

Spenard Community Council responds to 2022-0090  
Title 21.05.070 Accessory Uses  
And 21.10.050 Use Regulations

The Spenard Community Council wishes to express their concerns with the proposed changes to Title 21 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).

The changes as currently written are too broad and can, and probably will, bring unintended consequences for a community that is already unstable due to the high rate of turnover of renters and short term leaseholders.

Spenard currently has one of the highest percentile of renters in the Bowl. The West Anchorage District Plan (2.1.4) states that: "Spenard contains the highest concentrations of renters (63%) and highest vacancy rate (8%) of the three community council areas. ... the neighborhoods around the north end of Spenard Road, Northern Lights Boulevard, and Minnesota Drive have some of the highest densities in the Bowl."

Home ownership leads to a more stable and involved community with ties to schools, churches, community based activities and a sense of belonging. And yet 21.05.070 will remove the owner occupancy requirement in spite of stating that changing the language will:

PROVIDE A MEANS FOR HOMEOWNERS,  
26 PARTICULARLY THE ELDERLY, SINGLE PARENTS,  
27 AND FAMILIES WITH GROWN CHILDREN, TO  
28 REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES AND NEIGHBORHOODS,  
29 AND OBTAIN EXTRA INCOME, SECURITY,  
30 COMPANIONSHIP, AND SERVICES;]

There is no language in this proposal that will curtail ADUs being turned into short term rentals, in fact, it will have no barriers at all to the owner renting out their primary residence if they are only residing there six months of the year and renting out the ADU.

Currently, one of the main reasons Anchorage is experiencing a housing shortage is short term rentals, such as AirB&Bs. The Anchorage Daily News in a front page story, September 5, 2022, quoted the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, "The agency cites several causes for the tight market, including extremely limited construction activity and a sharp increase in short term vacation rentals."

A real cause of concern for the SCC is that many of our neighborhoods, which are some of the oldest in the Municipality, are already dealing with narrow, crumbling, failing streets that barely serve the current residents. How will they handle additional traffic and parking for renters of ADUs that have no parking requirements on site?

Spenard has very little R-1 housing. It is one of the lowest percentiles in the Bowl. We have pleaded with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Anchorage Assembly over the years to not rezone the parcels of R-3 along Spenard Road into B-3 without success. Several of those parcels are still sitting empty. The failure of the many bodies to maintain land for housing stock rests with those decision makers.

We need to revisit the West Anchorage District Plan as it calls for in Land Use Objectives, 3.4.2, "Preserve and enhance the physical character of land uses valued by the community, including established residential neighborhoods."

As written, the current proposed changes to Title 21.05.070 and 21.10.050 do not protect homeowners and neighborhoods and do not include data that these changes will help improve the construction and costs of new housing stock.