

Subject: Follow-up: HOME Initiative zoning ordinance (AO 2023-87)

Hello,

Following up on the request for more info about the HOME Initiative (AO 2023-87), including the ordinance and next steps: and please feel free to reach out with questions.

Attached are documents to review, but here is some additional information and context that's helpful when thinking about how our zoning code relates to housing and development issues we know Anchorage has:

- This ordinance does 2 things:
  - 1. Makes the policy choice to simplify the number and rules around our residential zoning districts
  - 2. Proposes the start of a process to review and fix parts of code that have to do with residential zoning: it makes one choice now, and directs Planning and the community to work on other changes that flow from this policy choice.

We are working to more clearly communicate this point, that it is a process not just one change, and to put more details around what that process would look like.

- This ordinance, and all the discussions around housing and land use, are attempts to start to chip away at a massively complicated set of conditions and problems that result in Anchorage basically seeing very little new housing development, infeasibility for the most part of redeveloping the housing we have (including renovation, not just tear down), huge costs for building, and also rising costs of existing housing which exacerbate the problems for everyone. We have limited supply, cost of that keeps going up, and we aren't adding much new supply – certainly not adding supply in the segments of the market we really need it.
- So, this piece should be debated on its merits, whether it will make a significant impact on our problems, if it deliver some of the policy changes we need. But the big picture is not whether or not conditions need to change – they do. The question is what the Muni can influence (for example, we can't make banks give better rates to reduce financing costs), and of what we can influence, how do we make the most impact. That is the spirit of this ordinance, and really all of the discussion around our zoning code.
- It is also important to consider whether the zoning code is functional and appropriate for our city, as it's built now – I believe in zoning, it is how we set rules for people's use of their property, so we balance property rights with the surrounding property rights of everyone else. There are major flaws in our current code. And there are several things in our code which look small on paper, but have big cost and feasibility implications. We are working to tease those out, but it shouldn't be assumed that what we have now is working, and we're just changing it. We're trying to fix existing problems. (And again, then the discussion is about what those fixes need to be).
- And specifically, we are working on a substitute version of this ordinance, including changing the part that waives referral and review by PZC. My co-sponsors have recognized that isn't the way

to go on this, and plan to put it back in, I agree with them that it was a flaw in the original version. So please note that we are already changing that, so I encourage any comments and review to focus more on 1. The policy change proposed here, simplifying zoning codes and 2. The process that's proposed for the next year or so.

Attached:

1. AO 2023-87 ("HOME Initiative")
2. AM (memo) for the ordinance, with some background information
3. Presentation slides about the ordinance

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**Dena'inaq elnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu (Dena'ina).** *I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina (English).*

Translation by Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart and Joel Isaak

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