



City of Homer

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Planning

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Memorandum

Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II
DATE: JUNE 18, 2025
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL

11. NEW BUSINESS

11. A. Title 21 Code Re-Write Update: Conditional Use Permit, New Districts, and District Consolidations Recommendations

1. Conditional Use Permit Supplemental Information

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Homer Title 21 Update

June 18th, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Focus: Conditional Use Permit Supplemental Information

Homer CUP Analysis

Since the last Planning Commission meeting, City staff have provided an analysis of Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) reviewed by the Planning Commission over the last five years. A summary of that analysis is provided in your packet. The analysis reveals some trends that inform recommendations for changes to CUPs:

- Over 60% of CUP requests were for **more than one principal structure on a lot**. All but one of those were approved.
 - Conditions of approval typically included outdoor lighting (must be downlit) and dumpster screening.
- Another 17.6% of CUP requests were for **building coverage over 30% of proposed building area or a building area over 8,000 sf**. All were approved.
 - Conditions of approval typically included screening, outdoor lighting, and conformance with setbacks.

The nearly universal approval of these requests, and similar conditions, suggest that both situations for CUPs – 1) more than one principal structure on a lot and 2) building coverage over 30% of proposed building area - could be eliminated, and special standards for approval could include outdoor lighting, screening, and setback conformance.

Comparable Community Examples

The following examples were gathered from comparable Alaska communities to provide some context to how administrative flexibility, Conditional Use Permits, and housing types are handled in the zoning ordinance.

Key takeaways include two of the three communities analyzed allow for some degree of administrative flexibility (without a variance) for regulations that they feel can be relaxed under certain circumstances. Generally, these communities allow attached housing types (townhouses, apartments, 2-4 plexes) as either permitted or conditional uses in a range of districts including commercial. Some housing geared toward workers is also allowed as a conditional use in Valdez and Seward. Regarding CUPs, the emphasis is generally on intense industrial uses that could have community impacts, auto-oriented uses that may be located near neighborhoods, and multi-family housing types in a variety of districts.

Valdez

- Administrative adjustments: These are written into the administration section of the code. Staff can approve the following administrative adjustments according to a set of approval criteria.
 - Up to twenty percent (20%) of the zoning district dimensional standards including lot size, setbacks and height.
 - Up to twenty percent (20%) of the required minimum parking ratio requirements for a specific use.
 - Up to fifty percent (50%) of the required landscaping and buffering standards.
 - Up to twenty percent (20%) of the required sign setback or sign size requirements.

- Up to twenty percent (20%) of the required wall/fence height requirements.
- Up to twenty percent (20%) of the accessory structure size limitations.
- Expansions of legal nonconforming uses.
- Notable CUPs: CUPs are generally reserved for auto-dependent uses in neighborhood mixed use and central business districts as well as several impactful industrial uses.
- Housing Types: Townhouses, Multi-Unit buildings up to four units, and Multi-Unit buildings over four units (with specific use standards) are permitted in all residential and commercial districts (except for Rural Residential). Worker housing is a conditional use in all industrial districts, the rural residential district, and the general commercial district.

Soldotna

- All public utilities are exempt from zoning regulations.
- Administrative waivers are available for:
 - Up to 20% of landscaping standards
 - Minimum off-street parking and loading standards (no maximum)
 - Townhouse standards
 - Accessory Dwelling Unit minimum size (up to 10%) and front yard setbacks (up to 30%)
- Notable CUPs: CUPs are required for permitted uses that have size limitations in the Limited Commercial District; for example, personal or repair services greater than 1,300 sf. Other notable uses requiring a CUP include heavy industry in the Commercial District and single-family residences in nearly all districts.
- Housing Types: Generally, the same housing types are permitted uses in the same types of residential districts as Homer, with the exception that multi-family, townhouses and condominiums are conditional in the Rural Residential district. Also, multi-family, townhouses and condominiums are permitted in the Limited Commercial and conditional in the General Commercial district.

Seward

- Code includes specific use standards for many permitted uses, which are reviewed by staff when issuing zoning permits. These uses include:
 - Lodging
 - Mobile vendors
 - Employee campgrounds
 - Livestock
 - Temporary structures
- No administrative flexibility is written into the code.
- Notable CUPs: CUPs are generally reserved for auto-dependent uses like auto repair and drive-thru businesses, large places of assembly, and some intense industrial uses.
- Housing Types: Many attached housing types (multi-unit) are allowed as conditional uses in commercial and industrial districts. Bunkhouses are allowed as a conditional use in the AC Auto-Oriented Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional districts.