

Planning



**Municipal
Manager**

**Community
Development**

**Building
Services**

Planning

Planning Department

Description

The Planning Department provides professional, technical, and analytical expertise that assists the community in identifying goals, policies, and objectives governing growth and future development within the Municipality of Anchorage. It guides the development of a livable and resilient northern community, facilitates development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations and prepares long range land use plans based on the community's goals and aspirations, economic assets and opportunities, and environmental attributes. Deemed an essential service, the Department contributes to the economic vitality and livelihood of supporting residential and commercial activities through timely land use entitlement, code and plan interpretation and application.

Department Services

- Produces area-wide, regional, and neighborhood plans that meet community expectations for our winter city community. This includes Assembly-adopted comprehensive plans for the Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak-Eagle River, Girdwood and Turnagain Arm and sub-area plans within those areas.
- Provides planning for long-term multi-modal transportation needs.
- Ensures that new developments adhere to adopted plans, codes, and regulations.
- Provides a public process for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezoning's, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.
- Assists the public with residential, commercial, and industrial development projects.
- Provides staff support to Municipality's Emergency Operation Center in the areas of Planning, Operations, and other areas as requested.

Divisions

- Director's Office & Administration
 - Provides leadership, management, and coordination for overall operations of the department; and
 - Provides full array of administrative and financial management services to include but not limited to budget, accounting, grant administration, purchasing, IT coordination, asset management, human resources coordination, and payroll.
- Current Planning
 - Processes zoning, platting and other development applications requiring land use actions;
 - Provides staff support to four (4) adjudicatory/regulatory boards: Planning & Zoning Commission, Platting Board, Urban Design Commission, and Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals; and
 - Develops ordinances to amend codes and regulations as needed to respond to market needs and public safety.
- Long Range Planning
 - Creates, updates, coordinates, and implements the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak/Eagle River/Eklutna, and Girdwood/Turnagain Arm);
 - Prepares and implements district and neighborhood plans, and conducts planning studies;
 - Develops policy guidance and ordinances to amend code as needed to implement plans;

- General Permit Authority: Administers and maintains the agreement with the Corp of Engineers through regular updates of the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan and issues wetlands permits per COE guidelines;
- Prepares and updates the Land Use Plan Map;
- Assists the public in the development and construction of residential, commercial and industrial projects consistent with the Municipality’s Comprehensive, District and Neighborhood plans;
- Historic Preservation Officer: Administers and maintains National Park Service Certified Local Government Status, which enables the Municipality to qualify for grant funding;
- Provides staff support and expertise to the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission, and towards historic preservation planning efforts;
- Provides staff support to the Geotechnical Advisory Commission, and the Watershed and Natural Resource Advisory Commission; and
- Applies for grants to further the vision and goals of the Municipality’s land use and functional plans.
- Transportation Planning
 - Supervises and coordinates the AMATS (Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions) Program through a cooperative, coordinated, and comprehensive planning process;
 - Develops and implements a multi-modal transportation system for the Municipality of Anchorage;
 - Maintains eligibility for Federal Assistance for road, transit, trail, port, freight, and air quality improvements;
 - Develops and manages the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); and
 - Updates the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
 - Monitors, amends, and updates the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP); Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and
 - Prepares and reviews design and land use plans.

Department Goals that Contribute to Achieving the Mayor’s Mission:



Economic Recovery – Build a city that attracts and retains a talented workforce, is hospitable to entrepreneurs and business owners, provides a strong environment for economic growth, attract new and innovative industries to Anchorage, and expand the tourism opportunities of Southcentral Alaska.

- Examine and track the level of tax subsidy for the processing of zoning and platting cases.
- Develop staff resources to serve as projects managers to assist major housing and economic development projects from concept phase to issuance of certificate of occupancy.
- Assist health and higher education partners in implementing their campus master plans to ensure continued quality health care and higher education is provided in-state.
- Provide timely and accurate services for applicants requesting:
 - Land use reviews/determinations;
 - Administrative land use permits; and
 - Zoning and platting services.

- Safety: Provide guidance in the design of public and private development projects that fosters crime prevention and minimizes the impacts from natural and man-made disasters.
 - Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design guidelines in the review of site and building plans;
 - Adopt policies and procedures to minimize the impacts of and response to natural disasters.



Increased Development – Work to streamline the Anchorage development process and provide incentives to bring capital projects to the city. Foster an atmosphere that welcomes business investment through stable taxes and restrained government spending.

- Provide timely, clear, and accurate information about zoning and platting cases to the general public and to the citizens serving on Anchorage’s four land use regulatory boards: Planning and Zoning Commission, Platting Board, Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals, and Urban Design Commission.



Exemplary Municipal Operations – Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Municipal operations to deliver services faster and better.

- Engage the community in land use planning activities to make decisions about land uses and transportation, as well as public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community.
- Review and make necessary changes to codes, regulations, land use approval, building permit and other processes to reduce barriers to housing and non-residential development.
- Incorporate the necessary tools and training for staff in order to serve the public effectively.

Planning Department Summary

	2022 Actuals Unaudited	2023 Revised	2024 Approved	24 v 23 % Chg
Direct Cost by Division				
PL Planning	4,128,905	3,523,279	3,512,021	(0.32%)
PL Planning Administration	322,947	323,562	333,187	2.97%
Direct Cost Total	4,451,852	3,846,841	3,845,208	(0.04%)
Intragovernmental Charges				
Charges by/to Other Departments	1,672,002	1,802,777	1,830,452	1.54%
Function Cost Total	6,123,854	5,649,618	5,675,660	0.46%
Program Generated Revenue	(1,380,661)	(1,460,223)	(1,460,223)	-
Net Cost Total	4,743,193	4,189,395	4,215,437	0.62%
Direct Cost by Category				
Salaries and Benefits	3,239,127	3,251,655	3,358,907	3.30%
Supplies	29,729	14,984	14,984	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Contractual/Other Services	1,160,428	570,752	461,867	(19.08%)
Debt Service	-	-	-	-
Equipment, Furnishings	22,568	9,450	9,450	-
Direct Cost Total	4,451,852	3,846,841	3,845,208	(0.04%)
Position Summary as Budgeted				
Full-Time	24	23	24	4.35%
Part-Time	1	1	1	-
Position Total	25	24	25	4.17%

Planning

Reconciliation from 2023 Revised Budget to 2024 Approved Budget

	Direct Costs	Positions		
		FT	PT	Seas/T
2023 Revised Budget	3,846,841	23	1	-
2023 One-Time Requirements				
- REVERSE - 2023 1Q Assembly Amendment 18 GG - ONE-TIME Grant to Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services DBA NeighborWorks Alaska	(133,885)	-	-	-
- REVERSE - 2023 1Q Assembly Amendment 23 GG - ONE-TIME Spenard corridor parking study	(200,000)	-	-	-
- REVERSE - 2023 1Q Assembly Amendment 23 GG - ONE-TIME Feasibility study for developing manufactured housing communities throughout the Municipality	(50,000)	-	-	-
Changes in Existing Programs/Funding for 2024				
- Salaries and benefits adjustments	(17,748)	-	-	-
2024 Continuation Level	3,445,208	23	1	-
2024 Proposed Budget Changes				
- None	-	-	-	-
2024 Assembly Amendments				
- 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 1, Communications and educational materials about development code changes	75,000	-	-	-
- 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 11, Long range planning position, July 1 start	125,000	1	-	-
- 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 25, ONE-TIME Chugiak, Eagle River comprehensive plan	200,000	-	-	-
2024 Mayor Vetoes				
- Strike: 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 1, Communications and educational materials about development code changes	(75,000)	-	-	-
- Strike: 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 11, Long range planning position, July 1 start	(125,000)	(1)	-	-
2024 Veto Overrides				
- Override Strike: 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 1, Communications and educational materials about development code changes	75,000	-	-	-
- Override Strike: 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 11, Long range planning position, July 1 start	125,000	1	-	-
2024 Approved Budget	3,845,208	24	1	-

Planning Operating Grant and Alternative Funded Programs

Program	Fund Center	Award Amount	Expected Expenditures Thru 12/31/2023	Expected Expenditures in 2024	Expected Balance at End of 2024	Personnel			Program Expiration
						FT	PT	T	
2022/2023 AMATS Program - Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Program 2020 (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) Annual grant for local and regional studies that are required prior to transit and highway design and construction.	190200 1000086	3,336,125	3,336,125	-	-	7.8	-	-	Dec-23
2023 Historic Preservation Commission Grant (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) A pre-development project for an historic structures report that includes a condition assessment and engineering report. The intent of the report is to identify the structural integrity of the Government Hill Wireless Station (Wireless Station) in order to better understand which treatment would be most appropriate for future development of the property. This project does not involve a treatment of an historic property, but the report will present recommendations that comply with the Preservation standard from the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.	190200 1000089	20,000	20,000	-	-	-	-	-	Dec-23
Brownfield 2019 Coalition EPA Grant (Fed Pass-Thru Grant) MOA will inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct cleanup planning and community involvement for brownfield sites in the Anchorage area. Coalition partners are strengthening the local economy by redeveloping brownfield properties in and around 5 high priority revitalization areas: East Downtown/Fairview/Ship Creek, Downtown Core, Midtown/Spenard, Mountain View, and Chugiak/Eagle River. Brownfields are real property, the expansion, development or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.	190200 1000076	1,600,000	933,333	333,333	333,334	-	-	-	Sep-26
AMATS Transportation Systems Management & (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) The project will translate AMATS strategic elements (including 2040 MTP Implementation Plan, ITS Implementation Plan, CMP Implementation Plan, and Transportation Demand Management Plan) into a combined five-year TSMO implementation plan document that will provide overall direction and strategic outcomes with specific projects with related cost estimates, services, and activities.	190200 1000084	421,804	421,804	-	-	-	-	-	Dec-23
AMATS Safety Plan (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) Develop a comprehensive Safety Plan to collaborate across departments and jurisdictions and incorporate quantitative safety criteria into project privatization. Set & track 5 performance targets: 1) # of fatalities 2) rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled 3) # of serious injuries; 4) rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT; and 5) # of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries.	190200 1000087	233,252	233,252	-	-	-	-	-	Dec-23
AMATS 2050 MTP (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) The MTP will update descriptions of existing conditions; address current and future deficiencies; make recommendations for improvements to roadways, public transportation service, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and include a financial plan; and will address air quality requirements and MAP-21 planning factors carried forward in the FAST Act.	190200 1000082	983,439	655,626	327,813	-	-	-	-	Dec-24

Planning Operating Grant and Alternative Funded Programs

Program	Fund Center	Award Amount	Expected Expenditures Thru 12/31/2023	Expected Expenditures in 2024	Expected Balance at End of 2024	Personnel			Program Expiration
						FT	PT	T	
AMATS: Recreational Trails Plan Update (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will provide a comprehensive update of all recreational trails within the AMATS area. This update will include primary and secondary linkages to established multi-use pathways, as well as, recreational facilities such as single track bicycle trails, hiking networks, and bicycle parks within the planning area. This plan will also study trail expansion opportunities and strengthening the connections between recreational trail development and fostering economic growth within the AMATS area.	190200 1000093	419,854	104,964	104,964	209,926	-	-	-	Dec-26
AMATS: Downtown Streets Engineering Study (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will implement the Our Downtown Anchorage District Plan through a street engineering study that will address the Plan's transportation & circulation policies. Plan action items include assessing ROW ownership and management in the Downtown district, identify opportunities for complete streets, and include modeling as needed.	190200 1000097	513,155	171,052	171,052	171,051	-	-	-	Dec-25
AMATS: Complete Streets Plan (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This plan will build on the AMATS Complete Streets policy to provide planning guidance for street types, sidewalks, roadways, intersections, curbsides, and ADA accessibility as well as plan implementation. This plan will also develop multi-modal street typologies for the AMATS area a corresponding street typology map. These typologies may include recommendations for development review, streetscape design, traffic signal upgrades, recommended road reclassifications, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities design.	190200 1000099	423,131	84,626	169,252	169,253	-	-	-	Dec-27
Total Grant and Alternative Operating Funding for Department		7,950,760	5,960,782	1,106,414	883,564	8	-	-	
Total General Government Operating Direct Cost for Department				3,845,208		24	1	-	
Total Operating Budget for Department				4,951,622		32	1	-	

Planning Department

Anchorage: Performance. Value. Results.

Mission

The Planning Department provides professional, technical, and analytical expertise that assists the community in identifying goals, policies and objectives governing growth and future development within the Municipality of Anchorage. It guides the development of a livable northern community, facilitating development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations and preparing long-range land use plans based on the community's goals and aspirations, economic assets and opportunities, and environmental attributes.

Core Services

- Produces area-wide, regional, and neighborhood plans that meet community expectations for our winter city community. This includes Assembly-adopted comprehensive and sub-area plans for Chugiak-Eagle River, Anchorage Bowl, Girdwood, and Turnagain Arm.
- Provides planning for long-term multi-modal transportation needs.
- Ensures new developments adhere to adopted plans and land use code.
- Provides a public process for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezoning's, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.

Planning Department

Current Planning Division

Anchorage: Performance. Value. Results.

Mission

Facilitate land use development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations.

Core Services

- Respond to public inquiries regarding land use development regulations and how regulations apply to given situations.
- Provide public processes for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezoning's, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes, etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.

Accomplishment Goals

- Provide timely, clear, and accurate information about zoning and platting cases to the general public and to the citizens serving on Anchorage's four land use regulatory boards: Planning and Zoning Commission, Platting Board, Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals, and Urban Design Commission.
- Examine and track the level of tax subsidy for the processing of zoning and platting cases.
- Develop staff resources to serve as projects managers to assist major housing and economic development projects from concept phase to issuance of certificate of occupancy.
- Assist health and higher education partners in implementing campus master plans to ensure continued quality health care and higher education is provided in-state.
- Provide timely and accurate services for applicants requesting:
 - Land use reviews/determinations;
 - Administrative land use permits;
 - Zoning and platting services; and
 - Zoning Review for all land use and building permits.
- Safety: Provide guidance in the design of public and private development projects that foster crime prevention and minimizes the impacts from natural and man-made disasters.
 - Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design guidelines in the review of site and building plans;
 - Adopt policies and procedures to minimize the impacts of and response to natural disasters.
- Engage the community in land use planning activities to make decisions about land uses and transportation, as well as public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community.
- Review and make necessary changes to codes, regulations, land use approval, building permit and other processes to reduce barriers to housing and non-residential development.
- Incorporate the necessary tools and training for staff in order to serve the public effectively.

Performance Measures

Progress in achieving goals shall be measured by:

Measure #1: Average number of business days to complete initial reviews of land use determinations. Goal: 10 business days (Land Use Review)

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days to Complete	2.11	6.14	7.09	3.89	9.85	6.29						
Total # Completed	9	7	11	9	13	17						
# of Staff	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	1.25	1.25						

Measure #2: Average number of days to complete initial reviews of administrative land use permits. Goal: 3 business days (Land Use Review)

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days	7	4	4	n/a	n/a	9						
Total # Completed	14	4	3	0	0	1						
# of Staff	.5	.5	.5	0	0	.1						

NOTE: June tower admin permit waited for additional information to be submitted from the contractor.

Measure #3: Average number of business days to complete initial reviews of Residential Permits. Goal: 3 business days (Zoning Plan Review)

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days to Complete	2	3	2	2	2	2						
Total # Completed	43	43	69	46	104	94						
# of Staff	1.83	1.78	1.56	1.80	1.73	1.93						

NOTE:
Holidays during the work week are calculated as workdays in the average # of days to complete a review.

**Measure #4: Average number of days to complete initial reviews of Commercial Permits.
Goal: 10 business days (Zoning Plan Review)**

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days	4	7	4	7	4	4						
Total # Completed	61	53	65	80	108	65						
# of Staff	1.83	1.78	1.56	1.80	1.73	1.93						

NOTE:

Holidays during the work week are calculated as workdays in the average # of days to complete a review.

PVR Measure WC: Managing Workers' Compensation Claims

Reducing job-related injuries is a priority for the Administration by ensuring safe work conditions and safe practices. By instilling safe work practices, we ensure not only the safety of our employees but reduce the potential for injuries and property damage to the public. The Municipality is self-insured and every injury poses a financial burden on the public and the injured worker's family. It just makes good sense to WORK SAFE.

Results are tracked by monitoring monthly reports issued by the Risk Management Division.

