



# FROM THE DESK OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

**DATE** October 6, 2023  
**TO** Community and Economic Development Committee  
**FROM** Allie Hartman, Legislative Services  
**THRU** Assembly Members Kevin Cross, Randy Sulte and Daniel Volland  
**SUBJECT** **Small Multifamily Presentation Notes**

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Thank you for the opportunity to [present the background, goals and scope of AO 2023-103](#), which was introduced at the September 26 Assembly Meeting and referred to the Planning & Zoning Commission before an Assembly Public Hearing on December 19, 2023.

This email compiles notes in response to questions offered during the October 5 Community and Economic Development Committee:

## Defining “Small Multifamily”

AO 2023-103 proposes establishing a “small multifamily” definition, distinct from the multifamily definition, to create standards specific to middle housing in residential zones where multifamily housing is already allowed and commercial zones that align with the 2040 Land Use Plan:

**One or more detached residential buildings not exceeding three stories with two to four dwelling units on one lot.**

## Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan Alignment

Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (2040 Plan) assesses the housing and employment needs of current and future Anchorage residents and includes goals, priorities and actions to address those needs.

Goal 2 of the 2040 Plan envisions that “infill and redevelopment meets the housing and employment needs of residents and businesses in Anchorage,” with Policy 2.3 to “remove barriers to desired infill development” and “to promote adaptive reuse of older buildings and compact infill/redevelopment.”



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Goal 3 of the 2040 Plan envisions thriving, walkable mixed-use commercial centers within a neighborhood context with “housing affordable to a range of incomes.”

Goal 4 of the 2040 Plan envisions that, “Anchorage’s neighborhoods provide a range of places to live, meeting the housing needs of residents at all income levels, household sizes, interests, ages, abilities and races and ethnicities,” with Policy 4.2 to “allow and encourage innovative compact housing types and a variety of housing options,” Policy 4.3 to “promote balanced neighborhoods with diverse infill housing,” and Policy 4.4 to “encourage property owners to preserve, rehabilitate, or redevelop properties in ways that minimize housing displacement and maintain affordability, health and safety for residents.”

AO 2023-103 reflects these goals and policies and targets residential and commercial zones where gentle density best aligns with the 2040 Plan. A map of these zones is attached.

### Impacts to Residential Zones

AO 2023-103 proposes changes to zoning only in the Anchorage Bowl and does not include Girdwood or Chugiak Eagle River. Within the Anchorage Bowl, the proposal focuses on making it easier to build 3- and 4-unit projects where they are already allowed: R-2M, R-3, R-3A, R-4, and R-4A

#### R-2M

The R-2M district is intended primarily for residential areas that allow for a variety of single-family, two-family, and multifamily dwellings, with gross densities between five and 15 dwelling units per acre. The R-2M district provides residential neighborhoods with a greater diversity of housing by allowing a mix of both detached and a variety of attached dwelling types in close proximity to each other, rather than separated into different zoning districts.

There are a total of **8,955 lots** zoned R-2M as reported by CAMA property data. Current regulations for R-2M require minimum lot sizes by unit count:

- 2 Units: 6,000 square feet minimum lot size
  - 6,400 lots eligible
  - 71% of R-2M lots eligible
- 3 Units: 8,500 square feet minimum lot size
  - 2,690 lots eligible
  - 31% of R-2M lots eligible
- 4 Units: 10,800 square feet minimum lot size



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- 985 lots eligible
- 12% of R-2M lots eligible

AO 2023-103 proposes establishing dimensional standards for small multifamily in R-2M that match the existing standards for two-unit projects. By lowering the minimum lot sizes for three- and four-unit developments in R-2M, the proposal activates **3,710 lots** to be eligible for as many as four units.

### **Impacts to Commercial Zones**

Goal 3 of the 2040 Plan envisions thriving, walkable mixed-use commercial centers within a neighborhood context with “housing affordable to a range of incomes.” Because the 2040 Land Use Plan clearly intends to develop more housing-centered commercial areas, the proposal adds small multifamily to select commercial zones: B-1A, B-1B, B-3, RO, and MC.

### **Example Triplex Information**

Slide 5 of the presentation showed two examples of small multifamily projects, including a triplex in Fairview: [3717 McCain Loop, Anchorage, 99503 \(cookinlethousing.org\)](#)

The property offers three units on a 7,000 square foot lot:

- Unit A / 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom at \$1248 + electric only
- Unit B / 1 bedrooms, 1 bathrooms at \$1400 + electric only
- Unit C / 2 bedrooms, 1.5 bathrooms at \$2175 + electric only

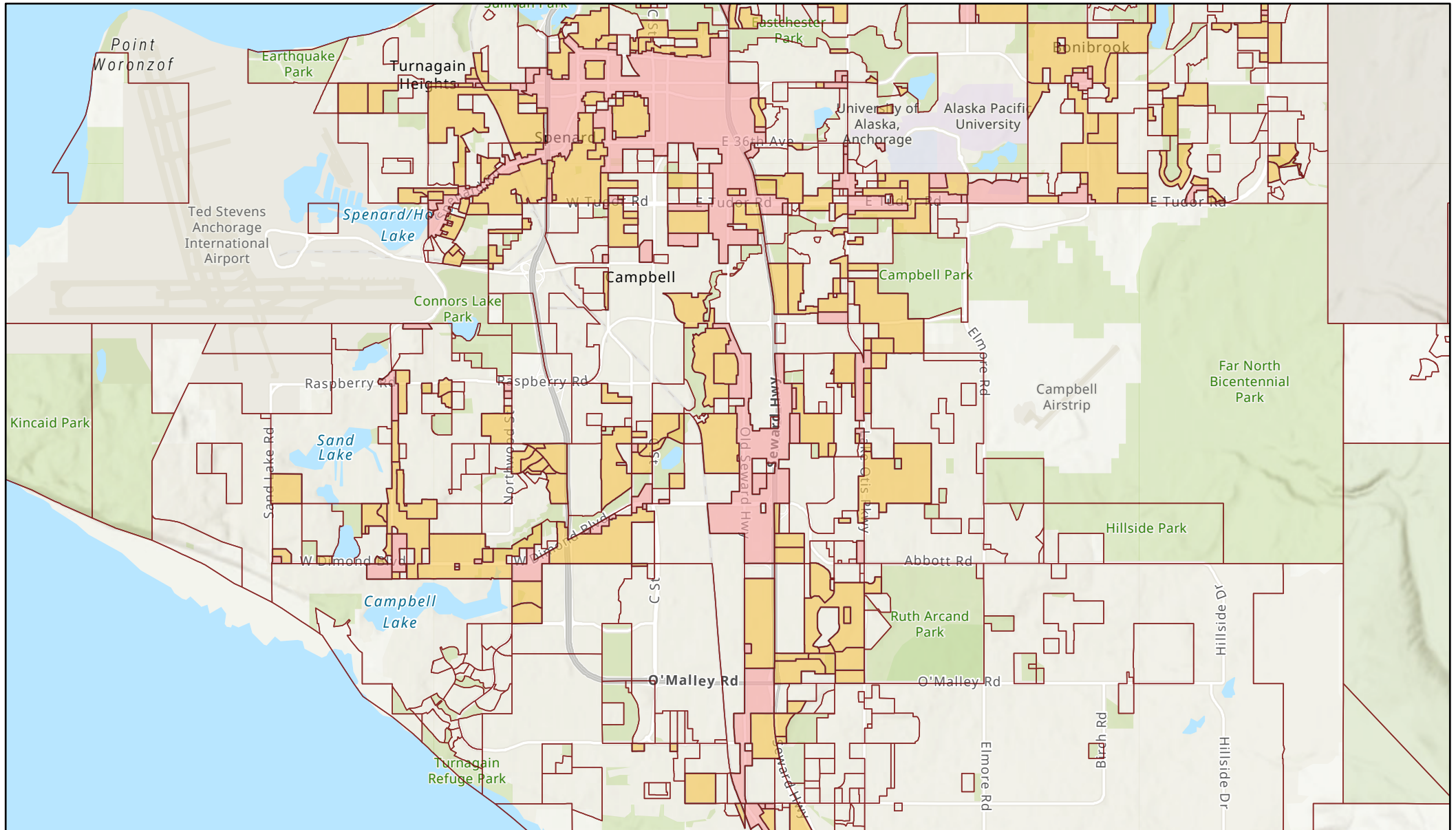
Please contact me with questions or concerns about this information:

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# AO 2023-103 Small Multifamily Proposed Zones



10/6/2023, 4:24:45 PM

 Zoning Outlines

 Commercial

Zoning

 Multiple Family Residential

1:144,448

0 0.5 1 2 mi

0 0.75 1.5 3 km

Kenai Peninsula Borough, Matanuska-Susitna Borough GIS, Municipality of Anchorage, State of Alaska, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, Esri, USGS