

## **VI. Guidelines for New Development Projects**



## Chapter VI

### GUIDELINES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Projections of development potential for downtown Anchorage indicate a very strong market for further development in the office, hotel, retail, and residential sectors (see Chapter II). Previous chapters have dealt with the opportunities to channel this new development into areas that will promote the efficiency and urban potential of the city, as well as opportunities to enhance the image and pedestrian environment of the city through innovative urban design.

In most cases, these opportunities were described in general language, since they pertained to a wide range of projects that would be developed. However, opportunities do exist for the Municipality to take the lead in demonstrating many of the site orientation and design guidelines techniques recommended for major new developments in the CBD. Among the recommended design guidelines are:

- ⊙ Orientation along an east-west axis whenever possible
- ⊙ Mixed uses where possible, with retail at ground level
- ⊙ Stepped profiles along north building facades to improve solar access to sidewalks and streets
- ⊙ Plazas at southwest and southeast corners

- Setbacks along the north streetface providing open spaces and landscaping
- Interior suncourts
- Skyway connections to neighboring buildings and to parking facilities

The projects that present the earliest opportunities to apply these design features are the proposed State Office Complex, the recommended retail complex, and off-street parking facilities recommended for three locations.

All of these projects share the following characteristics:

- Scale. The buildings all would encompass at least half a block and, in the case of the State Office and retail facilities, two or more blocks. For this reason, all the projects are of a scale that demands innovative and sensitive siting and design.
- Public Involvement. All of these projects, due to their magnitude and land assembly considerations, would require public participation and coordination. In all cases, the role of the government in the projects could range from complete ownership to participation in joint public-private investment.
- Importance to CBD Development. Unlike some speculative projects, whose locations are often determined by investment feasibility considerations alone, all of these projects can have profound effect on the future development of the CBD. Therefore, they

warrant careful attention to where activities will be taking place and linkages with other downtown functions.

Each of the projects is described in the following discussions in terms of its program, locational factors, recommended site(s), and key design features.

### STATE OFFICE COMPLEX

State employees currently occupy tenant space in numerous office buildings in the CBD, as well as space in government-owned facilities in outlying areas. The consolidation of these employees was found to be desirable from many standpoints in a study conducted for the State of Alaska in 1981. The study recommended a complex that would ultimately encompass 639,000 square feet and house 2,800 employees.

#### Site Analysis

The 1981 report examined numerous locations in the CBD, as well as locations outside of the CBD for the State Office Complex, and recommended a site adjacent to and west of the existing Federal Office Complex (Site 1 in Figure VI.1). More recently, a site north of the Federal Complex bounded by 4th and 5th Avenues and A and C Streets (Site 2) was recommended for reevaluation. In the course of analyzing these two sites, a third site, bounded by A and Cordova Streets and 5th and 6th Avenues (Site 3), surfaced as another site warranting reevaluation. The Municipal Planning Department analyzed these three sites in January 1982 in "Site Analysis of the State Office Complex Alternatives."

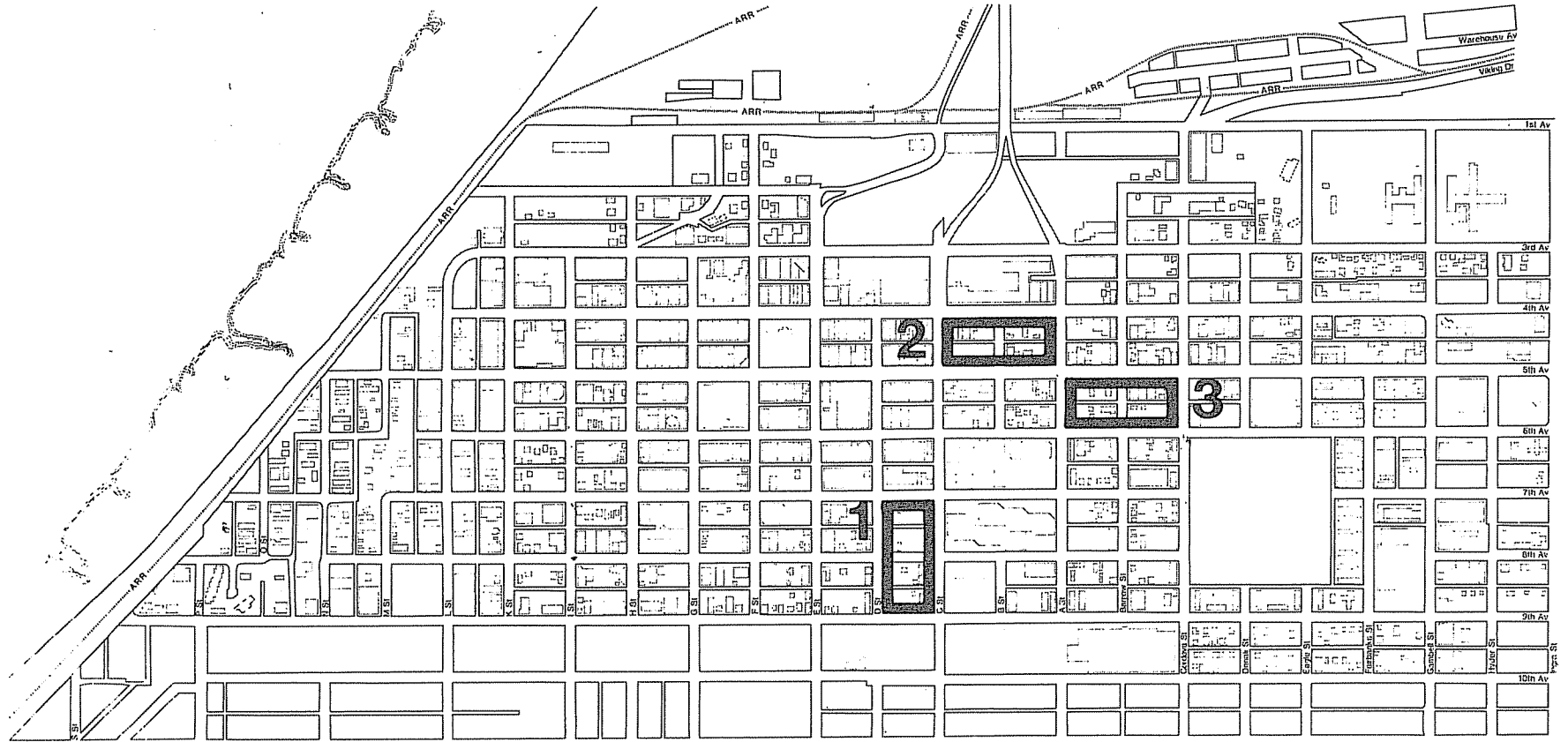
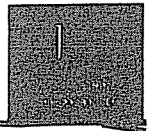


FIGURE VI.1

# State Office Complex Site Alternatives



**TABLE VI.1  
STATE OFFICE COMPLEX  
SITE COMPARISON**

	Site 1 (Blocks 77 & 103)	Site 2 (Blocks 45 & 46)	Site 3 (Blocks 112 & 113)
<b>PROJECT PERSPECTIVE</b>			
Site Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 198,000 s.f.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 198,000 s.f. 1/4 site city-owned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 198,000 s.f.</li> </ul>
Displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Block 77</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parking and old homes (6)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Block 103</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 multi-story offices</li> <li>- 1 small hotel</li> <li>- Salvation Army</li> <li>- 1 gas station</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Block 45</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Several bars</li> <li>- 1 gas station</li> <li>- 1 cafe and small hotel</li> <li>- City parking</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Block 46</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pawn shops</li> <li>- 2 residential parcels</li> <li>- Several offices</li> <li>- 1 retail &amp; 1 auto supply store</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Block 112</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Few retail/office buildings</li> <li>- Few residential parcels</li> <li>- Parking</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Block 113</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 retail buildings</li> <li>- Auto body shop</li> <li>- 2 office parcels</li> <li>- Parking</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Elevation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 103.0 ft.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 105.5 f.t.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 109.0 ft.</li> </ul>
Seismic Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moderate ground failure susceptibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High ground failure susceptibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moderate ground failure susceptibility</li> </ul>
Adequacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Next to Federal Office complex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2 blocks from Federal office complex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 blk. from Federal office complex</li> </ul>
Street Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8th Ave. between C &amp; D Sts.</li> <li>● 8th Ave. potentially more important E-W street.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8th St. between 4th &amp; 5th Aves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Barrow St. between 5th &amp; 6th Aves.</li> <li>● Barrow St. not essential to CBD circulation</li> </ul>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concentrated traffic loading (State and Federal)</li> <li>● Served by C. St.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Distributed traffic loading</li> <li>● Served by A &amp; C Sts. &amp; 4th &amp; 5th Aves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Distributed traffic loading</li> <li>● Served by A &amp; Cordova Sts. and 5th &amp; 6th Aves.</li> </ul>
Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Would require acquisition of major adjacent private development (Hunt) to wes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Would further constrict retail expansion if to south; geo-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Excellent potential to north; little major development</li> </ul>

TABLE VI.1 (continued)

DOWNTOWN CONTEXT			
<p>Land Use</p> <p>Pedestrian Flow</p> <p>Retail Revitalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much concentration at one location                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State office 626,000 s.f. 2,800 employees</li> <li>- Fed. office 64,000 s.f. 1,500 employees</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Development pressure toward park &amp; neighborhoods to south</li> <li>• Employee concentration to southern parts</li> <li>• Would not affect Retail Revitalization Plan alternatives</li> <li>• State office can be developed with close plan coordination and integration</li> <li>• Public evaluation and decision must be carefully made (effect on downtown's future)</li> <li>• Would require acquisition of major adjacent private development (Hunt) to west; none to south or east</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development stimulated to currently blighted area</li> <li>• Growth in easterly direction encouraged</li> <li>• Employee distribution more balanced</li> <li>• Places employees on both sides of retail</li> <li>• Unless well-coordinated, may impose major development constraints, limiting options for new climate-controlled shopping environment</li> <li>• However, above could be remedied by joint State office/retail/parking development approach</li> <li>• Retail, one of the most important ingredients: Once lost, recovery remote.</li> <li>• Would further constrict retail expansion if to south; geo-technical problems to north</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development stimulated to overlooked area between retail &amp; Sheraton</li> <li>• Growth in easterly direction encouraged</li> <li>• Employees at eastern anchor of retail</li> <li>• Opens up retail development options - few constraints</li> <li>• Could be developed independently of other programs</li> <li>• However, quality of development could be augmented by joint State office/retail/parking development approach</li> <li>• Excellent potential to north; little major development</li> </ul>

Each of the sites was also examined by the consulting team from the standpoints of site characteristics (viewed independently from the rest of downtown) and of urban context (taking into account downtown development patterns, adjacent uses, traffic, stimulation of retail trade, etc.). Table VI.1 provides this comparison.

### Findings and Recommendations

Siting. Site 3 was found to be preferable to Sites 1 and 2 for the proposed State Office Complex, assuming that its geotechnical qualities are found to be favorable, because of its good accessibility, its potential integration with other activity generators on the east side of the CBD core (such as the recommended retail complex discussed below), and its expansion potential to the north.

Because the geotechnical characteristics of Site 3 have not been appraised in detail, it was recommended that such an appraisal take place immediately to aid in the site selection process. Since the area around Site 3 is considered pivotal to the overall growth of the CBD, and since the geotechnical investigation of Site 3 would be enhanced through knowledge of conditions on adjoining sites, it was further recommended that the investigation encompass all intervening areas between Site 3 and the buttressed area.

Based on the Comprehensive Development Plan preliminary site analysis, the Municipal Assembly indicated a preference for Site 3 and has authorized a geotechnical investigation of the site. While the scope of this investigation falls somewhat short of the recommended areawide analysis, it should nevertheless indicate conclusively whether

the intense development of Site 3 for a State Office Complex is appropriate.

Design. It is anticipated that the State Office Complex will ultimately require two or three entire blocks, including some on-site parking for 1,000 cars -- meeting about half the parking demand the facility will generate. Given the size of this facility, and the probable need for additional nearby parking structures, all the design features cited in the introduction to this chapter would appear to be desirable.

If the complex is developed on Site 1, which adjoins the park strip between C and D Streets, an overriding consideration is that the bulk of the building along the park strip be minimized. To address this concern, a modification of the recommended stepped building profile might be considered, with the building increasing in bulk from south to north. It would also be possible, given the north-south orientation of the site, to incorporate a stepped building profile of greater slope along the north face of the building to provide a greater amount of light and air within the public right-of-way on 7th Avenue.

### RETAIL COMPLEX

A mixed-use retail complex has been recommended by economic consultants (see Chapter II) as a crucial element of the Phase I implementation plan. With joint public and private support for the complex and a comprehensive "package" that includes parking, new adjoining office space, infrastructural improvements, improved traffic management, and other provisions, downtown



Anchorage can establish itself as the most diverse and strongest retail center in the region.

#### Coordination with Existing Retail

In an effort to strengthen existing retail facilities and make them more attractive, proposals have been considered for sidewalk amenities, additional landscaping, more off-street parking, and coordinated appearance improvement programs. All of these appear to be sound proposals and are discussed elsewhere in this document.

However, economic projections show that, notwithstanding these improvements, downtown Anchorage might possibly lose one of the two existing department stores as well as a portion of the existing retail tenant stores in the absence of a new, attractive, climate-controlled retail complex. The public participation program yielded support for the concept of such a retail complex, provided that it enhances the strength of existing retail facilities. The success of such a complex is contingent on the following factors:

- Direct tie with existing anchor stores (J. C. Penney and Nordstrom) and key existing tenant stores
- Public assistance in land assembly
- Participation in the development by affected property owners
- Adequate and convenient public parking
- Easy auto and transit access

- A location central to major activity generators, (employment centers, attractions, cultural facilities, etc.)
- Incorporation of recreational and after-hours features in the complex
- Immediate implementation so as not to risk a loss of existing downtown retail facilities

Retail development can be viewed as a "glue" binding downtown together. In a climate such as that of Anchorage, a successful retail complex requires not only a lively and varied street scene, but also climate control to encourage impulse buying in comfortable surroundings year-round. Cities that have achieved this include Minneapolis, Toronto, Spokane, and others.

#### Site Analysis

Based on the criteria for a successful downtown retail complex set forth above, new retail development must relate directly to existing retail facilities. Therefore, the two existing anchor stores, J. C. Penney and Nordstrom, should be viewed as anchors for the new retail complex and strong connection to existing retail areas on 4th, 5th, and 6th Avenues should be established. Several options were explored (Figure VI.2).

Expansion to the West. The substantial amount of new construction west of J. C. Penney would prevent any new retail development beyond the one block immediately adjacent to the existing store (Block 51).

Expansion to the South. The blocks immediately south of the Nordstrom store appear upon first

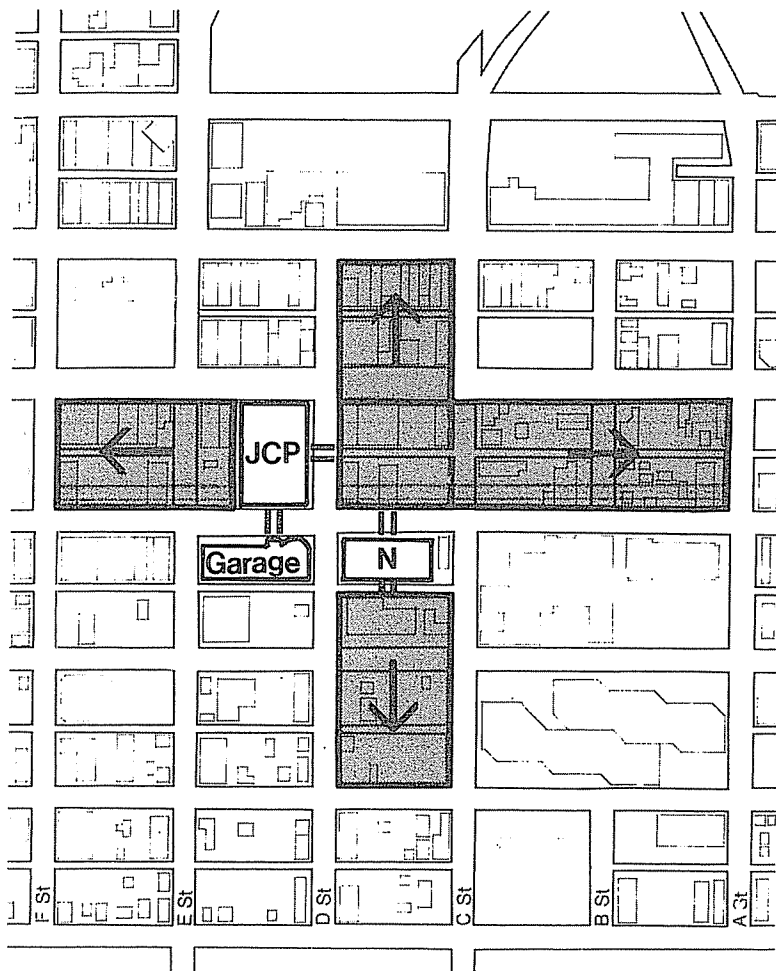


Figure VI.2. Alternative Options for Retail Complex

look to be good candidates for retail development, being oriented toward employee concentrations at the soon-to-be-completed ARCO and Hunt Towers and the existing federal complex. However, retail expansion in this direction would isolate the J. C. Penney store to the northwest. The presence of the J. C. Penney garage to the south of the store precludes the store's linkage with the complex, unless the garage were to be demolished (creating a major loss in downtown parking).

Other drawbacks to this option are the isolation of the existing retail facilities along 4th and 5th Avenues, including the relatively new Sunshine and Post Office Mall developments; its isolation from major civic and tourist facilities, such as the new Performing Arts Center, Convention Center, and all major downtown hotels; and its potential traffic and related impacts on the park strip and the area to the south.

Expansion to the East. Expansion of retail to the east of the J. C. Penney store and immediately north of the Nordstrom store can continue up to three blocks, engaging the proposed State Office Complex (and, beyond that, the Sheraton Hotel) on the east side. Thus, in addition to anchor stores, the complex would be further anchored by major concentrations of people to both the east and the west -- a necessity to a successful retail development. In addition, adequate land appears to be available in the vicinity of A and C Streets north of the site for possible conversion to parking that could "feed" the complex from the north.

Expansion to the North. The blocks north of the Nordstrom store also appear to be a good candidates for retail expansion, using the Sunshine

and Post Office Mall buildings as anchors on the north. However, since expansion would be limited to the two intervening blocks, this option appears to have better potential as a later phase adjunct to the eastward expansion concept (discussed immediately above), which offers the best combination of employee adjacency, accessibility, visibility and available area.

### Findings and Recommendations

Siting. The final configuration of the downtown retail complex should be determined in conjunction with other factors, such as the location of the State Office Complex, the location of the public parking structures, and others. It would seem most prudent to view expansion first in an easterly direction and later in a northerly direction as the ultimate goal.

A first step in the land assembly process, on the assumption that State Office Complex Site 3 is adopted, would be the acquisition of the three blocks bounded by D and A Streets and 5th and 6th Avenues (Figure VI.3). This would allow tie-in with the existing J. C. Penney and Nordstrom stores and would establish the State Office Complex as a major people-generating anchor at the east side of the project.

Design. Given the importance of retail to a thriving downtown core area, it is important that its design incorporate features that promote its visibility, its accessibility, and a variety of attractions. In the context of downtown Anchorage, this implies:

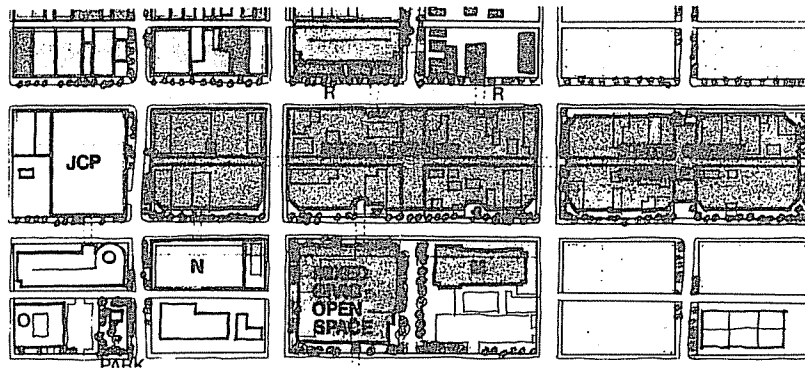


Figure VI.3. Integration of Proposed Retail Complex with Existing Retail and Other Functions and Facilities

- That the structure be visible from the street to encourage interaction between existing retail facilities and those within the complex
- That convenient off-street parking be provided as close as possible to the shopping areas -- ideally below the entire complex and beside it, with direct connections from adjacent parking structures to all retail levels
- That there be eating, entertainment, and "people watching" opportunities within the complex that will attract people to and through the facility as well as offer opportunities for interaction and special programs

The program for the recommended mixed-use retail complex (see Chapter II) indicates a total retail area of up to 370,000 square feet (120,000 square feet in a department store and up to 250,000 square feet in specialty stores), translating into an appropriate footprint of up to two square blocks, assuming a two-level retail concourse. Some parking for the complex could be provided below grade, allowing the retail concourse to have full access at street level. Additional parking that would be required for a viable retail operation could be provided in a multi-level structure on the blocks directly north of the complex; enclosed, climatized skyway connections to each retail level could be provided to equalize the distribution of shoppers throughout the complex as much as possible.

Additional features that could be incorporated in the complex include:

- A glass-enclosed wintergarden with year-round landscaping as the central focus
- A food court to cater both to shoppers and to employees from throughout downtown Anchorage
- Display kiosks to acquaint shoppers with other downtown activities, including significant cultural, recreational, and governmental programs

As with the Site Office Complex, it is recommended that the mixed-use retail complex incorporate features that contribute to the pedestrian environment, such as:

- A stepped profile along the northern facade of the structure to allow more light and air into the public right-of-way along 5th Avenue
- Generous setbacks along the south (6th Avenue) facade with landscaping, seating, and other pedestrian amenities
- Plazas at the southwest and southeast corners of the project as sunny open spaces integrated into the downtown sidewalk network

## PARKING STRUCTURES

Three parking structures are recommended for the Phase I implementation plan. Locational factors have been discussed in Chapter V. The guidelines in this section provide an indication of how the design of new parking structures can enhance the pedestrian environment while, at the same time,

significantly narrowing the gap between parking demand and supply.

### Site Analysis

A preliminary locational analysis for recommended parking structures in the Anchorage CBD is provided in Chapter V. This analysis places emphasis on how parking structures would fit into the overall CBD development pattern, on compatibility with surrounding development, and on minimizing necessary relocation.

In highly developed parts of downtown -- in general, the area west of C Street -- parking structures that occupy half a block are probably the maximum size that could be considered compatible with surrounding development, which tends to be developed on a parcel-by-parcel basis. In redevelopment areas, such as those recommended for the State Office and mixed-use/retail complexes, new development is likely to be in the form of intensely developed "superblocks," within which spaces would be designed to provide more of a human scale. In these areas, parking structures occupying an entire block or combinations of half-blocks (allowing people to "feed" directly into adjoining development) would be possible.

### Findings and Recommendations

Siting. The configuration of parking structures, as mentioned above, should be contingent on:

- Proximity to major generators of parking demand

- Access to and from major downtown distributor routes
- Compatibility with adjacent development
- Minimal relocation impact
- Ease of land assembly
- Geotechnical conditions

Design. Design factors that have been considered include:

- The bulk of structures -- generally, the height and footprint of a parking structure should be compatible with those of buildings around it
- Orientation -- structures can be responsive to the unique solar conditions affecting the quality of space on all sides
- Pedestrian environment -- retail space at ground level can be incorporated into parking structures, as can widened sidewalk areas and other pedestrian amenities
- Traffic flow -- adequate means ingress and egress and locations on high-capacity arterials can reduce the impact of parking structures and increase their effectiveness

The nature of parking structures results in designs that can be classified into a few distinct categories. Among these are continuous ramps; flat-deck structures with speed ramps, and others. Decisions as to which type of structure is appropriate is based on site conditions, capacity of

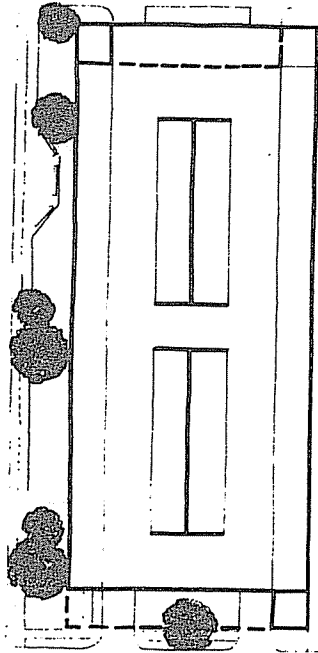


Figure VI.4. Conceptual plan of north-south, half-block parking structure featuring expanded pedestrian area

the parking structure, and traffic conditions around the structure.

The minimum dimension of most half-block sites in downtown Anchorage is 140 feet. (Most blocks are bisected by a 20-foot alley, leaving 140 feet for construction on either side of the alley.) This allows ample room for parking structures with two parking aisles in varying configurations.

Figures VI.4 through VI.7 show possible design concepts for half-block parking structures that might be oriented on a north-south axis or on an east-west axis respectively.

As with other recommended development projects, parking structures can be designed to incorporate features that make them attractive assets to the downtown pedestrian environment. Among the design features to be considered are:

- Widened pedestrian areas adjacent to the right-of-way
- Ground-level retail with possible arcade concept (can produce a terraced effect)
- Placement of half-block parking structures adjacent to alley to allow more light within right-of-way and additional pedestrian space or retail area along the street
- Landscaping to soften the appearance of the structures and blend with recommended landscaping improvements within public right-of-way

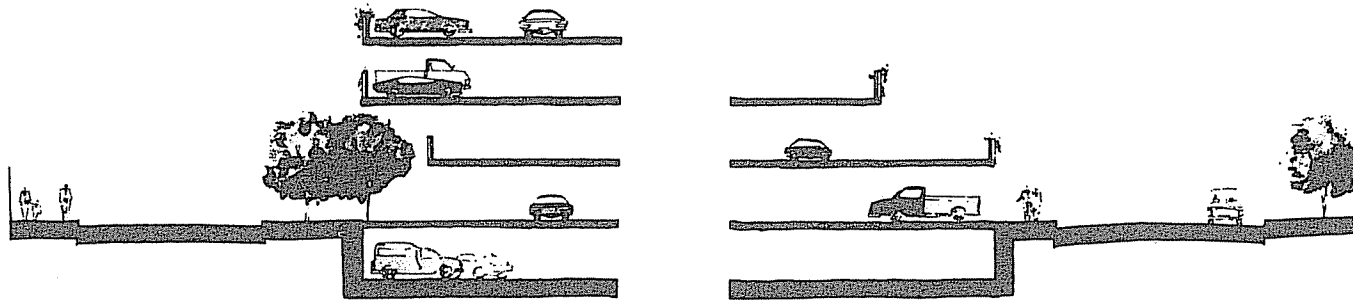


Figure VI.5. Conceptual longitudinal cross-section of north-south, half-block parking structure showing terraced north facade to admit more light to expanded pedestrian area

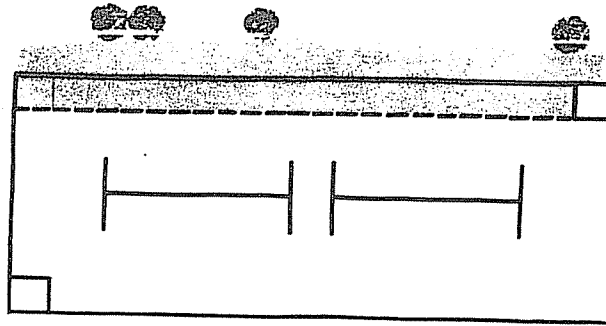


Figure VI.6. Conceptual plan of east-west, half-block parking structure featuring retail area at first level

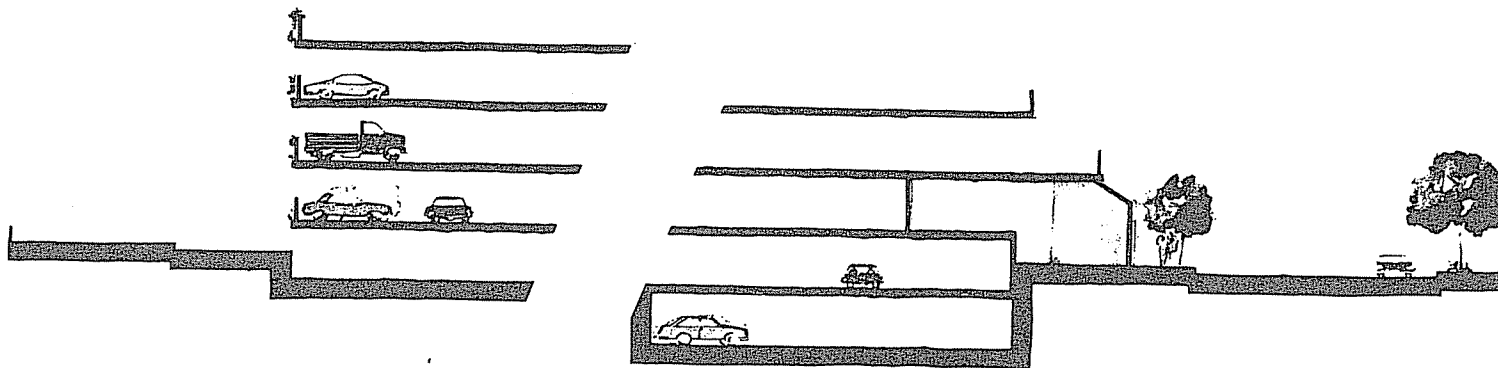


Figure VI.7. Conceptual transverse cross-section of east-west, half-block parking structure showing loft retail area