



Anchorage 2020 Comp Plan in Relationship to the Hillside District Plan

Comprehensive Plan is a Guide

The Anchorage 2020/Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (2020) outlined a broad framework for development within the Municipality. 2020 is considered a blueprint for how to direct future growth; it is not intended to be the final word on Anchorage’s development by prescribing the future in great detail. The Comprehensive Plan does not preclude future decisions from being made about Anchorage’s development. Rather, 2020 encourages future analysis and outlines specific methods to achieve future determinations on land use and other issues. Of importance to the Hillside District Plan, 2020 details that Neighborhood and District Plans need to be developed to address specific areas of town. It states, “The plan is general in nature. It will be further refined by ordinances, by revised land use and zoning maps, by area-specific plans [i.e. HDP], and by other policy tools.” (p. 3).

Additionally, municipal code 21.05.155 authorizes and states the procedure for the development of neighborhood and district plans. 21.05.155 defines the purpose of these specific plans, stating:

“Neighborhood or district plans shall be guided by the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Neighborhood or district plans should give specificity to the goals, objectives, policies, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. These plans shall supplement and elaborate on the Comprehensive Plan. The goal of a neighborhood or district plan is to promote the orderly growth, improvement, and future development of the neighborhood, community, or municipality.”

The Hillside District Plan is a Specific Plan Guided by 2020’s Vision

The Hillside District Plan is an area-specific plan intended to “further refine” the vision outlined in Anchorage 2020. The following features of 2020 will guide the Hillside District Plan

- The Preferred Growth Scenario for Anchorage (which was informed by an extensive public participation process in which the community identified key values and a vision for Anchorage.)
- The Hillside Issue Snapshot
- The Land Use Concept Plan Map and Conceptual Urban/Rural Service Boundary
- The Projected Growth Allocations
- Plan Implementation Policies and Strategies

Preferred Growth Scenario and Hillside Issue Snapshot

The Comprehensive Plan specifically indicated the Hillside as a planning issue that influences Anchorage’s future growth, and gives the following snapshot of Hillside as a planning issue:

Hillside – The Hillside contains the most vacant land in Anchorage that is suitable for the development of single-family homes, but is heavily constrained by issues such as topography, poor soils, variable groundwater quality and quantity, uneven densities, and transportation and utility access issues. The Hillside has been the target of intensifying development and presents many challenges for development.

Anchorage 2020 suggests these goals for the Hillside:

- Continue traditional low density development on the upper Hillside (<1 dwelling unit per acre)
- Strategic and limited revision to zoning and public water and sewer extensions permit additional small-lot subdivisions on lower hillside
- Protect significant environmental features and integrate into new subdivisions and public utilities
- Reduce traffic congestion and trip generation
- Address wildfire threat through active management program

Additionally, the land use concept plan and policy map indicates no specific sites for Neighborhood Commercial; however, a footnote to the map indicates that “potential sites for Neighborhood Commercial Centers on the Hillside will be determined through the Hillside District Plan (p. 50).”

The Conceptual Urban/Rural Service Boundary

The Comprehensive Plan developed a Land Use Concept Plan map which indicates the Conceptual Boundary line between Urban and Rural service areas. This conceptual boundary crosses the Hillside roughly following Elmore Rd running north-south across the Hillside. The Comprehensive Plan describes urban areas as having higher density residential and commercial developments supporting a wider range of activities. Rural areas would retain lower residential densities with a more limited range of services. The Comprehensive Plan specifically states that: “A more precise location of the urban/rural services boundary will be determined upon completion of the Hillside District Plan (p. 56).” In other words, 2020 does not fix the location of the Urban/Rural service boundary and further states that “specific changes in the location of the sewer service area boundary and allowances for higher residential densities will be established in the proposed Hillside District Plan (p. 61).”

Projected Growth Allocations

The growth allocation portion of the plan projects that the southeast (SE) district (includes the entire Hillside District Plan area plus a portion of Hillside Park and the subdivision north east of Abbott and Abbott Loop Roads) will see a population increase of between 12,400 – 18,600 people through 2020. This is estimated to be between approximately 4,000-6,000 dwelling units. The Comprehensive Plan suggests the following housing allocation for the SE/Hillside area:

- 30% multifamily
- 43% urban SF
- 27% rural SF

The Plan further states that growth in the SE sub-area is expected to follow the existing pattern of single-family subdivisions and low-density residential development. It recommends that within the urban service boundary area, the SE area follows established settlement patterns with some limited rezoning to allow for small-lot home sites. Medium density multi-family is also assumed to be permitted in west/lower Hillside. The rural portion is expected to remain entirely low density. However, as stated previously, the Comprehensive Plan defers to the Hillside District Plan to recommend specific changes to the location of the sewer service area boundary and define any allowances for higher residential densities. It also suggests the exploration of new technologies for on-site water supply and wastewater disposal (p. 66). The Comprehensive Plan further recommends that the subdivision ordinance be revised to reduce fire hazards, provide slope development guidelines, and retain natural vegetation in order to foster sustainable development.”

Plan Implementation Policies and Strategies

The following plan implementation policies are of particular relevance to the district planning process and to the Hillside District Plan. These are not the only relevant policies to the Hillside District Plan, but they best illuminate the importance of the Hillside District Plan in defining the direction of Anchorage's and the Hillside's future growth.

- Policy 1 – The Land Use Policy map shall guide land use decisions until such time as other strategies (including District Plans) are adopted that provide more specific guidance.
- Policy 2 – Land Use and Generalized Residential Intensity Maps shall be developed with each Neighborhood or District Plan incorporating elements of the Land Use Policy map and shall guide land use decisions.
- Policy 3 – Municipality shall employ development strategies to accommodate dwelling units by the year 2020 (Southeast planning sector calls for 4,000-6,000). (District Plans cited as essential strategy to implement this policy).
- Policy 4 – The Zoning Map shall ultimately be amended to be consistent with the adopted Neighborhood and District Plan maps. (Hillside District Plan cited as essential strategy to implement this policy).
- Policy 8 – Urban residential density, defined as greater than 1 dwelling unit per acre, is the optimum standard in the urban services area; and rural density residential, defined as equal to or less than 1 primary dwelling unit per acre, is the optimum standard in the rural services area. (Hillside District Plan cited as essential strategy to implement this policy).
- Policy 13 – New rural residential subdivision shall be designed to maintain rural character, link to existing roads and trails, protect sensitive environments, and incorporate wildland fire safety design standards. (Hillside District Plan cited as essential strategy to implement this policy).

The implementation strategies section of 2020 specifically defined the Hillside District Plan as follows:

“Hillside District Plan – The Hillside area (to be defined and mapped) must be analyzed on a district planning level to address unique environmental features that will be considered. A district plan will be developed, together with implementation strategies, which suits the character of the area. The district plan will cover a wide range of issues including:

- Levels of service for public facilities and services;
- Delineation of an Urban/Rural boundary;
- Management of wastewater disposal and water supply;
- Areawide drainage
- Transportation
- Land Use (residential density and distribution, commercial, public facilities, and open space);
- Wildfire hazard mitigation; and
- Public Safety Access (pg. 97-98)”