

**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE**
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM

M.O.A.

2001 JUN 12 PM 1:47

Date: June 12, 2001
CLERKS OFFICE**To:** Assembly Chair Dick Traini and Assembly Members**From:** Mayor**Subject:** Veto – AO 2000-97, Regarding Public Hearing Notices For Title 21 Provisions

On June 5, 2001, the Assembly passed AO 2000-97, *An Ordinance of the Anchorage Municipal Assembly Amending Anchorage Municipal Code Subsection 21.15.005B, Regarding Public Hearing Notices For Title 21 Provisions*. In the administration's AIM, dated August 29, 2000, we advised the Assembly that we did not support this ordinance. Following the Assembly public hearing on June 5, 2001, the administration again advised the Assembly that we did not support this revision.

Our primary concern is the significant effect this ordinance change will have on development and on the Anchorage economy. Therefore, with this memorandum, I am vetoing AO 2000-97.

If AO 2000-97 were to take effect, this change would have a negative impact on all regulatory hearings concerning Title 21 scheduled before the Planning and Zoning Commission, Platting Board, and the Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals, as well as on all issues coming before the Assembly. It would add an additional two weeks of public notice to each of the public notice processes, which could easily add two months of additional time to private and public sector projects. This additional delay could result in the loss of a whole construction season, thus causing unreasonable and unnecessary costs to a developer and homebuyer.

There needs to be a balance between public notification and project development. Our current public notification period of 21 days is one of the most open and lengthy of any community on the West Coast. Since introduction of this ordinance last year, our departments have aggressively implemented e-government, with the Planning Departments Public Notification Program as one of the lead projects. Individuals, Community Councils, and others may now access this system for a timely indication of projects being planned for their neighborhoods.

We also provide a "heads-up report" of projected cases by which Community Councils receive advance indication that a case is pending. Finally, on the rare occasion when a project is scheduled before a regulatory board or commission and a Community Council has not had sufficient time to fully review the matter, the council can request a delay until such time as the Community Council can meet to review the case. The current review timeframe allows for adequate public review without unnecessarily penalizing developers.

Last week the federal Commerce Department placed Alaska second to last in economic growth out of the 50 states. As stated by the Anchorage Daily News editorial, "we did not even keep up with backwaters like West Virginia and Mississippi, which grew at rates nearly five times that of Alaska." This is a matter that should concern every member of the Anchorage Assembly.

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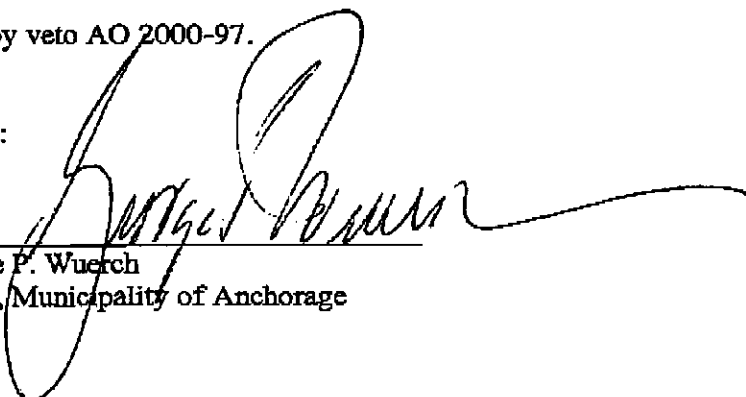
Instead of implementing ordinances which further complicate and prolong the development process, the Assembly needs to find ways to strengthen our economy and encourage development.

This ordinance, if allowed to become law, would be a heavy-handed approach to solving a relatively minor problem, which is already being addressed through our e-government initiatives. It sends a chilling message to the development community that Anchorage is becoming a more difficult and more expensive place to do business, a fact verified at Monday's Chamber of Commerce luncheon. The Chamber presented a forum on development in Anchorage by representatives of the Associated General Contractors of Alaska, Anchorage Board of Realtors, and the Anchorage Home Builders Association. It was confirmed by the development industry at this function that this ordinance will make it longer to develop projects and will drive up the cost of development in Anchorage.

In a city where affordable housing is a key ingredient to developing a vibrant, diversified economic base and where we already have a very open public review process, I believe it is unwise for government to be increasing the cost of living with excessive and unnecessary government regulations.

I hereby veto AO 2000-97.

Signed:



George P. Wuerch
Mayor, Municipality of Anchorage