Introduction
The overall scale and geographic distribution of population and employment are the primary drivers of transportation demand and determine travel patterns. Features and constraints such as coastlines, slopes, and stream corridors and established land uses have influenced the development in the Anchorage Bowl and the transportation patterns seen today. Because of the relationship between the distribution of housing and employment and expected daily travel patterns, inventorying existing and predicting future development are key to projecting future transportation demand. Estimates of where new housing units and new employment are expected to occur are important inputs to estimating the magnitude of daily travel that will need to be accommodated by the transportation system.

The MOA has developed a land use forecast that reflects where and how future land development will occur based on planning policies and development trends. Future forecasts are derived from a documented series of assumptions. These assumptions are based on the development policies and trends likely to occur during the forecast period. This chapter summarizes assumptions and results of the land use forecasts, the anticipated population and employment growth in Anchorage through 2025, and the projected patterns of new development. (For a more detailed description of the methodology used to forecast land use, see the MOA report Anchorage 2025 Household and Employment Forecast and Allocation for the 2004 Long-Range Transportation Plan, July 2004.)

Forecast Findings

Population, Housing, and Employment
Table 6-1 shows the population, household, and employment projections for the Southcentral region of Alaska, an area that includes the MOA and the Mat-Su Valley. The growth projections call for 37,000 new housing units and more than 35,000 new jobs within the MOA between 2002 and 2025. About 23 percent of the future MOA household growth is expected to be absorbed by Chugiak-Eagle River; primarily because large tracts of undeveloped land are available (based on the 1993 Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan).

Information Sources
The MOA and other planning entities use population, household, and employment growth projections prepared by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), University of Alaska Anchorage. Other sources for applicable statistics are the 2000 U.S. Census, a 2002 Alaska Department of Labor wage and salary employment database by specific street address, the 2002 Anchorage Household Survey (Anchorage Household Travel Survey by NuStats 2002), MOA building permit records, MOA Assessor parcel property files, and MOA land use planning maps and statistical databases.
Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan

Table 6-1. Projections for 2025 Regional Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2025 Forecast</th>
<th>Numeric Change</th>
<th>2002 – 2025 Growth (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchorage Bowl</td>
<td>237,160</td>
<td>302,330</td>
<td>65,170</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chugiak-Eagle River</td>
<td>31,540</td>
<td>58,870</td>
<td>27,330</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat-Su Borough</td>
<td>65,800</td>
<td>126,600</td>
<td>60,800</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>334,500</td>
<td>487,800</td>
<td>153,300</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Households</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchorage Bowl</td>
<td>84,620</td>
<td>113,060</td>
<td>28,440</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chugiak-Eagle River</td>
<td>10,580</td>
<td>18,680</td>
<td>8,100</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat-Su Borough</td>
<td>22,800</td>
<td>42,100</td>
<td>19,300</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118,000</td>
<td>173,840</td>
<td>55,840</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment (includes self employed)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchorage Bowl</td>
<td>150,660</td>
<td>186,570</td>
<td>35,910</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chugiak-Eagle River</td>
<td>3,980</td>
<td>7,190</td>
<td>3,210</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat-Su Borough</td>
<td>13,700</td>
<td>24,200</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>168,340</td>
<td>217,960</td>
<td>49,620</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
The specific data for Chugiak-Eagle River and the Anchorage Bowl were derived from total MOA forecasts based on the 1993 Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan.

Military base housing and population are included in the Anchorage Bowl figures.


and 35,910 new jobs by 2025. The rest of the region is expected to gain about 27,400 new housing units and only 13,710 new jobs by 2025.

Regional population growth through 2025 can be seen in Figure 6-1. The Mat-Su Valley will experience the most dramatic population growth (92 percent), followed by Chugiak-Eagle River (87 percent), and the Anchorage Bowl (28 percent).

Employment in both the Mat-Su Borough and Chugiak-Eagle River is expected to consist largely of local jobs to meet demand of the growing local populations. In 2025, the Anchorage Bowl will remain the dominant source of employment for the Southcentral region.

In the past few decades, the economy of the Mat-Su Borough has become closely linked to the MOA economy. That connection relies heavily on residents commuting from the Mat-Su Borough to employment in Anchorage. Chugiak-Eagle River residents also travel to Anchorage for jobs. All commuters from the Mat-Su Borough and Chugiak-Eagle River must use the Glenn Highway to get into the Anchorage Bowl. The expected number of commuters will continue to increase, and Figure 6-2 charts the projected Glenn Highway commuters from the Mat-Su Borough and Eagle River to employment sites in the Anchorage Bowl.

MOA Employment by Industry Sector

Estimating employment by industry sector is an important step in forecasting future travel demand. Each industry sector has characteristics relevant to choices that affect facility location and space requirements and are affected by applicable land use policies and regulations.

The Alaska Department of Labor recognizes 13 industry sectors:
- Health Services
- Universities
- Schools
- Government
- Services
- Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
- Retail Trade

The highlighting identifies text revised in the 2027 LRTP. See the Revisions chapter at the end of the book.
Wholesale Trade
• Transportation, Communications, and Utilities
• Manufacturing
• Construction
• Mining
• Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

Figure 6-3 charts the projected MOA growth in these industry sectors. The services and government sectors are the largest employers in Anchorage.

More than half of the total 2002 to 2025 increase in MOA jobs is attributed to employment gains in the health services sector and the services sector.

**Distributing Anchorage Bowl Growth**

Predicting the locations where growth in the Anchorage Bowl will occur relies on identifying and understanding current patterns and factors that limit or promote development. The existing urban form is a population approaching 240,000 (Anchorage Bowl only) spread out over 64,500 acres and living in primarily low housing density. The distribution of household density is shown in Figure 6-4. The average housing density per acre exceeds 10 dwelling units in only a few areas within the Anchorage Bowl.

Employment to a lesser degree also is dispersed. The downtown Central Business District, although a significant source of jobs, does not dominate employment or retail activity in the region. Other Anchorage Bowl areas with significant activity
include the military bases, University-Medical District, Midtown, the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA) area, and the Dimond Mall. In general, Anchorage development reflects a dispersed pattern.

The density and pattern of development strongly influence the range of transportation solutions available to meet future transportation demand. One result of the dispersed land use development pattern is a “many-to-many” pattern of trip making to multiple centers. (Chapter 5 discusses the impacts of transfers and distance from transit corridors on travel by transit. Chapter 7 provides information about how employment and population distribution affect transit operations.)

**Incorporating Anchorage 2020 Land Use Policies**

Anchorage 2020, the official policy framework for guiding growth and development within the Anchorage Bowl, is expected to correct some shortcomings of the existing land use pattern. The intent of Anchorage 2020 is to create a city in which there will be more opportunities to live a less automobile dependent lifestyle by selectively increasing housing densities, consolidating employment, and encouraging mixed-use development to improve walkability within the Anchorage Bowl and to encourage bus and transit use. Housing density increases are specifically called for along four transit corridors; within seven town centers; and, in the three redevelopment areas near major employment centers. (Chapter 3 describes transit corridors, town centers, and redevelopment areas, and Figure 3-1 shows their locations.) New policies will help focus employment growth within the three existing major employment centers: Downtown, Midtown, and the University-Medical District.

Also influencing the locations and development of new housing and employment will be countless decisions made by landowners, developers, financial institutions, government agencies, homebuyers, prospective tenants, and business firms. Collectively, a total of between $8 billion and $12 billion (in 2004 dollars) will be invested in new housing and employment sites during the next 20 years. Despite the magnitude of investment, changes to the existing patterns of development and the urban form will be gradual.

**Applying Land Use Allocations**

Anchorage 2020 called for changes in the development decision processes for future land uses within the Anchorage Bowl. Approximations of the Anchorage 2020 detailed development distribution were forecast by modeling factors affecting allocation. The land-use allocation model utilizes information about current land use,
economic trends, environmental conditions, and site availability. This model uses a set of systematic rules and careful accounting procedures to estimate future development locations and allocate new housing units and jobs for a range of land use types.

The 2025 Anchorage Bowl housing forecast is a shift from the current growth areas, south and central areas of the Anchorage Bowl, to the northeast and northwest planning areas (see Figure 6-5). Two major factors explain this change: (1) assumptions about higher densities in the Anchorage 2020 policy areas, town centers, transit corridors, and areas near the employment centers and (2) the combined effects of less vacant land in the southeast and southwest and more use of redevelopable land in the northeast and northwest.

Table 6-2 shows housing growth by planning area, and Figure 6-6 shows further allocation into traffic analysis zones (TAZs). (The TAZs serve as the basis for predicting origins and destinations of travel with the transportation forecasting model.) Although existing areas of rapid development (such as Southport, Sand Lake gravel pits, the Abbott Loop areas, and subdivisions off Goldenview Drive) are predicted to continue to grow, a substantial amount of the future growth is projected to occur in and around town centers, transit-supportive development corridors, and redevelopment areas. For example, town centers are forecast to attract more than 3,300 new housing units during the next 20 years and accommodate about 12 percent of all new housing development in the Anchorage Bowl.
Figure 6-5. Anchorage Bowl Planning Areas

Source: Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Figure 6-6. Household Growth by Traffic Analysis Zone, 2002–2025

1 Dot = 20 Households
Change in Households

Source: CH2M HILL
The projections shown in Table 6-1 and discussed in this chapter do not take into account the potential effects of a Knik Arm bridge on regional population and employment distribution. During preparation of the most recent ISER population and employment projections, a preliminary analysis was conducted to test the sensitivity of regional population and employment distribution to the opening of a Knik Arm crossing in the year 2009.

Results indicate that a bridge would reduce the growth of the Anchorage population by about 19,000, or 5 percent, by 2025. This shift would start slowly and increase in the later years of the planning period, closer to 2025. Opening a Knik Arm bridge likely would have less effect on employment growth in Anchorage, with about 6,000 jobs expected to go elsewhere in the region.

It should be noted that the change in growth rates is very sensitive to the year that the bridge is opened. The date is uncertain and subject to many variables. Population and employment changes that could result from the Knik Arm bridge will be analyzed as part of the Environmental Impact Statement for the project. Depending on findings, the Knik Arm crossing may be considered for a subsequent amendment to the LRTP.

The highlighting identifies text revised in the 2027 LRTP. See the Revisions chapter at the end of the book.
Summary

The Southcentral region covering both the MOA and the Mat-Su Borough will become an urbanized region with a population approaching 500,000 by 2025. Suburban population is growing more rapidly in the Mat-Su Borough and Chugiak-Eagle River than in the Anchorage Bowl, and employment growth is forecast to occur predominantly in Anchorage. The growth of suburban residential uses portends longer trips and heavier future commuting into and within the Anchorage Bowl, particularly around areas of high employment growth, such as Midtown.

The 2025 land use forecast shaped by the Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River planning policies results in an estimated 400,000 more weekday trips on the transportation system than occurred in 2002, a 40 percent increase. Trips will be somewhat longer in length because more trips will be linked to suburban locations.

The next issue is how well the transportation infrastructure sustains reasonable mobility and access under the higher future demand. What transportation investments will be needed to support mobility and economic vitality of the region? Chapter 7 addresses these questions.