4. PLANNING SYSTEMS - KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the range of improvements proposed for the Government Hill neighborhood in a series of planning "systems." These include land use, circulation, and parks and open space. Maps illustrate general improvements recommended within these system categories.

A. CHARACTER AREAS

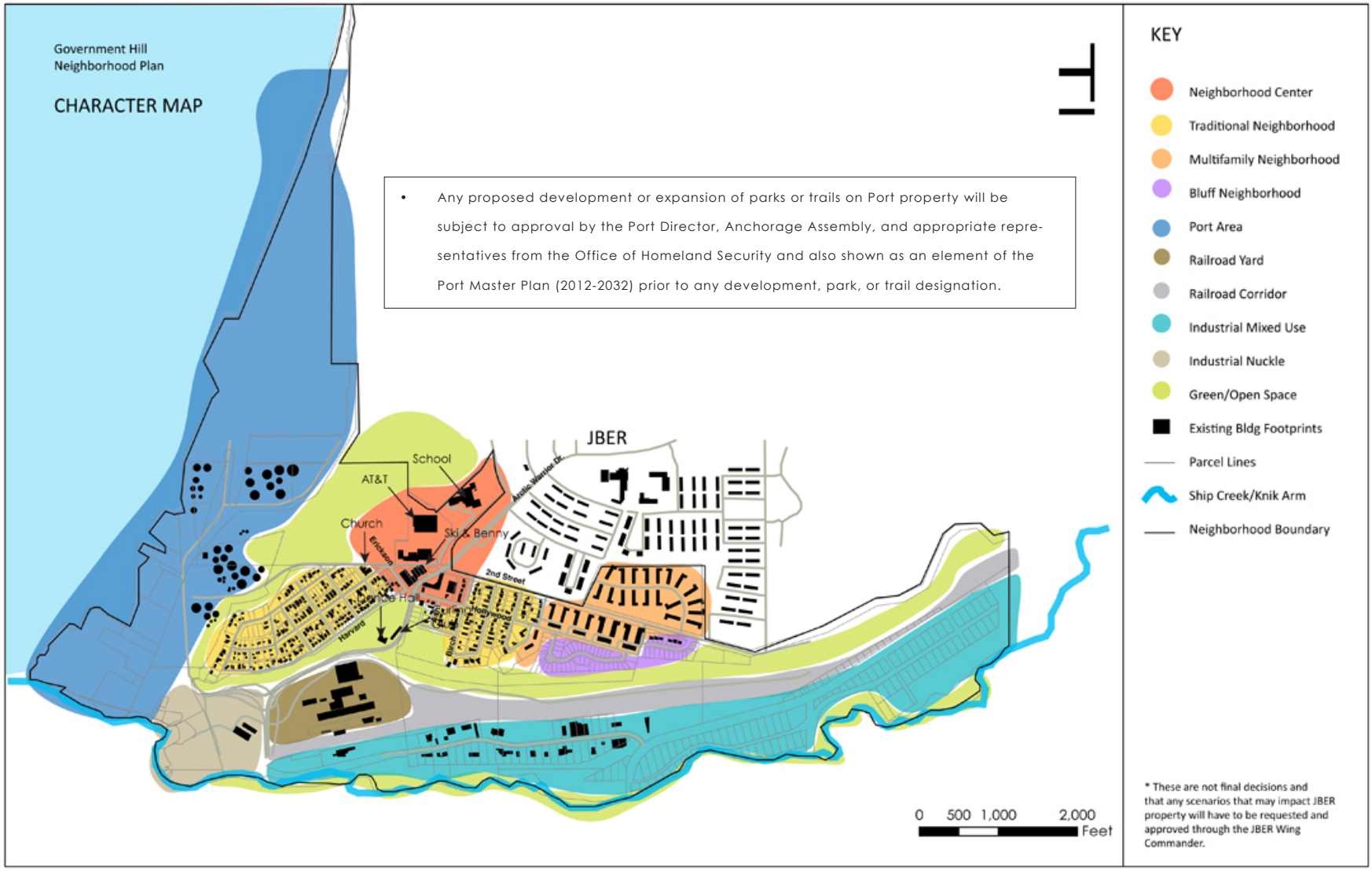
The Government Hill neighborhood should be considered as a set of character areas, each of which has a set of goals and objectives for the future. Some of these are ones in which the established character is valued and should be respected in future development. The traditional residential neighborhoods, located on the top of Government Hill, are examples. Others are places where improvements should occur and the character should be enhanced. The neighborhood center is a case in point. Each of these character areas is described in this section and illustrated on the Character Map. The vision for the character of each of these areas draws upon comments from residents who participated in community workshops during production of this plan.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER CHARACTER AREA

In the heart of the neighborhood the Government Hill planning area is the neighborhood center. This area is envisioned to be reconfigured, to accommodate more efficient circulation and land use. Parcels are to be assembled in new ways that will offer more opportunity for compact, mixed-use development. This reconfiguration allows streets to be realigned to facilitate safe and convenient access and facilitates intersection improvements that enhance pedestrian safety. Streetscape enhancements would give special identity to the area and encourage pedestrian activity.

** Note that the term "neighborhood center" denotes an area of several blocks with a concentration of activities. This is not to be confused with the concept of a building that includes a neighborhood meeting space, which is referred to separately.

Stunning views of the Chugach Mountain Range from Government Hill


Government Hill
Neighborhood Plan
CHARACTER MAP
• Any proposed development or expansion of parks or trails on Port property will be subject to approval by the Port Director, Anchorage Assembly, and appropriate representatives from the Office of Homeland Security and also shown as an element of the Port Master Plan (2012-2032) prior to any development, park, or trail designation.
JBER
School
AT&T
Church
Ski & Benny
Ericksen
2nd Street
Harvard
Arctic Warrior Dr.
0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet
KEY
Neighborhood Center
Traditional Neighborhood
Multifamily Neighborhood
Bluff Neighborhood
Port Area
Railroad Yard
Railroad Corridor
Industrial Mixed Use
Industrial Nuckle
Green/Open Space
Existing Bldg Footprints
Parcel Lines
Ship Creek/Knik Arm
Neighborhood Boundary
* These are not final decisions and that any scenarios that may impact JBER property will have to be requested and approved through the JBER Wing Commander.

The Neighborhood Center combines a mix of:

- Civic uses, perhaps a community meeting room, an outdoor skating rink and plaza, a farmers' market, or similar functions that are shared by community residents.
- Commercial uses, including retail, dining, and professional offices.
- Residential units, including apartments or condominiums above commercial uses, as well as town houses.
- Institutional facilities, including clubs, churches, and other places of worship.

In the development scenarios that are presented in Chapter 5, land at the fringe of JBER is shown redeveloped as housing. This would increase the resident population that could support the commercial uses and services in the center, and perhaps offer a housing alternative for personnel at JBER.

Goals & Objectives:

- Revitalized commercial center.
- Mix of neighborhood-serving commercial and residential uses.
- Enhanced pedestrian streetscape with public art, seating, etc.
- Enhanced as gateway for neighborhood.
- Clear Government Hill identity.
- Small grocery store.
- Coffee shop/bakery.
- Food business with a rooftop terrace.
- Additional parking.
- Enhanced signage and wayfinding tools.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS CHARACTER AREA

These are the core of Government Hill and include many properties of historic significance. They are characterized by narrow, walkable streets, intensive landscaping lots with single-family houses, and functioning alleys.

Goals & Objectives:

- Calm and slow traffic through residential streets.
- Maintain pedestrian scale.
- Maintain use of alleys for residential access, utilities, and services.
- Maintain a diversity of housing.
- Create a potential for artist live/work studios at empty wireless building.
- Maintain water tower as a community asset .
- Enhance east/west connectivity.
- Provide a dog park .
- Promote heritage tourism to attract more business (historical walking tour).

MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA

These are located along the eastern edge of Government Hill and are relatively low in scale.

Goals & Objectives:

- Refurbish multi-family buildings.
- Potential for community gardens in underutilized park
- Install speed control.
- Enhance intersections at E. Bluff Drive and Arctic Warrior Drive.
- Enhance travel way along E. Bluff Drive for school bus.

THE BLUFF NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA

The bluff neighborhood is centered along Northpointe Bluff Drive and contains a series of lots that have redeveloped in recent years. These properties provide some of the most stunning views of downtown Anchorage and the Chugach Mountains.

Goals & Objectives:

- Build a pedestrian/bicycle connection to 3rd Avenue.
- Provide a dog park.
- Resolve parking issues due to housing density.

ALASKA RAILROAD RAILYARD CORRIDOR

The Alaska Railroad yards lie at the foot of Government Hill, framing the southern edge of the neighborhood. The corridor consists of a mix of rail facilities along with some commercial and visitor-oriented services.

Goals & Objectives:

- Minimize light spill into the residential portions of the Government Hill neighborhood.
- Minimize noise impacts.
- Coordinate access improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists into the upper portion of the Government Hill neighborhood and to Ship Creek Trail.
- Encourage preservation of historic buildings in the railyard corridor.

PORT OF ANCHORAGE CHARACTER AREA

The Port lies along the shoreline of Knik Arm, framing the western edge of the Government Hill neighborhood. It consists of a mix of industrial facilities, including office buildings, storage tanks, and docks.

Goals & Objectives:

- Develop Brown's Point Park (100th anniversary in 2012).
- Reopen portions of W. Bluff Drive as a trail while respecting security requirements.
- Provide better wayfinding signage.
- Minimize light spill into the residential portions of the Government Hill neighborhood.
- Coordinate access improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists into the upper portion of the Government Hill neighborhood and to Ship Creek Trail.

INDUSTRIAL MIXED-USE CHARACTER AREA

The Industrial Mixed-Use Character Area lies along Ship Creek Road. This is an industrial corridor in which buildings flank the road.

Goals & Objectives:

- Improve access to downtown, especially for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Redevelop abandoned buildings.
- Rehabilitate the historic power plant.
- Plant material along the railroad edge as a buffer.

THE INDUSTRIAL KNUCKLE

The Industrial Knuckle is a point at which the Port of Anchorage yards and the Alaska Railroad yards merge with a mix of office buildings, services, and some visitor-oriented facilities. This also includes the bridge leading from downtown to Government Hill.

Goals & Objectives:

- Improve pedestrian walkways along the bridge and associated access roads.

- Install public art and winter lights on the bridge.
- Enhance pedestrian safety and connections.
- Promote development of additional amenities to serve residents and visitors.

COMPLETE THE GREEN SPACE RING

A ring of green space frames the western and southern portions of the bluffs of Government Hill. This is a highly valued resource that should be maintained for Government Hill residents, citizens of Anchorage at large, and visitors to the neighborhood. Adding other land to the open space system should be considered so that a "greenbelt" wraps completely around the upper portions of Government Hill.

Goals & Objectives:

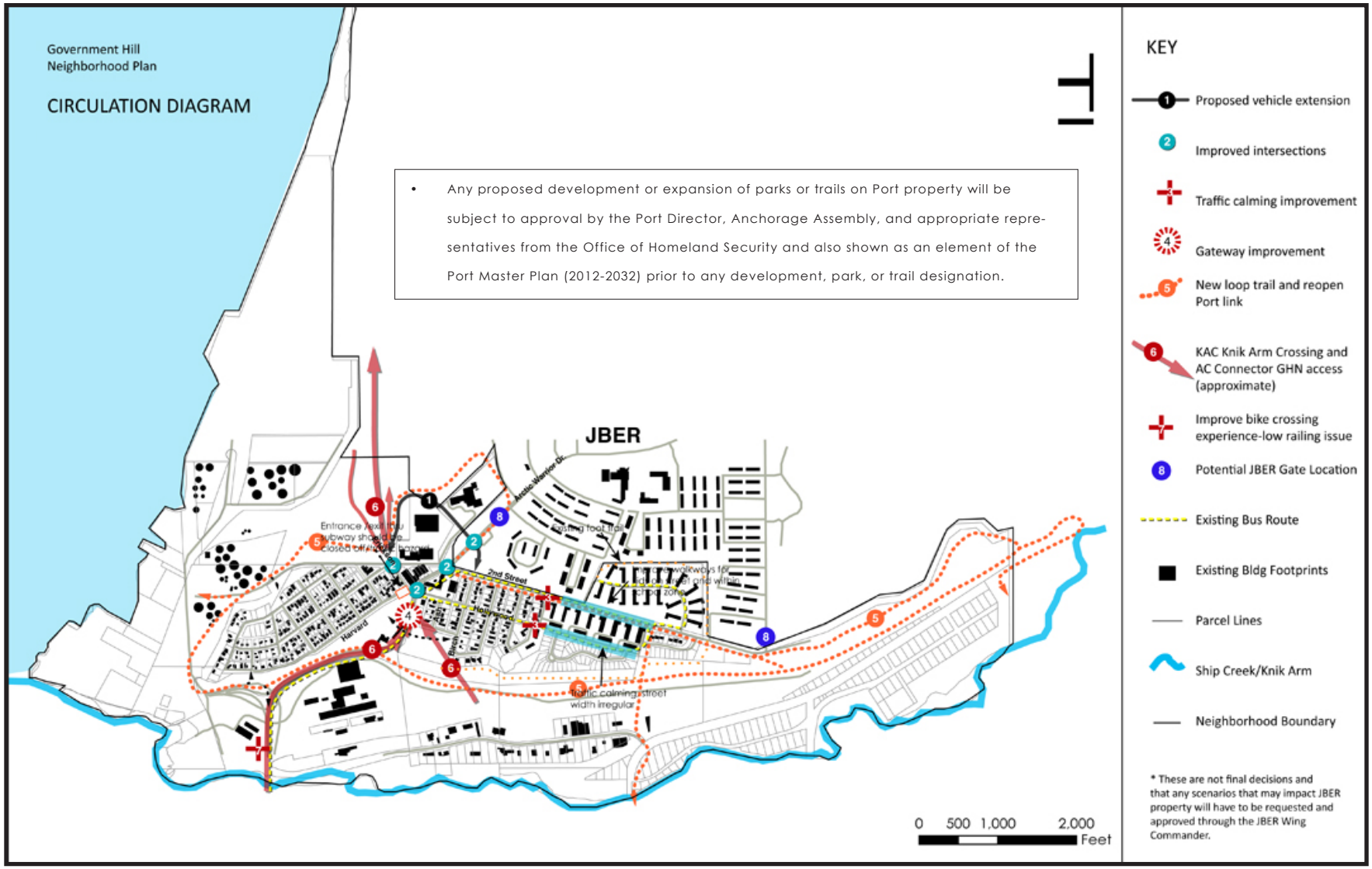
- Maintain the bluff as a greenbelt buffer with replanted trees.
- Expand on community garden opportunities.
- Maintain trails and pedestrian connections, providing a "ring" around the neighborhood.
- Create additional parkland designed to serve a variety of user groups.
- Convert the Old Defense Fuel Site to park space.
- Explore the potential for a community hall near the Curling Club.
- Maintain views to and from Government Hill, especially views to Denali and Mt. Foraker from Suzan Nightingale McKay Memorial Park.

B. LAND USE IMPROVEMENTS

With the specific goals and recommendations for the individual character areas in mind, there are some general land use recommendations that can be made. These are the key land use concepts for Government Hill:

1. Maintain the land use categories of the traditional residential neighborhoods.
2. Maintain use of alleys for residential access, utilities, and services.
3. Increase the mix of uses in the neighborhood center.
4. Moderately increase density in the neighborhood center.
5. Establish the core as a mixed-use district tailored to fit the range of building types and sizes as set forth in this plan.
6. Facilitate reconfiguration of more efficient parcels.
7. Ensure that major public projects are designed and built to reinforce and enhance the Government Hill neighborhood's vision for its community.

Government Hill neighborhood in summer


Government Hill
Neighborhood Plan
CIRCULATION DIAGRAM
• Any proposed development or expansion of parks or trails on Port property will be subject to approval by the Port Director, Anchorage Assembly, and appropriate representatives from the Office of Homeland Security and also shown as an element of the Port Master Plan (2012-2032) prior to any development, park, or trail designation.
JBER
2nd Street
Harvard
Traffic calming street width irregular
0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet
KEY
Proposed vehicle extension
Improved intersections
Traffic calming improvement
Gateway improvement
New loop trail and reopen Port link
KAC Knik Arm Crossing and AC Connector GHN access (approximate)
Improve bike crossing experience-low railing issue
Potential JBER Gate Location
Existing Bus Route
Existing Bldg Footprints
Parcel Lines
Ship Creek/Knik Arm
Neighborhood Boundary
* These are not final decisions and that any scenarios that may impact JBER property will have to be requested and approved through the JBER Wing Commander.

C. CIRCULATION SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS

This section describes what the future circulation system for Government Hill will look like and how pedestrians, vehicles, cyclists, and public transportation will be served. The Circulation Map is a visual illusration of key circulation items identified by the community and in this planning effort.

AUTOMOBILE CONNECTIONS

1. Strengthen Intra-Neighborhood Connections

Part of the unique character of the Government Hill neighborhood is its street system, which reflects the early development pattern in the city. This street network should be preserved, but at the same time, connectivity should be enhanced. This means maintaining, and even enhancing, east-west movement through the neighborhood and neighborhood center for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles.

While Government Hill retains its sense of a quiet enclave, circulation should be enhanced. New road improvements should ease traffic flow into, through, and within the neighborhood. The extent of these improvements varies with the different redevelopment scenarios that are presented, and also by the timing of phased improvements.

Some specific actions:

- Improved east-west connector between the hilltop neighborhoods.
- Improved intersection from downtown into the neighborhood center.
- Improved entrance into JBER.

Undesirable driving, walking, and biking conditions from Government Hill to Downtown Anchorage in winter

- Improved primary access and secondary access to the Government Hill Elementary School.

2. Realign Some Streets to Create More Efficient Parcels

This includes improving key intersections to accommodate improved traffic flow while enhancing pedestrian safety at crosswalks.

3. Improve Parking in the Neighborhood Center

While alternative modes are to be emphasized, parking supply and access needs improvement in the neighborhood center to serve existing commercial and institutional users, and to help stimulate reinvestment.

Some specific actions:

- Develop parking lots to be shared by adjacent property owners.
- Locate parking lots to the side and rear of buildings, so they will be visually subordinate to the street scene.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SYSTEMS

1. Improve Access to the Government Hill Elementary School

Better access is needed to the school for pedestrians and motorists. Ideally, a second, alternative route would be available, linking east and west sides of the neighborhood.

2. Improve the Neighborhood Trail System

A continuing theme is the desire to "complete the loop of trails," connecting pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes so that users may circle the neighborhood, and conveniently gain access to other regional trails.

Some key actions to improve the trail system are:

- Provide a trail along the western embankment with adequate security provisions along the port edge.
- Provide a trail connection that leads north of the AT&T facility, creating an alternative mode of access to the school.
- Provide a multimodal neighborhood loop trail.

Port of Anchorage

3. Improve Trail Access to Water Amenities

Along the southern edge of the neighborhood, improve trail links to key waterfront amenities.

Specific connections are:

- Connection to pedestrian improvements at the mount of Ship Creek.
- Connection to the Ship Creek trail.

4. Improve Sidewalks in the Neighborhood Center

Design new sidewalks to encourage walking. Include walkways that are of sufficient width and also enhanced with landscaping.

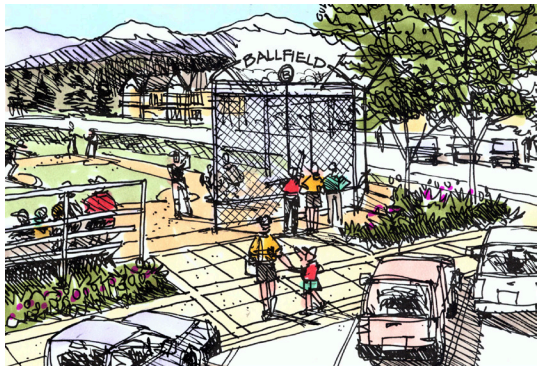
Specific improvements include:

- Provide a pedestrian connector to link Harvard and Sunset Parks.
- Develop a community plaza as a focal point of the Neighborhood Center.
- Provide more active use areas along northern edge.
- Provide a pedestrian connection to Ship Creek trail.
- Plan for view opportunities.
- Maintain connections within existing park areas.
- Provide places for community gardens.
- Develop a historic interpretive trail.
- Consider the needs of handicapped or physically challenged people and senior citizens who reside in the neighborhood.

Corner of Government Hill commercial center and pedestrian bridge

D. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

The hill area should be ringed with parks that are connected by a continuous loop of trails. This will provide hiking and biking opportunities for residents, employees, and visitors. Along the way, view overlooks should open to vistas of downtown, the Knik Arm, and mountains in the distance. Several parks should contain play equipment or other amenities for active use, while others would be for passive enjoyment.



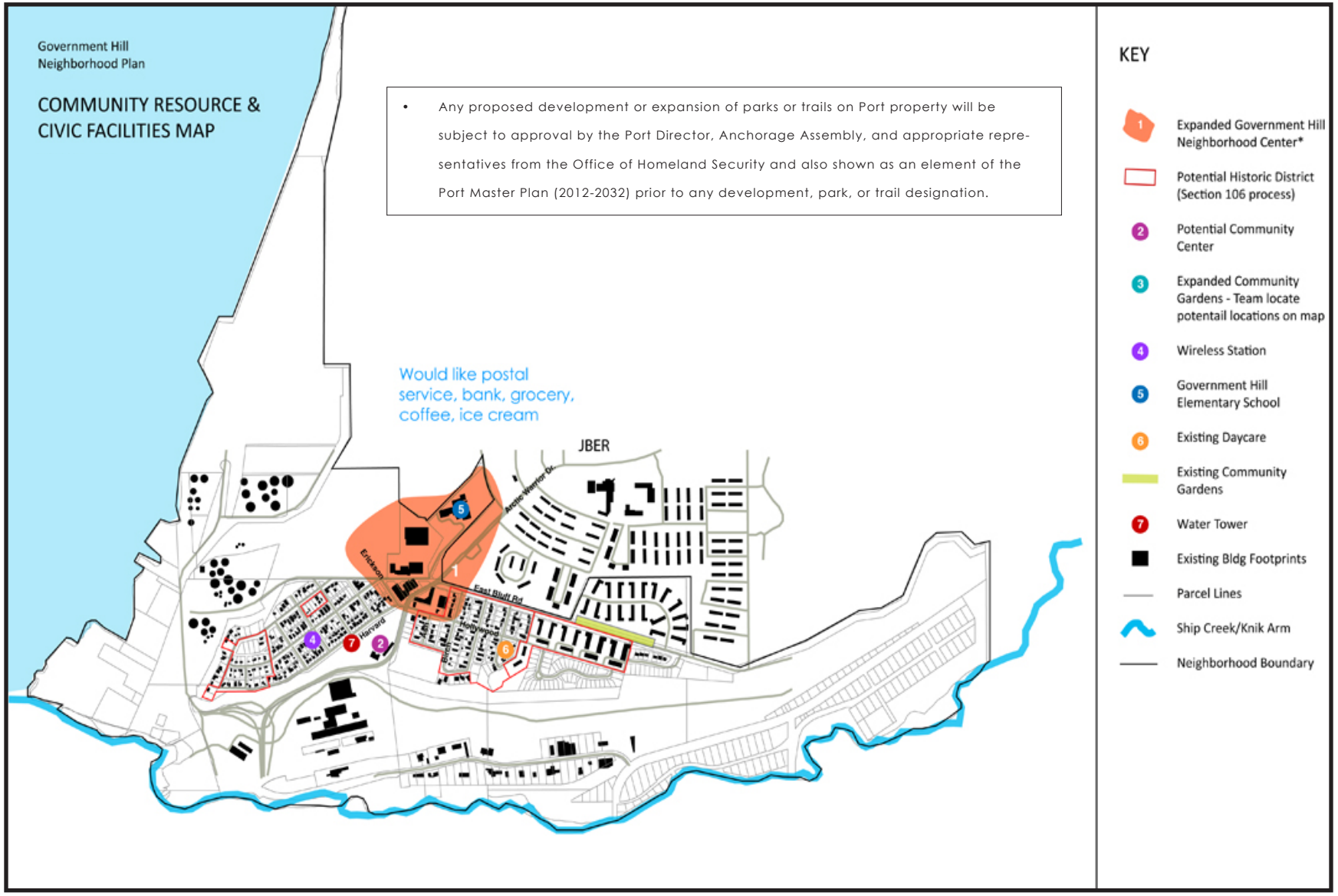
Some specific parks systems improvements:

- Maintain all existing parks and open space resources.
- Seek additional open space along the northern edge of the hill, and study the potential to include playing fields there.

Cargo containers located on Port of Anchorage property

Community gathering space in Sunset Park

Views from Government Hill


Government Hill
Neighborhood Plan
COMMUNITY RESOURCE &
CIVIC FACILITIES MAP
• Any proposed development or expansion of parks or trails on Port property will be subject to approval by the Port Director, Anchorage Assembly, and appropriate representatives from the Office of Homeland Security and also shown as an element of the Port Master Plan (2012-2032) prior to any development, park, or trail designation.
Would like postal service, bank, grocery, coffee, ice cream
JBER
East Bluff Rd
Harvard
KEY
Expanded Government Hill Neighborhood Center*
Potential Historic District (Section 106 process)
Potential Community Center
Expanded Community Gardens - Team locate potentail locations on map
Wireless Station
Government Hill Elementary School
Existing Daycare
Existing Community Gardens
Water Tower
Existing Bldg Footprints
Parcel Lines
Ship Creek/Knik Arm
Neighborhood Boundary

E. COMMUNITY RESOURCES & CIVIC FACILITIES

This section discusses the future vision for amenities provided to the residents of Government Hill including services lanes, spaces for civic functions, outdoor recreation, and local community gathering. Implementation of community amenities will depend on available funding for both capital and long-term operational costs.

1. Maintain existing community facilities.
This includes the Curling Club and Square Dance Club buildings. It also includes preservation and maintenance of alleys for their traditional uses.

2. Provide a community meeting hall.
This building should be an assembly space that can be used for meetings and events. A preferred location is in the revitalized neighborhood center, but an alternative site in Harvard Park also merits further study. The community hall should be located where it can share parking with other complementary uses, and where traffic generated by activities there can help stimulate business development in the area.

3. Provide an outdoor use and gathering space in the Neighborhood Center.
This space should be designed to accommodate outdoor uses during appropriate weather conditions. It should be positioned to help energize the commercial core.

4. Provide space for a potential farmers' market.
The central plaza could be designed to serve this function, or a new parking lot could be designed for this purpose.

5. Promote preservation and adaptive reuse of historic resources.
These historic resources include some distinctive properties that are of noteworthy significance, such as the wireless building, but also many civic and residential structures throughout the neighborhood.

The Community Resources and Civic Facilities Map represents some of the key features present today and those the community would like to have in the future.

Calvary Baptist Church

Anchorage Curling Club

Historic Water Tower

Land Use Summary

The Government Hill Neighborhood Plan is a policy document designed to guide future decisions affecting land use and development in the Government Hill neighborhood planning area. As such, it includes strategies for the future land use pattern. The land use pattern in the Government Hill planning area is well established with areas of residential, neighborhood commercial, open space, and public facilities on Government Hill, Port, Alaska Railroad, and industrial uses in Ship Creek. The Government Hill Neighborhood Plan (GHNP) land use plan map responds to this structure and builds upon it.

The land use plan is generalized to respond to the potential for a Knik Arm Crossing, through the three scenarios recommended in this plan. In each scenario the Knik Arm Crossing would use the "cut-and-cover" concept to minimize impacts to the location of the neighborhood center, and would be primarily within existing park, transportation, and industrial areas where it is located above surface. However, several properties designated as residential in the land use plan would be removed as part of KABATA's proposed alignment.

In addition to considering existing uses, the GHNP is also influenced by policy direction from Anchorage 2020. The Anchorage 2020 Land Use Policy Map highlights several key land use considerations within the GHNP study area, including a neighborhood center on Government Hill and an industrial reserve in the Ship Creek basin. Other policies reinforced during public outreach relate to the importance of preserving neighborhoods and open spaces and encouraging neighborhood redevelopment in eastern Government Hill. The GHNP land use map has taken these into consideration and presents a plan that accommodates them in a cohesive and balanced fashion.

The GHNP land use plan map captures the land use pattern for Government Hill's long-term preservation and continued development. It provides a visual representation of the GHNP's land use policies and is used in conjunction with the character, transportation, and framework maps in the GNHP. The GHNP is not a zoning map which establishes specific land use regulations on a lot-by-lot basis. Rather, it is, in conjunction with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, a policy guide and legal basis for consideration of future zoning decisions and other development decisions.

The location and amount of each land use designation, shown on the GHNP land use map, is compatible with the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map conceptually approved by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission in 2006, with some refinements, clarifications, and updates.

Major Land Use Components

The GHNP land use plan map identifies different land use designations to illustrate the location and extent of categories of land use throughout Government Hill. The classifications help define the building intensity and density for each area.

Land Use Designations

The following pages define each land use designation shown on the Land Use Map. Each designation includes a statement of intent and a description of essential characteristics, such as predominant uses, intensity of use, and the general nature of new development/redevelopment. Where a land use designation has more than one corresponding zoning district, proposed zone changes should be demonstrated as the most appropriate, taking into consideration the purpose of each zone, the proposed rezoning site, and the zoning and/or development pattern of surrounding land.

Residential Uses

Residential uses are predominant on the east and west ends of Government Hill. Excluding major transportation facilities, residential areas are the most widespread land use in Government Hill.

The GHNP Residential designations reflect existing zoning and built land use patterns, offer a broad range of low-medium housing densities and types to meet the demand of current and future residents. In addition to the residential uses described below, other uses such as schools, places of worship, parks, and child care facilities are often allowed in residential areas.

Residential (Low-Intensity Attached and Detached)

Intent:

The low-intensity attached and detached residential designation provides for a variety of single-family, single-family attached, and two-family residential neighborhoods.

Description:

- Conventional single-family detached houses, more compact attached and detached housing types such as small-lot, cluster, townhome, accessory units, and duplex (two-family) units. Building scale, setbacks with landscaping or natural vegetation, and low traffic volumes on local streets contribute to a low-intensity living environment.
- Greater than 5 and up to 8 housing units per acre.
- Designation is applied to areas with an established single-family or two-family detached development pattern and on vacant parcels where higher density is desirable in areas adjacent to parks or schools.
- The corresponding zone is R-2A, R-2D.

Residential (Low-Medium Intensity)

Intent:

The "low-medium intensity" residential designation provides for a range of single- and multi-family housing in neighborhoods that offer a compatible diversity of housing choices.

Description:

- Standard detached houses and small-lot, single-family homes, attached single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, and low-density multi-family. When located in a neighborhood environment, which includes any nearby single-family homes, the physical scale, appearance, and street orientation of multi-family/attached housing development should be compatible.
- Greater than 8 and up to 15 housing units per gross acre.
- Designation is applied to areas that have developed with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing units or are near a major street where public transportation is available.
- The corresponding zones are R-2F and R-2M.

Residential (Medium-Intensity)

Intent:

The medium-intensity residential designation provides for a compatible mix of multi-family and attached housing choices in an attractive, living environment with a range of amenities for residents, including easy access to parks and open space, retail services, employment centers, and public transportation.

Description:

- Multi-family complexes and townhouses characterized by low-rise, multi-story buildings, with design amenities such as private open space and recreation areas.
- Designation is applied to areas with an established multi-family housing development pattern. It is also applied to areas once designated for lower density residential and non-residential use that are either underutilized or are adjacent to commercial areas or major streets where transition to more intensive residential use is appropriate.
- The corresponding zone is R-3; R-2M can be used in areas in transition between multi-family and single-family housing.

Commercial/Mixed-use Center Uses

Anchorage 2020 states that there exists a "neighborhood commercial center" within Government Hill. The GHNP refines this concepts by:

- Renaming neighborhood commercial center as "neighborhood center."
- Assigning the neighborhood center designation to a more specific area than shown in the Anchorage 2020 Land Use Policy Map.
- Expanding the neighborhood center from the extent of existing commercial zoning to reflect the concept of a mixed-use center with a variety of commercial, residential, and public/institutional uses.

The "neighborhood center" designations on the GHNP Land Use Plan Map is intended to provide a focal point of commercial, cultural, and community activity at the neighborhood scale, in walking distance from most of the residential areas of the neighborhood. It is envisioned to serve the surrounding area with shopping and services, at a scale in keeping with the area it serves, and evolve as a compact, mixed-use activity center with redevelopment potential and the opportunity to integrate various activities (including residential) within a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The following commercial, mixed-use, and public/institutional designations allow for a range of shopping, retail services, public/institutional uses, and low-intensity employment in the focal center of Government Hill neighborhood. This area is located in the center of the neighborhood along the linear corridor between Downtown Anchorage and JBER.

Neighborhood Center

Intent:

The "neighborhood center" designation provides for small- to medium-size commercial convenience centers that serve the surrounding neighborhood or cluster of neighborhoods.

Description:

- Small-scale, non-obtrusive convenience retail and personal services, such as food markets, drug stores, restaurants, and professional services oriented to the needs of the surrounding residential population. The largest centers may be anchored by a full-sized grocery store.
- The scale, appearance, and function of new development

should be compatible with adjacent residential uses, and designed with the goals of reducing vehicle trips and driving distances, and minimizing traffic impacts.
- The corresponding zones are B-1A and NMU.

Schools and Community Institutions
Intent:
The "school and community institutions" designation provides for the Government Hill Elementary School, that can readily integrate at the local neighborhood center scale and provides a community service or focus for the surrounding area.

Description:
- This use consists of the public school campus and facilities, which is located on a long-term lease agreement on JBER property.
- The corresponding zone is PLI or DR.

Public Utility/Facility
Intent:
The "public utility/facility" designation provides for public facilities and infrastructure that is primarily employment/ industrial in character, and refers to the AT&T facility.

Description:
- Predominant land uses consist of public utilities (sewer and water treatment plants, power generation plants, industrial yards, water tank reservoirs, pump stations, and facilities for maintenance or fleet services) and public facilities (such as fire stations) not oriented to on-site customer service.
- The corresponding zones are the PLI, I-1 and I-2 zones.

Industrial Uses and Transportation Facilities
The Port and Railroad operations areas account for roughly two thirds of the total GNHP planning area and exerts a significant influence on land use in the Planning Area. Railroad and Port lands include a mix of transportation and industrial activities accommodating passenger as well as air cargo service. These activities generate truck and automobile traffic that uses local roads. The Port is situated in the westernmost portion of the study area adjacent to Knik Arm.

Anchorage 2020 identified an "industrial reserve" in the Alaska Railroad Terminal Reserve, where the predominant use is industrial establishments on Alaska Railroad lease lots. The GHNP implements this concept by assigning industrial land uses clustered along Post Road and Whitney Drive in a corridor north of Ship Creek. This area is characterized by existing industrial uses proximate to major rail, sea, and regional highway transportation facilities.

Industrial/Industrial Reserve
Intent:
The "industrial/industrial reserve" designation preserves key industrial lands for existing and future industrial economic development in areas served by major transportation corridors, and allows the most intensive industrial uses.

Description:
- This designation is a reserve for a wide range of existing and future industrial uses. Non-industrial uses are limited to prevent land use and traffic conflicts and to preserve land for industrial economic development. Uses may include manufacturing, major transportation operations, research and development, industrial/business parks, warehousing

and distribution, equipment and materials storage, vehicle and equipment repair, and waste management and similar uses. Certain areas may allow for processing and distribution of natural resources and hazardous materials.
- Designation is applied to areas with access to major truck routes and rail lines, with established industrial uses and/or with proximity to a Major Transportation Facility;
- The corresponding zone is I-2.

Major Transportation Facility

Intent:

The "major transportation facility" designation provides for large multi-use transportation facilities of regional, state, and national importance, including airports, ports, and railroads.

Description:

- This designation is applied to facilities with regional and global transportation importance that are land intensive and considered essential to the local and state economy and transportation infrastructure.
- This designation in Government Hill comprises the TSAIA, subject to FAA grant assurances and other regulations, and the ARRC terminal railroad utility corridors subject, in some instances, to exclusive United States Surface Transportation Board regulation.
- The corresponding zones are the AD, MI, MC, I-1, I-2, IC, and PLI zones.

Parks and Natural Resource Uses

Recreation lands and facilities are an integral part of the quality of life in Government Hill and help buffer the residential neighborhoods and Ship Creek from neighboring industrial and transportation uses. Park, recreation, and natural open space areas that are designated on the Land Use Plan Map generally either exist or are identified on existing plans. They include dedicated parks with and without active recreational facilities, as well as hillside and riparian areas that provide natural open space value. Portions of Alaska Railroad land allowed for public recreation is also identified. The Port of Anchorage has just embarked on a master planning/business planning effort for 2012-2032. The Master Plan will be designed to ensure full opportunity for adjacent neighborhoods to be informed and provide comments during this planning process. To address reconsidering the secure boundaries of the Port or modifying access rules for trails will require consultation with the Department of Homeland Security.

Parks and Natural Resources

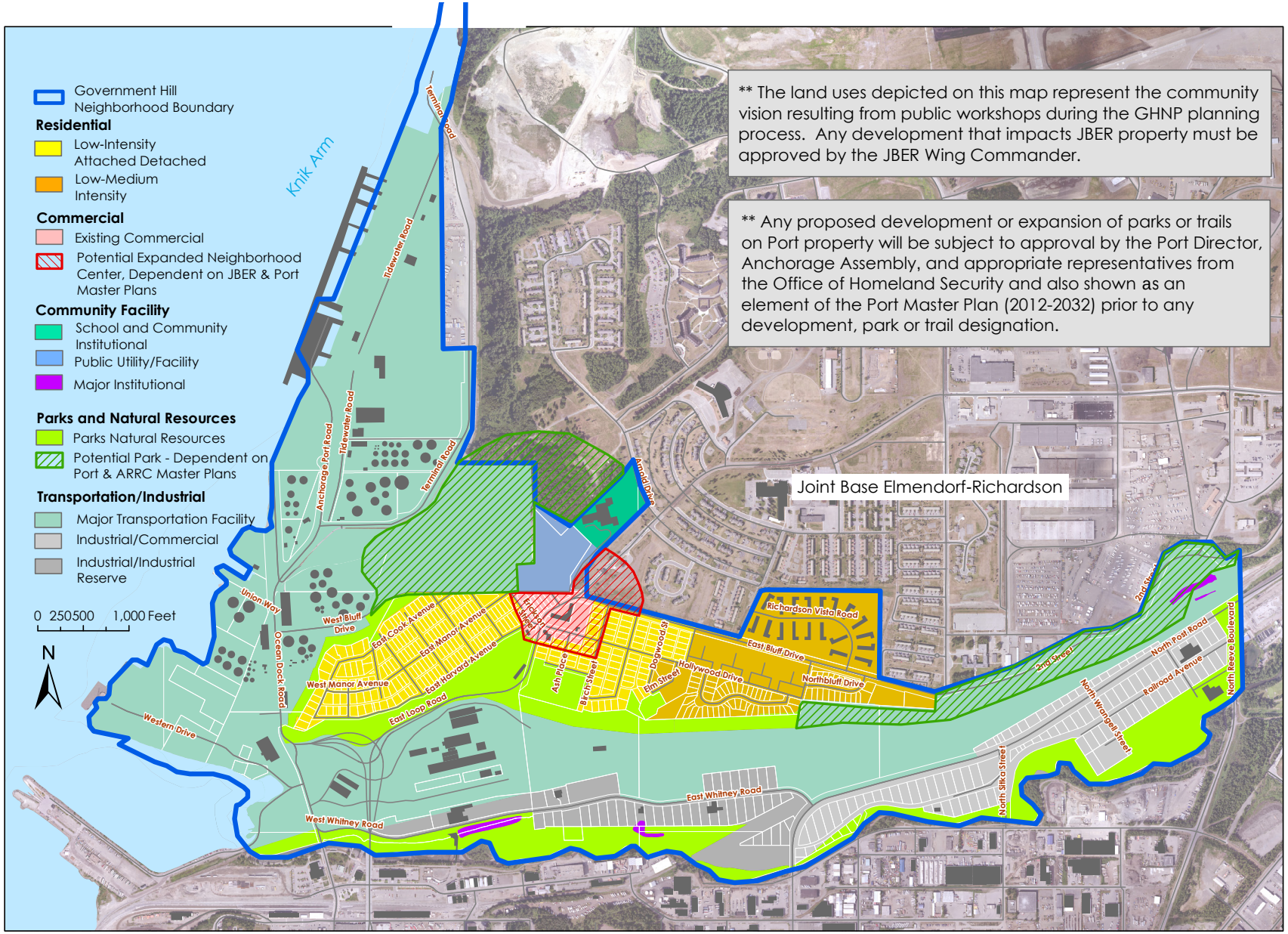
Intent:

The "parks and natural resources" designation provides for active and passive outdoor recreation, conservation of natural areas, trail corridors, and connections between neighborhoods.

Description:

- Includes neighborhood, community, and natural resource use areas. The character and design of parks and natural open space areas differ depending on their individual function and context.
- Designation is applied to existing municipal parks and greenbelts.
- The corresponding zones are PR and PLI.
- Any proposed development or expansion of parks or trails on Port property will be subject to approval by the Port Director, Anchorage Assembly, and appropriate representatives from the Office of Homeland Security and also shown as an element of the Port Master Plan (2012-2032) prior to any development, park, or trail designation.

GHNP Land Use Plan Map



Other Areas that Function as Park or Natural Resource

Intent:

This designation applies to non-municipal lands, or other municipal non-park parcels that, by adopted plan, formal agreement, subdivision or easement, function as part of the community system of parks, outdoor recreational facilities, or natural preservation areas (e.g., HLB mitigation parcels).

Description:

- Includes a small number of dispersed sites serving as private park, outdoor recreation, wetland mitigation, or natural resource areas, some of which may not allow public recreation access.
- The corresponding zones are PLI or other zones depending on the location.

F. Urban Design Principles for Government Hill

Revitalizing the Government Hill neighborhood center offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate proven best practices in urban design and winter city design. These include well-designed streetscapes and new buildings that respect the heritage of the community, while setting a progressive tone for a new and exciting neighborhood center. A well-thought-out and designed neighborhood center in Government Hill has the potential to become an exciting active space for all seasons and one that stands out as a model for other neighborhoods in the Municipality as well as internationally.

This section provides basic design guidelines for public- and private-sector investment in the neighborhood, with a focus on the neighborhood center. Many of the images displayed in this section were identified by workshop participants as representing preferred design for the area.

Winter city design principles:

- Contact with nature
- Year-round usability
- User participation
- Cultural continuity
- Creation of comfortable micro-climatic conditions

Complete Streets

Streets in Government Hill should be designed as "complete streets," which serve all modes of transportation equally and promote an active pedestrian-oriented environment. This is especially important in the neighborhood center.

Plan for year-round pedestrian activity.

- Provide sidewalks with sufficient width to encourage walking year-round.
- Provide covered walkways to shelter pedestrians from snow and rain.
- Install arcades on building frontages that can be rolled up during warmer weather and rolled down in winter, creating year-round walkable space.

Plan for year-round bicycle activity.

- Streets in the neighborhood center will have shared travel lanes.
- Design for bike use along trails and secondary streets.

Design for a balance of circulation modes.

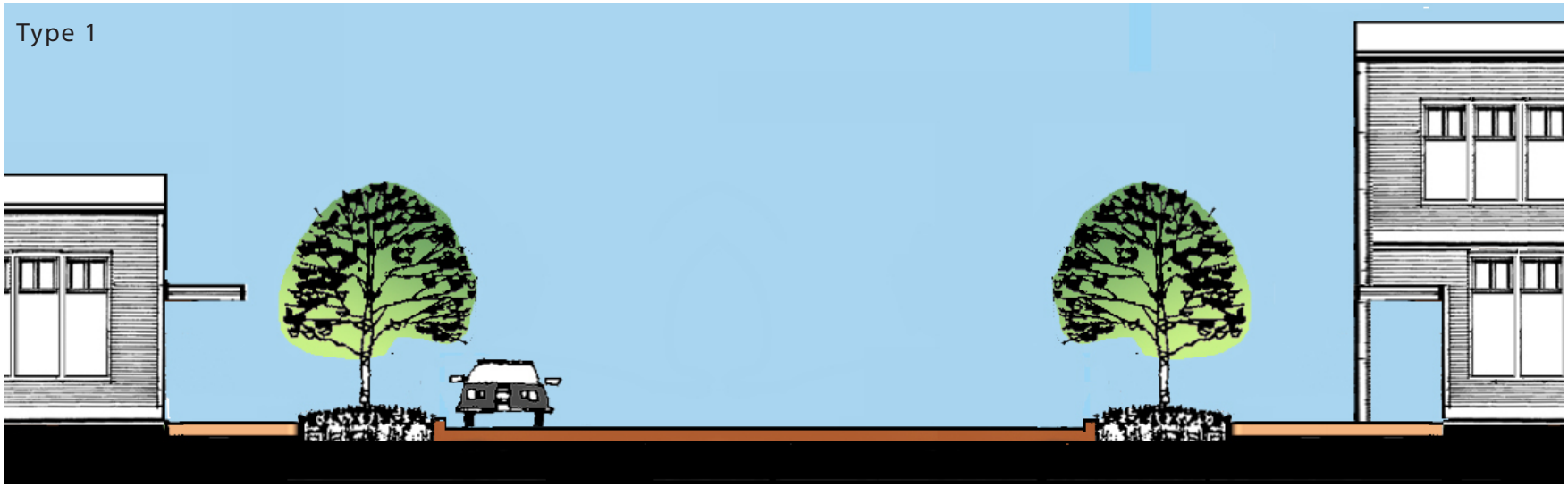
- Include bus and auto circulation.
- Include parking lanes where right-of-way width permits.
- Provide sidewalks along all primary streets in the neighborhood center.
- Accommodate freight access where appropriate.
- Promote and encourage multi-modal opportunities through development choices, land use, and street typology and designation.
- Encourage preservation of traditional neighborhood streets and alleys for residential access, utilities, and services.

Government Hill Neighborhood Center Street Sections

In the revitalized neighborhood center, three classifications of street sections should be applied. These are designed to accommodate a mix of users – pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, along with transit vehicles. The intent is to provide sufficient space for all functional requirements while limiting the overall right-of-way width so that the streets will be in proportion to buildings that frame them, and to create a sense of a "village" center. Each is designed to provide adequate space for pedestrians to walk comfortably. They also are designed with planting strips, which separate sidewalks from parking or travel lanes, and can accommodate snow storage in winter, while serving as a landscaped amenity in summer.

The three cross-sections of those classifications are described here:

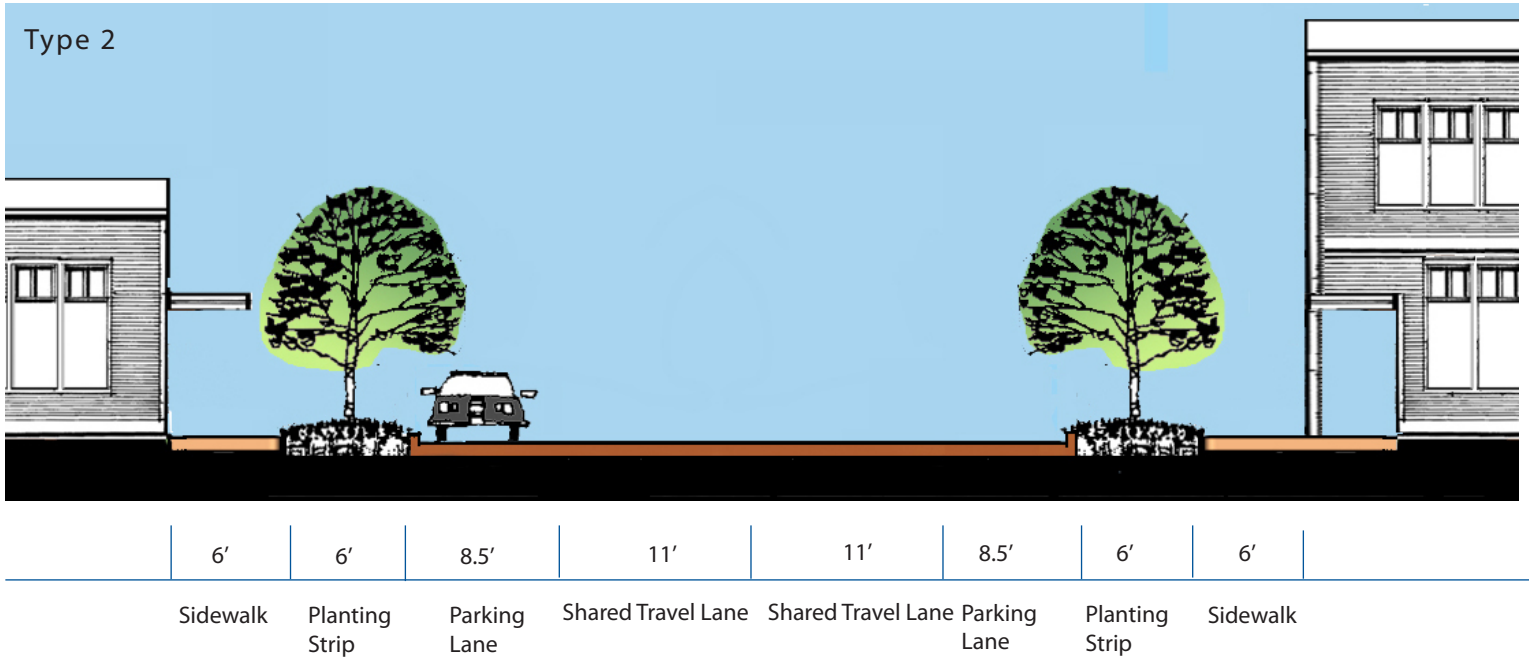
Type 1 – Main Street
This street applies to the heart of the neighborhood center, the "main street" in its core, where the highest levels of



use are anticipated. The street section is for a 72-foot cross section. It has two travel lanes of 11 feet in width, one in each direction. These are flanked by parallel parking lanes of 9 feet in width, which provide additional parking and also serve as a buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians. A planting strip of 8 feet wide separates the sidewalk from the parking lane. In winter, the planting strip serves for interim snow storage. The planting strip contains grasses and shrubs that can withstand compacted snow during winter months. The sidewalk is also 8 feet in width, to accommodate pedestrians passing in both directions.

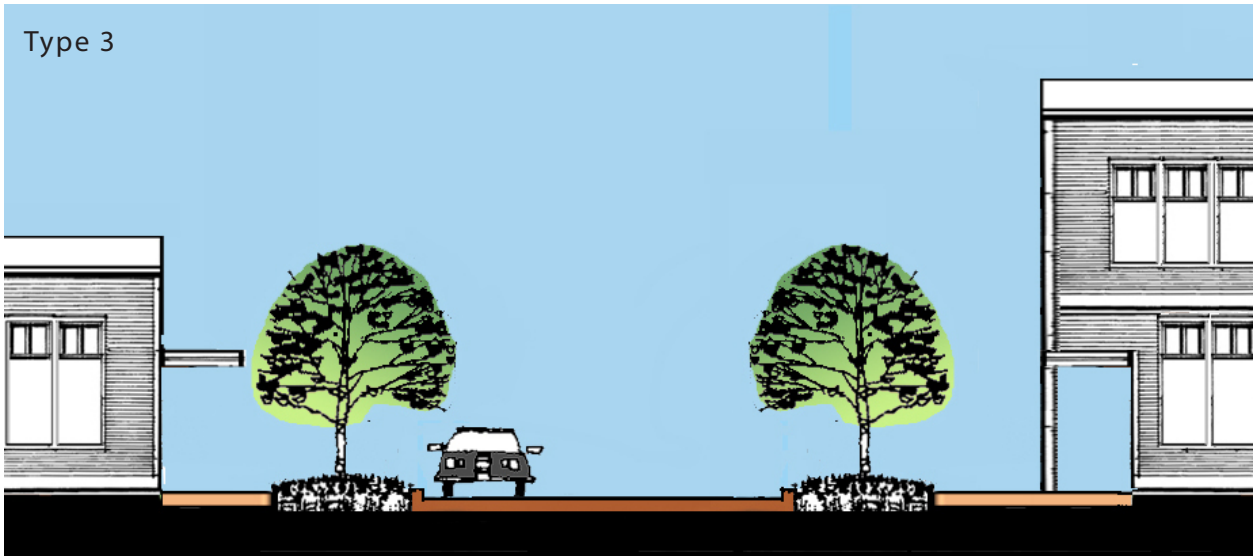
Type 2 - Secondary Street

This applies to the secondary streets in the neighborhood center, where traffic volumes are less, but the right-of-way still provides room for on-street parking. They typically connect directly to the "main street." This is designed for a 62-1/2 foot right-of-way. It also contains two travel lanes, one in each direction, of 11 feet in width. These are flanked with parking lanes, which are reduced to 8-1/2 feet. A 6-foot wide planting strip separates the parking lane from a sidewalk, which is 6 feet in width.



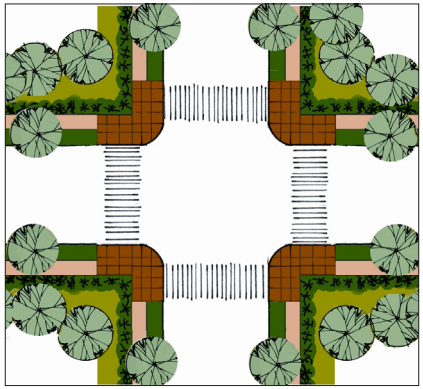
Type 3 – Neighborhood Lane

This applies to internal circulation lanes, which connect parking lots or short streets that will carry a limited amount of traffic. These may lead to other primary and secondary streets. It has a 50-foot wide right-of-way. This accommodates two travel lanes, each of 11 feet in width, one in each direction. This is framed by an 8-foot planting strip, and beyond is a 6-foot wide sidewalk. This street section does not include on-street parking.



Streetscape Design

Design the streetscape in the neighborhood center to encourage pedestrian activity and to establish a distinct identity for Government Hill.



Clearly identify major cross-walks.

- Design crosswalks to be slightly raised for positive drainage away from the walking surface.
- Use distinctive striping or paving patterns.

Use snow-tolerant vegetation.

- Plant deciduous trees on the south-facing sides of buildings and outdoor areas.
- Use berms and vegetation to direct snow drifts away from building entrances.
- Plan snow storage areas to be planted spaces during warmer months.
- Use plant materials (especially decorative grasses) that can withstand the snow pack.

Separate sidewalks and pedestrian walkways from roadways.

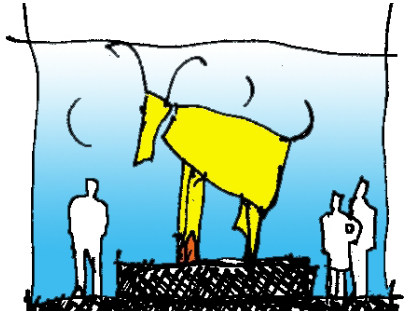
- This separation protects pedestrians from the spray of slush and water from passing cars.
- It also provides space for snow storage.
- Cover ramps or stairs to protect them from snow and ice.
- Provide handrails for walkways on slopes.

Design for snow storage.

- Street cross-sections should be designed to provide for snow storage adjacent to the road.
- By creating this additional space between the road and the sidewalk, snow from plowing is not placed on pedestrian walkways.

Public Art & Heritage Interpretation

Incorporate public art in outdoor use areas at building entrances and in parks. Include art in heritage interpretation schemes as well, and provide a series of historical markers to convey the history of Government Hill.



Provide a focal point.

- Use public art, a water feature, or distinctive plant arrangements to create a distinct identity for public spaces.

Consider interpretive themes in art installations.

- These may be representational forms or more abstract.

Include historical artifacts in heritage interpretation.

- Combine these with markers to explain their historical associations.

Provide a coordinated set of interpretive markers.

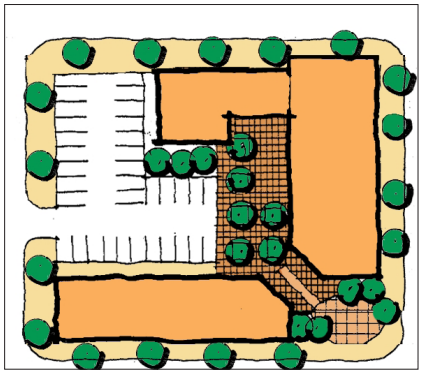
- These should be installed along public trails, in parks, and in streetscape designs.

Site Design

Locate buildings to define the street wall along a block and to frame outdoor use areas. Locate parking to the side and the rear and link them internally to minimize the number of curb cuts required along the street. Clearly define pedestrian ways through the site.

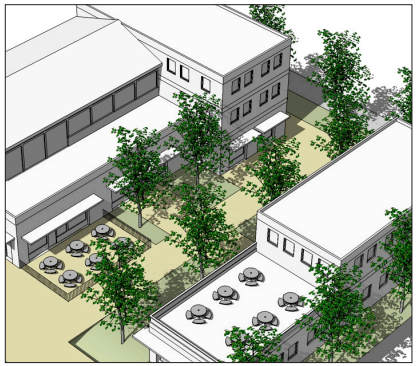
Design a building to anchor a corner site.

- Use landscaping and outdoor use areas to define the street edge where a building is not located.



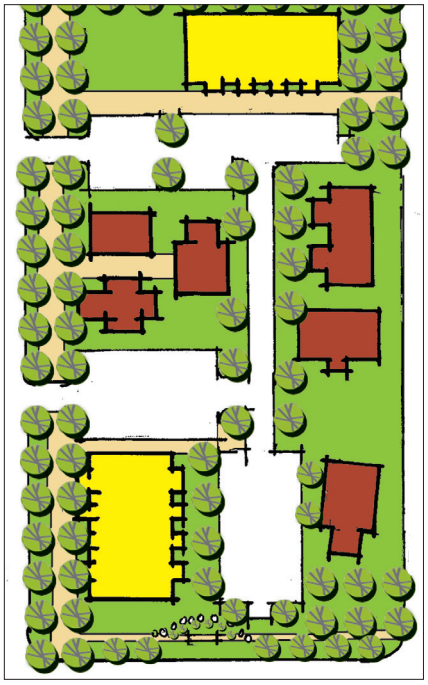
Use an entry plaza to lead pedestrians from parking to the street.

- Clearly define walkways with lighting, textured paving and landscape materials.



Design open space to be shared by abutting buildings.

- Also plan for roof-top use opportunities.



Divide parking areas into smaller "pods."

- This reduces the perceived scale of parking and provides more opportunity for landscaping and snow storage.
- Link individual lots internally to minimize turning movements onto the street.

Pedestrian Systems

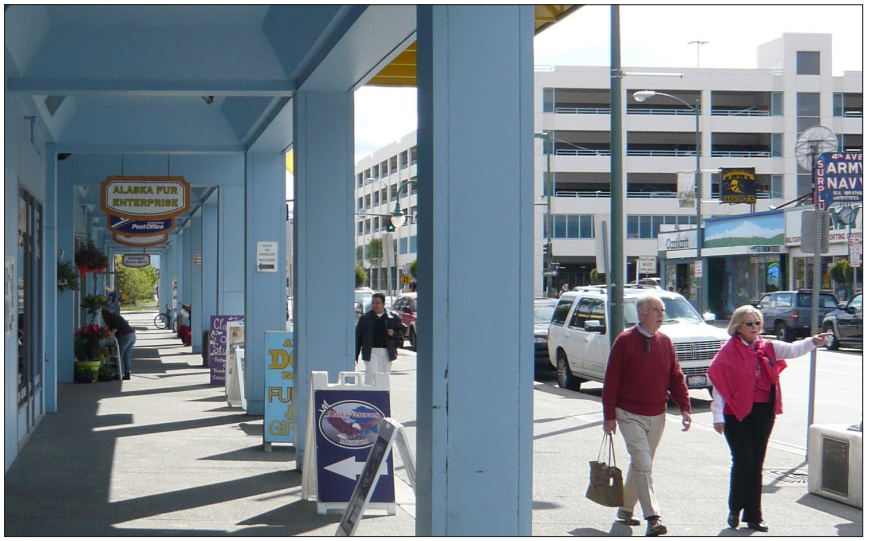
Plan sidewalks, trails, and pathways as an integrated circulation system for pedestrians. Include connections through mixed-use developments as well as along public realm routes. Design them for year-round use.

Provide a pedestrian link through mixed-use developments.

- Connect this internal trail to public walkways at the perimeter of the property.

Provide sheltered connections between buildings.

- This also provides opportunity for outdoor services.
- Consider providing heated sidewalks where appropriate.

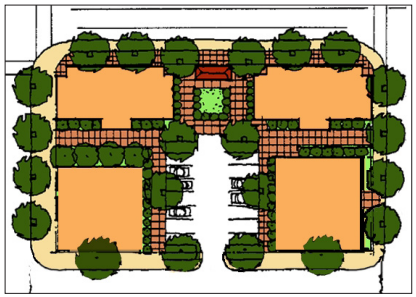


Provide an arcade along a primary facade.

- This also serves as a transition space from the public sidewalk.
- Provide amenities, benches, trash receptacles, and lighting.

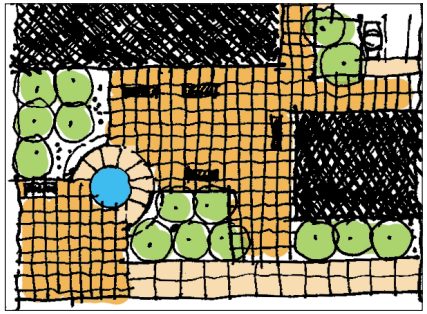
Design of Public Spaces

Any outdoor space in the Neighborhood Center should be designed to be attractive year-round and to invite a diverse range of users. It should be planned in conjunction with indoor uses that abut it in order to enhance the vitality of the area.



Interconnect public spaces.

- Link plazas to adjoining uses with walkways.
- Link streetscapes and public spaces with low-impact public signage.



Provide a focal point.

- Use public art, a water feature, or distinctive plant arrangements to create a distinct identity.

Design for a mix of users.

- Different types of activities and events should be combined so they can build off each other. For example, combining a skating rink, outdoor café, children's play area, and food or holiday market can create a synergistic effect, even when it's cold and dark outside.
- Plan for a diversity of ages and interests.

Design for year-round use.

- Plan for seasonal changes in uses.
- Design these spaces so that wintertime activities are also assets.

Design of Outdoor Spaces

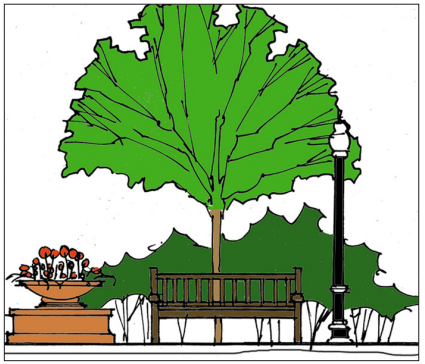
Incorporate design devices that will animate an outdoor space and facilitate its use year-round. Plan for a range of activities and keep it flexible to adapt to changing needs.

Provide wind shelters.

- Use pergolas and other structures to act as screens.
- Install hedges and shrubs as "living snow fences" to protect gateways and walkways from wind.
- Plan areas of dense evergreens to act as a wind break, protecting pedestrians from windchill.
- Choose tree species that offer attractive twig color or fruit and that are salt tolerant.

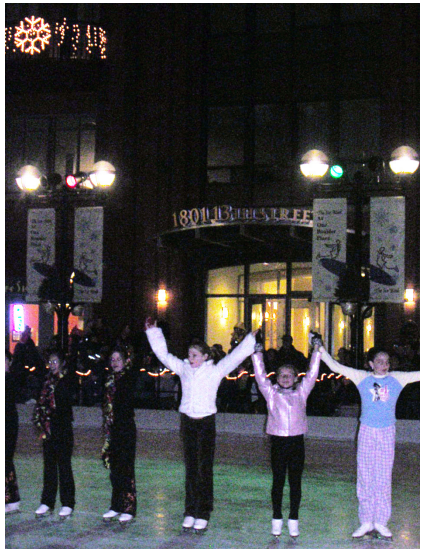
Locate an outdoor use area to maximize solar access opportunities.

- Avoid locating outdoor use areas on north-facing slopes.
- Avoid creating public spaces for winter use in areas shaded from the sun.
- Provide wind screens in areas that serve as outdoor gathering spaces.
- Use buildings to protect outdoor spaces from prevailing winds.



Design street furniture for year-round use.

- Use benches with slats, so they will drain and not collect snow and ice.
- Wood or composite synthetics are preferred for seating, rather than metal or concrete.



Design for year-round use.

- Plan for seasonal changes in uses.
- Design spaces so that wintertime activities are also assets.

Building Orientation

Design buildings to orient to the street and define the public realm. Also position buildings to frame outdoor spaces and to orient to the sun for maximum solar benefit. Establish a pedestrian-friendly street edge by providing sheltering canopies and arcades.

Orient a building to the street.

- Provide a storefront or other design element that attracts pedestrian activity.
- Align storefronts along the street edge.
- Provide a primary entrance that faces the street.

Provide a canopy to shelter the sidewalk.

- This will enhance winter-time use of the street.
- It also provides a sense of scale to the building front.

Provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge.

- Each building form should be designed to enhance the street and invite pedestrian activity.
- Recommended treatments include:
  - Display windows
  - Display cases
  - Wall art
  - Architectural detailing
  - Landscaping.

Orient to the sun.

- Orient buildings to maximize solar access opportunities.

Building Form, Mass, and Scale

New buildings should provide a sense of human scale. This can be accomplished by varying wall planes, roof forms, and setbacks. Changes in materials can also help. In addition, variations in wall planes can mitigate winter micro-climatic conditions on the street.

Provide variation in wall planes.

- This will help to provide a village character scale.
- Also design exterior walls to reduce wind speed by incorporating balconies, stepped façades, or wall offsets into the building's exterior.

Use horizontal moldings and changes in wall planes to express a sense of scale.

- Changes in material colors and patterns also help to provide visual interest to pedestrians.

Divide a larger building into modules.

- This helps to express traditional village building scale and reduce the overall mass.

Building Form

Use building forms that convey a traditional village center character, while also mitigating winter weather conditions. Plan for snow shedding so that primary pedestrian ways are protected.

Use variations in roof forms to reduce perceived scale.

- Design roofs for snow and ice accumulation and to prevent shedding onto parking areas or pedestrian walkways.

Orient roofs for optimum snow shedding.

- Direct snowfall away from primary pedestrian entrances.

Provide variations in wall planes.

- Use wall offsets, notches, and changes in materials to express a change in scale.

Building Entry Transitions

Orient an entrance to the street and other pedestrian way. Provide a sheltered transitional space at a building entrance. A transition area at a building entrance provides patrons with an area to shed snow prior to entering the building.

Use an arcade as an entry.

- This provides transitional space for removing snow before entering a building.

Provide an air-lock entry.

- This reduces heat loss during winter.

Use a canopy as a transition.

- This can control snow shedding and help to identify the primary entrance.

Use an atrium as an entry.

- This can help extend year-round use and orient to open spaces.

Consider an atrium as a year-round gathering space in a development.

Building Materials

Use building materials that have a proven durability in the Anchorage climate and that also convey a sense of human scale. Preferred materials are concrete, brick, architectural block, stucco, wood, and fiber-cementious composite siding.

Brick is appropriate.

- Use traditional brick modules to convey a sense of scale.

Use concrete that is detailed to provide visual interest.

- Combine it with wood and other materials to provide a sense of scale.

Use warm colors for year-round appeal.

- Variations in color also reduce the perceived mass of larger buildings.

Fiber-cementious lap siding is appropriate.

- Use it in designs that appear similar to traditional lap or board-and-batten siding.

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