

**Coming To A Residential Neighborhood
Near You - - More People!
March 23, 2014**

Zoning Laws for the Municipality of Anchorage changed in January 2014. These Laws (or Regulations) are contained in a huge document called “Title 21”.

Title 21 has been under review and re-design for many years and followed the principles set forth in the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan of 2001, which set down as a blueprint the development of the Anchorage Bowl for the 20 years to follow (i.e. through 2020). It took a long time to convert these ideas into Use Regulations, 13 years to be exact, but here we are!

One of the major concerns of the Comprehensive Plan was the lack of buildable land to accommodate an increasing population, so steps were taken to allow for denser population by changing the rules on where people could live and what builders could construct. Whilst you will see more radical and vertical housing in the future, this article is about existing (and new) Residential neighborhoods - i.e. R1 and R1A Zoning.

Accessory Dwelling Unit is not a new term, but an ADU may now be lawfully added to a Single Family Residence, in effect, converting it to a Duplex for all intents and purposes. What this means is that an SFR can now be converted to a property housing 2 families instead of 1.

This will alarm some of you but the introduction of a secondary, rentable portion of the home will help people such as the aged, or single parents, to earn income from their home to help make ends meet.

The ADU must be “permitted” (i.e. Apply for Permit) and, in an Affidavit signed by the owner, declared to meet the ADU requirements.

The first and foremost requirement is that you Owner-Occupy the property. Some other specific rules are that :-

1. The ADU is compatible with the existing residential appearance of the home.
2. The ADU is part of the home, and not detached.
3. Adequate parking is provided so as not to negatively impact street parking availability.

If your ADU is existing already (such as a mother-in-law apartment or the like with separate access), you may apply for the ADU permit for a fee of \$112 along with your Affidavit of Compliance. This permit will be publicly recorded and permanently attached to the Title of the property.

If you propose to remodel for, or otherwise construct, an ADU, a Building Permit is required if any Plumbing, Electrical or Structural is involved. If you live on an R6 lot (Rural Residential) your ADU can be a detached building.

Conclusion:

What all this means is that we have entered a brave new world in Anchorage that will increase the population per square foot. Some will welcome this income producing opportunity and the value of such properties will increase.

Others will watch with caution as their neighborhoods are impacted and may decide to 'Get out of Dodge'. For a detailed packet on the ADU process and permit, you may request it from me (Windsor@alaska.net) or, alternatively, call the Municipality of Anchorage on 907-343-8380.

Note:

Local Homeowners' Associations will find it much more difficult shutting down SFR's converted to Duplex style living under the new regulations, especially when they are 'Permitted'. However, I strongly recommend that you tread lightly and quietly in your subdivision with an ADU, existing or planned. Once folks understand what is happening, they may not like it, especially if they live next door. Your local Subdivision Covenants and Restrictions are still legally enforceable. For advice on this aspect of ADU development you should consult a Real Estate Attorney. However, the newness of the 2014 Title 21 may even have an Attorney scratching his head for a bit.

On The Brighter Side:-

- ◆ In 2013, Anchorage grew by 1%, and added 1,000 new jobs.
- ◆ Alaska's unemployment rate stands at 4.9%, compared to 7.3% nationally.
- ◆ In 2014, Anchorage is expected to add 1600 new private sector jobs according to the Anchorage Economic Development Council, while the government sector will reduce by 400 jobs. Net - the economy grows by 1%, steady as she goes.
- ◆ In a national survey for 2013, Anchorage was voted #8 to live, #3 to work, and #12 to play in among all cities in the U.S.
- ◆ Winter wasn't so bad either, eh what?