

## **SMALL AREA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ORDINANCE**

**PZC Case No. 2021-0039**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **WHY IS THE MUNICIPALITY ADOPTING A SMALL AREA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SAIP)?**

First introduced in the 2014 *East Anchorage District Plan*, small area plans were recommended as a new planning tool to help facilitate redevelopment projects on large parcels fronting Muldoon Road. In the absence of such a tool, redevelopment of these larger parcels can be haphazard, complicated, costly, and may not achieve the vision and desires of the community. Also, small area plans may help to ensure that redevelopment and revitalization efforts meet forecasted growth needs and achieve planned residential units on our remaining buildable lands.

The 2017 *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan* (2040 LUP) also recognized the significance of redevelopment incentive and assistance actions to spur the type of growth needed by the community. The 2040 LUP described the difficulties and constraints associated with funding, construction, infrastructure, entitlement processing, and land costs of redevelopment projects.

Redevelopment projects are replacing greenfield projects as vacant buildable land is used up in the Anchorage Bowl. The 2040 LUP promoted Small Area Implementation Plans (SAIP) as an essential planning strategy to achieve that plan's goals, especially in strategic priority growth areas of the Anchorage Bowl. The Plan's Implementation Action 2-11 calls for amending Title 21 to create a SAIP process and standards. SAIPs are meant to address and resolve development issues and growth conflicts while focusing and maximizing private and public investments.

This new ordinance amends the Chapter Three, Master Planning section of Title 21. It provides direction for master planning at a smaller and more detailed scale than the larger Institutional Master Planning element in Chapter Three. Other Title 21 master planning functions, specifically Area Master Plans and Development Master Plans, can be found in Chapter Nine and are restricted to use in Girdwood only.

This project helps carry out implementation Action 2-11 of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan's* **Goal 2: Infill and Redevelopment**. It also relates to other Implementation Actions and ongoing code amendment projects and actions that seek to achieve the goals of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*.

## **WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS OF A SAIP?**

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The SAIP ordinance has been written to streamline master planning procedures and the associated development activities on large parcels or groups of parcels to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Built into the SAIP ordinance are several master planning incentives that benefit landowners and the public. SAIPS can:

- Serve as a one-stop entitlement process. (If applicable, an adopted SAIP may pre-approve Conditional Use Approval, Administrative or Major Site-Plan reviews that may have typically been required.)
- Allow for potential waivers of SAIP and other land use entitlement fees (e.g., rezonings).
- Allow deviations from certain Title 21 standards, including:
  - Those variances listed in 21.03.240B.
  - Expands the list of allowed uses by including certain commercial uses from B-1A Zoning District.
  - Flexibility in minimum lot size and/or setback standards.
  - Allows juxtaposing development intensities and/or number of dwelling units across parcel and zoning lines or transferred of density/units to other parcels within the SAIP area.
- Allow deviations from certain standards in the municipal Design Criteria Manual.
- Allow the Planning Director to approve minor deviations from a SAIP's approved final development plans before construction.
- Allow Director to approve minor modifications to an approved SAIP.
- Allow the development to avail tax incentives and other public-offered development assistance tools.
- Establish an agreed upon development path forward between development and changing administrations.
- Allow for public input and public understanding of growth activities in SAIP areas.

## **SAIP ORDINANCE OUTLINE AND SOME HIGHLIGHTS**

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As formatted in this draft, the SAIP ordinance:

- Sets a minimum parcel size of five acres, but under some circumstances may apply to sites as small as one acre.
- Includes 13 submittal requirements.
- Follows an approval process similar to other entitlements in Title 21, Chapter 3, e.g., rezonings.
- Final approval authority is primarily the Urban Design Commission; however, under certain circumstances, the approval is by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Provisions allow for flexibility with land uses and site design.
- Presents six approval criteria, which must be substantially met by a SAIP proposal.
- Project consistency review process by the Planning Director, which includes six compliance standards for Plan implementation and requires an annual progress report.
- Details a modification and termination process.

## **SOME GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING THIS ORDINANCE**

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While reviewing this draft ordinance, the following could be used to guide and organize comments and to offer considerations that focus the ordinance's intent and features.

1. Is the intent and layout of the ordinance clear?
2. From the perspective of a designer/builder/developer—Are the submittal criteria appropriate, too much, or inadequate?
3. From the perspective of a neighbor/community council—Are the submittal criteria appropriate, too much, or inadequate?
4. Are the items in the deviation from code section (E) clear and appropriate? Are these deviations enough to encourage the use of or support for the SAIP?
5. Are the incentives of interest to a landowner? Are there incentives that are not listed that we should consider? Where have these been used effectively?
6. Will using the SAIP save processing time and money vs using the current code otherwise?
7. Is the approval process clear and appropriate? Is the appeal process clear?
8. What are the shortcomings or barriers to using this new planning process?
9. Does the community see any benefits from this ordinance?