

Rogers Park Community Council  
Draft Resolution No. 2022-3  
August 31, 2022

**Resolution of the Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) for improving siting and dimensional building standards for Detached Accessory Dwelling Units in R1-1 and R-1A Zoning Districts to better reflect the intent of the Anchorage Planning Process, respect neighbors, and improve opportunities for affordable housing.**

Whereas the Anchorage Assembly adopted Municipal Ordinance No. AO- 2018 43(S) on June 12, 2018, to allow building Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (DADUs) in R-1 and R-1A zoning districts;

Whereas the Municipal Planning Department (Planning Department) has recently submitted a proposal to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC, Case No. 2022-0090) to amend Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations promulgated in AO- 2018 43(S) and codified in Title 21;

Whereas the Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) respects the Municipal Planning Process, the values of our neighbors, and the Assembly's desire for DADUs to help alleviate Anchorage's housing shortage;

Whereas the Anchorage Housing Survey Report stipulated a best practice for DADU development is to consider and be respectful of neighbors and not infringe on their privacy and AO- 2018 43(S) recognized a consideration of neighborhood character and the privacy and rights of neighbors;

Whereas Title 21.15.040 does not define character but defines "Compatible (or Compatibility)" as "The characteristics of different uses, activities, or designs which allow them to be located near or next to each other in harmony. Some elements affecting compatibility include the height, scale, mass, bulk, and setbacks of structures. ... compatibility refers to the sensitivity of development... and avoiding adverse impacts on neighboring uses;

Whereas Accessory dwelling units are defined as small, subordinate, attached or detached housing units on the same property as an existing single-family dwelling;

Whereas the Planning Department stated that "Limitations on detached ADU's and their size exist ... to ensure that ADU development is compatible with the intended scale and character of single-family neighborhoods in the R-1 and R-1A districts ...";

Whereas by adopting larger dimensional standards for DADUs than proposed by the Planning Department in 2017, neither the PZC or Assembly presented information to support how these larger structures in R1 and R1-A Zoning districts would "allow more efficient use of residential property, allow development that is more compatible with existing neighborhoods, create more affordable housing alternatives or respect the rights and values of neighbors;

Whereas a priority of the Anchorage Climate Action Plan and Climate Action Strategy is to “Increase opportunities for residents ... to implement clean energy technology,” and Solarize Alaska is facilitating efforts to make residential solar energy systems more accessible and affordable;

Whereas Anchorage has the lowest angles of sun (longest shadows) throughout the year of any major North American city; shadows cast by a building on a neighboring lot is a function of latitude, proximate location to neighbors, its height and bulk, roof type and orientation, and type and number of appurtenances;

Whereas increased shadowing reduces the efficiency and return-on-investment (if not feasibility) of existing and future solar installations; access to direct sunlight for food production (backyard gardens), passive solar radiation for lighting and heating, spring snowmelt, and backyard use and enjoyment; and

Whereas other major cities with higher sun angles and less shadow effect have successfully implemented DADU development with smaller building dimensional standards and respectful design and siting requirements;

Now therefore be it *resolved*, that RPCC emphasizes its desire for: a) proper siting, or positioning on the lot, for least impact on neighbors’ access to the sun; b) privacy; and c) reasonable height restrictions; all to minimize adverse impacts to neighbors’ enjoyment of their land. The RPCC proposes the following actions for consideration by the PZC and Assembly:

1. Ensure that the size of all accessory structures remains in scale with the designated single-family development pattern. In pursuit of this goal, AO- 2018 43(S) should be amended to avoid bulk and appearance of a second full-sized house on the lot, with reduced gross floor area and height consistent with the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan and the recommendations of the Planning Division (Memorandum from Tom Davis to Dave Whitfield October 25, 2017)<sup>1</sup>;
2. Measures to protect neighbors’ privacy and solar access with lower building height, better design and siting on the lot, and restrictions on balcony and window design and placement; and
3. Implement strategies identified in the Action Plan (Section 3 of the 2040 LUP, 2017) to facilitate ADU construction. This should include developing a permit review assistance program, applicant guidance materials, improved tracking of ADU development trends, and public information” and seek remedies to overcome obstacles to financing the design and construction of ADUs which has been identified as one of the most significant barriers to ADU construction.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 82.5% of Anchorage households are composed of 1 or 2 people and the average number of people in Anchorage households (2.51 in 2021) has been steadily declining since 1960 (source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March and Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1960 to 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Chapple, K. 2017. Jumpstarting the market for accessory dwelling units. UC Berkeley. <https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2017/05/23/jumpstarting-the-market-for-accessory-dwelling-units/>

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