

3 PLAN CONCEPT/ FRAMEWORK

This chapter tells the “story” of the Spenard Corridor. It describes a framework for coordinating urban design, land use and circulation systems at a Plan Area-wide scale. This will inform future land use designations, zoning updates, transportation improvements, open space improvements and other public investments. More detailed recommendations and design concepts are then provided in Chapter Four: District-Specific Concepts.

A. Plan Concept

The Plan Concept consists of four core objectives related to physical design and circulation in Spenard. These are extensions of the goals and policies described in the previous chapter. They should serve as a baseline for interpreting the more detailed framework policies provided in Section B Framework Policies below. Objectives for placemaking and connectivity are identified below and illustrated in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

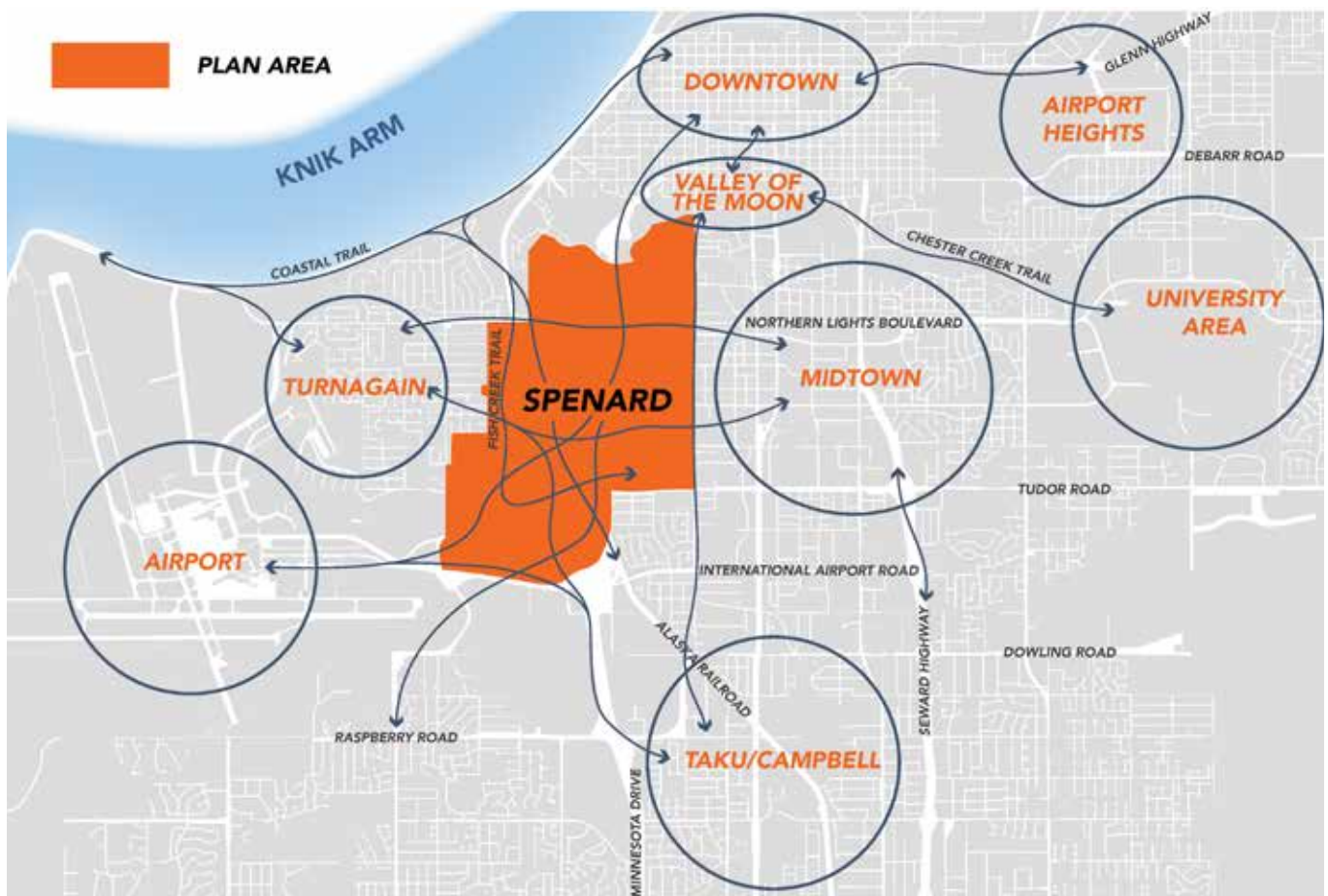


Figure 3.1 Plan Concept (Part A): Citywide

Objective 1. Establish the Spenard Corridor “Spine”

Spenard Road should be the thread that knits the Plan Area together and should be a destination in itself. Designs should focus on bringing vibrancy to the corridor with interesting and inviting urban spaces, active transportation facilities, convenient transit access and lively cultural venues. Where development occurs along Spenard Road, creating an active street edge should be the highest priority. Spenard Road should be a magnet for the area.

Objective 2. Organize the Spenard Corridor as a Series of Transit-supportive Districts

Spenard Road stretches over 2.5 miles from north to south through the Plan Area. The existing character along the corridor is varied and the opportunities for the future are diverse. The corridor should emerge as a series of three distinct Transit-supportive Districts, each offering different opportunities and experiences, but tied by the road itself as the common thread. Site and building designs, land uses and target markets should be tailored to a flexible but clear vision for each district.

Objective 3. Enhance Connectivity

Transportation facilities in Spenard should not only support Spenard, but also contribute to improved regional connectivity. As shown in Figure 3.2, Spenard should be connected seamlessly to its surrounding context, including key open space and recreational destinations, established neighborhoods, employment centers and entertainment and retail districts. Midtown, Downtown, the Coastal Trail/Fish Creek Estuary, Turnagain and the Airport are all examples.

Objective 4. Bring People to the Spenard Spine

Design transportation facilities, streets, gateways, wayfinding signage and other features to draw people to the Spenard Corridor Spine. The road itself should be designed as the “place to be” and all work nearby should reinforce this objective.

Note

The overviews for the individual TSD Districts describe the intended character for each of them to place them into context of the overall framework. These descriptions also appear in expanded form in Chapter 4.

B. Framework Policies and Directives

The Plan Framework shown in Figure 3.3 illustrates design and circulation policies, which are described in more detail in this chapter. The concepts illustrated in the Plan Framework are aspirational, and may not necessarily match those in previous plans. Some will require further study to determine their feasibility or will require coordination with private landowners. The location and alignment of Framework elements should be interpreted flexibly with the focus being on the fundamental objectives for design and circulation that are illustrated.

With respect to circulation, the Plan Framework focuses primarily on pedestrians, bicycles and transit systems. Vehicular circulation, which also is important, is discussed further in Chapter Five.

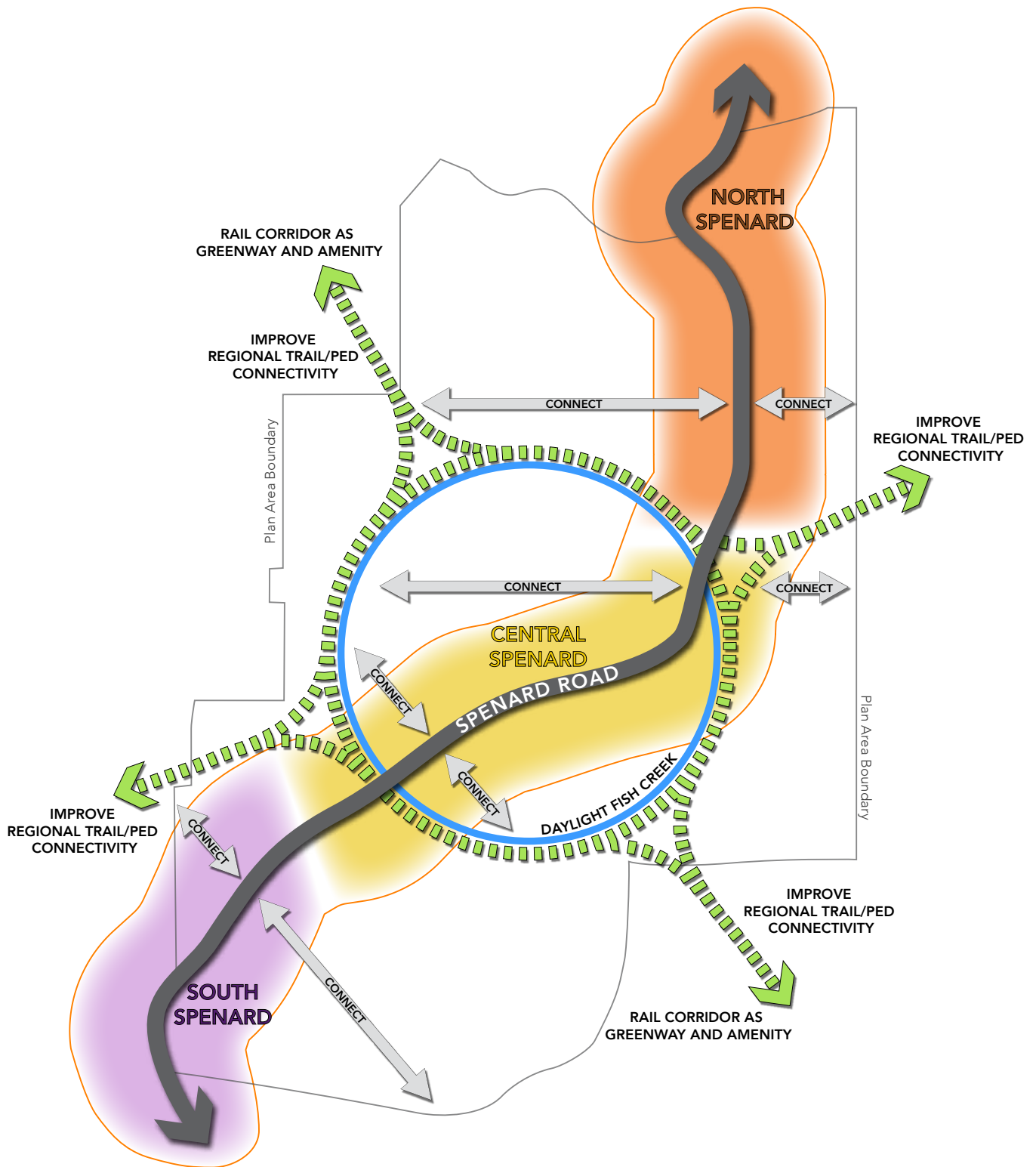
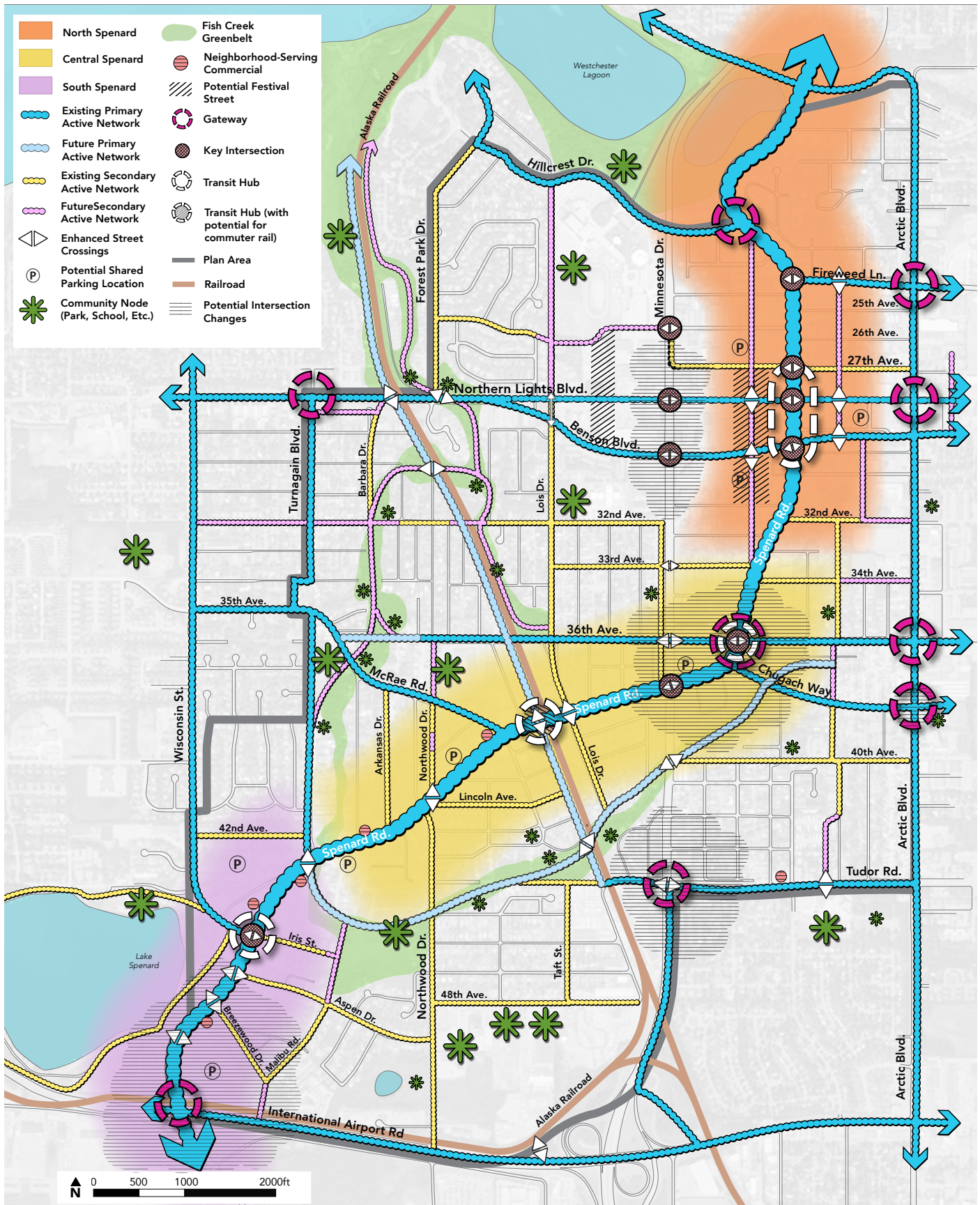


Figure 3.2 Plan Concept (Part B): Plan Area

3 Plan Concept/Framework



NOTE: The potential for the Alaska Railroad Trail shown in this figure depends on future coordination with the Alaska Railroad Corporation to consider how such a trail could coexist with the functional needs of the rail corridor.

Figure 3.3 Framework Map

Transit-Supportive Development District Vision and Policies

The Spenard Corridor is organized as three Transit-Supportive Development Districts. These are North Spenard, Central Spenard and South Spenard. They are envisioned to be three unique destinations. Each should offer different experiences and services and exhibit differences in urban character. Please see Chapter Four for specific concepts for each District. Figure 3.4 shows the three Spenard Transit-Supportive Development Districts. The district boundaries include commercial and residential areas within a quarter mile distance or 5-minute walk from Spenard Road.

Transit-Supportive Development

The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan describes Transit-Supportive Development in the following way:

“...Corridors where expanded public transit service will support a compact, walkable pattern of commercial, residential, and/or mixed-use development. Over time, compact development can create ridership demand to support more frequent bus service. It will give Anchorage’s households more choices in how to get to work and other destinations. It also provides more opportunities to live in a walkable, accessible, and affordable neighborhood environment... Future development is encouraged to be generally in the range of 8 to 20 housing units per acre on average over the entire corridor. However, individual parts of the corridor, such as in existing single-family and two-family neighborhoods, may have less density.”

The Spenard Corridor Plan supports the recommendations of transit-supportive development in the 2040 LUP, and seeks to further them with more specific guidance for the Spenard Corridor itself.

North Spenard District Vision

North Spenard will be the “heart” of the Corridor. It also should serve as a citywide entertainment destination, a place for culture and events. It will have a wide range of transit-supportive uses, including residential, retail, restaurant, employment and creative spaces. North Spenard should be more urban, with taller buildings, pedestrian-oriented streets and active outdoor gathering spaces. Over time, large-scale, phased redevelopment will intermingle with existing smaller buildings and housing, resulting in a critical mass of activity that keeps North Spenard active and safe during daytime and nighttime hours.





Central Spenard District Vision

Central Spenard will be a place of neighborhood-serving businesses. The shallow lot depths here are highly integrated with the neighborhoods that flank them. This should influence the character and scale of development. Redevelopment will be fine-grained in nature, with smaller buildings and variety in building orientation. Some larger-scale redevelopment opportunities exist and should be pursued on larger properties when parcel assembly can be achieved. Private and public improvements should be designed to work with the twists and turns in this area to create a sense of discovery along the corridor.



Traditional Neighborhood Design

The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan applies the Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) growth-supporting feature to the Spenard area, and describes TND in the following way:

“This growth-supporting feature enhances existing urban patterns of development. These older urban neighborhoods and districts have a more highly interconnected street system, smaller block sizes, greater connectivity, and sidewalks... Traditional Neighborhood Design facilitates compact development that reinforces these characteristics. It promotes policies, guidelines, and incentives that allow for and encourage new development and infrastructure (streets, sidewalks) to capitalize on this urban form.”

The Spenard Corridor Plan supports the recommendations of the Traditional Neighborhood Design in the 2040 LUP, and seeks to further them with more specific guidance for the Spenard Corridor itself.

South Spenard District Vision

South Spenard will be reinforced as a stable neighborhood for local residents which also is a lively visitor district that leverages its proximity to the airport and Spenard Lake. Tourism-focused development should be designed to benefit nearby residents by incorporating elements that appeal to locals and visitors. For example, open space amenities, neighborhood-serving retail and improved connections will benefit all users. New residential infill development that is located immediately off the corridor should be designed to provide a compatible transition in scale and use between a bustling South Spenard Corridor and the residential areas to the east and west. Gateway design elements should establish a sense of entry to Spenard from the south.



3 Plan Concept/Framework

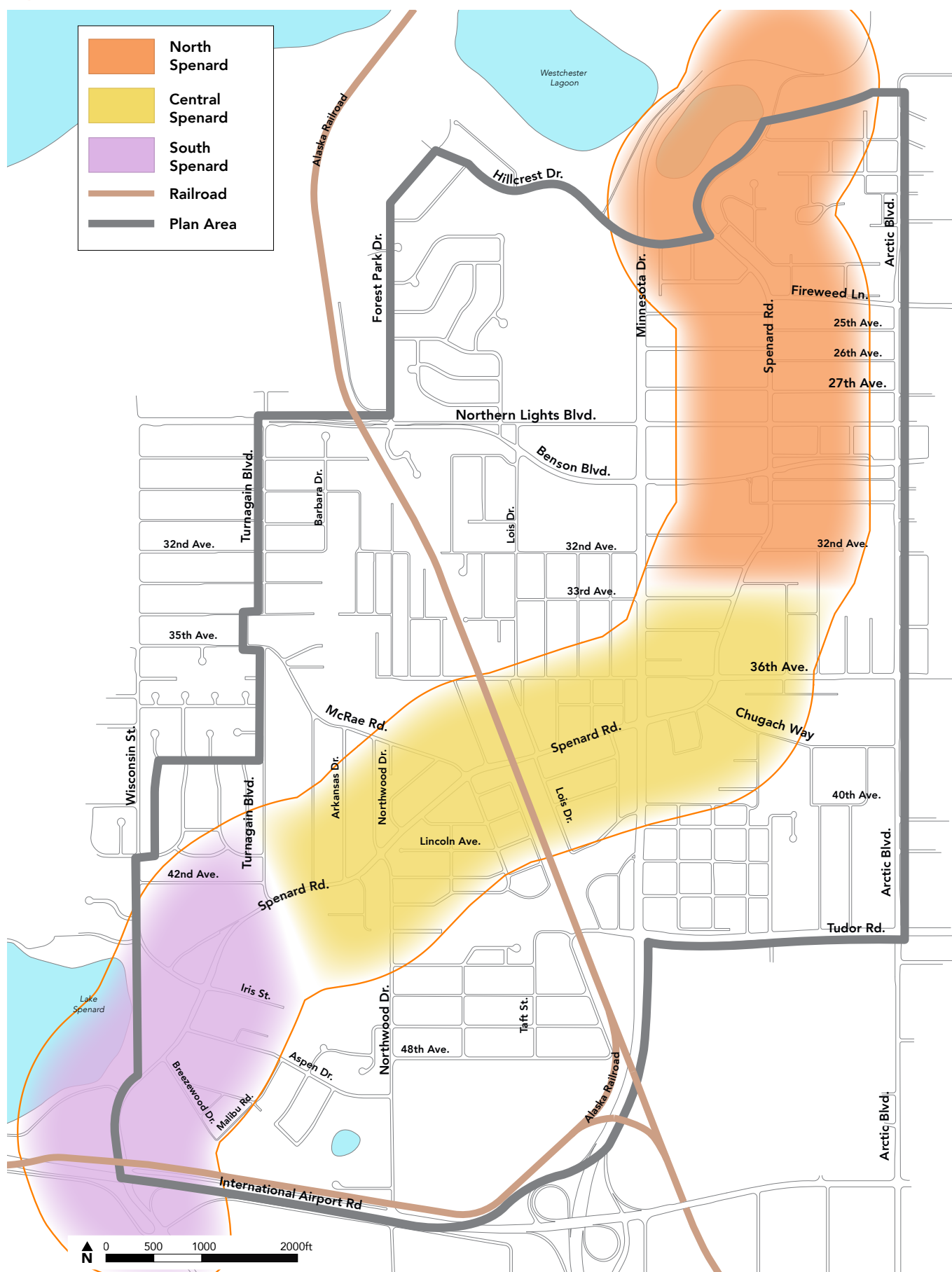


Figure 3.4 Transit Supportive Development Districts

Active Transportation Network Policies

Policy 3.1: Establish a network of primary and secondary active transportation connections.

The Active Transportation Network is shown in the Plan Framework Map (Figure 3.3). The network should:

- » Link Spenard with citywide destinations and adjacent neighborhoods
- » Establish an active transportation corridor on Spenard Road
- » Enhance connectivity through Plan Area neighborhoods
- » Connect community nodes, including schools and parks
- » Integrate Fish Creek and the Alaska Railroad right-of-way
- » Plan for snow storage and its management
- » Accommodate freight movements on Spenard Road

Active transportation refers to trips taken by foot or on bike. Spenard's pedestrian and bicycle network must be enhanced to achieve the Plan's vision. Figure 3.5 shows the proposed active transportation network. Additionally, Figure 3.6 identifies relevant MTP investment areas.

This network of primary and secondary connections should include:

Primary Network

The Primary Active Transportation Network, shown in blue in Figure 3.3, consists of roadways and routes that extend beyond Spenard to surrounding areas. These include:

- » Spenard Road
- » Major roads near the perimeter of the Plan Area
- » Major east-west connectors
- » The eastern components of the proposed Fish Creek Trail

Secondary Network

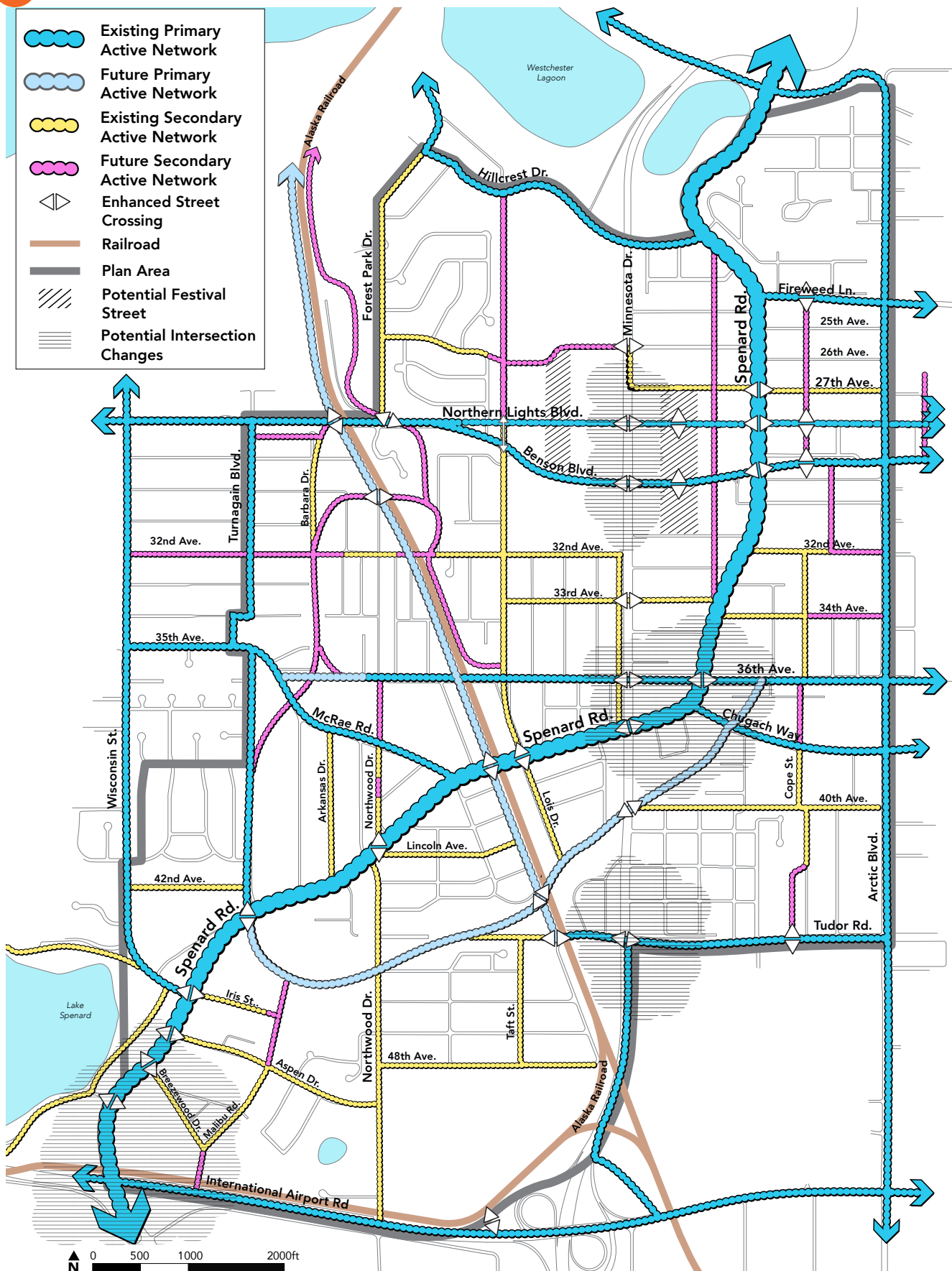
The Secondary Active Transportation Network, shown in yellow and pink, consists of neighborhood-level connections to the Primary Network and to key community destinations. It includes:

- » Neighborhood streets to the east and west of Spenard
- » New connections proposed to break up long existing blocks
- » The northern segment of the proposed Fish Creek Trail

Note

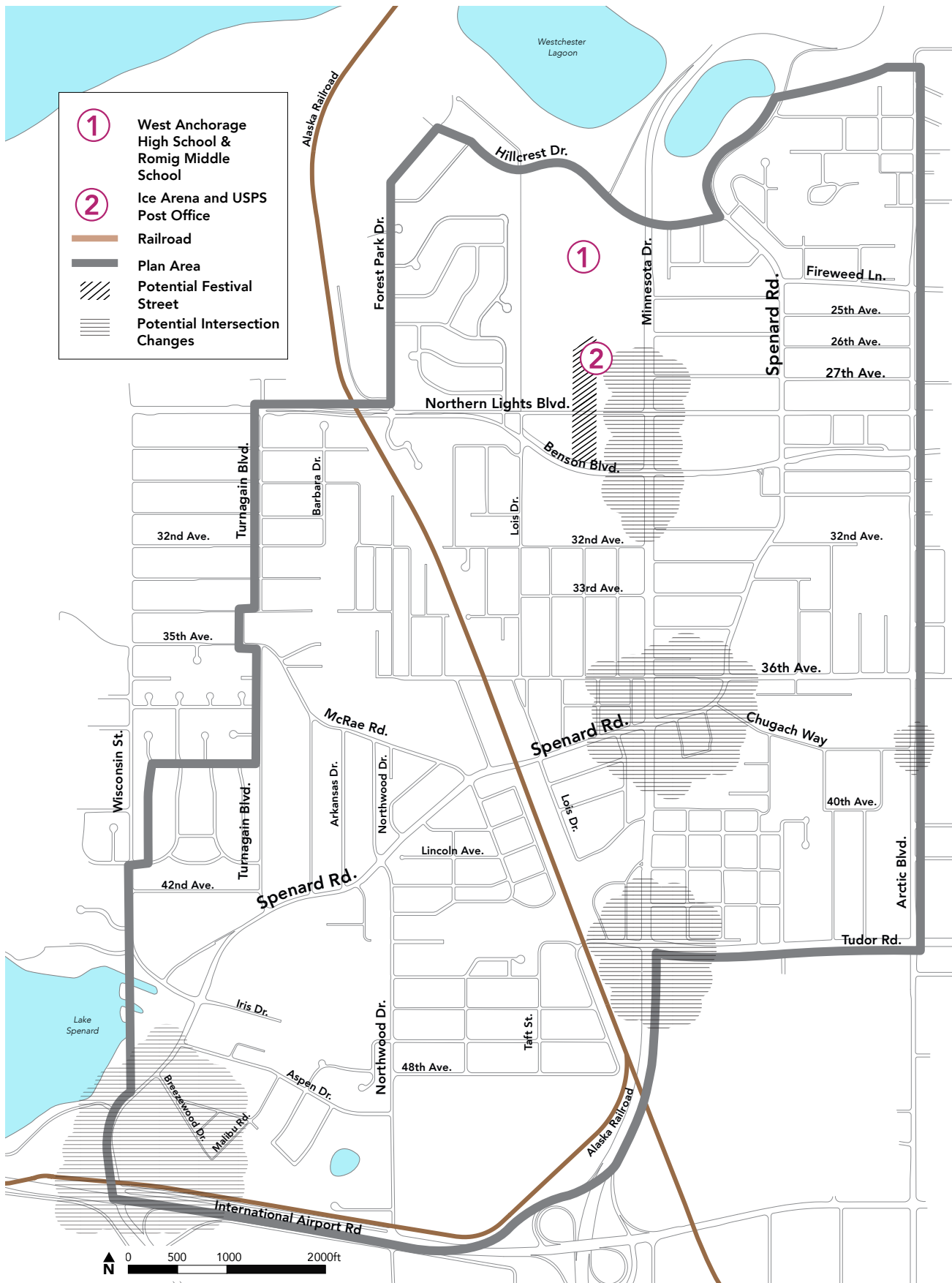
This section of the plan seeks to clarify active transportation objectives for Spenard, beyond what is identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Improvements will need to be coordinated with overall regional objectives in the MTP.

3 Plan Concept/Framework



NOTE: The potential for the Alaska Railroad Trail shown in this figure depends on future coordination with the Alaska Railroad Corporation to consider how such a trail could coexist with the functional needs of the rail corridor.

Figure 3.5 Active Transportation Network



NOTE: It is desirable to have Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA)'s or other studies to reroute out-of-direction travel and to be accessible by all modes, rather than operate as traffic islands..

Figure 3.6 Potential MTP Investment Areas



Multi-use pathway

Potential Network Facilities

Expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities should meet NACTO standards and consist of a variety of types, including:

- » **Multi-use Pathways.** Off-street paths shared by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- » **Bicycle Lanes.** Areas within the roadway that are exclusively designed and delineated for cycling.
- » **Buffered Bicycle Lanes.** Bicycle lanes as described above but buffered from vehicular traffic with striping.
- » **Protected Bicycle Lanes.** Bicycle facilities that share the roadway with vehicles but are physically separated from vehicular traffic with a vertical barrier.
- » **Shared Use Roadway/Bicycle Boulevard.** Streets that are signed or striped with “sharrows” to alert motorists of bicyclists.



Bicycle lane



Buffered bicycle lane



Protected bicycle lanes



Shared use roadway/bicycle boulevard (sharrow)

Crossings

Active transportation in Spenard is constrained by difficult crossings along major transportation routes. The Alaska Railroad, Minnesota Drive, Northern Lights/Benson Boulevard and Spenard Road are all examples. The Plan Framework illustrates locations for potential crossing improvements.

Crossing improvements will take a wide variety of forms. These include: at-grade intersection improvements that will make pedestrian crossings safer, mid-block at-grade crossings that allow safe crossing between signalized intersections, and grade separated crossings that facilitate uninterrupted travel. More detailed analysis must be conducted to determine which crossing treatment is appropriate at each location.

The first step in planning for crossings that will get the most use is to establish a network favoring active transportation. Crossing solutions will then become more evident using engineering studies and solutions manuals already in place. It is important to locate crossings at major vehicular intersections, or preferably two blocks to four blocks away. Crossings within one block of vehicular intersections are commonly rerouted to the major intersection to maintain efficiency for all modes.



Signalized crossing



At-grade mid-block crossing



Grade separated crossing (undercrossing)



Grade separated crossing (overpass)



Community Facility or Institution



Single-Family and Two-Family



Compact Mixed Residential-Medium



Residential Mixed-Use Development

Generalized Future Land Use

Currently, one of Spenard's unique qualities is its eclectic mix of land uses. Everything from light industrial to single-family housing is present in a close-knit, fine-grained pattern of urban development. This wide range of land uses in close proximity to one another should continue as a means of supporting daytime and nighttime activity as well as public transit. Future land use designations focus on properties that are more closely situated to the transit-supportive corridor. Flexible, mixed-use is recommended for many areas in the corridor. However, concentrations of multi-family, single-family and pure commercial, industrial and civic land uses also should continue to occur.

The generalized land use policies for the corridor are illustrated in Figure 3.7 and described below. This provides a framework for commercial properties and infill opportunities generally within a 1/4 mile (5- to 10-minute) walk of the high frequency transit service on Spenard Road. Varying combinations of these land use patterns are recommended for each of the three TSD districts. More specific land use recommendations with map details for the North, Central, and South districts are provided in Chapter 4. Those land use maps serve as the land use policy and regulatory elements of the Plan.

The brief descriptions of the land use designations in the Plan summarize those defined in the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (2040 LUP). The 2040 LUP definitions contain a full description of each land use designation, including more details about the intended prevailing uses, densities, development character, and implementation zoning districts.

- » **Park, Natural Area or Open Space.** Parks, greenbelts and other open spaces. This designation combines the Park or Natural Area and Other Open Space land use designations of the 2040 LUP. Where located on the Alaska Railroad Utility Corridor, it also cross-references to the 2040 LUP "Airport, Port, or Railroad Facility" land use designation with "Potential Open Space Alternative."
- » **Community Facility or Institution.** Community facilities, schools, public safety and other similar uses. Where located on Airport lands, it also cross-references to the 2040 LUP "Airport, Port, or Railroad Facility" land use designation with "Potential Open Space Alternative."
- » **Single-Family and Two-Family.** Single-family houses and low density residential.
- » **Compact Mixed Residential-Low.** This designation provides for a compatible, diverse range of single-family, attached, and smaller-scale apartment housing choices in the same neighborhood.

- » **Compact Mixed Residential-Medium.** This designation provides for multi-unit apartment and townhouse living (including R-3 development) and a mix of compact single-family and attached housing in a cohesive neighborhood.
- » **Urban Residential-High.** Medium- to high-density housing opportunities, allowing for apartment buildings, townhouses, and similar forms of urban housing.
- » **Town Center.** The Spenard Town Center integrates community-serving retail that meets the daily needs of several surrounding neighborhoods, and include public services and civic facilities. New apartments, compact housing, and live/work units are encouraged to develop alongside long-time properties.
- » **Main Street Corridor.** Commercial and mixed-uses within urban neighborhoods that can evolve as pedestrian-oriented, transit-served “main street” development.
- » **Light Industrial/Commercial.** Light Industrial/Commercial areas provide for multi-sector employment in an industrial setting.

The land uses recommended for the Plan Area are generally consistent with those called for in the Anchorage 2040 LUP. However, some minor deviations occur. These deviations represent recommended changes, in order to satisfy District specific objectives. Recommendations for land use are identified in Chapter Four: District-specific Concepts. To compare how the SCP land use designations relate to the 2040 LUP, please see Figure 2.4 in Section 2.1 of the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan.

Note

Note that Figure 3.7 indicates land use changes that are intended to follow parcel lines, but in some cases those locations are approximate. Where the land use remains the same as in the 2040 LUP, the boundary lines in the LUP should be referenced. Only the areas that are marked with a hatched pattern are intended to be changes from the 2040 LUP.

3 Plan Concept/Framework

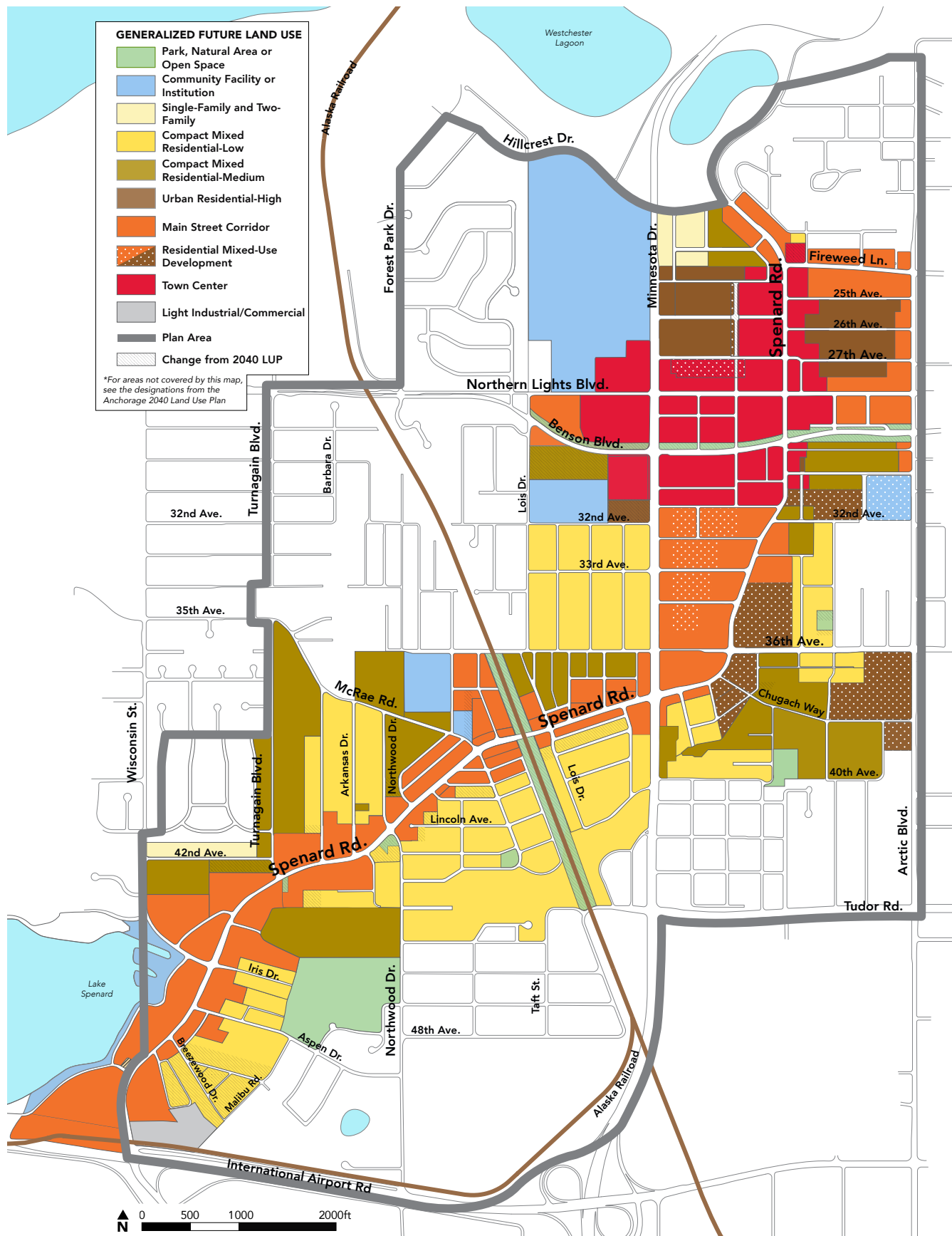


Figure 3.7 Generalized Future Land Use

Growth-supporting Features

The following Growth-supporting features overlay and modify the land use designations

- » **Residential Mixed-Use Development.** Medium- to high-density housing opportunities combined with commercial mixed-use retail, office, production, lodging, other employment and services, and coordinated public infrastructure investments to create a mixed-use neighborhood. This feature appears as a stipple (dot) pattern over the base land use designations in Figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.9. It cross-references to the 2040 LUP growth-supporting feature with the same name.
- » **Transit-supportive Development.** The areas shown with land use designations on Figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.9 comprise the Spenard Transit-Supportive Development corridor, which incorporates and builds on this feature as described in the 2040 LUP.
- » **Traditional Neighborhood Design.** All land use designations on Figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.9 incorporate this development feature as described in the 2040 LUP, with the exception of the Community Facility campus of Romig M.S. and West Anchorage H.S.
- » **Greenway-supported Development.** Refer to the 2040 Land Use Plan Map for the area of application of this growth-supporting feature along parts of the Fish Creek Corridor.

The land use areas recommended in Figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.9 are generally consistent with the 2040 LUP. However, some deviations occur. These deviations represent recommended changes in the land use designations in order to satisfy Spenard District-specific objectives. Areas where there are new recommendations for land use are identified in Figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.9 and described in each District discussion.

Policy 3.2: Accommodate a wide range of uses throughout the Plan Area that support transit, generate activity and contribute to economic development, housing and placemaking.

The following include planning technique policies to further support the land use, transportation and design elements of the Plan:

Redevelopment and Adaptive Reuse

Policy 3.3: Pursue an adaptive reuse program that encourages redevelopment and activation of existing buildings along the corridor.

This may include amending codes and review procedures as well as offering incentives. An adaptive reuse program will help to maintain the finer-grained scale of development that supports local businesses that are unique to Spenard. The adaptive reuse program may permit reductions or waivers for some site development regulations, such as parking, and also may allow for interim uses and phased improvements.

Innovative Housing Types

Policy 3.4: Promote a variety of innovative housing types in the Spenard corridor.

These types include live/work units and duplexes with accessory dwelling units. Amend codes and approval processes as necessary to accommodate new use types such as live/work units.

Flex Industrial Uses

Policy 3.5: Promote and support light industrial facilities that combine technology with low-impact fabrication and assembly work.

These types of facilities are appropriate in areas of the Spenard corridor where such uses would not abut more sensitive land uses.

Changes In Land Use

Policy 3.6: Encourage a mix of uses along the corridor.

In some cases, rezoning may be necessary to accommodate the uses envisioned. In some places, the affected parcels may be in a transition area abutting more sensitive, lower intensity uses. In these cases, the rezoning should use the Special Limitations tool to tailor the permitted uses and design conditions that will be required to assure compatibility with the context. (Note that a summary of some design solutions for “transitions” is described in a separate section of this chapter.)

Protecting Established Neighborhoods

Policy 3.7: Encourage small-scale neighborhood-serving commercial uses as generally located on Figures 3.3, 4.5, and 4.9.

These uses should be located just off the Spenard Road corridor and orient to the local/side streets and provide design features that create transitions from the busy Spenard corridor to adjacent residential uses. Example uses might include small-scale grocery stores, bakeries, or coffee shops.

Applying the Spenard Overlay Zone

Policy 3.8: Establish a Spenard Overlay Zone to the transit-supportive land use corridor boundaries.

Establish and apply a Spenard Overlay Zone to the transit-supportive land use corridor boundaries generally depicted in Figures 3.2, 4.1, 4.5, and 4.9. The overlay should include land use, development, design, and other related provisions specific to the Spenard planning corridor that achieve the town center, main street, and neighborhood land use designations and growth supporting features for transit-supportive, mixed-use, and traditional neighborhood development. Points of focus should include support for:

- » The street typologies (street edge character specified for this area;
- » The design guidelines highlighted in this Plan (Appendix A); and
- » The land use policies of this Chapter and Chapter 4.

Walkable Blocks

Policy 3.9: Enhance and support the pedestrian experience by promoting short block lengths.

This provides for an integrated circulation network that facilitates walking to more destinations. Some existing blocks are excessively long and measures that could reduce these distances are to be encouraged. This may be accomplished by introducing a new public street, or by creating a private, street-like drive through a property, or even by providing a pedestrian/bicycle path through a property. Facilitate creation of walkable blocks. (New connections that would reduce block lengths in some parts of the corridor are presented in Chapter 4.)

Creating Efficient Parcels

Policy 3.10: Promote parcel development that is efficient and promotes adaptive reuse.

Where it is feasible and appropriate to do so, reconfigure or vacate an existing street to yield parcels that are more likely to accommodate new development and facilitate adaptive reuse. These measures also should be considered as a means of incentivizing redevelopment in appropriate areas.

Compatible Design

Policy 3.11: Promote new development and adaptive reuse projects that work with the neighborhood context to meet the vision for the plan area.

The design guidelines in Appendix A should be applied to the extent feasible in improvement projects.

C. Open Space Network Policies

A high-quality and easily accessible network of open spaces should be established as a unifying feature in the Plan Area, building on the numerous open spaces and parks located there today. Figure 3.8 shows the proposed open space network, the components of which are described in a series of policies below.

Policy 3.12: Connect to Neighboring Open Spaces.

Spennard's open space network should be integrated with surrounding regional open spaces. Examples are the Coastal Trail, the Westchester Lagoon and Chester Creek Trail, Arctic Park, Springer Park, Fish Creek Estuary, Pop Carr Park and Lloyd Steele Park.

Policy 3.13: Improve and Enhance Existing Parks.

Spennard's existing parks are important amenities that provide places to rest, recreate and host community gatherings. These should be enhanced whenever there is an opportunity to do so. Improvements should be designed to activate open spaces, increase walkability and expand usage and appeal. Creating community gardens, adding restroom facilities, installing lighting/safety features and expanding bicycle amenities are all potential improvements to consider.



Connect to neighboring open spaces.



Connect to neighboring open spaces.

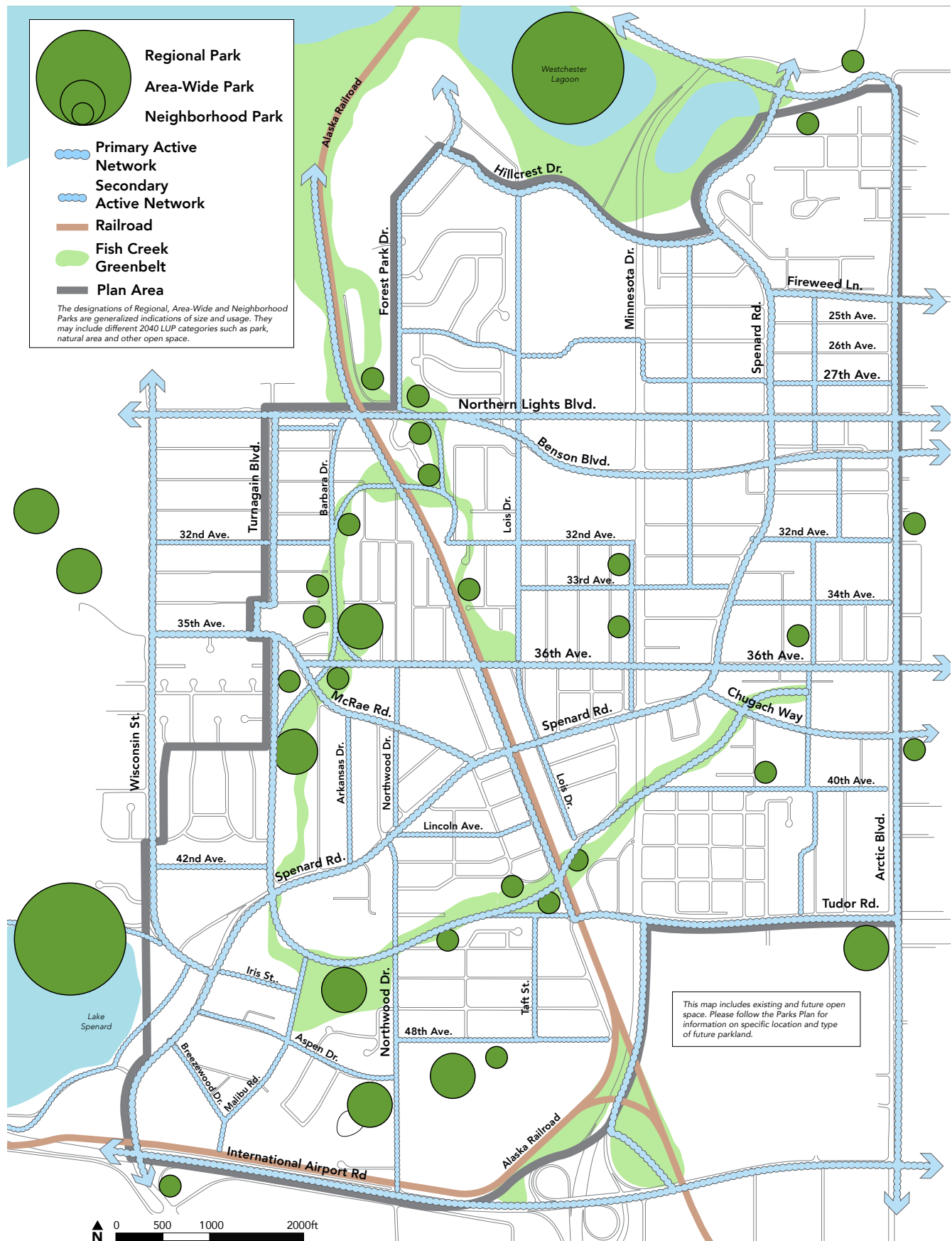


Improve and enhance existing parks.



Improve and enhance existing parks.

3 Plan Concept/Framework



NOTE: The potential for the Alaska Railroad trail shown in this figure depends on future coordination with the Alaska Railroad Corporation to consider how such a trail could coexist with the functional needs of the rail corridor.

Figure 3.8 Open Space Network

Policy 3.14: Establish New Open Spaces to Enhance the Open Space Network.

New vibrant open spaces should be created in Spenard to enhance the pedestrian experience, visual appeal and quality of life for residents. Open spaces are most successful when they are activated by adjacent development. New open space targets include:

- » **New Open Space Along Spenard Road.** Currently, there is little formal open space along Spenard Road itself. This is due in part to shallow lot depths, small parcel sizes and the desire for surface parking along the Corridor. New development should be encouraged to include open space along Spenard Road, provided that it is activated, maintained and well-used.
- » **New Green Spaces.** New functional green spaces can provide a visual break from buildings and paved surfaces. New development should be encouraged to incorporate well-maintained landscaping, particularly in South Spenard.
- » **New Hardscape Spaces.** Development projects should be encouraged to include plazas and other hardscape amenities. These could include promenades, wide sidewalks, plazas or courtyards. New hardscape spaces are particularly appropriate for areas where there is a concentration of development and activity, such as at Transit Hubs.

Policy 3.15: Encourage public art to be installed within open spaces.

Public art will provide an amenity, create interest, celebrate cultural heritage and history and add to the eclectic nature of the Plan Area. This will also contribute to placemaking and to celebrating Spenard as a cultural center.



Green space



Green space



Hardscape space



Hardscape space

Greenway-Supported Development

The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan identifies Greenway-Supported Development, which includes segments of Fish Creek. These are areas where “...new development will incorporate natural open spaces, creek corridors, and pedestrian routes. GSDs are a development concept that focuses on catalyzing new infill and redevelopment projects, based on a creek or greenway restoration. Future redevelopment projects have the potential to interface with revitalized urban creeks, wetlands, wildlife habitats, public spaces, or multi-use trails.”

The Spenard Corridor Plan supports the recommendations of the Greenway-supported Development corridor in the 2040 LUP, and furthers them with more specific guidance for the Fish Creek Corridor itself. This further supports the concepts refined and delineated by Assembly Resolution 2018-277, which supports efforts to daylight Fish Creek.

Policy 3.16 Promote development of regional open space features.

Three major open space features should be pursued as keystone organizing elements and amenities:

- » **Fish Creek Greenbelt.** Although some portions of Fish Creek include accessible parks and trails, there is a lack of continuity. The Fish Creek Greenbelt should be designed as a key organizing feature that connects neighborhoods and parks and provides an opportunity to engage water right in the Plan Area. This supports the greenway development and daylighting envisioned in Anchorage's 2040 Land Use Plan.
- » **Alaska Railroad Trail.** The Alaska Railroad right-of-way is currently well known as a barrier to bicyclists and pedestrians. This Plan supports the establishment of a multi-use trail and open space along the right-of-way. The railroad line that cuts through the Plan Area should be celebrated as an asset, rather than seen as a challenge. This will require substantial coordination with Alaska Railroad Corporation in addition to feasibility determinations and adequate funding.
- » **Spenard Lakefront.** To the extent feasible, the Spenard Lakefront should be activated and improved as a key amenity and component of the active transportation system. Its edges could be enhanced to provide a safe open space amenity for recreation and observing aviation activity that is well integrated with adjacent development. Any improvement to the lakefront must prioritize safety and aviation access. As identified in the Lake Hood Seaplane Base Master Plan, the first goal for the Lake is to maintain a safe and secure operating environment, and to provide safe facilities for pedestrians, vehicles and aircraft.



Create an accessible trail system along Fish Creek.



The railroad provides an opportunity for a multi-use trail system. This effort will require substantial coordination with Alaska Railroad Corporation in addition to feasibility determinations and adequate funding.



Activate and enhance the Spenard Lakefront to create a key amenity.

D. Placemaking Opportunities Policies

Placemaking refers to the development of standalone features that serve as points of visual recognition, animation and activity. Figure 3.9 illustrates potential placemaking opportunities, including those at transit hubs, gateways and key intersections. While potential placemaking sites are identified, exact locations are likely to be market driven and should respond to future opportunities.

Transit Hubs

A transit hub is a stop that is enhanced with public open space and is well coordinated with adjacent development. Transit hubs are proposed within each TSD, near priority redevelopment areas, land uses and key intersections that will generate the highest transit ridership.

Policy 3.17 Design transit hubs to facilitate efficient and comfortable bus use.

They should also serve as amenities, such as spaces for community events. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should provide the highest levels of safety, capacity and user comfort level. The shape, form, programming and detailed design of each transit hub should be unique in its character and designed to respond to the character of the TSD District in which it is located. Transit hubs should be designed so that it can be phased with private investment if needed. This may mean that a transit hub starts out small and evolves into a larger one as investment occurs around it.

Gateways and Key Intersections

Gateways are points of entry or transition from one District to another that are visually recognized by a design feature. Physical gateway elements could include landscaping, use of special paving materials, wayfinding signage and public art. The siting and orientation of a building on private property can also contribute to the establishment of a gateway.

Policy 3.18: Promote development of gateways and enhancement of key intersections

Key intersections typically occur where two or more significantly traveled streets intersect or at terminations of axes. As development and public improvements proceed with implementation of the Plan, design of these locations should be emphasized. Private development should be designed to orient in some way to these locations. For example, a building at a key intersection may provide a corner plaza or face an entrance toward the center of the intersection.



Transit hub



Transit hub



Wayfinding signage



Gateway feature

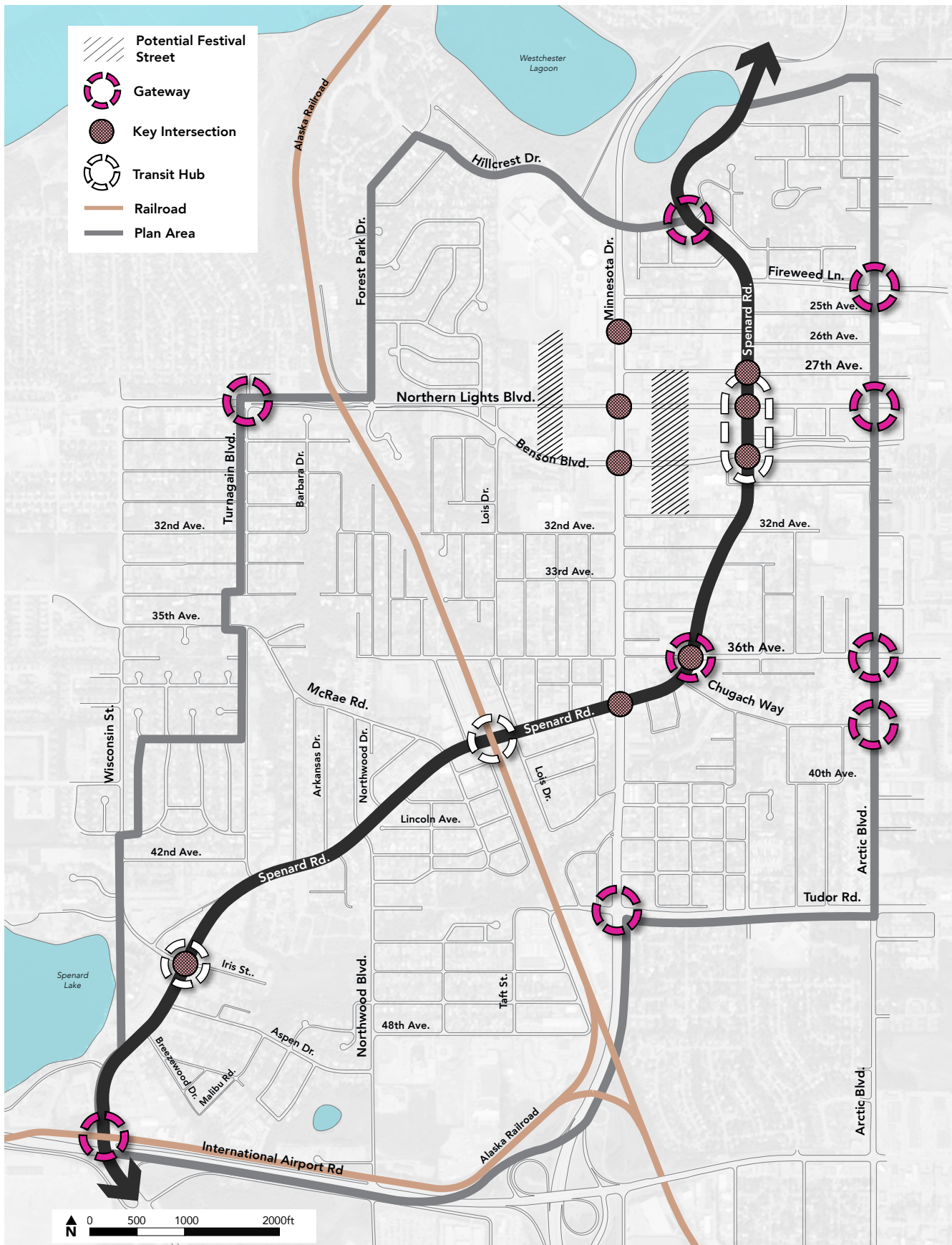


Figure 3.9 Placemaking Opportunities

E. Supporting Transit Policies

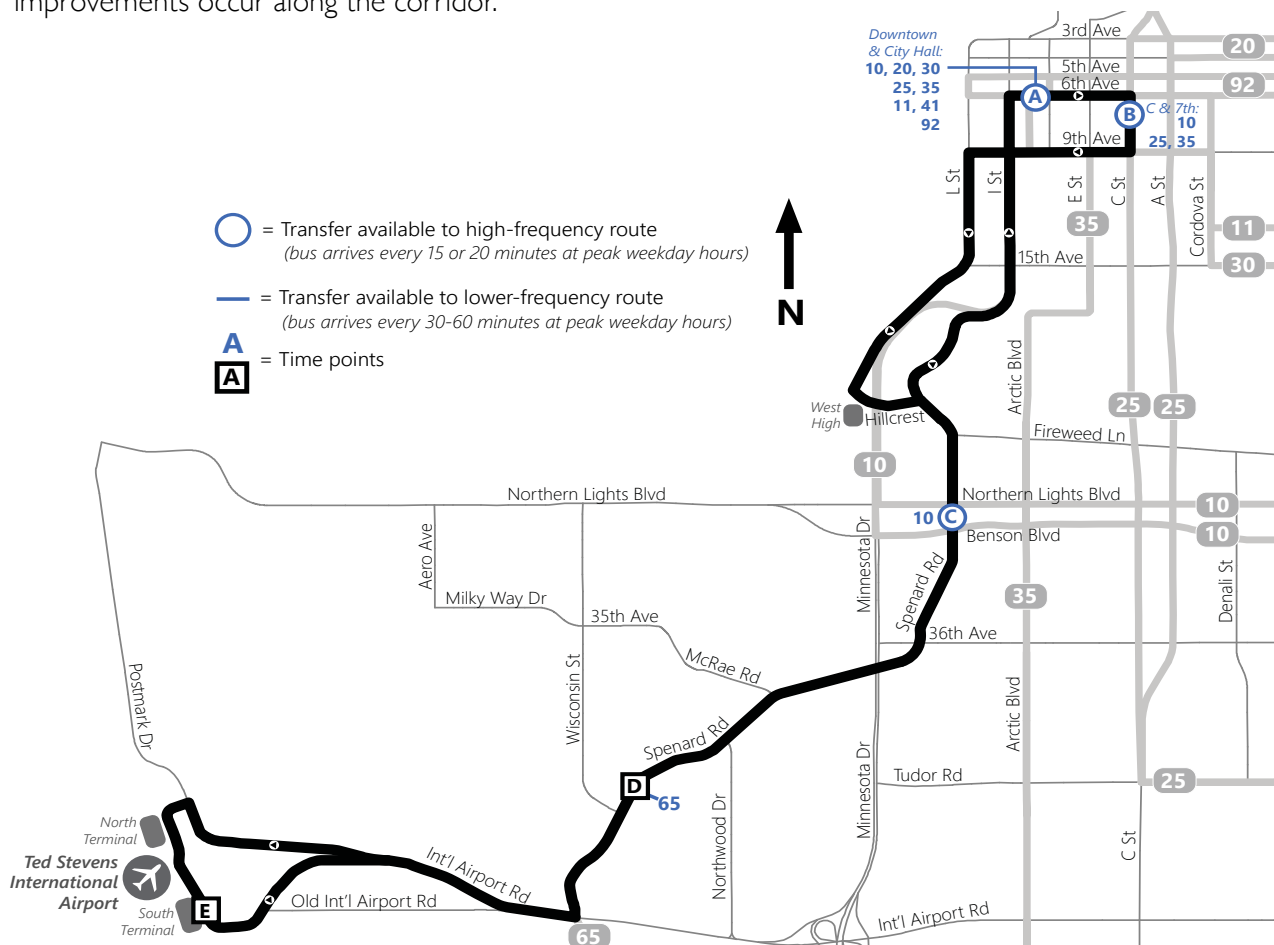
The Spenard area is conveniently located near several key places in Anchorage, including the airport, Downtown and Midtown. While many trips to these destinations will continue to be automobile-based, a shift in trips towards public transit should be promoted. Improvements to public transit throughout Spenard will benefit the greater region by reducing congestion and increasing mobility and access for those who do not drive.

Transit improvements also benefit the Spenard neighborhood and local businesses. Private investment in development often follows public investment in transportation networks, as access to transit is a key amenity that is sought by those who want to live and work in a place where there are alternatives to driving. Integration with transit should be a key focus of new development in Spenard.



Policy 3.19: Improve transit service along the Spenard Corridor.

The trip frequency of the People Mover Route 40, which runs from Downtown to the airport via Spenard Road, was recently increased to 15-minute bus intervals. This is a key accomplishment that will help Spenard develop as a Transit-supportive Development (TSD) corridor. Further enhancements to frequency should be encouraged as physical improvements occur along the corridor.



People Mover Route 40 map, as of 2/6/19.

Note

For more information on the Official Streets and Highways Plan Street Typologies, see the full document:

<https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/Publications/Documents/OSHP%20Complete%20Document1.26.15.pdf>

F. Street Edge Character Policies

Policy 3.20: The street edge should be designed to support transit use and the prevailing land uses planned for the area.

Street edge character refers to streetscape design and also the features of development that occur immediately adjacent. This includes building setbacks, building scale and the location and design of parking. Street edge character strongly influences the experience of those who come to Spenard. The definitions below describe different street edge character types that are to be used. These include building setbacks and placement, as well as parking location and streetscape design. The different street edge character types are indicated with colored and dashed lines in Figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.9.

The various street edge character types described here build on the Official Streets and Highways Plan Street Typologies.

Residential Street

Residential streets are designed to emphasize walking, bicycling, and land access over auto mobility. Residential streets are more pedestrian-oriented than commercial streets. Sidewalks, landscaping, including street trees and planting strips, and bike lanes (on designated routes) provide an attractive street interface.

Commercial Streets

Commercial streets are designed to balance traffic mobility with land access. While they are used by cars and freight/deliveries, commercial streets should accommodate pedestrians, transit (where appropriate), and bicycles. They should have landscaping to soften the interface between the street and parking areas. Opportunities should be explored to share driveways to improve auto mobility and efficiency.

- » Setbacks: larger and varied setbacks; gaps in street wall
- » Parking: limited parking allowed in front setback
- » Streetscape: sidewalks and internal pathways

Main Streets

Main streets serve medium-intensity retail and mixed land uses. Unlike commercial streets, main streets are designed to promote walking, bicycling, and transit within attractively landscaped corridors. To further create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, main streets have wide sidewalks (10 feet or greater, depending on the expected pedestrian traffic), landscaping, street furniture, outdoor cafes, plazas, and other features.

- » Setbacks: varied setbacks; some gaps in street wall
- » Parking: located behind or beside a building
- » Streetscape: generous sidewalk and streetscape amenities

A variation of this type is the Main Street-Shared/Festival Street, in which the street is designed to be flexible in use, to allow for multi-modal operations and temporary closures for special events.

Mixed-Use Streets

Mixed-use streets are located in areas characterized by a mix of high-intensity commercial, retail, and residential areas with substantial pedestrian activity. Alternative modes of travel are emphasized on mixed-use streets with increased use of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit design elements. Improvements such as trees/landscaping and street furniture are desirable to make mixed-use streets more attractive and friendly for pedestrians. Mixed-use streets typically provide on-street parking and wide sidewalks, depending on the type and intensity of adjacent land uses.

- » Setbacks: varied setbacks; some gaps in street wall
- » Parking: located behind or beside a building
- » Streetscape: continuous sidewalk

A variation of this type is the Mixed-Use Street-Boulevard, in which the street is lined with and enhanced by a generous area of landscaping.

Transit Corridors

Transit streets are located in areas of medium- to high- intensity land use. Alternative modes of travel are emphasized on transit streets with increased use of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit design elements. Improvements such as transit shelters and landscaping, in medians and along street edges, are desirable to make transit streets more attractive to pedestrians and transit users.

- » Setbacks: varied setbacks, gaps in street wall
- » Parking: parking located behind or beside a building
- » Streetscape: landscaped setbacks, sidewalks and internal pathways



Surface parking

G. Shared Parking Pools Policies

Policy 3.21: Promote the development of Public Parking Pools.

These should be located strategically. Parking structures and surface parking should be encouraged where there are significant concentrations of development in close proximity to Spenard Road, and in association with Transit Hubs. Public parking should be designed to serve Spenard's TSD Districts. Users potentially include businesses, residents and visitors. Figure 3.10 illustrates target zones for pooled parking based on proximity to key locations along Spenard Road.



Parking structure



Parking associated with transit



Parking structure

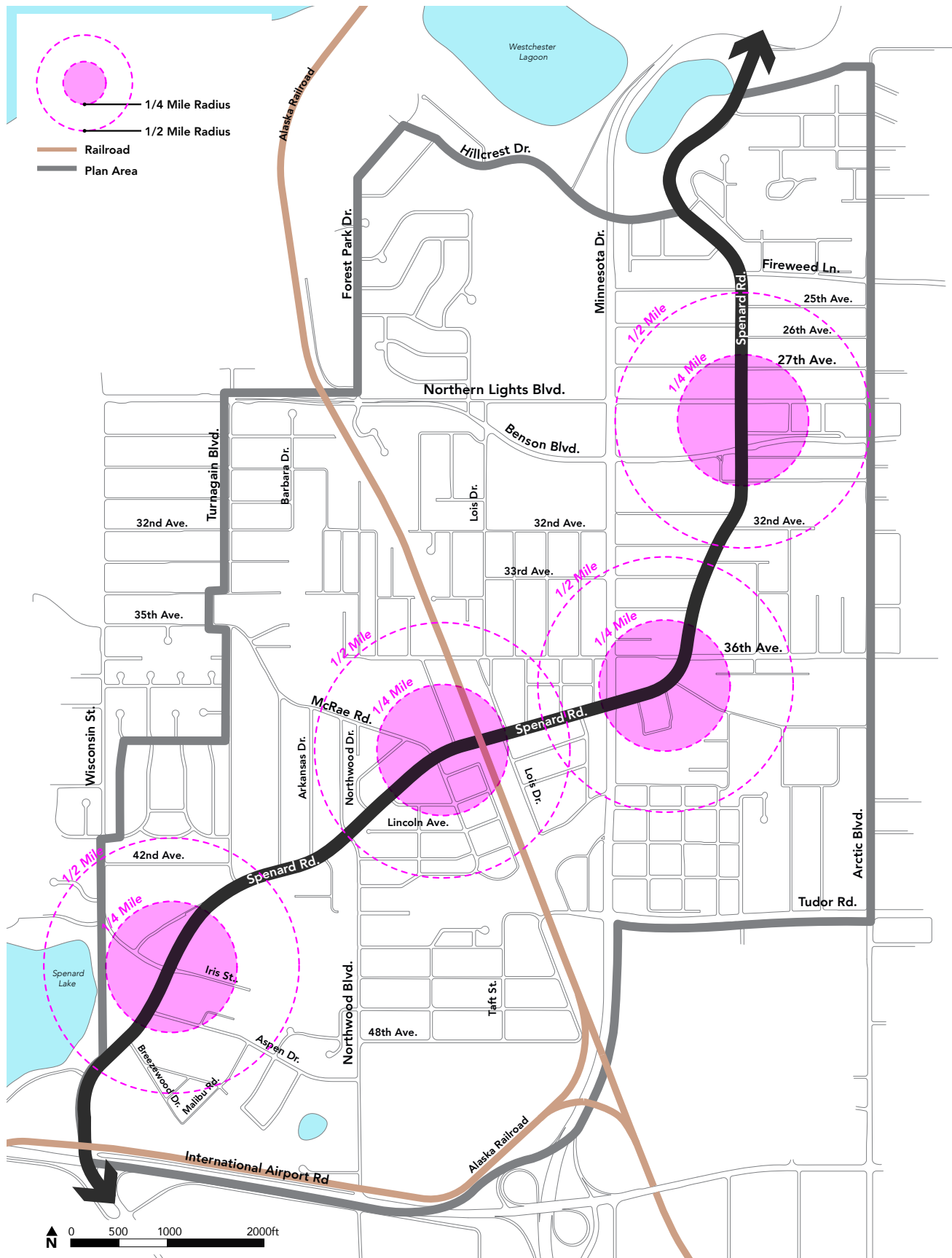


Figure 3.10 Target Parking Zones

H. Transition Policies

Policy 3.22: Provide for compatible transitions where commercial or mixed-use areas interface with multi-family or low-density residential areas.

The quality of the interface between two types of abutting land uses is a key consideration in the plan area. This is especially relevant where a higher intensity use, such as commercial, mixed-use or multifamily, occurs immediately adjacent to a low intensity residential area. In some cases, these edges include a buffer to minimize negative impacts, but other types of interface strategies can be used to create an asset that contributes to the quality of the neighborhood. These are considered to be “transitions.”

Where a commercial or mixed-use area interfaces with a multi-family or low-density residential area, encourage the non-residential development to incorporate design features that soften the interface and mitigate incompatibilities using the following design and use elements. These should be addressed by entitlement conditions of approval, rezoning action special limitations, or development standards and incentives such as in the Spenard Overlay Zone, including:

- » Building height and step-downs in scale
- » Lot coverage and building size/bulk
- » Building placement and setbacks
- » Landscape buffers and screening
- » Permitted uses and hours of operation
- » Solar access
- » Placement and design of vehicle access and parking
- » Snow storage
- » Exterior lighting-brightness and glare
- » Strategic placement of compatible uses such as residential or live-work units