

**PZC Staff Packet
November 1, 2021**

**Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones
Height and Bulk Standards**

PZC Case No. 2021-0111

- 1. Staff Memorandum**
- 2. Attachment 1: Project Description and Background**
- 3. Attachment 2: Public Hearing Draft Ordinance**
- 4. Attachment 3: Annotated Zoning Code Amendment Language**
- 5. Attachment 4: Comments Received**
- 6. Supplementary Packet #1: Comments Received after Packet was Finalized**

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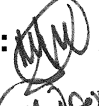



Municipality of Anchorage
Planning Department
Memorandum




Date: November 1, 2021

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

Thru:  Michelle J. McNulty, AICP, Planning Director

Thru:  Kristine Bunnell, Long-Range Planning Manager

From:  Tom Davis, AICP, Senior Planner, Long-Range Planning Division

Subject: Case No. 2021-0111, Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Standards

Planning and Zoning Commission Review and Approval

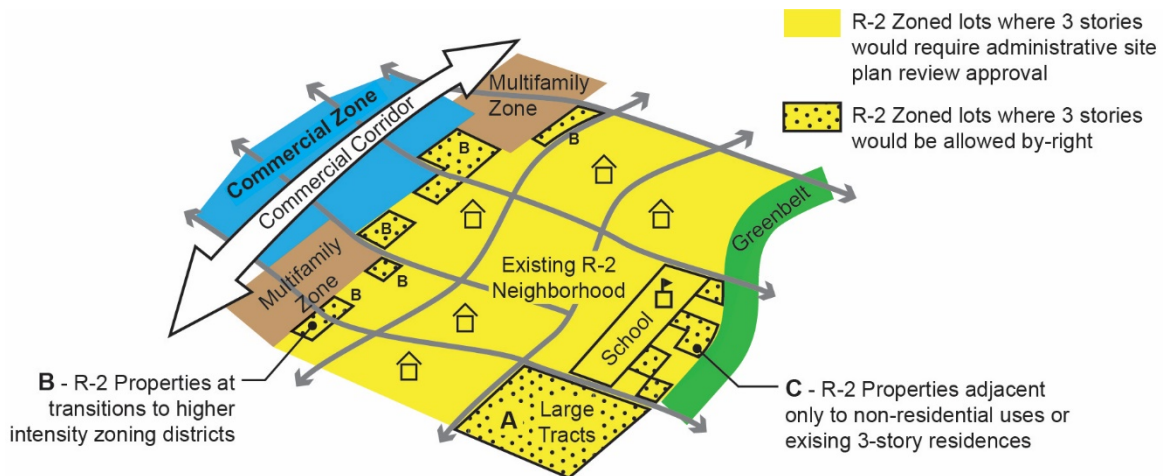
The Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled to take public comment on November 1, 2021, regarding the Public Hearing Draft of Case No. 2021-0111, an amendment to the building height and bulk regulations in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M residential zoning districts (R-2 zones). This is an amendment to the regulations in the Anchorage Municipal Code Title 21 Zoning Ordinance (Title 21). For review are the Public Hearing Draft ordinance and the staff recommendations and amendments for consideration by the Commission. After the public hearing closes, the Commission will deliberate this case and forward its recommendations to the Assembly for consideration.

R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment – Background and Summary

Attachment 1, *Project Background and Description*, provides the background and need and the summary description of this Title 21 text amendment. As explained in more detail in Attachment 1, the Public Hearing Draft R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment proposes amendments to the two-and-one-half-story (2½-story) height limit in the R-2 zones. The amendments are intended to support more efficient housing development in the R-2 zones while addressing neighborhood compatibility.

An overview of the Public Hearing Draft amendment, as formatted in Attachment 2 and shown with annotation in Attachment 3, includes the following:

1. Allows 3-story buildings by-right in strategic and peripheral locations considered most likely to provide housing opportunities and minimize neighborhood impacts, including:
 - A. Large development sites ½ acre or more in size.
 - B. Transitional sites located adjacent to commercial or multifamily districts.
 - C. Sites adjacent only to non-residential uses or 3-story residential uses.



2. Requires the 3-story buildings on the exempted sites to provide transitions in height and bulk to adjacent residential properties, as follows:
 - A. Step-back in height: 3-story buildings to be stepped back in form, or set back further in footprint, or have rooftops sloped away from adjacent residential lots.
 - B. Maximum sidewall length: 3-story building length extending along the side lot line facing adjacent residences to be limited in proportion to total lot depth.
3. Enables discretionary administrative approval of 3-story residences on other R-2 lots (in the yellow area in the diagram above), via the Title 21 Administrative Site Plan Review entitlement procedure. Relevant elements of this procedure not provided in Attachment 1 include:
 - Application: Proposed plan and \$3,965 fee submitted to Planning Department.
 - Public Notice: Published online and sent to Community Council(s).
 - Discretionary review and approval by Planning Director.
 - 45-day Department review period
 - Tailored Approval Criteria (*see Attachment 1, p. 11*).
 - Case file documentation with approved plan and the Department's analysis.
4. Reduces the side setback for small multifamily structures (3 units or more on a lot) from 10 feet to 5 feet, to have the same setback as for a duplex or townhouse, provided:
 - A. The multifamily building's sidewall must be similar in length to a typical new home or duplex; and
 - B. 3-story buildings must still be stepped back from side lot line as discussed in item 2.A. above.
5. Revises the height exceptions for rooftop appurtenances such as stairwell towers and the definition of "half story" that underlies 2½-story limit, to mitigate taller buildings.

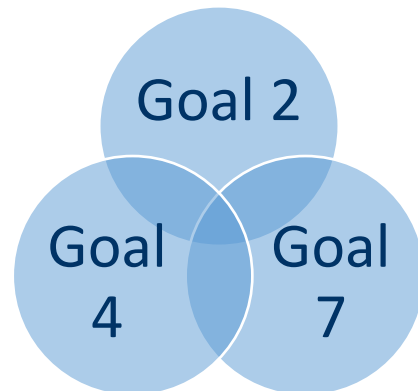
Pages 9 through 12 of Attachment 1 outline the Public Hearing Draft amendments in more detail and provides cross-references to the specific code amendment language in Attachment 3.

Comprehensive Plan Guidance

The Public Hearing Draft R-2 zones height and bulk amendment advances implementation actions 4-4 and 4-10 of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (2040 LUP)* **Goal 4: Neighborhood Housing** and its associated Action 7-2 of *2040 LUP* **Goal 7: Compatible Land Use**:

- **Action 4-4:** Amend Title 21 to allow compact housing on R-2M or R-3 zoned lots near designated Centers. May include increased height or allowed units per lot, subject to additional urban design and neighborhood compatibility standards, such as for building massing and scale, lot coverage, setbacks, and vehicle access...
- **Action 4-10:** Amend Title 21 to reduce restrictions that currently deter construction of compact housing types...
- **Action 7-2:** Incorporate neighborhood compatibility standards in compact housing amendments...

The amendment also furthers the *2040 LUP* **Goal 2: Infill and Redevelopment**. Goal 2 seeks to meet Anchorage’s housing needs through development within existing neighborhoods. *2040 LUP* **Goal 7: Compatible Land Use** envisions that infill development is compatible with the valued characteristics of surrounding properties and neighborhoods. The *2040 LUP* establishes that “compatible design is a key part of growing successfully through infill and redevelopment.” Reflecting the direction of the *2040 LUP*, the Public Hearing Draft amendment integrates Goals 2, 4, and 7.



Following is a list of the *2040 LUP* Policies for Goals 2, 4, and 7 that provide direction for the R-2 zones amendment:

- **LUP 2.3.** Remove barriers to desired infill development and incorporate flexibility in development requirements to promote adaptive reuse of older buildings and compact infill/redevelopment, including that which reflects traditional urban neighborhood design contexts.
- **LUP 4.2.** Allow and encourage innovative compact housing types and a variety of housing options that respond to changing preferences.
- **LUP 4.4.** Encourage property owners to preserve, rehabilitate, or redevelop properties in ways that minimize housing displacement and maintain affordability.
- **Housing-related Policies 14 and 58** from the *Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan* also apply. Policy 14 discourages development at densities less than called for in the city plans.
- **LUP 7.1.** Preserve, accommodate, and contribute to the character, scale, and identity of established neighborhoods as new infill housing development occurs.

- **LUP 7.2.** Ease the transitions between more intensive uses and adjacent lower-density neighborhoods—in terms of built scale, height, level of activity, and character.
- Related **Policies 11** and **49** from *Anchorage 2020* also apply. Policy 11 calls for requiring mixed-density development to improve the functional and aesthetic characteristics of the surrounding development. Policy 49 calls for site plan layout and building design for new development to consider the character of adjacent development.

2040 LUP Land Use Designations

The *Comprehensive Plan* policies also direct municipal land use decisions to follow the land use designations of the 2040 LUP Land Use Plan Map as to housing types, densities, and scale. The *Single-Family and Two-Family* land use designation (2040 LUP, page 37) provides for low-density residential neighborhoods including the R-2A and R-2D zones. Targeted neighborhood densities are 5 to 8 dwelling units per gross acre. The intended neighborhood character is a “low-intensity residential environment.”

The *Compact Mixed Residential—Low* land use designation (2040 LUP, page 38) provides for a compatible, diverse range of single-family, two-family, attached townhouses, and smaller-scale apartment housing at neighborhood densities of 5 to 15 units per gross acre. Its primary implementing zoning district is the R-2M zone. Its intended physical characteristics include:

- Retains single-family neighborhood characteristics such as building height.
- The building scale of new multi-unit/attached housing development is compatible with a neighborhood that includes single-family homes.
- Infill and redevelopment is compatible with the height, scale, and massing of adjacent homes and overall character of the street frontage.
- Infill and redevelopment protects front, side, and rear yard setbacks to provide open space, play space, landscaping, and sunlight access.

Area-Specific Plan Guidance

Preparation of the revised height and bulk standards for the R-2 zones also accounts for the area-specific land use designations, community design characteristics, and policies of the neighborhood and district plans that include substantial areas with R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning. These include primarily the *East Anchorage District Plan*, *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*, *Spenard Corridor Plan*, *West Anchorage District Plan*, and the *Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan*. Relevant policies include:

- East Anchorage District Plan: Strategies 1.1, 1.3.
- West Anchorage District Plan: Objectives 2, 4.
- Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan: Policies 5.5, 5.11, 7.12

Public Process Summary

The Public Hearing Draft R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment, including Attachments 1, 2, and 3 was released for agency and public review on September 3, 2021, and scheduled for the November 1 Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing. The documents were posted on the Planning Department website and distributed for review and comment to all Community Councils, review agencies, and other interested parties. The public hearing schedule was announced on the Municipality of Anchorage Public Notices webpages.

Two public information meetings were held via Microsoft Teams, at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 5, and at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 6. The project team appeared at the October 20 Federation of Community Councils Board of Delegates meeting. Additional appearances and consultations were held upon request by interested organizations.

The 2021 Public Hearing Draft is reworked from a previous, 2019 public hearing draft R-2 zones amendment that underwent public review and a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission in March 2019 (PZC Case No. 2019-0009). After receiving comments on the 2019 draft, the Commission closed the hearing, postponed its deliberations indefinitely, and requested the Planning Department hold additional consultations with stakeholders and address the comments received. Additional consultations were held with stakeholder groups in spring 2019 through early 2020. A more detailed project history is provided on page 7 of Attachment 1. A link to the 2019 case materials is provided on the Planning Department's R-2 project website.

Comments Received

A summary of the primary comments from the 2019 public comments, including the key concerns regarding potential impacts of 3-story flat-roofed buildings in the R-2 zones, is provided with illustrations on page 8 of Attachment 1. These comments and planning considerations provided a starting place for developing the 2021 Public Hearing Draft.

The Department received comments on the 2021 Public Hearing Draft document from six municipal agencies, all of which have no objection to the ordinance. One member of the public provided comments by October 15, in time to be considered in this staff report memo. Comments from one Community Council were also received and are included in the packet, although they were not received in time to be addressed by this staff report. All comments that have been received to date are included in this packet (Attachment 4). Additional comments that the Department receives will go to the Commission as a supplementary packet by the November 1 Commission meeting.

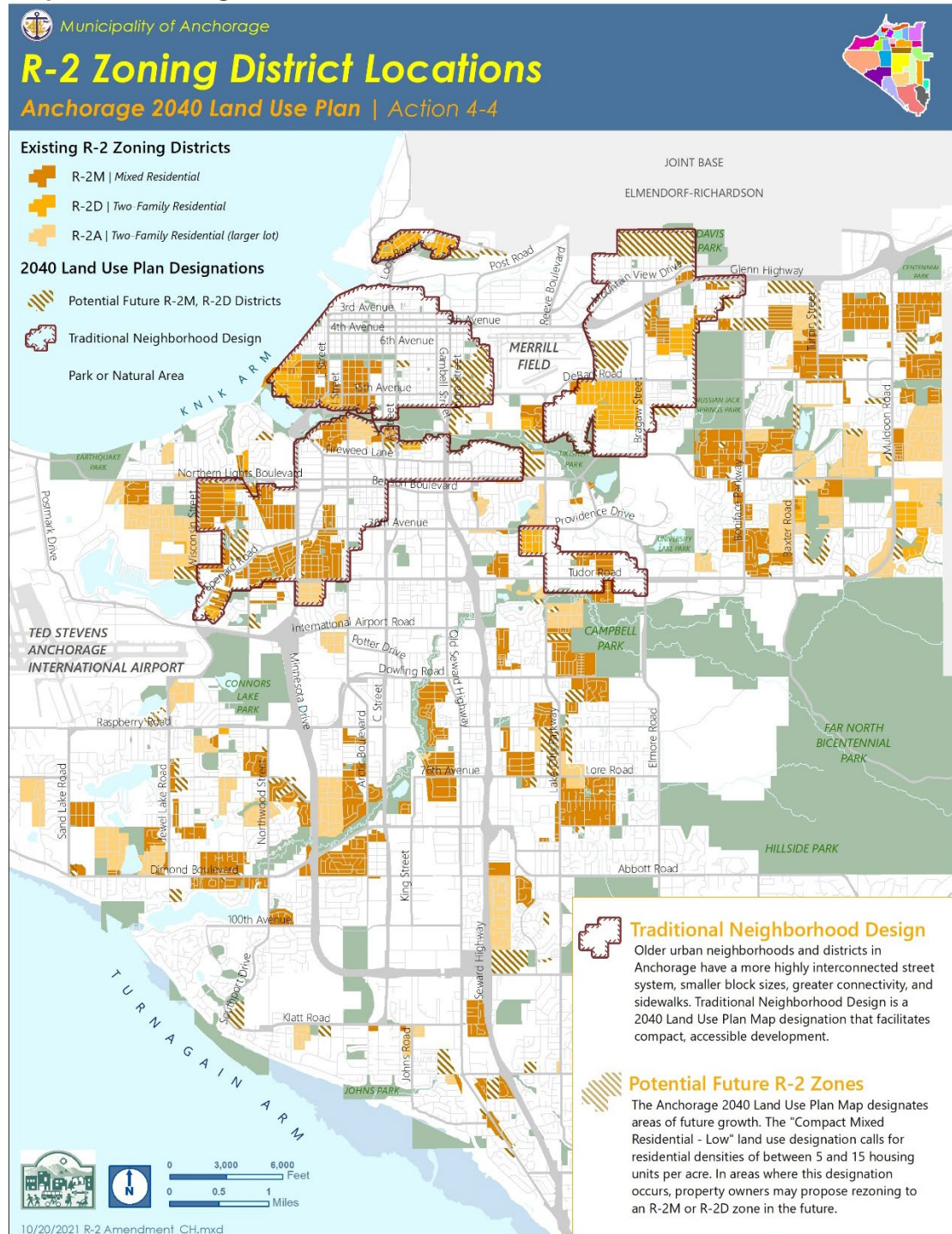
Department Staff Review

Staff from the Long-Range Planning, Current Planning, and Land Use Review sections of the Department reviewed and suggested edits to the Public Hearing Draft. Staff also took in questions and observations from the public at the October 5 and 6 public information meetings. These

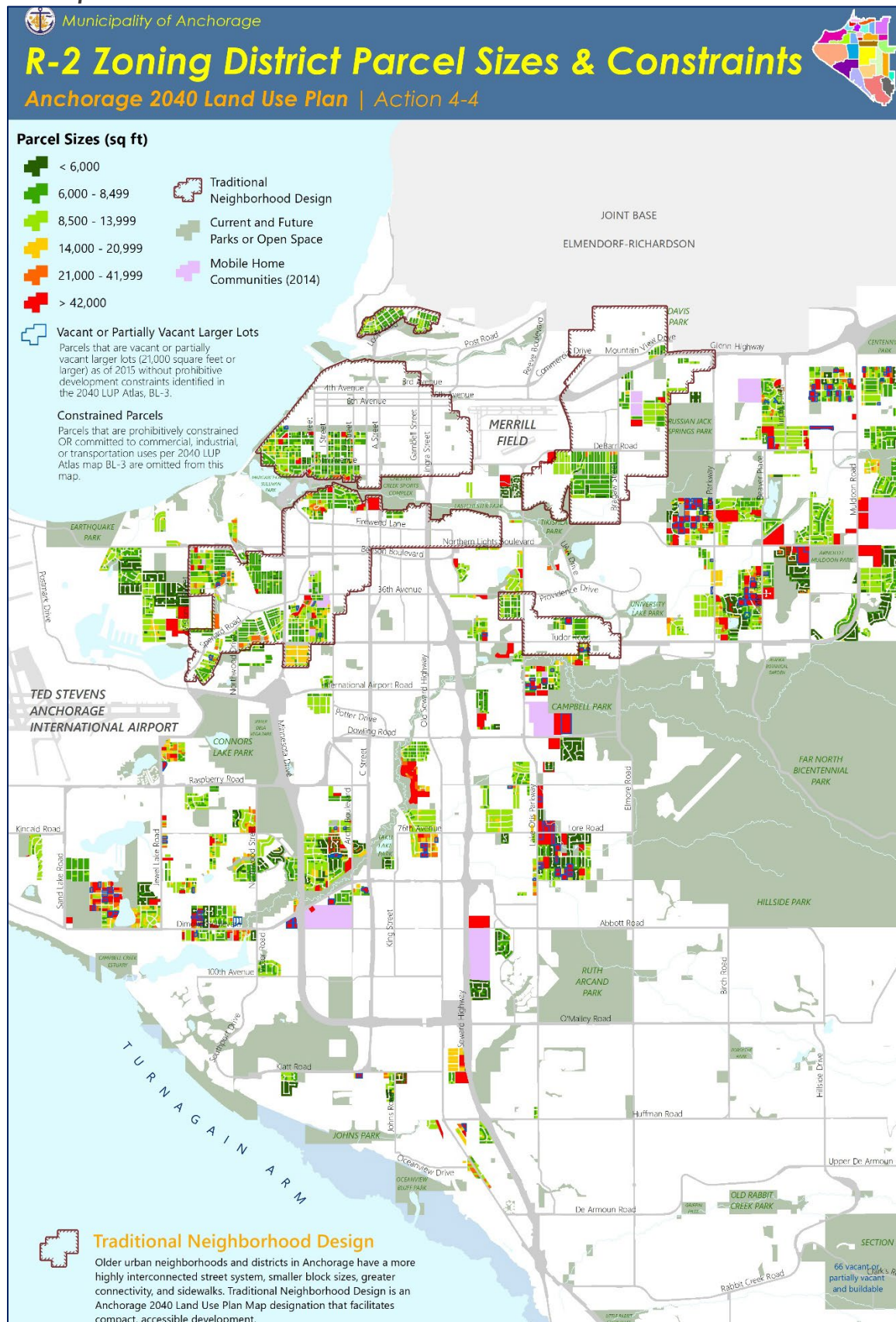
reviews and consultations identified potential clarifications adjustments to the draft language, which are addressed in the Department Recommendation section below.

Staff analysis also included updating Maps 1 and 2 from Attachment 1. Map 1 (page 3 of Attachment 1) showed the R-2 zoning districts as of 2018. Map 2 (page 5 of Attachment 1) showed R-2 lot sizes in 2018. Updates to Maps 1 and 2 using 2021 zoning and parcel data appear below.

Map 1. R-2 Zoning Districts in 2021



Map 2. R-2 Lot Sizes in 2021



Department Recommendation

The Department recommends **APPROVAL** of the Public Hearing Draft Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Standards, with the following amendments:

1. Section 21.04.020F.2.c.i. (Page 2, line 25 in Attachment 3): Site testing of approximately 12 duplex developments indicates that the 60-foot proposed maximum sidewall length for a multifamily building to be allowed a 5-foot setback is too short to approximate the length of a typical new duplex. In response, the Department recommends modifying section 21.04.020F.2.c.i. as follows:
 - i. No more than 72[60] feet in length, in order to be compatible in scale to a single-family dwelling or duplex; ...
2. Section 21.06.030D.7.b.ii. (Page 6, lines 19 and 20 in Attachment 3): Staff reviewers commented that listing the individual zoning districts (e.g., B-3, I-1, ...) would be clearer to applicants than “commercial or industrial zones.” Secondly, test mapping of R-2 zoned lots adjacent to commercial zoning districts that would be eligible for 3-story buildings found that one of the commercial zones, the B-1A Local and Neighborhood Business District, is in the middle of R-2 residential neighborhoods and is not a higher intensity zone. B-1A provides for small-scale commercial businesses, limited to 2 stories that fit in the scale of R-2 neighborhoods. Examples include Fire Island Bake Shop in South Addition and Fiora d’Italia Restaurant in Spenard. Unlike the B-3 zone, the B-1A zone does not seem to merit 3-story residences providing a height transition to the rest of the neighborhood. In response, the Department recommends modifying section 21.06.030D.7.b.ii. as follows:
 - ii. The site is located at a transition to an R-3, R-3A, R-4, R-4A, RO, B-1B, B-3, I-1, or I-2[COMMERCIAL, OR INDUSTRIAL] zoning district...
3. Section 21.06.030D.7.b.ii. (Page 6, line 22 in Attachment 3): Staff review found a technical error in the wording “...adjacent facing across a class I or II street...”. The draft language is intended to refer to properties facing each other across a local and collector street. However, Class II streets are arterial streets (e.g., Tudor Road). Lots located across arterial streets from each other are not considered “adjacent” under Title 21. In response, the Department recommends correcting section 21.06.030D.7.b.ii. as follows:
 - ii. ...or adjacent facing across a local or collector[CLASS I OR II] street...
4. Section 21.06.030D.7.e.ii. (Page 9, lines 20-25 in Attachment C): Staff reviewers commented that the proposed site plan approval criteria ii. is a long, complex sentence. It is also likely to be more difficult than the other criteria for code users to interpret. The latter part of the sentence which refers to “building width along street frontages” and “sidewall length relative to total lot depth” seems redundant to the first line of the sentence. However, the phrases “breaks in massing between townhouse units” and “while considering site-specific conditions” provide value and should be retained. In response, the Department recommends modifying 21.06.030D.7.e.ii. as follows:

- ii. The site plan provides a compatible building width and length, including breaks in massing between townhouse units, that compliments or transitions to the scale of single-family and two-family development anticipated by the R-2 zoning for the area[, INCLUDING BUILDING WIDTH ALONG STREET FRONTAGES, BREAKS IN MASSING BETWEEN TOWNHOUSE UNITS, AND SIDEWALL LENGTH RELATIVE TO TOTAL LOT DEPTH], while considering site-specific conditions;
5. Section 21.06.030D.7.e. (Page 9 in Attachment 3): Staff fielded questions at the public information meeting on October 5 about the applicability of adopted neighborhood plans to proposed 3-story buildings. The public hearing draft amendment does not include the Title 21 site plan review criteria for proposed developments to be “consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan” (AMC 21.03.180F.4.). The reason is that criteria would be too broad. It would open a proposed 3-story entitlement to review for compliance against too many unrelated planning policies. However, a more targeted criteria for consistency with area-specific or neighborhood plan policies regarding building scale and massing would seem appropriate. For example, if there is an adopted neighborhood plan with applicable development guidelines, then it would seem imperative for that element of the comprehensive plan to be considered in the discretionary site plan review and approval. In response, the Department recommends adding the following criteria to 21.06.030D.7.e.:
 - v. The site plan conforms to policies and guidelines regarding the height, bulk, and massing of buildings in adopted neighborhood and area-specific elements or applicable land use designations of the comprehensive plan.
6. Section 21.15.040D., *Definitions – Story, Half*. (Page 12, lines 7-20 in Attachment 3): Staff reviewers commented that the Public Hearing Draft amendment to the definition of “Story, Half” needs clarification for code administrators and applicants. In response, the Department recommends clarifying “Story, Half” in 21.15.040 as follows:

Story, Half
A story that has the following characteristics:

 - Habitable floor area under a gable, hip, gambrel, mansard, or curved (e.g., barrel) roof; and
 - All roof rafters extend down to the top plate of walls[LOCATED WITHIN] five feet or less in height above[OF] the floor joists of such story, except at roof ends (e.g., gable ends) or where dormers are provided; and
 - The g[G]ross floor area does not exceed[NOT EXCEEDING] 75 percent of the gross floor area of the story below. The calculation for the gross floor area for the half story excludes areas[PORTIONS OF THE HALF STORY] where the ceiling height is six feet eight inches (6’8”) or less.

Attachments: 1. Project Background and Description
2. Public Hearing Draft Ordinance
3. Annotated Public Hearing Draft Title 21 Amendment Language
4. Comments Received

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Project Description and Background

**Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones
Height and Bulk Standards**

Public Hearing Draft

PZC Case No. 2021-0111

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Project Description and Background

Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Standards

Table of Contents:	Page
Summary	1
Project Background and Need	2
Where are the R-2 Zones Located?	2
What is the Function of R-2 Zones?	4
R-2 Zoned Buildable Lands and Future Housing Capacity	4
History of R-2 Height & Story Limits	6
Problems with the Current 2½-Story Limit	6
R-2 Height and Bulk Amendment Project History	7
2019 Public Comments and Planning Considerations	8
2021 Public Hearing Draft Amendment	9
Amendment Objectives	9
Description of Amendments	9
What this Amendment Does Not Do	12

SUMMARY

Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) Case No. 2021-0111 is a proposed amendment to the two-and-one-half-story (2½-story) limit in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M residential zoning districts (R-2 zones). It is a text amendment to the regulations in the Anchorage Municipal Code Title 21 Zoning Ordinance (Title 21). The amendment proposes to allow for 3-story buildings on peripherally located sites, large development sites, and other sites most likely to both provide housing opportunities and minimize height and bulk impacts within existing R-2 neighborhoods.

This project is intended to help carry out implementation Action 4-4 of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan's Goal 4: Neighborhood Housing* and its associated Action 7-2 of 2040 **Goal 7: Compatible Land Use**. It is related to other Title 21 code amendment projects and actions that seek to achieve the goals of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*.

The amendment is intended to support more efficient housing development in the R-2 zones while addressing neighborhood compatibility. The current 2½-story limit has led to the following problems:

- Constraining the number of new housing units that can fit on some development sites;
- Increasing the costs of adding third-story living spaces as attic spaces or daylight basements;
- No exceptions or administrative relief or flexibility to respond to site characteristics; and
- Vague and confusing regulatory language.

The amendment also addresses problems with other dimensional standards in the R-2 zones, including:

- An excessive side yard setback when applied to small multi-unit structures;
- Excessive height exceptions for rooftop stairwells and other roof appurtenances; and
- No height exception available for roof dormers that support 2½-story attic living spaces.

Allowing 3-story buildings in certain locations and situations, subject to additional height and bulk compatibility standards or site plan approval procedures, and in combination with adjustments to existing dimensional standards, can support more efficient housing development while minimizing impacts on adjoining properties and the interior of existing R-2 neighborhoods. This purpose is in alignment with the stated intent of the R-2 zones and the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*. This project proposes to achieve these objectives through the following:

1. **Allowing 3-story Residences on Large and Transitional Sites:** Currently, buildings in the R-2 zones cannot exceed 2½ stories, such that living spaces above the second story must be tucked under a sloping roof as an attic living space. The amendment proposes to allow 3-story buildings in the R-2 zones at transitions to higher-intensity multifamily and commercial zoning districts, on large development sites ½ acre or more in size, and on lots adjoining only non-residential uses or existing 3-story residential uses.
2. **Requiring a Height/Bulk Transition on the Exempted Sites:** Three-story buildings allowed on the sites above would be required to be stepped back in form or set back in footprint further from adjacent properties. The amendment also places limits on the length of 3-story buildings in relation to the lot depth. It provides for exceptions and administrative relief and flexibility.

3. **Approving 3-story Residences on Other R-2 Lots through a Site Plan Review:** The amendment gives applicants an avenue to propose 3-story buildings on other R-2 zoned lots through the Title 21 Administrative Site Plan Review procedure. Such developments would be subject to a set of discretionary site plan approval criteria designed to mitigate 3-story buildings within existing R-2 neighborhoods.
4. **Reducing Side Yard Setbacks for Small Multi-unit Buildings in the R-2M Zone.** The amendment reduces the side setback for small multifamily buildings from 10 feet to 5 feet if the multifamily building's sidewall length facing the side lot line is no greater than that of a new single-family, two-family, or townhouse residence.
5. **Additional Mitigation of Taller Structures.** Lastly, the amendment clarifies height exceptions and definitions, and mitigates for stairwells and parapet walls on buildings taller than two stories.

(The "Description of Amendments" section below outlines these amendments in more detail.)

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND NEED

This 2021 Public Hearing Draft has been reworked from a previous public hearing draft version of the R-2 zones height and bulk amendment that underwent public review in 2018-2019 and a public hearing at the Planning and Zoning Commission on March 4, 2019 (PZC Case No. 2019-0009). The 2021 Public Hearing Draft responds to public comments received regarding the 2019 draft, subsequent consultations, and further assessment of the 2½-story limit.

This section provides background regarding the R-2 zones and their requirements for height, identifies problems with the current 2½-story height limit, and summarizes the public comments received regarding the 2019 draft version of this amendment as primary planning considerations for making changes to the 2½-story height limit.

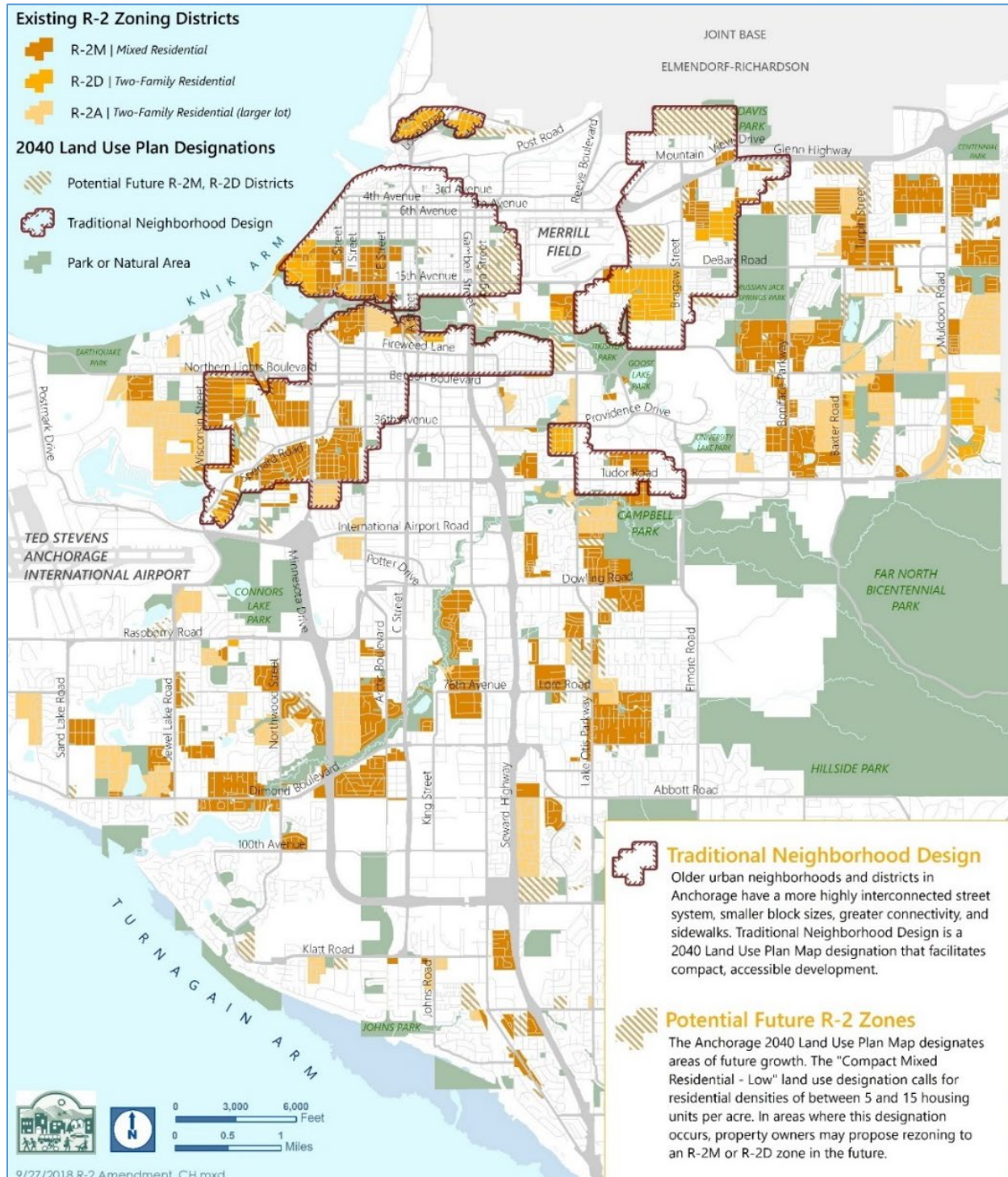
Where are the R-2 Zones Located?

The R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts are distributed across the Anchorage Bowl, as shown on Map 1 on the next page. They comprise approximately one-third of residential-zoned land in Anchorage's urban water and wastewater service area and include more than 30,000 properties. They are primarily built-up neighborhoods with existing homes. Up to half of all Anchorage Bowl residents live in an R-2 zone.

Most Anchorage Bowl community councils have R-2 zoning. Only Downtown and five Hillside community councils do not.

- Community councils with the most R-2 zoned land overall include Northeast, Sand Lake, Abbott Loop, Turnagain, Taku-Campbell, and Spenard. These have more R-2 zoning partly because they are bigger neighborhoods with more zoned land in general.
- Community councils with the most R-2 zoned land per acre include South Addition, North Star, Scenic Foothills, Turnagain, University Area, Northeast, Spenard, Tudor Area, Russian Jack Park, and the residential portions of Government Hill and Airport Heights. Neighborhoods within these community councils are primarily in R-2 zoned areas—i.e., R-2 zones help define the character of much of their core neighborhoods.

Map 1. R-2 Zoning Districts in 2018

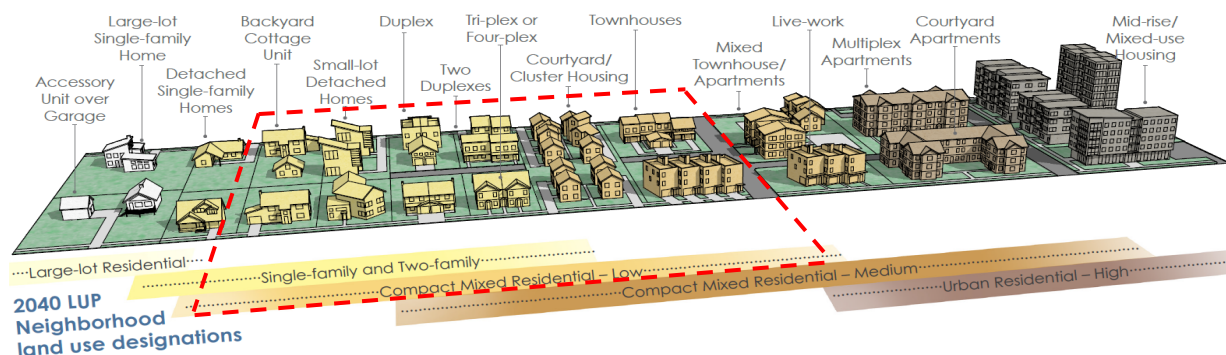


What is the Function of R-2 Zones?

The R-2 zoning districts play a unique and important role among Anchorage's residential zones. These key districts provide a moderate neighborhood scale and intensity that is compatible with a single-family neighborhood-type living environment, and yet they also provide a diverse range of compact housing types: attached single-family, duplex, townhouse, and (in the R-2M zone) small multifamily structures. They offer low- to moderate-scale residential living environments desired by most Anchorage residents but also more land-efficient and attainable housing choices for a variety of households, incomes, and age groups. An R-2 zone is more likely to offer a place for people to stay in their neighborhood as their housing needs change from younger to older stages of life.

This distinguishes R-2 zoning from R-1 single-family zoning on the low end of the density spectrum and R-3/R-4 apartment zoning on the high end of the density spectrum. The range of R-2 housing types within the middle of the spectrum of Anchorage housing is shown in the red-dashed box below. The illustration conveys how the scale of the various R-2 housing structures can fit with a low-scale residential living environment that defines R-2.

Figure 1. Neighborhood Housing Types



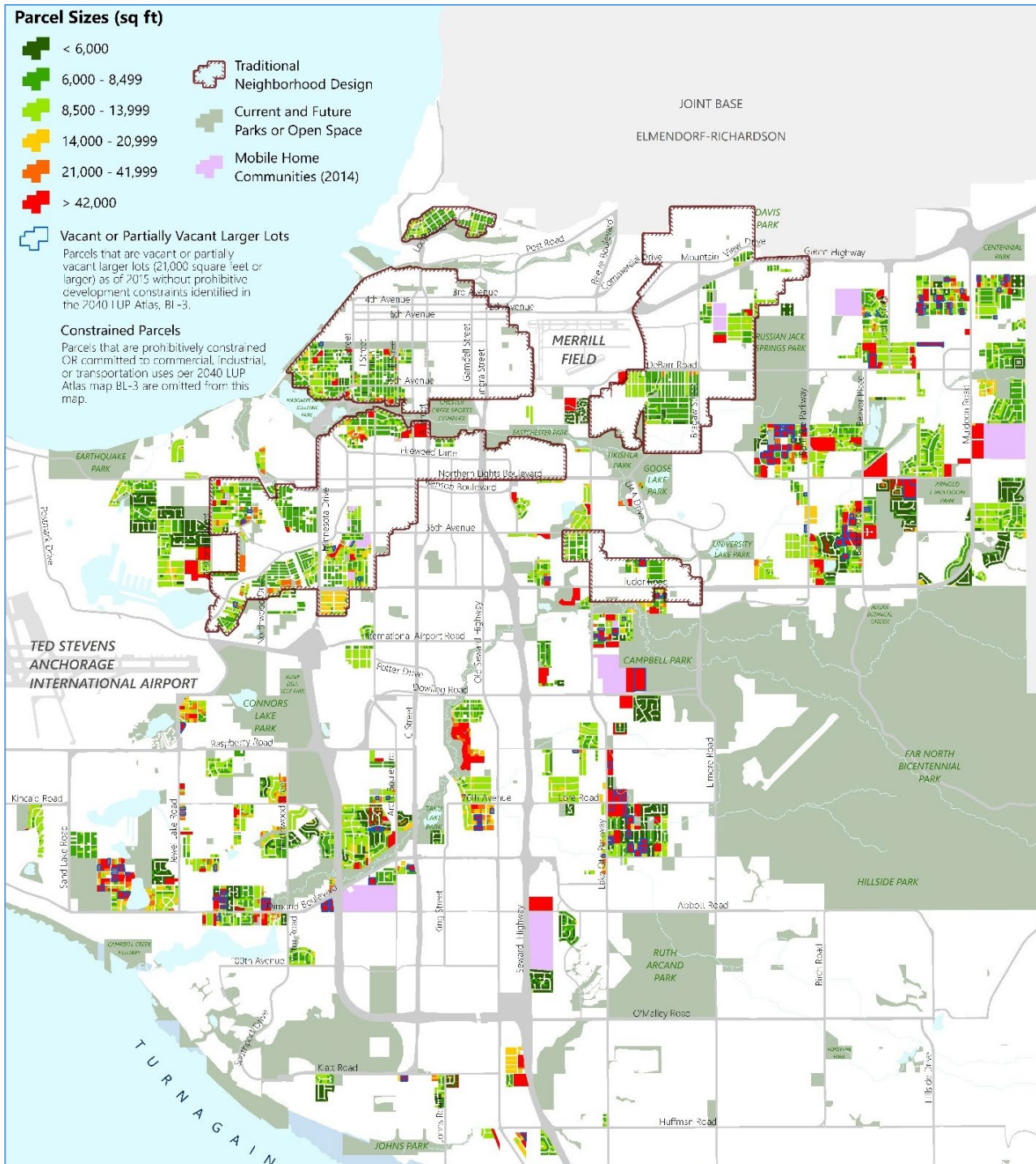
R-2 Zoned Buildable Lands and Future Housing Capacity

The *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan* found that, as of 2016, approximately one-fifth of Anchorage's forecast additional housing capacity was in the R-2 zones. The R-2 zones' housing capacity is important because it supplies primarily the "compact" housing types as discussed on the previous pages above. The forecast demand for this range of housing types through 2040 is greater than the forecast land capacity to supply housing in this range.

Map 2 below shows the R-2 zoned properties by lot size. It indicates the prevalence and distribution of larger versus smaller lots. Also, it outlines in blue buildable vacant lots larger than 21,000 square feet (i.e., approximately ½ acre or larger).

The R-2 zones provide "infill" and "redevelopment" lots within established neighborhoods. They also include a smaller number of larger tracts available for "greenfield" development. *Anchorage 2040* analyses found that more than two-thirds of the buildable acres and additional housing capacity remaining in the R-2 zones was identified on larger parcels one-half acre or more in size. Lots smaller than half acre, typically located within the interior blocks of existing neighborhoods, accounted for less than a third of buildable acres and capacity.

Map 2. R-2 Lot Sizes in 2018



History of R-2 Height & Story Limits

From the 1940s through the early 1980s, R-2 zoning expanded with the growing city across the Anchorage Bowl, and housing built in R-2 zones was subject to a 2½-story height limit. A “story” is defined in Title 21 as “That portion of a building included between the upper surface of a floor and the upper surface of the next floor or roof above.” A 2½-story building consists of two stories plus a third-floor attic living space tucked into a pitched roof form. Title 21 called this attic living space a “half story”: “A story under a gable, hip, gambrel or mansard roof, the wall plates of which on at least two opposite exterior walls are not more than two feet above the floor of such story” (Title 21, c. 1983).

Buildings were also subject to a height limit measured in feet, that accompanied the 2½-story limit. During the 1960s the accompanying height limit of 35 feet was reduced to 25 feet. The 25-foot, 2½-story dual height limit prevailed until nearly the end of Anchorage’s oil boom years in the mid-1980s. As a result, most of the existing housing stock in the R-2 zones was built under the 2½-story limit. Then a series of changes were made to the height limits over time:

- **1985:** The 2½-story limit was deleted, leaving only the 25-foot height limit. In practice, 25 feet still limited most buildings to only 2½ stories. An exception was also created to the 25-foot height limit to allow a 30-foot height if 30% of the development lot was left as open space.
- **1999:** The 25-foot height limit in the R-2 zones was increased to 30 feet to allow new homes to have steeper roof pitches and taller ceilings, allow more diversity in design, and fit more living area within homes on smaller buildable lots. Most residences were still constructed with pitched roofs at that time, and the 1999 case materials do not appear to have anticipated 3-story flat-roof residential construction as a prevalent housing style.
- **2013:** The 2½-story limit was restored in the R-2 zones as part of the Title 21 Rewrite project, to supplement the 30-foot height limit. Since becoming fully effective in 2016, it limits third-story living spaces to only “half-story” attic living spaces having no more than half the floor area of the second floor. The restoration of the 2½-story limit responded to concerns about construction trends toward bigger, taller townhouses with flat roofs, parapets, and stairwell towers.

Problems with the Current 2½-Story Limit.

The Planning Department has heard several problems with the current 2½-story:

- **Homebuilders report that the 2½-story limit constrains the number of housing units that can fit on some development sites.** As a result, it is a contributor to construction of fewer units than the lot size would allow under R-2 zoning, especially on larger sites and in the R-2M zone. Generally, it is difficult to fit multiple townhouse units on a development property partly because modern townhouse units have more living space and larger garages than older housing constructed when Anchorage’s R-2 district regulations first evolved. A townhouse unit takes up a larger footprint on the property than units did historically. Stacking a third story would reduce the footprint and help fit the allowed number of dwellings anticipated by the R-2 zoning. Three-story residences have become more practical within the 30-foot zoning height limit because of changes in construction techniques and market preferences that make flat roofs more acceptable.
- **Homebuilders report the 2½-story limit increases the cost of third-story living spaces.** Any third-story living space must be only a “half-story” attic living space tucked under a pitched roof and

have only half as much floor area as the second story. Daylight basements do not count toward the 2½-story limit if they are far enough below grade. However, half-story attic and basement living spaces cost thousands of dollars more per unit to construct and can be inefficient.

- **The 2½-story limit may not be providing effective or consistent standard for building height, building bulk, and sunlight access protections.** Floor heights vary and daylight basements may stick up as much as 6 feet above grade. There is no clear ground-rules for the ceiling/roof height of half-story attic living space or its side walls. The maximum allowed floor area of the half-story is half the floor area of the home's second floor, so bigger homes get to have a bigger half-story.
- **Applicants and zoning staff find the current language confusing.** The current wording of the definition of "half-story" in Title 21 is vague and confusing and is inconsistent with other codes.
- **Inflexibility.** Title 21 currently allows no exceptions or administrative adjustments for relief or design alternatives from the 2½-story limit, regardless of site context or circumstances.

The 2½-story limit appears to be a contributing factor that combines with other engineering, market, and regulatory factors that leads to underutilization of R-2 zoned lots below the number of allowed units that would otherwise be anticipated by the R-2 zoning. Other potential site development requirements that have been identified for potential reform include modern parking requirements, side setbacks, and on-site driveways and vehicle turnarounds.

These problems are in context of Anchorage's challenges with housing development costs, affordability, quality of aging housing stock, and availability of buildable land. The *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*, adopted in 2017, called for policies and actions to help create more housing opportunities.

R-2 Height and Bulk Amendment Project History.

In early 2018, homebuilders requested that the Municipality reevaluate the 2½-story limit. Homebuilders proposed removing the 2½-story limit to reduce costs, add design flexibility, and (on larger lots) fit the number of units allowed by the zoning. The Planning Department initiated a public process to amend the R-2 zones height and bulk regulations:

- **Pre-consultations** were held with an initial advisory group of builders and architects, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and community councils in summer and early fall 2018.
- **A Community Discussion Draft** amendment was released for public review in September 2018, was accompanied by public meetings, and received substantial written comments.
- **A Public Hearing Draft** was released in December 2018 (PZC Case No. 2019-0009) for several months of public review.
- **A public hearing at the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC)** was held on March 4, 2019. After receiving a range of comments, the PZC closed the public hearing, postponed its deliberations indefinitely, and requested the Planning Department hold additional consultations with stakeholders to address the concerns raised.
- **Additional consultations** were held with stakeholder groups in spring 2019 through early 2020.

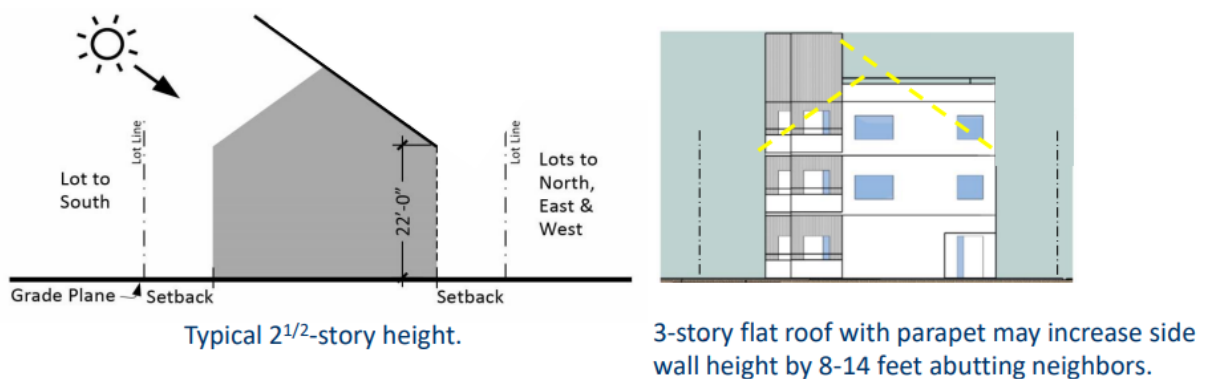
2019 Public Comments and Planning Considerations.

Developers, community councils, and multiple residents (primarily residents from South Addition) provided comments. There were concerns that the 2019 draft proposed to replace the 2½-story limit with different bulk standards that were complicated, unfamiliar, too restrictive in certain ways, but inadequate to mitigate the potential impacts of 3-story flat-roofed buildings, parapet walls, and stairwell towers. Following is a summary of key comments and concerns about the 2019 public hearing draft:

- Increase in time, costs, and confusion in the development and approval process.
- Restrictions on building sizes and potentially the number of units on some sites.
- Would not lead to an increase in housing units.
- Incompatible building height and bulk with adjoining homes and the intent of the R-2 zones.
- New buildings with rooftop stairwells and elevator towers already too tall under current code.
- Loss of sunlight access to yards and living spaces on adjoining lots.
- Loss of solar photovoltaic energy value on adjoining lots.
- Loss of neighbors' privacy from third-floor windows and 3-story rooftop patios.
- Loss of affordable/workforce housing opportunities by allowing bigger, more expensive units.
- Need to focus on other, more effective kinds of reforms to support infill housing.
- Third story compounds other concerns: wide front driveways and garages, loss of front yards, loss of space for on-street parking and street snowplowing/storage.
- Need for stronger area-specific bulk/height limits in older neighborhoods with small lots.

Figure 2 below indicates a source of some of the concerns heard with increasing maximum height from 2½ to 3 stories. This half-story increase results in building facades and side walls that can be 8 to 25 feet taller facing the adjacent properties. A new 2½ story building has two-story side walls approximately 20 to 24 feet tall up to the roof eave. By comparison, a 3-story flat-roof building has side walls extending up to the maximum roof height (30 feet) topped with roof parapets, increasing the side wall height to 32 to 34 feet. Rooftop stairwell towers can further increase wall heights to 40 to 45 feet.

Figure 2. Dimensional Effects of Allowing 3-Story Buildings



2021 PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT AMENDMENT

Amendment Objectives

To respond to previous public comments, the 2021 Public Hearing Draft amendment has been reworked from the 2019 public hearing draft. Project objectives include:

- Help make it more feasible to fit the allowed number of housing units on larger sites that meet the minimum lot size requirements for multiple buildings.
- Support efficient use of buildable R-2 properties located at transitions to higher intensity districts, employment, services, and access to public transportation.
- Provide for exceptions, administrative relief, and design flexibility allowing for 3-story buildings, subject to additional bulk and height standards to mitigate impacts.
- Where 3-story buildings are allowed, ensure that they provide transitions in bulk and height to adjoining residences in the R-2 zones that is equivalent to the level of protection afforded by the 2½-story height limit.
- Mitigate the effects of flat-roof construction generally, by promoting more sensitive placement, size, and design of rooftop appurtenances such as parapet walls and rooftop stairwell towers.
- Provide relief for small multi-unit buildings from 10-foot-wide multifamily setback requirements in the R-2M zone, to treat similar sized buildings consistently, improve site planning outcomes, and support multi-unit infill housing opportunities anticipated by the R-2M zoning.
- Clarify the regulations for 2½-story limits and height exceptions to reduce confusion.

Description of Amendments

The following description of the proposed amendment elaborates on the summary list of amendment topics on page 1. It also provides cross-references to *Attachment 3: Zoning Code Amendment Language (annotated)*, which provides the draft code amendment language with illustrations and explanation.

- 1. Allowing 3-story Residences on Large or Transitional Sites.** The amendment proposes to retain the 2½-story limit generally, and allow 3-story buildings as exceptions in the following strategic and peripheral locations most likely to provide housing opportunities (and that include most of the buildable land capacity in the R-2 zones) while minimizing height and bulk impacts within existing R-2 neighborhoods:
 - a. Large development sites** ½ acre (21,780 square feet) or more size. These are large enough to accommodate multiple residential buildings and are the most likely to yield more housing because of the spatial efficiencies afforded by 3-story buildings. They comprise approximately two-thirds of the remaining buildable R-2 zoned land capacity. They are not commonly located within existing R-2 neighborhood blocks, which minimizes impacts.
 - b. Transitional sites** located adjacent to a multifamily district, or a commercial or industrial district, where abutting at the side lot line or facing across the local or collector street. These

sites can provide a transition in scale to the rest of the R-2 neighborhood. Their peripheral location minimizes impacts to the interior of existing R-2 neighborhoods. Transition sites also support more housing opportunities next to employment, services, and public transit routes.

- c. **Other Low-impact sites**, defined as being adjacent only to non-residential uses such as schools or parks, or to existing 3-story residential uses.

⇒ *See Attachment 3, pages 3 (right-hand table column) and 6, for the code amendment text and more details regarding allowing 3-stories on large or transitional sites.*

- 2. **Requiring a Height/Bulk Transition.** The amendment proposes that 3-story buildings on the exempted sites above be required to provide the following transitions in height and bulk to adjacent residential properties located in the R-2 zones and other low-density residential zones:

- a. **Step-Back Plane:** Three-story buildings would be required to be stepped back, set back further, or their rooftops sloped away from the adjacent residential lots, by staying under a step-back “plane” measured starting from 20 feet above grade at the lot line of the development site and rising inward over the site at an 8:12 rise-to-run angle. This bulk plane measurement is the approximate height of a 2 ½-story building built to its side setback.

- b. **Maximum Sidewall Length:** There would be a limitation on the length of the 3-story portion of a building extending along the side lot lines, in relation to the total depth of the lot.

- c. **Administrative Relief and Flexibility.** Dormers, gable-end roof forms, and incidental architectural features such as chimneys would be exempt from the step-back plane requirement above. The following administrative adjustments from the height/bulk transition requirements would also be available:

- **Minor Modifications:** Administrative relief allowing small deviations of up to five percent from the step-back plane and maximum length requirements through the Minor Modifications procedure in Title 21 section 21.03.120.
- **Administrative Variances:** Administrative relief allowing larger deviations from the step-back plane and maximum length requirements in cases of hardship due to topography or other challenging site characteristics, by adding an Administrative Variance procedure in Title 21 Section 21.03.240J.
- **Alternative Equivalent Compliance:** Administrative flexibility allowing designers to propose a different way to achieve the intent of the height/bulk transition, through the Alternative Equivalent Compliance procedure in Title 21 Section 21.07.0010D.

⇒ *See Attachment 3, page 7, for the code amendment text and more details regarding the height/bulk transition standard.*

⇒ *See Attachment 3, page 8, for the code amendment text and more details regarding exceptions from the height/bulk transition standard for roof appurtenances, dormers, and gable ends.*

⇒ See Attachment 3, pages 1 (lines 3-12 and 27-44), 8 (lines 19-22), and 10, for the code amendment text and more details regarding administrative relief and flexibility from the height/bulk transition standard.

3. **Approving 3-story Residences on Other R-2 Lots through Administrative Site Plan Review.** The amendment provides an avenue for applicants to propose to 3-story buildings on other R-2 zoned properties, that do not meet the locational criteria for being exempted in 1. above, through the Administrative Site Plan Review procedure in Title 21 Section 21.03.180. Such development would be subject to a new set of discretionary site plan approval criteria designed to mitigate 3-story building massing impacts within existing R-2 neighborhoods.

⇒ See Attachment 3, pages 9 (all) and 1 (lines 16-23), for the code amendment text and more details regarding the three-story entitlement through administrative site plan review.

4. **Reducing Side Yard Setbacks for Small Multifamily Buildings.** Currently the R-2M zone requires a 5-foot side yard setback for single-family, two-family, and townhouse uses, and 10-foot side setback for multifamily uses (3 or more units on a lot). The amendment proposes to reduce the side yard setback for small multifamily structures from 10 to 5 feet, if the multifamily building's sidewall length facing the side lot line is similar in scale to the sidewall length of a typical new single-family or two-family (duplex) residence. This change would result in more consistent treatment of same-sized buildings and avoid discouraging small, multi-unit infill developments.

⇒ See Attachment 3, pages 2 and 3 (middle table column), for the code amendment text and more details regarding reducing side yard setbacks for small multifamily buildings.

5. **Additional Mitigation of Taller Structures.** Finally, the amendment proposes to improve the height measurement regulations to clarify the regulations and mitigate the effects of structures taller than two stories:

- a. **Reducing height exceptions for rooftop access enclosures.** Title 21 allows rooftop stairwell and elevator access towers to exceed the 30-foot height limit. The amendment reduces the height exception for stairwells from 15 to 12 feet and elevator enclosures from 25 to 18 feet in the R-2 zones.
- b. **Requiring rooftop enclosures to be set back from the front building facade.** The amendment proposes to require rooftop stairwell and elevator access enclosures that exceed the 30-foot height limit in the R-2 zones to be set back at least four feet from the front street-facing building façade wall.
- c. **Reducing height exceptions for rooftop parapet walls.** The amendment proposes to reduce the height exception for rooftop parapet walls in the R-2 zones from 4 feet to a maximum of 2 feet above the 30-foot height limit. The proposed two-foot limit is the lowest exception that still accommodates roof drainage needs and the mounting of safety railings on the parapet wall. The proposed amendment allows open and transparent railings to exceed the two-foot limit.

- d. **Clarifying the height exceptions for dormers that serve attic living spaces.** The amendment would give a height exception for dormers that stay within specified dimensional thresholds.
 - e. **Clarifying the definition of 2½ stories.** The amendment would clarify the definition of the term “one-half story” in the Title 21 definitions chapter in 21.15.040.
- ⇒ *See Attachment 3, pages 4 and 11, for the code amendment text and more details regarding changing height exceptions for rooftop parapets, railings, and access enclosures.*
- ⇒ *See Attachment 3, page 5, for the code amendment text and more details regarding height exception for dormers.*
- ⇒ *See Attachment 3, page 12, for the code amendment text and more details regarding clarifications to the Title 21 definition of half story and 2½ story in 21.15.040.*

What this Amendment Does Not Do.

In response to questions received from the public in 2019, following is a list of things the Public Hearing Draft amendment does NOT include:

- Does not change the 30-foot height limit.
- Does not change the maximum 40 percent lot coverage (i.e., the percentage of a lot allowed to be covered by buildings).
- Does not change the minimum lot size required per housing unit or per type of housing unit. In other words, it does not increase the number of dwelling units, or change what kinds of housing types are allowed on a given lot. For example, a 6,000 square foot lot in the R-2D zone currently allowed to have only one single-family home or duplex will continue to be allowed only one single-family home or duplex. For example, an 8,500 square foot lot in the R-2M zone currently allowed to have only up to a triplex will continue to be allowed to have only up to a triplex.
- Does not propose rezonings or changes to neighborhood zoning boundaries on the Zoning Map. Does not propose any new development project for any property.
- Does not change height limits or setbacks in the Chugiak-Eagle River R-2 zones, which comprise the CE-R-2A, CE-R-2D, or CE-R-2M zoning districts and have their own regulations specific to Chugiak-Eagle River.

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Draft Assembly Ordinance

**Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones
Height and Bulk Standards**

Public Hearing Draft

PZC Case No. 2021-0111

Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan
Implementation Actions 4-4 and 7-2

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Submitted by: Chair of the Assembly at
the Request of the Mayor
Prepared by: Planning Department
For reading: _____

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AO NO. 2022-___

AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 21 CHAPTERS 21.03, REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES; 21.04, ZONING DISTRICTS; 21.06 DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS AND MEASUREMENTS; 21.07, DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS; AND 21.15.040, RULES OF CONSTRUCTION AND DEFINITIONS, IN ORDER TO AMEND THE TWO-AND-ONE-HALF-STORY LIMIT AND RELATED DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS IN THE R-2A, R-2D, AND R-2M ZONING DISTRICTS, FOR PROMOTING HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMPATIBLE WITH THE INTENDED SCALE OF R-2 NEIGHBORHOODS.

(Planning and Zoning Commission Case No. 2021-0111)

WHEREAS, the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (2040 Plan)* assesses the housing needs of current and future Anchorage residents and includes goals, policies, and actions to address these housing needs; and

WHEREAS, Goal 2 of the *2040 Plan* and its supporting policies promote infill and redevelopment in existing neighborhoods as a means to meet the housing needs of residents in Anchorage, in part through incorporating more flexibility in development requirements; and

WHEREAS, Goal 4 of the *2040 Plan* establishes Anchorage's neighborhoods as the places to provide a range of places to live, meeting the housing needs of residents of all income levels and household types; and

WHEREAS, Goal 7 of the *2040 Plan* and its supporting policies promote infill development that is compatible with the valued characteristics of surrounding properties and neighborhoods, including the physical scale and character; and

WHEREAS, the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts (R-2 districts) are found in many parts of the Anchorage Bowl, comprising one-third of residentially zoned land in the Anchorage Bowl water and sewer service area; and

WHEREAS, the R-2 districts fulfill a unique and important function among Anchorage's residential zones, providing for compact single-family, two-family, townhouse, and (in the R-2M) small-scale multifamily structures at a low-to-moderate scale and intensity compatible with the single-family neighborhood scale; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Action 4-4 of the *2040 Plan* calls for a review of the R-2M district to
2 further the development of compact housing to assist in meeting a large part of the
3 housing needs through infill and redevelopment within existing neighborhoods;
4 and

5
6 **WHEREAS**, Action 7-2 of the *2040 Plan* calls for the incorporation of neighborhood
7 compatibility standards in the compact housing amendments in Action 4-4; and
8

9 **WHEREAS**, a two-and-one-half-story (2½-story) height limit applied to the R-2
10 districts from the 1940s through the early 1980s, was removed leaving a 25-foot
11 height limit in the mid-1980s which was increased to a 30-foot height limit in 1999;
12 and
13

14 **WHEREAS**, the 2½-story limit was restored in the R-2 districts in 2013 to
15 supplement the 30-foot height limit and address compatible bulk and scale of new
16 housing development; and
17

18 **WHEREAS**, problems with the current 2½-story limit have been identified,
19 including: it is a factor constraining the number housing units that can fit on some
20 development sites; it increases the costs of adding third-story living spaces to
21 resolve the space constraint because the third story must be a daylight basement
22 or attic living space; it does not provide for exceptions or administrative relief or
23 flexibility to respond to site context or characteristics; it is vague and confusing as
24 currently worded; and
25

26 **WHEREAS**, problems with other dimensional standards in the R-2 districts have
27 been identified, which include an excessive side yard setback applied to small
28 multi-unit structures and excessive maximum heights of rooftop stairwells and
29 other rooftop appurtenances incompatible with the residential scale; and
30

31 **WHEREAS**, allowing 3-story buildings in appropriate locations and situations
32 subject to additional height and bulk compatibility standards can, in combination
33 with other adjustments to the height and dimensional standards can support more
34 efficient housing development anticipated by the R-2 districts and the *2040 Plan*,
35 while minimizing impacts on adjoining properties and existing R-2 neighborhoods;
36 now, therefore,
37

38 **THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY ORDAINS:**
39

40 **Section 1.** Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 21.03, Review and Approval
41 Procedures, is hereby amended to read as follows (*the remainder of the chapter*
42 *is not affected and therefore not set out*):
43

44 **21.03.120 Minor Modifications.**
45

46 *** *** ***

47 B. *Applicability.*

1
2 1. *Minor Modifications to General Development and Zoning*
3 *District Standards*

4 As part of the review and approval of any procedure set forth
5 in this chapter, the director, the planning and zoning
6 commission, or the urban design commission may approve
7 minor modifications of up to a maximum of five percent from
8 the following general development and zoning district
9 standards provided that the approval criteria of subsection D.
10 below are met.

- 11
12 a. Minimum lot area, [OR]setback, step-back, or building
13 length requirements set forth in chapter 21.06,
14 Dimensional Standards and Measurements;

15 *** **

16
17 (AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO 2013-117, 12-3-13; AO No. 2020-38, §3,
18 5-28-20)

19
20 **21.03.180 Site Plan Review.**

21 *** **

22
23 F. *Approval Criteria – General*

24 Except as provided otherwise in G., [A]an application for
25 administrative or major site plan review shall be approved upon a
26 finding that the site plan meets all of the following criteria:

27 *** **

28
29 (The following inserts a new subsection G. and re-numbers existing
30 subsections G. and H. The revisor of the code is requested to re-number
31 the existing section as appropriate.)

32
33 G. Approval Criteria – Topic-Specific Site Plan Reviews

- 34
35 1. Administrative site plan review approval criteria for proposals
36 to exceed the two-and-one-half story height limit in the R-2A,
37 R-2D, and R-2M districts are listed in 21.06.030D.7.d.

38 *** **

39
40 (AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO 2013-117, 12-3-13; AO No. 2015-
41 142(S-1), § 2, 6-21-16; AO No. 2020-38, § 3, 5-28-20)

42
43 **21.03.240 Variances.**

44 *** **

45
46 J. *Administrative Variances*
47

*** **

6. For Height Encroachments into Step-backs and Step-back Planes

The director may grant an administrative variance from height/bulk transition requirements including building height step-back planes or limitations on building elevation length in Chapter 21.06, provided:

a. There exist physical circumstances of the subject property such as topography or exceptional lot configuration not shared by landowners in general;

b. Because of these physical circumstances, the strict application of the height/bulk transition or step-back plane would create an exceptional or undue hardship upon the property owner, and would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of the zoning ordinance;

c. The hardship is not self-imposed, the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant, and such conditions and circumstances do not merely constitute inconvenience; and

d. The administrative variance granted is the minimum deviation or encroachment necessary to address the hardship and development rights, and will cause the least interference possible with the intended solar access protections.

*** **

(AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO 2013-117, 12-3-13; AO No. 2015-36, § 10, 5-14-15; AO No. 2015-133(S), § 2, 2-23-16; AO No. 2017-55, § 7, 4-11-17; AO No. 2018-67(S-1), § 4, 10-9-18; AO No. 2018-118, § 2, 1-1-19; AO 2020-38, 5-28-20)

Section 2. Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 21.04, Zoning Districts, is hereby amended to read as follows (*the remainder of the chapter is not affected and therefore not set out*):

21.04.020 Residential Districts

*** **

F. *R-2M: Mixed Residential District*

*** **

2. *District-Specific Standards*

- a. Residential buildings shall contain no more than eight dwelling units.
- b. The maximum length of a building elevation that is two and a half stories or more in height at any point shall be 150 feet. Otherwise, the maximum length shall be 180 feet.
- c. The minimum side setback established in Table 21.06-1 for multifamily dwellings in the R-2M district is reduced from 10 feet to 5 feet, provided the building elevation facing the side lot line is:
 - i. No more than 60 feet in length, in order to be compatible in scale to a single-family dwelling or duplex; or
 - ii. No more than 48 feet in length without a recess in its wall plane, such that the remaining portion of the building elevation has a minimum side setback of at least 15 feet, in order to appear as an arrangement of smaller, connected structures with backyard space.

*** **

(AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO No. 2015-100, § 1, 10-13-15; AO No. 2017-176, § 3, 1-9-18; AO No. 2019-58, § 2, 5-7-19)

Section 3. Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 21.06, Dimensional Standards, is hereby amended to read as follows (*the remainder of the chapter is not affected and therefore not set out*):

21.06.020 Dimensional Standards Tables.

*** **

A. Table of Dimensional Standards: Residential Districts

TABLE 21.06-1: TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS - RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (Additional standards may apply. See district-specific standards in chapter 21.04 and use-specific standards in chapter 21.05.)								
Use	Minimum lot dimensions ¹		Max lot coverage (%)	Min. Setback Requirements (ft)			Max number of principal structures per lot or tract ²	Maximum height of structures (ft)
	Area (sq ft)	Width (ft)		Front	Side	Rear		
***	***	***						
R-2A: Two-Family Residential District (larger lot)								
Dwelling, single-family detached	7,200	60	40	20	5	10	1	Principal: 30, not to exceed two and one-half stories, <u>except where three stories are allowed per 21.06.030D.7.</u> Accessory garages/carports: 25 Other accessory: 12
Dwelling, two-family	8,400	70	40	20	5	10	1	
Dwelling, single-family attached	3,500	35 (40 on corner lots)	40	20	N/A on common lot line; otherwise 5	10	1	
All other uses	7,200	60	40	20	5	10	N/A	
R-2D: Two-Family Residential District								
Dwelling, single-family detached	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	Principal: 30, not to exceed two and one-half stories, <u>except where three stories are allowed per 21.06.030D.7.</u> Accessory garages/carports: 25 Other accessory: 12
Dwelling, two-family	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	
Dwelling, single-family attached	3,500	35 (40 on corner lots)	40	20	N/A on common lot line; otherwise 5	10	1	
All other uses	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	N/A	
R-2M: Mixed Residential District								
Dwelling, single-family detached	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	Principal: 30, not to exceed two and one-half stories, <u>except where three stories are allowed per 21.06.030D.7.</u> Accessory garages/carports: 25 Other accessory: 12
Dwelling, two-family	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	
Dwelling, single-family attached	3,000	35 (40 on corner lots)	40	20	N/A on common lot line; otherwise 5	10	1	
Dwelling, townhouse	2,400	24 (30 on corner lots)	60	20		10	1	
Dwelling, multifamily (up to 8 units permitted per building)	8,500 + 2,300 for every unit over 3	50	40	20	10, <u>except where 5 is allowed as provided in 21.04.020F.2.c.</u>	10	More than one principal structure may be allowed on any lot or tract in accordance with subsection 21.07.110F.2.	
Dwelling, multifamily, with single- or two-family style construction of multiple buildings on a lot	3,000 per unit	50	40	20	10, <u>except where 5 is allowed as provided in 21.04.020F.2.c.</u>	10		
All other uses	6,000	50	40	20	5	10		
***	***	***						

*** *** ***

(AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO 2013-117, 12-3-13; AO No. 2015-100, § 2(Exh. A), 10-13-15; AO No. 2016-71, § 1, 6-21-16; AO No. 2017-160, § 3, 12-19-17; AO No. 2017-176, § 6, 1-9-18; AO No. 2018-43(S), § 3(Exh. B), 6-12-18; AO No. 2019-11, § 4, 2-12-19; AO No. 2019-58, § 3, 5-7-19; AO 2020-38, 5-28-2020)

21.06.030 Measurements and Exceptions.

*** *** ***

D. *Height*

*** *** ***

6. *Height Exceptions*

*** *** ***

- c. Except as specifically provided elsewhere in this title, the height limitations contained in this chapter do not apply to appurtenances on buildings, such as spires and similar religious appurtenances, belfries, cupolas, flagpoles, chimneys, antennas, rooftop mechanical equipment and its screening, stairwell and[TOWERS,] elevator enclosures[PENTHOUSES], parapets, firewalls, open or transparent railings, solar reflectors, photovoltaic panels, skylights, or similar appurtenances; provided, however, the following:
 - i. The appurtenance does not interfere with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace[.];
 - ii. Enclosure[THE] appurtenances such as stairwells, elevators, mechanical enclosures, and skylights cumulatively cover no more than one-third of the roof area of the building, except that when it has been demonstrated to the director and the building official that building HVAC requirements necessitate a larger mechanical enclosure[PENTHOUSE], the appurtenances may cumulatively cover up to one-half of the roof area.
 - iii. The appurtenance is not constructed for the purpose of providing additional floor area, usable space, or storage room for the building, except that a storage room of 60 square feet or less, combined with[A] stairwell [TOWER]or

elevator enclosures[HOUSING], and directly related to a rooftop use (such as tool storage for a rooftop garden), is allowed.[]; AND]

- iv. The appurtenance does not exceed the height limit of the district by more than 12 feet in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts and up to 15 feet otherwise, with the following exceptions:

*** *** ***

(D) Elevator enclosures[PENTHOUSES] may exceed by up to 18 feet on residential buildings in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts and up to 25 feet otherwise.[];

(E) Parapets, required fire-resistant rated walls[FIREWALLS], and skylights may exceed by up to two feet on residential buildings in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts and up to four feet otherwise.

(F) Any railing or portion of a railing that exceeds the maximum allowed parapet height in (E) shall be an open or transparent railing as defined in section 21.15.040.

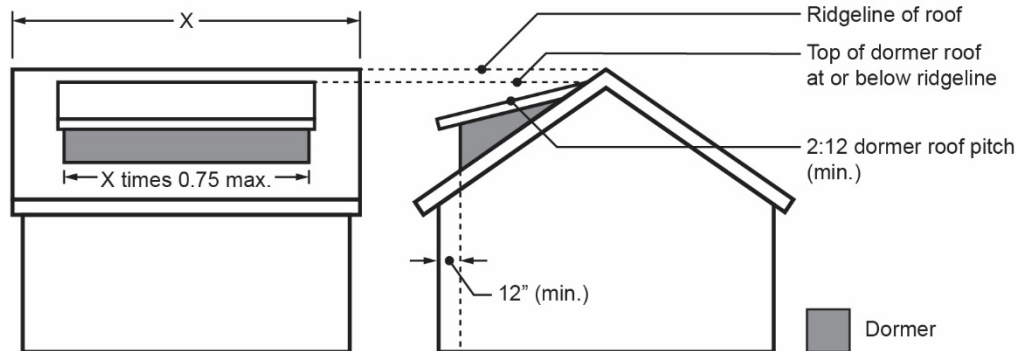
- v. Rooftop stairwell and elevator enclosures in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M districts are set back from the perimeter of street-facing building façade walls by at least four feet.

*** *** ***

e. Dormers that meet subsection i. below and have a total width of not more than 33 percent of the width of the roof form from which the dormers(s) project may extend above the height limit. Dormers with a total width greater than 33 percent may extend above the height limit when:

- i. The roof of the dormer has a pitch of at least 2:12 and no part of the dormer extends above the ridgeline of the main roof;

- ii. The walls of the dormer are stepped back at least one foot from the exterior wall plane of the floor below, including from end-of-house corner walls/gable end walls; and
- iii. The total width of the dormer(s) is not more than 75 percent of the width of the roof from which the dormer(s) project.



*** *** ***

(The following inserts a new subsection 7. and re-numbers existing subsections 7., 8., and 9.)

7. Three-story Entitlement in R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M Zoning Districts

a. Purpose

The intent of this section is to allow three-story buildings in the R-2 zoning districts at transitions to higher-intensity zones or in locations that minimize bulk, shadowing, privacy, and character impacts on R-2 zoned residential neighborhoods.

b. Three-story Entitlement on Large or Transitional Sites

Development sites that meet one or more of criteria i. to iii. are exempt from the two-and-one-half story limit in Table 21.06-1, provided all structures meet the 30-foot height limit and provide the height/bulk transition described in subsection c.:

- i. The development site is at least 1/2 acre;
- ii. The site is located at a transition to an R-3, R-3A, R-4, R-4A, commercial, or industrial zoning district, either abutting at its side lot line (except

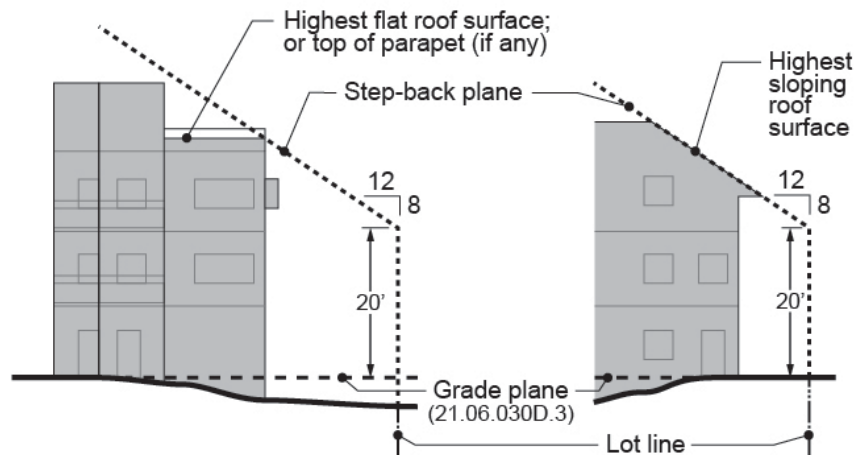
not the side lot line opposite the primary front lot line on a corner lot), or adjacent facing across a class I or II street (except not a secondary frontage opposite the primary frontage on a double-fronted lot); or

- iii. The site is adjacent only to non-residential or three-story residential uses.

c. *Height/Bulk Transition Standards*

Three-story buildings shall provide a transition in height to neighboring residences. This transition requirement applies where the development site's lot lines are adjacent to residentially zoned properties not listed in 21.06.030D.7.b.ii. and b.iii. The transition requirement is as follows:

- i. Buildings shall not encroach into a step-back plane measured starting from 20 feet above the grade plane established in 21.06.030D.3., Grade Plane, at the lot lines of the development site, and rising inward over the site at an 8:12 rise-to-run angle.

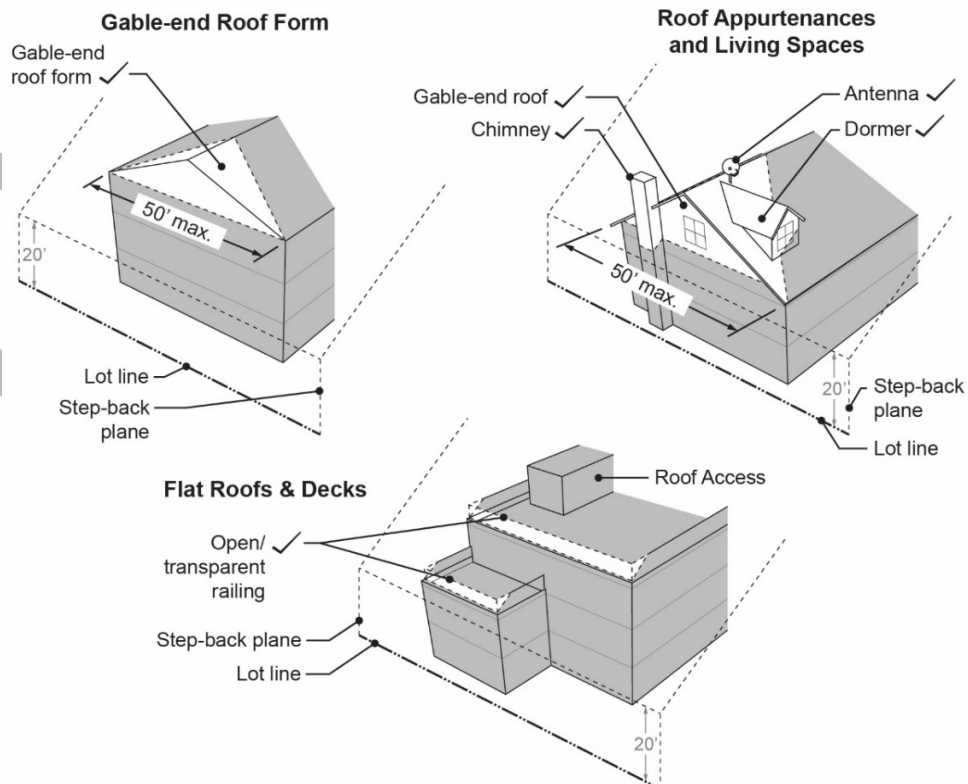


- ii. The three-story portion(s) of building elevation(s) facing a side lot line shall have a length no more than 70 percent of the lot depth.

d. *Exceptions to Height/Bulk Transition*

The following exceptions are allowed to the height/bulk transition standards in c., including encroachments above the step-back plane:

- i. Incidental architectural features listed in subsection 21.06.030C.2.d.
- ii. Building appurtenances and dormers listed as height exceptions in subsection. 21.06.030D.6., except parapet walls and rooftop stairwell, elevator, and mechanical enclosures are not exempt, as illustrated below.
- iii. Gable ends of sloping roof forms, provided the portion of the gable end that penetrates above the step-back plane, including any roof overhang, has a maximum width of 50 feet or less, as illustrated below.
- iv. Encroachments approved through the minor modifications process in 21.03.120B., or the administrative variance process in 21.03.240J.6.
- v. The alternative equivalent compliance procedure in section 21.07.010D. may be used to propose alternatives to the standards in c.



e. Three-story Entitlement through Administrative Site Plan Review

Developments on sites that do not meet the criteria in 21.06.030D.7.b. may propose to exceed the two-and-one-half story limit through the administrative site plan review process in 21.03.180, subject to the following set of approval criteria. The following approval criteria apply instead of the generally applicable site plan review approval criteria in 21.03.180F.

i. The site plan provides a compatible building height that compliments or transitions to the scale of the adjacent properties and minimizes loss of sunlight access to adjacent properties, through building (and rooftop appurtenance) height transitions, massing, placement or setbacks, and/or changes in topography;

ii. The site plan provides a compatible building width and length that compliments or transitions to the scale of single-family and two-family development anticipated by the R-2 zoning for the area, including building width along street frontages, breaks in massing between townhouse units, and sidewall length relative to total lot depth, while considering site-specific conditions;

iii. The site plan provides ground-floor primary entries or habitable floor area (21.15.040) in street-facing building facades, mitigates garages and blank walls, and minimizes exterior stairs (motel-style) to second-story entries; and

iv. The site plan minimizes disruptions to the privacy and outdoor activities on adjacent properties, including through the size and placement of upper-level windows, rooftop decks, building mass, and exterior lighting.

(The revisor of the code is requested to re-number the existing section 21.06.030D. as appropriate.)

*** *** ***

(AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO 2013-117, 12-3-13; AO No. 2015-100, § 3, 10-13-15; AO No. 2017-176, § 7, 1-9-18; AO No. 2018-12, § 1, 2-27-18; AO 2020-10(S), 3-10-2020; AO 2020-38, 5-28-2020)

Section 4. Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 21.07, Development and Design Standards, is hereby amended to read as follows (*the remainder of the chapter is not affected and therefore not set out*):

21.07.010 General Provisions.

*** *** ***

D. Alternative Equivalent Compliance

1. Purpose

Alternative equivalent compliance is a procedure that allows development to meet the intent of this title[CHAPTER] through an alternative design. The procedure permits a site-specific plan that is equal to or better than the strict application of a design standard specified in this title. This procedure is not intended as a substitute for a variance or administrative modification or as a vehicle for relief from standards in this title[CHAPTER].

2. Applicability.

The alternative equivalent compliance procedure shall be available only for the following sections of this title:

a. Subsection 21.06.030D.7.c., Height/Bulk Transitions;

b[A]. Subsection 21.06.030D.9.8., Height Transitions for Neighborhood Compatibility;

c[B]. Subsection 21.07.060F., Pedestrian Amenities;

d[C]. Subsection 21.07.080, Landscaping, Screening, and Fences;

e[D]. Subsection 21.07.090M.3., Structured Parking; Façade Treatment;

f[E]. Section 21.07.110, Residential Design Standards;

g[F]. Section 21.07.120, Large Commercial Establishments;

h[G]. Subsection 21.09.080, Building Design Standards (Girdwood); and

i[H]. Section 21.11.070G., Standards for Urban Design Amenities (Downtown).

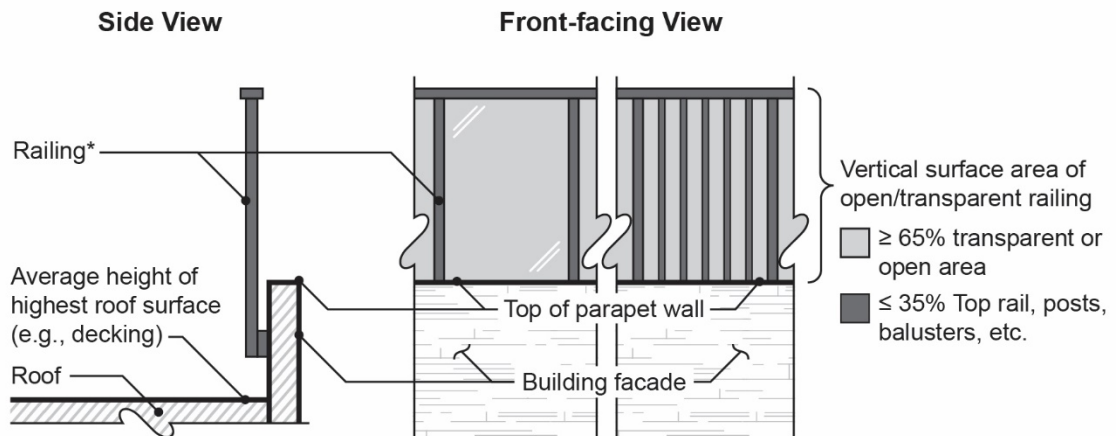
(AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO 2013-117, 12-3-13; AO No. 2020-11, § 1, 2-25-20; AO No. 2020-38, § 8, 5-28-20)

Section 5. Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 21.15, Rules of Construction and Definitions, is hereby amended to read as follows (*the remainder of the table is not affected and therefore not set out*):

21.15.040 Definitions.

Railing, Open or Transparent

Any railing treatment that is comprised of clear glass, similar transparent materials, and/or openings (i.e., empty spaces) between materials used in its construction, for at least 65 percent of its vertical surface area.



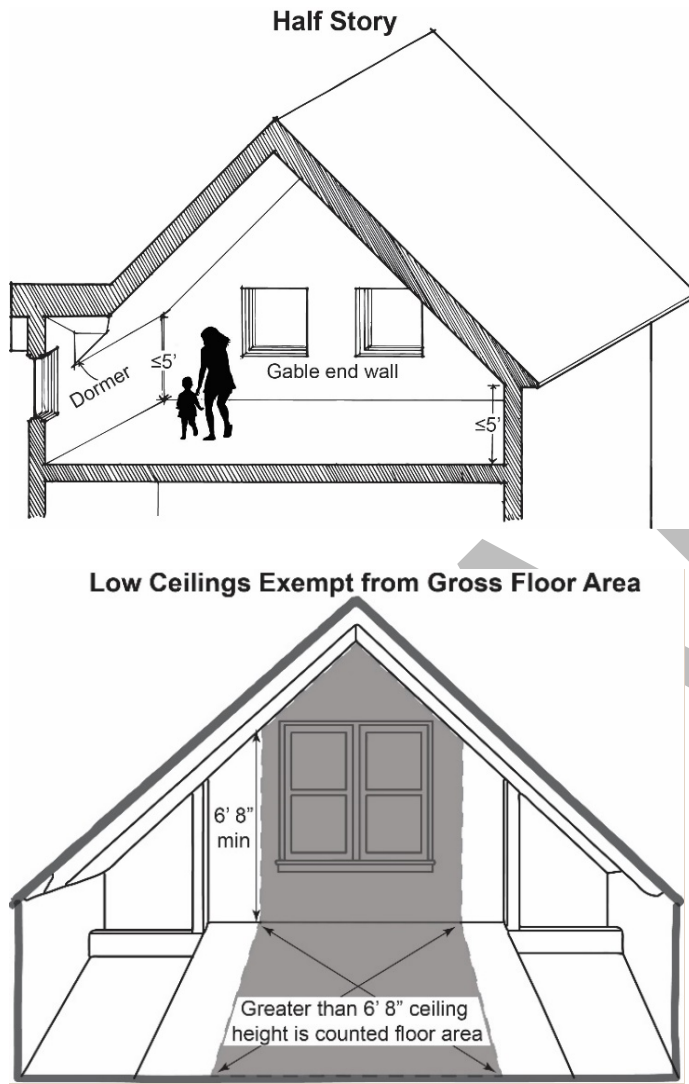
*Railing construction, including rail heights, spacing of posts and balusters, and other dimensions, shall comply with the requirements of the Building Code.

Story, [ONE-]Half

A story that has the following characteristics:

- Habitable floor area under a gable, hip, gambrel, mansard, or curved (e.g., barrel)[SHED, OR HIPPED] roof; [THAT CONTAINS HABITABLE FLOOR AREA, INCLUDING FLOOR AREA UNDER DORMERS,]
- All roof rafters located within five feet or less of the floor joists of such story, except at roof ends (e.g., gable ends) or where dormers are provided; and

- Gross floor area not exceeding 75[50] percent of the gross floor area of the story[FLOOR] below. The calculation for the gross floor area excludes portions of the half story where the ceiling height is six feet eight inches (6'8") or less.



*** *** ***

(AO 2012-124(S), 2-26-13; AO 2013-117, 12-3-13; AO No. 2015-82, § 7, 7-28-15; AO No. 2015-100, § 9, 10-13-15; AO No. 2015-133(S), § 6, 2-23-16; AO No. 2015-138, § 5, 1-12-16; AO No. 2015-142(S-1), § 10, 6-21-16; AO No. 2016-3(S), § 18, 2-23-16; AO No. 2016-144(S), § 2, 1-1-17; AO No. 2017-55, § 14, 4-11-17; AO No. 2018-12, § 2, 2-27-18; AO No. 2018-67(S-1), § 9, 10-9-18; AO No. 2018-92, § 1, 10-23-18; AO No. 2017-75, § 4, 5-9-17; AO No. 2020-38, §§ 11, 14, 5-28-20)

Section 6. This ordinance shall become effective 30 calendar days after passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this ____ day of _____, 2022.

Chair

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk

(Planning and Zoning Commission Case No. 2021-0111)

Zoning Code Amendment Language
(Annotated)

Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones
Height and Bulk Standards

Public Hearing Draft

PZC Case No. 2021-0111

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Zoning Code Amendment Language (Annotated)

This *Zoning Code Amendment Language (Annotated)* document presents the public hearing draft Title 21 text amendments to the R-2 height and bulk standards, accompanied by supporting information, explanation, and illustrations.

The text amendments in this document are the same text amendments as provided in the *Draft Assembly Ordinance* (Attachment 1), except they are shaded in light brown to be easier to see.

All text amendments are arranged in order they appear in *Anchorage's Title 21 Zoning Ordinance*. Only sections of the zoning ordinance that are being amended are included. Proposed new zoning ordinance sections are marked “(New)” below:

Table of Contents: Amendments by Zoning Code Section	Page
21.03.120B. Minor Modifications	1
12.03.180F. Site Plan Review Approval Criteria	1
21.03.240J. Administrative Variances – For Encroachments into Step-backs (New)	1
21.04.020F.2. R-2M District-specific Standards	2
21.06.020B. Table 21.06-1.: Table of Dimensional Standards – Residential Districts	3
21.06.030D.6. Height Exceptions	4
21.06.030D.7. Three-story Entitlement in R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M Zoning Districts (New)	6
21.07.010D. Alternative Equivalent Compliance	10
21.15.040 Definitions	11

How to Read this Document

Amended code language appears on the right-hand pages (numbered pages) and annotation on left-hand pages. The annotation explains how to interpret or apply the draft amendment language. Sometimes the annotation also describes the issue being addressed or the intent of the proposed code change.

Proposed changes to zoning code language (called “amendments”) appear as “tracked changes” text with a shaded background, as follows:

- Added code language is underlined.
- Deleted language is in [ALL-CAPITALIZED TEXT IN BRACKETS].
- Text without tracked-changes/shaded background is current code language not being changed.

Each page of tracked-changes code language begins with a header showing the chapter and major section that contains the proposed changes. In order to show only those subsections being changed, a row with three sets of asterisks (***) indicates that all intervening parts of the chapter are unchanged between the section header above the asterisks and the language shown below the asterisks.

ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 1

Section 21.03.120B.1.a.: Minor Modifications - Applicability

An amendment is proposed to Title 21 Section 21.03.120B.1.a, *Minor Modifications - Applicability*, to include "step-back and building length requirements" to the list of allowed types of minor modifications. This will allow the Planning Director to approve minor deviations from height/bulk transition requirements in Title 21 including from the new height/bulk transition requirement proposed on page 7 of this document for where 3-story buildings are allowed in the R-2 zones.

In general, Title 21 allows for "minor modifications" as a form of administrative relief from certain dimensional standards (e.g., setbacks) when the size of the modification requested is only a small deviation from the dimensional standard, and adverse effects on nearby properties are unlikely, making it unnecessary to undergo a variance approval process. Minor modifications are limited to a maximum of five percent from the development standards and require the Planning Department to document the approval and its rationale in the building permit file.

Section 21.03.180F.: Site Plan Review - Approval Criteria

An amendment to the Title 21 site plan review approval criteria is proposed on lines 14 - 23 of the next page. The amendment creates an exception from the generally applicable approval criteria for site plan reviews, by which developments seeking entitlement to 3-story buildings in the R-2 districts through an administrative site plan review shall be subject to the set of approval criteria specific to that purpose as proposed on page 9 below.

Section 21.03.240J.: Administrative Variances

An administrative variance from the proposed 3-story building step-back requirement and building length limitation (page 7) is added to provide a more substantial form of administrative relief if topography or other site characteristic creates a hardship in meeting the step-back requirement. Administrative variances are approved by the Planning Director rather than a board or commission.

The proposed approval criteria (lines 32 - 43) are consistent with the approval criteria of other variances in Section 21.03.240.

1 **CHAPTER 21.03: REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES**

2 *** **

3 **21.03.120 Minor Modifications**

4 *** **

5 **B. Applicability**

6 **1. Minor Modifications to General Development and Zoning District Standards**

7 As part of the review and approval of any procedure set forth in this chapter, the director, the
8 planning and zoning commission, or the urban design commission may approve minor
9 modifications of up to a maximum of five percent from the following general development and
10 zoning district standards provided that the approval criteria of subsection D. below are met.

- 11 **a.** Minimum lot area, [OR] setback, step-back, or building length requirements set forth
12 in chapter 21.06, Dimensional Standards and Measurements;

13 *** **

14 **21.03.180 Site Plan Review**

15 *** **

16 **F. Approval Criteria – General**

17 Except as provided otherwise in G., [A]an application for administrative or major site plan review
18 shall be approved upon a finding that the site plan meets all of the following criteria:

19 *** **

20 *(The following inserts a new subsection G. and rennumbers existing subsections G. and H.:)*

21 **G. Approval Criteria – Topic-Specific Site Plan Reviews**

- 22 **1.** Administrative site plan review approval criteria for proposals to exceed the two-and-one-
23 half story height limit in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M districts are listed in 21.06.030D.7.d.

24 *** **

25 **21.03.240 Variances**

26 *** **

27 **J. Administrative Variances**

28 *** **

29 **6. For Height Encroachments into Step-backs and Step-back Planes**

30 The director may grant an administrative variance from height/bulk transition requirements
31 including building height step-back planes or limitations on building elevation length in
32 Chapter 21.06, provided:

- 33 **a.** There exist physical circumstances of the subject property such as topography or
34 exceptional lot configuration not shared by landowners in general;

- 35 **b.** Because of these physical circumstances, the strict application of the height/bulk
36 transition or step-back plane would create an exceptional or undue hardship upon
37 the property owner, and would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed
38 by other properties in the same district under the terms of the zoning ordinance;

- 39 **c.** The hardship is not self-imposed, the special conditions and circumstances do not
40 result from the actions of the applicant, and such conditions and circumstances do
41 not merely constitute inconvenience; and

- 42 **d.** The administrative variance granted is the minimum deviation or encroachment
43 necessary to address the hardship and development rights, and will cause the
44 least interference possible with the intended protections for adjacent properties.

45 *** **

ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 2

Section 21.04.020F.: R-2M District-Specific Standards

Chapter 4 of Title 21 establishes the zoning districts and provides district purpose statements and district-specific standards. District purpose statements explain the legislative intent behind each district. Purpose statements are not regulatory requirements.

The R-2M district-specific standards apply in addition to the generally applicable regulations found elsewhere in Title 21. As shown on lines 18-21 next page, this ordinance carries forward current district-specific standards a. and b. which limit how many dwelling units can be in a multifamily building and the length of multifamily buildings in the R-2M district, to keep all buildings compatible in scale in a mixed single-family/two-family neighborhood environment.

F.2.c.: Proposed New District-Specific Standard

Currently the R-2M district requires a 5-foot side yard setback for single-family, two-family, and townhouse¹ uses, and a 10-foot side yard setback for multifamily uses (3 or more units on a lot). The setback requirements can be seen on page 3 of this ordinance. The 10-foot setback for multifamily structures is intended to mitigate the massing of larger multi-unit structures.

Lines 22-30 of the next page (page 2) propose a new subsection c. in the R-2M district-specific standards that would allow the side yard setback for small multifamily buildings to be reduced from 10 feet to 5 feet, if the multifamily building's end wall length along the side lot line is similar with the length of typical new single-family, two-family (duplex), or townhouse use.

For example, the end wall of a multifamily building containing a row of attached townhouse-style residences, as it faces the side lot line, will sometimes have a similar length and height as the side-facing wall of a typical attached single-family or duplex unit. In such cases, the multifamily building bulk is no more impactful on abutting properties than an attached single-family or duplex residence would be. There is not much rationale for requiring the multifamily building to have a wider side setback in such a case. A 10-foot side setback can be a barrier against the construction of three or more units on a lot in the R-2M zone, because wider setbacks reduce the width of the buildable area of the lot.

The maximum length of 60 feet in subsection c.i. (lines 25-26) is intended to approximate the side-wall length of a typical new home, attached single-family residence, or duplex with front or rear garage and a backyard. The maximum length of 48 feet in subsection c.ii. (lines 27-30) accommodates three typical 24-foot-wide townhouse units in a row.

¹ In Title 21, a townhouse use is a building with three or more dwelling units attached in a row, in which each unit is on its own lot, so that the party walls between the units fall on the lot lines. Three or more dwelling units all located on the same lot, even if the units are attached in a row, are a multifamily use.

CHAPTER 21.04: ZONING DISTRICTS

*** *** ***

21.04.020 Residential Districts

*** *** ***

F. R-2M: Mixed Residential District

1. Purpose

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. The R-2M district is to be located in established or redeveloping residential neighborhoods or is to create a transition between single-family, two-family, and higher-density multifamily and mixed-use areas. The design of new development, such as building scale and setbacks, parking facility size and location, and yard landscaping, should be complementary to the existing neighborhood and mix of dwelling types.

2. District-Specific Standards

a. Residential buildings shall contain no more than eight dwelling units.

b. The maximum length of a building elevation that is two and a half stories or more in height at any point shall be 150 feet. Otherwise, the maximum length shall be 180 feet.

c. The minimum side setback established in Table 21.06-1 for multifamily dwellings in the R-2M district is reduced from 10 feet to 5 feet, provided the building elevation facing the side lot line is:

i. No more than 60 feet in length, in order to be compatible in scale to a single-family dwelling or duplex; or

ii. No more than 48 feet in length without a recess in its wall plane, such that the remaining portion of the building elevation has a minimum side setback of at least 15 feet, in order to appear as an arrangement of smaller, connected structures with backyard space.

*** *** ***

ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 3

Section 21.06.020A.: Table 21.06-1. Table of Dimensional Standards

Table 21.06-1 establishes the basic dimensional standards for lot size, setbacks, and building size in the residential zones. The next page is an excerpt from Table 21.06-1 that contains the dimensional standards for only the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zones.

Maximum Height of Structures

The maximum allowed height of structures is established in the right-hand column of the table. The current height limit in the R-2 zones is 30 feet, not to exceed two-and-one-half ($2\frac{1}{2}$) stories. A story is defined in the current Title 21 as "That portion of a building included between the upper surface of a floor and the upper surface of the next floor or roof above." A building with $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories means the building has two full stories and the third story is an attic-like living space tucked under the pitched roof.

The changes in the far right-hand column of the table on the next page would allow for 3-story buildings as exceptions in certain locations under certain conditions, and subject to additional height and bulk transition standards. These locations and conditions are set forth in the referenced code section 21.06.030D.7. that is proposed on pages 6 through 9.

Side Setbacks for Multifamily Uses in R-2M Zone

The changes to the R-2M zoning district multifamily side setbacks would allow for five-foot setbacks under certain conditions, which are set forth in the referenced section on page 2 of this document.

1 **CHAPTER 21.06: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS**

2 *** **

3 **21.06.020 Dimensional Standards Tables**

4 *** **

5 **A. Table of Dimensional Standards: Residential Districts**

TABLE 21.06-1: TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS - RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (Additional standards may apply. See district-specific standards in chapter 21.04 and use-specific standards in chapter 21.05.)								
Use	Minimum lot dimensions ¹		Max lot coverage (%)	Min. Setback Requirements (ft)			Max number of principal structures per lot or tract ²	Maximum height of structures (ft)
	Area (sq ft)	Width (ft)		Front	Side	Rear		
R-2A: Two-Family Residential District (larger lot)								
Dwelling, single-family detached	7,200	60	40	20	5	10	1	Principal: 30, not to exceed two and one-half stories, <u>except where three stories are allowed per 21.06.030D.7.</u> Accessory garages/carports: 25 Other accessory: 12
Dwelling, two-family	8,400	70	40	20	5	10	1	
Dwelling, single-family attached	3,500	35 (40 on corner lots)	40	20	N/A on common lot line; otherwise 5	10	1	
All other uses	7,200	60	40	20	5	10	N/A	
R-2D: Two-Family Residential District								
Dwelling, single-family detached	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	Principal: 30, not to exceed two and one-half stories, <u>except where three stories are allowed per 21.06.030D.7.</u> Accessory garages/carports: 25 Other accessory: 12
Dwelling, two-family	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	
Dwelling, single-family attached	3,500	35 (40 on corner lots)	40	20	N/A on common lot line; otherwise 5	10	1	
All other uses	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	N/A	
R-2M: Mixed Residential District								
Dwelling, single-family detached	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	Principal: 30, not to exceed two and one-half stories, <u>except where three stories are allowed per 21.06.030D.7.</u> Accessory garages/carports: 25 Other accessory: 12
Dwelling, two-family	6,000	50	40	20	5	10	1	
Dwelling, single-family attached	3,000	35 (40 on corner lots)	40	20	N/A on common lot line; otherwise 5	10	1	
Dwelling, townhouse	2,400	24 (30 on corner lots)	60	20		10	1	
Dwelling, multifamily (up to 8 units permitted per building)	8,500 + 2,300 for every unit over 3	50	40	20	10, <u>except where 5 is allowed as provided in 21.04.020F.2.c.</u>	10	More than one principal structure may be allowed on any lot or tract in accordance with subsection 21.07.110F.2.	
Dwelling, multifamily, with single- or two-family style construction of multiple buildings on a lot	3,000 per unit	50	40	20	10, <u>except where 5 is allowed as provided in 21.04.020F.2.c.</u>	10		
All other uses	6,000	50	40	20	5	10		
*** *** ***								

ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 4

Section 21.06.030D.6.c.: Height Exceptions

Title 21 allows building appurtenances like antennas, chimneys, and rooftop access enclosures to exceed the maximum allowed building height, within limitations to address potential impacts.

The changes on the next page are proposed to mitigate the potential impacts of amendments in this ordinance that enable construction of 3-story, flat-roofed buildings with rooftop access in the R-2 zones. They primarily address rooftop stairwells, elevator enclosures, and parapet walls.

Height of Rooftop Access Enclosures and Parapet Walls

Currently, subsection 21.06.030D.6.iv. allows rooftop stairwells and mechanical enclosures to exceed the R-2 zones' 30-foot height limit by 15 feet. Rooftop elevator access enclosures may exceed by 25 feet. The proposed changes to subsection iv. on lines 33-35 reduce the exception for stairwells to 12 feet and for elevators to 18 feet. These revised dimensions are based on consultations with municipal building review staff, homebuilders and designers, municipal elevator inspectors, and local elevator installation companies regarding the height needs of rooftop access stairwells and elevator enclosures commonly used on 2- to 3-story residential buildings.

On lines 36-42 of subsection iv., the height exception for rooftop parapet walls in the R-2 districts is proposed to be reduced from 4 to a maximum allowed height of 2 feet. Parapet walls are low protective walls at the edge of the roof. They form the part of the building's exterior wall that rises above the flat rooftop. Parapets increase the height of flat-roofed buildings, so they increase bulk and shadowing impacts. The proposed 2-foot limit reflects consultations with building and design experts regarding how much clearance parapets need above the flat roof surface while still

accommodating open or transparent safety railings mounted to the parapet. Page 11 of this ordinance provides a definition for open and transparent railings.



Transparent railing on left and solid parapet at right.

Stairwell Enclosure Setbacks from Front Façade Walls

Lines 44-46 would require stairwell and elevator enclosures above the 30-foot height limit in the R-2 zones to be set back at least 4 feet from the front street-facing building façade wall. This is intended to ensure that the front façade wall is no taller than 3 stories and the 12- to 18-foot access enclosure on top of it visually appears as a separate mass farther away, as pictured above.

1 **CHAPTER 21.06: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS**

2 *** **

3 **21.06.030 Measurements and Exceptions**

4 *** **

5 **D. Height**

6 *** **

7 **6. Height Exceptions**

8 *** **

9 **c.** Except as specifically provided elsewhere in this title, the height limitations
10 contained in this chapter do not apply to appurtenances on buildings, such as
11 spires and similar religious appurtenances, belfries, cupolas, flagpoles, chimneys,
12 antennas, rooftop mechanical equipment and its screening, stairwell
13 and[TOWERS,] elevator enclosures[PENTHOUSES], parapets, firewalls, open or
14 transparent railings, solar reflectors, photovoltaic panels, skylights, or similar
15 appurtenances; provided, however, the following:

16 **i.** The appurtenance does not interfere with Federal Aviation Regulations,
17 Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace[.];]

18 **ii.** Enclosure[THE] appurtenances such as stairwells, elevators, mechanical
19 enclosures, and skylights cumulatively cover no more than one-third of the
20 roof area of the building, except that when it has been demonstrated to the
21 director and the building official that building HVAC requirements
22 necessitate a larger mechanical enclosure[PENTHOUSE], the
23 appurtenances may cumulatively cover up to one-half of the roof area.

24 **iii.** The appurtenance is not constructed for the purpose of providing
25 additional floor area, usable space, or storage room for the building,
26 except that a storage room of 60 square feet or less, combined with[A]
27 stairwell [TOWER]or elevator enclosures[HOUSING], and directly related
28 to a rooftop use (such as tool storage for a rooftop garden), is allowed[.;
29 AND]

30 **iv.** The appurtenance does not exceed the height limit of the district by more
31 than 12 feet in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts and up 15 feet
32 otherwise, with the following exceptions:

33 *** **

34 **(D)** Elevator enclosures[PENTHOUSES] may exceed by up to 18 feet
35 on residential buildings in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning
36 districts and up to 25 feet otherwise.[.];

37 **(E)** Parapets, required fire-resistant rated walls[FIREWALLS], and
38 skylights may exceed by up to two feet on residential buildings in
39 the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M zoning districts and up to four feet
40 otherwise.

41 **(F)** Any railing or portion of a railing that exceeds the maximum
42 allowed parapet height in (E) shall be an open or transparent
43 railing as defined in section 21.15.040.

44 **v.** Rooftop stairwell and elevator enclosures in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M
45 districts are set back from the perimeter of street-facing building façade
46 walls by at least four feet.

47 *** **

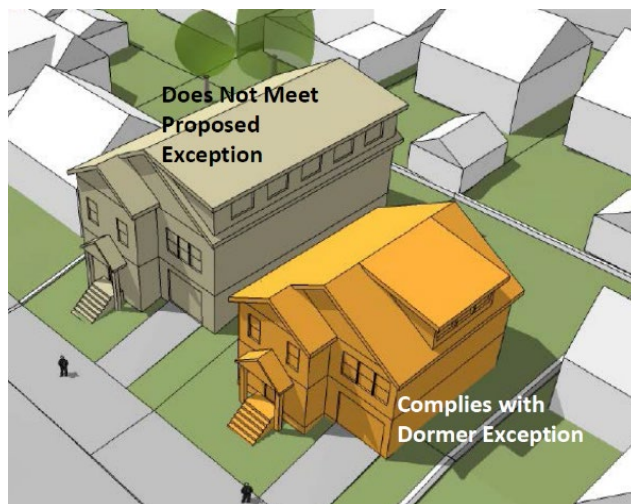
ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 5

Section 21.06.030D.6.e.: Height Exceptions – Dormers (new)

The amendments on the next page establish a height exception for dormers. This change clarifies the ground rules and eliminates a potential regulatory barrier against third floors being tucked under pitched roofs as half-story attic living spaces.

Currently, Title 21 does not list dormers as a height exception. A dormer typically sits above the lowest eave of the main roof. For this reason, the midpoint of a dormer's roof is sometimes higher than the midpoint of the building's main roof. Since Title 21 measures building height based on the midpoint of the highest roof surface, some dormer configurations can trigger Title 21 to measure the building as being taller than its main roof form when it has a dormer.

The proposed height exception would accommodate dormers that are sized to remain a secondary roof mass and not cover the entire top floor. Wall dormers, whose facial wall plane is flush with the building wall below, would be exempted from the height limit calculation if they comprise no more than 33 percent of the total length of the roof form they project from. Dormers whose facial wall plane is stepped back from the building wall below them can comprise up to 75 percent of the length of the roof form and still be exempted.



Half-story attic living spaces with dormers can help larger structures compliment the neighborhood residential scale. When the third floor is tucked into a pitched roof with dormers, the building appears less bulky and can fit in better with existing neighborhood scale. Dormers help make attic living spaces function as they add useable space, windows, and daylighting.

CODE LANGUAGE to be added is underlined. Language to be deleted is [ALL CAPS IN BRACKETS].

CHAPTER 21.06: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

*** **

21.06.030 Measurements and Exceptions

*** **

D. Height

*** **

6. Height Exceptions

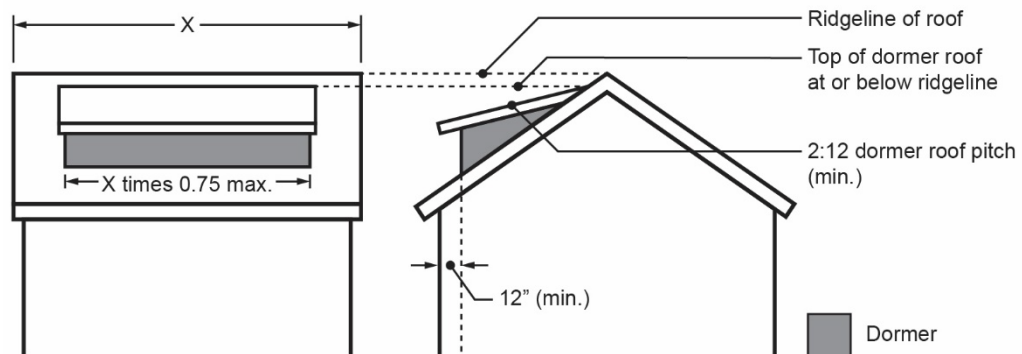
*** **

e. Dormers that meet subsection i. below and have a total width of not more than 33 percent of the width of the roof form from which the dormer(s) project may extend above the height limit. Dormers with a total width greater than 33 percent may extend above the height limit when:

i. The roof of the dormer has a pitch of at least 2:12 and no part of the dormer extends above the ridgeline of the main roof;

ii. The walls of the dormer are stepped back at least one foot from the exterior wall plane of the floor below, including from end-of-house corner walls/gable end walls; and

iii. The total width of the dormer(s) is not more than 75 percent of the width of the roof from which the dormer(s) project.



*** **

Section 21.06.030D.7.: Three-story Entitlements in R-2 Zoning Districts (new)

The amendments on page 6 propose a new subsection of the height regulations to allow three-story buildings as exceptions to the $2\frac{1}{2}$ -story limit in the R-2 zones, in locations and situations that are most likely to provide housing opportunities while minimizing height and bulk impacts within existing R-2 neighborhoods.

Subsection b. on the next page would allow 3-story buildings as exceptions on certain kinds of sites: large development sites, at *transitions* to higher-intensity zoning districts, and other low-impact locations that minimize height and bulk impacts within existing R-2 neighborhoods. Residences in these locations would be allowed to be 3 stories through the regular building and land use permit process, subject to additional height and bulk transition standards (see page 7):

- i. **Large development sites** at least $\frac{1}{2}$ acre (21,780 square feet) in size: These sites have enough space to accommodate multiple residential buildings and are the most likely to yield more housing because of the spatial efficiencies afforded by 3-story buildings. They also comprise most of the remaining buildable R-2 zoned land capacity for housing within the R-2 districts. Sites $\frac{1}{2}$ acre or larger in size are not commonly located within existing R-2 neighborhood blocks, so 3-story buildings on these lots will have less impacts.
- ii. **Transitional sites** located adjacent to a multifamily district, or a commercial or industrial district abutting at the side lot line or facing across the local or collector street ². These sites can provide a transition in scale to the rest of the R-2 neighborhood. Their peripheral locations minimize impacts to the interior of existing R-2 neighborhoods. Transition sites are also strategic because they can support more housing opportunities next to employment, services, and public transit routes.
- iii. **Other low-impact sites** adjacent only to non-residential uses such as schools or parks, or to existing three-story residential uses. These sites are considered least likely to impact neighboring R-2 residences.

² R-2 lots separated from higher-intensity zones by greenbelts, major arterial roadways, or other major geographic barriers are not considered transitional. R-2 lots that only back up to the higher-intensity zone at their rear lot line or across an alley are also not considered transitional, as their only relationship along their front and side lot lines is to their R-2 residential street block.

CHAPTER 21.06: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

*** *** ***

21.06.030 Measurements and Exceptions

*** *** ***

D. Height

*** *** ***

(The following inserts a new subsection 7. and renumbers existing subsections 7. Through 9.:)

7. Three-story Entitlement in R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M Zoning Districts

a. Purpose

The intent of this section is to allow three-story buildings in the R-2 zoning districts at transitions to higher-intensity zones or in locations that minimize bulk, shadowing, privacy, and character impacts on R-2 zoned residential neighborhoods.

b. Three-story Entitlement on Large or Transitional Sites

Development sites that meet one or more of criteria i. to iii. are exempt from the two-and-one-half story limit in Table 21.06-1, provided all structures meet the 30-foot height limit and provide the height/bulk transition described in subsection c.:

i. The development site is at least 1/2 acre;

ii. The site is located at a transition to an R-3, R-3A, R-4, R-4A, commercial, or industrial zoning district, either abutting at its side lot line (except not the side lot line opposite the primary front lot line on a corner lot), or adjacent facing across a class I or II street (except not a secondary frontage opposite the primary frontage on a double-fronted lot); or

iii. The site is adjacent only to non-residential or three-story residential uses.

Section 21.06.030D.7.: Three-story Entitlements in R-2 Zoning Districts (cont'd)

Subsection c., Height/Bulk Transition

Subsection c. on the next page propose that the 3-story buildings allowed by the amendments on page 6 must provide a transition in height and bulk to neighboring residences, to minimize bulk, shadowing, privacy, and neighborhood scale/character impacts on existing R-2 neighborhoods. The transition requirement would apply where the development site's exterior lot lines are adjacent to residential properties located in the R-2 districts and other low-density residential zones. The transition standards are described below. It would not apply along lot lines shared with residences in R-3, R-4, or non-residential zones. Exceptions, administrative relief, and flexibility from the height and bulk transition requirements are provided on page 8.

Subsection c.i.: Step-back Plane:

Three-story buildings would be required to be stepped back, set back further, or their rooftops sloped away from the adjacent residential lots, to avoid encroaching into a step-back "plane." The step-back would be measured starting from 20 feet above grade at the lot line of the development site and rising inward over the site at an 8:12 rise-to-run angle. This step-back measurement re-creates the approximate height of a 2½-story building built to its minimum side yard setback from the neighboring lots. This is intended to achieve the following:

- a) Protects a similar minimum level of sunlight access, daylighting, privacy, and building scale mitigation for neighboring lots as the 2½-story limit provides; and
- b) Allows a similar building bulk entitlement along the shared lot line for the builder as the 2½-story limit provides. For example, the step-back plane provides enough space to accommodate a typical attic/half-story living space above the second story.

Subsection c.ii.: Maximum Sidewall Length:

There would be a limitation on the length of the 3-story portion of a building wall facing an adjacent residential lot. This mitigates potential impacts of long, 3-story buildings extending most of the depth of the lot becoming more frequent and eliminating backyards. This could affect neighboring lots' backyards and break from moderate-scale R-2 development patterns.

The proposed maximum length of 70 percent of lot depth would allow for 3-story building length of 98 feet on a standard urban 140-foot lot depth. For example, that should allow for a 4-unit townhouse structure on a 140-foot lot depth, where the individual townhouse units are 24 feet wide (4x24=96 feet). That would preserve 22 feet of backyard to the rear lot line.

CHAPTER 21.06: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

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21.06.030 Measurements and Exceptions

*** **

D. Height

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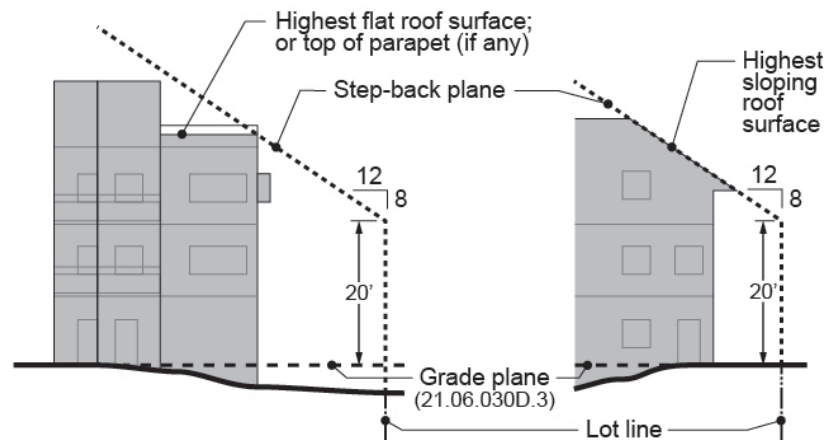
7. Three-story Entitlement in R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M Zoning Districts

*** **

c. Height/Bulk Transition Standards

Three-story buildings shall provide a transition in height to neighboring residences. This transition requirement applies where the development site's lot lines are adjacent to residentially zoned properties not listed in 21.06.030D.7.b.ii. and b.iii. The transition requirement is as follows:

- i. Buildings shall not encroach into a step-back plane measured starting from 20 feet above the grade plane established in 21.06.030D.3., Grade Plane, at the lot lines of the development site, and rising inward over the site at an 8:12 rise-to-run angle.



- ii. The three-story portion(s) of building elevation(s) facing a side lot line shall have a length no more than 70 percent of the lot depth.

ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 8

Section 21.06.030D.7.: Three-story Entitlements in R-2 Zoning Districts (cont'd)

The amendments on page 8 continue the new subsection D.7. for three-story building entitlements from the previous two pages.

Subsection d., *Exceptions to Height/Bulk Transition*

The proposed exemptions i., ii., and iii., on lines 12-18 from the step-back requirement are intended to allow the kinds of building appurtenances and features as allowed under the current 2½-story height limit. Most roof appurtenances such as chimneys, antennae, and dormers are allowed to exceed the 2½-story height limit, for example.

Exception iii., gable ends of sloping roof forms, is currently allowed as part of 2½-story home.

Parapets and stairwell enclosures on top of three-story structures are not exempted. This is because a parapet wall or the long axis of a 12-foot stairwell enclosure, when placed atop the newly allowed three-story flat roofed buildings, would create greater shadowing impacts than a 2½-story building does, and would thwart the proposed step-back requirement on page 7.

Subsections d.iv. and d.v., *Administrative Relief and Flexibility*

Item iv. on lines 19-20 provides two forms of administrative relief from the height/bulk transition requirements: minor modifications and administrative variances. Item v. on lines 21-22 provides access to administrative flexibility through the Title 21 alternative equivalent compliance procedure.

- **Minor Modifications:** Allows small deviations of up to five percent from the dimensional requirements of the step-back plane or maximum length requirements on page 7, through the Minor Modifications procedure in Title 21 section 21.03.120.
- **Administrative Variances:** Allows larger deviations or exceptions from the step-back plane or maximum length requirements in cases of hardship due to topography or other challenging site characteristics, by adding an Administrative Variance procedure for this purpose in Title 21 Section 21.03.240J.
- **Alternative Equivalent Compliance:** Allows developers and designers to propose a different way to achieve the intent of the height/bulk transition, through the Alternative Equivalent Compliance procedure in Title 21 Section 21.07.0010D.

These changes coordinate with the amendments shown on page 1. See also the annotation for page 1.

CHAPTER 21.06: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

*** **

21.06.030 Measurements and Exceptions

*** **

D. Height

*** **

7. Three-story Entitlement in R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M Zoning Districts

*** **

d. Exceptions to Height/Bulk Transition

The following exceptions are allowed to the height/bulk transition standards in c., including encroachments above the step-back plane:

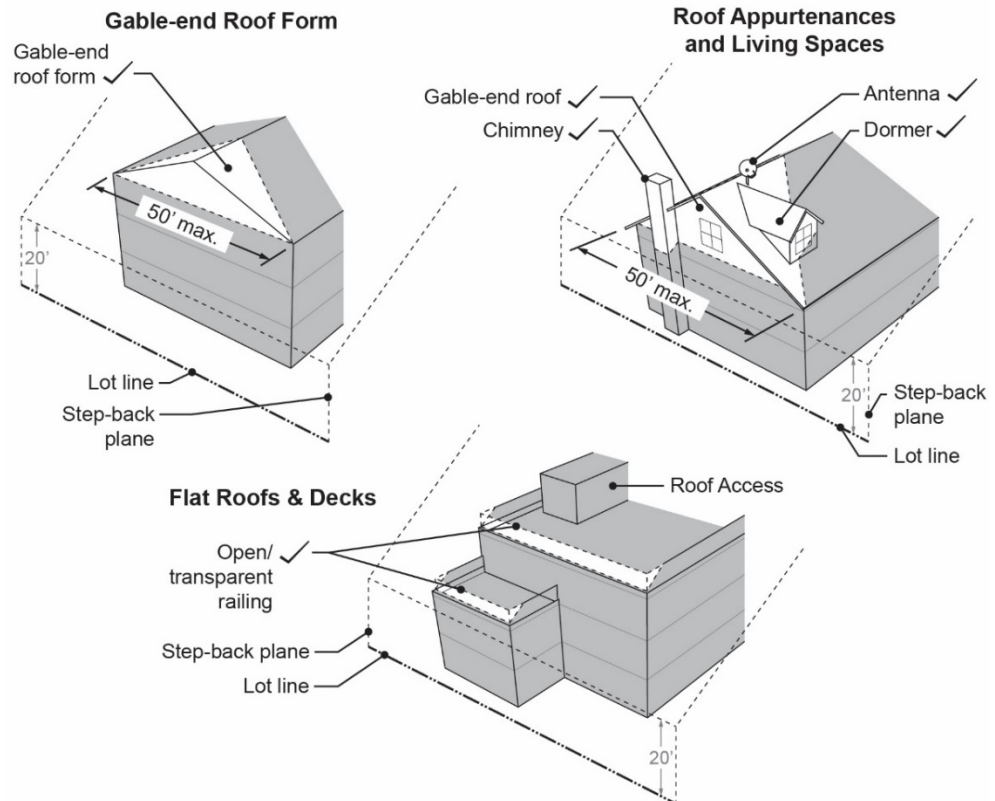
i. Incidental architectural features listed in subsection 21.06.030C.2.d.

ii. Building appurtenances and dormers listed as height exceptions in subsection 21.06.030D.6., except parapet walls and rooftop stairwell, elevator, and mechanical enclosures are not exempt, as illustrated below.

iii. Gable ends of sloping roof forms, provided the portion of the gable end that penetrates above the step-back plane, including any roof overhang, has a maximum width of 50 feet or less, as illustrated below.

iv. Encroachments approved through the minor modifications process in 21.03.120B., or the administrative variance process in 21.03.240J.6.

v. The alternative equivalent compliance procedure in section 21.07.010D. may be used to propose alternatives to the standards in c.



ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 9

Section 21.06.030D.7.: Three-story Entitlements in R-2 Zoning Districts (cont'd)

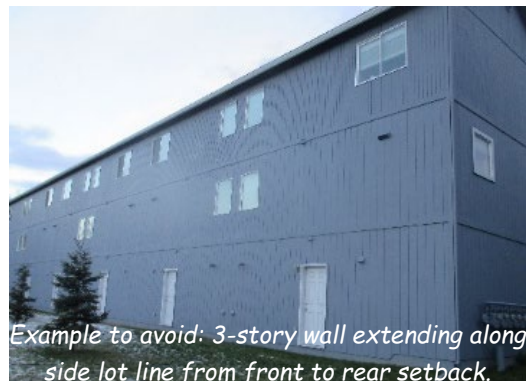
The amendments on page 9 complete the new subsection D.7. for three-story building entitlements from the previous pages.

Subsection d., *Three-Story Entitlement through Administrative Site Plan Review*

Subsection d. on the next page would provide applicants with an avenue to propose 3-story buildings on properties not exempted from 2½-story limit on page 6, through the Administrative Site Plan Review procedure in Title 21 Section 21.03.180. Subsection d. includes a new set of site plan approval criteria tailored to address 3-story building massing impacts within existing neighborhoods in the R-2 districts. The Planning Director has the discretion to require design features and massing limitations to ensure that three-story buildings are designed sensitively to the site conditions and for compatibility with surrounding neighbors.

Following are some examples of ways to address each of the proposed administrative site plan review approval criteria i. through v. on the next page. The content below is intended to be further developed and illustrated into a how-to/informational handout to assist applicants and the public. Additionally, an updated version of the administrative site plan review application form will be provided to reflect these approval criteria.

- i. Ways to address approval criteria i. could include providing a larger setback, a step-back in building height, placing rooftop stairwell towers further away from neighboring properties, breaking up the upper-level massing into smaller forms allowing sunlight penetration in between, or sensitive placement of the three-story mass.
- ii. Ways to address approval criteria ii. could include limiting building length next to side lot lines shared with abutting residences, modulating long building walls to visually break up the building massing, or recessing part of the building to provide yard space across the fence from neighboring backyards.
- iii. Ways to address approval criteria iii. could include providing primary entrances no higher than six feet above grade plane, ground-floor windows, or amply wide ground-floor entry porches or stoops highlighted by roof forms, side light windows, or wall articulation.
- iv. Ways to address approval criteria iv. could include the placement of three-story buildings in relation to neighboring the size and placement of windows and rooftop decks, and placement of upper-level exterior lighting to avoid spillover glare.



CHAPTER 21.06: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

*** **

21.06.030 Measurements and Exceptions

*** **

D. Height

*** **

7. Three-story Entitlement in R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M Zoning Districts

*** **

e. Three-story Entitlement through Administrative Site Plan Review

Developments on sites that do not meet the criteria in 21.06.030D.7.b. may propose to exceed the two-and-one-half story limit through the administrative site plan review process in 21.03.180, subject to the following set of approval criteria. The following approval criteria apply instead of the generally applicable site plan review approval criteria in 21.03.180F.

i. The site plan provides a compatible building height that compliments or transitions to the scale of the adjacent properties and minimizes loss of sunlight access to adjacent properties, through building (and rooftop appurtenance) height transitions, massing, placement or setbacks, and/or changes in topography;

ii. The site plan provides a compatible building width and length that compliments or transitions to the scale of single-family and two-family development anticipated by the R-2 zoning for the area, including building width along street frontages, breaks in massing between townhouse units, and sidewall length relative to total lot depth, while considering site-specific conditions;

iii. The site plan provides ground-floor primary entries or habitable floor area (21.15.040) in street-facing building facades, mitigates garages and blank walls, and minimizes exterior stairs (motel-style) to second-story entries; and

iv. The site plan minimizes disruptions to the privacy and outdoor activities on adjacent properties, including through the size and placement of upper-level windows, rooftop decks, building mass, and exterior lighting.

*** **

Section 21.07.010D.2: Alternative Equivalent Compliance - Applicability

The Alternative Equivalent Compliance procedure in Title 21 allows developers and designers to propose to meet the intent of a development standard through alternative means and methods. The proposed alternative design must achieve the intent of the site development standard to the same or better degree than would strict application of the site development standard.

The proposed change on the next page provides for flexibility in the application of step-back requirement proposed on pages 6-7 by amending Section 21.07.010D.2: *Alternative Equivalent Compliance - Applicability*, to add the Step-back to the list of sections in Title 21 for which the alternative equivalent compliance process is available.

CHAPTER 21.07: DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS

*** *** ***

21.07.010 General Provisions

*** *** ***

D. Alternative Equivalent Compliance

1. Purpose

Alternative equivalent compliance is a procedure that allows development to meet the intent of this title[CHAPTER] through an alternative design. The procedure permits a site-specific plan that is equal to or better than the strict application of a design standard specified in this title. This procedure is not intended as a substitute for a variance or administrative modification or as a vehicle for relief from standards in this title[CHAPTER].

2. Applicability

The alternative equivalent compliance procedure shall be available only for the following sections of this title:

a. Subsection 21.06.030D.7.c., *Height/Bulk Transitions*;

b[A]. Subsection 21.06.030D.9-8., *Height Transitions for Neighborhood Compatibility*;

c[B]. Subsection 21.07.060F., *Pedestrian Amenities*;

d[C]. Subsection 21.07.080, *Landscaping, Screening, and Fences*;

e[D]. Subsection 21.07.090M.3., *Structured Parking; Façade Treatment*;

f[E]. Section 21.07.110, *Residential Design Standards*;

g[F]. Section 21.07.120, *Large Commercial Establishments*;

h[G]. Subsection 21.09.080, *Building Design Standards* (Girdwood); and

i[H]. Section 21.11.070G., *Standards for Urban Design Amenities* (Downtown).

*** *** ***

ANNOTATION FOR PAGE 11

Section 21.15.040: Definitions:

Chapter 15 of Title 21 sets forth the terms and definitions used throughout Title 21.

"Railing, open or transparent"

A definition for open or transparent railings is provided to support the amendments on page 4, lines 37-43, which limit the height exception for solid parapet walls in the R-2 zones to 2 feet above the 30-foot rooftop height limit, but allow for open or transparent railings mounted above the parapet to extend more than 2 feet above the height limit.

See the annotation for page 4 for a photo of a transparent railing.

CHAPTER 21.15: RULES OF CONSTRUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

*** **

21.15.040 Measurements and Exceptions

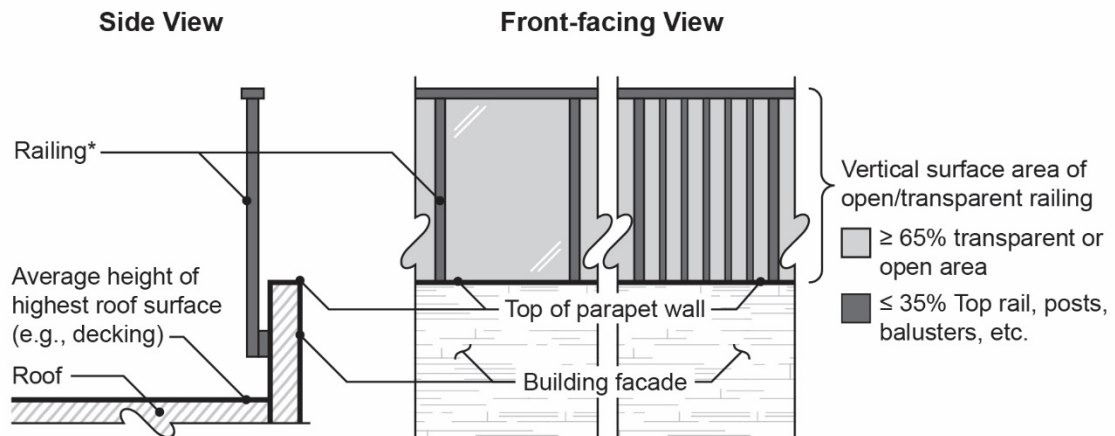
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D. Definitions

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Railing, Open or Transparent

Any railing treatment that is comprised of clear glass, similar transparent materials, and/or openings (i.e., empty spaces) between materials used in its construction, for at least 65 percent of its vertical surface area.



*Railing construction, including rail heights, spacing of posts and balusters, and other dimensions, shall comply with the requirements of the Building Code.

*** **

Section 21.15.040: Definitions (Cont'd):

"Story, half"

The current term "Story, One-half" is shortened to "Story, half." Its definition is edited for content and clarity. Two illustrations are added. Discussion of the changes:

- Both the current and proposed definition include "habitable floor area." Title 21 defines habitable floor area as floor area used for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking.
- The current definition allows only three roof styles: gable, "hipped," or shed. The amendment adds gambrel, mansard, and curved (e.g., half-cylindrical) roof styles, to provide a more comprehensive list of roof styles that provide a downward roof pitch on at least two opposing sides of the building. The amendment removes "shed" style roof because shed roofs, like butterfly roofs, provide downward sloping roof pitches on only one wall, which does not reflect the intended meaning or objectives of a half story.
- The current definition is unclear as to how far the half story living space must be tucked up into the sloping roof form. A more typical code definition would clarify that the roof rafters should come down to within two feet of the floor joists of the half story, on at least two opposite exterior walls. The Anchorage municipal Property Appraisal manual identifies half stories as having the rafters coming down to within four feet (i.e., at least two opposite exterior walls are no more than four feet tall). The amendments generally take that approach.
- The current definition limits the gross floor area of the half story to no more than half the gross floor area of the story below. Based on testing and a review of several other codes, the amendment proposes increasing the maximum floor area to 75 percent of the story below. This increase seems necessary for an attic living space to be able to wholly occupy the interior of a pitched roof, especially if the living space includes dormers.
- The amendment also clarifies that floor areas in the half story that have a ceiling height less than 6'8" under the sloping roof are exempt from the gross floor area calculation.

The revised language is adapted from standard architectural dictionaries and a review of other zoning codes to convey the intended meaning more clearly. It also reflects consideration of the Building Code provisions for minimum ceiling heights, and the Anchorage municipal Property Appraisal Department's manual for describing stories and half-stories.

CHAPTER 21.15: RULES OF CONSTRUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

*** **

21.15.040 Measurements and Exceptions

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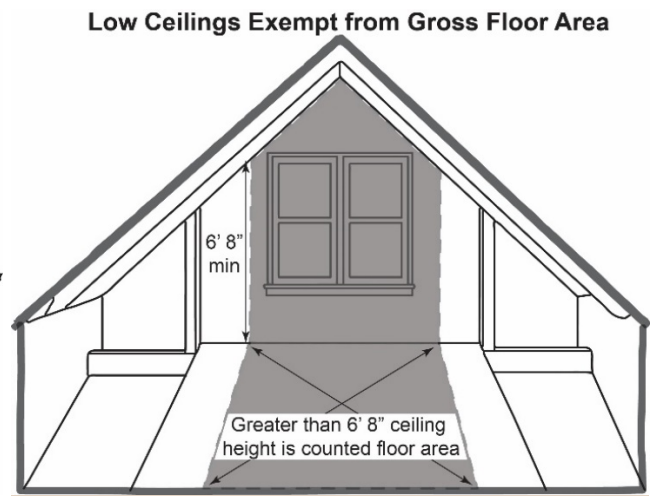
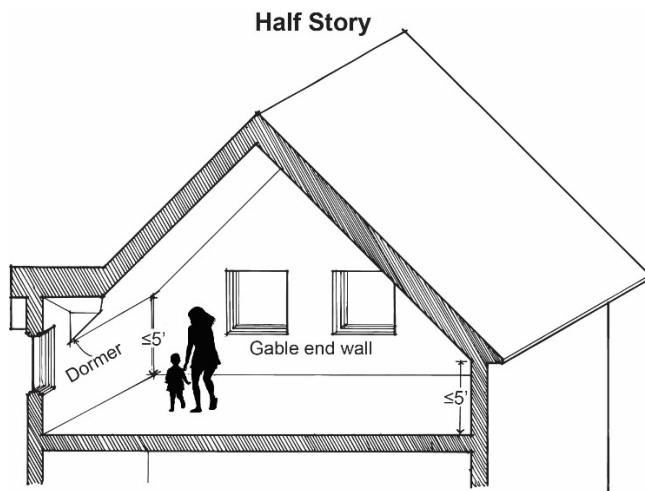
D. Definitions

*** **

Story, [ONE-]Half

A story that has the following characteristics:

- Habitable floor area under a gable, hip, gambrel, mansard, or curved (e.g., barrel)[SHED, OR HIPPED] roof;[THAT CONTAINS HABITABLE FLOOR AREA, INCLUDING FLOOR AREA UNDER DORMERS,]
- All roof rafters located within five feet or less of the floor joists of such story, except at roof ends (e.g., gable ends) or where dormers are provided; and
- Gross floor area not exceeding 75[50] percent of the gross floor area of the story[FLOOR] below. The calculation for the gross floor area excludes portions of the half story where the ceiling height is six feet eight inches (6'8") or less.



*** **



Planning Department
Long-Range Planning Division
PO Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650

www.muni.org/Planning/2040Actions.aspx

Comments Received

**Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones
Height and Bulk Standards**

Public Hearing Draft

PZC Case No. 2021-0111

Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan
Implementation Actions 4-4 and 7-2

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Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: Wilson, Karleen K.
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 4:36 PM
To: Blake, Lori A.; Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: FW: 2021-0111 Request for Reviewing Agency Comments
Attachments: 2021-0111 Routing Memorandum.pdf

No comments from Addressing.

Karleen Wilson
MOA Addressing Official
907.343.8168
[MOA Official Address Map](#)

From: Stewart, Gloria I. <gloria.stewart@anchorageak.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 11:51 AM
Cc: Stewart, Gloria I. <gloria.stewart@anchorageak.gov>; Davis, Tom G. <tom.davis@anchorageak.gov>
Subject: 2021-0111 Request for Reviewing Agency Comments

Greetings all. Attached please find Planning Department Routing Memorandum for the above referenced Case No. 2021-0111 (Public Hearing Draft for T21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones Height & Bulk Standards) scheduled for a Public Hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission on November 01, 2021). Routing materials can be viewed by clicking the link below, scrolling to bottom of page and selecting 2021-0111 Reviewing Agency Routing. Instructions for submitting comments are outlined in paragraph 4 of the Routing Memorandum.

<http://www.muni.org/CityViewPortal/Planning/Status?planningId=17427>.



Planning Department
MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Gloria I. Stewart
Senior Planning Technician •
Planning Department
Current Planning Division - Zoning & Platting
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Phone: (907) 343-7934
4700 Elmore Road, Anchorage, AK 99507
www.muni.org/planning



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities

DIVISION of PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT and STATEWIDE PLANNING
Anchorage Field Office

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Anchorage, AK 99519-6900
Main: 907.269.0520
Fax: 907.269.0521
dot.alaska.gov

September 15, 2021

David Whitfield, Current Planning Manager
MOA, Community Development Department
Planning Division
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650

RE: MOA Zoning Review

Dear Mr. Whitfield:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Central Region Planning Field Office has no comments on the following zoning cases:

- **2021-0066: Tract 2, Carol Creek Subdivision (Plat 2018-82)**
- **2021-0113: 2208 Eureka Street**
- **2021-0114: 2208 Eureka Street**
- **2021-0111: Title 21 Text Amendment to the R-2 Zoning Districts Height and Bulk Standards: Request for Public Comments**
- **2021-0120: Review and Recommendation of an Ordinance of the Anchorage Municipal Assembly amending Anchorage Municipal Code Sections 21.08.050 and 21.08.060 to adopt a cleanup standard for contaminated soils for new subdivision applicants**

Comments that apply to all applications accessing DOT facilities:

*These comments may or may not be specifically listed in a comment for an application, but each still apply.

All properties accessing ADOT&PF roads must apply to Right-of-Way for a driveway permit, subject to provisions listed in 17 AAC 10.020. Any previously issued driveway permit is retained with the property and can pass to future owners. Driveway permits become invalid once the property undergoes a platting action or major change in development and property use. For these reasons permits become void and must be reissued.

We recommend the petitioner verify all ADOT&PF road rights-of-way adjacent to their property and dedicate them. If there is an existing right-of-way, the petitioner is unable to develop that portion of the property yet continues to pay property taxes on it; dedicating will remove that cost to the petitioner.

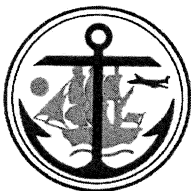
If there are any questions regarding these comments, please feel free to contact me at (907) 269 – 0522 or shawn.gardner@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn Gardner".

Shawn Gardner
Anchorage Area Planner, DOT&PF

"Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Traffic Engineering Department



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 15, 2021

TO: Current Planning Division Supervisor.
Planning Department


THRU: Kristen A. Langley, Traffic Safety Section Supervisor,
Traffic Engineering Department

FROM: Randy Ribble, Assistant Traffic Engineer

SUBJECT: **2021-0111 Title 21 Text Amendments to R-2 Zoning Districts and Bulk Standards**

Traffic Engineering has no objection to the proposed code changes to Title 21 for the R-2 A Zoning Districts height and Bulk Standards.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 17, 2021
TO: Dave Whitfield, Planning Manager, Planning Section, Planning Division
FROM: Alex Prosak, P.E., Civil Engineer II, Planning Section, AWWU 
RE: Zoning Case Comments
Hearing date: November 1, 2021
Agency Comments due: October 4, 2021

AWWU has reviewed the materials and has the following comments.

21-0111 TITLE 21, Text Amendment to the R-2 Zoning Districts Height and Bulk Standards: Request for Public Comments, Grid N/A

1. AWWU has no objection to this AMC amendment.

If you have any questions pertaining to public water or sewer, please call 786-5694 or send an e-mail to alex.prosak@awwu.biz.



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



Development Services Department

Private Development Section

Mayor Dave Bronson

MEMORANDUM

Comments to Planning and Zoning Commission Applications/Petitions

DATE: September 23, 2021
TO: Tom Davis, Senior Planner
FROM: Judy Anunciacion, Private Development Engineer
SUBJECT: PZC Case 2021-0111

Case 2021-0111 – Title 21 Amendment to the R-2 Zoning Districts Height and Bulk Standards: Request for Public Comments

Department Recommendations: The Private Development section has no objection to the proposed amendment to the R-2 Zoning Districts Height and Bulk Standards.

Kimmel, Corliss A.

From: McGee, Lynn M.
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 7:19 AM
To: Stewart, Gloria I.
Cc: Blake, Lori A.; Kimmel, Corliss A.
Subject: RE: 2021-0111 Request for Reviewing Agency Comments

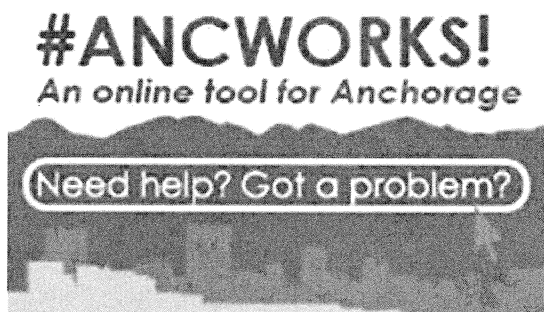
All:

ROW has the following comments by case number:

2021-0111 ROW has no comment or objections on the proposed action.

Regards,

Lynn McGee
Senior Plan Reviewer
Right of Way Section
lynn.mcgee@anchorageak.gov
Office: 343-8226
Fax: 249-7340



From: Stewart, Gloria I. <gloria.stewart@anchorageak.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 11:51 AM
Cc: Stewart, Gloria I. <gloria.stewart@anchorageak.gov>; Davis, Tom G. <tom.davis@anchorageak.gov>
Subject: 2021-0111 Request for Reviewing Agency Comments

Greetings all. Attached please find Planning Department Routing Memorandum for the above referenced Case No. 2021-0111 (Public Hearing Draft for T21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones Height & Bulk Standards) scheduled for a Public Hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission on November 01, 2021). Routing materials can be viewed by clicking the link below, scrolling to bottom of page and selecting 2021-0111 Reviewing Agency Routing. Instructions for submitting comments are outlined in paragraph 4 of the Routing Memorandum.

<http://www.muni.org/CityViewPortal/Planning/Status?planningId=17427>.

Davis, Tom G.

From: Dale Smythe <dsmythe@bettisworthnorth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2021 12:32 PM
To: Davis, Tom G.
Cc: Melisa Babb
Subject: R2 proposed changes- input from design community

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Tom,
Melisa in our office mentioned you were interested in more input from the design community on the recent proposed R2 changes.
Follow my review and overall discussions, I fully support the changes proposed as a way to help increase density and add more housing options for Anchorage residents.
I live in an R2 area and recognize the potential changes as positive.
thanks

Dale Smythe AIA | Senior Architect, Project Manager
Main. 907.561.5780 | Direct. 907.382.4052
2600 Denali Street, Suite 710 Anchorage, AK 99503



Davis, Tom G.

From: Tamas Deak <TDeak@KPBArchitects.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 8:40 PM
To: Davis, Tom G.; John Thurber
Subject: RE: Thank you for attending October 5 Title 21 R-2 height amendment public info workshop
Attachments: FINAL Comments R2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendments 10152021.pdf; 2110 Draft P&Z Resolution.pdf

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Tom,

Please, find the response to the project from SACC attached. Please, review the letter in a timely manner as it has pertinent information about our process.

Tamás Deák, FASLA, LEED® AP (BD+C)
Principal
Landscape Architect in Responsible Charge, Intern Architect

KPB ARCHITECTS
500 L Street Suite 400 | Anchorage AK 99501
v 907.274.7443 | f 907.274.7407

From: Davis, Tom G. <tom.davis@anchorageak.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 5, 2021 8:59 PM
To: John Thurber <jthurber501@icloud.com>; Tamas Deak <TDeak@KPBArchitects.com>; Cheryl Richardson <cheryl.d.richardson@gmail.com>; Patrice Parker <patrice.parker@gmail.com>
Subject: Thank you for attending October 5 Title 21 R-2 height amendment public info workshop

John, Tamas, Patrice, and Cheryl –

Thank you all for filling the attending guest list for the R-2 amendment public information meeting this evening. First attachment is the presentation slides from this evening. Second attachment is a quick, rough map attempting to respond to one of the questions raised this evening.

Let me know as you have other questions while preparing South Addition CC or individual comments for the PZC.

For others who may be interested in the R-2 amendment, a second public info meeting is scheduled to take place tomorrow, October 6, from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. The hyperlink/call-in number to join tomorrow's show is available on the R-2 project web page at <http://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/Projects/AnchLandUse/Pages/Compatible.aspx>.

I will also post tonight's slides to the project web page.

Thank you,

Tom

South Addition Community Council Executive Committee

John Thurber, Daniel Volland, Cathleen Hahn, Patrice Parker, Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
C/O John Thurber, southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

October 15, 2021

Long Range Planning Division
Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage
Anchorage2040@muni.org
Address: 4700 South Bragaw Street
Anchorage, AK 99507
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage AK, 99519-6650

Attn: Tom Davis (davistg@muni.org, (907) 343-7916

RE: R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment Project 2021 Public Hearing Draft

Tom,

First and foremost, on behalf of the South Addition Community Council, we would like to express our sincere thank you for your efforts in contemplating and discussing this project during numerous coordination meetings, presentations and direct dialogue with our neighbors. It is hard to believe that it has been three years since we offered our last formal comments to the Planning Department regarding the previous version of this effort. Cheryl Richardson always reminds us that we would have little to say if the current code did an adequate job protecting South Addition's neighborhood. While true, what we included in this letter will be strictly focused on the project referenced above.

It would be remiss of us if we did not share with you some process background. You are reading is the SACC response to your R2 project draft approved by the SACC Executive Committee during its regularly scheduled meeting on October 14, 2021. There were a few amendments to the draft we brought forward that are incorporated herein.

Your presentation to the South Addition Community Council occurred on September 23, 2021. It was followed by coordination with individual members and then a topical, in-depth discussion with executive committee members, John Thurber, Patrice Parker, Tamas Deak present on October 5, 2021, as part of your public outreach efforts. You requested formal comments in a timely manner so they can be included in the Planning and Zoning Commission information packet prepared for their November 1st public hearing.

As you can see this timeline is not conducive to fully completing our public process at SACC. The SACC Executive Committee voted to approve these comments. We will also present a resolution to approve the comments during the SACC general meeting scheduled for October 28, 2021. We will send you the outcome of that agenda item as soon as we can.

We hope this clarifies our process, and with that please, find our comments and observations included within this letter as approved by the SACC Executive Committee.

South Addition Community Council Executive Committee

John Thurber, Daniel Volland, Cathleen Hahn, Patrice Parker, Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
C/O John Thurber, southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

John Thurber coordinates our planning group, so you can reach us through him or by addressing any questions you may have to me as well. (Tamas Deak, tdeak@kpbarchitects.com.)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Foreword to Recommendations

The South Addition Community Council (SACC) has started a Neighborhood Plan (NP) process as part of the Anchorage 2040 process in 2016. Part of the NP work has been gathering insights from South Addition community members regarding neighborhood character. That insight remains relevant to your current renewed effort to amend R-2 zoning districts in the land use code and it is summarized below from our previous letter as a reminder.

Little has changed in the past three years in what our council members value in our neighborhoods. There is no change in the overwhelming sentiment about the preservation and enhancement of the physical character of our traditional neighborhood being crucial for the social and emotional well-being of our current and future residents. Preservation and enhancement remain essential guiding principles for any development that occurs within South Addition.

People value the ability to walk or commute by other means on well-developed and well-maintained sidewalks/roads among various diverse and compatible residential or small-scale commercial buildings in terms of their height and bulk.

People value mature trees in yards and streets and they value that there is a clear hierarchy and organization of street functions due to the blessing of alleys and the consistency of physical features that make a street appealing.

People value the organic balance between the areas devoted to personal yards, green spaces, various of gardens and hard-surfaced functional spaces, all connected in the context of the generally low speed and low traffic volume streets. The exceptions are the large arterials, each with its own set of challenges.

People value the economic benefits the neighborhood provides with its proximity to downtown businesses. They value the smaller scale yet diverse buildings and enjoy consistently stable and favorable property values despite their scale.

People value that individuals and families want to live in South Addition for its inherent characteristics and friendly people. The neighborhood continues to attract new generations of caring people who purchase older houses and invest in them by incremental remodeling or by a single leap of a new addition or rehabilitation.

People value that still, somehow, these new neighbors are mindful and careful that they seamlessly fit in the neighborhood context. They enhance their property and the commons proving that the rising tide does lift all boats.

South Addition Community Council Executive Committee

John Thurber, Daniel Volland, Cathleen Hahn, Patrice Parker, Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
C/O John Thurber, southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

We acknowledge that you have made improvements to the original proposal from three years ago. Several of these reflect on the Planning Department's effort to listen to the plurality of voices and stakeholders.

We recognize your attempt striving to find better and more refined solutions to complex land use issues. The notable improvements are notwithstanding, there is still room to address opportunities for improvement and we offer a few comments/recommendations for your consideration.

Comments/Recommendations

Because of the significant value our community places on neighborhood character and the identity it carries, SACC would like further consideration given to the issues below before it is presented for decision by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

1. The SACC endorses the proposed change to include lot size limitations under 21.06.030.D7.b.i to create a by right implementation of height increases. However, we believe that the unique "old-school/traditional" development pattern of traditional neighborhoods like South Addition lends itself better to make the lot size limitation to one half-block area. A half-block size allows the development project to be enclosed by public rights-of-way and removing adverse effects on neighboring parcels. South Addition would welcome a developer with the know-how and resources to create another project like Park Place on West 13th. Good design, thoughtful site layout, quality building and landscape improvements resulted in a three-story high-density project everyone loves. And it provides a dwelling unit type that is not on the market otherwise.
2. The SACC understands the purpose and intent to allow by right three-story construction on a transitional site and generally concurs with the validity of the concept (21.06.030.D.7.b.ii.) Our concern is with the implementation of this strategy in South Addition. We neither believe that the B-1A districts are suitable triggers for the transition sites nor can we identify those transitional zones in South Addition without a map or descriptive definition. SACC contends that the development patterns in South Addition – particularly in the core area of South Addition – do not offer transition zones. This tool is much better suited for the more extensive R2 zoned areas where more developable land is available for more housing.
3. A significant concern for SACC is the exception process proposed under section 21.06.030.D.7.e. We do believe that exceptions for height are necessary in some cases. Still, the proposed process allow an exception on any lot if approved through administrative site plan review. This exception places an undue burden on the planning department by having to process, review, coordinate, decide for each case, without the benefit of public information. Why burden the planning team with a site plan review process and not offer any public input to help advise their decision? We strongly believe that an exemption process must include a public hearing site plan review, if implemented. (One way to eliminate the need for the exemption process is to make it easier to allow three story development where appropriate and not let it occur where it is not appropriate. A minimum land area at a half-block in South

South Addition Community Council Executive Committee

John Thurber, Daniel Volland, Cathleen Hahn, Patrice Parker, Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
C/O John Thurber, southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Addition, as proposed in recommendation 1, removes the need for an exemption process.)

4. We eluded to the notable improvements the planning department made in refining the ordinance amendments. Many of these while important, they are not at the crux of our concern. We believe that proposing transparent parapets above a certain height, eliminating certain appurtenances like penthouses, requiring different approaches to stepping back buildings, modifying the requirements regarding elevator "enclosures", and addressing the heights of dormers are efforts in the right directions to address undesirable shading.

The members of the South Addition community welcome the collaboration the planning department - and you personally - offered to date on these amendments. We want to continue to lend support, so Anchorage can achieve its housing development goals in a context sensitive manner that also respects South Addition Community Council's goals. We welcome new neighbors who bring new compatible development to the neighborhood and support the remarkable renaissance of remodeling, additions, and accessory units.

Please, contact SACC President John Thurber or I, if you have any questions.
Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tamas Deak, Member-at-Large
tdeak@kpbarchitects.com



John Thurber, Community Council President
southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com
jthurber1@msn.com

South Addition Community Council

John Thurber, Daniel Volland, Cathleen Hahn, Patrice Parker, Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

October 28, 2021

Resolution to accept South Addition Community Council comments to MOA R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment Project 2021 Public Hearing

WHEREAS - The Municipality of Anchorage adopted the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan on September 26, 2017 as a targeted update to the Anchorage 2020 – Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan to guide the land development; and

WHEREAS - The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan identified strategies and actions to achieve the goals of the plan; and

WHEREAS - The Municipal Planning Department is in the process to carry out Actions 4-4 and 7-2 in a planning project called Title 21 R-2 Zones Bulk and Height Amendment; and

WHEREAS - The above planning project has gone through several iterations since 2018 and now is in the 2021 Public Hearing Draft phase; and

WHEREAS - The Municipal Planning Department is seeking public input regarding the 2021 Public Hearing Draft and requested formal comments from the South Addition Community Council (SACC) during the September 2021 general meeting as part of the informational presentation provided by Tom Davis municipal senior planner; and

WHEREAS - A Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing is scheduled for November 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS - In order for SACC comments to be included in the P&Z hearing packet, they must be submitted to P&Z before the next SACC general meeting on October 28, 2021; and

WHEREAS - The SACC Executive Committee prepared, reviewed and adopted formal comments during its October 14, 2021 meeting to be provided in time for inclusion in the hearing packet for the November 1st P&Z hearing; and

Whereas - The comments will be presented to the SACC membership for formal adoption during the October 28, 2021 general meeting; and

WHEREAS - Any amendments adopted during the October 28 meeting will be submitted to the P&Z Commission; and

WHEREAS - The SACC Executive Committee comments have been presented and discussed as part of the published agenda; therefore be it

Resolved, That the SACC adopts the comments adopted by its Executive Committee to the MOA R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment Project during the October 28 general meeting.

PASSED / FAILED : Votes in favor____, votes against____, abstentions_____.

John Thurber, SACC President
southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Patrice Parker, SACC Secretary

Planning and Zoning Commission

November 1, 2021

Case #: **2021-0111**

Case Title: Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones
Height and Bulk Standards

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

☒ Comments submitted after the packet was finalized

☐ Additional information

☐ Other:

1. University Area Community Council
2. South Addition Community Council final
comments and resolution
3. Airport Heights Community Council

Sent by email: X yes no

Anchorage 2040

From: Krista Scott <kleigh.scott@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 5:33 PM
To: Anchorage2040
Cc: Paul Stang Stang
Subject: Regarding Case No. 2021-0111

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Regarding Case No. 2021-0111, a proposed amendment to the building height and bulk regulations in the R-2A, R-2D, and R-2M residential zoning districts (R-2 districts). This is a text amendment to the regulations in Anchorage Municipal Code Title 21 Zoning Ordinance (Title 21).

The UACC has no additional comments on the proposed edits.

Thank you for the opportunity to review.

Respectfully,

Krista Scott

UACC P&Z

South Addition Community Council

President: John Thurber, VP: Daniel Volland, Treasurer: Cathleen Hahn, Secretary: Patrice Parker,
At Large: Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

October 29, 2021

R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment Project 2021 Public Hearing Draft Comments as amended and approved during the October 28, 2021 general meeting

Because of the significant value our community places on neighborhood character and the identity it carries, SACC would like further consideration given to the issues below before it is presented for decision by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

1. The SACC endorses the proposed change to include lot size limitations under 21.06.030.D7.b.i to create a by right implementation of height increases. However, we must protect the unique "old-school/traditional" development pattern of traditional neighborhoods like South Addition from increased height and bulk in its R2 zones. Generally, by right height increase would lend itself better to a lot size limitation of one half-block area in South Addition. A half-block size allows the development project to be surrounded by public rights-of-way and removes adverse effects on neighboring parcels. Good design, thoughtful site layout, quality building and landscape improvements may result in compatible development that preserves the neighborhood character with this approach, however, SACC does not want the unique, "old school" development pattern of South Addition to be redeveloped to scale, form and patterns unique to R3 zoned scale developments. Such development is welcome in South Addition's abundant R3 zoned areas.
2. The SACC understands the purpose and intent allowing by right three-story construction on a transitional site and generally concurs with the validity of the concept (21.06.030.D.7.b.ii.) Our concern is with the implementation of this strategy in South Addition. We neither believe that the B-1A districts are suitable triggers for the transition sites nor can we identify those transitional zones in South Addition without a map or descriptive definition. SACC contends that the development patterns in South Addition – particularly in the core area of South Addition – do not offer transition zones. This tool is much better suited for the more extensive R2 zoned areas where more developable land is available for more housing.
3. A significant concern for SACC is the exception process proposed under section 21.06.030.D.7.e. We do believe that exceptions for height are necessary in some cases. Still, the proposed process allows an exception on any lot if approved through administrative site plan review. This exception places an undue burden on the planning department by having to process, review, coordinate, decide for each case, without the benefit of public input and information. Why burden the planning team with a site plan review process and not offer any public input to help advise their decision? We strongly believe that an exemption process must include a public hearing site plan review, if implemented. (One way to eliminate the need for the exemption process is to make it easier to allow three story development where appropriate and not let it occur where it is not appropriate. A minimum land area at a half-block in South Addition, as proposed in recommendation 1, removes the need for an exemption process.)

South Addition Community Council Executive Committee

John Thurber, Daniel Volland, Cathleen Hahn, Patrice Parker, Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
C/O John Thurber, southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

4. We acknowledge the notable improvements the planning department made in refining the ordinance amendments. Many of these, while important, are not at the crux of our concern at this draft phase. We believe that proposing transparent parapets above a certain height, eliminating certain appurtenances like penthouses, requiring different approaches to stepping back buildings, modifying the requirements regarding elevator "enclosures", and addressing the heights of dormers are efforts in the right direction to address undesirable shading. SACC emphasizes that seeking stronger elevator, parapet and penthouse standards to maintain the scale of our traditional neighborhood will remain our concern for future development especially based on recent built examples to the contrary.

End of comments.

South Addition Community Council

President: John Thurber, VP: Daniel Volland, Treasurer: Cathleen Hahn, Secretary: Patrice Parker,
At Large: Fran Durner, Tamas Deak, Harry Need
southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

October 29, 2021

Resolution to accept SACC comments to MOA R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment Project 2021 Public Hearing Draft

WHEREAS - The Municipality of Anchorage adopted the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan on September 26, 2017 as a targeted update to the Anchorage 2020 – Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan to guide the land development,

WHEREAS - The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan identified strategies and actions to achieve the goals of the plan,

WHEREAS – The Municipal Planning Department is in the process to carry out Actions 4-4 and 7-2 in a planning project called Title 21 R-2 Zones Bulk and Height Amendment

WHEREAS – The above planning project has gone through several iterations since 2018 and now is in the 2021 Public Hearing Draft phase,

WHEREAS – The Municipal Planning Department is seeking public input regarding the 2021 Public Hearing Draft and requested formal comments from the South Addition Community Council (SACC) during the September 2021 general meeting as part of the informational presentation provided by Tom Davis municipal senior planner,

WHEREAS – The SACC Executive Committee prepared, reviewed and adopted formal comments during its October 14, 2021 meeting to be provided to the Planning Department and to be presented to the South Addition community council membership for adoption during the October 28, 2021 general meeting,

WHEREAS – The SACC Executive Committee comments have been presented and discussed as part of the published agenda,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

That the South Addition Community Council adopts the comments approved by its Executive Committee to the MOA R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Amendment Project with the amendments accepted during the October 28 general meeting with 32 votes in favor, 1 vote against, 0 votes to abstain.



John Thurber, Community Council President
southadditioncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

This written testimony is in reference to the Title 21 Amendment to R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Standards as written and submitted in PZC 2021-0111.

Airport Heights Community Council (AHCC) contains R-2D zoning. The majority of homes in AHCC are single story, built in the 1940s and 50s. The duplexes were built as upstairs/downstairs dwelling with the lower level being mostly underground, or as side-by-side small ranch style duplexes. Airport Heights was the site of the initial pilot project for Solarize Anchorage in 2018 where 33 homes took part and installed solar on their roof tops. Even more have added solar since that first pilot project. Airport Heights is home to multiple gardeners who enjoy and appreciate the ability to provide food sustainability to many throughout the neighborhood.

An oversized duplex in Airport Heights was built in 1996-97 at 1555 Columbine Street. The duplex skirts building height limits and encroaches on the 5 foot setback with a cantilever just inside the property line. The cute little house that withstood the 1964 quake just to the north of the duplex was plunged into darkness for much of the year. The owners of the little house sold the property, it was picked up as a rental, and became a drug house bringing crime and disrepair with it. In 2015 or 2016, the little home was razed, leaving a vacant lot. In the span of one generation, a building code with minimal restraint and consideration for neighborhood compatibility along with a passive permitting office, allowed one house to wither away another.

Minimal setbacks with large height limits reduce access to solar photovoltaic energy, limit sunlight to neighboring gardens, reduce back yard privacy, do not increase housing capacity, limit resale potential of surrounding properties, and are not beneficial or compatible to the Airport Heights neighborhood or other neighborhoods around Anchorage.

We support the steps outlined in Section 21.06.030, especially for lot size (21,780 sq ft), step-back plane, height/bulk transition, and dimensional standards of a three-story building as laid out in the Title 21 Text Amendment to R-2 Zones Height and Bulk Standards Public Hearing Draft as of 29 October 2021. We appreciate the improved definition of what a ½ story is. Size thresholds are important in maintaining neighborhood compatibility and building larger structures while not increasing housing capacity is not in alignment with the stated intent of the R-2 zones and the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan. People buy properties in Airport Heights because they appreciate the current neighborhood; its character and solar access afforded to homes and yards.

In the Description of Amendments 5.b, we recommend adding that rooftop stairwell and elevator access enclosures that exceed the 30-foot height limit in the R-2 zones be set back at least four feet from the front street-facing building façade wall and from the South – Southwest of the structure if there is a residential structure South-Southwest of the proposed project that is at least one story shorter than the proposed construction. Elevator access enclosures have become the new normal in new construction as a way skirt height limits and add additional closet, reading nook, or storage space to a structure at the expense of diminishing solar access for existing surrounding properties.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Carolyn Ramsey
AHCC/President