



3 strategy for downtown revitalization

Anchorage's existing conditions—its unique setting, economic and social environment and built realm—set the context and foundation for envisioning the future of Downtown.

This chapter first articulates the vision for Downtown Anchorage and describes the overarching goals that must be met to realize this vision. It then provides an overall framework of strategies for improving the entire Downtown environment.

The vision and strategies must work together—while leveraging recent investments and optimizing limited resources—to create a **strong, implementable strategy for revitalization.**



THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE

Anchorage 2020 Plan

In recent years, the community participated in the visioning process for the greater region as part of the Anchorage 2020 Plan. While focused on the entire Anchorage Bowl, the vision principles set forth by the Anchorage 2020 Plan also serve as a foundation for planning Downtown's future. The Anchorage 2020 Plan Vision is highlighted below.

This Vision statement provides general guidance for all Anchorage 2020 policies, including the policies related to Downtown discussed on Page 4.

Downtown Comprehensive Plan

The Downtown Comprehensive Plan articulates a vision and set of overarching goals that are specific to the city center. The vision was created through discussions with a wide range of community members and local stakeholders, including residents, business owners, property owners, developers, the Anchorage Downtown Partnership, and multiple other agencies.

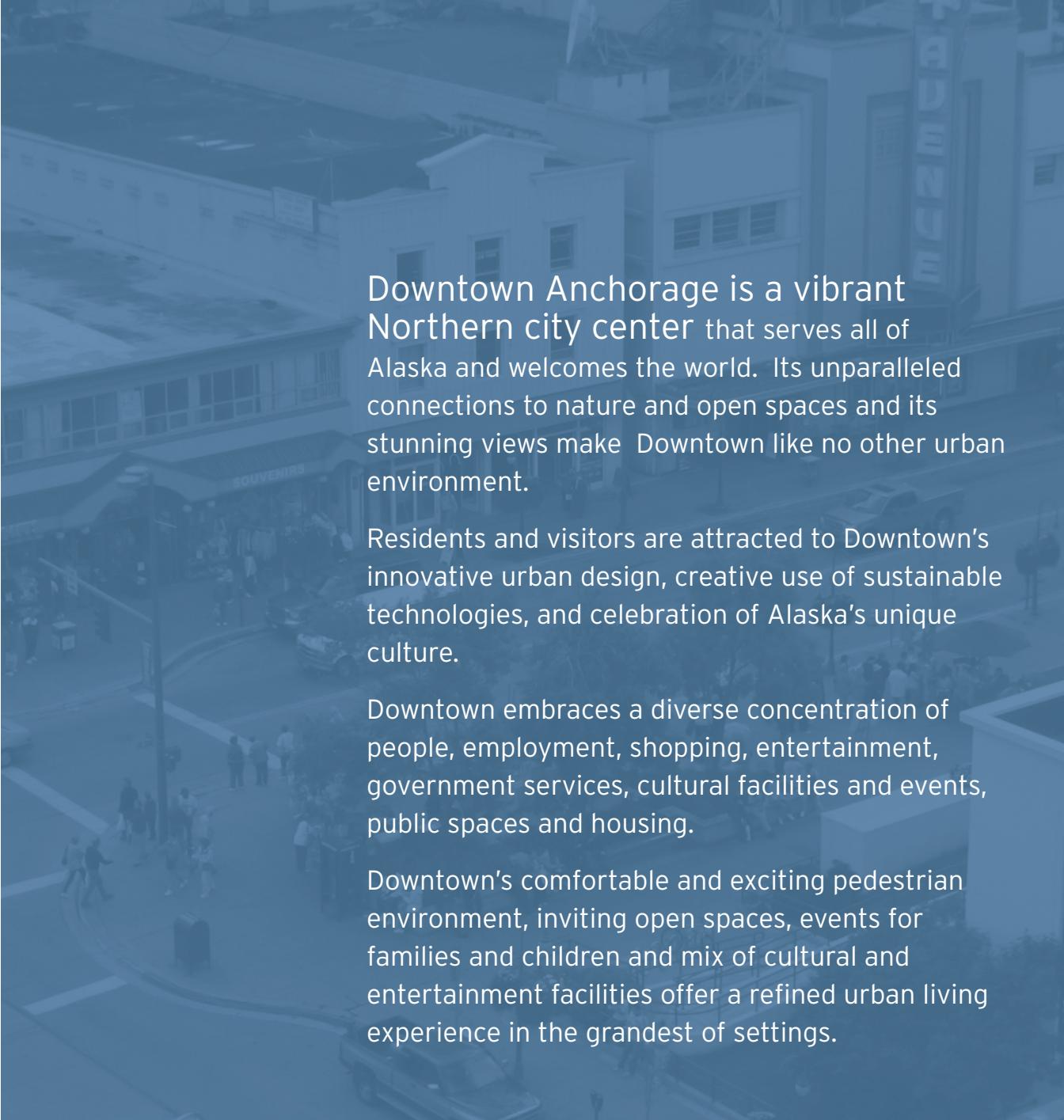
Cultivating a strong, clear vision specific to Downtown is an important milestone in setting its future course. The overarching goals guide the path to achieving that vision. These concepts and direction are illustrated on the following pages.

Anchorage 2020 Plan Vision Statement

Anchorage is:

- A diverse, compassionate community where each individual is valued, and children, families and friendships flourish.
- A northern community built in harmony with our natural resources and majestic setting.
- A thriving, sustainable, broad-based economy supported by an efficient urban infrastructure.
- A safe and healthy place to live where daily life is enriched by a wealth of year-round recreational and educational opportunities.
- A caring, responsive government that is accessible and equitable for all its citizens.
- An active learning community with abundant cultural amenities.

Downtown Vision



Downtown Anchorage is a vibrant Northern city center that serves all of Alaska and welcomes the world. Its unparalleled connections to nature and open spaces and its stunning views make Downtown like no other urban environment.

Residents and visitors are attracted to Downtown's innovative urban design, creative use of sustainable technologies, and celebration of Alaska's unique culture.

Downtown embraces a diverse concentration of people, employment, shopping, entertainment, government services, cultural facilities and events, public spaces and housing.

Downtown's comfortable and exciting pedestrian environment, inviting open spaces, events for families and children and mix of cultural and entertainment facilities offer a refined urban living experience in the grandest of settings.

Overarching Goals

1



2



3



Create a Downtown for All

Celebrate Anchorage's diversity by offering amenities, goods, attractions and services that appeal to persons of varying ages, backgrounds and incomes. Downtown crowds should be a reflection of the community.

Provide More Housing Downtown

Make Downtown a great place to live by developing diverse housing options and resident-serving amenities that will boost commerce, build community and create round-the-clock vibrancy.

Jump-Start Development

Coordinate and leverage the substantial public sector investment of major planned projects to catalyze private development.

4



Improve Connectivity

Link amenities, housing, office space, retail and natural resources to enhance Downtown's sense of place and connectivity among destinations. Promote walking as an important mode of local circulation within Downtown. Strengthen intermodal connections, making it easier for Downtown pedestrians to use Anchorage's air, rail, bus and ferry terminals.

5



Activate the Ground Floor Environment

Ensure that the ground floors of all buildings and sidewalk treatment engage pedestrians and create an active, inviting, urban experience with a comfortable, safe and vibrant pedestrian environment year-round.

6



Provide a Clear, Sensible Regulatory Framework

Establish codes and guidelines to ensure that new development achieves the vision for Downtown while providing clarity and flexibility for the development community.

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Strategy Framework on the opposite page provides a conceptual structure for achieving the Downtown Vision and Overarching Goals. The Strategy Framework prioritizes action categories into a three-tiered hierarchy.

Land Uses

This hierarchy identifies primary and secondary land uses, represented in the blue circles (right). The primary land uses are most important for achieving the vision and goals for Downtown Anchorage and are considered essential to Downtown's development. The secondary land uses augment the primary uses, providing Downtown with distinct destinations, services, activities and workplaces. Without this mix, the goal of achieving a vibrant, mixed-use urban environment will be compromised.

Development Projects and Opportunities

The next tier of Downtown's Strategy Framework is comprised of Development Projects and Opportunities. Each of the Catalytic Development Sites and Opportunity Sites will be developed with a mix of the Primary Land Uses. Each yellow rectangle (right) represents a Catalytic Development Site that should be prioritized for development or redevelopment due to its prime location and potential to strengthen the urban intensity within the Downtown Core. These

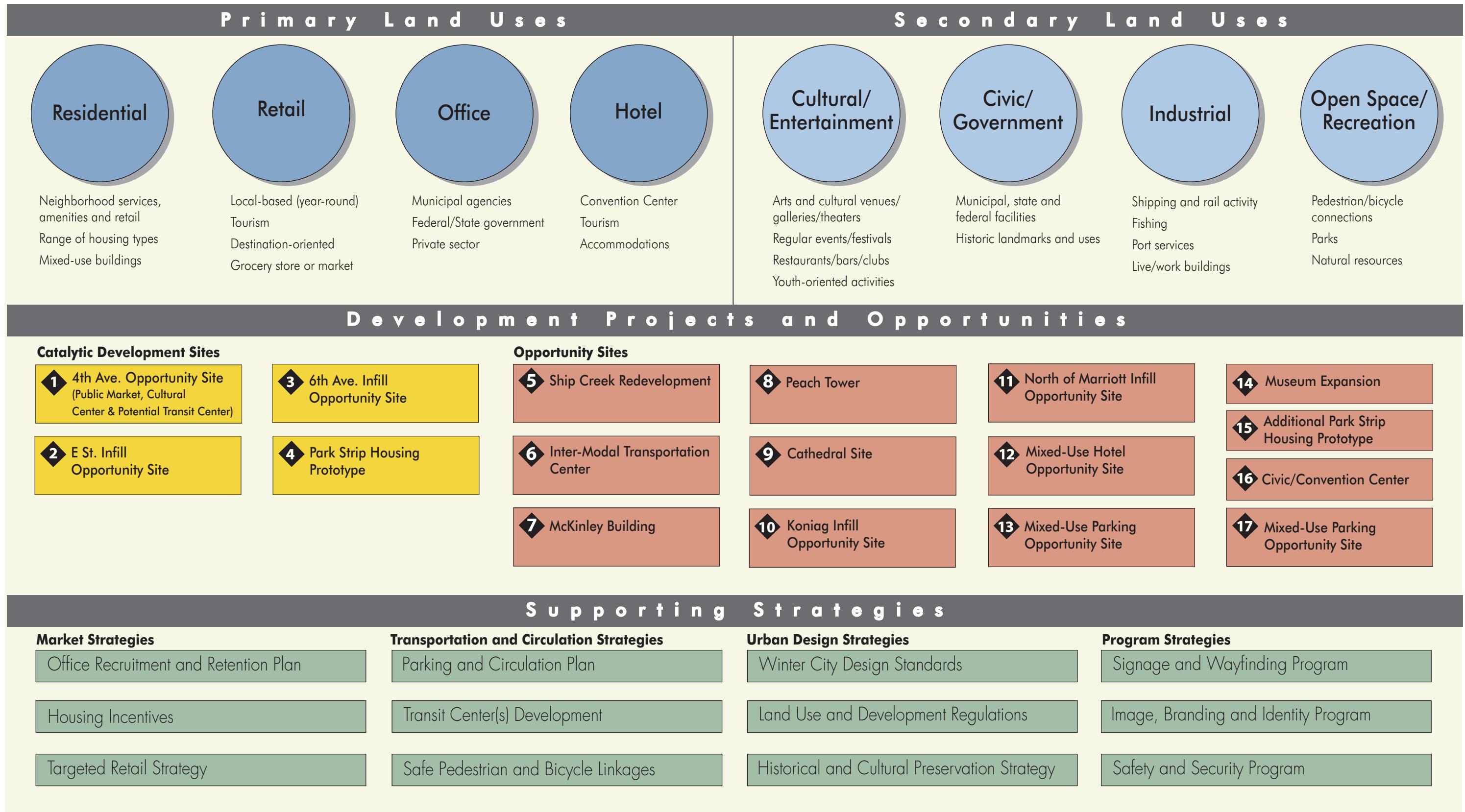
sites are described in more detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.

Each red rectangle (right) represents an Opportunity Site within Downtown. These sites are either projects that are currently in the planning process, are already under construction, or have been identified to have potential for development or redevelopment. Their locations are noted on the Strategy Diagram on page 33.

Supporting Strategies

The third tier of the Framework is made up of Supporting Strategies. These strategies are identified to support development of the Primary Land Uses, aid upcoming Development Projects and Opportunities and provide the fabric to knit these individual sites together into a comprehensive Downtown environment. Each of these strategies is addressed in this Plan. The strategies in the first column are addressed in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development. The strategies in the second column are addressed in Chapter 5: Transportation and Circulation. The strategies in the third column are addressed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6: Urban Design. Lastly, the strategies in the fourth column are addressed in Chapter 7: Program Strategies.

Together, these levels provide a framework for addressing issues and ensuring implementation of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan.



Strategy Framework

STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

STRATEGY DIAGRAM

The Strategy Diagram on page 33 illustrates the key land uses, adjacencies and interconnections identified as most important for achieving the vision and goals for Downtown. It outlines the relationships among key housing and mixed-use districts, development projects, opportunity sites, streetscape improvements and other physical and perceptual linkages between them. In short, the Strategy Diagram is the **visual blueprint or “road map” for Downtown’s future development.**

The Downtown Study Area encompasses a substantial amount of land, and the majority of recent public and private investments are focused in a Downtown Core within the larger area. These investments must be enhanced and interconnected. Meanwhile, smaller scale improvements to the public realm in the surrounding Downtown sub-districts will continue to enhance the private investment already occurring on a site by site basis. The concentration of major investments will create a boost of new energy in the core, which can catalyze revitalization throughout the Study Area and into adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

The following pages describe the Strategy Diagram and its key elements in greater detail.



The strategy for Downtown takes advantage of the cultural and commercial momentum, public and private investments and development opportunities within the study area.

Downtown Study Area/ Mixed-Use Core

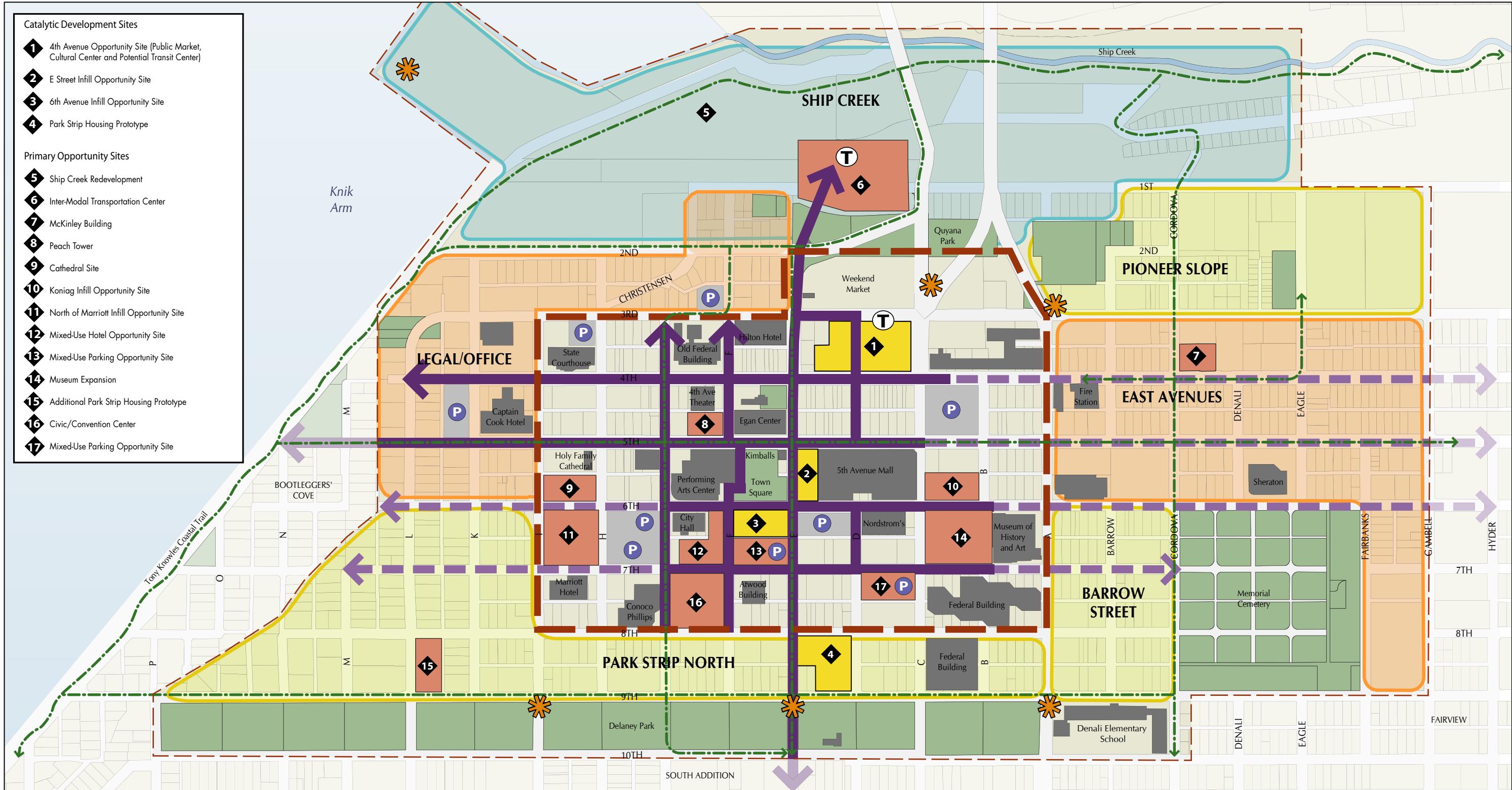
The Downtown Study Area extends from the east edge of Bootlegger's Cove to Gambell Street, and from 10th Avenue to the southern banks of Ship Creek. In initial implementation phases, prioritized improvements should be concentrated within the mixed-use civic, office and commercial-oriented Downtown Core. This will build synergy among new and planned development projects, both public and private, and focus finite resources to create a stable and dynamic city center. While private development interest is encouraged throughout Downtown, major public improvements outside of the core in the adjacent mixed-use districts should occur in subsequent phases. **Prioritization, concentration and strong linkages are the keys to Downtown's revitalization.**

Mixed-Use Districts

Two mixed-use districts are identified within the Downtown Study Area. These districts complement each other and work in conjunction with the focused Downtown Core. Both have their own strategy, character, areas of concentration and preferred development guidelines and prototypes. The specific nature of these districts is described in detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.



Street level environments created by mixed-use development are energized day and night with commercial activity on the ground floor and residential or office space above.

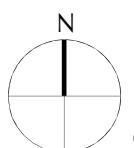


Legend

- - - Downtown Study Area
- ■ ■ Downtown Core
- ■ ■ "Notable" Building Footprint*
- ■ ■ Park/Open Space
- ■ ■ "Ship Creek"
- ■ ■ "Downtown Mixed Use Footprint"
- ■ ■ Catalytic Development Site
- ■ ■ Opportunity Site
- ■ ■ Ship Creek
- ■ ■ Downtown Mixed Use
- ■ ■ "Downtown Mixed Use; Focus on Residential"
- ■ ■ "Gateway"
- ■ ■ "Transit Station"
- ■ ■ "Parking Structure"
- Primary Pedestrian Connection
- Secondary Pedestrian Connection
- ← Bike/Pedestrian Connection

*These footprints are intended to better orient the viewer to the map and do not suggest that these are the only buildings of significance in Downtown.

Strategy Diagram



0 275' 550' 825'

STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Catalytic Development Sites

Four sites are identified as Catalytic Development opportunities because of their potential to add vibrancy to Downtown and leverage further development in the immediate surroundings. Each project will provide the city center with new energy, encourage pedestrian walkability and fit within the overall land use strategy.

The sites are highlighted on the Strategy Diagram and described in detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.

More than ten additional Opportunity Sites, also noted on the Strategy Diagram, are other important projects or sites in various stages of planning or construction.



Delaney Park is a vital resource that Downtown can leverage for its recreational and open space assets, potential for facilitating connectivity, and ability to catalyze future mixed-use residential development adjacent to the park.



One of Downtown's actively used parking structures is located above the People Mover Station, just west of City Hall, serving municipal employees and the public.

Transit Stations

The current Downtown Transit Center at 6th Avenue and H Street is the hub for citywide bus service. Two options are under consideration—refurbishing the current site or potentially developing a new transit center located on 3rd Avenue across from the Weekend Market. See Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development for further discussion.

In addition, an intermodal train terminal planned for Ship Creek will serve tourists, other visitors, and possibly commuters from the Mat-Su Valley. Connections between the Transit Center and rail terminal will be provided via an escalator between Ship Creek and convenient Downtown walkways.

Parks and Open Space

The areas shown in green on the Strategy Diagram are existing parks and open space within the Downtown Core. They illustrate the tremendous resources that Downtown already possesses. At least two of these parks have been identified for improvements: Town Square and Delaney Park. The connection between these parks will be enhanced by the E Street corridor project, as well as trail and pathway improvements.

Strategies for maintaining, protecting and enhancing Downtown's system of open spaces appear in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.



Peratovich Park sits adjacent to the old City Hall building and Visitor Center, which makes it ideal for a central gathering space and outdoor performances.

Pedestrian Connections

A successful Downtown requires a safe, attractive and hospitable pedestrian environment. Anchorage's climate requires an extra effort to accommodate and promote pedestrian circulation and comfort during the spring, fall and winter months.

The Strategy Diagram distinguishes between primary and secondary connections in an effort to focus infrastructure investment in the core area where there is anticipated the greatest concentration of activity and highest usage. These connections will be improved through a number of streetscape enhancements discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Such enhancements include wider sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting and other streetscape amenities. Once enhanced primary connections are established, secondary pedestrian connections will be improved between the Downtown Core and other city center districts.

Trails/Connections

Two of Anchorage's most extensive trails enter into the Downtown Study Area: Ship Creek Trail and the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. There are plans underway to connect them along the tidal flats. These trails should be linked to the pedestrian connections to best integrate non-vehicular circulation throughout Downtown. Most importantly, these trails will directly link pedestrians and bicyclists to the transit stations, parks and open space, as well as Downtown's cultural sites, facilities and neighborhoods.

Parking Structures

As Downtown grows and densifies and land values increase, many existing parking lots will be developed with other uses. Mixed-use garages and underground structures will be necessary to accommodate parking for existing and new uses.

Existing and new public parking structures should be located to capture motorists at the earliest and most convenient locations upon entering Downtown, and be linked to the high quality pedestrian connections throughout the core to provide easy access and connectivity for residents, workers and visitors.



Wildlife sightings are commonplace right next to Downtown (above top). The Coastal Trail provides direct bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the city center.

