

5

CIRCULATION AND CONNECTIVITY

This chapter provides circulation direction for an enhanced circulation system for the Plan Area. It addresses all transportation modes as well as vehicular parking. It first presents broad policies related to all modes of circulation and then follows with more specific policies and recommendations for individual modes. Since future development in the Plan Area will be largely incremental and will vary in terms of location, density, type and associated infrastructure, the exact impact of the Plan's policies are difficult to predict. As such, this chapter serves as a guide for future transportation investments to ensure support of long-term Transit-Supportive Development (TSD) goals and objectives. It is intended to complement the Municipality of Anchorage's (MOA) Complete Streets Guidelines and Non-motorized Plan. This chapter offers conceptual circulation improvements. It is important to note that these policies and recommendations need to be coordinated with DOT & PF and the MOA to determine feasibility. See Figure 1.3 for a process to test changes in arterial and collector typologies relative to major land uses and access points.

Note

This chapter offers conceptual circulation improvements. These conceptual improvements are identified for 'major streets' and 'neighborhood streets'. These categories are simplified from the OS&HP street classifications. It is important to note that these circulation recommendations will need to be coordinated with DOT & PF and the MOA to determine feasibility.

A. Circulation Policies

These circulation policies are broad in nature and should be considered in the design of all future public improvements and when commenting on private development. They serve as a baseline for the more detailed recommendations presented later in this chapter

Policy 5.1: Create a balanced street network in Spenard.

- » A balanced network of streets accommodates all modes of transportation in a way in which each mode operates efficiently and helps to support transit and minimize vehicular trips.
- » Create a hierarchy of streets to avoid funneling traffic onto the same one or two streets.
- » Plan public parking facilities and roadways such that they are well connected to the external network (outside the Plan Area) and disperse traffic volumes.
- » Ensure efficiency of bus circulation and pedestrian movements.
- » Plan bus layover areas that provide a transfer location and space for transit vehicles to hold and to facilitate efficient transfers.



Policy 5.2: Create a Street Typologies Plan.

A street typologies plan helps to ensure that new and redeveloped streets work with existing land use and the vision for the area.

- » Create a Street Typologies Plan that coordinates with the 2040 Land Use Plan.

Policy 5.3: Design Spenard's roadway network as a connected grid.

An interconnected street grid helps to distribute traffic and enhance walkability when distances between intersections are appropriately scaled.

- » New public and private streets should be planned to support and expand the existing street network and provide internal, public connections where street linkages are missing.
- » Block perimeters of 2,400 feet or less should be used to ensure blocks are walkable.
- » Preserve existing network components, particularly for active transportation modes.

Policy 5.4: Manage access and mitigate modal conflicts.

Access to properties includes driveways and alleys that are used by personal vehicles as well as deliveries and servicing. Where these cross pedestrian and bicycle routes, conflicts can occur, which can affect the appeal of these modes in the active transportation network

- » Vehicular access to properties should be managed to minimize conflicts.
- » Design access points to properties to minimize vehicular conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists.
- » Minimize curb cuts and consolidate access points among multiple properties, wherever possible.
- » Locate access on a side street wherever possible.
- » Locate transit stops to facilitate safe crossings and shorten the walking distances at key transfer locations.
- » Prevent vehicular access to properties directly from Spenard Road wherever possible.
- » Use median treatments to limit left-turning vehicles on streets that are components of the Active Transportation Network.
- » Make allowances for freight delivery and drop off zones for users of transportation network companies (TNCs).
- » Improve and maintain alleys for vehicle access, freight deliveries and trash pickup where appropriate, to reduce potential conflicts with primary activities found on primary street frontages.

Policy 5.5: Enhance Spenard's bicycle network for a range of users.

Bicycle users include those using bikes for transit, for recreation and for short errands. Designing for all user groups is important.

An enhanced network should include:

- » Design bicycle routes to be as direct as possible.
- » Design the bike network to accommodate travel from key area destinations in and out of the Plan Area.
- » Promote facilities and routes that attract a wide spectrum of rider types and ability levels.
- » Design the bike network to integrate with transit access.
- » Build missing trail connections to attract riders from further distances.
- » Design intersections to reduce the frequency and severity of bicycle collisions.
- » Use turn lanes, medians, and refuge islands to break down wide and/or complex intersections into smaller parts to help bicyclists navigate.

Policy 5.6: Prioritize for Spenard's pedestrians.

Providing a safe, efficient and walkable pedestrian system is essential in promoting the active transportation network. This includes the pedestrian system infrastructure that connects the community, as well as framing pedestrian routes with pedestrian-friendly buildings and landscape.

Pedestrian access (comfort, safety, and convenience) should be the highest priority.

Emphasize the tenets of great walkability, including:

- » Short block length
- » Grid networks
- » Placement of buildings to frame the pedestrian space
- » Placement of bus stops to reduce walking distance and encourage safe crossing locations
- » Vibrant street frontage
- » Excellent sidewalk facilities
- » Design the transit network and bus transfer systems that reduce the need for riders to cross streets with high traffic volumes. Where high volume pedestrian crossings are in demand, provide enhanced pedestrian crossings.
- » Design active transportation routes between transit stops, parking, and adjacent land uses to be ADA accessible. Utilize curb ramps, adequately wide facilities and minimal cross-slopes.

Note

This section offers conceptual circulation improvements. It should be used in conjunction with the OS&HP, which can be accessed here:

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

B. Street Design Policies

Plan Area streets should be designed to successfully and safely move all road users, including individual vehicles, freight, transit, bicycles and pedestrians. Whenever possible, streetscape improvements should be designed to work within existing rights-of-way (ROW). Where roads are controlled by more than one agency, street design efforts will require collaboration and coordination with outside agencies.

Policy 5.7: Design for Right-of-Way and Travel Demand Constraints

Right-of-way width and vehicular traffic volumes are two of the biggest considerations in the re-design of existing streets. Right-of-way widths can largely impact the feasibility of providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities alongside required space for vehicular travel. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Municipality to pursue acquisition of private property in order to redesign a street, but only when adequate facilities cannot be accommodated within available right-of-way. Many local streets in Spenard have rights-of-way that are constrained, including some as narrow as 30 feet. Where significant redevelopment is expected to occur, adjacent rights-of-way may need to be expanded to safely accommodate multi-modal transportation demand.

Opportunities to increase space for alternative modes should be considered. This should include space in the public right-of-way and may include collaboration with private property owners.

Policy 5.8: Apply Neighborhood Street Design Alternatives (OS&HP Residential Street Typology)

Neighborhood Streets are typically narrow in width. Their primary purpose is to convey local traffic through residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood Streets generally correspond with the Secondary Active Transportation Network identified in Chapter Three (Figure 3.5). Neighborhood Streets are currently configured differently from street to street, including some with partial sidewalks, some with full sidewalks and some with no sidewalks at all. Rights-of-way widths range from as low as 30 feet in older neighborhoods to 60 feet in newer neighborhoods.

A range of alternative Neighborhood Street sections should be tailored to support residential areas. These are shown in Figures 5.1 through 5.6. These do not reference specific streets. Instead, they illustrate several concepts that could be applied to a variety of Neighborhood Streets depending on the available right-of-way and other factors.

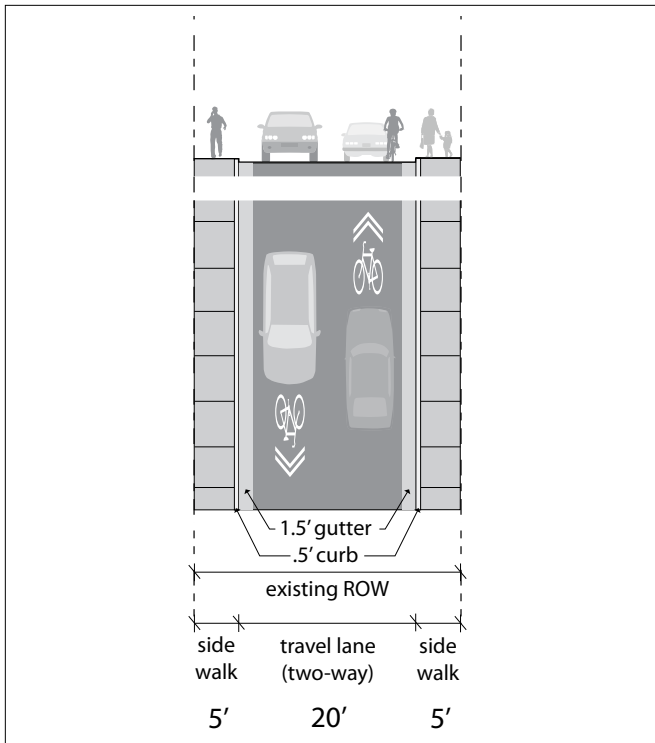


Figure 5.1 Neighborhood Street (Existing Condition - 30' ROW)

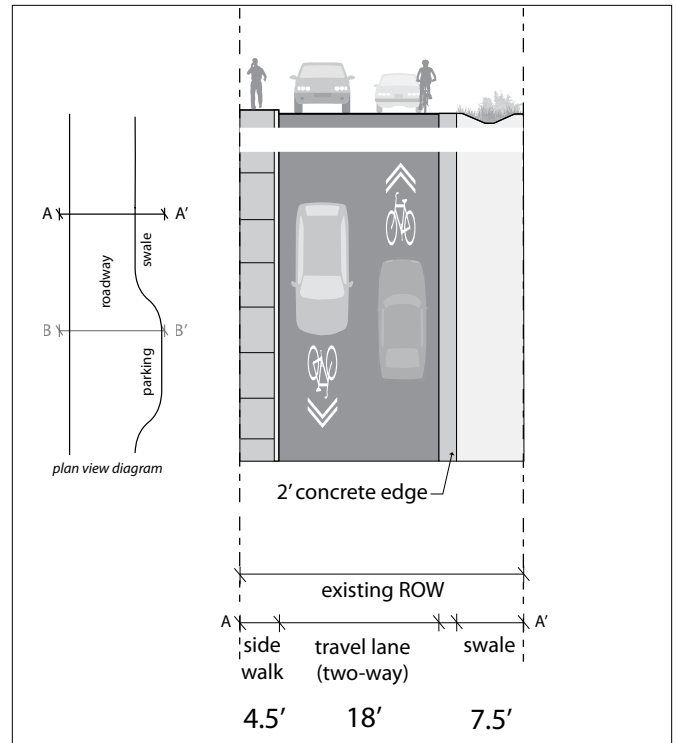


Figure 5.2 Neighborhood Street Expanded ROW - 30' ROW + Natural Drainage Section Cut A
(for use where on-street parking is not important)

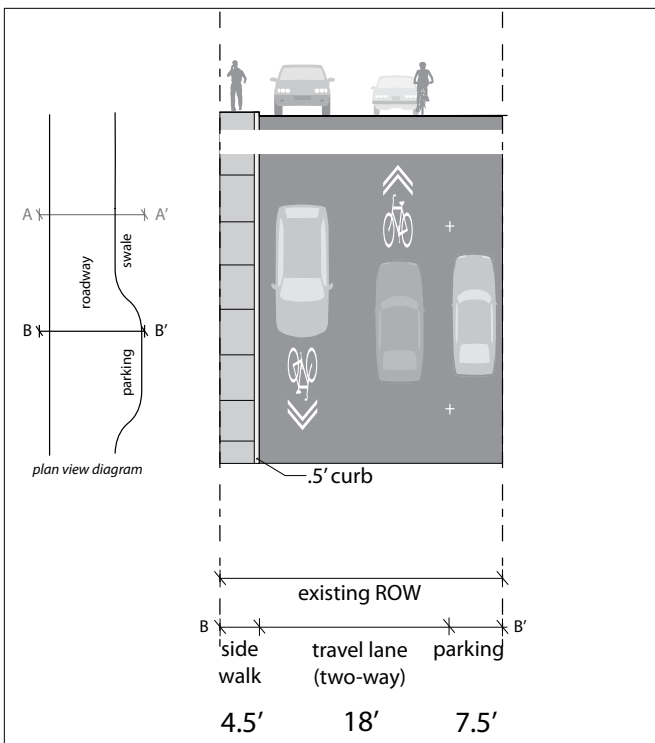


Figure 5.3 Neighborhood Street Expanded ROW - 30' ROW + Natural Drainage Section Cut B
(for use where on-street parking is important)

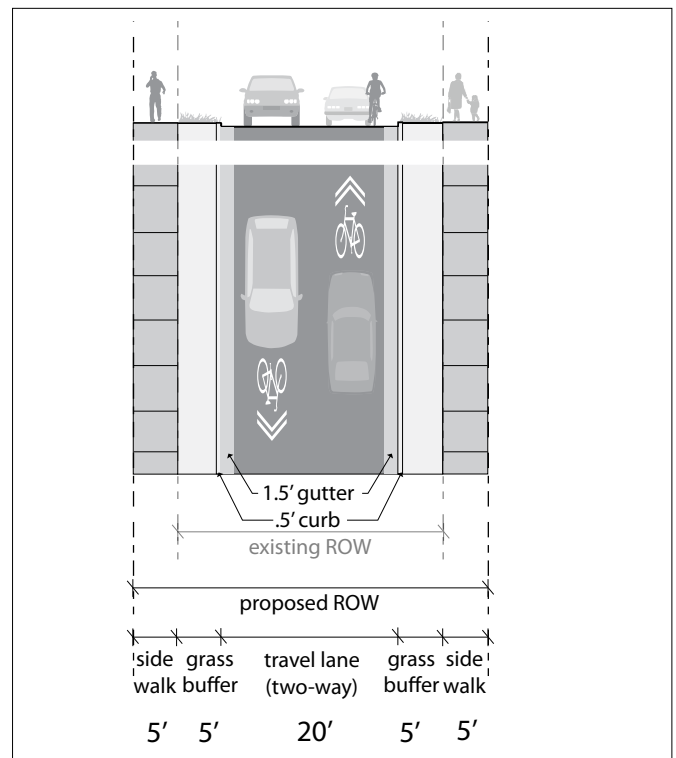


Figure 5.4 Neighborhood Street Expanded ROW - 30' ROW + 10'
(for use where 10' of additional ROW is possible)

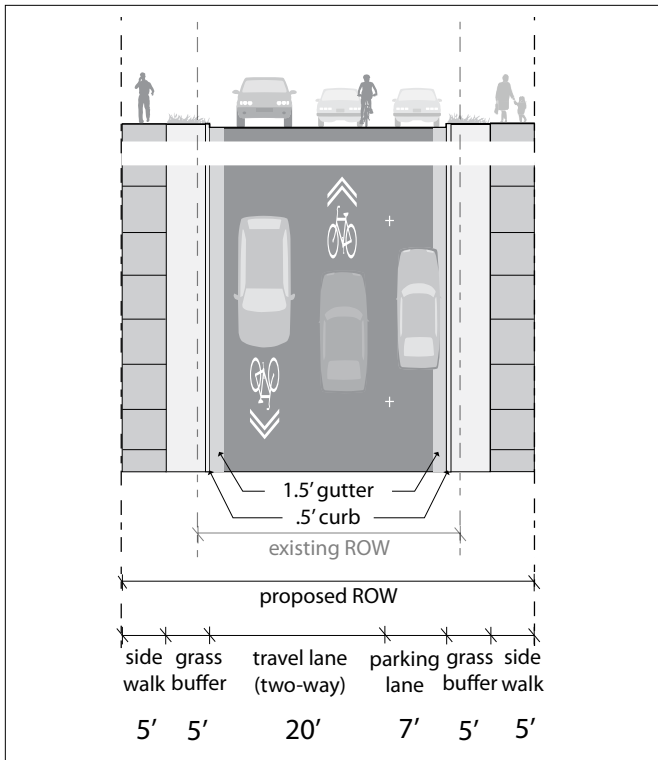


Figure 5.5 Neighborhood Street Expanded ROW - 30' ROW + 17'
(for use where 17' of additional ROW is possible)

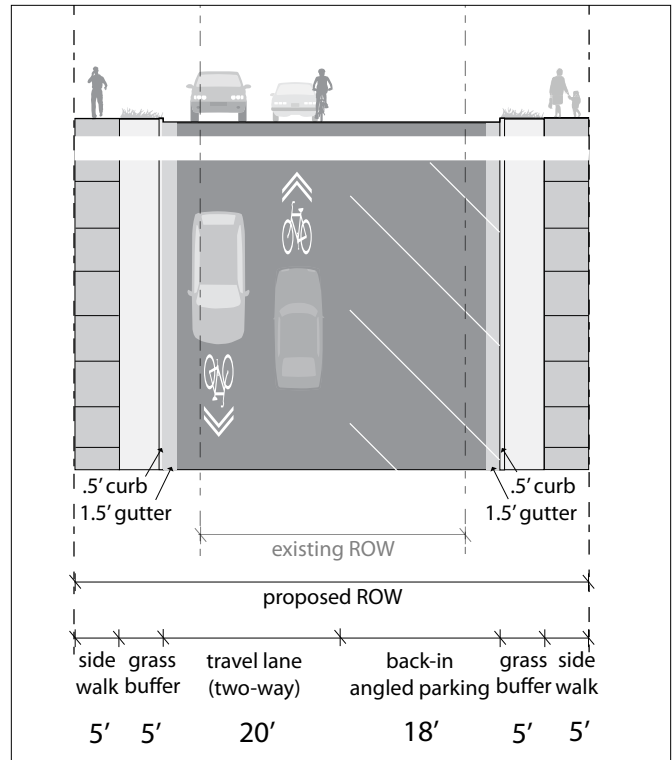


Figure 5.6 Neighborhood Street Expanded ROW - 30' ROW + 28'
(for use where 28' of additional ROW is possible)

Policy 5.9: Tailor Major Street Designs to support the Active Transportation Network.

Major Streets have wider rights-of-way and often serve as regional connectors that carry both local and regional vehicular traffic. Major Streets generally correspond to the Primary Active Transportation Network identified in Chapter Three (Figure 3.5). Right-of-way widths range from as little as 40 feet to 90 feet or more.

Alternative street typologies should be applied where feasible (OS&HP Street Typologies, including Mixed-Use and Commercial streets). The Major Street sections in Figures 5.7 through 5.12 illustrate concepts for Fireweed Lane and Benson Boulevard respectively.

Benson Boulevard

Figure 5.7 illustrates a potential redesign of Benson Boulevard. The existing sidewalk on the north side of Benson Boulevard should be expanded to a multi-use path that safely accommodates bicycles and pedestrians. Some facilities could be enhanced at the current locations while other segments may require coordination with property owners during redevelopment efforts. While the focus should be on the north side, the Plan also supports improvements to the south side facilities.

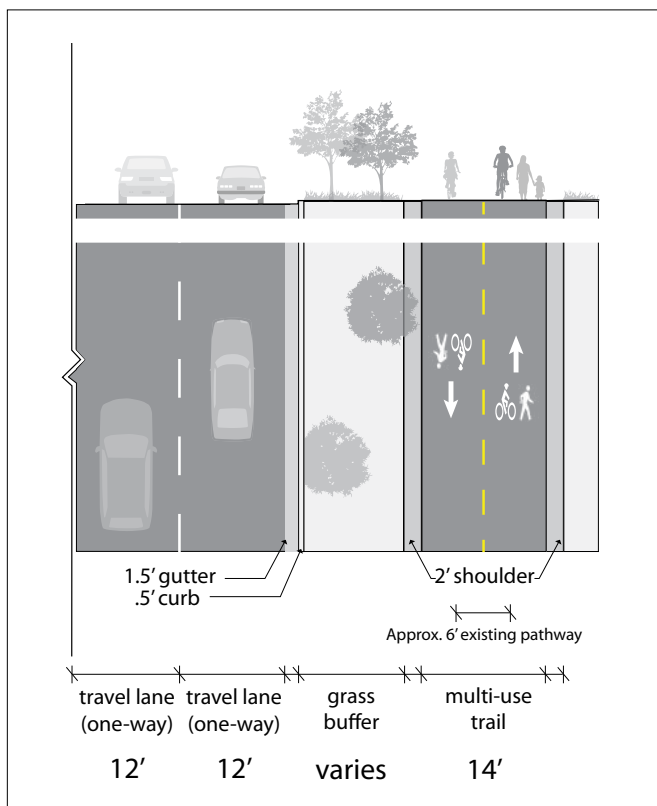


Figure 5.7 Benson Blvd. - Multi-use Trail
(for use where a multi-use trail can be added)

Fireweed Lane

Figures 5.8 through 5.12 illustrate street design options for Fireweed Lane. All options assume reducing the total number of travel lanes in a “road diet.” Removing a lane creates an opportunity to enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the right-of-way. Given the volumes and speed on this roadway, it is recommended that bicyclists be separated from motorized traffic or that bike lanes be installed. The potential to complete a road diet on Fireweed Lane will require further study and coordination with Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) to ensure feasibility, but current traffic volumes indicate it is a viable option that can result in significantly improved pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

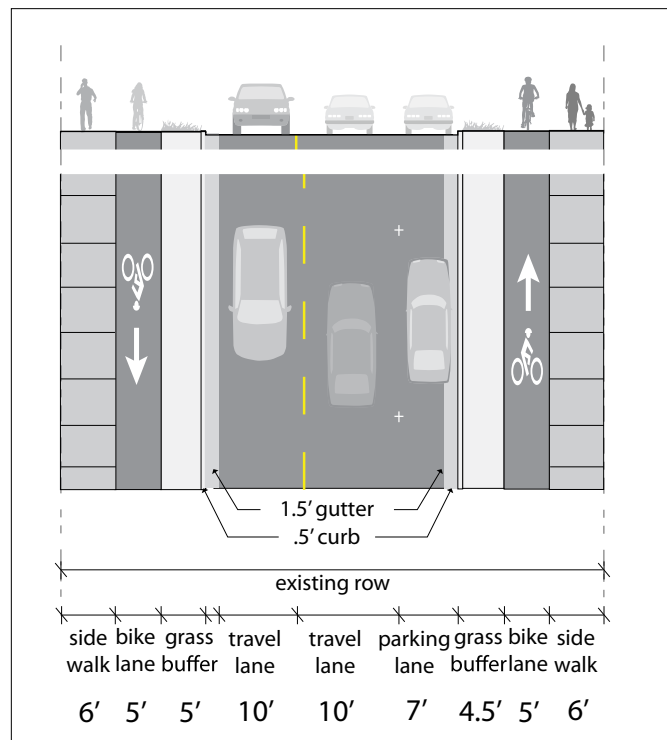


Figure 5.8 Fireweed Ln. 60' ROW - One-way Protected Bike Lane (parking one side)
(for use where separated bike lanes are important)

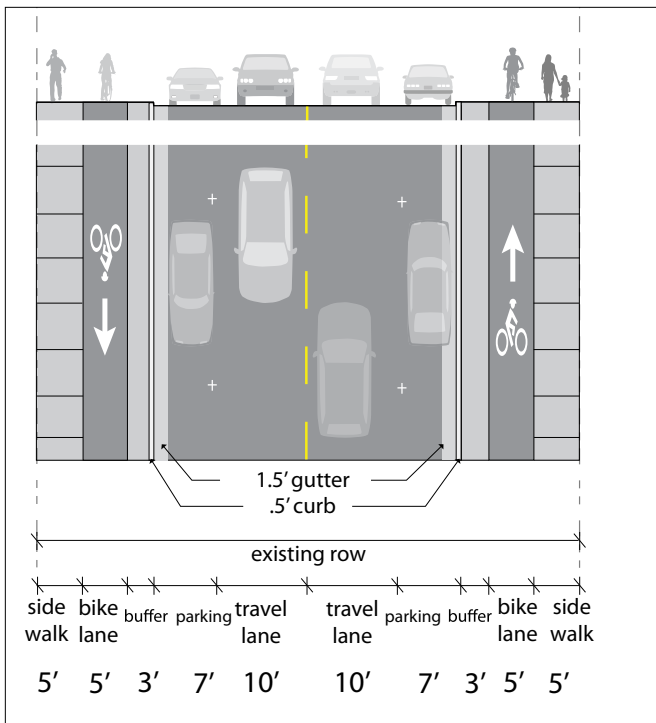


Figure 5.9 Fireweed Ln. 60' ROW - One-way Protected Bike Lane (parking both sides)
(for use where on-street parking is a priority)

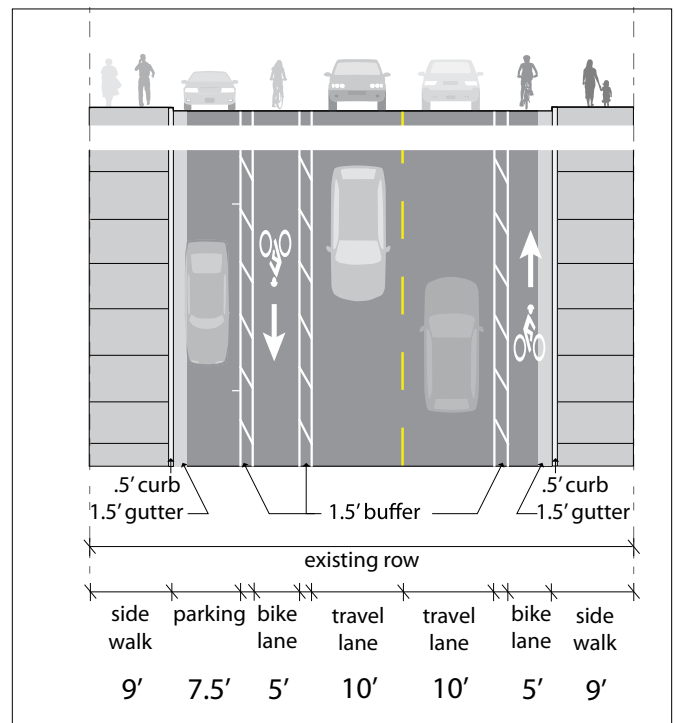


Figure 5.10 Fireweed Ln. 60' ROW - One-way Buffered Bike Lane (parking one side)
(for use where buffered bike lanes are a priority, and where parallel parking is possible)

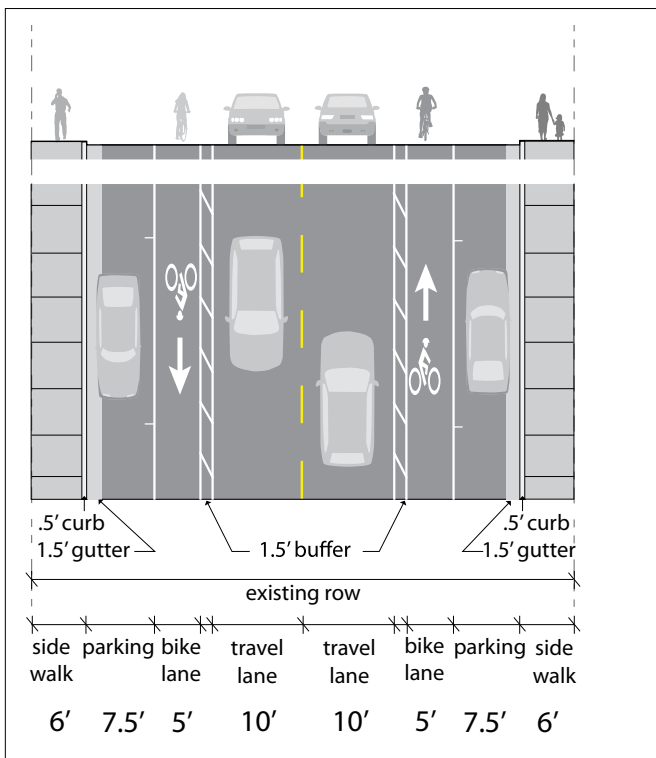


Figure 5.11 Fireweed Ln. 60' ROW - One-way Buffered Bike Lane (parking both sides)
(for use where buffered bike lanes are a priority, and where parallel parking is possible)

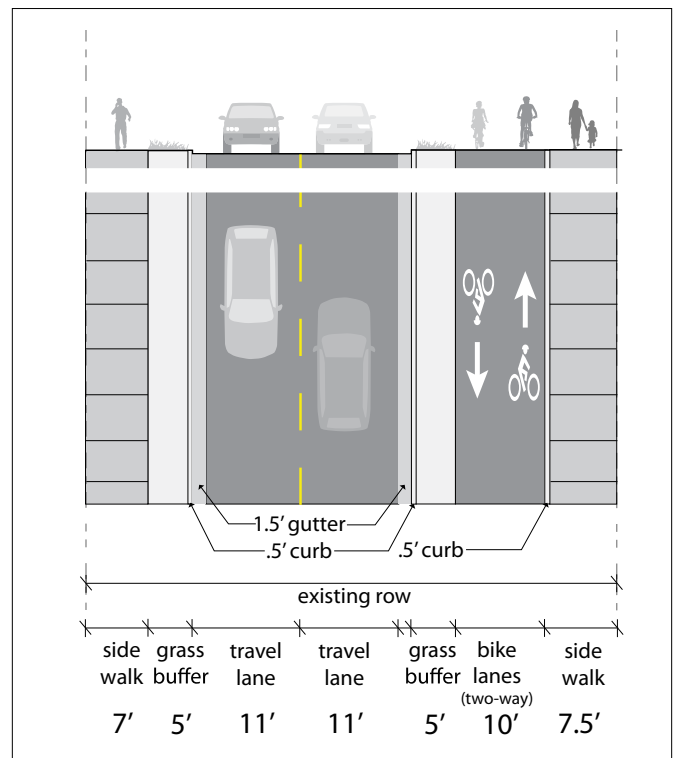


Figure 5.12 Fireweed Ln. 60' ROW - One-way Two-way Protected Bike Lane
(for use where bike traffic is a priority but parallel parking is not)

Note

For more information on the proposed conversion of Spenard Road and 36th Avenue into a one-way couplet, please see the Spenard Road/36th Ave. Couplet Reconnaissance Study. See <http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/sewardand36th/index.shtml>

Policy 5.10: Enhance the Spenard Road “Middle Segment” Street Design

This section focuses on the design of Spenard Road from Benson Boulevard to Minnesota Drive. It provides an initial design framework and street design alternatives. In response to congestion concerns, the Alaska Department of Transportation has proposed converting Spenard Road and 36th Avenue into a one-way couplet from Minnesota Drive to 36th Avenue. Figures 5.14 and 5.15 show options for high-quality bicycle, pedestrian, freight and transit facilities alongside a one-way conversion if this is pursued in the future. Please note that the SCP is neutral in looking at the project design. Options will need to be studied further as more detailed design processes occur during implementation of this Plan. All options are based on conversion to a three-lane configuration, with one lane in each direction and a center turn lane.

These alternatives should be considered:

Spenard Road Crossings

Figure 5.13 illustrates the Spenard Road Middle Segment in plan-view and indicates preliminary recommendations for locating mid-block crossings, constructing minor crossing improvements and installing major crossing improvements at signalized intersections.

Spenard Road Design Alternatives

Figures 5.14 and 5.15 illustrate the typical existing street design of the Middle Segment and then provide options for upgrading the street to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility. Please note that additional design work and public input will be needed to determine the optimal design for the street, but these options should be considered as preliminary concepts, all of which are consistent with the circulation objectives of this Plan.

The Spenard Road and 36th Avenue intersection is considered a major AMATS LRTP investment area. While it has the potential to affect land use, it also has the potential to require major transportation investment compatible with major roads and the area. See Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1 for methods to test changes in arterial and collector typologies relative to major land uses and access points.

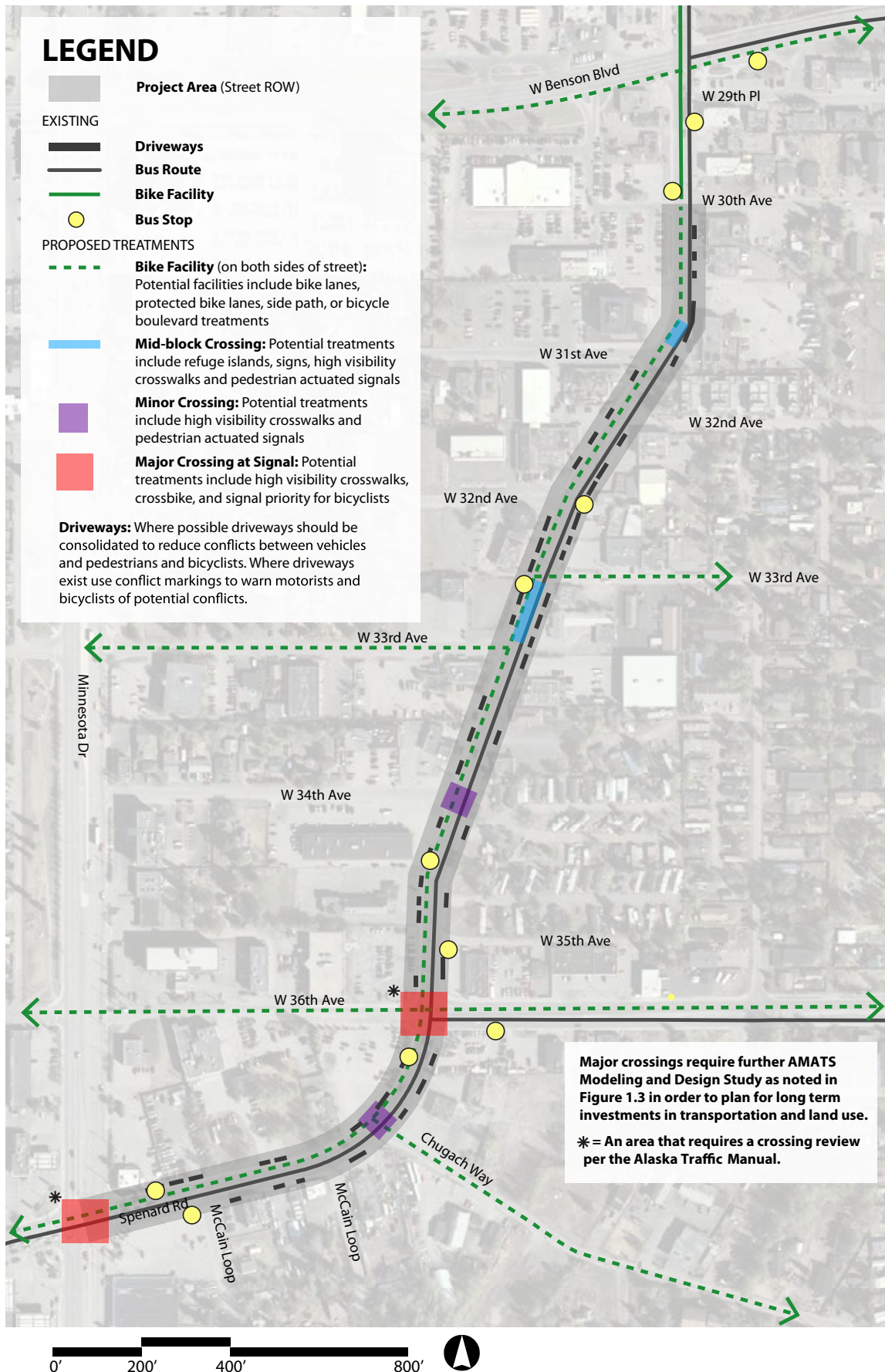
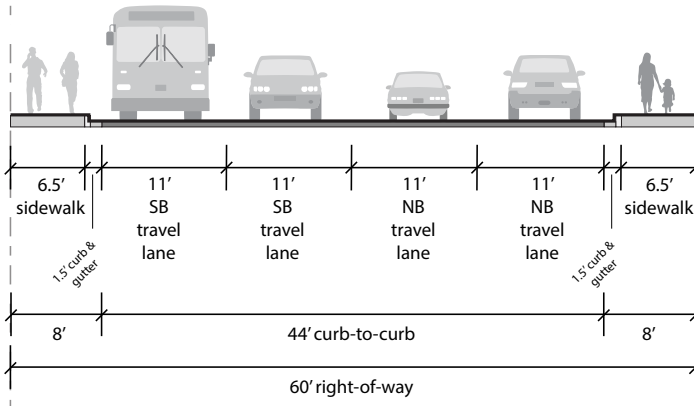
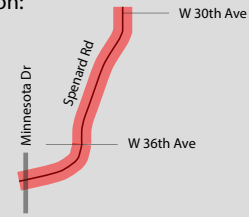


Figure 5.13 Spenard Road Corridor Crossings (Middle Segment)

Existing (Minnesota Dr to W 30th Ave)



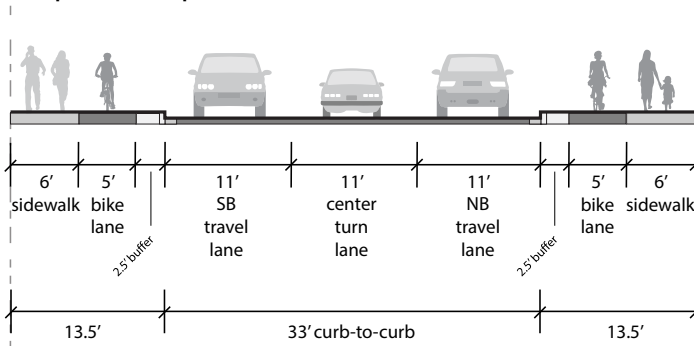
Location:



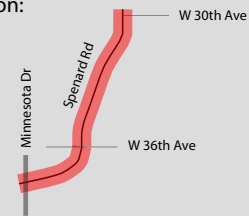
Notes:

Existing pedestrian facilities are lacking, or substandard resulting in a corridor that is not accessible by ADA standards. Bicycle facilities are non-existent.

Proposed - Option 1 (Minnesota Dr to W 30th Ave)



Location:



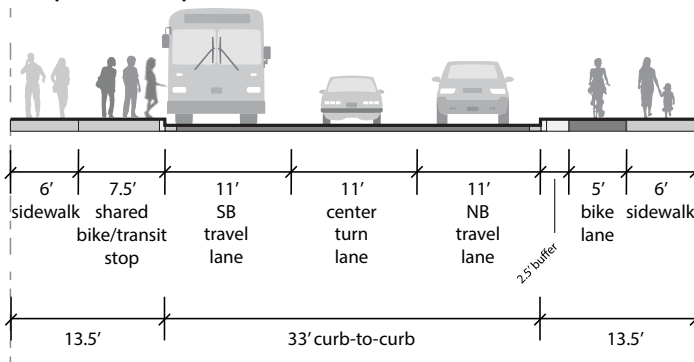
Notes:

Protected bike lanes provide an all ages and abilities facility that is accessible to a wide range of people.

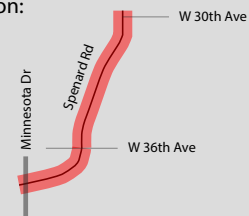
Additional ROW would allow for 8ft sidewalks, utility poles, and amenities, such as extra space needed for bus stops.

Winter maintenance: clearing and removal of snow should be prioritized along the corridor to promote access to transit by people walking or biking.

Proposed - Option 1 (at shared bike/transit stop)



Location:

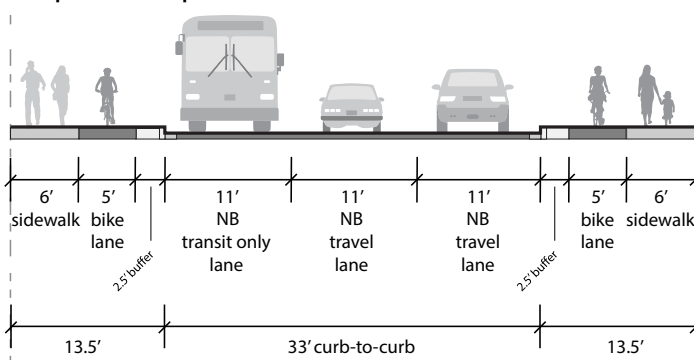


Notes:

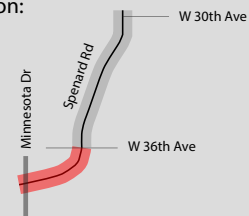
Where transit stops occur along the corridor the bike lane and buffer would become a shared bike/transit stop space. Bicyclists would yield to pedestrians boarding a bus.

Additional ROW at transit stops would allow for a 5ft bypass bike lane and 8ft transit island.

Proposed - Option 1 Alternative (Minnesota Dr to W 36th Ave)



Location:



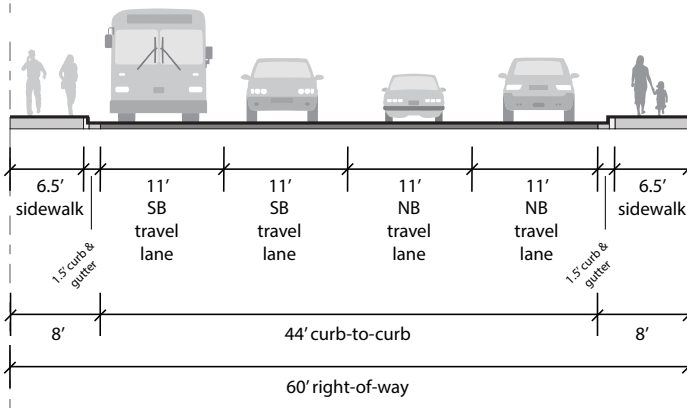
Notes:

The intersections of Spenard Rd & W 36th Ave and Spenard Rd & Minnesota Dr require further study. This Alternative responds to the AK DOT concept for a NB only lanes between Minnesota Dr and 36th Ave, and allows for continuous transit along Spenard Road.

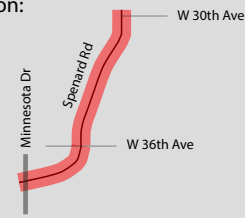
Figure 5.14 Spenard Road Option 1

All of the options above require AMATS modeling as per Figure 1.3 to integrate transportation and land use.

Existing (Minnesota Dr to W 30th Ave)



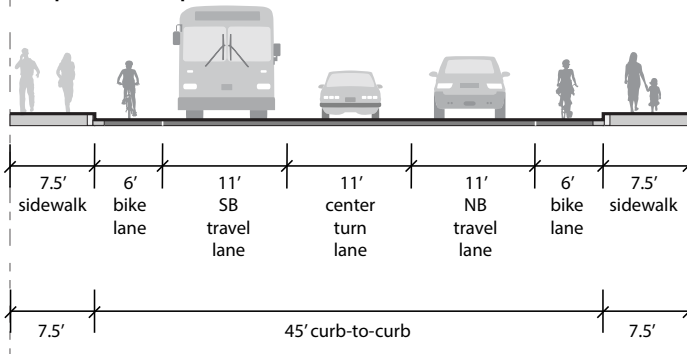
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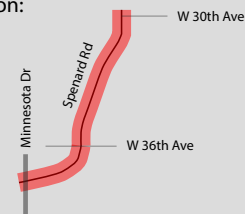
Notes:

Existing pedestrian facilities are lacking, or substandard resulting in a corridor that is not accessible by ADA standards. Bicycle facilities are non-existent.

Proposed - Option 2 (Minnesota Dr to W 30th Ave)



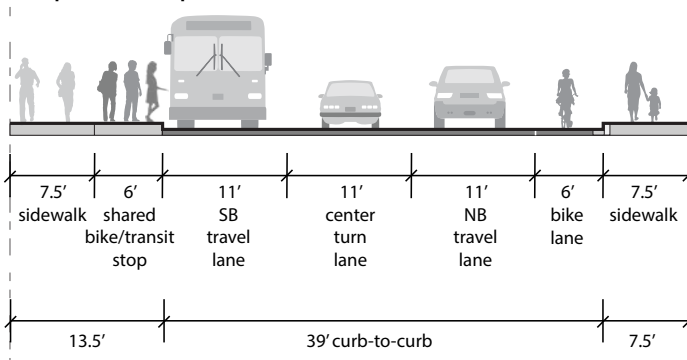
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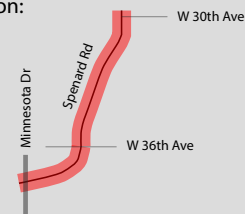
Notes:

Bike lanes provide space in the ROW for bicyclists to operate, however minimal separation from travel lanes does not provide an all ages and abilities facility. Additional ROW would allow for 8ft sidewalks, utility poles, and amenities, such as extra space needed for bus stops. The intersection of Spenard Rd & W 36th Ave requires further study.

Proposed - Option 2 (at shared bike/transit stop from Minnesota Dr to W 30th Ave)



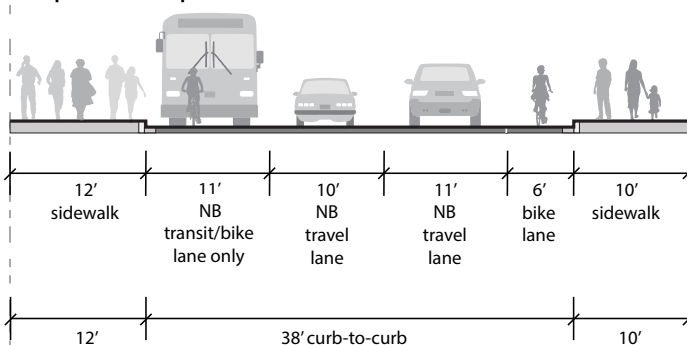
Location:



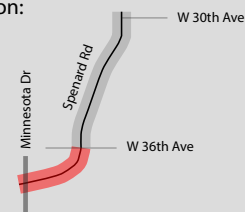
Notes:

Additional ROW at transit stops would allow for a 5ft bypass bike lane and 8ft transit island.

Proposed - Option 2 Alternative (Minnesota Dr to W 36th Ave)



Location:



Notes:

Wider sidewalks are ideal for commercial areas where a lot of pedestrian traffic is expected. Wider sidewalks can also accommodate utility poles and amenities, such as transit stops, benches, trash cans, etc. Shared transit/bike lanes are not all ages and abilities facilities and should only be considered along corridors with low or moderate bus headways. The intersection of Spenard Rd & Minnesota Dr requires further study.

Figure 5.15 Spenard Road Option 2

All of the options above require AMATS modeling as per Figure 1.3 to integrate transportation and land use.



Policy 5.11: Pursue Festival Street Design Opportunities

A festival street, or “shared street,” is a slow speed street where pedestrians have the right of way but bicycles and vehicles are permitted to share the space. The purpose is to create a special street that is safe and conducive to public uses and activities beyond transportation. Uses may include street festivals, performances, and farmers’ markets. Typically, a festival street is located in a mixed-use area on a narrow street with low traffic volumes. It may be a public street, or it may be a private, street-like lane.

These opportunities for developing a festival street should be considered:

As described in Chapters Three and Four, two festival streets are proposed:

- » Between Minnesota Drive and Spenard Road in coordination with private redevelopment efforts.
- » From Carrs Mall/Benson Boulevard to Romig Middle School/26th Avenue



Two festival streets in these locations could form a perimeter that connects special traffic generators and taps into new and existing signals at Northern Lights Boulevard/Benson Boulevard, Minnesota Drive and the Northern Lights Mall. If both festival streets are not feasible improvements, the west side entrance to Romig Middle and West Anchorage High Schools could be a useful local link even as a non-festival street.

Note that the specific north-south festival street concept will require significant coordination among landowners, the Municipality, other agencies and community members. A potential festival street space may require acquisition and management by the Municipality, or an agreement to allow public access if it is to be a private, street-like private drive. Festival streets typically include the following:

- » Curbless street as a shared space, which gives pedestrians access to the full right-of-way and provides room for walking, outdoor dining, and other street activities and events.
- » Speed limit is between 10 and 15 MPH.
- » Service access is accommodated to adjacent businesses and residences.
- » Design cues alert people with visual impairments to the shared nature of the space.
- » On-street parking typically is not provided.
- » Drainage features/swales

C. Roadway Network Policies

This section provides recommendations for Spenard's vehicular roadway network. Figure 5.16. illustrates key locations for network expansion as well as potential reconfiguration opportunities.

Policy 5.12: Expand the Street Grid Network

Continuity in street connections which are interconnected in a grid system offers alternative routes to distribute usage. This can enhance walkability and support transit.

Spenard's street grid should be designed with small block sizes that support convenient and direct pedestrian and bicycle access in an interconnected network of streets. The intent is to ensure that all trips to and from a transit stop are as short as possible. Spenard's grid network also should support vehicular and freight/delivery traffic by providing alternative routes. As the area redevelops, new streets and pedestrian/bicycle routes should connect to and extend the existing grid, wherever possible.

Policy 5.13: Consider Street Reconfiguration and Vacation Opportunities

Spenard has an extensive street network and it appears that some street segments may even be redundant, meaning some public streets are located in close proximity and serve the same purpose. In other cases, public rights-of-way provide access and parking for only one or two properties as opposed to acting as vital components of the roadway network.

The Municipality should monitor street segments like this and consider whether vacation or reconfiguration could be used to incentivize redevelopment. Doing so could be used in full or in part to increase the size of an opportunity site, which may make redevelopment more feasible. Redundant streets could also be reduced in size to provide areas for snow removal, create opportunities for public space, facilitate bicycle and pedestrian connections or simply reduce maintenance burdens for the Municipality.

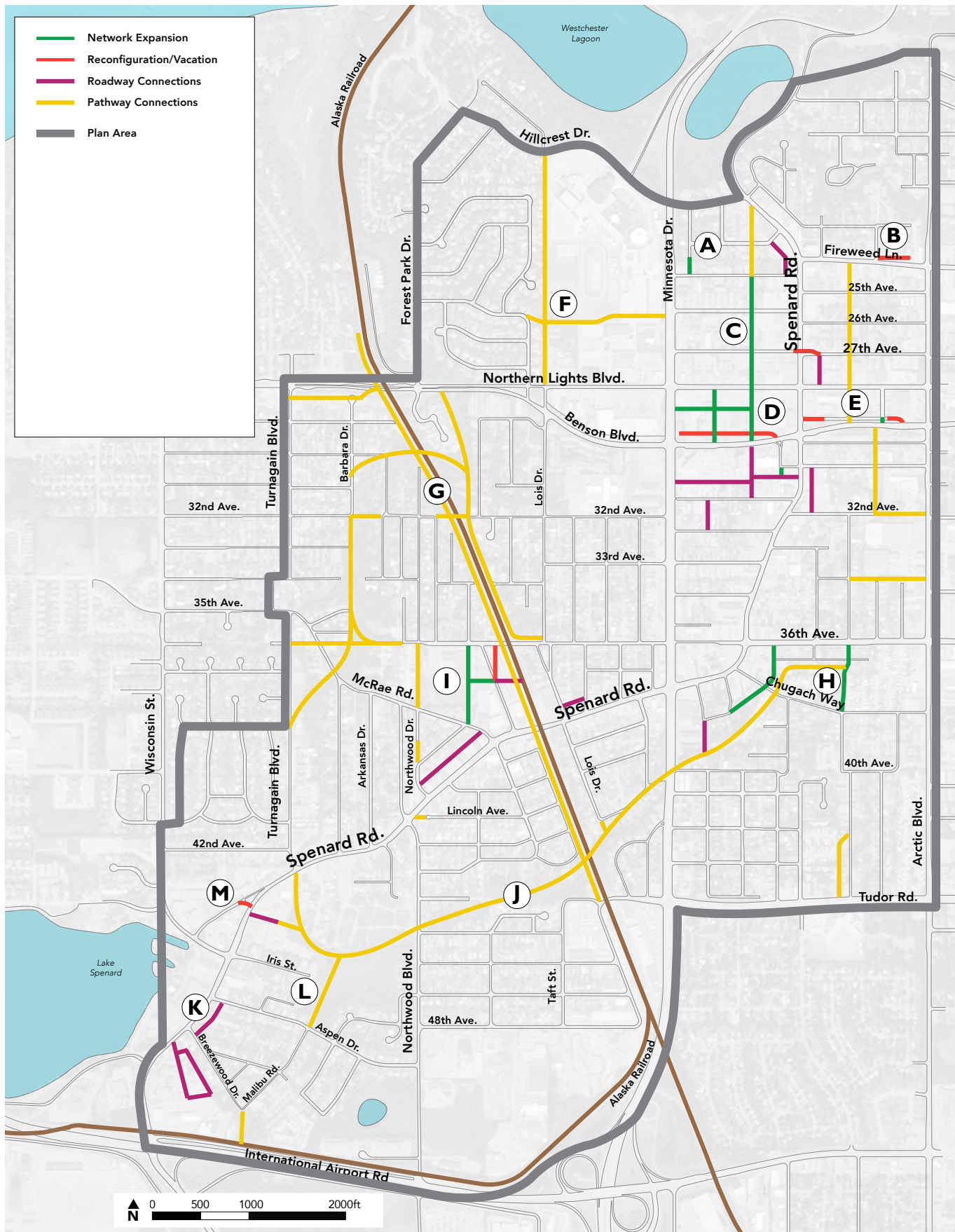


Figure 5.16 Potential Network Expansions and Reconfigurations

Potential Network Expansions and Reconfigurations

Below are letters that coordinate with the map on the previous page. Each letter identifies potential expansions and reconfigurations of Spenard's roadway and pathway networks. Locations are preliminary. Each of these changes requires further study, as implementation actions, and coordination with property owners.

A	Extend Culver Pl. south to 25th Ave.	B	Vacate a section of 24th Ave.
C	Create a new north-south street from 25th Ave. to Benson Blvd. and potentially further south	D	Expand the street network between Northern Lights Blvd. and Benson Blvd. and vacate a section of 29th Ave.
E	Vacate Photo Ave. at Spenard Rd. and at Benson Blvd. Extend N. Star St. south to Benson Blvd.	F	Provide a network from Northern Lights Blvd. to Hillcrest Dr. and from Minnesota Dr. through West Anchorage High School to adjacent neighborhood.
G	Develop a pathway along the Alaska Railroad	H	Connect 36th Ave. with Chugach Way and McCain Loop
I	Expand and reconfigure the street network near Woodland Dr. and McRae Rd.	J	Create a pathway and trail system that runs along the Fish Creek Greenbelt
K	Develop a new roadway system to improve the gateway area of South Spenard	L	Use pathway connections to link Malibu Rd. to the Fish Creek Greenbelt network
M	Realign Lakeshore Dr. at Spenard Rd.		

Note

See Figure I.3 in Chapter I for the AMATS LRTP process.

Policy 5.14: Pursue Opportunities for Road Diets

A road diet is defined as a “right-sizing” of a street, most typically to reduce the roadway width which is dedicated to vehicular travel and increase space dedicated to bicycles, pedestrians and landscaping. Road diets typically are suitable for four lane roads with traffic volumes of up to 20,000 vehicles daily. A road diet was recently performed on the north segment of Spenard Road as a conversion from four lanes to three lanes, one lane in each direction and a two-way left turn lane.

Benefits include:

- » Reduced speeds
- » Reduced crashes and crash severity due to lower speeds and fewer conflicting movements
- » Improved business access with TWLTLs and improved business visibility due to slower speeds
- » Improved multimodal facilities
- » Placemaking

Applying road diets to enhance the active circulation network should be considered. West Fireweed Lane, with an annual average daily traffic (AADT) under 10,000 vehicles per day, and Spenard Road, from Benson Boulevard to Minnesota Drive, are likely road diet candidates.

Policy 5.15: Enhance At-Grade Rail Crossings

There are three at-grade rail crossings in the Plan Area. These are points where the rail right-of-way crosses Spenard Road, Tudor Road and 36th Avenue. At-grade rail crossings in Spenard present unique challenges to pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

Safety improvements should be pursued where streets intersect these railroad crossings. Passive devices may include fencing, channelization, swing gates, pedestrian barriers, pavement markings and texturing, refuge areas, and fixed message signs. Active devices may include flashers, audible active warning devices, automated pedestrian gates, pedestrian signals, and variable message signs.

All pedestrian/bicycle railroad crossings should be designed to minimize the time required for pedestrians to cross. Key recommendations include:

- » Design it to include appropriate warning devices. This will likely require further engineering analysis.
- » Locate pedestrian crossings of the street beyond the typical vehicle queue storage area of the railroad crossing. Pedestrian crossing studies should be conducted to ensure feasibility.
- » Align bicycle crossings to be perpendicular to the tracks as much as possible to reduce the risk of trapping bicycle tires.

Policy 5.I6: Roadway Classification and Vehicular Speed

Low vehicle speeds reduce crash severity for all roadway users as well as increase pedestrian and bicycle comfort, foster street retail activity, reduce vehicle noise, and facilitate pedestrian crossings and connectivity. Speed reduction may make Spenard Road less appealing to drivers not accessing destinations along the corridor and thereby shift traffic to nearby arterials to serve those trips.

Vehicle speeds on Spenard's roadways should be matched to the context of surrounding land uses, the needs of all road users and the purpose of the street.

These improvements should be considered:

- » Design the Central and North sections of Spenard Road for low vehicle operation speeds.
- » Reclassify the Central and North sections of Spenard Road from a minor arterial to a collector to reflect usage. This would allow narrower lanes, on-street parking, and other design elements proven to reduce speeds. Alternatively, designate Spenard as a Central Business District to allow more design flexibility as permitted under MOA codes.
- » Revise vehicle Level of Service (LOS) standards to permit LOS D in Spenard to allow for greater congestion and design flexibility.
- » Speed changes, reclassification, and LOS target changes requires revising AMATS modeling of arterial or collector changes to determine acceptability of the effects on the surrounding network. See Figure I.3 in Chapter I.

Policy 5.I7: Promote Traffic Calming in Neighborhood Streets

Traffic calming measures are physical improvements intended to maintain and enhance the livability and safety of residential neighborhoods by slowing speeds and discouraging cut-through traffic. The 2016 Municipality of Anchorage Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy Manual identifies a variety of approved treatments for slowing vehicular speeds, which can be integrated with other bicycle and pedestrian improvements as described in Section B: Street Design.

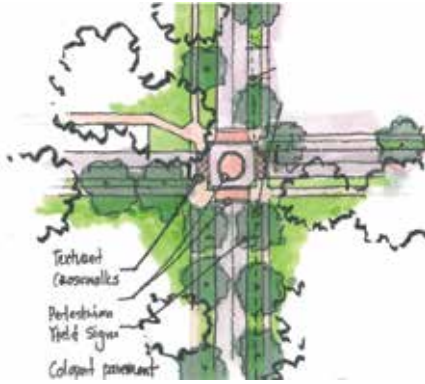
Traffic calming measures should be considered on non-arterial streets.

Key candidates for traffic calming in the Plan Area are included on the MOA 2017 Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program Qualified Streets List. These streets meet MOA criteria for traffic calming and should be prioritized for implementation:

- » Cambridge Way (project under design - February 2019)
- » Chugach Way
- » Harding Drive
- » Lois Drive



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Traffic calming measures.



Before: 35th Avenue and McRae Road was a typical strip-paved “Spenard Street” with limited right-of-way and on-street parking. (photo courtesy of CRW Engineering Group)



After: As part of a roadway improvement project, raised pedestrian crosswalks, widened shoulder striping and new pedestrian facilities and signage were incorporated to calm traffic. (photo courtesy of CRW Engineering Group)

- » West 45th (project under design - February 2019)
- » West 48th
- » Woodland Park Drive
- » West 30th Avenue
- » Turnagain Boulevard

Neighborhood Streets

Key candidates for traffic calming in the Plan Area that are included on the MOA 2017 Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program Qualified Streets List are listed below. These streets meet MOA criteria for traffic calming and should be prioritized for implementation.

- » Cambridge Way (project under design - February 2019)
- » Chugach Way
- » Harding Drive
- » Lois Drive
- » West 45th (project under design - February 2019)
- » West 48th
- » Woodland Park Drive
- » West 30th Avenue
- » Turnagain Boulevard

Traffic calming may also be merited to address impacts from Minnesota, between Northern Lights and Tudor. Traffic calming measures may also be appropriate on other streets identified as part of the Active Transportation Network in Chapter Three (Figure 3.5). However, traffic calming measures such as chokers, island narrowings and chicanes require careful consideration for use on bicycle routes, as they force cyclists to shift into traffic.

While there are exceptions such as West 48th Avenue and Cambridge Way, many neighborhood streets have limited right-of-way, on-street parking, and are strip-paved with no curb and gutter. This makes it challenging to retrofit them with traffic calming measures. Potential treatments in these situations include:

- » Colored or textured pavement at intersections and pedestrian crossings
- » Highly visible crosswalk markings
- » Neighborhood traffic circles
- » Speed cushions and humps
- » Radar speed-feedback signs
- » Yield-to-pedestrian signs

As neighborhood streets undergo major improvements, in addition to the solutions listed above, a variety of traffic calming measures should be explored, including:

- » Chokers
- » Intersection neckdowns
- » Island narrowings (with and without pedestrian refuges)
- » Chicanes
- » Lateral shifts
- » Raised crosswalks
- » Raised intersections
- » Speed tables

Additionally, as roadway rights-of-way get repurposed through redevelopment, opportunities should be considered to rethink how the right-way is used to calm traffic, meet parking needs and enhance pedestrian and bicycle environments.

Alleys

Alleys are integral infrastructure in certain parts of the Spenard Plan Area that feature an urban neighborhood street network pattern, such as in Roosevelt Park and between some Spenard Road commercial properties and the residential neighborhood blocks behind them.

Where they exist, alleys should be maintained or improved to provide access to detached garages, accessory dwelling units, freight deliveries and trash pickup.



D. Transit Network Policies

This section provides recommendations for Spenard's transit network. Please note that the improvements below will need to be implemented in close coordination with transit providers and should consider future local and regional transit demand.

Recent improvements to the People Mover have resulted in higher frequency service on Route 40: Spenard/Airport. Additional improvements have occurred on Route 10: Northern Lights and Route 35: Arctic. The improvements outlined in this section represent additional ones that should be considered in the future.

Policy 5.18: Locate Transit Hubs to Enhance Operations

Transit Hubs are places of enhanced connectivity where different modes of transportation, including walking, biking, ridesharing and public transit, come together to provide additional connections to employment, housing, retail, and other services.

Transit Hubs should be located strategically to:

- » Be within walking distance of major destinations
- » Be central to a transit service area
- » Facilitate transfers
- » Support multiple modes of transportation
- » Have parking and pick-up/drop-off facilities
- » Support access for larger transit vehicles
- » Create a node for pedestrian, bike, transit and vehicular circulation.

Policy 5.19: Plan for Bus and Shuttle Layover Zones

As a Transit Hub emerges, it may be necessary to plan for bus and shuttle layover zones depending on future transit service routes. Layover zones are often located at the ends of bus routes where buses wait on standby between trip.

Transit Hubs should be planned to provide opportunities for staging private shuttles. Designs should depend on bus size, number of buses overlaying at the same time and general turnover. Typically, bus layover zones are required to be twice the length of the bus with an added 10 feet for maneuvering.

Policy 5.20: Provide Amenities at Transit Stops

Amenities at transit stops help make them more attractive and thereby support increased use.

Amenities should be provided to encourage ridership. These include benches, shelters, information kiosks and lighting. In addition to recent and planned transit amenities, the following options should be considered:

- » Incorporate Amenities Into New Developments. Support private investment by including transit amenities into new development projects.
- » Enhanced Shelters. Invest in bus shelters with roofs, transit maps and other information to help protect transit riders from climatic elements while they wait.
- » Seating. Provide seating at transit stops where possible to add to rider comfort. This is particularly important for transit riders with accessibility challenges.

Policy 5.21: Plan for Rideshare Operations

Recent trends in rideshare operations indicate that these modes can help facilitate transit use when convenient transfer points are provided.

The design and location of transit hubs should also consider the potential to accommodate rideshare modes (Lyft, Uber, etc.) and autonomous vehicles. In particular, providing wait zones should be considered where a high density of rideshare demand will occur. This may be at transit hubs and transfer stations where users may desire rideshare service for “last mile” of travel.





E. Pedestrian Network Policies

This section provides recommendations for Spenard's pedestrian network.

Policy 5.22: Provide Continuity in the Sidewalk Network

A continuous pedestrian network, primarily composed of sidewalks, is an essential component to efficiency in the active transportation network.

Spenard's pedestrian circulation network, including sidewalk facilities, should be completed. This should be pursued on an incremental basis as well as in coordination with more comprehensive street improvements. Fill gaps in the network and expand inadequate walk widths where opportunities arise.

Policy 5.23: Plan Pedestrian Crossings to Promote Network Continuity

A key element in the continuity of the pedestrian system is having pedestrian crossings at key locations.

Pedestrian crossing improvements should be located based on utility, safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, and integration into the signalized intersection network. Specific locations and designs should be determined based on crossing demand, roadway speed and volume, the number of crossing lanes, the location of school zones, proximity to signalized crossings, and the presence of refuge islands, as specified in the Alaska Traffic Manual. Plan Area-specific recommendations are described below.

Enhancements to Existing Signalized Intersections

- » The focus should be on improving existing signalized intersections.
- » Crossings of Minnesota Drive at 26th Avenue, Spenard Road, Northern Lights Boulevard, and Benson Boulevard should be prioritized. Engineering analysis should be conducted to determine the most appropriate treatment for each crossing.
- » Pedestrian refuge islands should be considered at locations with high pedestrian and transit activity, where crossing distances are long (60 feet or greater), at trail and bicycle route crossings, and within neighborhood retail areas and civic districts.

Arterial Crossings

Crossing treatments of Northern Lights Boulevard, Benson Boulevard and Minnesota Drive in their current configurations should be located at signalized intersections due to speeds, crossing widths and projected volumes. If new signals are added on arterials, pedestrian and bicycle crossing treatment should be prioritized. Possible future signalized crossing locations include the following:

- » **Minnesota Drive at 33rd Avenue.** A crossing at this location would provide more direct pedestrian and bicycle crossings from the neighborhoods west of Minnesota Drive to the Spenard Road corridor. However, due to the impacts on Minnesota Drive (signal time given to each direction dramatically decreases a road's capacity, increasing the possibility of congestion and queues), this crossing should be implemented only in response to a substantial increase in pedestrian demand. Further study is needed to project the potential use levels of this crossing.



Grade Separated Crossings

Grade separated crossings provide an alternative for arterials. They should be designed to equal or improve at-grade crossing travel time and should not result in out-of-direction travel. Designs must accommodate ADA access by limiting the slope of a grade separated crossing. This often results in a need for longer facilities that ramp up long before the intersection.

Mid-Block (At-Grade) Crossings

Mid-block crossings are clearly delineated pedestrian features that allow users to cross the street in between signalized intersections. Mid-block crossings should be pursued strategically throughout the Plan Area where crossing demand is significant and signalized intersections are too far away to adequately serve users. Transit Hubs and long blocks without signalized intersections are key candidates. Mid-block crossings must be carefully located and designed to encourage pedestrian safety and awareness for motorists. Please see Appendix A for design guidelines for mid-block crossings.





F. Bicycle Network Policies

This section provides general policies and specific recommendations for Spenard's bicycle network.

Policy 5.24: Provide Continuity in the Spenard Bicycle Network

A key to promoting bicycle usage is to have a safe and convenient network.

An interconnected bicycle network should extend throughout Spenard. Figure 5.17 presents a proposed bicycle circulation network for Spenard. It builds off of the recommendations in the Anchorage Bike Plan.

Policy 5.25: Provide Connections to the Regional Bike Network

Multi-use trails form the backbone of the bicycling network and “last mile” connections to the corridor are essential for safety and efficiency.

Redevelopment projects should enhance connectivity to the following:

- » The Tony Knowles Coastal Trail to the north and west. Primarily served from the corridor via Wisconsin Avenue.
- » Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail to the north and east. Connected from a multi-use path along Spenard Road north of Hillcrest Drive.
- » Fish Creek Trail to the north and west. Serves a connection across Northern Lights Boulevard to Spenard Road via Turnagain Boulevard. In the south, it connects Minnesota Drive with Northwood Drive at Tudor Road.

Policy 5.26: Design Bicycle Friendly Intersections

Street intersections often act as areas of conflict between bicyclists and motor vehicles.

Spenard's intersections should be designed to support bicycle travel, alert motorists of the presence of bicyclists, and ensure that intersections are easily perceivable by all users. This means using special striping, color changes or, in some cases, physical street design elements to ensure bicycle safety.



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Policy 5.27: Plan for Bicycle Amenities

Amenities along bicycle routes make them more attractive and thereby support increased use.

Amenities that support bicycling and discourage driving should be promoted in public improvements and private development.

Bicycle Parking

Providing bicycle parking encourages people to cycle. If there is no place to conveniently and securely park, cyclists may choose other modes of transportation such as driving. Bicycle parking should be protected from the elements, where possible, and located such that it does not impede pedestrian circulation or create indefensible space.

Bikeshare

Similar to car-sharing, bike-share programs provide access to bicycles at a variety of locations. These programs complement transit and other alternative transportation programs by allowing individuals to switch back and forth between modes. Similar to a car-sharing program, users are able to check out bicycles for a certain duration of time and pay a marginal fee either through a membership or per use. These programs seek to offer affordable access to bicycles to reduce the number of vehicles trips made for short trips.

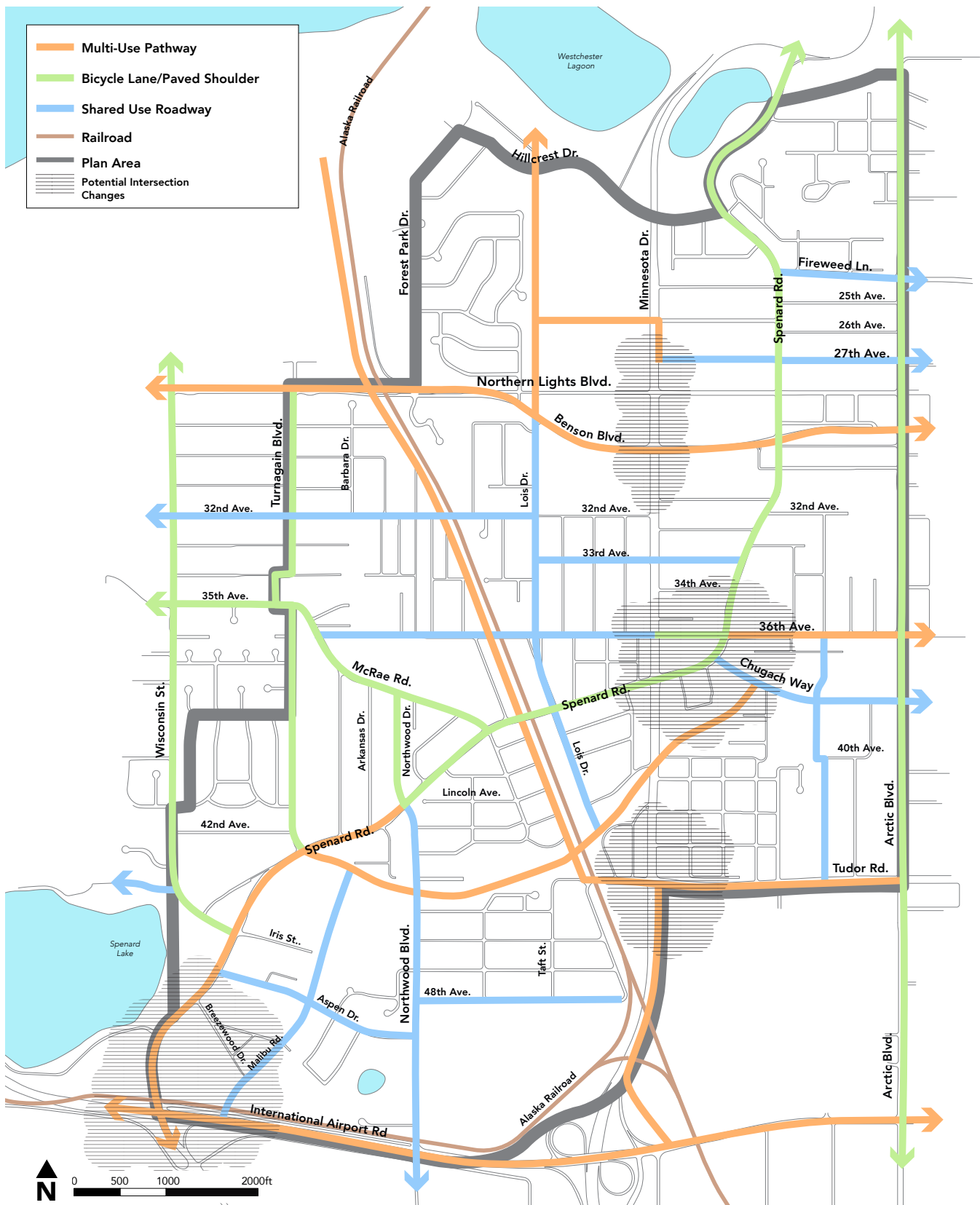
Bicycle Amenities in Private Development

Encourage private development to include amenities that facilitate bicycling, including:

- » Bicycle Parking
- » Bicycle Storage and Lockers
- » Shower Facilities (for employment uses)
- » On-site Bicycle Connections



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NOTE: This map identifies generalized bicycle facility types, and is not intended to specify exact street configurations or crossing types. 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 5.17 Future Bicycle Network

G. Vehicle Parking Policies

This section provides recommendations for parking, which is a significant component of Spenard. While personal auto use and ownership is likely to decrease over time, it is expected to remain a major development factor. In spite of this, the Plan supports minimizing parking through a combination of efficient use of private parking and strategic investment and management of public parking. Parking can be a significant constraint for redevelopment and business operations in the Plan Area. Small lot sizes, irregular lot shapes and buffering/landscaping requirements often hinder provision of adequate quantities of surface parking. A suite of approaches should be considered to alleviate constraints and improve parking efficiency.

Policy 5.28: Provide Flexibility in Parking Requirements

Minimizing the amount of land that is dedicated to parking helps facilitate increased density, which in turn supports transit use. It also can help facilitate storm water management. This is influenced by the number of parking spaces to be provided, as well as the efficiency with which they are designed.

A development should provide only the amount of parking that is needed for the uses on a site. This will help minimize the visual impact of parking and create opportunities for development and placemaking.

Projects should avoid an oversupply of parking that could compete with a growing transit system. Structured parking is often a necessary and appropriate solution to consolidate and maximize the land available for transit-supportive development.

Property owners in targeted redevelopment areas should be encouraged to work with the Municipality to develop specific Parking Management Plans. Under Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) Title 21.07.090 Off-Street Parking and Loading, specific parking plans must demonstrate that on-site parking needs are adequately met and that nearby on-street parking is not significantly impacted. The policy allows negotiating specific parking requirements in the near term as properties incrementally develop. The Municipality should consider whether providing additional flexibility in parking requirements would be appropriate. This could occur through a custom zoning overlay for the Plan Area. This is discussed further in Chapter Seven, Implementation.

Policy 5.29: Promote Compact Parking Design

Surface parking can negatively impact the visual quality and experience of Spenard. This can be mitigated in part by careful design. A surface parking lot should be laid out in an efficient manner to provide an adequate number of spaces while also minimizing curb cuts and avoiding potential interruptions to vehicular traffic and pedestrian/bicycle traffic.

Parking should be located and designed so as to reinforce the transit-pedestrian-, and bicycle-friendly vision for Spenard. As electric vehicles and car-sharing grow in use, parking design should consider including charging stations and preferential car-sharing parking locations to further encourage these vehicle use types. The visual impact of parking also should be minimized.

1. Avoid surface parking if possible. Where surface parking remains as an interim use, follow these guidelines:
 - Site and build TSD buildings and parking lots within parcels such that they can later accommodate additional in-fill development as some of the current parking transitions to parking structures and demand for surface parking decreases.
 - Utilize a series of smaller parking lots instead of one large lot. Locate these lots to the sides and rear of buildings. Where surface parking is located adjacent to a street, buffer it with landscaping.
2. Replace surface lots with garages as growing land values support greater development. Parking garages adjacent to public streets should be wrapped with active ground-floor space to avoid disrupting the continuous streetfront experience.
3. Design surface lots and garages to include carpool, vanpool, shared car, and bicycle spaces, as well as charging stations for electric vehicles.
4. Design garages to provide priority spaces for bicycles and for cars that promote sustainability, such as electric and car-sharing vehicles.
5. Locate vehicular access to parking lots or garages from side streets or alleys, and avoid crossing primary pedestrian routes to and from the Transit Hubs.
6. Strategically locate a parking facility such that it encourages pedestrians to pass by street-level retail and other active use areas.



Policy 5.30: Promote Shared Parking

Shared parking is based upon the concept of using the same parking spaces for two or more land uses at different times. Shared parking is an ideal option when “9 to 5” uses like offices are side-by-side with “24/7” uses like destination retail, grocery stores, movie theaters, restaurants and residences. Office and commuter spaces that traditionally would sit vacant evenings and weekends can instead serve multiple users. Fewer spaces have to be built, and different activities can share the cost and one space also can generate revenues from multiple users.

Parking should be shared, whenever possible. This may include surface lots, parking structures, smaller common parking aisles and common on-street parking. Shared parking pools may also present opportunities to more efficiently store and remove snow than could be achieved on individual parcels. Sharing should be allowed not only on-site (within an individual mixed use project) but off-site as well, within a reasonable walking distance. Shared parking should be allowed by-right as long as the users in question and all affected property owners provide documentation of a formal shared parking agreement and evidence that the uses in question generate parking demands at different times.

Policy 5.31: Promote On-street Parking

On-street parking is an important public amenity for businesses and residents in Spenard. It provides convenient access to properties and also can buffer sidewalks from automobile traffic.

Existing on-street parking should be preserved in the Plan Area unless its removal clearly meets other Plan Area objectives. On-street parking should also be expanded on Plan Area streets in coordination with streetscape improvements and particularly at locations where concentrations of development emerge, such as Transit Hubs and larger redevelopment sites. An exception does occur in Title 21 where off-street parking is allowed.

Policy 5.32: Promote Efficient Management of Parking

This Plan supports the use of a wide variety of tools to minimize the amount of parking needed, ensure efficient parking supply, further economic development goals and respond to business owner needs. Managing parking is key to making best use of all available spaces.

Cooperative management of parking among property owners should be considered. The potential to create one or more parking management districts also should be studied. These are some tools to consider:



Partnerships Among Private Landowners

Property and business owners should seek opportunities to partner in consolidating and sharing parking facilities. This may occur where land uses with differing peak demand times are adjacent to each other (for example, when a bank is adjacent to a restaurant/bar). Opportunities may also exist to develop shared parking facilities that are funded through a parking district or other implementation mechanism.

Parking Districts

Parking Districts manage parking supply on a district-wide, aggregate basis rather than as individual lots (public or private). Development of a Parking District begins by involving key stakeholders (e.g. businesses, developers, land owners, residents and government representatives) in creating a set of guiding principles that help facilitate the process for establishing the district and develop the rules for its operation. This could be a viable tool where concentrations of businesses exist, such as in North Spenard.

Residential Permit Parking

Residential parking permit programs protect neighborhoods in high demand areas from spill-over parking impacts. Continue to monitor the need for this tool as Spenard redevelops with more intensive uses.

Carshare Programs

Carsharing allows people to rent a car on a short-term (hourly or daily), as-needed basis, paying only for the rental time and miles traveled. The cars are in designated reserved parking areas, making it easy to walk to and thereby reduce the need for adding more parking infrastructure. Reserved parking should be provided for passengers in carpools and vanpools and located within parking facilities that prioritize these users. Carsharing can play an essential role in closing the “last-mile gap” between the transit hub and destinations just outside area.

Pricing Strategies

Parking pricing concepts should be considered as an integral part of a comprehensive parking policy approach for Spenard. Pricing is a powerful tool that can affect parking occupancy and turnover, and can induce greater turnover of the most convenient spaces, increase parking availability, balance parking demand and generate revenue to fund community improvements. Pricing helps control the supply and demand so parking can support short-term and long-term customer use.

On-street and off-street parking prices should be coordinated. This encourages commuters to use alternative modes while still providing short term parking for customers. Some specific tools to consider in Spenard include:

- » Unbundled Parking. Parking sold or rented separately from building space. For example, tenants can be offered a discount on their rent for not using parking spaces. Unbundling parking is an essential first step towards getting people to understand the economic cost of parking and providing users with the opportunity to opt out of parking and make alternative travel decisions. Without unbundled parking, tenants consider parking as free, while transit costs them money.
- » Parking Cash-Out. Parking cash-out allows employees to choose between a parking subsidy (free parking), or the out-of-pocket equivalent cost of the parking space. Employees may choose to apply the money towards their parking space or make arrangements to use a lower cost alternative mode and keep the cash. Many employers have created effective programs that eliminate free or subsidized parking while providing employees with transit passes.
- » Variable Rate Parking. Variable rate pricing can be used in areas with seasonal or special event parking considerations. This may also be used to maintain desired occupancy rates (for example – charging a higher fee during events near special event centers or during special shopping seasons). It can also be used to encourage turnover and increase short term parking supply. Discounts can be given to vanpools and carpool parking as is done in employer-operated garages.

