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**To:** [House Community and Regional Affairs](#)  
**Cc:** [Hahlen Behnken](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony on SB 50, comprehensive plans & housing, H CRA Tue 3/25  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:13:34 AM

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## SB 50 Testimony | House CRA 3/25/25

Thank you, Co-Chairs Himschoot and Mears, and all members of the House Community & Regional Affairs committee, for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Anna Brawley, calling from Anchorage - while I play multiple roles related to housing policy, I'm testifying today as an individual and planning professional, working with communities across Alaska.

I support Senate Bill 50 because it connects two important roles for local government: taking action on community needs, like housing, and engaging with the community to create a vision, and set clear goals to achieve that vision. There is already a process in place for this function, known as a comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plans are big-picture, wide-ranging plans that serve as a 20-plus-year roadmap for communities: they are both a process and a product, and when done well, build community consensus for who they want to be, with practical strategies to get there.

Planners can easily list off the big topics in a typical comp plan: land use, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, public lands and facilities, and other issues. However, sometimes it's hard to see where housing fits in: is it a land use issue? An infrastructure issue? A workforce issue? Often, it's all of the above - housing intersects with many topics, but is distinct and different, and given the challenges we face today across the state, deserves local attention on local solutions.

In my experience as a planning consultant, communities updating their comprehensive plans want to really engage residents in setting direction, and are also managing a number of pressing issues and competing priorities - it is difficult to give every topic the attention it deserves. Elevating housing as an important topic, distinct from land use, encourages communities to make this a local planning priority.

Some communities have already recently updated their plans: one example is my former client, City of Valdez. Valdez recently completed a comprehensive plan update, and identified housing as a top community priority, using current data to inform their next steps. While I was not involved in creating the plan, I was proud to support an implementation project and public process as a key priority in their plan, updating zoning code to help meet future housing demand. We should commend Valdez for their planning and commitment to action, and encourage all communities to take up the topic of housing, and build support for local solutions to their own housing needs.

It is also important to emphasize, this is encouraging, but not mandating, *how* communities engage in housing work. Comprehensive plans are required, but what they look like and what priorities the communities choose are set at the local level. A comprehensive plan update can look like creating a full new plan; updating data and demographic trends to match current conditions; adopting additional plans, such as a targeted housing strategy; or simply re-prioritizing actions in an existing plan to decide what to focus on. SB 50 is not a mandate, but

a positive call for local planning, and local action on housing.

Thank you,  
Anna Brawley

*Writing as a resident and planning professional, not in my role as an elected official.*