

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS ANNA BRAWLEY & MEG ZALETEL

A0 2024-104(S)

A PAUSE ON RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS

www.muni.org/assembly



PULL UP A COMFY CHAIR!

Expectations?



Reality



START BY ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

- Should Anchorage have residential design standards?
- Are **these specific design standards** working as intended?

To answer that, first we need to ask 3 more questions:

1. How and why did we get here?
2. Why were these choices made, what experiences shaped that?
3. What have we experienced since, to inform policy choices now?

LET'S TAKE A WALK BACK IN TIME...



SPENARD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Meeting at 7:00 PM, October 3, 2012, at the Spenard Recreation Center

AGENDA & NEWSLETTER

1. Minutes and Agenda
2. Announcements
3. Legislative Report – Sen. French and/or Rep, Holmes
4. Assembly Report – Assembly members Harriet Drummond, Ernie Hall
5. Local Projects and Issues Discussions (limit to 10 minutes each)
 - a. Airport – John Parrot
 - b. Anchorage Citizens Coalition Title 21 - John Weddleton
 - c. Code Compliance – Cora Weaver
6. Committee Reports
 - a. Airport –Bob Auth
 - b. Liquor – Suzy Baird
 - c. Planning & Zoning issues – Peggy Auth
 - d. FCC – Jason Bergerson
 - e. Westside Community Patrol – Jasper Hill, Gary Talley
7. Unfinished Business
8. New Business
9. Adjourn

Agenda link: <https://www.communitycouncils.org/download/6496.pdf>

CONTEXT:

HOW AND WHY WE GOT HERE

(TAKE IT AWAY, JOHN!)

TIMELINE RECAP: PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION, PLAN #2...

Anchorage 2020
Comprehensive
Plan Adopted

Title 21 (Zoning)
Rewrite Begins

2001

2002

New Title
21 Adopted

2013

New Code
Fully in Effect

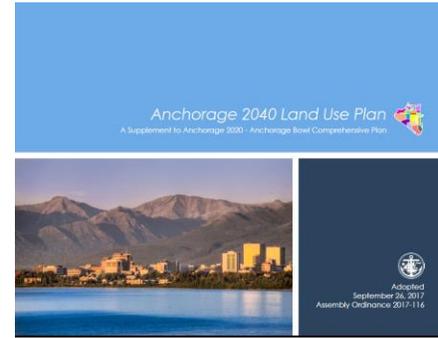
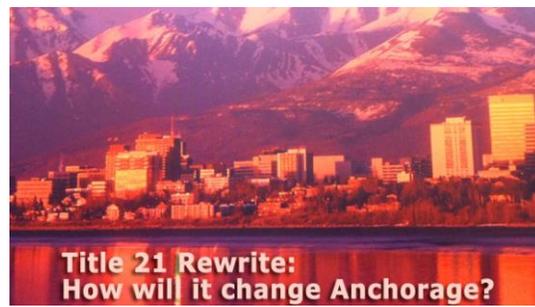
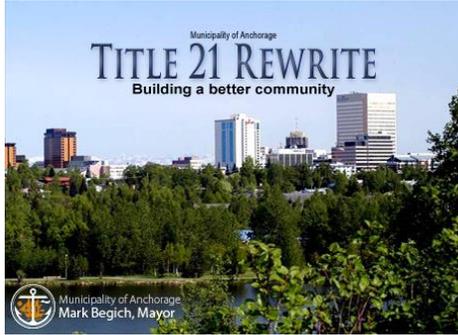
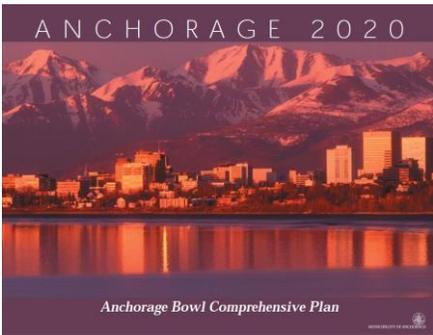
2016

Anc. 2040 Land
Use Plan Adopted

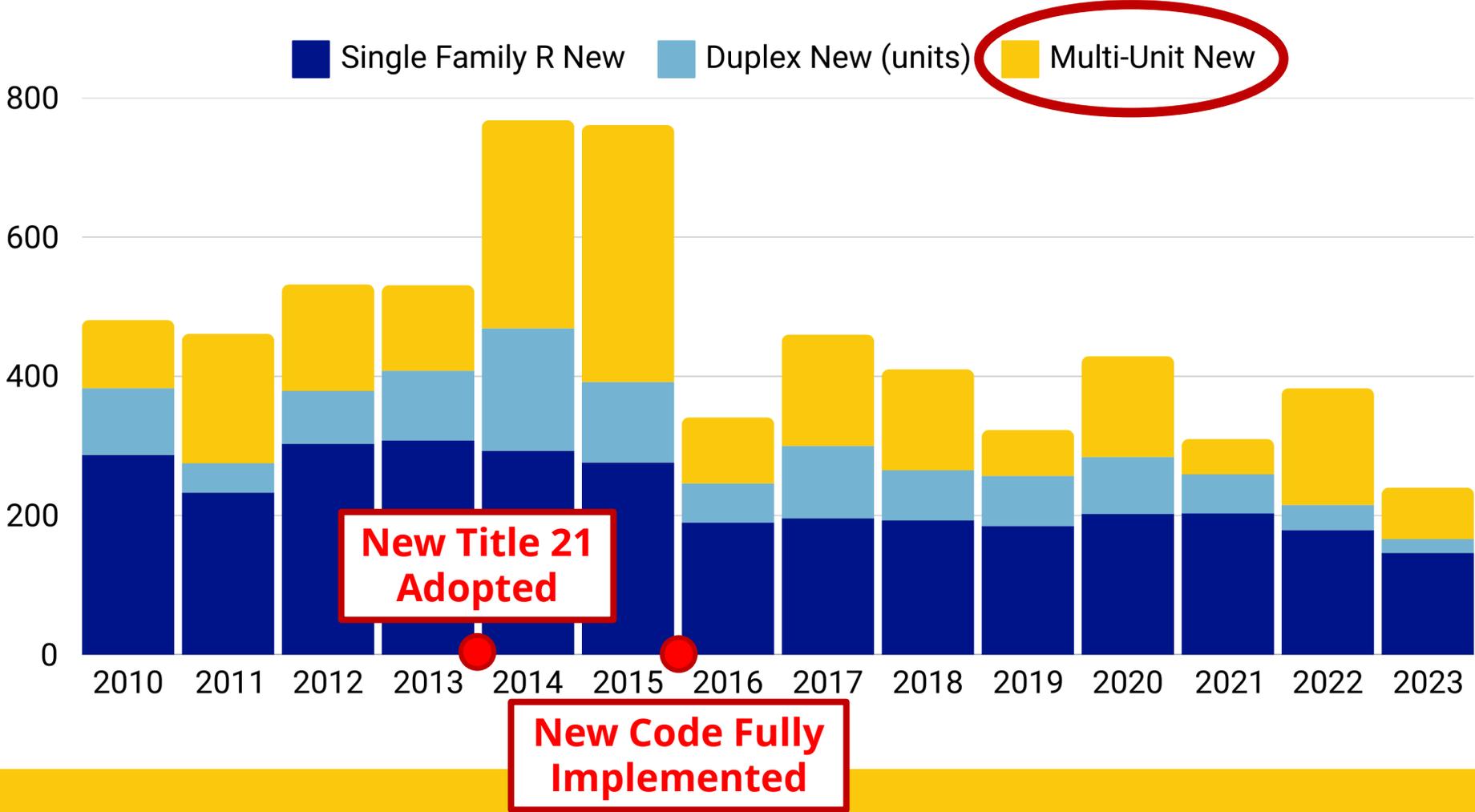
2017

**Title 21 code changes
(ongoing)**

- Create R3A, R4A zones
- Residential height limit
- Greenhouse rules
- Marijuana land use regs.
- Unit lot subdivisions
- ADU changes (x2)
- Parking requirements
- 3 and 4 plex reforms
- R4A changes & height rules
- Open space changes
- HOME Initiative
- Planned Unit Dev. fixes
- Special limitations repeal
- B3 design standard rules
- Multiple omnibus updates



ANCHORAGE PERMITTED UNITS, 2010-2023



HOUSING SHORTAGE

2012: Problem

City Report Forecasts Housing Shortage Over Next 20 years

Alaska Public Media

Published May 21, 2012 at 8:42 PM AKDT

▶ LISTEN



<https://alaskapublic.org/uncategorized/2012-05-22/city-report-forecasts-housing-shortage-over-next-20-years>

2014: Still a problem

Anchorage doesn't have enough homes to meet demand

By Devin Kelly

Updated: July 8, 2016

Published: March 8, 2014

Climbing the staircase to the second floor of her family's South Anchorage duplex, Ashley Hood glanced over at the toys scattered across the living room.

"You see why we need to move?" she asked.

The Anchorage hairstylist and her husband, Shawn, an aircraft mechanic, moved into the three-bedroom, townhouse-style unit in 2011, several months after the birth of their first child. It was a good fit

<https://www.adn.com/economy/article/anchorage-doesnt-have-enough-homes-meet-demand/2014/03/09/>

2024+: Even bigger problem

Housing shortage keeps raising home prices in Anchorage as average jumps to more than \$500K

By Alex DeMarban

Updated: October 31, 2024

Published: October 31, 2024



<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/anchorage/2024/10/31/housing-shortage-keeps-raising-home-prices-in-anchorage-as-average-jumps-to-more-than-500k/>

AO 2024-104(S)

... so, why pause?

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS IN A NUTSHELL

- How buildings & properties look from the outside:
 - How buildings are placed on a site, and how close together
 - “Façade articulation” = types of siding, wall decorations, etc.
 - “Roof articulation” = rooflines that aren’t flat, straight lines
 - How many windows you have, especially facing the street
 - Whether your door faces a main street (or not)
 - Where your garage is placed, and how visible it is from the front
 - Whether you have a prominent and visible front entrance
 - How the building interacts with sunlight, creates shade or not
 - Landscaping and screening, to hide or minimize how visible it is
- How people (whether or not they live there) perceive that building

DESIGN STANDARDS ARE A PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ACTION

- A **variety of housing types and densities** in safe, attractive neighborhoods that offer a choice of urban, suburban, and rural lifestyles that are appropriate for northern conditions and in harmony with our natural setting. (Anchorage 2020)
- A **forward-looking approach** to community growth and redevelopment.
- A **balanced, diverse supply of affordable, quality housing**, located in safe and livable neighborhoods with amenities and infrastructure, that reflects Anchorage's varied social, cultural, and physical environment. (Anchorage 2020)
- A built environment based on **design standards that sustain long-term economic viability and growth and that promote affordable residential, commercial, and industrial development.** (Anchorage 2020)
- Anchorage achieves **residential and commercial growth**, which improves community resiliency and citizens' quality of life as it supports their vision for the future expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. (Anchorage 2040)
- Anchorage's neighborhoods provide **a range of places to live, meeting the housing needs of residents at all income levels, household sizes, interests, ages, abilities, and races and ethnicities.** (Anchorage 2040)

... Design standards that sustain economic viability & **promote development**
... Anchorage achieves residential growth and **meets housing needs of residents**

HOUSING IN THE 2040 LAND USE PLAN



Duplexes Each with a Third Unit in back above a Detached Garage

*12th & Cordova, in Anchorage, Alaska
Completed 2014 (likely under “old code”)
2040 LUP pg. 37*

- Built in R-3 zone, Fairview
- ~40% lot coverage, 40% allowed by the code
- Setbacks are 10ft front and back, minimum of 8 ft to the side
- Meets residential design standards.

✓ **BUILDABLE**

HOUSING IN THE 2040 LAND USE PLAN



Compact Courtyard Housing

*Image: Red Oak Park in Boulder, CO.
2040 LUP pg. 38*

- Does not meet side setbacks for southern lot-line. Not buildable without a variance.
- Does not meet building spacing standards: rear wall of buildings on the north line is only ~10ft away from end wall of buildings running north-south (row).

X NOT BUILDABLE

BACK TO OUR KEY QUESTIONS

Should Anchorage have residential design standards?

- Our plans call for having design standards.
- Our community values having rules about how buildings look.

Are **these specific design standards** working as intended?

- Based on this community's lived experience & development feasibility of multi-family housing, **no**.

AO 2024-104(S) EXPLAINED

A 3-YEAR PAUSE ON MULTIFAMILY DESIGN STANDARDS

- 21.07.110 C Multifamily & Townhouse Residential Design**
Type(s): attached (“multifamily”) housing with 5+ units
- 21.07.110 D Single-Family & Small Multifamily Design**
Type(s): Housing with 1-5 units, and subdivisions
- 21.07.110 E Site Design (Multiple Structures, 1 Property)**
Type(s): (“multifamily”) housing with 5+ units
- 21.07.060 F Pedestrian Frontage**
Type(s): (“multifamily”) housing with 5+ units

Projects must meet certain design & process thresholds to qualify.

An approved permit “lock ins” the zoning rules for that project going forward.

Required annual reporting from Planning Dept. on progress & analysis of impact.

WHAT DOES **AO 2024-104(S)** DO?

WHAT IT DOES

Pauses the following sections in 21.07.110:

- ✓ *C.3. Pedestrian Frontage Standards (#1)*
- ✓ *C.4. Building Spacing*
- ✓ *C.5. Building Articulation Menu*
- ✓ *C.6. Northern Climate Protection & Sunlight Menu*
- ✓ *C.7. Landscaping*
- ✓ *D.2. Mix of Housing Models*
- ✓ *D.3. Pedestrian Frontage Standards (#2)*
- ✓ *E.2 Multiple Structures on a Lot*

Also pauses 21.07.060F (Ped. Front. #3):

- ✓ *Garage size, location*
- ✓ *Required windows and entrance orientation*

WHAT IT DOES NOT DO

- X *Pause Section C.8. Mechanical & Electrical Equipment Screening*
- X *Delete or permanently remove standards*
- X *Change Title 21 processes (AMC 21.03)*
- X *Change zoning districts (AMC 21.04)*
- X *Change use table, district or use regulations (AMC 21.05)*
- X *Pause subdivision code, driveway standards, drainage & stormwater rules, etc.*
- X *Pause Title 23 – Building Code*
- X *Change private regulation of land: HOA requirements, deed restrictions, covenants*

DEPARTMENT MEMO ON **AO 2024-104(S)**

This ordinance was waived from Planning and Zoning Commission review, but Planning produced a memo:

Some design standards have increased development costs for residential construction, the Department recommends that the Assembly approve the moratorium, but with the following additional suggestions for consideration:

1. **Extend the suspension from January 31, 2027 to May 31, 2028**, or until such time as new or revised standards are adopted, to provide more time for the full course of design, from concept to completion, for large projects.
2. For future action by the Planning Department: **Convene a working group to explore and test revisions** to 21.07.110C and similar portions of 21.07.110.D, 21.07.110.E, and 21.07.110F per the recommendation letter by CIHA and Debenham, Inc, dated November 20, 2024 and regarding "AO 2024-104, Multi-Family Residential Design Standard Moratorium."
3. For future action by the Planning Department: **Update policy guidance in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and 2040 Land Use Plan** to better align with current trends, data, and best planning practices regarding multifamily residential construction. This effort could be a part of the **10-year plan targeted update process**.

How we're responding

S version changes timeframe from 2 years to 3 years (2028)

Agree – working group for separate project going well. Will amend AO with this intent.

Agree – [AR 2024-201](#) (June 2024) calls for targeted plan update to deal w/ housing.

Ordinance: A0 2024-104(S)

Public Hearing: Feb. 11, 2025

ancgov.info/testify

Sign up for phone testimony by Mon 2/10 @ 5pm

THANK YOU.

ANNA BRAWLEY

District 3 | West Anchorage
anna.brawley@anchorageak.gov

MEG ZALETEL

District 4 | Midtown Anchorage & Vice Chair
meg.zaletel@anchorageak.gov

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