCO inspect private dwellings?</i></p>	<p>This proposal does not change inspection requirements for other parts of code. MOA enforcement will enforce Title 21, but is not the responsible for inspections required by other statutes. This proposal does not change alcohol licensing requirements nor impose any requirements on AMCO.</p>
<p>7. <i>I highly support the draft AO and encourage passage. I would ask for an amendment in order to address the existence of a food desert on the Hillside. Referencing the slides below, I request that the AO be amended to allow for grocery stores and convenience stores (but without fuel sales) of reasonable and context-sensitive size in the R-6 zone when located on a lot that takes access from a roadway with a Class II or greater designation in the OSHP.</i></p>	<p>The Planning Department has begun working on a separate proposal to address this comment and will bring it forward in collaboration with or based on guidance from District representatives later in 2026.</p>
<p>8. <i>I would like to state my support for this change to the requirements in regards to "Retail and Pet Services" to be allow by Conditional Use. I think this allows a path forward to properties and owners that have a property that can accommodate the retail sales off food for many other large animal properties on the hillside A recent change in interpretation has impacted the continued practice of selling feed to those that rely on it. The ability for an owner to at least file for a conditional use seems fair and a great resolution to the issue and then the owner will be forced to be held to a standard and allow a public process to determine if the site is satisfactory or not for the type of use described. This is a very good way to resolve this. I hope this is approved forward and code is changed to reflect this.</i></p>	<p>This change was included in an interim version of this proposal, but has been removed for the PZC review. The Planning Department has begun working on a separate proposal to address this comment and will bring it forward in collaboration with or based on guidance from District representatives later in 2026.</p>

COMPONENTS OF THE ORDINANCE LIKELY TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

Change	Discussion
<p>Allowing food and beverage production, including alcoholic beverages, as an accessory use.</p>	<p>This proposal aims to remove obstacles for existing and future food and beverage producers in Anchorage. The recent passage of AO 2025-114 demonstrates the role of home-based businesses in getting started in food production.</p> <p>This change would allow food and beverage production as an accessory use on a portion of a property or for the portion of a year.</p> <p>This use differs from a home occupation in that it may be accessory to a use other than a dwelling unit.</p>
<p>Creating a new accessory use that allows more flexibility than the existing home occupation standards.</p>	<p>The existing home occupancy standards in 21.05.070 have limitations on allowable area, the number of nonresidents that may be engaged in the activity, how long vehicles may be parked, hours of operation for employees, specific restrictions around uses, and others.</p> <p>This proposal uses some of the existing home occupation standards related to light, noise, glare, signs, and deliveries, but does not impose others.</p>

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE

The following goals of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan can be used to support this proposal:

- **2020 Land Use & Transportation Goal:** General Land Use Issues: A forward-looking approach to community growth and redevelopment.
- **2020 Work Force & Economic Development Goal:** Diverse Economy: A diverse and stable economy, focused on clean industry, that makes the most of Anchorage’s regional, statewide, and global position and of Anchorage’s leadership opportunity for resource development.
- **2020 Work Force & Economic Development Goal:** Business Support and Development: A quality of life and a financial climate that encourage businesses to start up, expand, or relocate in Anchorage.

The following goal of the 2040 Land Use Plan can be used to support this proposal:

- **Goal 1 Plan for Growth and Livability:** Anchorage achieves residential and commercial growth, which improves community resiliency and citizens' quality of life as it supports their vision for the future expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL: AMC 21.03.210D.

Text amendments may be recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission for approval by the Assembly if it is found that all the following approval criteria have been met:

Criteria	Discussion
1. The proposed amendment will promote the public health, safety, and general welfare;	Food security and supporting local commerce have been determined to be important to the community, and thus this amendment would help promote public health, safety, and general welfare.
2. The proposed amendment is consistent with the comprehensive plan and the stated purposes of this title;	This proposal is consistent with the comprehensive plan and would support the economic vitality of the MOA, as outlined in the purpose of AMC 21.01.030.
3. The proposed amendment is necessary or desirable because of changing conditions, new planning concepts, or other social or economic conditions.	The amendment originated in feedback from the public, indicating changing conditions in Anchorage.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance.

POTENTIAL FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Agricultural uses and food production have been topics of public discussion at the policy-maker level throughout 2025.
2. This proposal meets the criteria for a Title 21 text amendment change per AMC 21.03.210D.

Attachments: 1. Proposed Updated Draft Ordinance
 2. Original Draft Ordinance
 3. Comments Received

cc: Graham Downey, Special Assistant to the Mayor
 Nolan Klouda, Senior Policy Advisor to the Mayor