

Submitted by: Assembly Members Perez-Verdia,
Quinn-Davidson, and Volland
Prepared by: Office of Legislative Services
Reviewed by: Assembly Counsel's Office
For reading: April 7, 2023

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AO No. 2023-48

1 **AN ORDINANCE: REPEALING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE (AMC)**
2 **CHAPTER 3.97, NAMING OF MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, OTHER FIXED FACILITIES**
3 **AND PUBLIC PLACES; ENACTING AMC CHAPTER 1.80, NAMING OF PUBLIC**
4 **PLACES; AMENDING CHAPTER 4.60, PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARDS, TO ADD**
5 **SECTION 4.60.035, PUBLIC NAMING COMMISSION AND AMEND SECTION**
6 **4.60.090 ACCORDINGLY; AND AMENDING SECTION 21.03.185, STREET NAME**
7 **ALTERATIONS.**
8

9
10 **WHEREAS**, Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) chapter 3.97 establishes a procedure
11 for the naming of municipal buildings and public places, including a process for
12 establishing the membership of naming panels; and
13

14 **WHEREAS**, AMC section 3.97.020 states that when considering the naming or
15 renaming of facilities, the preferred practice is to give a public place a name with
16 historical, cultural, or geographical significance considering location, function, prior
17 Indigenous name, and natural features; and
18

19 **WHEREAS**, despite these broader guidelines, current practice appears most often to
20 result in naming public places after individuals selected by naming panels consisting
21 of persons interested in a particular name, including grieving family members; and
22

23 **WHEREAS**, as a result, very little recognition of traditional Indigenous place names
24 has occurred in practice, and naming often lacks consistency, continuity, or vision;
25 and
26

27 **WHEREAS**, the naming of a public place should be thoughtful, intentional, and reflect
28 community vision and values; now, therefore,
29

30 **THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY ORDAINS:**
31

32 **Section 1.** Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 3.97 is hereby repealed. In
33 accordance with AMC section 1.05.050B., a copy of the existing text of Chapter 3.97
34 being repealed is attached as Exhibit A.
35

36 **Section 2.** Anchorage Municipal Code Title 1 – General Provisions, is hereby
37 amended to add a new chapter to read as follows:
38

39 **Chapter 1.80 - NAMING OF PUBLIC PLACES**
40

41 **1.80.010 - Purpose.**
42

- 1 A. The municipality hereby establishes a policy and set of procedures to
2 govern the naming and renaming of a public place, including renaming
3 of streets and roads.
- 4 B. A sound naming policy adds meaning, significance, and uniformity to
5 public facilities, minimizes conflict, and provides a forum for meaningful
6 discussion regarding naming. Further, a consistent municipal naming
7 policy results in continuity and a sense of community.
- 8 C. This process prioritizes a number of naming principles, including the
9 recognition of traditional Indigenous place names of the Dena'ina
10 Athabascans or other Alaska Native groups, natural elements, local
11 identity and vision, and historical events.
- 12 D. The selection of a name that is purposeful, suitable, and symbolic
13 should be approached in a systematic, fair, and consistent way. This
14 process can generate opportunities to build community identity and
15 awareness, create a lasting public dialogue, express appreciation, and
16 be reflective of Anchorage's vision for itself.

17 **1.80.020 – Definitions.**

18
19
20 The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have
21 the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly
22 indicates a different meaning:

23
24 *Public place* – For purposes of this chapter, a public place means any
25 building, facility, municipal or park lands, owned by or under the control
26 of the municipality, including interior and component spaces integral to
27 the whole, and excluding Anchorage School District buildings and
28 facilities.

29
30 *Traditional Indigenous place name* means the Dena'ina Athabascan
31 name or other Alaska Native name for a place generally accepted
32 amongst the members of the Native Village of Eklutna or the culturally
33 appropriate Tribe or village.

34 **1.80.030 – Naming policy.**

35
36
37 When considering the naming or renaming of a public place, the preferred
38 practice shall be to impart public property with a sense of historical, cultural, or
39 geographical significance considering location, function, the traditional
40 Indigenous place name, or natural features. Considerations in the selection of
41 a name shall include:

- 42
43 A. The existing name of any public place, including a traditional Dena'ina
44 or other Indigenous place name. Continuity of name and common
45 usage are presumed to increase a sense of neighborhood.
- 46 B. Influences from adopted plans or a municipally sponsored process
47 (such as 1% for Art at the same location, Commission Annual Plan, or
48 mission/vision, Title 21 subdivision platting, etc.), or an established
49 vision for Anchorage or the area of Anchorage in which the public place
50 or real property exists.
- 51 C. Natural features of the area, including but not limited to geographical,

- 1 geological, and anthropological features.
- 2 D. Events, both contemporary and historic.
- 3 E. Cultural significance to a group or groups of people who have positively
- 4 impacted the community.
- 5 F. Positive impact of an individual or group on the local community and the
- 6 history of Anchorage in an ongoing and transformative way. When
- 7 considering honoring a person or persons with naming of a public
- 8 place, the Commission should document their efforts to:
- 9 1. Identify the person or persons' connection to the municipality if
- 10 considering an outstanding local, state, national or international
- 11 civic leader(s);
- 12 2. Consider the historical significance of the person and or
- 13 connection with the municipality.
- 14 3. Limit honorary naming to a single use of an individual's name at
- 15 any one point in time when not in conjunction with a monetary or
- 16 in-kind sponsorship.
- 17 4. Support the preferred practice of honoring individuals through
- 18 naming of internal areas, fixtures, and features integral to public
- 19 spaces.
- 20 5. Avoid naming a public building, facility, or park for a person.

21

22 **1.08.040 – Public Naming Commission.**

23

- 24 A. Duties of the public naming commission shall include:
- 25
- 26 1. Responsibility for implementing the naming policy of the
- 27 municipality through review of all requests and actions for
- 28 compliance with this policy and honorary naming criteria under
- 29 this chapter.
- 30 2. Review of proposed names and public places, including holding
- 31 public hearings, and identifying additional potential names or
- 32 public places as appropriate to the request. The panel will
- 33 assess all requests once a year as part of the annual naming
- 34 plan.
- 35 3. Meeting at least once annually for the sole purpose of naming
- 36 implementation goals and strategy, and monthly as needed for
- 37 the purpose for regular commission business.
- 38 4. Filing an annual naming plan with the mayor and the assembly
- 39 by August 31 of each year, which shall include:
- 40 a. Activities of the prior year.
- 41 b. Commission's statement of vision for naming of public
- 42 places.
- 43 c. List of public places proposed for consideration of naming
- 44 or renaming in the coming year.
- 45 d. Summary of naming requests from the public from the
- 46 prior year and proposed disposition of those requests,
- 47 including how the proposed names meet the
- 48 requirements in section 1.80.030.
- 49
- 50 B. A naming project may be initiated by:
- 51

- 1 1. Referral to the Commission from the mayor or the assembly
2 identifying the proposed public place.
- 3 2. Nominations from the public or resolutions of community
4 councils. Posthumous naming in honor of a person or persons
5 may be made no earlier than thirty-six (36) months
6 posthumously.
- 7 3. The public naming commission by:
8 a. Identifying public places or real property of significance
9 that have not yet been named.
10 b. Collaborating with the department of public works to
11 recommend names for facilities in development.
- 12
- 13 C. Recommendation and approval.
14
- 15 1. Prior to final recommendation to the mayor and assembly, the
16 Commission shall hold at least one public hearing to present the
17 proposed naming recommendation and receive public comment.
- 18 2. Prior to final recommendation to the mayor and assembly for a
19 public place under the jurisdiction of a parks and recreation
20 board or commission, including the Anchorage Parks and
21 Recreation Commission, the Girdwood Board of Supervisors, or
22 the -Eagle River-Chugiak Park and Recreation Board of
23 Supervisors, the Commission shall request an advisory opinion
24 from the board or commission with jurisdiction.
- 25 3. The Commission shall prepare a memorandum advising the
26 mayor and the assembly and explaining and amplifying any
27 relevant information regarding the Commission's
28 recommendation.
29 a. The Commission's memorandum shall include reference
30 to the policy in section 1.08.030 and how the Commission
31 considered those factors in its recommendation.
32 b. Every effort shall be made to adhere to the naming policy
33 established in section 1.08.030. All recommendations
34 involving departure from section 1.08.030 must include a
35 detailed rationale for the departure.
36 c. The Commission's memorandum shall be attached to a
37 resolution for consideration by the assembly. If a majority
38 of the Commission members are unable to agree, a
39 divided recommendation of the Commission may be
40 submitted for assembly consideration.
- 41 4. In all naming or renaming, the assembly shall set the proposed
42 resolution addressing the Commission's recommendation for
43 public hearing at least 27 days after introduction to ensure
44 appropriate information dissemination to the public prior to final
45 action by the assembly.
- 46
- 47 D. Renaming.
48
- 49 1. Renaming shall not apply to historic names of designated
50 landmarks listed on a state or National Register of Historic
51 Places, unless supported by the state and/or federal

1 government.

2 2. Initial naming of streets and roads are governed by Title 21 and
3 changing these names has far reaching effects and costs.
4 Renaming of streets and roads is subject to the requirements of
5 section 21.03.185, as well as public safety considerations.

6 3. This chapter shall not apply to the naming or renaming of a
7 public space that was donated to the municipality contingent
8 upon assignment of a specific name or to any facility constructed
9 or purchased from money or property donated to the
10 municipality for the specific purpose of securing a name for the
11 facility.

12
13 **Section 3.** Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 4.60 – Program Advisory Boards, is
14 hereby amended to add a new section to read as follows:

15
16 **4.60.035 - Public naming commission.**

17
18 A. *Purpose.* There is established a public naming commission to
19 implement the standards for public naming set forth in Chapter 1.80.

20
21 B. *Composition and terms of members.*

- 22 1. The commission shall consist of nine voting members, appointed
23 by the mayor and subject to confirmation by the assembly.
24 2. Each member shall be appointed pursuant to chapter 4.05.
25 3. Unless otherwise provided in this section, the commission shall
26 be governed by the provisions of Chapter 4.05.

27
28 C. *Qualifications.* To the extent available in the municipality, commission
29 members shall include:

- 30 1. A historian, anthropologist, or archaeologist.
31 2. An Alaska Native culture advisor with knowledge of local
32 Indigenous history and culture.
33 3. A member with real estate experience, such as a real estate
34 developer, appraiser, or broker.
35 4. A member with expertise in historic preservation.
36 5. A member with experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion
37 work.
38 6. Four community at large members.

39
40 D. *Powers and duties of commission.* The duties and powers of the
41 commission are set forth in Chapter 1.80.

42
43 E. *Staffing.* The commission shall be staffed by the Clerk's office.

44
45 F. This commission shall terminate on October 14, 2026, unless
46 affirmatively continued by the assembly for an additional three years in
47 accordance with section 4.05.150.

48
49
50 **Section 4.** Anchorage Municipal Code section 4.60.090 is hereby amended as
51 follows (*the remainder of the section is not affected and not set out*):

4.60.090 - Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area Commission.

*** **

D. The commission shall act in an advisory capacity to the mayor and assembly in all matters pertaining to parks and recreation within the service area, including but not limited to:

*** **

5. Advising the public naming commission [PANEL] on selections of names for park sites and park or recreation facilities under the provisions of chapter 1.80 [3.97].

*** **

(AO No. 84-28; AO No. 95-223, § 1, expires 1-20-1998; AO No. 98-25, § 1, expires 3-7-2001; AO No. 99-7, § 1, 1-26-99, expires 1-20-02; AO No. 2001-189, § 2, expires 1-20-05; AO No. 2004-96, § 1, 6-8-04; AO No. 2006-51(S), § 8, 6-20-06; AO No. 2007-129, § 1, 10-9-07; AO No. 2011-64(S-1), § 5, 6-28-11; AO No. 2017-98 , § 2, 8-8-17)

Section 5. Anchorage Municipal Code section 21.03.185 is hereby amended as follows (*the remainder of the section is not affected and not set out*):

21.03.185 - Street name alterations.

A. *Generally.* A street name alteration may be proposed by petition or by a government agency. The petition or proposal shall be submitted to the department. The department shall reject any street name alteration that does not conform to the standards of section 21.08.030, Design Standards, and any applicable regulations. The criteria established in AMC chapter 1.80 [3.97.025] for honorary renaming shall apply.

*** **

(AO No. 2015-131, § 2, 1-12-15)

Section 6. Notwithstanding AMC section 21.03.210, the text amendment to Title 21 in Section 5 of this ordinance is cosmetic only and shall not require Planning and Zoning Commission review.

Section 7. This ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this _____ day of _____, 2023.

Chair

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM**

No. AM 267-2023

Meeting Date: April 7, 2023

1

2 **From: Assembly Members Perez-Verdia, Quinn-Davidson and Volland**

3
4 **Subject: AN ORDINANCE: REPEALING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE**
5 **(AMC) CHAPTER 3.97, NAMING OF MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, OTHER FIXED**
6 **FACILITIES AND PUBLIC PLACES; ENACTING AMC CHAPTER 1.80, NAMING**
7 **OF PUBLIC PLACES; AMENDING CHAPTER 4.60, PROGRAM ADVISORY**
8 **BOARDS, TO ADD SECTION 4.60.035, PUBLIC NAMING COMMISSION AND**
9 **AMEND SECTION 4.60.090 ACCORDINGLY; AND AMENDING SECTION**
10 **21.03.185, STREET NAME ALTERATIONS.**

11
12 In an effort to improve the application of the current policy for public place naming,
13 this ordinance reestablishes a Title 4 public naming commission and codifies
14 additional standards.

15
16 **Historical Context**

17
18 An early naming policy was codified in 1987, prioritizing naming for prominent
19 Alaskans with “care not to overlook the contributions of women or minorities” and
20 to consider “geographical influences.” Names were selected by a citizen naming
21 panel.

22
23 Later enactments included priorities focused on historical, cultural, or geographical
24 significance, as opposed to the previous focus on people. AO 2006-51(S). The
25 responsibility for recommending a name was moved to a Public Facilities Advisory
26 Commission but then shifted back again to citizen panels. AO 2007-95(S).

27
28 In 2007, the current policy was codified, requiring the traditional Dena’ina or other
29 Alaska Native name be presumed to be the best name of a public place and offering
30 a number of factors to consider. The practice of naming panels was continued.

31
32 **Application of Current Policy.**

33
34 The naming of public places after individuals still occurs overwhelmingly without
35 regard to historical, cultural, or geographical significance, and regardless of an
36 existing traditional Indigenous place name. Naming panels often include interested
37 persons, including grieving families, who request a naming panel, with the result
38 that the outcome is often a foregone conclusion.

39
40 **Public Naming Commission.**

41
42 To address these gaps in implementing the naming policy, this ordinance proposes
43 to re-establish a long-term Title 4 advisory commission. In addition to four
44 community members at large, five members would be required to possess relevant
45 experience and education, such as a background in history, archeology, or
46 anthropology, a Native culture advisor with knowledge of local Indigenous history

1 and culture, a member with knowledge of real estate or historic preservation, and a
2 member familiar with equity and inclusion.

3
4 The advantages of a long term commission include:

- 5
- 6 • Required expertise in history and culture
- 7 • More impartial review of naming requests
- 8 • Continuity with experience in applying code criteria
- 9 • Permanent record of requests and recommendations
- 10 • Creation of a panel that can build out a vision for naming in our community,
11 resulting in naming that is driven by strategic vision and more accurately
12 reflects the spirit of Anchorage
- 13 • Additional public process
- 14

15 Not only can the public attend commission meetings, but the ordinance also requires
16 that the commission and assembly each hold at least one public hearing before
17 selecting a name for a public place.

18
19 The commission is also required to submit its recommendation to the mayor and the
20 assembly by a memorandum setting forth in detail the factors that were considered
21 and the commission’s rationale if the recommendation is not consistent with the
22 naming policy. The commission must also submit a detailed annual report.

23
24 Finally, the ordinance provides that the commission cannot act on a nomination for
25 naming a deceased individual for at least 36 months posthumously.

26
27 The costs to the municipality to support the new commission are expected to be less
28 than \$30,000 annually so a summary of economic effects is not provided.

29
30 **We ask for your support of this ordinance.**

31
32 Prepared by: Legislative Services
33 Reviewed by: Assembly Counsel’s Office

34
35 Respectfully submitted: Kameron Perez-Verdia, Assembly Member
36 District 3 – West Anchorage

37
38 Austin Quinn-Davidson, Assembly Member
39 District 3 – West Anchorage

40
41 Daniel Volland, Assembly Member
42 District 1 – North Anchorage

43
44
45

Exhibit A

Chapter 3.97 NAMING OF MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, OTHER FIXED FACILITIES AND PUBLIC PLACES¹

3.97.010 Purpose.

- A. The municipality hereby establishes a policy and set of procedures to govern the naming of a public place and the honorary renaming of streets and roads. A sound naming policy adds meaning, significance and uniformity to public facilities, minimizes conflict and provides a forum for meaningful discussion regarding naming. Further, a consistent municipal naming policy lends continuity and a sense of community, and establishes a means of appropriately recognizing prominent individuals and those who have substantially contributed to the municipality, the state or the nation.
- B. The selection of a name that is purposeful, suitable, and symbolic should be approached in a systematic and creative way. This process can generate opportunities to induce dynamic community impact, create sensitivity and lasting public relations, express appreciation, and educate.
- C. For purposes of this chapter, a public place means any building, facility, municipal or park lands, owned by or under the control of the municipality, including interior and component spaces integral to the whole, and excluding Anchorage School District buildings and facilities.

(AO No. 87-73; AO No. 2006-51(S), § 1, 6-20-06; AO No. 2007-95(S), § 1, 9-25-07)

3.97.020 Policy.

When considering the naming or renaming of municipal buildings, other fixed facilities, and public places, the preferred practice shall be to give public property historical, cultural or geographical significance considering location, function, prior indigenous name, and natural features. The existing name of any public place, including a traditional Dena'ina or other Alaska Native name, is presumed to be the best name of that public place. Continuity of name and common usage are presumed to increase sense of neighborhood.

(AO No. 87-73; AO No. 2006-51(S), § 2, 6-20-06; AO No. 2007-95(S), § 2, 9-25-07; AO No. 2017-98, § 1, 8-8-17)

3.97.025 Criteria.

- A. *Honorary naming.* Naming of a public place will:
 - 1. Demonstrate that the policy objectives under section 3.97.020 have been considered and will specify findings for an exception;
 - 2. Identify the individual's connection to the municipality if considering an outstanding local, state, national or international civic leader;
 - 3. Consider the historical significance of the person and the duration of residence in the municipality, or connection with the municipality if a nonresident;

¹Cross reference(s)—Historic preservation board, § 4.60.030.

-
4. Consider the history of the location in relation to the history of the present name, when proposing to rename an existing public place;
 5. Not change the name of a public place bearing an historic Anchorage family name;
 6. Not change historic names of designated landmarks listed on a state or National Register of Historic Places, unless supported by the state or federal government;
 7. Limit honorary naming to a one time present use of an individual's name;
 8. Support the preferred practice of honoring individuals through naming of internal areas, fixtures, and features integral to public spaces. Naming a public building, facility, or park for a living person is not favored.
 9. Renaming of a public place, road or street should not be considered within 20 years of the previous naming.
- B. *Public places under the jurisdiction of a parks and recreation board or commission.* In naming a public place, including a trail, within the control and supervision of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, the Girdwood Board of Supervisors, or the Chugiak-Eagle River Parks and Recreation Board of Supervisors, these additional factors shall be considered:
1. Names of persons who, through exemplary and substantial effort, have made a significant contribution to the community or the parks and recreation department or who have made a substantial donation to acquisition or development of the property;
 2. Organizations that have made a substantial donation to the acquisition or development of the property;
 3. The indigenous name for the location or its features, from the Dena'ina or other Alaska Native group, and its cultural significance to them; and
 4. Incorporating the geographic, natural or geological feature as part of the name to assist the public in recognizing the location.
- C. *Honorary renaming of streets and roads.* Subject to the requirements of AMC 21.15.133, AMC 21.80.260, and public safety considerations, the following criteria shall apply in the honorary renaming of streets and roads:
1. The individual whose name is proposed for honorary renaming shall be worthy of long-term recognition by virtue of special efforts, accomplishments, or contributions which have benefited the municipality or the state.
 2. No street name bearing an Anchorage historic family name will be eligible for renaming.

(AO No. 2006-51(S), § 3, 6-20-06; AO No. 2007-95(S), § 3, 9-25-07; AO No. 2008-92, § 1, 9-16-08; AO No. 2017-98, § 1, 8-8-17)

3.97.030 Procedures.

- A. *Public naming panel.* Preliminary action in naming a public place may be initiated by memorandum of the mayor or resolution of the assembly, identifying the proposed public place or individual, for referral to a public naming panel. If any request covers a public place in a municipal park, the request shall be referred to the parks and recreation commission or service area board with jurisdiction over the public place either before appointing the panel or by the panel after appointment. The four-member panel shall be appointed to proceed as follows:
1. The mayor shall appoint two members for the panel; and

-
2. The assembly chair shall appoint two members for the panel.
 3. The naming panel may be composed of members of recognized boards and commissions.
 4. An informational memorandum shall be submitted identifying the four members of the panel.
 5. Municipal staff support to the panel shall be identified in the memorandum or resolution.
 6. The panel shall review proposed names and public places, hold public hearing, and identify additional potential names or public places as appropriate to the request.
 7. The panel shall review all requests for compliance with policy and honorary naming criteria under this chapter.
- B. Upon agreement of at least three of the four panel members, a letter advising the mayor and the assembly chair shall be dispatched on behalf of the panel. The letter shall include reference to each criteria identified in section 3.97.025 and how the panel considered those factors in its recommendation. The panel's letter shall be attached to a resolution for consideration by the assembly. Memoranda as appropriate may be appended to the resolution to explain or amplify relevant information for the assembly. If at least three of the four panel members are unable to agree, a divided recommendation of the panel may be submitted for assembly consideration.
- C. Final action by the assembly shall be no earlier than one year posthumously for naming of a building, facility, or park. In all naming or renaming, the assembly shall set the proposed resolution addressing the panel's recommendation for public hearing at least one month after introduction to ensure appropriate information dissemination to the public prior to final action by the assembly.

(AO No. 87-73; AO No. 2006-51(S), § 4, 6-20-06; AO No. 2007-95(S), § 4, 9-25-07; AO No. 2008-92, § 2, 9-16-08; AO No. 2017-98, § 1, 8-8-17)

3.97.040 Changing of names. (Repealed)

(AO No. 87-73; AO No. 2006-51(S), § 5, 6-20-06)

3.97.050 Naming facility for other than an individual. (Repealed)

(AO No. 87-73; AO No. 2006-51(S), § 6, 6-20-06)

3.97.060 Applicability of chapter.

This chapter shall not apply to the naming or renaming of facilities which were donated to the municipality contingent upon assignment of a specific name or to any facility constructed or purchased from money or property donated to the municipality for the specific purpose of securing a name for the facility. Further, this chapter does not apply to the naming of streets or roads, except in the application criteria for honorary renaming in section 3.97.025, or to naming rights for municipal buildings, facilities or public places sold pursuant to Title 7, which shall be subject to assembly approval.

(AO No. 87-73; AO No. 91-173(S); AO No. 2005-114, § 1, 9-13-05; AO No. 2006-51(S), § 7, 6-20-06; AO No. 2007-95(S), § 5, 9-25-07)