

Municipality of Anchorage

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 11, 2007

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

THRU: Tom Nelson, Director
Planning Department

FROM: Tom Davis, Senior Planner
Physical Planning Division

SUBJECT: Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan
PZC Case 2007-076
Issue-Response Addendum

The Issue-Response **Addendum** on the following pages addresses questions and comments made by members of the Planning and Zoning Commission during its review of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan Issue-Response Summary at its meeting on May 14, 2007. The Addendum covers only those issues from the original Issue-Response Summary document (dated May 14) which garnered additional comment from the Commission.

The issues on the following pages appear in the same order (and with the same issue numbers) as in the May 14 Issue-Response Summary. As before, each numbered issue-response item begins as a summary statement of what is the issue or comment. A response with a recommendation from the Planning Department follows.

A section of technical edits and corrections of miscellaneous errata in the public hearing draft Plan appears at the end of this addendum.

The Commission is scheduled to deliberate on the Downtown Plan on June 11, 2007. A hardcopy of this memorandum and the minutes of the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting of May 14, 2007 will be provided in the Commission's packet for the June 11 meeting.

Addendum to Land Use and Economic Development Issues
(Issues 15, 20, 22, 24 and 26)

15. Issue: Development Criteria for Opportunity Sites

- At the May 14 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, Planning concurred with a change which had been suggested by Nancy Pease after getting some clarification.

Response: Planning recommends changing the last bulleted criteria on page 65 to read:

- New projects should be designed to preserve views outward to the natural environments as well as views inward to **usable outdoor public space** within the city center.

20. Issue: Town Square Park – Changes to the Park

- The Downtown Plan should identify the current role and functions of Town Square Park. If no major change from current functions is suggested, then clarify this. (*Bruce Phelps, Toni Jones*)

Response: Planning, in the consultation with the Parks Department, recommends adding the following narrative sidebar to pages 66-67 to clarify the intended function of Town Square:

Town Square Park

The Downtown Plan strategy for Town Square Park builds on Town Square's current role and function as a community gathering area with programmed events on weekends and holidays and more informal community use during the week. This strategy is consistent with the 2006 *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource and Recreational Facility Plan*, which designates Town Square Park as a "Community Use: Town Center Park" (Appendix B, Page 7). The management intent is to have Town Square remain as a desirable place for the community to gather and to participate in special events and also as a place for active and/or passive use the majority of the time. The programs and use areas in the park should continue to serve all members of the community.

The Downtown Plan supports the 2006 park bond improvements to Town Square which were approved by the community, and intended to enhance Town Square's visibility, connectivity and effectiveness at hosting large community events. They include specific improvements to the reflection pond and ice rink, steps and stage, and improved access and visibility from adjacent streets.

The Downtown Plan also recommends an overall parks and open space plan for Downtown. That process will identify long term future open space needs and enhancements in Downtown. If any substantial changes to Town Square or other existing park were to be proposed by that process, they would undergo a separate site-specific park master plan process that would include the public's involvement as well as approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission.

This narrative sidebar will probably require shifting the Downtown Open Space Diagram from page 67 to 66, and removing the "City-wide Open Space Diagram" from page 66 to the open space background discussion in Appendix A.

22. Issue: Town Square Park – Air Rights / Solar Access

- On pages where sunlight access to parks is discussed, it would be useful if there is a reference to existing height limitations in AO 85-173. (*Bruce Phelps, Toni Jones*)

Response: Planning recommends the following references to the existing height limitations:

1. Page 58 (Building Design Guidelines for Catalytic Sites #2 and #3) – Add two bulleted design guidelines which state:
 - Encourage structured parking to be underground, to help avoid unnecessary building heights and reserve more above-ground space for activity-generating uses near Town Square Park.
 - Preserve sunlight access to Town Square Park through building heights and massing. Ensure that Catalytic Development Site #3 adheres to height limitations which are already established by municipal ordinance (AO 85-173).
2. Page 104 (Sunlight Access) – Add language to the third bullet as follows:
 - Preserve sunlight access to the following sites in Downtown:
 - Public parks and plazas, such as Town Square Park and Delaney Park. Meet or exceed existing sunlight access protections for Town Square Park including the height limitations established by municipal ordinance (AO 85-173).

24. Issue: Historic Overlay Zone

- Clarify if staff's intent is to do a historic preservation plan or just a series of strategies. (*Bruce Phelps*)

Response: Planning is suggesting that the historic preservation section on pages 68-69 recommend a historic preservation plan process specifically for Downtown which will identify historic resources, issues and opportunities, and incorporate a series of strategies for historic preservation in the Downtown. Based on this, following is an elaboration of the May 14 Issue-Response recommendations for the historic preservation section:

1. The title of the historic preservation section should read in a manner consistent with the open space section title (p. 66): “Establish Strategies for Downtown Historic Preservation”
2. The section should begin with an introductory narrative that helps provide a frame of reference for the historic preservation policy statements and strategies to follow. Provide some background and establish the significance of historic preservation in Downtown.
3. The section should communicate an overall set of general policy objectives such as promoting public awareness of Downtown's historic resources and their value for the future of Downtown and the overall community; encouraging consideration of historic resources in planning and development decisions by the public and private sectors; providing incentives to encourage historic preservation; forming strategic partnerships to further the interests of historic preservation; and/or leveraging historic resources as cultural and economic development assets for the future growth and vitality of Downtown.
4. The section should recommend an overarching strategy to develop a Historic Preservation Plan specifically for Downtown, to be undertaken by the Anchorage Historic Preservation

Commission (AHPC), to identify historic resources, issues and opportunities, and create a framework of historic preservation policies, guidelines and strategies for Downtown.

5. The section should identify potential strategies that could be the outcome of a Downtown historic preservation plan. These could be derived in part from the powers and duties of the Historic Preservation Commission. Generalize and qualify the discussion regarding an overlay zone by stating that one of the outcomes of a historic preservation planning process would be to develop a historic overlay zone in Downtown through a public process. Indicate its purpose and what it might regulate. Other potential strategies mentioned should include maintaining an inventory of historic resources; providing financial incentives such as grants, tax relief, loans and/or loan guarantees; providing information to historic property owners on methods of maintaining and rehabilitating and etc; creating alternative building code provisions for the reuse of historic structures; developing guidelines for historic preservation and identifying appropriate zoning and development provisions applicable to historic properties; and/or expanding public information and interpretive programs and activities.
6. Remove the conceptual boundaries of the overlay zone from the historic resources map on page 68. It is not necessary to define boundaries yet and such a discussion could detract from the focus on establishing overall historic preservation policies in the Downtown Plan.
7. In general revise pages 68 and 69 to refer to the current Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission (AHPC) and its function, powers and duties established in AO 2006-175.

26. Issue: Seismically Induced Ground Failure Zones 4 and 5 – Land Use Policies

- Make clear whether the Community Risk Assessment referred to in the May 14 Issue-Response Summary will establish acceptable levels of risk in the downtown area, and, as a result, include recommendations for changing municipal requirements regarding appropriate land uses, building design criteria and other regulatory changes within ground failure zone #4 or #5. (*Bruce Phelps*)
- The Department's recommended interim seismic ground failure overlay zone (per the May 14 Issue-Response Summary) should refer to the overlay zone as a "descriptive ground failure overlay zone" which merely is a description of information about already existing building code requirements and review procedures in ground failure zones #4 and #5. (*Bruce Phelps*)

Response: Planning concurs.

Addendum to Transportation and Circulation Issues
(Issues 28, 30, 34, 38, 39, 40, 44, 45, 47)

28. Impacts of Regional Highway Projects

- Inserting the phrase “negatively impact” into Planning’s recommended language regarding the Knik Arm Crossing’s impacts on page 72 would clarify the intent. Include reasons as to why the impact would be negative. *(Nancy Pease)*
- More clearly state both the benefits and the negatives of the regional highway projects. The Knik Arm Crossing should be more than a connection to the Freeway-to-Freeway project. It should be an integral part of the Freeway-to-Freeway project. *(Bruce Phelps)*

Response: Planning suggests the following modified bullet to address a Knik Arm Crossing:

- The proposed Knik Arm Crossing should be directly incorporated into the Freeway-to-Freeway Connection, to ensure an integrated regional transportation system involving both projects. If a Knik Arm Crossing were instead connected directly to the A/C couplet, it would carry much more regional through traffic, gravel and freight through the Downtown Core. This would negatively impact local circulation and the potential for high-density mixed-use redevelopment.

30. Issue: Street Circulation Recommendations: Traffic Impacts and Analytical Basis

- The plan should more clearly describe the circulation/transportation analysis that was used as the basis for the recommendations pertaining to circulation in the Downtown Plan. *(Bruce Phelps)*

Response: Planning recommends clarifying the analytical basis on page 76 and listing some of the anticipated benefits of the analytical recommendations, as follows:

1. Street Conversions

Automobiles currently are the primary mode for access to Downtown Anchorage. While the Downtown Comprehensive Plan will improve access for other modes, automobiles are likely to remain the primary access mode for the foreseeable future. In addition, the freight movements that travel through Downtown benefit the regional economy and must be accommodated.

To address these issues, the planning team evaluated the existing street network and identified weaknesses (listed on page 72) that would need to be addressed to improve circulation and support successful redevelopment of Downtown. The team used a transportation network modeling analysis to developed and evaluated 10 alternative scenarios modeling alternative for potential circulation systems for Downtown. These scenarios tested the impact of changing the directionality and/or functional classifications of various streets in Downtown. ~~The purposes of the scenarios was to test many concepts and learn what works and what does not. Each scenario was evaluated based on its likely impact on: compatibility with land use and redevelopment goals; a quality pedestrian environment; regional through-trips; local traffic circulation; freight mobility; transit access; tour bus operations; and construction feasibility. The results are documented in Appendix D, Anchorage Downtown Transportation Analysis~~ Before identifying a final recommendation, the planning team evaluated each scenario based on its effect on the pedestrian environment, land use compatibility, tour operators and passenger circulation, regional through trips, negative circulation, fright mobility, transit access and construction feasibility. **[new paragraph break]**

~~As a result of the transportation~~ From this analysis, a combination of key street conversions are recommended.—~~These appear~~ to improve mobility, access, safety and the economy in Downtown Anchorage. ~~The recommended street conversions are illustrated~~ in the diagram on the opposite page and ~~are~~ described in the following pages. Some of the recommended street conversions can occur in the near term (9th Avenue, D Street, F Street), while others are dependent on unrelated improvements that must occur first (5th Avenue and 3rd Avenue). In combination, these street conversions will:

- make street circulation in Downtown simpler and more intuitive;
- increase system capacity for local traffic circulation;
- improve transit access;
- increase transportation / land use compatibility;
- improve the pedestrian environment and pedestrian circulation;
- open more of the Core to less through-traffic and greater opportunities for redevelopment; and
- provide sufficient capacity for anticipated regional through-traffic and freight mobility.

~~Though no conversions to the A/C couplet are identified due to its role in the state highway system, efforts should be made to calm traffic as it passes through Downtown, particularly at key intersections with heavy pedestrian movement.~~

In addition, Planning recommends adding to the street conversion descriptions, as follows:

1. On page 77, revise the description of the D Street and F Street conversions to state:

The near-term conversion of D and F Streets to two-way traffic would improve traffic circulation in part by reducing driver confusion and out-of direction travel.

2. Also on page 77, add language at the beginning of the description of 3rd Avenue conversion:

This Plan recommends pursuing long-term opportunities to achieve the conversion of the 5th/ 6th Avenue couplet to a 3rd / 6th couplet. This will continue to provide for the highest speed and volumes of motor vehicle traffic, while in a location more compatible with high-density redevelopment and pedestrian circulation in the heart of the Downtown Core.

3. On page 80, add a sentence to the end of the last bullet:

Calm traffic on the A/C Couplet at key intersections as it passes through Downtown.

34. Issue: Identification of street typologies in the Downtown Plan.

The May 14 Issue-Response Summary discussed the unaddressed issue of street typologies and recommended adding a new section of Chapter 5. Following is an elaboration of the May 14 recommendations for what the section should include:

1. Add a two-page section to identify a hierarchy of street typologies in the Downtown, which would occupy pages 80-81 following the Street Conversions section.
2. Begin the section with an explanatory narrative that establishes the background, basis and purpose of identifying street typologies. Anchorage's street typology classification system

was established by the LRTP in 2005. Functional classifications for streets have historically been based on the movement of motor vehicles. The LRTP recognized the need for a more balanced street classification system that relates to adjacent land uses and other transportation types. Street typologies speak to the issue that a right-of-way is more than just a roadway. The inclusion of parking, sidewalks, and other facilities and amenities are important for compatibility of the street improvements with a mixed-use land use environment. The LRTP recommends that a determination of applicable street typology be established through municipal planning prior to future individual street improvement projects.

3. Provide the basis for the “mixed-use” street typology. State the LRTP identified several street typologies which prioritize various design elements (eg, sidewalks, on-street parking, transit facilities and lane widths) by looking at factors related to adjacent land uses, intensity and urban design. These typologies include for example a *mixed use street*.
4. Explain the objectives of a street typology system for Downtown. It will be important to the implementation of the Downtown Plan’s proposed new districts and urban design guidelines. The new development standards for Downtown are recommended to be a “form-based” development code. A form-based code relates the form and orientation of buildings to the type of street. For example, it would encourage a building on a designated pedestrian-oriented mixed-use street to have a relatively strong relationship to the street, with setbacks no wider than necessary to accommodate the pedestrian space and with entrances, windows and active ground-floor uses along the public sidewalk. Also, Appendix C, Downtown Core Street Streetscape Plan on pages 25-30 recommends using the street typologies from Anchorage’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to help guide the design and implementation of streetscape improvements in the Downtown Core.
5. Explain how the street typology categories for Downtown derive from a combination of the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan, the Downtown Districts Diagram, the Downtown Plan’s Street Network Strategy Diagram, Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram and other transportation and circulation diagrams and strategies.
6. Provide a very simple categorization consisting of the following typologies, including a description of each. Explain that the latter two typologies are sub-types of the first.
 - **Mixed use street:** The Core Streets Streetscape Plan concludes that most streets in Downtown tend to fit the LRTP description for mixed use streets. Mixed use streets are located in areas characterized by a mix of high-intensity commercial, retail and residential areas with substantial pedestrian activities. Mixed use streets emphasize pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements, and frequently provide on-street parking and wider sidewalks, depending on the street’s functional designation and the intensity of abutting land uses.
 - **Pedestrian oriented mixed use street:** As the Core Street Streetscape Plan suggests on page 26, the mixed-use typology can be further refined to reflect the unique character of certain downtown streets. “Pedestrian oriented mixed use street” is essentially a sub-typology of mixed-use street emphasizing areas of highest pedestrian use.
 - **Residential oriented mixed use street:** The Residential oriented mixed use street is based on the LRTP mixed use and residential streets typologies, and follows on the Downtown Plan’s proposed residential oriented sub-districts and urban design guidelines.

7. Provide an explanation of how the Downtown Plan street typologies relate to the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan street typologies. Explain the Core Streets typologies are more detailed and area-specific sub-types of the mixed-use street and pedestrian-oriented street typologies from the Downtown Plan.
8. Provide a Street Typologies Diagram map which designates the street typology of the streets in the Downtown Plan study area.
9. Provide guidance for how the street typologies should be used in decision making for the design of future street improvements, revisions to the Downtown land use and development code and other planning and development decisions.

38. Issue: Traffic Signal Speed

- The Downtown Plan's recommendation for progressed speeds of 20 MPH or less on all Downtown streets is of concern to reviewers including traffic engineers and Planning and Zoning Commissioners. Anchorage has limited experience with 20 MPH progressed speeds on regional through streets. While it may be appropriate to have progressed speeds of 20 MPH or less on the streets that provide mostly local circulation, it seems necessary to have a progressed speed higher than 20 MPH on the major couplets that provide the major access routes into Downtown and are integral to the regional through-traffic transportation network.

Questions Regarding Impacts on Traffic Mobility. Using the July 2006 transportation analysis report as a starting point, provide more information on the likely impacts of a 20 MPH or less maximum progressed speed on traffic mobility and capacity:

- Will it reduce traffic volume capacity on major regional-through routes and access routes into Downtown and impact travel times?
- Will it disperse traffic to less appropriate routes, increase congestion or discourage people from visiting or conducting business Downtown?
- Does the transportation network analysis or examples from other downtowns provide evidence that this is an accepted practice that works?

Response: Although decreasing the progressed speeds on major couplets from approximately 28 MPH today to 20 MPH will lengthen automobile travel times through Downtown, current capacities will remain unchanged with lower speeds. For example, travel time on the longest traverse through Downtown (the 1.4 mile long trip via 5th Avenue/L Street, starting at Gambell Street and ending at the intersection of 9th and L) would increase from approximately 3 to 4 minutes. This kind of increase will not reduce regional mobility, traffic volume capacity or disperse traffic to less appropriate routes—especially if implemented in tandem with the Freeway to Freeway Connection. One minute or less is a relatively minor increase in travel time that comes in exchange for exponential improvements to the quality of urban environment in Downtown. It opens the Downtown Core up to major revitalization and economic development as a mixed-use city center. For these reasons, it is a common practice to have low progressed speeds in downtowns. For example, progressed speeds in Downtown Portland, Oregon range from 12 mph on local circulation streets to 17 MPH the highest capacity through street (Broadway). Portland benefits from the diversion of regional through-traffic including freight trucks to nearby bypass freeways such as I-405. The Anchorage Downtown Plan recognizes that Anchorage's Freeway to Freeway Connection will provide similar benefits.

Questions Regarding Impacts on Land Uses and Pedestrian Circulation. Why is 20 MPH the threshold for a quality pedestrian environment and mixed-use redevelopment goals?

- Why not use “20 MPH or less” on most streets and a higher progressed speed such as 25 MPH or 30 MPH on key regional through streets?
- What are the potential air quality impacts of the reduced speed?

Response: Kittelson’s Downtown transportation study emphasizes that one of its most important recommendations is that vehicle speeds within the Downtown Core should be reduced to the extent possible, and specifically to 20 MPH or less on all streets. Traffic speed is a primary determinant of the quality of the pedestrian environment. It impacts pedestrian circulation, which the Downtown Plan identifies as the primary mode of local circulation. These factors also influence the potential for medium- to high-density mixed-use redevelopment. It is generally well established in traffic safety studies that 20 MPH is the approximate threshold above which pedestrian-vehicle accidents become exponentially more deadly, and it becomes more difficult for drivers to stop or respond to situations before it is too late. In addition to providing a safer and more comfortable pedestrian environment, progressed speeds at 20 MPH or less make bicycling more viable. Where progressed speeds are high, average cyclists will receive red signals every 2-3 blocks. This increases travel times and the added delay makes it more likely that cyclists will choose to ignore the signals, thus creating a safety problem. Additionally, lower traffic speeds create a more comfortable bicycling environment.

Response - Speed Differential Between Streets. Major couplets can be managed at a higher speed than other streets, however it is not recommended to create too great of a speed differential. Crossings of streets with a great speed differential are more dangerous and difficult to manage in a downtown environment. It is safer when driver and pedestrian expectations approaching an intersection are more uniform.

Response - Air Quality Impacts. The Municipal Air Quality Program does not anticipate that the recommended reduction in speed would have a significant impact on carbon monoxide or PM-10 (particulate matter) concentrations in downtown. Although the EPA MOBILE6 emissions model predicts that lowering speeds from 28 to 20 MPH would result in a 4% increase in CO emissions along the corridor, this increase would have a very little impact on overall pollution levels in Downtown. Monitoring has shown that CO levels in the downtown area are among the lowest in Anchorage. No violations of the federal air quality for CO standard have been measured in the downtown area since the mid-1980’s. Although speed reduction is not usually considered to be among the major factors affecting PM-10 particulate (dust) emissions, data have shown that lowering speeds among large vehicles such as buses and trucks can result in a reduction in PM-10 emissions along the corridor.

Questions Regarding Implementation Timeframe. Clarify if slower progressed speeds can be a near term operational improvement, or are contingent on first completing the Freeway-to-Freeway Connection. Could slower speeds be introduced incrementally over time, i.e., some streets and not others? If the speed change is related to operational improvements, those improvements should be specified.

Response: The Downtown Plan on page 81 states that improvements such as changing traffic signal timing and progressed speeds can occur individually or system-wide, depending on available funding. However, the Plan implies that a progressed speed of 20 MPH or less on the major east-west couplet should occur in tandem with completion of the 3rd / 6th couplet and Freeway-to-Freeway Connection.

39. Issue: Downtown Bus Circulator

- In general, reviewers are concerned that it seems premature for the Downtown Plan to make a recommendation for a transit circulator. Describe and justify its specific recommendations. Should it have as a basis a more overall transit study that would determine the reasonability of the bus circulator route. How might a transit circulator relate to regular fixed route service? Can a transit circulator be implemented in the relative near-term or is it a long term strategy contingent on a transit center relocation or street conversion?

Response: If a circulator were implemented and the route carefully laid out to extend the walking trip in order to carry people the extra distance they wouldn't otherwise walk, then it becomes highly effective when it is free. Frequent service intervals, quick connections to major destinations and free service are what make the circulator a convenient extension of the walking trip. This allows the rest of the transit system to work for fee (e.g., \$1.75 bus fare) even if operating on the same route as the circulator. Only a circulator allows free service without having to create a "ride for free zone" within the existing transit system.

A circulator can also make connections between attractions within Downtown. Its route can be carefully laid out to connect the housing, retail, cultural and other destinations and activity centers Downtown, without the constraints of a regular transit route. The circulator ties as many pieces together as possible. It is these connections which allow the circulator to leverage the various destinations. This will become more important especially when more residential development begins to happen. It makes mixed-use projects incorporating neighborhood services like grocery stores more feasible for development. Developers will see that their project will be accessible to more residents, employees and visitors from throughout Downtown.

40. Issue: Transit Center Relocation

- In general, reviewers are concerned that it seems premature to recommend a transit center relocation study before completing a review of the overall needs of the transit system. Elaborate on the basis for the recommendation that the existing transit center must relocate or expand. Reviewers are also concerned about the peripheral nature of the location of the candidate site. The proposed new transit center location does not seem to be more efficient than the current location. How can it be good policy to move a Transit Center from a central location to a peripheral location?

Response: The transportation network analysis conducted for the Downtown Plan by Kittelson and Associates established that projected transit service and ridership growth creates a strong need for a new or expanded transit center site. The existing transit center is approaching operational capacity. The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) recommends to double the frequency of bus service over the next 20 years on many bus routes serving Downtown, and projects that transit ridership will more than double during this period. This could result in a doubling of daily boardings and alightings in Downtown from 7,000 to 14,000 by 2025. For these reasons, an overall system study is unnecessary in order to determine whether or not there is a need to expand or relocate. The main question remaining is "where" to expand or relocate. Although the Downtown Plan's proposed site on 3rd Avenue is the most ambitious in achieving multiple Downtown Plan objectives, the Plan states that final selection of a new location will be subject to the results of a site selection study.

To clarify the basis for a transit center relocation in the Downtown Plan, planning recommends the following changes, as well as more changes under issue #44 below:

1. Provide a reference to pages 82 – 83 at the beginning of page 54: “The Downtown Plan recommends that the existing Transit Center be relocated or expanded (see page 82).”
2. Add the following bulleted statement to the section describing current conditions for connectivity and accessibility, in the second column of page 72: “The Downtown Transit Center is approaching its operational capacity. Bus loading, unloading and storage occupy street areas that could otherwise provide for pedestrian and traffic circulation.”
3. Add a sentence to the first paragraph in the section on page 82 to briefly indicate the rationale for relocating a transit center (See recommended changes under Issue 44 below).

44. Issue: Improve Transit Service Levels

- The Downtown Plan should establish a target for improving transit service and ridership levels as a percentage of trips Downtown. (*Nancy Pease*)

Planning recommends changing the transit section on pages 82-83 as follows,

3. Improve the Downtown Transit System

The increased density planned for the city center will significantly increase Downtown traffic volumes unless the community provides viable alternatives to driving ~~are provided~~. This Plan builds on city’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) objective to double the frequency of bus service over the next 20 years on many bus routes serving Downtown, as well as the LRTP projection that transit ridership will more than double during this period. This could result in a doubling of daily boardings and alightings in Downtown from 7,000 to 14,000 by 2025.

In response, this section recommends expanding and/or relocating the transit center, initiating a Downtown bus circulator to extend the ~~Transit should be perceived as the most effective means of extending the distance people walk to destinations throughout in Downtown, and coordinating transit service with destinations and amenities.~~ Transit and share a ride programs should also be a viable alternative for Downtown commuters.

Expand ~~Modernize~~ and/or Relocate the Transit Center

The anticipated growth in the number of passengers creates a need for a larger transit center. The Municipality should conduct a Transit Center Relocation Feasibility Study to determine...

45. Issue: Non-stop Express Transit Routes

- Qualify the recommendation for a non-stop express transit route on page 83. Such a recommendation has to derive from an overall transit study and this study has to determine the reasonability of the express route. Or, if a detailed transit analysis has been completed, describe and justify the recommendation on the basis of this analysis. (*Bruce Phelps*)
- More stops in the U-Med District should be added. (*Nancy Pease*)

Response: Planning recommends changing the bullet on page 83 to read:

- As part of strategies for Downtown to be the city’s center for accommodating visitors from all over Alaska, establish a non-stop express transit route connects the Alaska Native Medical Center and overall Universities/Medical District to Downtown. Pursue partnerships and/or other special funding strategies to avoid impacting transit service levels on regular routes.

Planning does not support recommending a non-stop express transit route to Midtown at this time. Because Midtown and Downtown are only a mile apart, and many existing bus routes already connect the two with relatively few stops in between, it is questionable whether a non-stop express route would reduce travel times enough to return the investment. Midtown destinations are also spread out over a relatively wide geographic area. A non-stop express route may not be an efficient service for such a dispersed employment area.

47. Issue: Coordinated Parking Strategy – Parking Supply and Travel Mode

- The Downtown Plan should look at the pricing of garages as a factor in the usage of parking garage spaces. The typical entrant into the job market cannot afford parking in a garage. (*Toni Jones*)

Response: Anchorage Parking Authority reports that its public parking rates for hourly, daily and monthly permit parking in Downtown are the lowest public parking rates of any downtown in the nation (Collier's survey – 2005 and 2006). Because Anchorage does not charge the market rate even for the best-located parking spaces in the center of Downtown, there are problems of availability of parking in the high demand locations. This creates the impression among parkers that parking spaces are full throughout Downtown. In fact, Anchorage's supply of on-street meters, garages and surface lot spaces at other locations are empty because they are several blocks further from the center. Pricing encourages everyone to park right in the center.

The Parking Authority is considering changing the pricing structure of parking to be more reflective of market supply and demand. High demand parking spaces in the heart of the Downtown Core would be priced higher than they are today, certainly higher than lower demand public parking spaces several blocks further away from the center of Downtown. This should more equally distribute the parking demand and more efficiently use existing parking spaces.

The Downtown Plan on page 84 recommends considering pricing parking to match demand, as well as other methods of managing parking pricing, even free parking. The Plan also recommends addressing other factors which contribute to the inefficient use of parking resources. Its strategies include publicizing and providing wayfinding to available parking; strategically locating new parking garages; and improving the pedestrian / transit circulation network in Downtown so it is less daunting and more attractive to walk and/or ride a transit circulator a few extra blocks between car and destination.

Planning recommends adding convenient location and pricing to the list of factors affecting parking usage on pages 84 and 85.

Errata: Technical Edits and Clarifications

Cover Page: Add, "Destination Downtown:" to the top of the cover page above the main title and increase the visibility of the subtitle "Downtown Comprehensive Plan".

Page 1: Clarify the sentence in the second column by changing it to read, "Land uses must be coordinated to achieve their **greatest synergy and potential** highest impact."

Page 6: Due to a printing error the right-side column of text on page 6 was missing in the March 2007 public hearing draft. Recover the column content as it appeared in the January 2007 public review draft.

Page 11, Settings, last bullet: Change "two season climate" to "**four** season climate".

Page 28, second paragraph in the second column": Correct the sentence as follows: "Each red rectangle (right) represents **an** Catalytic and Opportunity Site within Downtown".

Page 41, second-to-last goal: Correct the last sentence as follows: "Identify each sub-district of Downtown so each can further develop its own unique character, identity and function, and **so** they complement, rather than compete with each other.

Page 43, second bullet: Change "special needs people" to "people with special needs".

Page 44, photo caption: Move the caption underneath the picture.

Page 66, first bullet: Rephrase the supporting sentence for the strategy as an action sentence, as follows: "**Provide** safe, visible connections between civic plazas, parks and open space corridors **as an** **are** essential **part of the** **to a successful** parks and open space network."

Page 48, second column: Add period to the end of the first paragraph and add the word "Street" after "Gambell" in the second paragraph.

Page 49, first column: Correct the blue text header "fi" to read "Development Specifications"

Page 49, second column:

- Change the first sentence in the paragraph at mid-page to, "The Park Strip North **sub**-district is a prime opportunity..."
- Change the third-to-last bullet to, "...5 to 7 stories **on** **between** north half of the block between 8th and 9th Avenues;"

Page 50, Barrow Street sub-district

- Change the second sentence in the description as follows, "A small **sub**-district situated between the Downtown Core... [...] ...has its own identity separate from the Park Strip **North** residences to the west..."
- Correct the blue text header "fi" to read "Development Specifications"

Page 50, Pioneer Slope sub-district:

- Delete the comma in first sentence.
- Correct the blue text header "fi" to read "Development Specifications"

Page 51, sidebar in right margin: Add the missing title, "Catalytic Development Sites"

Page 56, caption below bottom photo: Change the second sentence to, “Both the E Street Opportunity Site and the Sixth Avenue Infill Development Sites should incorporate...”

Page 58, second bullet: Change the last line to, “...E Street and 5th and 6th Avenues.”

Page 59:

- Change the second sentence in the first bullet to, “No loading/unloading should occur on 5th or 6th Avenues or E Street.”
- Change the last line of the second bullet to, “...Downtown circulation and parking strategies of this Transportation Plan.”

Page 68:

- Correct the name of the National Register Site n.2 to read “Leopold David Leopold House”.
- Correct the name of the Historic Site h.2 to read “Delaney Park Strip”.

Page 83, Tour Bus Drop-off Locations Diagram: Move the drop off-location depicted on G Street north of 5th to south of 5th on the west side of the street next to the hotel.

Page 92: Delete the last two bullets which repeat previous information.

Page 93:

- Delete word “through” from the second bullet.
- Add a legend to the Viewshed and Vantage Point Diagram which explains features on the map.
- Add a Vantage Point asterisk symbol to Resolution Park (at the corner of 3rd and L).

Page 94, sidewalk widths:

- Change the first bullet to read, “Maintain a pedestrian clear zone of a minimum width of six feet on all sidewalks (left).”
- Change the third bullet to, “...consider converting one on-street parking space into a bulb-out with a constructing tree planting beds in place of one parking space”.

Page 101, Pedestrian Shelter: An illustration depicting the concept of a covered arcade which appeared in previous drafts had to be removed from the public hearing draft shortly before release to make way for technical edits and clarifications to the narrative content of the section. Additional informational/explanatory illustrations including photographic examples of arcades, awnings and canopies which were intended to be added were not due to lack of space and time. Planning recommends expanding the “Pedestrian Shelter” section to span two pages in order to provide adequate room for the informational illustration and photographs missing from the public hearing draft. This graphic improvement would help illustrate what is meant by an “arcade”, “canopy” or “awning” and would not change the narrative text or policy content of the section.

Page 104, wind protection

- Correct the second to last bullet to read, “...to lessen wind impacts at and the ground level.”
- The last bullet is a nonsensical sentence fragment. Delete.

Page 112, Wayfinding Signage: Move this section to be the last section of urban design guidelines which address the public realm. It is a streetscape/public realm design guideline which organizationally does not belong at the end of the “building design” guidelines.