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# TURNAGAIN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

c/o Federation of Community Councils  
1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

TO: Municipality of Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission  
FROM: Turnagain Community Council  
DATE: Monday, November 18, 2019  
RE: PZC Case #2019-0143, Alternative Landscaping Requirements

Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the following proposed ordinance.

## **Comments on PZC Case 2019-0143 (Landscaping)**

1. We support the intent of this ordinance, and thank the Planning Department for working to identify good ways to incentivize retention of native and existing vegetation on a site. We have also observed the tendency to completely clear a site during development, and understand the risks to water quality, soil stability, aesthetics and neighborhood character that completely clearing a site brings. We hope these policies help accomplish that goal!
2. We support the inclusion of cottonwoods as acceptable species to remain onsite during development. While they have downsides and are not the most desirable landscaping tree, mature trees should be retained whenever possible.
3. We support the extension of the allowable growing season as it relates to developments to September 15.
4. We considered in existing code where other changes could be made to further support keeping native vegetation, especially trees, as they provide a great deal of benefit and take the longest time and resources to replace. We recommend reducing the minimum caliper of deciduous trees from 6 inches to 4 inches [AMC 21.07.080F(1)(d)], as an amendment in this ordinance. We understand that the intent is to only protect mature trees; however, we understand that 4 inches is typically larger than the trees available in a commercial nursery, and a tree of that size can reasonably be considered mature—especially the species of trees typical in Alaska, like birch or aspen. We believe this is also a worthwhile change to consider, supporting the general goal of incentivizing retention of existing vegetation, particularly trees.
5. We observed in some of the agency comments that there is potential conflict between this change and other codes, related to stormwater requirements and the Design Criteria Manual. We strongly encourage the Planning Department and other relevant departments to explore ways to implement this change or make other adjustments to code to accommodate it. This seems like a worthwhile change to make, given that climate change is extending the growing (and development) season. Do not let this conflict between the codes be a barrier to making common-sense change.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Cathy L. Gleason  
Turnagain Community Council President