

I have two objections to the Project 21 Draft (Rewrite of Title 21)...

1) The Project 21 draft should allow certain/specific types of steel buildings to be used as garages/shops (and possibly primary or secondary homes) in residential areas. Many of the new styles of steel buildings (Miracle Truss, American Steel, etc.) are similar/identical in appearance to standard construction and generally exceed structural code requirements, plus they are less susceptible to damage by the Alaska environment (steel buildings are fire- and insect-proof while exceeding snow-load, wind, and seismic requirements). There is simply no reason not to include a more efficient/effective construction technique in the new zoning rules, as long as it achieves the aesthetic "look" or style for the surrounding neighborhood.

2) The size restriction on garages and buildings used to store motor vehicles should NOT be limited to "50% of the part of your home you actually live in" when the structures are on larger parcels (2 1/2 acres or greater). This restriction may be appropriate on smaller lots but heated garage/shop space is a necessity (for preserving/maintaining vehicles) in Alaska and it is not realistic to limit the size of someone's "non-living" area simply because they choose to have a smaller home. Many of the residents in rural areas such as my neighborhood (Chugiak) have average size homes but their oversized garages provide larger "winter" play areas for children who can not (economically) travel to similar facilities on a daily basis. In our case, the garage is a much-used family activity area where local kids come to play "year-round." During the winter months, we also use the heated space to work on projects that beautify our home and our children develop the "hands-on" skills (such as mechanics and construction) they will need later in life.

In short, the broad restrictions of the current zoning/plat guidelines are poorly written and should be refined to allow larger (proportional) garages with suitable construction styles (and exterior appearance) on appropriately-sized parcels.

Thank You,

Ray Cummins  
Chugiak, Alaska