

South Addition Community Council Resolution Requesting Changes to Proposed Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan Draft

Submitted October 17, 2016

The public has not been given adequate time to respond to the LUP 2040 Public Hearing Draft. It was released for public review on September 26 with public comments due by October 17. Important maps and appendices have not been available for public review as long as the narrative, and staff's issue-response summary is still not publicly available. Neither the Planning and Zoning Commission nor the Assembly should take action on the LUP 2040 until adequate time is provided for Community Councils and the public to comment.

SACC's Priority Comments:

- 1. SACC opposes the addition in the 2040 LUP that would allow increased density in areas within up to a half mile from designated City Centers. This provision's half-mile designation applies to virtually all of South Addition and contradicts or confuses many of the zoning designations. SACC requests that this provision be omitted.**

This provision is in the Character section, sixth bullet (p 28): "To provide greater housing opportunities, areas up to a half mile from designated City Centers may allow increased density. This is subject to compatibility standards for scale, design, lot coverage, setbacks, and alley driveway access." This provision is unnecessary and potentially confusing. The land use plan clearly addresses the goals of increased density in these areas. The map of "Areas of Growth and Change by 2040" (p. 19) clearly illustrates areas of growth. Neighborhood and area specific plans clearly outline how growth and increased density should play out in particular areas. To have a blanket-statement like this, that impacts almost all of South Addition, is unnecessary as the aspects of increased housing density have already been addressed. A blanket-statement like this bullet does not recognize the unique aspects of the neighborhoods it would cover in South Addition. It gives the impression that somehow the careful planning of the LUP and the neighborhood plans may be disregarded within a half mile of designated city centers. This should be removed so it does not lead to confusion or conflict between the city, developers and residents.

At the very least, this bullet should be amended to clearly state that neighborhood plans are the guiding force for the specifics of new and re-development, and that any diversion from the neighborhood plan should only take place after a rigorous public hearing process. This is in full compliance with Action 7-4 (p64), which states "Adopt a Traditional Neighborhood Design zoning district or overlay zone for urban neighborhoods, which reflects adopted plans. "

2. **South Addition Community Council (SACC) opposes the proposal to allow ,by right, four story buildings in R2M zoned areas near designated city centers.** For the first time in the 15 year long process of developing this plan the municipality has suddenly proposed increased height to four stories in R2M and R-3 districts, well above the long-existing dimensional maximum height of 35 ft. **SACC requests that this provision be omitted.**

SACC has repeatedly objected to the proposed four stories in R3 zones. This section is objected to as well.

Compact Mixed Residential – Medium “Character” section, fourth bullet (p 29): “Areas within a quarter mile walking distance of Town Centers and City Centers may allow up to a fourth story .” In addition, Action 4-4 in the Actions Checklist (p 62) proposes to amend Title 21 “to allow compact housing on R-2M or R-3 zoned lots near designated Centers”, which “May include increased height or allowed units per lot... .”

The LUP addresses height for zoning districts and this blanket-statement should not circumvent the careful planning of the LUP and neighborhood plan. This fourth-story provision would violate the Title 21 zoning that has been worked on for years by many parties to guide appropriate development in these areas. It also suggests there is a way to “go around” this careful planning. It is particularly distressing to South Addition residents as much of the neighborhood would be impacted. If a fourth story is desired in these areas, the appropriate public process of re-zone or variance must be observed.

Additional Comments

1. LUP Goal 7. Infill development that is compatible with the valued characteristics of surrounding properties and neighborhood is a very important part of the plan. (p15). The LUP should clearly state that new Development and zoning be driven by the vision expressed in each neighborhood plan.

SACC is pleased to see that plan addresses infill as a critical component of successful growth. A Plan that increases density in a way that highlights the valued characteristics of the neighborhood improves the quality of life and makes for a more acceptable integration of new development. This is particularly important in South Addition because of its history as one of Anchorage’s earliest neighborhoods. South Addition is proud of this heritage and dedicated to preserving the unique historic character while it grows. Much of the original land use development – paved sidewalks, ample setbacks

supporting landscaping and gardens, alley access for vehicles, mature trees, home scales that allow sunlight to adjacent properties – combine to make South Addition a desirable place to live and recreate. Residents from other parts of town come to South Addition to walk because of the inviting, safe, pedestrian scale of our neighborhood. Bootlegger's Cove, with its higher residential density, offers safe sidewalks and small, meandering streets that naturally slow traffic. Residents are committed to protecting the qualities that make the South Addition neighborhood a desirable place to live.

2. South Addition has little vacant land. It is imperative that new development in South Addition look to the South Addition neighborhood plan to guide them. The South Addition community is in the process of completing their neighborhood plan, and it is the express desire of the SACC that no new large developments or dramatic changes occur to zoning/land use within South Addition until the neighborhood plan is finalized. It is expected to be completed in 2017.
3. South Addition provides some housing for the downtown employment center, but that housing must be compatible with the existing character of SA. Downtown core housing opportunities should not be displaced to South Addition. Thriving downtowns are sustained and strengthened by a vibrant residential housing presence in their core. There is a great need to locate residential housing in Anchorage's downtown core, and the LUP and the city should work to ensure that residential units are constructed there. The area east and southeast of the downtown core is also ripe for redevelopment. It has stable seismic reports, fabulous views, available land, and a Fairview neighborhood plan committed to higher density residential revitalization.
4. Walkability is one of the most valued aspects of South Addition. Many residents walk or bike daily for recreation or as a primary mode of transportation to and from work. It is equally important to note that most residents own vehicles. It is necessary to ensure that there are appropriate parking requirements for all new residential construction. The recent employer and employee Housing survey conducted by Live, Work, Play showed that 79% of respondents wanted a garage as part of their housing.
5. SACC supports the Shared Design Principles delineated in the plan (p24/25). Thoughtful design is crucial to successful growth. Particular importance should be paid to design for northern climates, access to sunlight, walkability during winter, snow storage, year-round sidewalk maintenance, etc.
6. South Addition offers many greenbelts and parks. The Delaney Park Strip, Westchester Lagoon, the Tony Knowles Coastal and Chester creek trails are treasured by residents city-wide. SACC supports the LUP's Goal 8 - to maintain, improve and strategically expand parks, greenbelts and trail corridors. (p16).

7. Immediate measures are needed to protect year round sunlight on the Delaney Park Strip. As density increases along the Park Strip, the city needs to ensure that there are height limits on the south side of the Park Strip to prevent shading of this treasured community resource. Developments of even 30 feet cast a shadow on the Park Strip for at least 6 months of the year.
8. SACC supports community-minded efforts to reduce barriers to appropriate infill development and redevelopment. (p11). It is imperative that any new or re-developments are guided by the area and neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plans are painstakingly crafted by residents and stakeholders to foster new, thoughtful development that will integrate with the neighborhood to produce thriving communities. Flexibility with developers and deviation from the LUP or neighborhood plans should require public involvement.
9. SACC approves the LUP's goal to encourage corridors to evolve into mixed use, pedestrian-oriented and transit friendly environments. (p12). South Addition has several major corridors moving autos, commercial trucks, pedestrians and bikes to and from downtown. Traffic speed is a major concern for South Addition residents. Residents would like to see measures to slow this traffic through the neighborhood, to improve safety for pedestrians and bikers, and make these corridors safer all users. Traffic calming strategies such as narrower roads, trees adjacent to the street, etc., should be incorporated into all future road projects, maintenance and development.
10. We are pleased to see that transit is listed among transportation services, and want to see strong language, making transit a full partner in supporting desired infill and redevelopment with its pedestrian friendly streets. Transit is needed to remove even a small percent of drive alone auto trips from arterials now filled with high speed traffic that dominate parts of the neighborhood and make it unsafe to cross the street to get to a bus stop. Targeted transit service to and from employment centers will generate more demand for safe, walkable corridors and will help transform high speed arterials into streets that are desirable for both high quality housing and commercial uses.
11. Small scale, compact housing development would be consistent with South Addition's character. (p13). Encouraging compact housing, cottages, etc., would invite an increase in density with multiple homes on one lot, without a dramatic change in the character of the existing neighborhood.
12. SACC supports the LUP's commitment to improving access to transit and trails as a critical component of successful growth. (p15). More frequent, predictable public transit

and safe, enjoyable passages for bike and pedestrians will allow for reduced road congestion as South Addition residents walk, bike, and ride buses when possible. This nicely supports the valued characteristic of “walkability” in South Addition.

13. The Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2007 directed that a viewshed plan be adopted within 1-2 years (p 99 and Action item UD-1, p136, Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan), but that never happened. The 2040 LUP should include a viewshed plan, and take steps to protect the viewshed for downtown buildings. Building heights in South Addition will greatly impact downtown viewsheds.

The South Addition Community Council Resolution Requesting Changes to Proposed Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan Draft is submitted by the Land Use Committee of SACC on behalf of the Council. The Resolution will be formally adopted at the next SACC meeting on October 20, 2016.