

CHAPTER 3 PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

THE VISION FOR THE PLAN

The MTP aims to accomplish a number of goals and objectives. These guiding principles are founded on citizen involvement in previous planning efforts. They are tailored to meet applicable regulations and to provide a means to measure the success of plan development, as well as ongoing implementation of the MTP.

Goals and objectives describe the desired end result of a transportation plan once it is implemented. They also provide direction on how to get there. In addition, goals and objectives permit identification of performance measures that track how effectively implementation of the plan achieves those goals and objectives.

Developing Goals and Objectives

The basis for this plan's goals and objectives are those developed for the previous transportation plans for the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River. Each of these previous efforts utilized citizen involvement to develop guiding principles. Therefore, integrating these documents is an excellent foundation for this MTP.

Municipality Comprehensive Plans

The *Anchorage 2020: Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan* and the *Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update* guide community planning by providing a framework for decisions about land use and transportation. They also provided direction for public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community. Both are public declarations of general visions for the future that were articulated by area residents and adopted by the Anchorage Assembly.

How do comprehensive land use plans address transportation improvements?

The Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River comprehensive plans focus on land use planning and development issues related to land use. In recognition that land use and transportation are intertwined, the comprehensive plans also provide guidance on making transportation improvements. People use some form of transportation to travel between land uses—where they live, work, shop, conduct business, and recreate. Land uses that are far apart have a different impact on the transportation network (and vice versa) than those that are located close together. Both plans contain guiding principles related to transportation.

During this integration process, only minor modifications were required, for one or more of the following reasons:

- To better meet federal requirements contained in current transportation legislation (SAFETEA-LU)
- To replace certain terms (such as “pedestrian trails” and “bicycle trails”) with those that are now used in adopted plans (such as “multi-use trails”)
- To remove or replace (when appropriate) geographic and jurisdictional references (such as Anchorage, Eagle River, and Municipality) with the term “community” to represent the entire geographic area within the AMATS boundaries and the citizens and businesses located in the region
- To avoid inconsistencies, minimize redundancy, provide for a measurable outcome, or clarify the intent

The MTP goals and objectives presented in this chapter have been reviewed by the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and accompanying objectives of the MTP are presented below.

Goal 1

Ensure development of a balanced transportation network for people, goods, and services that provides an acceptable level of service, maximizes safety, minimizes environmental impacts, provides a variety of transportation choices, and supports planned land use patterns.

Goal 1 Objectives

- Decrease travel time through an increase in transportation efficiency during peak-hour periods.
- Minimize cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods.

- Strike a balance between safety and economical design with all transportation projects.
- Improve, as necessary, expressway, arterial, and collector roads to safely and efficiently handle projected traffic.

How Does Goal 1 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

The Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River comprehensive plans stress the importance of having choices through a transportation system with mode options, a system that makes travel convenient and affordable across the city and for all segments—year-round. The goal also recognizes the need to preserve neighborhood quality of life and improve the safety of the transportation system.

Goal 2

Provide a transportation system that moves people and goods safely and securely throughout the community.

Goal 2 Objectives

- Reduce vehicle, pedestrian, and bicyclist crashes.
- Decrease emergency response time and reduce risk to the community from natural hazards and disasters.
- Promote a walkable community with safe winter walking conditions.
- Minimize conflicts between freight and passenger vehicles and non-motorized travelers.

How Does Goal 2 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

Goal 2 helps realize the vision for a safe community that is contained in both comprehensive plans. It recognizes that community safety can be improved by transportation efforts in a number of ways.

Reducing crashes, improving the ability of emergency responders to quickly and reliably respond to emergencies, and providing evacuation routes in the event of a natural disaster are all ways transportation planning can make the Anchorage metropolitan area a safer place.

Goal 3

Develop an attractive and efficient transportation network that considers the cost of building, operating, and maintaining the system; the equity of all users; public health impacts; community values; and social justice.

Goal 3 Objectives

- Prioritize the projects within the MTP to optimize the benefit-cost ratio.
- Consider the life-cycle costs of projects when evaluating and selecting them within the MTP.
- Optimize the travel choices within the transportation system to maximize the associated benefits for all users while minimizing the costs to taxpayers.

- Balance the purpose of each project with aesthetic considerations.
- Match street and highway design to the use and character of the community/ neighborhood, recognizing that character may vary from primarily commercial to primarily residential and from primarily urban to primarily rural.
- Maintain and rehabilitate the existing transportation system to minimize deterioration and the need for major reconstruction projects.

How Does Goal 3 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

Goal 3 expresses the community desire for visually attractive and fiscally responsible improvements. It treats transportation facilities as community assets. This goal also helps implement the comprehensive plans' call for balanced transportation improvements by directing transportation planners to consider issues like equity, sustainability, secondary cost, and the unique character of the surrounding area.

Goal 4

Develop a transportation system that supports a thriving, sustainable, broad-based economy by locating and using transportation infrastructure and facilities to enhance community development.

Goal 4 Objective

- Optimize the transportation system to meet the needs of the Port of Anchorage, Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, the Alaska Railroad, the military bases, employment centers, and industrial and commercial areas.

How Does Goal 4 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

Goal 4 relates the importance of transportation to economic vitality. It acknowledges that the transportation system affects all sectors of the economy and that congestion has negative impacts on individuals, businesses, freight movements, and the municipality. This goal seeks to provide a transportation system that enhances community development as well as contributes to healthy municipal and statewide economic activity.

Goal 5

Establish community connectivity with safe, convenient, year-round automobile and non-automobile travel routes within and between neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public facilities.

Goal 5 Objectives

- Ensure an adequate system of arterial and collector roads is identified.
- Promote the even distribution of traffic loads between streets by enhancing the existing grid pattern of streets.

- Establish an adequate number of access points from subdivisions to adjacent higher-order streets.
- Enhance the physical connectivity between neighborhoods by increasing the number of roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections.
- Improve safe and convenient connectivity from schools to neighborhoods, parks, and other recreational and commercial areas by use of multi-use trails, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and transit.

How Does Goal 5 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

The comprehensive plans note the importance of having good access to all types of land uses. They also stress the need for solutions to balance the roles of neighborhoods, schools, and recreation areas as both transportation destinations and valued community elements.

Goal 6

Improve access to goods, jobs, services, housing, and other destinations while providing mobility for people and goods in a safe, affordable, efficient, and convenient manner.

Goal 6 Objectives

- Develop mechanisms for improving regional cooperation and planning to address important transportation issues.
- Reduce the passenger vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and passenger vehicle hours traveled (VHT) per capita.
- Increase opportunities for multi-purpose trips in planned mixed-use centers.
- Promote the development of an effective roadway network through improvements in intersection and efficient roadway capacity.
- Improve the existing transportation system efficiency through the implementation of effective and innovative transportation system management (TSM), transportation demand management (TDM), and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) strategies.
- Coordinate planning efforts across disciplines (such as transportation, land use, economic development, emergency management, and the military) and geographic areas.

How Does Goal 6 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

The focus of Goal 6 is mobility, the ability of people and goods to move from place to place. This goal builds on the direction provided in both comprehensive plans about moving people and goods efficiently and safely. Goal 6 recognizes that stronger regional collaborative mechanisms will be needed to address regional travel issues and improvements. Its intent is to reduce congestion and travel delay to ensure reasonable access to jobs, education, services, and other opportunities and provide efficient freight flows.

Goal 6 also stresses good management and operation of transportation systems—achieving optimum efficiency, offering travel options and incentives to reduce automobile dependency, and deploying advanced technologies to make transportation systems work better.

Goal 7

Provide a transportation system that provides viable transportation choices among various modes.

Goal 7 Objectives

- Promote the development of a safe network of trails and sidewalks that provide reasonable access to work, schools, parks, services, shopping, and the natural environment, with priority given to trail and sidewalk projects expected to have the highest use.
- Optimize the year-round accessibility and convenience of travel choices and, in particular, improve the year-round reliability and travel time of transit without adversely affecting motor vehicle travel time.

How Does Goal 7 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

Goal 7 recognizes that walking, bicycling, and transit options are needed, and that they must be made safe, accessible, attractive, and competitive to be viable. It calls for transportation improvements that make traveling by other modes (by bus, bicycle, or foot) more convenient to transit-dependent riders and more attractive to riders who currently choose to travel by automobile.

Goal 8

Design and maintain a transportation system that respects the integrity of the community's natural and built environment and protects scenic vistas.

Goal 8 Objectives

- Minimize adverse impacts on the community, such as neighborhood through-traffic movements.
- Preserve and improve air quality to maintain the health and welfare of citizens.

- Minimize noise and light pollution impacts, to the extent practical.
- Balance the benefit of improvements against the impacts on the natural environment, such as water resources, fish habitat, watersheds and wetlands, and parklands.
- Design and landscape roads to maintain and enhance the attractiveness of neighborhoods, open space, and commercial corridors and centers.
- Use context-sensitive design strategies to support the development of mixed-use centers (such as town centers, employment centers, and redevelopment areas) and transit-supportive corridors with more pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-oriented street environments while recognizing the need to move freight into and throughout the community.

- Reinforce the link between transit and land use by establishing as a priority the building of transit-friendly residential and commercial development in Downtown Anchorage and Downtown Eagle River.

How Does Goal 8 Help Implement Area Land Use Plans?

Goal 8 recognizes that the residents of Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River live in a northern, subarctic climate and their transportation facilities, including infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, must be operational year-round to provide true travel options. Goal 8 also reflects the value that residents place in the ability to be outdoors. Further, it focuses on protecting the environment and balancing transportation improvements with community values. Goal 8 promotes transportation improvements that protect and enhance the air breathed, the sounds heard, and the magnificent landscape enjoyed every day.

Goal 8 is also about protecting neighborhoods. The importance of maintaining and improving the quality of area neighborhoods is expressed in both the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-River comprehensive plans. The relationship between how travel is conducted and where residents live is evident in air quality issues, as well as in the effects of traffic on neighborhoods, including detractions such as cut-through vehicles and heavy traffic on arterials that surround neighborhoods.

Meeting Regulatory Requirements

Chapter 1 outlines eight planning factors from SAFETEA-LU that must be addressed by the MTP process. To ensure they are appropriately addressed in the MTP process, these factors must be reflected in the goals. To help identify whether goals speak to a planning factor, the theme or themes of each factor have been identified. The goals were compared to these factors and themes to determine whether each factor has been addressed by the goals of the MTP.

Table 3-1 illustrates that every planning factor is reflected in at least one goal.

Table 3-1 MTP Goals Address Required Planning Factors

| SAFETEA-LU Planning Factor | Theme(s) | Goal(s) |
|---|--|------------------|
| Support the economic vitality of the [United States, the States, nonmetropolitan areas, and] metropolitan area[s], especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency | Economic vitality | 2, 4, 6 |
| Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users | Safety | 1, 2, 5 |
| Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users | Security | 2 |
| Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight | Accessibility, mobility | 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 |
| Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns | Environmental sensitivity, energy efficiency, quality of life, land use-transportation integration, coordinated planning | 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 |
| Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes [throughout the state], for people and freight | Intermodal connectivity | 4, 6 |
| Promote efficient system management and operation | Efficiency | 3, 6 |
| Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system | Preservation | 3 |