

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



Planning Department
Long-Range Planning Division

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Acting Mayor Austin Quinn-Davidson

December 16, 2020

Ms. Moira Gallagher, Chair
South Addition Community Council
1427 M Street
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: Comments on November 12, 2020 Draft South Addition Neighborhood Plan

Dear Ms. Gallagher:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the November 12, 2020 Draft *South Addition Neighborhood Plan (SANP)*. Staff has reviewed the draft and offer the following observations and comments to assist the Council as it continues its work on the plan. The comments are based on what is required for a Neighborhood Plan in Title 21 (Section 21.03.130 of Anchorage Municipal Code).

General Comments on Organization and Content:

1. The majority of the draft plan's Table of Contents lines up with what is presented. Figure and Table numbering is much appreciated. Search and replace, where needed, the proper titles of the planning documents that are cited in the SANP.
2. To assist the reader/user, consider the following in the flow of topics, chapters, and content: Move the Public Process chapter to be one of the initial chapters, to come before the Existing Conditions analysis. Most plans discuss their public process and how the community created its plan as part of the introductory sections. The *Anchorage 2020—Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020)* needs to be included in the Introduction as well. *Anchorage 2020* is still in effect and is supplemented by the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (Anchorage 2040)*.
3. The following edits are needed to text:
 - Page 3, the call-out box needs to source where these definitions are coming from.
 - Page 9, second paragraph, last sentence, add "10th and" in front of "11th"; both these streets need to be mentioned.
 - Page 12, "Draft" needs to be deleted from "2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan"; the plan has been adopted.
 - Page 28, second bullet, last sentence, add "tire" between "fat" and "biking."

- Page 30, need to add mention of Block 13 Army Housing Historic District; this district is listed on the National Historic Register.
 - Page 31, Figure 9 map, should be flipped to be landscape on the page, so image is larger and more readable. Consider adding the list of “landmarks to save” from the South Addition chapter of the *Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan*.
 - Page 33, second to last sentence, references Figure 9; correct reference is Figure 10.
 - Page 35, Table 4, move header to next page to be with main body of table.
 - Page 36, Table 6, move table to next page so entire table is presented together.
 - Page 41, under 1.7, consider adding 2 new bullets: “Plan and fund Landmarks to Save list in South Addition chapter of *Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan*” and “Support and encourage Assembly adoption of the Anchorage Local Landmark Register Ordinance.”
 - Page 43, under 3.3, consider adding new bullet: “Incorporate CEPTED practices in the maintenance of trees and shrubs.”
 - Page 45, please make mention that 51% of property owners in a given historic district must vote and approve the district to make it happen.
 - Page 57, second paragraph, last sentence, delete “office” and replace with “Planning Department.”
4. In the Public Process chapter, document how the public process has met/exceeded the requirements for neighborhood plans as stated in AMC Section 21.03.130, Neighborhood or District Plans, including: 21.03.130B., Plan Submittal. To meet AMC Sections 21.03.130D.1.h. and D.2.e., please include in plan narrative how public participation in the plan help to formulate and shape the plan, such as the surveys, workshops, neighborhood break-out committees, and other efforts at consensus. How does the plan incorporate these?
 5. To better follow the form and content standards in 21.03.130D.1.e. and f., provide more in the discussion of community issues, challenges, and the opportunities that result from the existing conditions, relevant plans, and South Addition’s chapters of the *Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan*. If such discussion is built into the Existing Conditions and Relevant Plans discussions, summarize the take-aways and priorities from the different topics at the end of each subsection. This will help provide the nexus to goals and policies of the plan, as well as implementation actions identified later in the SANP.
 6. To better follow AMC Sections 21.03.130D.1. and D.2., Standards – Form and Content: Further develop the “Community Vision” chapter to establish a clearer, more robust, and more organized set of recommended neighborhood vision statement(s), goals, and policy directives. Collect all policy direction found in the plan and state it here in this chapter. This may include further developing Chapter 2 “Purpose and Goals” from what it is now “as the reasons why the plan was undertaken and what topics it wants to tackle” to more of a developed set of recommendations on what direction the city and other stakeholders should take on these topics: housing, pedestrian access, transportation, etc.

7. Ensure that the “Community Vision” covers the topics that chapter 8 “Implementation” seems to introduce (like sections 8.3 and 8.4) so that the “Community Vision” chapter introduces and provides direction on a topic, and chapter 8 “Implementation” only functions to specify what strategies and actions to take in order to carry out these goals and policies.

Currently, chapter 8 is difficult to find enough substantive policy guidance in order to bring the neighborhood’s preferences and desires into the mix when making land use, zoning, land use entitlement, capital improvement projects needs, and other decisions. Follow AMC 21.03.130D. standards 1.e, 1.f., 2.a, and 2.b.

For example, provide the goal and policy basis for recommending an overlay district. What community land use and development character goals and policies does South Addition have? Where are the overlay district boundaries to be? Use other plans (*Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan* and *Anchorage 2040*) as a starting point, and then further develop the policy framework for what and where a neighborhood-specific set of land use regulations will cover within the neighborhood plan. Although the overlay district process through the draft SANP plan’s suggested “urban design committee” can fill in a lot of the details, they will depend on the SANP to provide the policy foundations and general design topics/goals.

8. To comply with AMC 21.03.130D.1.d., clearly separate the policy elements of the Plan—its vision, goal, and policy statements—from the implementation actions section/table. For example, some of the content of the “Community Vision” chapter (including Table 8 actions) should move to the implementation actions chapter, and some of the content of the “Implementation” section—content of 8.3 for example—contains policy guidance.

Clarifying the delineation between policy and implementation is important because a plan with a clear vision, goals, and then policies and/or objectives is much more likely to get implemented. City agencies, officials, and the public can more easily access and understand what the Plan wants them to do.

Examples of local plans that provide a clear organization of policy directions include the *Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update* (2006); *Mountain View Targeted Neighborhood Plan* (2016); and the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan* (2017). Pages 15 and 71 (in the first column of each page) in *Anchorage 2040* in particular help clarify the policy structure:

- Goals set broad direction, consistent with the community vision statement. Goals identify a desired future condition that the Plan attempts to achieve over time.
- Objectives provide more measurable, specific step-down achievements from the goals. Sometimes plans do not have objectives; they just have goals.
- Policies are statements of principles or guidelines that direct decisions and actions toward achieving the Goals, without specifying which tools to use. Policies provide ongoing guidance, so they are open-ended as to time frame.
- Implementation Strategies and Actions carry out Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies. Strategies are pathways or mechanisms that often operate over a long time. Actions are specific measures, short term, with a delimited timeframe and an identifiable end state.

9. Follow the requirement of AMC Section 21.03.130D.1.g. to provide a land use plan map diagram. This can be a good opportunity to refine the neighborhood use and urban form subareas that other plans (*Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan*, *Anchorage 2040*) establish, and set the stage for overlay zoning or other actions.
10. The Actions table (Table 8) is a good start in creating an implementation chapter table of actions to take in the near-, medium-, and longer-term. To make it more likely that the Municipality and its partners will carry out this plan, adjust the content of Table 8 as follows:
 - a. More clearly organize or identify the action items in relation to the goals, objectives, and/or policies discussed in comment above. Mountain View's plan and *Anchorage 2040* each provide examples of action table items flowing from the goals and policies.
 - b. Number each action item rather than bulleting the action item. Planners and others need a unique number identifier in all cases.
 - c. Tie each action to a responsible party. Who is going to lead the action? Who else will help? For examples, see the right-hand columns of the Mountain View plan's series of action tables and the *Anchorage 2040* actions checklist table (Figure 3.5).
11. Incorporate the "Next Steps" section and its directives into the beginning of the "implementation" section and include them in the implementation table. This will better ensure these directives integrate into other implementation actions and are addressed in the future. The content of "Next Steps" is a part of what a thorough implementation chapter might do and say.
12. If South Addition secures a consultant to assist in the preparation of maps for the plan, especially the land use plan map, we would like to offer a kick-off meeting with the Municipality's GIS office to help the consultant get started with available data and legend/naming conventions used by the Municipality. The GIS office is the keeper of the GIS map data layers and can share that data with the consultant. This will save time and resources for your consultant by not having to generate data the Municipality already has. In the end, our goal is to ensure that the maps and legends are compatible and consistent with the standards for municipal land use maps.

If you have any questions about these comments, please contact Tom Davis, Senior Planner, at 343-7916.

Sincerely,

PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Carol Wong, Manager
Long-Range Planning Division

cc: Michelle McNulty, Director, Planning Department
Tom Davis, Senior Planner