



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the GHNP?

The Government Hill Neighborhood Plan (GHNP) will be the first neighborhood plan to be officially adopted by the Anchorage Assembly. As such, it will serve as an element of Anchorage 2020 - Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, guided by the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, as defined in section 21.05.030 of the Anchorage Municipal Code. The plan will give specificity to the goals, objectives, policies, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. The overarching goal of this neighborhood plan is to promote the orderly growth, improvement, and future development of the Government Hill neighborhood.

What is the purpose of the GHNP?

The GHNP is a policy document and does not modify Title 21, as it relates to land use and development and therefore does not affect how private property owners may use their land. The Design Guidelines in the GHNP reflect neighborhood goals such as complete streets, building placement, and winter city design. As such, they suggest community preferred design within the neighborhood but are not regulatory. The GHNP provides guidance for future improvements made by public entities and private developers. This includes development that may be initiated by the MOA, as well as other public entities such as the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA). The information and guidance in the GHNP can be used to influence and inform the planning and design of future development projects—including public infrastructure projects such as transportation, trails, and parks. This is to ensure the protection of cultural and historic neighborhood character and resident quality of life. The plan will also serve as a guide for attracting private-sector investment. The plan is specific to its

defined planning area of the Government Hill neighborhood. It is to be used in conjunction with the vision, goals, and objectives of other planning documents, including the Historic Preservation Plan for Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods.

The plan serves as a framework to address the impacts of the design, construction, and operation of the Knik Arm Crossing project (KAC) on the Government Hill neighborhood. The KAC project will introduce visual, environmental, and audio (noise) impacts with significantly increased traffic volumes. These impacts will degrade the quality of life, safety, and the day-to-day historic character and function of these neighborhoods. Initial estimated impacts of the KAC project and resulting mitigation for the Government Hill area by the design, construction, and operation of the KAC were identified in the Knik Arm Crossing Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. However, through the development of the Historic Preservation Plan for Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods (HPP) and the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan, additional mitigation requirements have been identified.

The Federal Highway Administration and the State of Alaska through KABATA are required to comply with several federal, state, and local regulations to complete the KAC project. These include:

- At the federal level: the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act-Section 106, and Declaration of Purpose and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (as amended);

- At the state level: AS 35.30.20 Compliance with Municipal Ordinances;
- At the municipal level: AM 641-2008 (MOA Policy on Context Sensitive Design Solutions, and Project Cooperation Agreement)(MOA/DOT Procedures for Cooperation on ADOT&PF Transportation Projects).

How will the GHNP be used?

The Plan will be used in several ways: to support historic preservation, assist in identifying Municipality-required mitigation elements for the KAC and large infrastructure projects, outreach and educational tools, and identify funding and partnerships to assist in future historic preservation projects and neighborhood improvement programs. There are certain things that the approval and adoption of the Plan will and will not do. Those are described as follows:

Adoption of the Plan will not:

1. Amend the regulatory portions of Title 21.
2. Establish or nominate historic or overlay districts within the planning areas.
3. Create design guidelines for existing or future private or public development.
4. Create additional municipal departments or agencies.

5. Create additional design and project reviews in the Community Development Department or other municipal departments, or by other partner agencies that typically provide project review and comment.

Adoption of the Plan will:

1. Provide proposed implementation items and conceptual planning elements to be pursued subsequent to Assembly approval, once advocates are identified for each implementation item.
2. Define the relationship between the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and what it means to be a part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.
3. Define the relationship to Title 21, specifically ANY conflict between the Plan and Title 21. Title 21 will have precedence until such time as the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Assembly amends Title 21 to adopt certain implementation actions outlined in the Plan.
4. Only apply when the authority is approved in the municipal code for historic or overlay districts, architectural design standards associated with those districts.
5. Guide discretionary land use decisions such as rezones, conditional uses, and subdivisions.
6. Support the efforts of the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission and Alaska State Historic Preservation Office to preserve and protect

important historic resources found on Government Hill. This includes properties, buildings, and stories that the Municipality, community, and private property owners may choose to preserve and protect.

7. Address design, construction, and operation impacts from the Knik Arm Crossing project.
8. Provide design concepts and scenarios that, in the event that the KAC project moves forward, will mitigate impacts of that project, and in the event that it does not move forward, will include priorities for the future development and enhancement of the neighborhood in the context of JBER, the Railroad, and the Port of Anchorage.
9. May be the foundation for a new agreement between the Municipality of Anchorage, Federal Highway Administration, and KABATA as defined in the current KAC Programmatic Agreement (12/2008) and KAC Memorandum of Understanding (1/2010).

How will the Scenarios in the GHNP be used?

The three (3) scenarios depicting how redesign of the commercial core in Government Hill could occur (Chapter 5) are meant to provide options for the Government Hill neighborhood as they move forward with development in the neighborhood. These scenarios provide a visionary baseline from which to plan and attract private investment. In the event that the KAC project moves forward, these scenarios will help guide the Context Sensitive Design process by illustrating the community's vision for development on top of and adjacent to the proposed cut-and-cover. The scenarios will also help to ad-

dress where additional street reconfigurations would need to be designed and implemented to ensure improved circulation in the neighborhood. While these scenarios provide visual options for redevelopment of the commercial core, they are not specific development site plans slated for construction.

Following adoption, it is anticipated that a preferred scenario will be identified by the neighborhood; this scenario would be formally adopted through an amendment to the GHNP. This preferred scenario will consider changes that will require significant public and private investment; the scenario selected should include phasing options that allow advancement as funding is identified.

Finally, the plan will also include a scenario that reflects the KAC project not moving forward. This scenario will be more modest and will include limited parcel and street reconfigurations, though it still also represents the desired future vision of the neighborhood.

How will the Design Principles in the GHNP be used?

The design principles and guidelines provided in chapter 4. Planning Systems – Key Recommendations provide basic design guidelines for public and private sector investment in the neighborhood, with a focus on the Neighborhood Center. Many of the images in this section were identified by the workshop participants as representing preferred design for the area. As such, these guidelines are not regulatory but may be used by the Planning Division to make recommendations on development projects proposed in the Government Hill neighborhood. For example, in a platting case that is combining two lots into one lot, the Planning Division may reference the Pedestrian Systems guidelines (p. 82) to

recommend that the applicant connect an internal trail to public walkways at the perimeter of the property with any new proposed development. Some of these guidelines may be used in the creation of the overlay district, which will be the main guiding regulatory document for Government Hill's Neighborhood Center. The guidelines are categorized as "Priority" and "Advisory." "Priority" is considered essential while "Advisory" is optional in nature, though desired by the community. In all cases, the appropriateness of the specific design recommendation must be considered against a specific site or development proposal.