



# Municipality of Anchorage

## Planning Department

### Memorandum




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**Date:** January 12, 2024

**To:** Anchorage Assembly – Transportation Committee

**From:** RY Ryan Yelle, Manager, Long-Range Planning Division

**Thru:**  Craig Lyon, Director, Planning Department

**Subject:** Transit Supportive Corridors

During the October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting of the Assembly’s Transportation Committee, Assembly Member Brawley had requested information regarding the implementation and effectiveness of our designated “Transit-Supportive Development Corridors” as designated within the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*, Land Use Plan Map (LUPM). Following this meeting, further clarification on the type of information requested was provided by Assembly Member Brawley. This information is organized below by question for the Committee’s review after a brief description of the LUPM’s definition and intent of transit supportive development corridors.

#### **Transit-Supportive Corridors as defined within the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan:**

*“Transit-Supportive Development (TSD) identifies corridors where expanded public transit service will support a compact, walkable pattern of commercial, residential, and/or mixed-use development. Over time, compact development can create ridership demand to support more frequent bus service. It will give Anchorage’s households more choices in how to get to work and other destinations. It also provides more opportunities to live in a walkable, accessible, and affordable neighborhood environment.”* (p. 60, Anchorage 2040)

#### **What (generally) are the benefits/incentives available to encourage development within Transit-Supportive Corridors?**

Below is list of various methods in which Transit-Supportive Corridors are factored into Municipal land-use decisions and/or recommendations:

- 1) Tax abatement incentives for multi-family affordable and workforce housing established via AO 2020-103 when the subject parcel *“is located on a parcel that is wholly, partially, or adjacent to a parcel within a quarter mile of the centerline of a road segment defining a transit-supportive development corridor;”*
- 2) Included as an approval criterion for the establishment of a Reinvestment Focus Area:

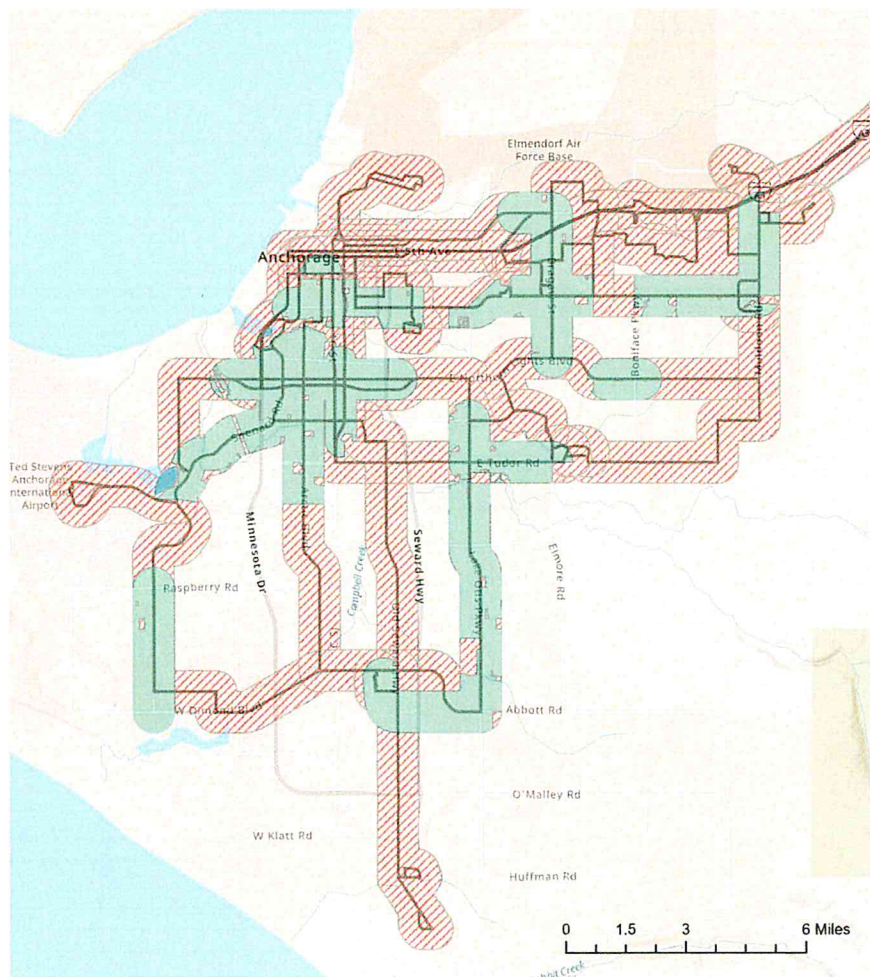
AMC 21.03.116E.4. *“The area is mostly within a ½-mile walking distance of a transit-supportive development corridor or greenway-supported development corridor, as measured from the centerline designated in a comprehensive plan;”*

- 3) Evaluated and factored into the development of the MOA Capital Improvement Program and AMATS Metropolitan Transportation Plan:
  - a. Part of the project evaluation criteria considers consistency with adopted plans such as the Comprehensive Plan and its elements to include the LUPM designations.
- 4) There were previous incentives within AMC Title 21 that allowed for a reduction in required parking spaces if the development was located within close proximity to a fixed-route transit stop. However, this incentive became obsolete with the elimination of required parking minimums. There are no other current codified incentives or benefits for development within, adjacent to, or near a transit supportive development corridor within AMC Title 21.

**Are there any disconnects between the existing fixed-route transit network and the corridors identified within the LUPM?**

Please see the below graphic which displays the current Transit Supportive Development Corridors (Green) overlaid upon all current fixed-route transit routes (Red Hashing).

**Transit Routes & Development Corridors**



**Legend**

-  Areas Along Routes Not Designated as Transit-Supportive Development Corridors
-  Existing Transit-Supportive Development Corridors
-  People Mover Bus Routes

**Have these corridors seen a measurable increase in development over the last ~5 years?**

Development within TSDs has not been officially tracked since the adoption of Anchorage 2040, but there have been significant redevelopment projects that have occurred within them over the past five years. Most notably, Cook Inlet Housing Authority's "Spenard East" multi-family project near Spenard Road and W. 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue; and Midtown Center Rezone (R-2M and B-3 to R-4A) near Arctic and W. 36<sup>th</sup> Ave. Both of these projects have or will result in increased residential density and improved pedestrian access to the right-of-way.

Additionally, it is important to note that Planning staff worked extensively with MOA Public Transportation staff during the drafting of Anchorage 2040 to align the long-term visions of both entities. Public Transportation staff provided substantial input into the designation of each these corridors to ensure they were being placed along roadways that will provide fixed-route transit for many years to come.

**What feedback has the Planning Department received on the effectiveness of Transit-Supportive Corridors?**

In general, fixed-route transit appears to be a *benefit to* development but isn't necessarily the *driver of* development. This is based on various comments received during informal and formal discussions with developers concerning various residential and commercial projects across the Municipality over the last several years. Developers acquire property or prioritize redevelopment based on several factors. Being located on or near a transit route is certainly one of those factors, but it does not appear to be primary reason that motivates the redevelopment of properties. Should there be an interest to elevate the influence fixed-route transit service has on redevelopment, additional incentives may need to be offered.