

Municipality of Anchorage Public Transportation Department



Documented Categorical Exclusion Worksheet:

Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I

AUGUST 2012

PREPARED BY:

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PREPARED FOR:

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

PLANNING DIVISION

3650-A EAST TUDOR ROAD

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AUGUST 2012

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FTA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION and DOCUMENTED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION WORKSHEET

Note: The purpose of this worksheet is to assist sponsoring agencies in gathering and organizing materials for environmental analysis required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), particularly for projects that may qualify as a documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE). The use and submission of this particular worksheet is NOT required. The worksheet is provided merely as a helpful tool in gathering and providing information deemed needed by FTA. **NOTE: Fields are expandable, so feel free to use more than a line or two to describe descriptions.**

Submission of the worksheet by itself does not meet NEPA requirements. FTA must concur in writing in the sponsoring agency's NEPA recommendation. Project activities may not begin until this process is complete. Contact the FTA Region 10 office at (206) 220-7954 if you have any questions or require assistance. If this is the first time you have filled out this form, FTA encourages you to contact us for guidance. **Please see the end of this document for new submittal procedures.** Check out Region 10's Environment web site (see link at the end of this document) with a list of topical resources.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Sponsoring Agency Municipality of Anchorage	Date Submitted	FTA Grant Number(s) (if known)
Project Title Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I		
Project Description (brief, 1-2 sentences) The focus of this project is the planning, design, contract administration and construction of the Phase I recommendations of the Dimond Intermodal Facility Feasibly Study. The project will enhance the existing transit station and services to include improvements to bus routes, providing more consistent travel times through the project area, gaining significant efficiency and on-time performance in the system. Improvements will also be made to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, providing safe and convenient access from the Dimond Transit Center to public rights-of-way.		
Purpose and Need for Project (brief, 1-2 sentences, include as an attachment if adopted statement is lengthy) The purpose for Phase I of this project is to provide safe and efficient pedestrian, bicycle, and transit mobility to and from the Dimond Transit Center by preserving the existing infrastructure, reducing bus travel time, allowing bi-directional bus travel, and providing pedestrian connectivity between the Dimond Transit Center and the surrounding area. Improvements in these areas will additionally enhance the viability of Phase II of this project, which involves integrating rail service at the Dimond Transit Center site.		
Project Location (include City and Street address) The Dimond Transit Center is located on the west side of the Dimond Center mall in the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska at 800 East Dimond Blvd, west of the Old Seward Highway.		
Project Contact (include phone number, mailing address and email address) Randy Bergt 3600 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue Anchorage, AK 99507 907-343-8285 BergtRD@ci.anchorage.ak.us		
If your project involves construction, include the following maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Vicinity (Please see Appendix A) • Project Site Plan (Please see Appendix B) • USGS quad (Please see Appendix C) 		

II. NEPA Class of Action

Answer the following questions to determine the project's potential class of action. If the answer to any of the questions in Sections A or B is "YES", contact the FTA Regional office to determine whether the project requires preparation of a NEPA environmental assessment (EA).

A. Will the project significantly impact the natural, social and/or economic environment?

- ☐ YES (contact FTA Regional office)
☒ NO (continue)

B.1 Is the significance of the project's social, economic or environmental impacts unknown?

- ☐ YES (contact FTA Regional office)
☒ NO (continue)

B.2 Is the project likely to require detailed evaluation of more than a few potential impacts?

- ☐ YES (contact FTA Regional office)
☒ NO (continue)

B.3 Is the project likely to generate intense public discussion, concern or controversy, even though it may be limited to a relatively small subset of the community?

- ☐ YES (contact FTA Regional office)
☒ NO (continue)

C.1 Does the project appear on the following list of potential Categorical Exclusions (CEs)?

The projects listed below are generally categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis under 23 CFR 771.117(c) unless certain circumstances exist, such as the presence of wetlands, historic buildings and structures, parklands and floodplains in the project area.

- ☒ YES (If checked AND there are no special circumstances, mark the applicable checkbox and briefly describe the activity below. Then, proceed to the signature block on the back page.)
☐ NO (continue to Section D)

- ☐ Activities not involving or directly leading to construction (technical studies, planning, preliminary engineering, etc.)
- ☐ Utility installations along or across a transit facility
- ☒ Construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, excluding those requiring construction in new right-of-way
- ☐ Installation of noise barriers or alterations to existing publicly-owned buildings to provide for noise reduction
- ☒ Landscaping

- ☒ Installation of fencing, signs, pavement markings, toll facilities, control centers, vehicle test centers, small passenger shelters, traffic signals, railroad warning devices, and signal controls with no substantial land acquisition or traffic disruption
- ☐ Emergency repairs under 23 USC 125
- ☐ Acquisition of scenic easements
- ☒ Ridesharing activities
- ☐ Bus, ferry, and rail car rehabilitation (including conversions to alternative fuels)
- ☒ Alterations to facilities or vehicles to make them accessible to elderly or handicapped persons
- ☐ Program administration (including safety programs), technical assistance, and operating assistance to continue existing service or increase service to meet routine changes in demand
- ☐ Purchase and lease of vehicles and equipment for use on existing facilities or new facilities that also qualify as CEs (including the capital cost of contracts for transit services)
- ☐ Track, railbed, and wayside system maintenance and improvements when carried out in existing right-of-way
- ☐ Purchase and installation of operating, maintenance and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) equipment to be located solely within the transit facility and with no significant off-site impacts
- ☐ Mitigation banking
- ☒ Resurfacing and restriping
- ☐ Routine maintenance

C.2 Brief Activity Description

Include a brief description of the activity and the reasoning for its categorical exclusion.
Please see **Appendix D**.

D. Does the project appear on the following list of potential documented Categorical Exclusions?

These projects may be categorical exclusions under 23 CFR § 771.177(d), but require additional documentation demonstrating that the specific conditions or criteria for the CEs are satisfied and that significant effects will not result.

- ☐ YES (Check and continue to Part III)
- ☒ NO (Contact FTA Regional Office)

- ☐ Grade separations requiring land acquisition to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings and bridge rehabilitation (including approaches to bridges and excluding historic bridges or bridges providing access to ecologically sensitive areas)
- ☐ Corridor Fringe Parking facilities (generally located adjacent to a mass transportation corridor such as an Interstate highway system)
- ☐ Carpool programs and activities requiring land acquisition and construction

- ☐ Safety improvements including seismic retrofit and mitigation of wildlife hazards
- ☐ Construction of new bus storage and maintenance facilities and new ITS control centers in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is consistent with existing zoning and located on a street with adequate capacity to handle anticipated traffic
- ☐ Rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing rail and bus buildings and ancillary facilities where only minor amounts of additional land are required and there is not a substantial increase in the number of users
- ☐ Construction of bus transfer facilities (an open area consisting of passenger shelters, boarding areas, kiosks, and related street improvements) when located in a commercial area or other high activity center in which there is adequate street capacity for projected bus traffic
- ☐ Construction of rail storage and maintenance facilities (or other similarly sized support facilities) in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is consistent with existing zoning and where there is no significant noise impact on the surrounding community
- ☐ Area-wide coordination of multiple ITS elements
- ☐ Advance land acquisition including:
 - Acquisition of underutilized private railroad rights-of-way (ROW) to ensure that adjacent land uses remain generally compatible with the continued transportation use of the ROW
 - Acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes, consistent with 23 CFR 771.117 (D)(12)

(Note: the eligibility of hardship and protective buys is very limited and must be approved, in writing, by the Regional FTA office before proceeding with any acquisition activities. Failure to do so will render the project ineligible for Federal participation.)

III. Information Required for Documented Categorical Exclusions

If you checked "Yes" to any of the options in Part II, Section D, complete Part III and submit to FTA.

A. Detailed Project Description

Include a project description and explain how the proposal satisfies the purpose and need identified in Part I.

Please see Appendix E

B. Location and Zoning

Attach a map identifying the project's location and surrounding land uses. Note any critical resource areas (historic, cultural or environmental) or sensitive noise or vibration receptors (schools, hospitals, churches, residences, etc). Briefly describe the existing zoning of the project area and indicate whether the proposed project is consistent. Include a description of the community (geographic, demographic, economic and population characteristics) in the vicinity of the project.

Please see Appendix F

C. Traffic

Describe potential traffic and parking impacts, including whether the existing roadways have adequate capacity to handle increased bus or other vehicular traffic. Include a map or diagram if the project will modify existing roadway configurations. Describe connectivity to other transportation facilities and modes.

The Dimond Intermodal Facility Feasibility Study (October 2011) looked in detail at traffic and parking impacts and forecast small changes in traffic and parking demand associated with this project. The proposed improvements to improve transit travel times and reliability are likely to also benefit vehicular traffic in the area.

D. Aesthetics

Will the project have an adverse effect on a scenic vista?

- ☒ No
☐ Yes, describe

Will the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

- ☒ No
☐ Yes, describe

Will the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

- ☒ No
☐ Yes, describe

E. Air Quality

Does the project have the potential to impact air quality?

- ☐ NO
☒ YES, describe

The pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facility improvements will encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use which will have a positive impact on air quality.

Is the project located in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-designated non-attainment or maintenance area?

- ☐ NO
☒ YES, indicate the criteria pollutant and contact FTA to determine if a hot spot analysis is necessary.

- ☒ Carbon Monoxide (CO)
☐ Ozone (O₃)
☐ Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

If the non-attainment area is also in a metropolitan area, was the project included in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) air quality conformity analysis?

- ☒ NO
☐ YES

Date of USDOT conformity finding

F. Coastal Zone

Is the proposed project located in a designated coastal zone management area?

- ☒ No
☐ Yes, describe coordination with the State regarding consistency with the coastal zone management plan and attach the State finding, if available.

G. Environmental Justice

Indicate whether the project will have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations. Describe any potential adverse effects. Describe outreach efforts targeted specifically at minority or low-income populations.

This project will not have an adverse impact on minority or low-income populations. The proposed improvements will benefit all current and future users of the People Mover system, a high percentage of whom fall into the minority or low-income population categories.

H. Floodplains

Is the proposed project located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year floodplain?

☒ No

☐ Yes, describe potential impacts and include the FEMA map with the project location identified.

I. Hazardous Materials

Is there any known or potential contamination at the project site?

☒ No, describe the steps taken to determine whether hazardous materials are present on the site.

All construction activities will occur at sites with existing development.

☐ Yes, note mitigation and clean-up measures that will be taken to remove hazardous materials from the project site.

J. Navigable Waterways

Does the proposed project cross or have the potential to impact a navigable waterway?

☒ No

☐ Yes, describe potential impacts and any coordination with the US Coast Guard.

K. Noise and vibration

Does the project have the potential to increase noise or vibration?

☒ NO

☐ YES, describe impact and provide map identifying sensitive receptors such as schools, hospitals, parks and residences. If the project will result in a change in noise and vibration sources, you must use FTA's "Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment" methodology to determine impact.

L. Prime and Unique Farmlands

Does the proposal involve the use of any prime or unique farmlands?

☒ No

☐ Yes, describe potential impacts and any coordination with the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

M. Resources

Does the project have the potential to impact any of the resources listed below?

☒ NO

☐ YES, if checked, describe resource and impacts. Impacts to cultural, historic, or recreational properties may trigger Section 4(f) evaluation, which requires consideration of avoidance alternatives.

☐ Natural

☐ Cultural

☐ Historic—Indicate whether there are any historic resources in the vicinity of the project. Attach photos of structures more than 45 years old that are within or adjacent to the project site.

☐ Recreational

☐ Biological--The project sponsor must obtain a list of threatened and endangered species in the project area from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-Fisheries (NOAA-Fisheries). Attach a current species map (within six (6) months. Describe any critical habitat, essential fish habitat or other ecologically sensitive areas. Check out Region 10's Environment web site (see below for link) more information.

☐ Other, describe

N. Seismic

Are there any unusual seismic conditions in the project vicinity? If so, indicate on project map and describe the seismic standards to which the project will be designed.

☒ No

☐ Yes, describe

According to the Municipality of Anchorage, the project site is within Zone 3 (Moderate Ground Failure Susceptibility).

O. Water Quality

Does the project have the potential to impact water quality, including during construction.

☐ No

☒ Yes, describe potential impacts

Storm water runs from the Dimond Center parking lot and Dimond Transit Center into a nearby ditch and from there into the storm water system. Normal precautions will be taken during construction to ensure construction debris does not reach this system.

Will there be an increase in new impervious surface or restored pervious surface?

☐ No

☒ Yes, describe potential impacts and proposed treatment for stormwater runoff.

Most of the improvements will be alterations to existing impervious surfaces; however, one of the proposed sidewalks may be built on existing pervious surface, resulting in as much as 7,000 square feet of additional impervious surface.

Is the project located in the vicinity of an EPA-designated sole source aquifer?

☒ No

☐ Yes, describe potential impacts and include a map of the sole source aquifer with project location identified.

P. Wetlands

Does the proposal temporarily or permanently impact wetlands or require alterations to streams or waterways?

☒ No

☐ Yes, describe potential impacts

Q. Construction Impacts

Describe the construction plan and identify impacts due to construction noise, utility disruption, debris and spoil disposal, and staging areas. Address air and water quality impacts, safety and security issues, and disruptions to traffic and access to property.

Construction activities are guided by municipal and state regulations. These regulations tend to minimize or mitigate construction impacts.

R. Cumulative and Indirect Impacts

Are cumulative and indirect impacts likely?

☒ No

☐ Yes, describe the reasonably foreseeable:

a) Cumulative Impacts, which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

b) Indirect impacts, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect impacts may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air, water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

S. Property Acquisition

If property is to be acquired for the project, indicate whether acquisition will result in relocation of businesses or individuals.

Note: To ensure the eligibility for federal participation, grantees may not acquire property with either local or federal funds prior to completing the NEPA process and receiving written concurrence in the NEPA recommendation. For acquisitions over \$500,000, FTA concurrence in the property's valuation is also required.

No property acquisitions are anticipated with this project.

T. Public Notification

Describe public outreach efforts undertaken on behalf of the project. Indicate opportunities for public hearings, (e.g. board meetings, open houses, special hearings). Indicate any significant concerns expressed by agencies or the public regarding the project.

The Dimond Intermodal Feasibility Study included input from public and project stakeholders and is posted to the People Mover website. The design phase for this project will include public involvement, such as public meetings, news briefs, and updates on the People Mover web site.

U. Mitigation Measures

Describe all measures to be taken to mitigate project impacts.

Construction will be managed as a Municipality of Anchorage or Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) project and is regulated by the Municipality of Anchorage Standard Specifications and/or the ADOT&PF specifications for design and construction, including Storm Water Pollution Prevention plans. Construction occurs during daylight hours and generally does not extend into evenings.

V. Other Federal Actions

Provide a list of other federal NEPA actions related to the proposed project or in the vicinity.

N/A

W. State and Local Policies and Ordinances

Is the project in compliance with all applicable state and local policies and ordinances?

☐ No, describe

☒ Yes

X. Related Federal and State/Local Actions

☐ Corps of Engineers (Section 10, Section 404)

☐ Coast Guard Permit

☐ Coastal Zone Management Certification

☐ Critical Area Ordinance Permit

☐ ESA and EFH Compliance

☐ Flood Plain Development Permit

☐ Forest Practice Act Permit

☐ Hydraulic Project Approval

☒ Local Building or Site Development Permits

☒ Local Clearing and Grubbing Permit

☐ National Historic Preservation Act-Section 106

☐ National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Baseline General for Construction

☐ Shoreline Permit

☐ Solid Waste Discharge Permit

Sole Source Aquifer

☐ Section 4(f) or 6(f) (Recreational and Historic Properties)

☐ Section 106 (Historic Properties)

☐ Stormwater Site Plan (SSP)

☐ Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (TESC)

☐ Water Rights Permit

☐ Water Quality Certification—Section 401

☐ Tribal Permits (if any, describe below)

☐ Other

Describe as applicable:

Y. Submitted By:

RANDY BERGT CAPITAL PROJECTS ENGINEER MDA, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION 907.343.8285	Date: NOVEMBER 30 TH , 2012
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Z. Approved By:

Federal Transit Administration	Date:
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Submit two paper copies of this form, attachments, and a transmittal letter recommending a NEPA finding to the address below, or submit an electronic version to fta.tro10mail@dot.gov. Contact FTA at the number below if you are unsure of these procedures. Modifications are typically necessary. When the document is approved, FTA may request additional copies.

Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
915 2nd Avenue, Suite 3142
Seattle, WA 98174-1002

phone: (206) 220-7954
fax: (206) 220-7959

For additional links to other agencies or for further topical guidance go to Region 10's [Environment](#) web site.

Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I

APPENDIX A

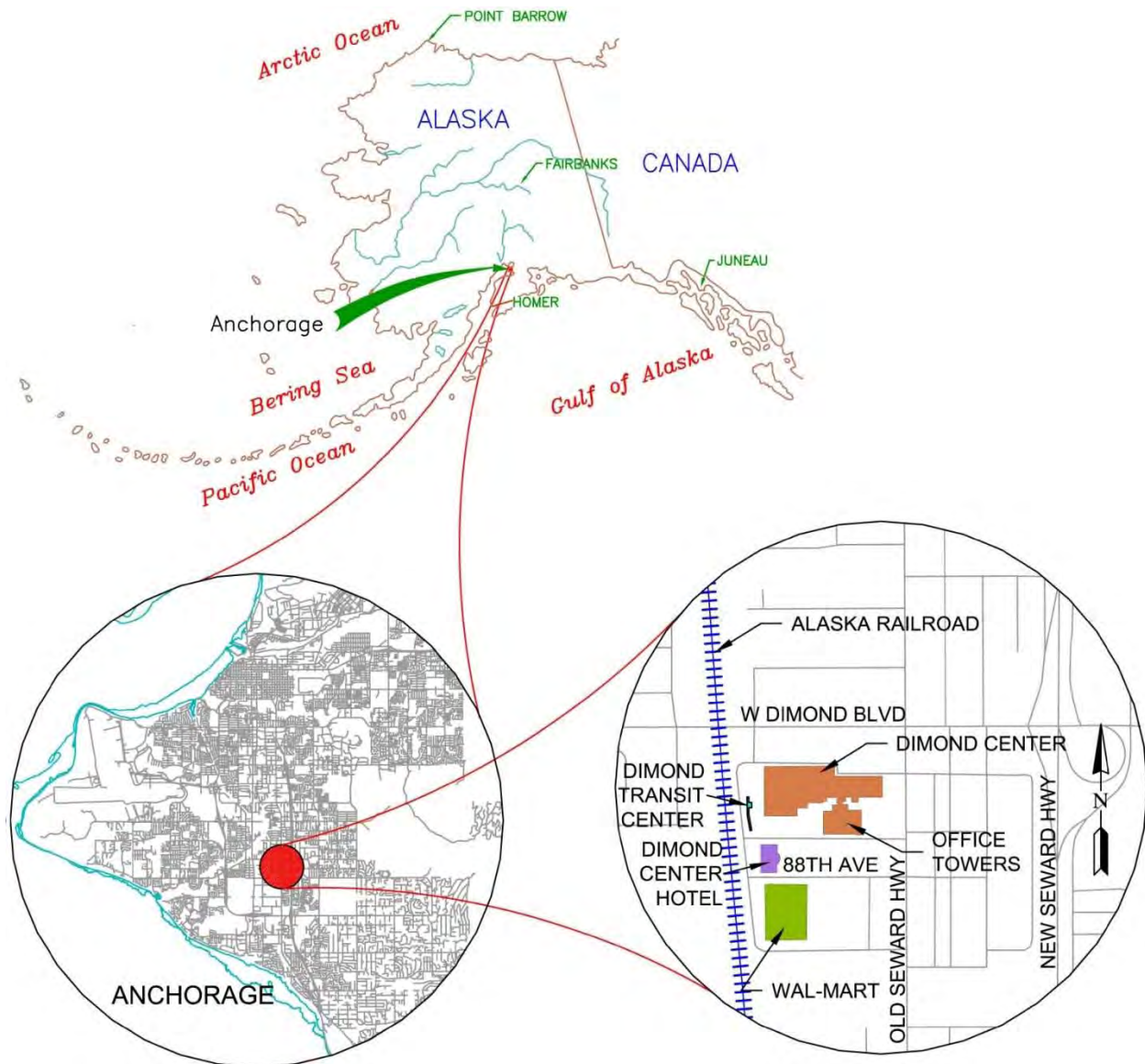
Project Vicinity

Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I
Appendix A

The Dimond Transit Center is a bus transfer facility located in the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska (MOA). The bus facility is owned and operated by the Public Transportation Department (PTD), but is located on private property – a site with a large, indoor shopping mall and office complex known as the Dimond Center and owned by the Ashlock family. A long standing (25-year) agreement between the property owner and the Municipality of Anchorage was enacted in 1988. That agreement continues and is being cooperatively updated to continue the longstanding relationship for the next 25 years.

The Dimond Transit Center is the transfer point for five bus routes and has a heated, enclosed waiting area. Approximately 1200 persons board or alight at the Dimond Transit Center each day. Volunteers from the Retired Senior Volunteer program staff a vending area within the enclosed waiting area where patrons can purchase snacks, coffee, and bus passes. A dynamic message sign provides up-to-the-minute departure time estimates for all five of the bus routes serving the Dimond Transit Center. Railroad tracks belonging to the Alaska Railroad Corporation run alongside the Dimond Center property. These tracks carry freight and passenger trains daily, with passenger train service currently limited to the summer months.

Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I
Appendix A




Project Vicinity

Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I

APPENDIX B












Project Site Plan

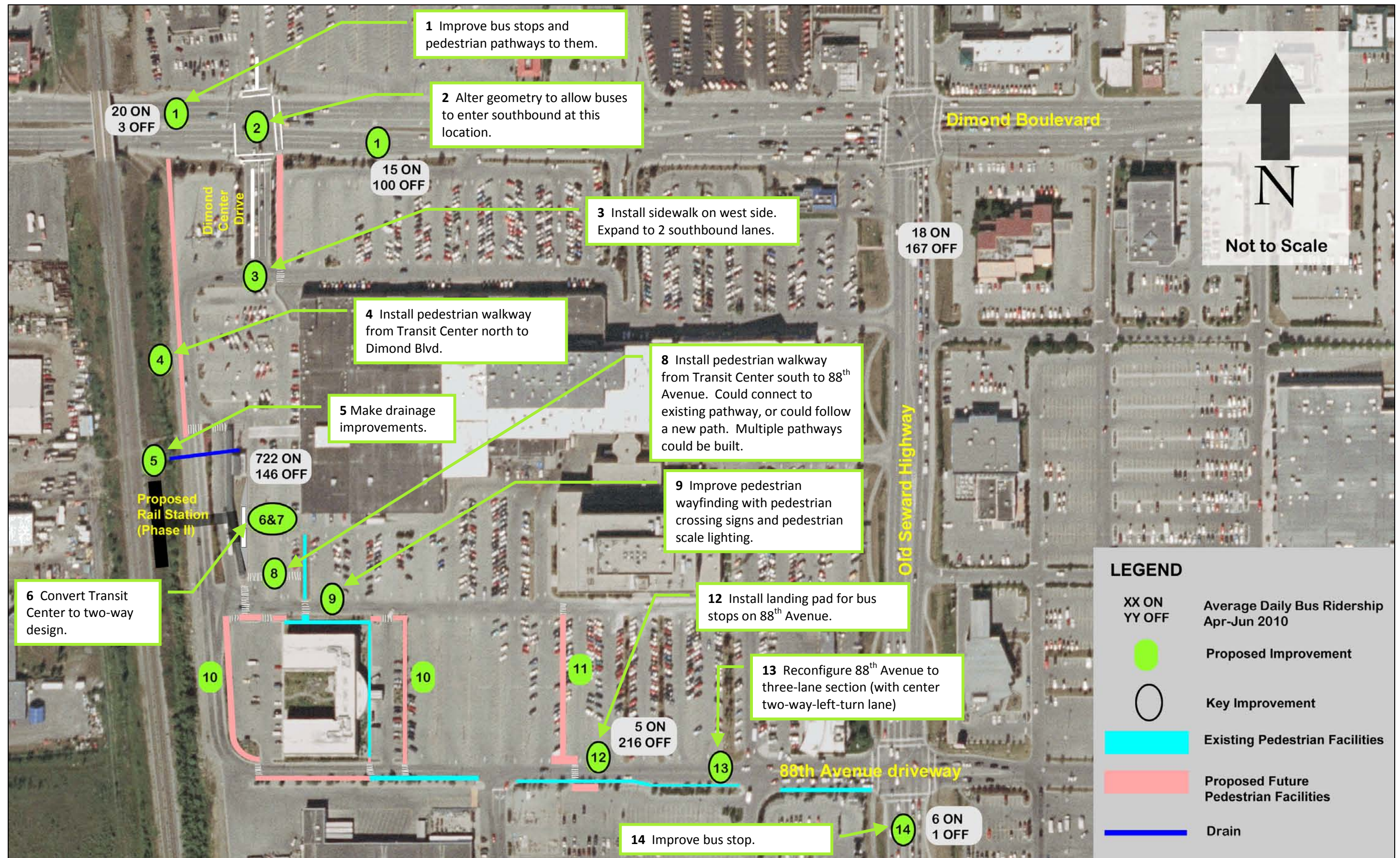
-  These improvements meet the identified key needs of Phase I to:
- allow bi-directional bus travel
 - result in travel-time savings for buses
 - preserve existing infrastructure

- provide pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the Transit Center and Dimond Boulevard and, or 88th Avenue

Proposed Improvements for Documented Categorical Exclusion

(modified from Dimond Intermodal Facility Feasibility Study)

	Location	Proposed Improvement	People Mover	Other Stakeholders				Multi-Modal and, or Transit Purpose	Other Effects
				Dimond Center	ARRC	DOT or MOA Traffic	Other Property Owners		
1	Dimond Boulevard bus stops (north side of Dimond Center)	Improve pedestrian walkways from bus stops to destinations; add other improvements such as illumination and bus shelters in accordance with Design Criteria Manual.				X		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhances waiting area.Provides pedestrian connections.	
2	Intersection of Dimond Center Drive with Dimond Boulevard	Alter median noses and right turn radii to allow buses to enter at Dimond Center Drive. Alter northbound lane assignments to eliminate split phasing. Add pedestrian crossing on west approach. Alter southbound approach to line up with altered northbound through lane.		X		X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Allows bi-directional bus travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decreases vehicle delay for Dimond Center Customers
3	Dimond Center Drive	Install sidewalk and pedestrian crossing on west side. Expand to two southbound lanes with a right turn channelizing island at the parking circulation roadway. Replaces Feasibility Study recommendation to reorient ‘T’. See attached analysis.		X		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides a safe pedestrian facility between bus stops and Dimond Center.Two southbound lanes decreases transit delay for both directions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of 16 to 32 parking spacesDecreases vehicle delay for Dimond Center customers.Improves safety for Dimond Center pedestrian or transit users.
4	West side of property, from transit center north to Dimond Boulevard	Install sidewalk, pedestrian scale lighting, and a crosswalk to the transit center		X	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides safe, conflict-free pedestrian connections between Transit Center/ Intermodal Facility and Dimond Boulevard and pathway systems north.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides additional pedestrian customer access into Dimond Center.
5	Bus Transit Center	Drainage Improvements		X	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Preserves existing and proposed infrastructure.	
6	Bus Transit Center	Redesign for two-way traffic		X				<ul style="list-style-type: none">Allows bi-directional bus travel.	
7	Bus Transit Center	Replace light fixtures with LED fixtures						<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cost savings.	
8	Southwest corner of Dimond Center to transit center	Install crosswalk		X				<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides pedestrian connections between area generators and transit facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of 9 parking spaces.
9	Pedestrian route from Dimond Transit Center to 88 th Avenue driveway	Install pedestrian crossing signs and pedestrian scale lighting. Dimond Center also expressed interest in flashing lights on pedestrian signs.		X				<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improves pedestrian safety and wayfinding.	
10	Pedestrian sidewalk in front of Dimond Hotel	Build sidewalk pathway further away from hotel. It may be possible to build multiple pathways, to provide several options. Property ownership needs to be established.						<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improves pedestrian facilities.	
11	Parking Lot from 88 th Avenue driveway bus stop north to Dimond Center entrance	Install pedestrian pathway. Suggested by Dimond Center. People Mover in agreement contingent on funding.		X				<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides pedestrian connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Can be used by patrons who arrive by bus or by car.
12	Bus stop on 88 th Avenue driveway	Build landing platform, pedestrian crossing from bus pad to sidewalk on south side with pedestrian ramps, and bus pad on south side of road for buses traveling counter-clockwise		X			X Wal-mart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improves accessibility.	
13	88 th Avenue driveway	Expand/reconfigure to three-lane section with center two-way-left-turn lane. Suggested by Dimond Center. This option was analyzed by Kinney Engineering (see attached).		X			X Wal-mart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decreases delay for transit buses.Will enhance bus two-way circulation within site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of 20 parking spaces.Decreases customer vehicle delay and aids parking circulation.
14	Old Seward Highway bus stop (south of 88 th Avenue driveway)	Improve pedestrian walkways from bus stop to destinations, add other improvements such as illumination and bus shelters in accordance with Design Criteria Manual.				X		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improves access to bus stop.Improves alighting/boarding area	



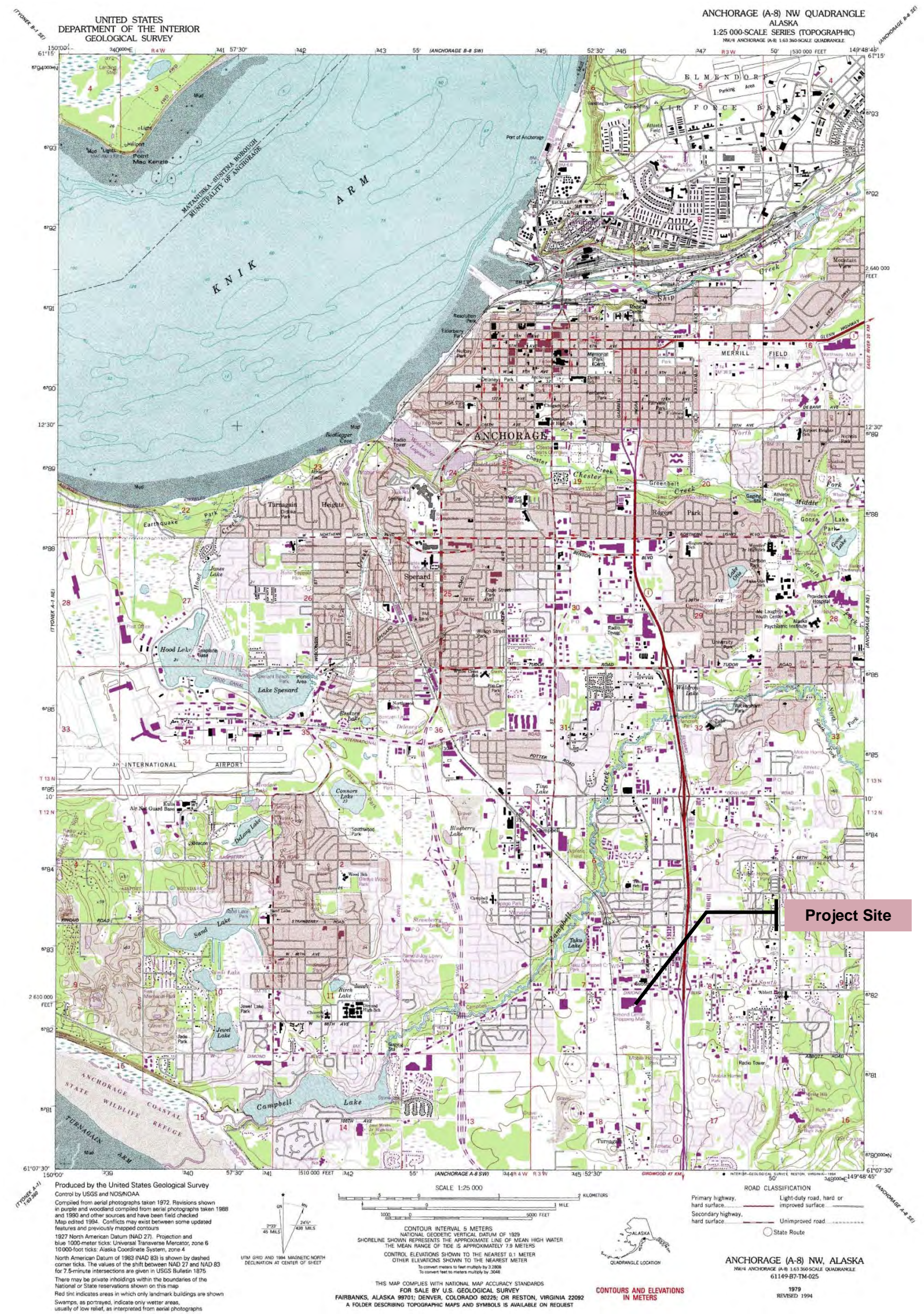
Documented Categorical Exclusion:
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APPENDIX C

USGS Quad

Anchorage A-8 NW Quadrangle

Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I
Appendix C



Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I

APPENDIX D

Brief Activity Description

Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I
Appendix D

This application is for Phase I of a multi-phase project to develop an intermodal facility for South Anchorage, Alaska. The proposed location of the intermodal facility is at the site of the existing Dimond Transit Center, located to the west of a large mall known as the Dimond Center, between the Dimond Center and the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) tracks. Phase I will improve the existing transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, providing immediate transit operation and user benefits in addition to supporting a future rail station.

The proposed improvements are based on recommendations of the Dimond Intermodal Facility Feasibility Study (October 2011), with modifications developed in consultation with the Dimond Center. The Dimond Center has agreed to these improvements, many of which will be built on Dimond Center property, and recognizes that these improvements will also benefit patrons and employees of the Dimond Center.

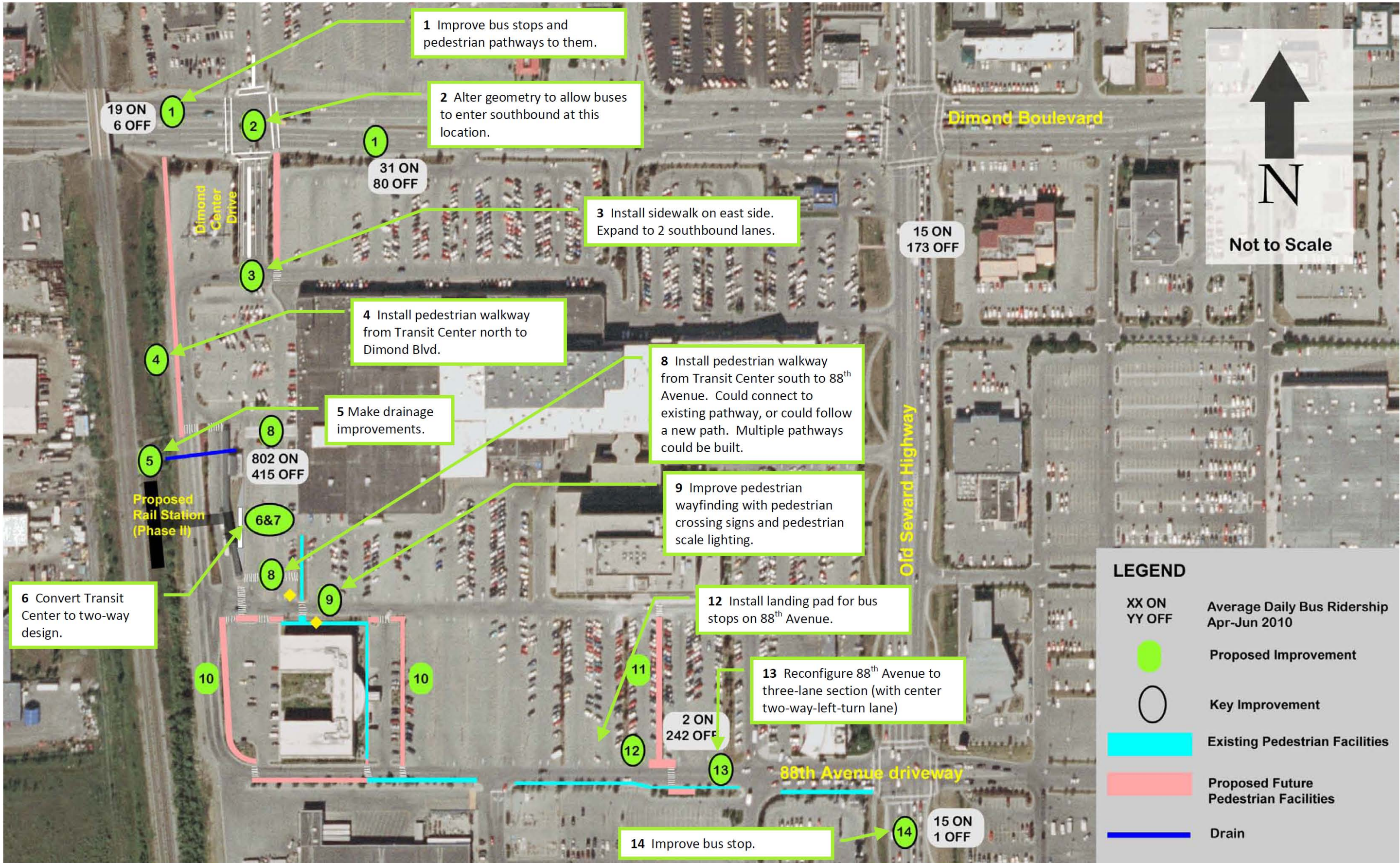
The identified key needs of Phase I of the Dimond Intermodal Facility project are to: preserve existing infrastructure, reduce bus travel time, allow bi-directional bus travel, and provide pedestrian connectivity between the Dimond Transit Center and Dimond Boulevard and between the Dimond Transit Center and the 88th Avenue driveway.

To meet these needs, the following improvements are recommended. These improvements are depicted on the proposed improvements diagram that follows.

1. Improve the bus stops on Dimond Boulevard just east and west of Dimond Center Drive, improve pedestrian walkways from the bus stops to nearby destinations and add other improvements such as illumination and bus shelters, in accordance with the Design Criteria Manual of the Municipality of Anchorage.
2. Improve the intersection of Dimond Center Drive with Dimond Boulevard; alter intersection geometry (median noses, corner radii, etc.) to allow buses to enter at Dimond Center Drive. Additionally, alter northbound lane assignments to eliminate split phasing of the traffic signal and alter the southbound approach to accommodate the altered northbound through lane. Add a pedestrian crossing on the west approach.
3. Install sidewalk along the east side of Dimond Center Drive and a pedestrian crossing south to the Dimond Center. Expand to two southbound lanes with a right turn channelizing island at the T-intersection to the south.
4. Install pedestrian walkway from the Dimond Transit Center north to Dimond Boulevard on the west side of the Dimond Center property, along the boundary with ARRC property to include pedestrian scale lighting, a fence between the sidewalk and the railroad tracks, and a crosswalk from the sidewalk to the transit center.
5. Improve drainage at the existing Dimond Transit Center.
6. Redesign the existing Dimond Transit Center to allow for two-way bus traffic.
7. Replace transit center light fixtures with LED fixtures.

Documented Categorical Exclusion:
Dimond Intermodal Facility Phase I
Appendix D

8. Cover the existing walkway from the Dimond Transit Center to the Dimond Center. Install pedestrian walkways from the Dimond Transit Center south to the 88th Avenue driveway.
9. Improve pedestrian wayfinding with pedestrian crossing signs and installation of pedestrian scale lighting on the existing sidewalk between the Dimond Center and the Dimond Hotel.
10. Install an alternative sidewalk or sidewalks to connect the Dimond Transit Center and the sidewalk on the south side of the 88th Avenue driveway so that pedestrians do not have to travel across the front entrance of the Dimond hotel.
11. Install a covered pedestrian pathway and pedestrian-scale lighting from the existing bus stop on the 88th Avenue driveway north to the Dimond Center entrance.
12. Install improved landing pad for the bus stop on the 88th Avenue driveway to include a landing platform on both sides of the road, and a pedestrian crossing.
13. Reconfigure 88th Avenue driveway to a three-lane cross section with a center two-way-left-turn lane.
14. Improve the bus stop on the Old Seward Highway, just south of the 88th Avenue driveway to include improved pedestrian walkways from the bus stop to destinations and add improvements such as illumination and a bus shelter, in accordance with the Design Criteria Manual.



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APPENDIX E

Detailed Project Description

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Public Transportation Department recently completed the Dimond Intermodal Facility Feasibility Study (October 2011) which considered the feasibility of expanding public transportation services in the area of the Dimond Transit Center to include a train station and service to train passengers. In addition to forecasting bus and rail transit ridership for an intermodal facility, the study made recommendations for improvements to the existing infrastructure. The study recommended that the project should move forward with a phased approach:

- **Phase I.** Improve onsite pedestrian and bus facilities to increase the effectiveness of the existing system.
- **Phase II.** Add rail service and provide a connection between the rail platform and the existing bus and pedestrian facilities.
- **Phase III.** Build other amenities as needed (such as a new intermodal station building or parking garage).

The focus for the current project is to implement the Phase I recommendations from the feasibility study, the key purposes of which are to:

- preserve existing infrastructure
- reduce bus travel time
- allow bi-directional bus travel
- provide pedestrian connectivity between the Dimond Transit Center and Dimond Boulevard and between the Dimond Transit Center and the 88th Avenue driveway.

HISTORY

The Dimond Center and the surrounding commercial development in South Anchorage at the corner of Dimond Boulevard and Old Seward Highway have long been part of an important transportation, retail, and employment center for the MOA. About 20 years ago, the Dimond Transit Center was built on property leased to the MOA by the Dimond Center. This facility, which today serves five bus routes and 750 riders a day, has expanded transportation options for the South Anchorage area. Surveys undertaken by the Dimond Center have indicated that more than 25 percent of persons employed at the Dimond Center travel to work via the bus system, emphasizing the important role public transit plays in supporting the commercial viability of the area.

Over time, the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) and the Dimond Center have discussed the benefits of building a train station in the vicinity of the Dimond Transit Center. This location is seen as particularly promising because existing railroad tracks run just to the west of the Dimond Center at the center of a strong economic hub for the city. In 2002, ARRC published the South Central Network Commuter Study and Operation Plan that looked at the feasibility of commuter rail in Anchorage and the surrounding areas and included a rail station near the Dimond Center as part of the proposed commuter rail network. In 2005, the Dimond Center prepared the South Anchorage Intermodal Transportation Center Project Prospectus, which resulted in a \$2.8 million earmark being appropriated towards the development of an intermodal

facility integrating rail and bus transit facilities in South Anchorage. In 2008, ARRC presented the Dimond Center Intermodal Transportation Center Project Development Plan to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), proposing that the earmarked money be spent on preparing NEPA documents, preliminary engineering, and construction of the siding and platform boarding station needed for a train station to be built in the area of the Dimond Center. The FTA asked for a feasibility study to be performed prior to design and construction. This task was given to the MOA's Public Transportation Department to oversee and was completed in October 2011.

PROJECT NEED: PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, TRANSIT FACILITY, AND TRAVELWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Pedestrian and bicycle modes provide needed access to the existing transit center and the proposed intermodal center from surrounding residences and businesses. Looking at the intermodal facility as an origin point, there are few residential units within a comfortable walking distance of the Dimond Transit Center (except the Dimond Center Hotel located directly south of the Dimond Transit Center), but there are many residential units within a 10 minute bike ride or bus ride. As a destination point, the pedestrian and bicycle mode becomes very important, as there are many businesses where bus or train riders could work or shop within comfortable walking or biking distance from the intermodal center. Reducing pedestrian walking distance and enhancing the pedestrian/bicycle travel experience would decrease the overall travel time for bus and rail transit riders and enhance the overall travel experience, making bus and rail transit more viable.

The bus transit mode provides an alternate mode of transportation for travelers throughout the MOA. Five bus routes serve the Dimond Transit Center. Four routes travel from the Dimond Transit Center to the Downtown Transit Center, with one of those routes also serving the airport and another route also continuing further south. The fifth route travels between the Dimond Center and the Muldoon transfer station, serving the University-Medical district. Enhancements to operations at the Dimond Transit Center could improve transit service throughout the city by increasing reliability on routes serving the Dimond Transit Center, which would also extend to connecting routes.

Bus transit is important to the intermodal facility because it works synergistically with other modes of travel. For example, just as the catchment area for bus service is extended and the distance bicyclists can travel is increased when bicyclists can take their bicycles on the bus, bus transit can serve as a feeder service to rail transit, extending the service area for the rail station and increasing the travel options for bus passengers.

BUS TRANSIT OPERATIONAL AND FACILITY NEEDS

Bus ridership data indicate that the Dimond Transit Center is an attractive facility for its patrons. Although alighting bus patrons use nearby bus stops as frequently as they use the Dimond Transit Center, the majority of bus patrons in the area choose to board the bus at the Dimond Transit Center. At the Dimond Transit Center, an enclosed facility provides a warm place to wait in the wintertime or on rainy or windy days. Volunteers from the Retired Senior Volunteer

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program staff a vending area where patrons can purchase snacks, coffee, and bus passes. A dynamic message sign provides up-to-the-minute departure time estimates for all five of the bus routes serving the Dimond Transit Center.

Consistent operations through the Dimond Center site are very important to the bus transit system. To minimize costs while maintaining memory headways (where the buses for a given route depart at the same time each hour), bus drivers normally drive several different routes during their shifts. The disadvantage of this is that delays to one route can affect many other routes throughout the bus system. Thus, the on-time record for the bus system depends upon bus travel times on each route being consistent from day to day as well as seasonally. In addition to needing consistent operations, it is advantageous to reduce bus travel time as much as possible, since riding the bus becomes more attractive as overall travel times decrease. These types of operational issues were considered in developing the “needs” list for the bus transit system.

In addition to operational matters, the bus facilities themselves were reviewed. Although the size and type of facility at the Dimond Transit Center successfully serves the current ridership level and the level anticipated in the future, there are some issues at the Dimond Transit Center that should be addressed. In addition, enhancements are recommended for several nearby bus stops, including the bus stop along 88th Avenue private drive alignment (on Dimond Center property), in the parking lot between the Dimond Center and Wal-mart.

A list of the identified problems and recommended improvements for the bus transit operations and facilities is found below in Table 1.

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Suggested Improvement</i>
Because of heavy traffic, bus travel time through the Dimond Center site nearly doubles during December peak holiday shopping times as compared to the rest of the year	Reconfigure the 88 th Avenue driveway as a three-lane section with a center two-way-left-turn lane. Redesign intersection of Dimond Center Drive with Dimond Boulevard. Expand Dimond Center Drive to two southbound lanes.
Due to geometric constraints, buses can only travel clockwise through the Dimond Center site, limiting bus stop locations in the area	Reconstruct intersection of Dimond Center Drive with Dimond Boulevard to allow buses to access Dimond Transit Center from Dimond Center Drive (private drive). Dimond Transit Center may also need improvements to allow two-way traffic.
Dimond Transit Center cannot accommodate 5 parked buses at one time (one for each route)	Reconfigure transit facility.
Broken brickwork at Dimond Transit Center and ponding in nearby parking lot	Perform a drainage study for the Dimond Transit Center and the surrounding area.
Bus stop on 88 th Avenue (on Dimond Center property) not accessible	Provide boarding platform for discharging passengers. Provide ramps to access sidewalk on south side of roadway. Provide sidewalk north to Dimond Center
Other nearby bus stops are fairly minimal, without standard amenities, in spite of high ridership levels.	Improve nearby bus stops on Dimond Boulevard and on the Old Seward Highway to include new walkways, illumination and bus shelters.

Table 1: Identified Problems and Recommended Improvements for Bus Transit Mode

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NEEDS

Pedestrian volume studies and existing facilities inventory studies undertaken as part of the Feasibility Study identified several areas needing improvement for the pedestrian and bicycle environment. Because the surrounding area is primarily a destination, the viability of the Dimond Center Intermodal Facility depends upon transit riders (both bus and train) being able to access the nearby employment, retail, and entertainment facilities once they have arrived at the Dimond Center Intermodal Facility. The attractiveness of the surrounding area increases as the number of businesses users can comfortably access increases.

Improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities have a wider benefit than simply the increased viability of the intermodal facility. Businesses in the area and their patrons also benefit. Patrons are more likely to visit several businesses in one trip if the walking environment is such that they

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can park once and visit several locations without having to re-enter the traffic stream and locate a new parking spot. The improved walking environment could also decrease traffic congestion in the area. Although busy streets do attract patrons to nearby businesses, heavily congested streets are more likely to discourage shoppers.

Problems identified in the pedestrian and bicycle environment and a general description of recommended improvements are contained in Table 2.

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Suggested Improvement</i>
Disjointed pedestrian access routes	New continuous and consistent walking paths and street crossings to fully connect existing pedestrian routes to destinations.
Difficult wayfinding	Install pedestrian crossing signs and pedestrian-scale lighting along pedestrian routes.
Missing pedestrian access routes	New walking paths from the Dimond Transit Center to Dimond Boulevard and from the Dimond Center to the 88 th Avenue driveway.
No detectable warning surfaces	Consider installation of detectable warning surfaces along pedestrian access routes wherever the route crosses a vehicular pathway, especially where the vehicular traffic is heavy and relatively high speed (such as along 88 th Avenue, even though it is a private driveway).
Existing pedestrian route passes directly in front of the Dimond Hotel	Although it is desirable to connect the Dimond Center Hotel to the pedestrian network, it is undesirable for all pedestrians to pass directly in front of the hotel. Consider installing a new pedestrian access route to bypass the front of the hotel.
Many pedestrians walk through parking lots or in vehicular pathways	Improve pedestrian wayfinding, to help pedestrians find safer travel routes. In addition, consider existing pedestrian travel routes when designing new pedestrian access routes.
Snow removal is not consistent along the pedestrian access route	Provide covered pedestrian walkways, where practical.

Table 2: Identified Problems and Recommended Improvements for Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Modes

PROJECT BENEFITS

This project focuses on improving transit facilities and providing benefits to system users as it pertains to the proposed Dimond Intermodal Facility. These transportation improvements are likely to also provide benefits to other groups.

PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS

The primary benefit to pedestrians and bicyclists will be increased safety and a more attractive environment. Pedestrians and bicyclists will also have more and better options for switching transportation modes, if they desire. All non-automobile modes of travel are enhanced and promoted with better pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

BUS TRANSIT

Bus transit users are likely to experience improved bus reliability and decreased travel times as a result of this project. They will also have more and better options for switching transportation modes, if they desire.

The bus transit system will be able to better preserve infrastructure (due to drainage improvements), have safer bus operations, and may also experience increased ridership because of improved reliability, decreased travel times, and new mode choices.

RAIL TRANSIT

This project creates an environment that improves the possibility of success for a commuter rail program by improving the attractiveness of the destination.

BUSINESS OWNERS

This project enhances the attractiveness of the commercial areas for employees and customers served by the Dimond Transit Center by reducing some delay due to congestion in the surrounding parking areas and streets and by encouraging pedestrian trips between shopping areas. It also provides tourists with better access to these areas.

COMMUNITY

Some benefits may well be felt by the community in general. The Dimond Intermodal Facility and related improvements are likely to reduce vehicle miles traveled in the MOA because of improved facilities for non-motorized and public transit trips. In addition, the project provides a new transportation mode option for both citizens of and visitors to Anchorage.

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APPENDIX F

Location and Zoning

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The Dimond Transit Center, which is currently served by five People Mover bus routes, lies just west of the Dimond Center mall in South Anchorage, AK, adjacent to the ARRC rail line. The transit center is the proposed location of the Dimond Center Intermodal Facility. The area immediately around the Dimond Transit Center is zoned Business (B-3), with the surrounding area zoned either Business (B-3) or Industrial (I-1) (see figure on next page). There are no critical resource areas within the project area or adjacent to it. The only possible sensitive noise or vibration receptor is the Dimond Hotel, located just south of the Dimond Transit Center.

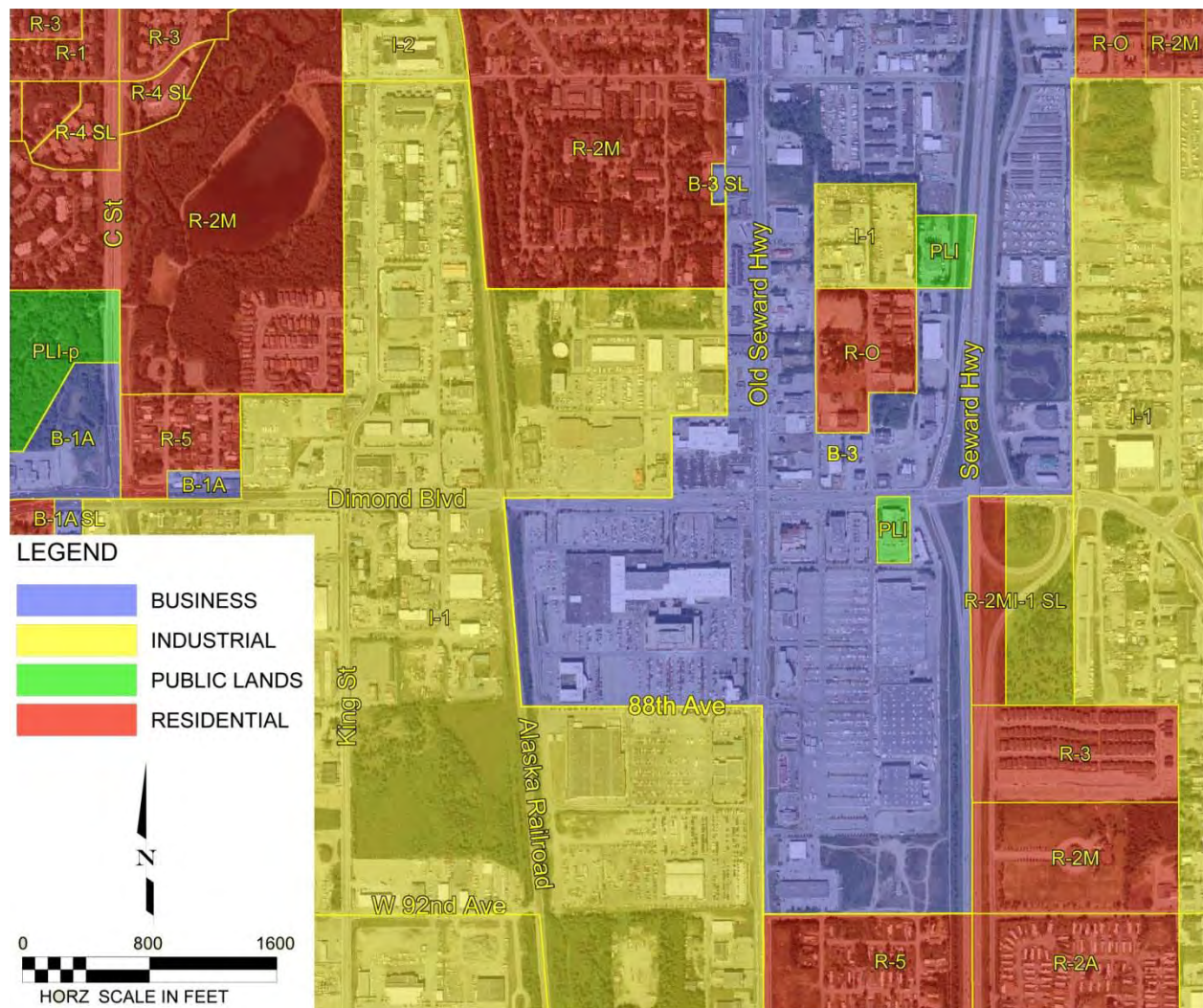
The transit center is located on commercial property owned by the Dimond Center, located at the southwest quadrant of the intersection of East Dimond Boulevard and Old Seward Highway. It is Alaska's largest shopping center, with approximately 728,000 square feet (sf) of gross leasable area (GLA) and more than 200 stores, including Best Buy, Old Navy and a nine-screen Regal Cinema. The Dimond Center complex also includes a six-story office building (120,000 sf) immediately south of the mall complex.. Within the mall, there is an ice rink, a bowling alley, an athletic club, and a US Postal Service branch.

The Dimond Center opened with 174,000 sf GLA in 1977. In 1981, it underwent a major expansion, more than doubling in size. The office tower, including the ice rink, bowling alley, and athletic club was completed in 1987. In 1996, the theater megaplex was constructed on the second floor of the mall. The Dimond Hotel was built on a mall outparcel in 2002. Also in 2002, the previous Alaska Marketplace store was demolished and replaced with a Best Buy, slightly expanding the size of the mall. The mall is currently undergoing a similar small expansion in preparation for the arrival of an Olive Garden restaurant.

South of the Dimond Center is a Wal-mart Supercenter, which opened in 1994 with 167,000 sf and later expanded to a Super Wal-mart, with about 200,000 sf. Construction on the expansion was completed in 2009. North of the Dimond Center, across Dimond Boulevard, is a strip mall with stores such as David's Bridal, Bed Bath and Beyond, and Pet Smart. Many of these stores opened in the last few years. On the opposite (east) side of the Old Seward Highway are additional shopping destinations, including Sam's Club and Sports Authority. Just to the east of this shopping complex is the Seward Highway, the major north-south highway route in the Anchorage area. This segment of the Seward Highway operates as a freeway and includes a diamond / partial cloverleaf interchange with East Dimond Boulevard. The Seward Highway provides highway access to Girdwood and Whittier to the south and connects to the Glenn Highway to the north, providing access to the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Valley.

In the Draft Land Use Plan Map that has been approved by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission to supplement the Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, the area is proposed to be designated as a Regional Commercial Center. The Regional Commercial Center designation encourages mixed uses, including commercial, office, entertainment, transit, and housing. The improvements proposed with this project are consistent with this plan.

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Project Area Zoning Map