

CLERK'S OFFICE
APPROVED
Date:.....12-11-07
PLAN WAS AMENDED 10-23-07,
11-6-07, & 12-11-07 AND
APPROVED 12-11-07

Submitted by: Chair of the Assembly at the
Request of the Mayor
Prepared by: Planning Department
For Reading: August 14, 2007

Anchorage, Alaska
AO No. 2007-113

1 AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE ANCHORAGE DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE
2 PLAN AS AN ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AMENDING
3 ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 21.05.030, AND AMENDING
4 AO 2006-172, ATTACHMENT A, AT ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE
5 SECTION 21.01.080.

6
7 THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY ORDAINS:
8

9 **Section 1.** The *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan* draft, dated March 2007, is
10 adopted as recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission in Resolution
11 No. 2007-038 as an element of the Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan,
12 replacing the 1983 *Anchorage Central Business District Comprehensive Development*
13 *Plan*. In addition, the *Anchorage Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan* draft, dated
14 March 2007, is included in the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan* as an
15 addendum, with modifications recommended by the Urban Design Commission in
16 Resolution No. 2007-006. The *Core Streets Streetscape Plan* is intended provide guidance
17 for the design of street projects in the Downtown Core.
18

19 **Section 2.** Anchorage Municipal Code subsection 21.05.030A.1. is amended to read as
20 follows (*the remainder of the section is not affected and therefore not set forth*):
21

22 **21.05.030 Elements.**

23 The comprehensive plan consists of the following elements, which are incorporated
24 in this chapter by reference. While they may be valid planning tools, plans or other
25 elements that are not listed below or incorporated into the comprehensive plan
26 elsewhere in this Code are not official elements of the comprehensive plan. If
27 elements of the comprehensive plan conflict, the element most recently adopted
28 shall govern.
29

30 **A. Anchorage Bowl.**

- 31
32 1. Anchorage Downtown [CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT]
33 Comprehensive [DEVELOPMENT] Plan, dated (insert effective
34 date of this ordinance) [FALL 1983 (GAAB RESOLUTION NO.
35 73-46; AR 83-194(S))].
36

37 *** **

38 (AO No. 18-75; AO No. 82-49; AO No. 85-165; AO No. 2000-119(S), § 4, 2-20-
39 01; AO No. 2001-124(S), § 2, 2-20-01; AO No. 2002-68, § 1, 4-23-02; AO No.
40 2002-119, § 1, 9-10-02; AO No. 2003-74, § 1, 5-20-03; AO No. 2003-129, § 2, 10-
41 21-03; AO No. 2005-115, § 3, 10-25-05; AO No. 2006-93(S-1), § 2, 12-12-06)

Section 3. AO 2006-172, Attachment A, adopting Anchorage Municipal Code section 21.01.080B.1., Table 21.01-1 Comprehensive Plan Elements, is amended to read as follows *(the remainder of the section is not affected and therefore not set forth)*:

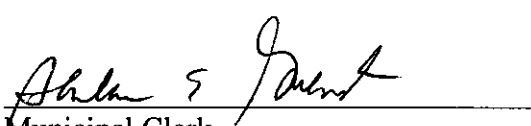
TABLE 21.01-1: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS			
Area/Topic	Plan	Adoption Date [1]	Amendments
Anchorage Bowl	Anchorage <u>Downtown</u> [CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT] Comprehensive [DEVELOPMENT] Plan	AO 2007-____; <u>(insert effective date of this ordinance)</u> [AR 83-194(S); 9-13-83]	

Section 4: This ordinance shall become effective immediately upon its passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 14th day of December 2007.


Chair of the Assembly

ATTEST:


Municipal Clerk



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM

No. AM 475-2007

Meeting Date: August 14, 2007

From: MAYOR

Subject: AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE ANCHORAGE DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS AN ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 21.05.030, AND AMENDING AO 2006-172, ATTACHMENT A, AT ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 21.01.080.

This ordinance is intended to adopt the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan, and to amend the section of the Anchorage Municipal Code which identifies the elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan is a complete revision to the 1983 comprehensive development plan for Anchorage's central business district. It comes in recognition that the current plan and development regulations for Downtown Anchorage are in need of updating in order to effectively facilitate new growth. Anchorage's central business district has also entered a new generation of public improvements, and this public commitment to invest in Downtown presented a timely opportunity for coordinating revitalization efforts and attracting new private investments.

Public Involvement Process. In 2001, the Anchorage 2020—Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020) established new policies for future growth and development in existing city centers, and specifically identified a district plan for Downtown as an essential implementation strategy. In response to the Anchorage 2020 process, central business district community stakeholders created the Downtown Development Framework, a market-based strategic framework report to help guide future planning and development and attract new investment in Downtown.

In 2005, the Municipality retained a multidisciplinary consulting team to develop a new plan and development regulations for the central business district. The project was led by consultants from Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG). They were assisted by a team of local and national consultants including Robert Odland Consulting, Land Design North, RIM Architects, Northern Economics, Kittelson & Associates, Shannon & Wilson, Inc., and Economic and Planning Systems. In addition, MAKERS Architecture + Urban Design, Earthscape, and CRW Engineering Group developed a streetscape improvements plan for the Downtown core. The consulting team provided a wide range of expertise in downtown planning and development.

1 Under guidance from a local Project Management Group and a Project Advisory Group
2 composed of community leaders and municipal agencies, the consulting team created a
3 highly participatory process and a plan that is directly responsive to policies of the
4 comprehensive plan, conditions and trends in the marketplace and the input of stakeholders
5 and other community participants.

6
7 The public involvement process included over 60 meetings, including three major public
8 meeting; small group sessions with an extensive range of stakeholders including businesses,
9 property owners, developers, residents and civic leaders; and regular meetings with the
10 citizen-based Downtown Advisory Group, Mayor, Assembly and multiple commissions. The
11 Anchorage Downtown Partnership has participated as a key partner on the client team and
12 has facilitated business community involvement including the Downtown Advisory Group.

13
14 **Plan Overview.** The purpose of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan is to guide future
15 growth and development in the Downtown, and encourage its revitalization as a vibrant,
16 mixed-use city center. Throughout, the Plan emphasizes concentration of resources available
17 for investment; coordination of land uses; and linkages between key facilities and catalytic
18 projects—so that new investment and activities are coordinated to achieve their highest
19 impact and stimulate additional development.

20
21 The Plan establishes a vision and six overarching goals (pages 25-27) that emerged from the
22 public involvement process. To achieve these goals it recommends a strategic framework of:
23 future land uses and districts, catalytic development projects and supporting strategies. The
24 supporting strategies include market based development incentives, transportation and
25 circulation plans, urban design guidelines and programmatic strategies. Two fold-out
26 diagrams illustrate the strategy framework on pages 29 and 33 respectively. The remainder
27 of the document elaborates on this framework in four major chapters and then concludes with
28 an implementation chapter.

29
30 Three appendices accompany the Plan. Appendix A, Existing Conditions Analysis and
31 Appendix B, Development Feasibility Assessment, provide information and analysis.
32 Appendix C, Anchorage Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan (draft), is a policy
33 document intended to supplement the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan. It
34 illustrates in greater detail how streets in the core should be upgraded to enhance pedestrian
35 activity and support economic development. It is intended to provide guidance for street
36 improvements in the Core.

37
38 **Issue-Response and Recommended Changes.** The public hearing draft of the Downtown
39 Plan was released on March 23, 2007. The Planning and Zoning Commission held a public
40 hearing on April 25, 2007. Following initial deliberations by the Commission, the Planning
41 Department prepared an Issue-Response memorandum and an Issue-Response Addendum
42 which addressed several outstanding issues from the draft plan and comments received
43 during the public hearing review process. Attachment A (PZC Resolution No. 2007-038)
44 documents the results of Planning and Zoning Commission deliberations and its
45 recommended changes to the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

Issues and concerns raised included providing for commercial uses in the proposed Downtown residential mixed-use district; planning process for any changes to Town Square Park and other parks; air rights and sunlight access protection for public parks and civic facilities; seismic risk assessment; traffic impacts of regional highway projects; recommended street circulation changes such as to the 5th/6th couplet; adequate tour bus access on 3rd Avenue; recommended maximum traffic speed; a recommended transit center relocation/expansion study; parking strategies; ice-free sidewalks; high-rise building step-backs; and implementation issues.

In addition, the Urban Design Commission (UDC) was asked to review Appendix C: Anchorage Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan. On July 25, the UDC recommended approval of the Core Streets Streetscape Plan, subject to certain modifications, as part of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan. Documentation of the UDC Resolution and recommended modifications are under preparation for submittal to the Assembly before public hearing.

A Consolidated Issue Response paper currently under preparation is intended to document for the Assembly all of the recommended amendments from the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Urban Design Commission for the draft Downtown Comprehensive Plan and its appendices, and will be submitted to the Assembly prior to the public hearing.

Land Use Code Amendments. The primary regulatory instrument affecting Downtown is Title 21, the municipal land use code. The revision of Title 21 has been underway for several years. The three central business district zoning districts were not included in the Title 21 Rewrite project. Instead, the Downtown land use code revision has been integrated into the Downtown Plan process. This has provided a closer link between policy and implementation.

The new Downtown land use code is intended to provide new use districts and development standards in concert with the Downtown Comprehensive Plan. It is also intended to be compatible in format with the Title 21 Rewrite. A regulatory structure for the Downtown code has been recommended by Robert Odland Consulting, and a public process to establish a new Downtown code is anticipated to occur subsequent to adoption of the Downtown Plan.

To adopt the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan as an element of the Municipality's Comprehensive Plan, this ordinance is intended to amend both the existing Anchorage Municipal Code subsection 21.05.030A.1., and the equivalent provisions in the recently adopted revision to Title 21 (AO 2006-172). The recently adopted subsection to be amended is identified as AO 2006-172, Attachment A, at AMC 21.01.080B.1, Table 21.01-1, Comprehensive Plan Elements, which is not intended to take effect until the remaining chapters in the rewrite of Title 21 are adopted.

1 **THE ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE ORDINANCE**
2 **ADOPTING THE ANCHORAGE DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS AN**
3 **ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AMENDING ANCHORAGE**
4 **MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 21.05.030, AND AMENDING AO 2006-172,**
5 **ATTACHMENT A, AT ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 21.01.080.**
6
7

8 Prepared by: Tom Nelson, Director, Planning Department
9 Concurred by: Mary Jane Michael, Executive Director
10 Office of Economic and Community Development
11 Concurred by: Denis C. LeBlanc, Municipal Manager
12 Respectfully submitted: Mark Begich, Mayor
13
14
15

16 Attachments: A. Planning and Zoning Commission Resolution No. 2007-038
17 B. Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes
18 C. Planning Staff Report PZC Case 2007-076, dated April 25, 2007
19 D. Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan, March 2007 Public
20 Hearing Draft, with Appendices A-C (Attachment D submitted under
21 separate cover)

Content Information**Content ID :** 005322**Type:** Ordinance - AO

Title: Ordinance Adopting the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan as an Element of the Comprehensive Plan, Amending AMC Sections 21.05.030, and Amending AO 2006-172, Attachment A, at AMC Section 21.01.080 (PZC Case 2007-076).

Author: perrysu**Initiating Dept:** Planning

Description: Ordinance adopting Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan, amending AMC Sections 21.05.030, and Amending AO 2006-172, Attachment A, at AMC Section 21.01.080 (PZC Case No. 2007-076)

Keywords: Downtown Plan**Date Prepared:** 8/2/07 7:27 PM**Director Name:** Tom Nelson**Assembly****Meeting Date** 8/14/07**MM/DD/YY:**

Public Hearing
Date MM/DD/YY: 9/11/07

M.O.A.
 2007 AUG -7 AM 11:21
 CLERK'S OFFICE

Workflow History

<u>Workflow Name</u>	<u>Action Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>User</u>	<u>Security Group</u>	<u>Content ID</u>
AllOrdinanceWorkflow	8/2/07 7:42 PM	Checkin	perrysu	Public	005322
Planning_SubWorkflow	8/3/07 9:26 AM	Approve	nelsontp	Public	005322
ECD_SubWorkflow	8/3/07 9:29 AM	Approve	thomasm	Public	005322
OMB_SubWorkflow	8/3/07 12:09 PM	Approve	mitsonjl	Public	005322
Legal_SubWorkflow	8/3/07 12:17 PM	Approve	fehlenrl	Public	005322
MuniMgrCoord_SubWorkflow	8/3/07 4:40 PM	Approve	abbottmk	Public	005322
MuniManager_SubWorkflow	8/3/07 4:40 PM	Approve	abbottmk	Public	005322

Attachment A

Planning and Zoning Commission Resolution No. 2007-038 with Attachments

- A. May 14, 2007 Issue-Response Summary
- B. June 11, 2007 Issue-Response Addendum
- C. June 8, 2007 Email Modification to I-R Addendum

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2007-038

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE ANCHORAGE DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

(Case 2007-076)

WHEREAS, Downtown Anchorage is at the heart of the city, providing a sense of identity for the community and influencing the economic well-being of the entire region; and

WHEREAS, the current plan for Downtown was developed in the early 1980s and is in need of updating in order to effectively facilitate new growth; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan outlines policies to promote infill and redevelopment and to strengthen Downtown as a vibrant city center, recommending a new central business district plan as an essential strategy; and

WHEREAS, Anchorage's central business district has entered a new generation of public improvements, and this public commitment to invest in Downtown presents a timely opportunity for coordinating revitalization efforts and attracting new private investments; and

WHEREAS, the new Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan has been developed as a complete revision to the existing comprehensive development plan for Downtown; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan is to guide future growth and development in the Downtown and encourage its revitalization into a vibrant city center; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan provides a framework of land use strategies, catalytic development projects, market-based development incentives, transportation and circulation plans, urban design guidelines, and programmatic strategies; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance for an update to the Title 21 land use and development regulations for the central business district; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan was developed by an interdisciplinary consulting team bringing a wide range of expertise and experience, under the guidance of a local project management group and a project advisory group composed of community leaders; and

WHEREAS, a highly collaborative planning process has produced a new plan for Downtown that is directly responsive to the policies of Anchorage 2020, conditions and trends in the marketplace, and the input, advice and support from an extensive range of stakeholders and community participants; and

WHEREAS, notice was published and a public hearing was held before the Planning and Zoning Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission that:

A. The Commission makes the following finding of fact:

1. The current comprehensive development plan for the central business district was developed in the early 1980s. Circumstances have changed since that time and the current plan is in need of revision.
2. In response, the Municipality became engaged in a planning process that was detailed and thorough, and that involved extensive public participation.
3. As a result of the analyses and public involvement, there is a firm basis for the recommendations contained in the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan.
4. The review process before the Planning and Zoning Commission has been thorough. Issues raised by the Commission and public have been given due consideration, with revisions offered in the Issue-Response documents. The recommendations for changes to the March 2007 public hearing draft, as offered in the Issue-Response documents, are sensible and reflect this thorough process.
5. It is important that the Municipality adopt this plan as a guide for growth in the Downtown, recognizing that there was a thorough and dynamic public process involved.
6. With the adoption of this plan, there should be adequate guidance for the development of Downtown.

7. In general, this is a plan that recommends important changes, which will allow Downtown to become a vibrant, compact and pedestrian-friendly urban center; and its implementation should make Downtown a magnet for investment and activity.

B. The Commission recommends that:

1. The March 2007 Public Hearing Draft Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan be adopted by the Anchorage Assembly with revisions as described by the Issue-Response Summary of May 14, 2007; as modified by the Issue-Response Addendum dated June 11, 2007 (but written and sent to the Commission on June 5); and as further modified by the June 8, 2007 email to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
2. The March 2007 draft Anchorage Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan be adopted by the Anchorage Assembly as an addendum to the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission this 11th day of June 2007.



Tom Nelson
Secretary



Toni M. Jones
Chair

Attachments: A. May 14, 2007 Issue-Response Summary
B. June 11, 2007 Issue-Response Addendum
C. June 8, 2007 Email with Modification to Issue-Response Addendum

(2007-076)

ATTACHMENT A
TO PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2007-038

Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan
Issue – Response Summary
for the Planning and Zoning Commission

May 14, 2007

Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage

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Introduction

This Issue-Response Summary responds to comments received during review of the public hearing draft Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan (hereinafter the Downtown Plan), and to testimony presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission at a public hearing on April 25, 2007. It responds to questions and concerns raised by Commissioners and addresses several outstanding issues to resolve and miscellaneous errata that have been identified. The Department recommendations in this Issue-Response Summary are advisory to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Commission is scheduled to deliberate on the Downtown Plan on May 14, 2007.

Organization

Generally, the issues are listed in order of the major elements of the Downtown Plan, including Land Use and Economic Development, Transportation and Circulation, Urban Design and Implementation. Within each major element, issues are grouped by topic, such as transit-related issues with the Transportation element or park-related issues within the Land Use Element.

Each numbered issue-response item begins as a summary statement of what is the issue, concern or question from the commentator(s). Key elements of comments are summarized or paraphrased by issue. A response with a recommendation from the Planning Department follows each issue.

A follow-up errata section will be provided, which is intended to correct miscellaneous errors or clarify language in the public hearing draft. Comments received that were suggested technical editorial revisions and clarifications/corrections will appear in the errata section.

For reference, written comments and minutes of the public hearing and Commission discussion are attached (Attachments A and B, respectively).

Additional attachments include a transportation network analysis report by Kittelson & Associates, Inc. (Attachment C); and AO No. 85-173 (Attachment D), which addresses height restrictions in the vicinity of Town Square Park.

Land Use and Economic Development

1. Issue: Inclusion of Street Improvement Goal Statements within Land Use Goals

- The supporting sentence for the Land Use and Economic Development Goal at the top of the second column on page 41 refers only to mixed-use development. Add a sentence to the effect "Design roadways to reduce and minimize traffic impacts on the adjoining outdoor and indoor spaces, and with sufficient safe pedestrian crossings that roadways are not pedestrian barriers." (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- The supporting sentence for the second Land Use and Economic Development Goal in the second column on page 41 should include the statement, "and reduce the barrier-effect of high-traffic roadways, to create a cohesive central city district." (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Although Planning agrees with the intent of the comments, they are probably more appropriately addressed in Chapter 5, Transportation and Circulation. The land use and economic development goals in Chapter 4 focus on improving *land use* and encouraging certain kinds of *land development*.

The goal in the first bullet specifically promotes *mixed-use development* (e.g., upper floor employment and/or residential mixed with more active ground floor uses) as the most supportive type of *land use* for an active pedestrian environment. The purpose of the goal in the second bullet above is to increase the density and improve character of *land use development* to foster vibrant center with distinct sub-districts.

Streetscape and crosswalk enhancements that favor the pedestrian environment and circulation are addressed on page 80 in Chapter 5 Transportation and Circulation, and in the "Public Realm" design guidelines on page 94-99 of Chapter 6 Urban Design.

The comment in the first bullet does articulate a streetscape design goal implied throughout the Downtown Plan but is absent from chapter's main Urban Design chapter goals on page 91. Therefore, in response to the issues raised, Planning does support adding a bullet under the first Urban Design Goal, on page 91, to articulate an intent to "Design roadways to reduce and minimize motor vehicle traffic impacts on adjoining outdoor and indoor spaces."

2. Issue: Office/Commercial Uses in the Residential Mixed-use District (DT-3), Park Strip North Sub-district

- The Residential Mixed-use (DT-3) District, Park Strip North sub-district designation, as it is described on pages 49-50 of the Downtown Plan, is not appropriate for the area bounded by 6th and 8th Avenues and I and M Streets. The area is an existing mixed-use area that contains some residential but primarily office uses. The Plan needs to acknowledge existing uses and the potential for landowners to redevelop their property with uses that are not strictly residential. It should change the designation for the area by including it in the Downtown Mixed-use (DT-2) District, Legal/Office sub-district, because of the similarities in the distribution of legal and

office uses. If re-designation is not an option, then the definition of the DT-3 Park Strip North District should be expanded to allow office space in a mixed-use format.
(Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office)

Response: The Downtown Plan recommends three new districts to guide future growth and development Downtown. The *Downtown Core (DT-1)* is intended to be the primary focus of finite community resources for public investments, high-density commercial redevelopment and growing civic/cultural activities. The two mixed-use districts, *Downtown Mixed-use (DT-2)* and *Downtown Mixed-use Residential (DT-3)*, address most of the remaining Study Area. The Plan subdivides the DT-2 and DT-3 into geographic *sub-districts*. It promotes each of these emerging sub-districts to further develop its unique character and function that complement rather than compete with the rest of Downtown including the Downtown Core.

The Mixed-Use DT-2 district is a commercial/mixed-use district, with medium- to high-density employment, retail and entertainment uses. While some housing is encouraged in the Legal/Office sub-district of DT-2, this sub-district is recommended to be primarily developed with new medium to high-density office and commercial space to complement uses in the Downtown Core. This is a continuation of existing development patterns. The area north of 6th Avenue already features large scale commercial, intensity, and design, mid-rise office towers, the Captain Cook Hotel, and many full-scale active restaurants/entertainment and arts venues, as well as related traffic. Future housing development opportunities are limited.

The Downtown Mixed-use Residential District (DT-3) responds to the overarching goal of the Downtown Plan to provide more housing density downtown. Housing is considered essential for commercial vitality and Downtown revitalization as an active, compact, mixed-use city center. During the Downtown Plan public participation process, no issue received greater support and consensus of comment from community participants and stakeholders than the need to provide for more housing units for a diversity of households. The Downtown Plan recommends 2,500 housing units in Downtown by 2025 (500 units existed in 2002), and that Downtown's districts have the buildable capacity to accommodate thousands more if the market opportunity arises.

Mixed-use housing development of this magnitude needs to have buildable space in a district that provides a residentially-supportive living environment. The DT-3 Mixed-use Residential District encourages housing development, resident-serving amenities and services, and an urban design that features an adequately domestic living environment. Located in subareas outside the busier Downtown Core, it may already be developing a residential-oriented mix of uses and character. These sub-districts are well-positioned by location and presence of residential uses for housing infill/redevelopment, and tend to have a low-density and underdeveloped land use pattern.

The area bounded by 6th and 8th Avenues and I and M Streets fits this description. In the vicinity of K Street, it is a northward continuation of the low density land use pattern and development character of the Park Strip North block to the south of 8th Avenue. It consists of a mix of housing, one-story and low-rise office buildings and parking lots, including a municipally owned housing opportunity site. It shares a contiguous, relatively quiet sub-district consisting of local streets with the blocks south of 8th Avenue along the Delaney Park Strip. Likewise, the area west of L Street between 6th and 8th includes multi-family and single family uses, small-scale offices, and shares a contiguous, relatively quiet sub-district with the block south of 8th (ref: Diagram 3.1, Appendix A). The entire area in question is peripheral to the busier core areas, relatively underdeveloped and one of Downtown's greatest opportunity areas large enough to provide (a) the number of housing units

recommended by the Downtown Plan and (b) a contiguous, viable, identifiable residential mixed-use district. This changes north of 6th Avenue, where there are many of the higher intensity entertainment, hotel and office uses of the DT-2, more traffic and little or no residential use. For these reasons, Planning recommends keeping the area bounded by 6th and 8th Avenues and I and M Streets as part of the DT-3 Park Strip North sub-district.

The Planning recommendation to address the concern is to add the following language to the description of Downtown Mixed-use Residential on the lower left side of page 49: "The Mixed-Use Residential District accommodates existing office uses and will allow office/mixed-use development at a scale and intensity that is compatible with a residential-oriented district." The details of future regulations and incentives in the DT-3 district will be worked out as part of the new land use and development code for Downtown.

3. Issue: Housing Feasibility and Affordability

- While it is a laudable goal to have a larger residential component than we currently do, the Appendix B Downtown Anchorage Feasibility Assessment of residential development indicates that the residential units will not be affordable. There would have to be some kind of government interference or something to yield affordable housing. The market does not seem to be driving a lot of residential into the Downtown right now. (*Jim Fredrick, Planning and Zoning Commission, April 25 worksession*)
- On page 126, add language to action LU-6 supporting households of varying income levels living downtown. (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Part of the reason for a new Downtown Plan is represented by the assessment of existing conditions/trends in the first comment above. The Downtown Plan project came in recognition that the community's current plan and development regulations for the central business district need updating in order to effectively facilitate new growth. The new Plan provides an array of land use, circulation and urban design strategies that are anticipated to have a positive impact on housing development trends, such as a housing development force to identify potential financial incentives for a variety of housing development (page 43); changes to the zoning and land use regulations to encourage housing development (pp 43, 47-50, Chapter 6); and many other strategies. It does not set a target for the number of affordable housing units.

In response to the second comment above, Planning does not object to adding: "...a diverse mix of housing types and income levels Downtown," to Action LU-6 on page 126.

4. Issue: Housing Growth Targets and Citywide Phasing

- This plan should raise the topic of prioritizing citywide residential growth for Downtown. Otherwise, Downtown might not achieve the population threshold to support year-round businesses like a grocery store. All of Anchorage benefits from new residential development concentrated in Downtown. Other neighborhoods are resisting dense development. There is a win-win situation if Anchorage enacts strategies to favor residential infill in Downtown and, simultaneously, avoid denser rezoning and defer the construction of development-inducing infrastructure in other neighborhoods. (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

- Re-examine the assumptions that target 2,500 housing units for the Downtown, with a goal to increase Downtown's housing target to absorb more of the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan housing allocation target of 7,000 – 9,000 households for Northwest Anchorage. At a minimum, show the 4,000 unit goal in the table not just the narrative on page 42. Provide a more complete discussion of the types of changes or conditions needed before Downtown housing can grow beyond the 2,500 units shown in the charts. The Downtown Plan states that its housing target relies on Anchorage's Long-range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for housing projections, but the LRTP projected only 1,510 housing units Downtown in 2025. The LRTP housing projection relied on trends rather than Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Policies for a vibrant urban core. Established neighborhoods near town and employment centers, including South Addition, want to retain and improve their existing character without adding more dense zoning or housing within their boundaries. They expect density to begin Downtown, and will consider zoning changes only after Downtown is more built out. (*Cheryl Richardson – Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)

Response: Appendix A, Section 7.4.1, provides a baseline projection for housing market demand in 2025 of approximately 1,500 housing units (ie., an additional 1,000 units over the existing 500 units), based on the growth assumptions in the 2005 LRTP (summarized on page 70 of Appendix A). It states that it is possible that the Downtown study area could capture a higher percentage of Anchorage's new households through aggressive implementation of Downtown Plan policies, and illustrates this possibility with a "High Growth Scenario" of 6,268 housing units Downtown.

The Downtown Plan must assume that its own policies will be implemented, and so predicts a market demand for as much as twice as many new units (2,000 instead of 1,000) as the LRTP-based market demand analysis, for a total of approximately 2,500 housing units Downtown by 2025. For several reasons the Plan does not predict a market demand for even more housing, such as 4,000 units or even 6,268 housing units from the "High Growth Scenario" from Appendix A.

The reason is that the Plan's forecasts are based on assumptions about what percentage of Anchorage's new households Downtown can be expected to capture. Using the latest growth projections from the UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), Planning has developed a working estimate of future housing demand for the Anchorage Bowl through the year 2030. This housing demand projection suggests that the Anchorage Bowl may need to accommodate somewhere between 18,000 and 28,000 new housing units in the by the year 2030. These figures are very approximate, and should be interpreted only as a general order of magnitude of potential future growth. They are presented as a range between a base case projection and a maximum high growth projection built on an aggregation of ISER's high-growth cases (e.g., a gas pipeline combined with a high oil revenues, etc.).

If the Downtown Plan forecasts 2,500 additional units in the Downtown Study Area by 2025, then Downtown will have to capture 10-15% of the overall housing growth projected for the Bowl in the paragraph above. A market demand projection of 4,000 housing units in the Downtown study area would have to assume that Downtown could capture more than 15-20% of the Anchorage Bowl's overall housing growth over the next 20 years. To do this Downtown would need to add nearly 200 housing units each year. Planning recommends keeping the 2,500 housing unit growth projection. Planning believes that achieving 2,500

units alone would be an incredible increase over current trend-based projections for housing demand, and represent a dramatic success for the community.

This does not preclude allowing 4,000 or more housing units if market opportunities arise—it is just a projection. What seems most important is that there is agreement among community participants, stakeholders, agencies that there should be more housing Downtown.

5. Issue: Employment and Retail Density Targets

- On pages 5 and 44 incorporate criteria from Anchorage 2020 Policy 23 of office employment densities of more than 50 employees per acre, calculated at the block level. It would seem rational to extrapolate this to include some sort of retail intensity threshold as well. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- On pages 48-49, include thresholds for employment and customer/patronage density, not just residential density, in the development specifications for all DT districts. Policy 23 has been ignored in numerous large projects in employment centers, and needs to be activated. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning does not object to a target employment density threshold for the Downtown Core (DT-1) district. However, a number like 50 employees per acre should be stated as a goal, not a required development specification. A required threshold of 25 employees per acre would be adequate to ensure higher density than suburban strip commercial. However, any threshold should be subject to other factors such as seismic hazards or historic preservation that may impact the ability to develop high density.

A minimum employment density threshold of employees per acre is probably not appropriate for the outlying Downtown Mixed-use DT-2 District, unless it is stated as a general goal calculated at the block level. The Plan recommends concentrating and interconnecting major public investments and highest density employment growth in the Downtown Core (DT-1) as a means to activate and energize the city center. The Plan allows for medium-to-high density in peripheral DT-2 district areas as market opportunities arise.

While the DT-3 district allows a certain amount of commercial use, its purpose is to provide housing and a quality living environment, and so it is not an appropriate district to apply a minimum employment density threshold.

6. Issue: Retaining and Attracting Government Offices

- On page 44, in the second bullet under the strategy **Strengthen the hub of ...employment Downtown**, add the intent to attract state and federal offices, not just municipal offices. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- Two policies of Anchorage 2020 refer to Downtown as a center of government offices. Yet there is more than one reference in the Downtown Plan that the municipal Health and Human Services Department is moving from Downtown. It is a significant government enterprise and employer. It seems to fly in face of the imperative. *(Jim Fredrick - Planning and Zoning Commission, April 25 worksession)*
- On page 44, provide stronger language which requires local government administrative offices to be located in Downtown. Consider recommending a local

ordinance that uses as a model the language of the federal law that requires federal agencies to be located in city centers. (*Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)

Response: Planning agrees with the intent of the first comment regarding the importance of state and federal level offices. The first bullet in the second column of page 44 establishes the general strategy intended to capture these levels of government. Planning recommends adding "...for federal, state and local government..." to the first bullet.

There are several reasons why the second bullet focuses on municipal government offices. The Municipality has decision making authority over the future location of its own offices; there is a high number of municipal offices dispersed through the community; site selections tend to occur through a public process more frequently at the municipal level. For these reasons, the Plan identifies the greatest opportunity to implement the policy at the municipal level. Lastly, it is generally considered a best planning practice to locate in particular the *community-level* civic services in the city center.

This second bullet is a general policy, and not intended to specify implementation methods such as an ordinance as the third comment suggests. If the Commission believes it is necessary to consider specific implementation actions, Planning suggests adding language the Chapter 8 schedule of implementation actions rather than Chapter 4.

7. Issue: Civic Facilities

- What is the planned use for the Egan Center? (*Lamar Cotten – Planning and Zoning Commission, April 25 worksession*)

Response: The management plan for the Egan Center is that it will continue to operate as part of Anchorage's civic/convention center facility.

8. Issue: Strengthening the Hub of Commercial Office Employment Downtown

- On page 44 and/or in LU-7 on page 126, consider a goal for major banks to move back Downtown from Midtown. (*Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)

Response: LU-7 is the implementation action for the recruitment strategies on pages 44-46 that target general categories of commercial sectors. It is intended that the Anchorage Community Development Authority and partners would identify which corporate sectors are appropriate recruitment candidates through carrying out the implementation action LU-7. Therefore it would seem premature for the Downtown Plan policy to prioritize specific corporate sectors such as finance.

It is questionable whether it would be practical to move banking facilities from Midtown to Downtown. Municipal land use policy reflects that Anchorage is developing a polycentric city form. The *Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan* designates Midtown as a Major Employment Center alongside Downtown. Each center is therefore by policy considered legitimate and has a unique function and role to play. As recommended by *Anchorage 2020*, the Municipality has commissioned a Midtown District Plan to help manage Midtown's growth and identify its core areas of high density. Meanwhile, the Downtown Plan

can help Downtown fulfill its unique role as one kind of vibrant city center coexisting with Midtown.

9. Issue: Roads and Parking as a Secondary Land Use

- On page 29, on the chart of eight land uses considered most important for achieving Downtown revitalization, add Roads and Parking (as a secondary land use). The purpose is to be aware of the percent in surface area, or the total lane miles, of roads and parking in Downtown. (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: The Downtown Plan Strategy Framework establishes a three-tiered hierarchy of strategies for Downtown. The first tier of strategies is Land Uses. The four "primary" land uses are most important for Downtown's development and revitalization as a major city center. The four "secondary" land uses provide distinct destinations, services, activities and workplaces. Secondary uses include cultural/entertainment uses such as arts, culture, restaurants and regular events and festivals; Civic/Government administrative facilities and historic landmarks; Industrial uses; and Open Space/Recreation uses. It is a recruitment list containing the proper mix of destinations and activity-generating uses that Downtown needs to retain and attract for a vibrant, mixed-use urban environment.

Roadways are public infrastructure. Parking is a passive accessory use. It is not a destination or activity generator. Too much of it creates dead spaces in urban districts. It is only necessary to the extent it serves the eight targeted land uses. Therefore, Planning advises against expanding the list of primary and secondary land uses to include an accessory use like parking.

If the purpose is to be aware of the percent of surface area encumbered for roads and parking in the Downtown, Planning suggests that this information could be provided in Appendix A and/or in the Chapter 2 discussions regarding existing conditions.

10. Issue: Transit as an Economic Development and Employer Incentive

- On page 44, the second column devotes a lot of space to solving the 'parking problem.' It should be changed to include discussion to increasing transit as the most viable solution. (*Dianne Holmes*)
- On page 46, include a bullet to reduce parking demand through employer incentive programs. (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Planning concurs with the general point being made by the first comments, and can suggest specific language to address it. In response to the second bulleted comment above, Planning suggests a bullet under the strategy Develop a Coordinated Parking Program on page 46 to reference the Chapter 5 employer incentive program and other transit incentives, as follows: "Reduce parking demand through transit services, programs, incentives and amenities recommended in this plan."

11. Issue: Expedited Permitting

- Expedited permitting recommended on page 46 and LU-10 on page 126 may become more difficult as people learn more about how the convention center and adjacent

parking garage did not undergo Title 21 Land Use Regulations review. *(Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition)*

Response: Expedited permitting is intended to streamline and shorten the Title 21 compliance review process, while leaving it essentially intact. Applicants of projects would save money and time in permitting, yet the land use and development standards still apply. This is different from exempting a project from Title 21.

12. Issue: Enhancing Downtown's Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Focus

- On page 45, consider adding the concept of a business incubator for the arts. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning concurs and can provide language using the guidance above.

13. Issue: First Avenue Arts District

- The 1st avenue east of the overpass depicted on page 47 in the Downtown Districts Diagram and recommended on page 50 seems too isolated to be an arts corridor, especially with arts corridors in several other places. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The 1st Avenue Arts District is reflecting the Alaska Railroad Corporation's current master plan and desires for the redevelopment of their property.

14. Issue: Promoting Arts and Culture in Downtown:

- An arts and cultural focus is promoted for the downtown area. While many embellishments in the streetscape design can compliment the Dena'ina Center, a major focus would detract from Mountain View's similar effort as well as the Native Cultural Center [Native Heritage Center?] in Muldoon. *(Dianne Holmes)*
- There is also an emphasis on portraying native mythology throughout downtown, but very little about showing the every day realities of subsistence and the knowledge that must accompany that lifestyle in our sub-Arctic environment. Additionally, many native people embrace the Christian religion and find it offensive to dwell on native mythology. Reconsider the impact of the above in Chapter 4, pages 45, 52, 53 and elsewhere in the DT Plan. *(Dianne Holmes)*
- On page 53, the mission of the proposed Arts and Cultural Center in Catalytic Site #1 is unclear. Is it for multi-cultural retail sales? Performances? Consulates and sister cities offices? Don't duplicate the Anchorage Museum or private efforts. *(Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning does not agree with the first bulleted statement. Promoting an arts and cultural district in Downtown Anchorage would complement, not detract from the Mountain View Arts district, the Native Heritage Center and other cultural districts. Arts and culture can take many forms including heritage and history, visual arts, performing arts, and

literary arts. Cultural diversity is one of the many assets Anchorage has to offer both residents and visitors. By enhancing and promoting arts and culture where they exist in the community, the Downtown Plan will help to further catalyze an existing asset.

Planning does not understand the intent of the second bulleted statement since it is not certain there is a reference to portraying native mythology in the Downtown Plan.

The intent of an arts and culture focus Downtown is to promote the unique diversity of Anchorage and Alaska through its artists and cultural assets, and to bring these resources together in the heart of the city. Promoting arts and culture Downtown can help catalyze the artist studios, galleries and boutiques that dot particular sections of Downtown. It is an important element in promote economic revitalization and development in Downtown. Cultural tourism is an important segment of Alaska tourism that can be built upon through a distinctive program like an Arts and Culture Center Downtown.

15. Issue: Development Criteria for Catalytic and Other Opportunity Sites

- On page 125, are actions LU-3 and LU-4 suggesting that the municipality becomes the property owner as a way to implement the policy? (*Lamar Cotten - Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- On page 65, in the general criteria for other opportunity sites, change the last criteria to, "New projects should be designed to preserve views outward to the natural environments and usable outdoor space, as well as views inward to the city center." (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: LU-3 and LU-4 are market-based, and intended to assist and encourage the property owner with feasibility studies, property consolidation and other means. They are not intended to mean acquiring the property or dictating what the development program will be.

It is not clear to Planning whether the intended change in the second comment above references outdoor spaces outside of / surrounding Downtown, or public spaces within Downtown. Is the change intended to replace the last part of the sentence?

16. Issue: Providing Parks and Open Space as Downtown Grows

- There is language later in Chapter 4 that recommends an assessment of open space needs. With a target of up to an eight-fold increase in residential units, supplementing open space is a likely need. Add a word to the title of the open space goal on page 41: "Maintain, supplement, and enhance open space, and reword text of goal: ..."parks and open space is maintained and supplemented to accommodate new residents and workers." (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- On page 66, in the second bullet on the right hand side, add: "As Downtown becomes more densely developed, it is important to preserve, maintain, and supplement its open spaces." (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Planning concurs with both recommendations.

17. Issue: HLB as an implementer of open space goal and strategies

- Add a strategy recommendation bullet on page 66 to enlist HLB as an active player in obtaining urban open space where needed to support residents and employees in higher density development. HLB has a mission to ensure an adequate public land base for future generations, and it is likely that the proposed density of Downtown will tax the existing open space. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The Downtown Plan typically identifies specific implementers of its policies in Chapter 8: Implementation. The recommendations in Chapter 4 provide only the overall policy direction; each recommendation might be linked to several different kinds of implementation actions and implementers in Chapter 8.

Planning believes that it is premature for the Downtown Plan to recommend which specific agencies (e.g., Planning, ACDA and/or HLB) should assist Parks in securing additional community open spaces. The Municipality should first complete Action LU-12 on page 127. LU-12 is a Downtown Park and Open Space Plan which identifies park and open space needs and acquisition strategies. The needs analysis in LU-12 would help identify potential contributors such as HLB and/or other agencies.

18. Issue: Park/Open Space Advisory Committee

- On pages 66 and 127 (LU-11), why form a Downtown Park Community Advisory Group to help determine the needs for open space and recreational needs Downtown? Granted that there needs to be citizen involvement, but why not a working group rather than the formal structure of a committee? If the Parks Board can function in this capacity, why not assign this to an existing body like them or the UDC? *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- It seems to be an unnecessary recommendation to form a Downtown Park Community Advisory Group. The real recommendation is contained in the next recommendation for a type of parks/open space plan. If they want to form a committee, great, but to make this a requirement now is premature. *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The Downtown Park Advisory Committee will be an ongoing committee dedicated solely to Parks and Recreation needs in the Downtown area. It will function like a subcommittee of the NW Park District Advisory Committee that the 2006 Anchorage Bowl Parks Plan recommends. It will advise the Parks and Recreation Commission on parks, open space and trail issues relating specifically to Downtown. A working group may function well in the short term but this recommendation is a long term strategy and a committee will help provide continuity to implementing the Park Plan and the Downtown Plan recommendations for parks in the downtown area.

19. Issue: Delaney Park

- Regarding LU-13 and LU-14 in Chapter 8, park advocates are greatly concerned that the proposed changes to **Delaney Park Strip** and Town Square do not reflect public desires. The concern arises from the lack of public process for these changes. *(Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition)*

Response: Page 66 of the Plan provides broad strategies for Parks and Open Space in the context of the overall downtown picture. More specific plans such as the Delaney Park Master Plan are underway to address more specific goals and strategies. The Delaney Park Master Plan has undergone a large public involvement process in the past 2 years. The Delaney Park Draft Master Plan was first released November 14, 2006. The updated version, recently released on March 1, 2007, responds to the numerous comments received throughout the process as well the numerous planning and public involvement efforts.

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

- Is it appropriate for the Town Square to function as a major venue? Ensure that only those functions are added that meet the overall management intent for the park. Additional work needs to be done to ensure that this is an appropriate recommendation. Identify the current management intent for Town Square and then differences between that management intent and the Downtown Plan and, if there are differences, that they be justified. *(Bruce Phelps – Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- Provide information on jurisdictional questions between the existing park plan for Town Square Park and the Downtown Plan. Must the Downtown Plan adopt a plan that has already been finalized? Didn't someone receive the authority to design the Town Square quite recently the way it currently is? How is that authority trumped by the Comp Plan? *(Andrew Josephson – Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- What is the typical process for redesigning a park? Would it not be generated by site analysis? *(Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- Regarding LU-13 and LU-14 in Chapter 8, park advocates are greatly concerned that the proposed changes to Town Square do not reflect public desires. The concern arises from the lack of public process for these changes. Ensure there is enough public process involved in the new plan for Town Square. *(Jeanne Devon; John Blaine; Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition)*
- The Downtown Plan takes many liberties with remodeling Town Square that should not be adopted until the proper process has been finalized. Of major concern is the recommendation that Town Square be opened up in order to hold large revenue-generating events. Large events are appropriately held at the Delaney Park Strip, which is provided for such events. Town Square was intended to be a small intimate area for downtown. Many of the proposed changes are to accommodate the new convention center—particularly pedestrian access for F Street alongside the PAC. Town Square should be treated as a separate entity with its own master plan. There should be a public process for any redevelopment or redesign of Town Square. Change references for altering Town Square for large events and state the requirement to complete the public process before redesigning Town Square: p. 66, Chapter 4; p. 120-121, Chapter 7; p 127, 131, Chapter 8; p.18, Appendix A, Existing Conditions. *(Dianne Holmes)*
- Security, connectivity and visibility are noted throughout the Downtown Plan for Town Square. Assertions that Town Square may be unsafe are not supported by evidence. Accommodating the security assertions and convention center related connectivity assertions could undermine the character of the park, such as by cutting down the hills opening up E Street and moving the stage where vendors have located.

Recommendations for connecting the old and new convention centers along side the western border of the park are taking precedence over the original desire for Town Square character; the Downtown Plan accommodates the new convention center to the exclusion of some other adopted plans. Include a note on the following pages that changes to Town Square access must be preceded by a public process specifically for TS: p. 33+, Chapter 3; p. 59, 66, Chapter 4; p. 98, Chapter 6; p. 53 Streetscape Plan; p. 18, Appendix A, Existing Conditions. *(Dianne Holmes)*

Response: Page 66 of the Downtown Plan provides broad strategies for Parks and Open Space in the context of the overall downtown picture. These broad strategies are also consistent with the 2006 adopted Anchorage Park Plan which recommends continuing upgrades to Town Square as a community use park. The draft Downtown Plan does not recommend specific design changes. More specific recommendations and any potential significant changes to Town Square Park will undergo a separate plan process that will include the public's involvement as well as approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Urban Design Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission.

If the Commission believes it necessary to clarify that any plan for improvements to Town Square Park will undergo a public process, Planning suggests changing LU-14 on page 127 to read simply as follows: "Complete a public process to create an improvement plan for Town Square Park." The second bullet on page 121 could also be modified to read, "Develop improvement plans based on a public process to improve Town Square, Delaney Park and ..."

LU-14 on page 127 is an implementation action item for the open space policies on page 44. LU-14 reflects the current uses in Town Square Park and builds on the recognition that it is a community gathering area with programmed events on weekends and holidays and more passive use during the week. The management intent of the Parks and Recreation Department is to have it remain as a desirable place for the community to gather and to participate in special events and also as a place for passive park use the majority of the time. The programs in the park should continue to serve all members of the community. The safety of the park hinges on its uses. The more use the park gets and the more people are in the park, the safer it will be for the community. The park also draws people downtown for events who would normally not come downtown. Town Square Park currently has the following programmed uses:

Winter:

1. Every Sunday there are family skate activities
2. Curling activities during Fur Rondy
3. Tree lighting ceremony in October
4. Lighting of holiday tree day after Thanksgiving
5. Fire and Ice New Year's Eve celebration
6. Ice sculpture display during Fur Rondy

Summer

1. Air Force band performance every Sunday
2. AWAIC Summer Solstice Festival in June for 3 days
3. Downtown Partnership "Live at 5" concert series Fridays from June– mid August
4. Kids Day activities in the park in April
5. 4th of July parade viewing
6. March of Dimes walk-a-thon in May starts in Park

7. Humpy's Half Marathon post race celebration in Park
8. Performing groups/church group plays
9. The Mayor's picnic

During the extensive public process for the Anchorage Park Plan (2003-2006) and the Park District Plans (2004-2005), safety in parks was a concern for residents of Anchorage. Visibility in and out of parks and the presence of other users were elements that the community said helped to make them feel safer in parks. Town Square Park in particular was seen as unsafe for residents walking through the park in the evenings because of the number of closed off or private areas within the park. In contrast, the openness of Delaney Park strip made most residents feel safe because their line of sight is much better. The policies in the Downtown Plan regarding safety and visibility upgrades are general in nature. Specific recommendations should be addressed in the Town Square master plan update process discussed above.

No change is being suggested to Town Square Park in the Downtown Plan regarding the pedestrian access corridor from 5th Ave to 6th avenue along the western boundary of the Park. AR 85-111 provides for this pedestrian corridor from the north to the south of the Park as part of the original utility construction easement from the F Street vacation.

21. Issue: Town Square Park – Clarify Ownership of the Southwest Corner

- The maps are inconsistent between the Downtown Plan and appendixes regarding ownership of the southwest corner of Town Square. That area is alternately shown as being part of F St and stated to be included in the F St/Convention Center pedestrian plan, or within Town Square property. See maps in Appendix C, Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan and one example map in Chapter 4, p. 57 of main Downtown Plan. This inconsistency should be clarified. It is important to consult the legal actions in the 1980s for this area to resolve the ownership of that corner because it will affect pedestrian access. The Commission placed conditions regarding access on this corner in 1984 or 1985. (*Dianne Holmes*)

Response: The SW corner of Town Square Park depicted in the Core Streets Document maps and not depicted in the Downtown Plan maps is a utility easement left over from the F Street vacation during the establishment of Town Square Park and the Performing Arts Center. While not officially counted as Town Square Park acreage (and thus not depicted on the Downtown Plan Maps) this plaza area is used as an entrance or “gateway” into the Park and to the PAC. Parks and Recreation manages the space for programmed events and maintains the landscaping there.

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

- Sun rights for Town Square Park should be considered and studied. Insert throughout the Downtown Plan in every instance where air/sun rights are discussed AO 85-173 and include a note that the height limitations should not be exceeded and that lesser heights should be encouraged. Also include a note to complete research on separate air rights for the area of the Covenant House as those may have been purchased separately. Pages where changes should be made are: p. 56-58, 61, Chapter 4; p. 104, Chapter 6; and p. 125, Chapter 8. There is a concern with what

40 condominium units on the south side, recommended in Catalytic Development Site #3 on pages 56-58 will do in terms of access to sunlight in Town Square Park. Provide more information about what p. 23 of Appendix A says that Town Square is current protected by city-owned air rights for the properties immediately to the south. *(Dianne Holmes)*

- There appear to be some issues regarding Town Square's air rights, and how that relates to some new developments planned across the street. I know that a very big concern of the citizens who have been involved so far is that Town Square remain green, and open, with the same access to sun and space as it has now. The wording in the Plan on this point seems to be vague. The character of the park as an "urban oasis" should not be compromised by development, and the paperwork concerning the air rights to the park is published and made available to the public. *(Jeanne Devon)*

Response: AO 85-173 (attached) outlines restrictions on development in blocks surrounding Town Square Park for protection from shadows. Page 18 of the Ordinance limits heights of buildings from 85 to 200 feet depending on the location of the development within the block. Planning staff has not yet found documentation of any separate air rights for the area of the Covenant House that may have been purchased separately.

The urban design guidelines on page 104 of the Downtown Plan provide the policy guidance for sunlight access protection for Town Square Park and other open spaces (the second and third bullets specifically). Specific sunlight access rights will be addressed in greater detail by the Downtown Land Use and Development Code (see discussion on page 92 of the Urban Design Chapter). It is unnecessary for the Plan to specify air rights by individual property around the park.

23. Issue: Historic Preservation Commission

- We recommend revising pages 68 and 69 to refer to the current Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission and its powers and duties established in AO 2006-175. *(MOA – Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission)*
- On pages 68 and 69, the formation of a Historic Preservation Commission seems to be inappropriate as a recommendation in a Downtown Plan. *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning concurs with the comments, and recommends the draft section be modified to reflect the existence of the AHPC and its purpose, powers and duties as based on its enabling ordinance.

24. Issue: Historic Overlay Zone

- Add a statement to indicate what an overlay zone for historic structures is intended to regulate and the purpose of such a zone. *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- We agree with the recommendation that a Historic Overlay Zone is needed to preserve and enhance Downtown's historic and cultural resources. Because the designation of a Historic Overlay Zone is likely the most effective historic district, we

would recommend expanding the conceptual zone boundaries on page 68 of the plan to include the entire Downtown Study Area and develop the actual zone through a public planning process of the commission. (MOA – Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission)

Response: Discussion of the proper boundaries for a potential historic overlay zone is beyond the scope of the Downtown Plan, and debate regarding their proper location on the map would be premature before a historic preservation plan is undertaken. Therefore, Planning recommends removing the conceptual boundaries of the overlay zone from the map on page 68 and stating in the narrative that a historic overlay zone is a potential implementation tool which could be recommended by a Historic Preservation Plan. Suggesting the extent of boundaries on a map is not necessary yet and would detract from the focus on identifying overall historic preservation goals in the Downtown Plan. Removing the boundaries from the map on page 68 does not diminish a recommendation that there be an overlay zone. It merely defers the discussion of boundaries until the appropriate public process during development of a Historic Preservation Plan and Historic Overlay Zone.

Planning recommends the following changes to the text on page 68:

1. Change the title of the historic preservation section to read in a manner consistent with the open space section title (p. 66): “Establish Strategies for Downtown Historic Preservation”
2. Change the last sentence in the first column to read, “The Downtown Plan recommends creating a Historic Preservation Plan ~~Historic Overlay Zone~~ to preserve and enhance Downtown’s historic and cultural resources.
3. Generalize and qualify the discussion regarding an overlay zone by stating that one of the potential outcomes of a historic preservation planning process would be a strategy to establish a historic overlay zone in Downtown.
4. Indicate the overall purpose, goals and strategies for historic preservation in a clearer, more organized and comprehensive manner. Potential strategies should feature but not be limited to a historic overlay zone, and could be derived from the powers and duties of the new Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission. These policies would provide a basis for recommending a Historic Preservation Plan process, to be undertaken by the Historic Preservation Commission.

25. Issue: Seismically Induced Ground Failure – Background Information

- The Seismically Induced Ground Failure Zones (Zones 4 and 5) depicted on the 1980 hazard map of the Municipality principally are based on the areas of destructive landsliding and ground spreading that occurred during the 1964 M 9.2 earthquake, and on many studies performed in the area since that event. The potential for significant failure of the ground in those areas is real. The technical and historical basis for the delineation of these zones, as well as the current restrictions on development in these zones, should be presented in Appendix A, existing conditions analysis. (MOA Geotechnical Advisory Commission)

Response: Planning will prepare the suggested documentation for inclusion in Appendix A with assistance or review by the Geotechnical Advisory Commission.

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

- About 60% of the Downtown Study Area lies in Seismically Induced Ground Failure Zones #4 and #5, and about 12% is in Zone #5. The vulnerability of structures located in these zones should be a principal challenge to the Downtown Plan area and treated in the plan as such. Life safety of building occupants should be the first concern of the Plan, and the economic vulnerability of property owners and the community as a whole should be a close second. *(MOA Geotechnical Advisory Commission)*
- If the plan encourages uses and structure configurations that are not compatible with the geo-hazards of the area, it will be difficult if not impossible to follow the plan. For example, there may be a conflict between some of plans' land use recommendations (eg., promoting high occupancy uses within Zones #4 and #5) and the technical difficulty and expense that will be necessary to design and actually build these projects. If certain land use regulations go forward, there may also be a need for corresponding changes to the local building code to allow these uses to occur. *(MOA Geotechnical Advisory Commission)*
- Although the Plan (pages 112 and 113) recommends that a risk evaluation be performed to determine an acceptable level of risk associated with various development schemes in vulnerable areas of Downtown, the study should be performed prior to implementing the Downtown Plan. In addition, descriptions provided in Chapter 4 for land uses and intensity of development for the various Downtown subdistricts should be preceded with a statement that certain proposed uses or intensities may be more restricted or not allowed within Seismically Induced Ground failure Zone #4 or #5, subject to the risk evaluation. If the plan is not consistent with the results of the risk evaluation, the Plan will not be a useful guide to future development. *(MOA Geotechnical Advisory Commission)*
- Explain what a seismic overlay zone is and what it will regulate. Explain the preference for a seismic overlay zone as an implementation tool before the seismic analysis has been conducted. This analysis should identify a whole bunch of recommendations, only one of which might be the overlay zone. Don't you want to state this more generally? What the Downtown Plan needs to indicate is that a seismic analysis for the downtown is recommended and that it is expected that a variety of means to control building siting and design/development are envisaged. *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: To address the concerns above, Planning recommends clarifications regarding seismic hazards and more consistent references to seismic hazards and seismically-induced ground failure zones #4 and #5 for the land use districts section in Chapter 4. These include several adjustments to sub-districts' development specifications for use, intensity and building height, where these descriptions would otherwise appear to conflict with seismic hazards and existing building code restrictions in zones #4 and #5. Specific recommendations are as follows:

1. On page 41, change the supporting sentence of the fourth land use goal to, "Minimize the life safety risks to building occupants and economic vulnerability of property owners and the community as a whole ~~to the public~~ for any future development

proposed in areas with potentially high or very high ground failure susceptibility seismic hazard zones #4 and #5 (see Seismic Hazards Diagram, page [...])."

2. On page 47, add an overall statement which precedes the descriptions of the individual sub-districts: Certain proposed uses or intensities may be more restricted or not allowed within Seismically Induced Ground failure Zone #4 or #5, subject to current building code requirements and a Community Risk Assessment discussed in the seismic section at the end of Chapter 4 and in Appendix A.
3. On page 48, add a bulleted "Development Specification" for the DT-1 district:
 - Certain proposed uses, intensities and building heights may be more restricted within seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5. Seismic constraints in 3rd and 4th Avenues are anticipated to limit the height and size of structures.
4. On pages 48 and 49, change the first bulleted "Development Specification" for the DT-2 East Avenues and Legal/Office sub-districts to:
 - 2 to 10 stories; 20 to 60-plus units/acre per Merrill Field flight path, and depending on seismic restrictions within seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5
5. On page 49, add a bulleted "Development Specification" for the DT-3 Park Strip North sub-district:
 - Residential density and building height may be more restricted within high seismic ground failure zones, especially near the bluff over Bootleggers Cove.
6. On page 50, change the narrative description of the DT-3 Pioneer Slope sub-district as follows: "...is located in seismically induced ground failure zone #5, with very high ground failure susceptibility a high seismic risk area and is considered for ~~comprised of~~ a diverse mix of low to medium density uses, including open space, commercial, residential and industrial uses. ~~Numerous parcels are prime sites for seismically engineered, medium density mixed-use development.~~"

Planning also recommends moving the "Seismic Constraints" section from the end of Chapter 6 Urban Design (pp 112-113) to the end of Chapter 4 after the historic preservation section. The content of this section should be changed to summarize the basis for the mapped seismically induced ground failure zones; improve the sequence of implementation actions related to seismicity; and clarify the purpose of a community risk analysis, a seismic overlay zoning and other implementation actions. Recommended changes (pp 112-113):

7. Delete the first two bullets.
8. Add a brief explanatory narrative that identifies and explains what the seismic risk is, and the basis for the mapped seismically induced ground failure zones and current building code requirements. The discussion should also explain the history and status of the "Buttress Area" north of 4th Avenue.
9. Add the boundaries of the Buttress Area to the Seismic Hazards Diagram (p. 113).
10. Change the wording of the third bullet to state that a "Community Risk Assessment" study should be conducted to help the community determine an acceptable level of risk associated with various development types in vulnerable areas of Downtown. It should state that, subject to the results of the community risk assessment, land use code and building code restrictions for certain proposed uses or intensities within seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5 may be changed in the future, and other

implementation measures to minimize risk may also be identified. As part of that the Buttress Area regulations should be reconsidered.

11. Replace the last two bullets on page 112 with a recommendation for establishment of an interim seismic ground failure overlay zone which reflects existing building code requirements and review procedures in ground failure zones #4 and #5. The purpose of the overlay zone is only to provide a reference and information to property owners regarding existing code requirements and help make the community aware of seismic ground hazards. It is not intended to add or change any restrictions, only to inform. The overlay zone should be provided as part of the Downtown land use and development code to be developed following adoption of the plan. Changes to existing building code requirements should only occur following the Community Risk Assessment recommended above.

Planning can prepare specific language based on the guidance above.

Transportation and Circulation

27. Issue: Downtown Plan's Overarching Goal to Improve Connectivity

- On page 27, the supporting language for the Overarching Goal to Improve Connectivity seems incomplete. This is the place to set the stage for "walking as the primary mode" policies. Points to add:
 - Design pedestrian connections that make walking convenient, fast, and enticing.
 - Strengthen intermodal connections to enable drivers to park and use non-vehicular travel within Downtown.
 - Avoid fragmenting Downtown with high-volume or high-speed roadways. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The Overarching Goals on page 27 provide the general policy guidance for the Downtown Plan, including the Transportation and Circulation chapter goals. Because Transportation and Circulation chapter prioritizes walking as the primary circulation mode within the Downtown Core, Planning agrees that the draft Overarching Goal for Connectivity should reference walking as the primary mode and recommends adding a single, general phrase or short sentence to the overarching goal on page 27, and incorporating the details suggested in the comment above in the Transportation and Circulation goals on page 75 if they are not covered there.

28. Impacts of Regional Highway Projects

- In the second to last bullet on page 72, delete the misleading implication that the potential Knik Arm crossing will have significant benefits to Downtown. Studies show negative impacts from bridge traffic on Downtown, especially on A/C couplet. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- It reflects an automobile-oriented bias for the plan to state on page 72 that the Fairview Freeway and Knik Arm Crossing will benefit Downtown. Downtown Plan consultants strongly questioned the wisdom of diverting regional traffic away from Downtown via the Ingra Gambell couplet, saying it would serve to divert commerce from downtown. *(Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition)*

Response: Planning recommends addressing the two projects separately, and explaining what their impacts are, as follows:

- The planned Seward/ Glenn Highways "Freeway-to-Freeway Connection" could have significant benefits to Downtown, increasing redevelopment potential in Downtown and neighboring Fairview by alleviating the regional through-traffic in these areas.
- A Freeway-to-Freeway (Gambell/Ingra) connection directly to the Knik Arm Crossing is critical to reducing impacts on Downtown. If no connection is made directly to Gambell/Ingra, then the A/C couplet would carry much more regional commuter and freight traffic through Downtown, impacting its revitalization prospects.

29. Transportation Goals. Provide a network of streets

- On page 75, in the last goal, instead of redundancy in the street grid, why not "efficiency"? (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Planning: The word "redundancy" may be the best descriptor in this case. The benefit of a grid of streets is its redundancy—i.e., it offers more than one choice of routes to get from point A to B. This redundancy of available routes helps to disperse and calm vehicle traffic. Downtown has a fine-grained street grid. However, the current configuration of some one-way streets in Downtown has eroded the redundancy of available routes.

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

- Explain, in general, the circulation/transportation analysis that was used as the basis for the recommendations pertaining to circulation in the Downtown Plan (DP). The specific recommendations need to reference a firm basis for these in a factual analysis. (*Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- Explain the reasons why the Downtown Plan believes that principal traffic flows through Downtown can be moved from the current street configuration in the center to a peripheral location. (Or provide a reference to the document.) (*Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: The multidisciplinary consultant team retained for the Downtown Plan included Kittleson & Associates., Inc. (KAI), a transportation planning and traffic engineering firm based in Portland, Oregon. KAI conducted a transportation network analysis of the Downtown and then recommended transportation policies and objectives. Its report provided the basis for the street conversions recommended in the Downtown Plan. The transportation report is provided as an attachment with this issue-response summary, and is suggested to be incorporated as an appendix to the Plan.

KAI evaluated the existing street network in relation to the Downtown goals and objectives emerging from the public process for the Plan. The evaluation identified weaknesses in the existing circulation network that would need to be addressed to meet the goals:

- The current mixture of one- and two-way streets causes driver confusion and out-of-direction travel, and several super-blocks disrupt the grid street network and adversely impact traffic circulation.

- Through traffic, particularly trucks, traversing Downtown negatively impacts the pedestrian environment.
- Poor local circulation and high volume streets within the Downtown Core will inhibit high-density redevelopment of Downtown.

KAI then analyzed the potential Downtown circulation patterns of ten alternative circulation scenarios. These scenarios tested the impact of changing the directionality and/or functional classifications of various streets in Downtown. The scenarios were evaluated based on their likely impact on (a) land use compatibility with Downtown redevelopment goals; (b) a quality pedestrian environment on which Downtown revitalization will depend; (c) ability to accommodate regional through-trips, freight mobility, transit access; (d) efficiency and intuitiveness of the motor vehicle circulation network within Downtown; and (e) construction feasibility. The following recommendations resulted:

- *Conversion of D and F Streets to two-way traffic*, to improve local motor vehicle circulation in part by reducing driver confusion and out-of-direction travel;
- *Conversion of 9th Avenue to a three-lane cross-section*, to improve pedestrian amenities and connections, provide on-street parking and promote mixed-use residential redevelopment in accordance with the Plan's land use goals and objectives. Travel demands under the proposed land use objectives were found to not exceed the carrying capacity of a typical three-lane cross section.
- *Conversion of the 5th / 6th Avenue couplet to a 3rd / 6th Avenue couplet and re-creating 5th Avenue as a two-way street similar to 4th Avenue* [discussed in issue 31 below]

The KEI analysis concluded that the recommended changes in the circulation system will:

- improve vehicle circulation within Downtown
- improve transit access and circulation in Downtown,
- have minimum impacts on regional through-traffic, contingent on the Freeway-to-Freeway Connection; and
- improve land use / transportation compatibility, by improving the pedestrian environment and the feasibility of medium-/high-density mixed-use redevelopment

31. Issue: 3rd/6th Couplet Phasing, Pedestrian Impacts and Regional Through-Traffic

- The Plan intends to reduce through traffic through Downtown and route it elsewhere. Is this in concert with other elements like the Freeway to Freeway Connection and LRTP elements to accommodate the traffic in a reasonable manner someplace else? (*Jim Fredrick – Planning and Zoning Commission, April 25 worksession*)
- On page 77, why is the conversion of 3rd Avenue to one-way contingent on the completion of the Freeway-to-Freeway connection? Seems it would work independently of that. (*Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- The Downtown Plan consultants initially indicated that they would recommend eliminating the 5th and 6th Avenue couplets because they were such major barriers to local circulation. Please conduct a study to reexamine whether 3rd and 6th are really needed as couplets. (*Cheryl Richardson -Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)

- The Downtown Plan advocates a pedestrian dominated development philosophy, sacrificing the efficiency of vehicular through travel to accommodate pedestrian amenities. If efficiency is reduced in the Downtown Core than the outlying roads will need to handle the through traffic. Phasing will be critical. *(MOA Project Management and Engineering Department)*

Response: The recommended change to a 3rd / 6th couplet is based on the Downtown Plan transportation network analysis conducted by Kittelson & Associates, Inc. (see issue 30 above and attachment). The analysis tested ten different potential traffic circulation pattern scenarios, including a comparison of the scenario for a 3rd / 6th couplet and the scenario to simply decouple 5th / 6th Avenues and convert them to two-way.

The analysis indicated that the scenario to decouple 5th / 6th Avenues would have a negative impact on transit access, would not improve the pedestrian environment or make the street circulation system any more compatible for medium- and high-density redevelopment (including housing) than the current street system.

The scenario to convert 5th Avenue to a pedestrian-oriented two-way street and move the west-bound couplet north to 3rd Avenue was found to provide the multiple benefits of alleviating the impacts of regional through traffic in the Downtown Core pedestrian environment; maintaining an efficient bus circulator route and improving transit circulation in general; and avoiding the dispersal of through traffic onto other east-west avenues.

The 3rd/6th couplet is very dependent upon the completion of the Freeway-to-Freeway Connection. The potentially negative impact on regional through traffic and freight circulation would be mitigated by prior completion of the regional Freeway-to-Freeway Connection. The Freeway-to-Freeway Connection would offer a more efficient regional traffic route, and reduce regional through traffic Downtown, resulting in additional capacity for Downtown focused traffic.

At first glance the Downtown Plan might seem to be pedestrian-dominated at the expense of automobile circulation. However, closer review shows the Downtown Plan will reduce out-of-direction vehicle travel and driver confusion. It is phased in relation to the Freeway-to-Freeway Connection to maintain sufficient capacity to serve regional through-trips and provide additional capacity for Downtown-focused traffic circulation. It will also improve motorist wayfinding and access to vehicle parking.

32. Issue: Extension of the eastbound bus lane proposed in the plan on Third Avenue

As discussed in the April 25 staff report to the Commission, Planning recommends consideration of the extension of the eastbound bus lane proposed for Third Avenue from F to E Street to F to C Street. Chapter 5 Transportation and Circulation on page 77 recommends the overall conversion of most of Third Avenue to one-way westbound traffic. As part of this, it supports and illustrates an eastbound lane on the north side of the Hilton Hotel between F and E Streets to accommodate tour bus loading and unloading (page 87). As proposed, this configuration would require departing tour buses to turn right on E Street (contingent on the recommendation to convert part of E Street to two-way traffic).

There is a need for safe bus movements and a pedestrian-friendly 4th Avenue. Extension of the proposed eastbound bus lane further east to C Street could provide a more efficient

circulation route for departing tour buses. It could also minimize unnecessary traffic conflicts in Downtown's core pedestrian area south on 4th Avenue and E Street. Such an extension would need to resolve potential traffic conflicts with a new transit center proposed in the plan (pages 52-3 and 82). While the Downtown Plan should recommend consideration for extension of the proposed eastbound bus lane, specific traffic engineering issues can be resolved through the Third Avenue One-Way Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Implementation Plan which is proposed on page 78.

33. Issue: Conversion of 9th Avenue to three lanes and on-street parking

- On page 77, which side of street would have on-street parking? (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: On-street parking along the north side of the street would probably have the most direct benefits to the Downtown central business district. On-street parking would support an enhanced urban sidewalk pedestrian environment, feed customer-oriented ground floor commercial uses, and directly encourage residential/mixed-use redevelopment recommended between 8th and 9th Avenues. (See Issue 43, On-street Parking, below)

The Downtown Plan provides general policy guidance regarding street conversions and is not intended to address the level of design detail requested by the comment. The specific design of the street will be determined through the 9th Avenue improvement project.

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

As discussed in the April 25 staff report to the Commission, during the latter part of the planning process it became apparent that the Downtown Plan should probably identify a hierarchy of street typologies in the Downtown. 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.

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 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*. The LRTP recommends that a determination of applicable street typology be established through municipal planning prior to future individual street improvement projects.

A street typology system could also 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.

A street typology system for Downtown can build on the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan and relate to other recommended strategies in the draft Downtown Plan. Planning recommends a very simple categorization consisting of the following typologies:

a. **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.

b. **Pedestrian-oriented street:** As the Core Streets 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 Street" is essentially a sub-typology of mixed-use street emphasizing areas of highest pedestrian use.

c. **Residential-oriented street:** The Residential-oriented Street is based on the LRTP Residential Streets typology, and follows on the Downtown Plan's proposed residential-oriented sub-districts and urban design guidelines.

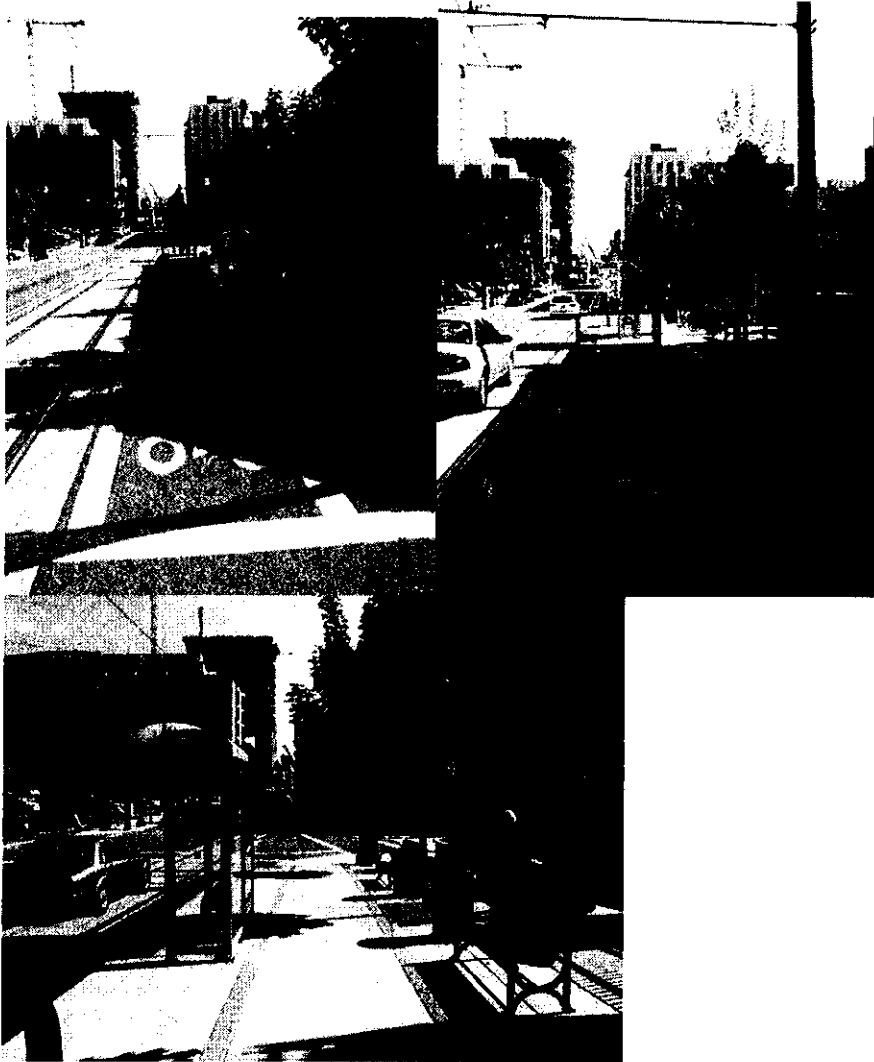
Planning recommends adding a new section of Chapter 5 Transportation and Circulation recommendations begin on page 80, to follow the Street Conversions recommendations. The new section should include a brief explanatory narrative that explains the purpose of street typologies in transportation/land use compatibility, a description of the street typologies recommended for Downtown and a Street Typology Diagram map. The street typology designations can build on the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan street typology map, the Downtown Districts Diagram, Street Network Strategy Diagram, Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram and other transportation and circulation diagrams in the Downtown Plan.

35. Bulb-outs on Bicycle Connections

- On page 81, how do cyclists who ride in the traffic lane squeeze past bulb-outs? What can bulb-outs safe for cyclists to pass by? Also, shouldn't narrower travel lanes need designated bike lanes for safety? (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- Page 99, fifth bullet, curb bulb-outs: How safe are bulb-outs on bike routes (where bike is in traffic lane) (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Bulb-outs create two choices for bicyclists using on-street bike lanes. The first choice is for the bicycle to move into the vehicle travel lane and obey those rules across the intersections. The second choice is for the bicycle lane to be designed to move onto the sidewalk/trail area and cross the intersection through the crosswalk area as a bicycle lane. For example, the series of photos below documents the approach to an intersection in a mixed-use district where the bicycle lane is designed to move onto the sidewalk area behind a bulb-out containing a transit stop.

The decision regarding whether to use bulb-outs in a specific street or which way to design the bulb-out in relation to bike lanes is dependent on whether the bicycle lane is intended to be (a) a high speed bike travel with a full designated route along the vehicle lane or (b) part of the overall local street system and can slow down to use the crosswalk areas.



36. Issue: Pedestrian Circulation Impacts of Major Couplets

- Page 72, Circulation, third bullet, regarding A/C and 5th/6th couplets): Add to end of sentence: "and deter pedestrian use". (Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)

Response: Planning concurs.

37. Issue: Pedestrian Crossings of Major Couplets including C Street

- C Street is a major traffic barrier to pedestrian circulation that runs through the middle of Downtown. The Downtown Plan needs to address convenient pedestrian connections between east and west across C Street, for example between the Downtown Core and the Museum of History and Art. The Downtown Plan on page 65 identifies an infill development opportunity site on the vacant lot next to the National Park Service building. This could provide a link between the Museum expansion and the Fifth Avenue Mall, such as by a pedestrian tunnel to bridge the C Street gap. *(Jim Fredrick - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The Transportation and Circulation chapter promotes walking as the priority means of local circulation within Downtown. It identifies high vehicular speeds on the major couplets including A/C and 5th/6th as uncomfortable barriers to pedestrian circulation. On page 80 it recommends enhancing the intersection crossing of C Street and several other major streets to improve the safety and continuity of pedestrian access around Downtown.

A more comprehensive diagram of intersections with high levels of pedestrian traffic prioritizing improvements for safe and convenient pedestrian crossings appears on page 98 of the Urban Design chapter. The Urban Design chapter recognizes safe, and convenient pedestrian crossings as essential to walkable, accessible Downtown, and on page 99 provides general design guidelines for pedestrian crossing enhancements.

In general, the Downtown Plan recommends at-grade enhancements to intersection crossings, rather than secondary-level pedestrian circulation systems in underground tunnels or overhead pedestrian bridges. Anchorage is fortunate in that, relative to many northern cities in North America, it is still primarily a "one-story city". Most activity still happens at the ground level, where it benefits the public realm and the vitality of the unique urban experience that is Downtown can provide.

After disappointing experiences, winter cities in North America that invested resources into extensive skywalk systems (e.g., Minneapolis and St. Paul) or tunnels (Toronto) discovered that Downtowns revitalize more effectively not by removing pedestrians from the street level but instead by competing against suburban commercial centers using their unique comparative advantages like quality public street environments.

38. Issue: Traffic Signal Speed

- On pages 81 and 129 (T-12), the recommended traffic signal speed of 20 MPH is too specific of a recommendation for a Downtown Plan. Give some flexibility to Traffic. *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- The recommendation for such a slow progressed speed as 20 MPH seems to conflict with the recommendations of the Downtown Plan that in general are intended to reduce congestion within the downtown core. Or, are further analyses necessary? *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- It is hard to imagine Downtown being 20 MPH. It would have to take a lot of traffic out of Downtown to make it 20 MPH. *(Jim Fredrick – Planning and Zoning Commission, April 25 worksession)*

Response: The Downtown transportation network analysis conducted by the Downtown Plan traffic engineering consultants (attached) provides the basis for the recommended progressed traffic speed. KAI expressed the numeric target in terms of a range or threshold of 20 MPH or less. Planning agrees with the commentator's observation regarding a single-point numeric policy and suggests changing the recommended signal speed on pages 81 and 129 to a range of "20 MPH or less on all Downtown streets", reflecting the original analysis by the traffic planning consultant.

KAI emphasizes that one of its most important transportation recommendations is that vehicle speeds within the Downtown Core be reduced to the extent possible. For example, the transportation network analysis recommends that average travel speeds on the proposed new 3rd/6th couplet be managed to approximately 20 miles per hour to improve the pedestrian environment on the new couplet compared to the current 5th/6th couplet. Lower speeds do not decrease regional mobility or economic viability in the CBD. This is because while decreasing the progressed speeds will lengthen vehicle travel times through Downtown, current traffic volume capacity will remain unchanged with lower speeds. Traffic speed is a primary determinant of the quality of the pedestrian environment, and can be controlled by traffic signal progression because Downtown's traffic signals are closely spaced.

There are reasons for specifying 20 MPH as the threshold for maximum progressed traffic speed. It is generally well established in traffic studies that 20 MPH is the tipping point in terms of the severity of personal losses in pedestrian-vehicle accidents. It is above 20 MPH that vehicle accidents become exponentially more deadly, and it becomes more difficult for drivers to stop or respond to situations before it is too late. A progressed speed of 20 MPH also makes bicycle commuting more viable and safe. Progressed traffic signal speeds in Downtowns in some cities are designed in part based on the speed of bicycle commuter traffic.

39. Issue: Downtown Bus Circulator

- On pages 83 and 129 (T-15), qualify the recommendation for a Downtown bus circulator. It has to derive from the overall transit study recommended in the strategy to "**Coordinate transit services and amenities**" on the lower half of page 83. This study should determine the reasonability of the bus circulator route. It is premature for the Downtown Plan to make a specific recommendation for a transit circulator unless it can describe and justify its specific recommendations on the basis of more elaborate analysis being available. (*Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- On page 83, it would require perhaps 3 buses to provide the five (5) minute headway recommended for a downtown circulator providing direct access throughout the core on a regular basis. All of the existing People Mover bus fleet is dedicated to existing service during peak periods. As referenced in the plan, funding for such increased transit would have to be established. (*MOA – Public Transportation Department*)

Response: This is a long-term strategy contingent on prior completion of the Freeway-to-Freeway Connection, the 3rd/6th couplet and a potential relocation of the Transit Center. It is related to the recommendation for an expanded transit hub at the edge of the pedestrian-oriented core which allows bus routes to circulate into and out of Downtown much more efficiently without having to navigate through it. To accomplish this, regular transit routes

would be relieved of the burden of navigating through Downtown by a special circulator with 5-minute headways.

40. Issue: Transit Center Relocation

- On pages 52-55, 83 and 129 (T-13), it is a question as to whether it is proper to recommend a "Transit Center Relocation Feasibility Study" which includes recommendation of Catalytic Development Site #1 as part of a reassessment of transit routes through Downtown. The Plan should first address a general transit study (as it relates to the Downtown) and then an analysis of facility relocation (or conduct the two studies concurrently). *(Bruce Phelps - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- Please consider retaining the current transit center on 6th and G as a hub because it is so centrally located to city hall, the convention center and Downtown shopping. Many Downtowns provide more than one transit hub. The location of the proposed new site seems to plan for the commuter from out of town, while neglecting the mobility of in town residents who use transit. *(Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition)*
- Page #36. People Mover plans to have a site selection analysis conducted for a downtown transit station. There may be more than two options for a transit center in the downtown area. It is noted that the suggested Transit Station on 3rd and E Street is outside of the high pedestrian activity area noted in Diagram 4.1 of Appendix A. *(MOA – Public Transportation Department)*
- On page 72, under Connectivity and Accessibility, bullet #4 states there is a lack of integration between the existing Transit Center, bus system and parking lots. What does this statement refer to? The current Transit Center is on the ground floor of a parking garage. *(MOA – Public Transportation Department)*
- On page 54, while a new transit center near the Saturday Market and RR area might be of benefit if a commuter rail system every materialized, there is not one word about using the parking lot west of the current transit center as a way to accommodate buses to implement the recent transit plan (where all buses converge in DT for a 10 minute overlap of schedules). It would seem more economical to use the current building and adjacent lot to keep the transit center in an area where it can best serve the public. Alter Chapter 4, pages 44 and 54 to include the above comments. *(Dianne Holmes)*
- On page 54, It is highly questionable whether the many people who work to the south of 6th Avenue will be inclined to walk to and from a transit center relocated to 3rd Avenue. The potential site is not necessarily a bad location; nor is the current location is necessarily best; we just need to be careful about how we examine the totality of which public we need to accommodate. *(Toni Jones – Planning and Zoning Commission, April 25 worksession)*
- Need a better explanation about the reasonability of moving the Transit Center, because it now has a central location; a peripheral location seems problematic. *(Bruce Phelps – Planning and Zoning Commission, April 25 worksession)*

Response: The adopted Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) recommends that by year 2025 the headways on seven bus routes into Downtown should be reduced from 30 to 15 minutes between buses. The LRTP projects transit ridership to more than double during this period. The KAI transportation network study recommends that this growth creates a strong need for a new transit center in the CBD to serve these passengers. KAI recommends that the new transit center should focus on providing easy access for customers to as many Downtown destinations as possible, and should allow for *off-street loading and unloading*.

Off-street loading and unloading improves the efficiency of transit operations in the CBD, improves the efficiency of automobile traffic circulation, and provides more capacity for expanded bus operations. It also increases opportunities for off-street transit center design improvements to enhance the comfort and amenities in loading/unloading/waiting areas. The current transit center does not have adequate capacity to accommodate the level of transit growth anticipated by the LRTP and needed for Downtown revitalization. Acquiring a city block for expanded bus operations next to the existing center in the heart of the Downtown Core would detract from the overall goal to assemble a compact mix of high-intensity active uses in that area. An off-street transit center on municipal land near the main railway station, with connection by pedestrian-oriented streets into the city core has precedent in many successful city centers (particularly in northern Europe), and has positive long-term implications for coordination between regional and local transit systems.

In combination with a dedicated Downtown bus circulator, the proposed new site could allow the main bus lines to efficiently arrive and depart Downtown without spending extra minutes navigating through Downtown. For example, People Mover route #75 enters and exits Downtown on the A/C couplet. Currently #75 must navigate more than 20 blocks through the Downtown Core in its round-trip to reach the Transit Center and return to A/C. The proposed new Transit Center site might reduce the #75 round trip to less than five blocks. This could improve operational efficiencies and levels of service to the public.

Conditions will change to improve the site, adjacent activities and connections south. The plan's vision is that the transit center relocation is part of an overall revitalization of the entire block between 3rd and 4th Avenues, including a public market that provides activity and services. It also envisions much stronger pedestrian connections to 4th Avenue. It can be linked very strongly to 4th Avenue with improved pedestrian facilities. The distance that people will walk will depend primarily on the level of quality, interest, activity, safety and comfort of the pedestrian environment. The 5-minute-headway Downtown circulator bus is recommended to help extend the reach of transit commuters to all of Downtown.

The Downtown Plan does not come to a conclusion or recommend absolutely that the transit center be relocated to the proposed site. Planning believes the Downtown Plan has enough basis to (a) recommend that a Transit Center relocation be made or strongly considered, and (b) propose that Catalytic Site #1 be considered as a potential site, subject to a site selection study. As the MOA Public Transportation Department suggests in the comment above, there may be more two potential alternative sites, and the Downtown Plan provides site selection criteria to assist in that study.

41. Issue: Transit Oriented Development around Transit Center

- On page 55, first bullet, what is "transit-oriented development"? (*Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: The bulleted site selection criteria for a potential new Transit Center recommends a transit-oriented development character in the immediate surroundings of a Transit Center. "Transit-oriented development" is development that maximizes transit ridership—through its use types and intensity of uses and activities and its physical design. It locates relatively high-density/intensity active uses (such as housing, employment, and food stores, etc.) within walking distance of the Transit Center. The orientation of the buildings, primary entrances and windows physically and visually connects these uses to the public sidewalks and pedestrian spaces that link directly to the Transit Center. Finally, the development contributes to streetscape enhancements and pedestrian amenities such as weather protection, buffers from the effects of moving vehicle traffic or places to sit or relax.

42. Issue: Transit Center Streetscape, Parking and Circulation Criteria

- On page 55, add two bulleted criteria : Pedestrian connections to the Alaska Railroad Intermodal Facility and other key downtown destinations; and the Downtown bus transit circulator should loop by the transit station. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning concurs.

43. Issue: Policy Support for Regional Bus and Rail Transit Connections

- On page 36, change "possibly" to "ideally" or "eventually"; or re-word this to reflect that commuter rail makes excellent sense for Downtown workers. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- On page 54, 4th Ave transit center, the last sentence on who is served should be more supportive of regional transit. Delete word "perhaps" and state with certainty that the transit center should serve other bus lines serving Southcentral. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- On page 54, same sentence, add to the bus lines served a future Mat-Su Valley express bus line. *(Nancy Pease - Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The adopted Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) recommends area-wide bus transit improvements that will, in turn, "enhance the future viability of commuter rail". Although the analyses used by the LRTP did not indicate strong viability for commuter rail, the LRTP did support future commuter rail in concept, subject to further improvements in municipal transit and further study. Although these analytical and policy foundations do not seem sound enough to Planning for an area-specific district plan to state with certainty that commuter rail will occur, Planning does not object to changing the language on page 36 to read, "...and ideally commuters from the Mat-Su Valley."

The ability of the future Downtown People Mover Transit Center to serve regional bus lines in addition to accommodating its own buses may depend on the capacity of the site selected to accommodate both local and regional bus traffic. Planning recommends qualifying the statement on page 54, and referencing the ability to serve regional bus lines as a site selection criteria:

1. On page 54, change the last sentence in the first column to, "The Transit Center should, to the extent its location and service capacity enable, perhaps serve not only local People Mover Buses but also any regional bus transit services that may come into operation and other bus lines servicing Southcentral Alaska residents such as the Homer ~~Stage-Line~~, the Seward ~~Bus-Line~~, and the Denali ~~Bus~~ ~~S~~services.
2. On page 54, in the second column, add the following site selection criteria: "Prioritize adequate space to also accommodate other bus lines providing service to other communities in Southcentral Alaska."

44. Issue: Improve Transit Service Levels

- The Downtown Plan should better reflect transit-oriented policies in Anchorage 2020. It should not accept continued reliance on automobiles. Its scope of work should address how land use changes downtown could coordinate with improvements to transit service to reduce reliance on the automobile, and set concrete goals to that end. It makes no sense to increase density without strategies to reduce auto trips. The Downtown Plan should do a better job of analyzing transit service levels needed in relationship to recommended increases in density. It should address how transit ridership depends most on areawide service levels. How would frequent, convenient transit service affect the need for expensive, new parking structures Downtown; how would it affect the need to maintain arterial couplets there? (*Cheryl Richardson - Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)
- On page 75, the Transportation and Circulation goal for transit should be not just "maximize efficiency" but "provide high frequency of service". Transit studies show that about a 10-minute frequency on urban routes attracts riders who would otherwise drive. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- Include a goal to carry a specific percentage of downtown commuter peak hour traffic via transit. For instance, in Portland, Oregon, 40 percent of its downtown commuters use transit. Northern European cities bring 60 percent of their commuters in on transit, and Portland is aiming that high. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: The Anchorage Bowl Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) adopted in 2005 recommends doubling the transit service frequency, from 30- to 15-minute headways between buses, on seven bus routes into Downtown by year 2025. The LRTP projects transit ridership will more than double during this period. Transit research and experience demonstrate that 15-minute frequency is a threshold for travelers who have to choose between automobile and transit travel, at which ridership increases substantially.

The Downtown Plan fits within the context of these areawide policies. For example, the increased ridership and bus traffic projected in the LRTP influenced the Downtown Plan recommendation that a new, off-street Transit Center site be considered. Although its scope is basically limited to the Downtown Study Area, the Downtown Plan does provide recommendations for improvements to transit facilities and efficiencies of service within the Study Area.

If the Commission believes it necessary to make an areawide policy statement regarding the frequency of transit service areawide, Planning recommends making a statement in support

of achievement of LRTP goals for levels of service, particularly headways of 15 minutes and, if the opportunity arises, a future goal for less than 15 minute headways.

45. Issue: Non-stop Express Transit Routes

- Qualify the recommendation for a non-stop express transit route on page 83 and its related implementation action item T-16 on page 129. 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. A specific recommendation should not be made prior to the results of a more elaborate analysis being available. *(Bruce Phelps – Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- The recommendation on page 83 does not explain why it specifies the Alaska Native Medical Center but not other major employment center destinations in the U-Med District or Midtown. Nor does it provide an explanation of the benefits of express service over existing fixed route service from Downtown to the ANMC and the U-Med Area. This raises funding and resource issues. *(Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The original rationale for the recommendation in question is related to the intent for Downtown to welcome and improve certain services for Native visitors from rural Alaska, who often do not drive but do commonly visit the ANMC.

46. Issue: Coordinated Parking Strategy –Citywide Parking Policy

- On page 73 the parking policy fails to address the citywide situation. Downtown suffers a severe handicap if it is the only commercial center with metered parking and more parking structures than surface parking. This plan should recommend that Title 21 as well as the Midtown and U-Med District Plans institute parking supply management, such as metered parking, and requirements to tip the balance toward multi-level rather than surface parking. This section on page 73 needs bullets calling for citywide parking policies so that our intended Downtown major employment center isn't at a competitive disadvantage versus unmetered commercial areas. *(Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Pricing parking in Midtown could perhaps be part of the solution to many parking related problems and encourage commuters to carpool if not take transit to work. Pricing is a market based approach that can help pass the true costs of single-occupancy vehicle trips to the user. However, free parking is ingrained in the local culture, and is currently a comparative advantage enjoyed by Midtown property owners, businesses and customers.

The greatest imbalance in current municipal parking policy in Downtown versus Midtown is probably in the Title 21 land use code. The Municipality is addressing this in the Title 21 Rewrite. Currently, Midtown developments must provide a minimum number of parking spaces on site per square foot of proposed use. Research indicates that these existing parking space standards require developers to "over park" their property with more spaces than necessary. The Title 21 Rewrite public hearing draft to be released this year will propose (a) potential reductions to the required amount of parking in mixed-use districts and

Midtown; (b) parking maximums, and (c) parking “alternatives” such as transit-oriented development or participation in municipal rideshare programs.

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

- Need the main focus of parking strategies on pages 84-85 to be reducing the parking demand, not catering to it. The parking policies of the Downtown Plan appears to work against the 2020 Comp Plan by facilitating vehicle travel rather than inducing travel mode shift. The Downtown Plan’s goal of ample, well-distributed parking cancels out its own stated goal of having drivers park their cars once in the downtown and then circulate on foot (p. 85). Parking facilities should capture motorist commuters as soon as they enter Downtown on the periphery and then they would continue on foot or by bus circulator to destinations within Downtown. The maps do not indicate parking situated to capture that type of vehicular travel. Peripheral parking rather than evenly dispersed parking would better emphasize walking as the preferred mode of transportation within the Downtown core. *(Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- The plan should examine why there are parking space vacancies. If the plan wishes to build up new businesses Downtown, at least some of the additional workers and shoppers will be driving. Factors: they are not conveniently located in relation to where they work; price is too expensive for many Downtown workers. There needs to be more detail about how existing spaces can be used more efficiently and parking be adequate to accommodate redevelopment *(Toni Jones – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: To address the first comment, Planning recommends deleting the first bullet on page 85 under “Strategically locate parking garages, and replacing the last sentence on page 37 with a statement that public parking structures should be located to capture motorists at the earliest and most convenient locations upon entering Downtown, and be linked to the downtown bus circulator route and pedestrian-oriented network of streets to emphasize walking as the preferred mode of transportation within the Downtown Core.

The Downtown Plan summarizes the factors behind the underutilization of its supply of parking spaces on pages 73 and 83. Planning suggests adding to these factors a lack of wayfinding signage, poor pedestrian connections to destinations, unaffordable prices. The Downtown Plan proposes specific measures to address these factors on pages 84-85.

48. Issue: On-Street Parking

- On page 84, “Maintain on-street parking wherever possible” is too vague and promotes more acreage for surface parking. Modify it: “maintain on-street parking where it has a role in reducing vehicle speed, or buffering major pedestrian sidewalk areas.” This can encourage people to use parking garages and leave more street space for pedestrian amenities. *(Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: On-street parking is widely-recognized as a best planning practice for a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and vibrant mixed-use commercial districts. The sidewalk section illustration on page 94 of the Downtown Plan explains that on-street parking next to

the sidewalk provides ready parking for Downtown businesses and improves pedestrian comfort. On-street parking provides convenient access to shops, helps slow traffic, and creates a buffer than shields pedestrians on the sidewalk from street traffic.

On-street parking also provides a relatively small yet visible and strategically vital portion of Downtown's parking supply. Once the building is pulled to the property line, and its front façade windows and entrances border the sidewalk edge, on-street parking becomes essential to the vitality of customer-oriented businesses. A street that includes on-street parking can still be primarily oriented to pedestrian use, and the best examples of older commercial streets in America have achieved a balance between vehicular and pedestrian needs—4th Avenue is Anchorage's best case in point. For these reasons, Planning does not support a change.

Urban Design

49. Issue: Urban Design Goal, Design for Density

- Add a bullet under the goal Design for density: "Provide access to open space and sunlight and preserve views of the natural setting." (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Planning agrees that open spaces with sky views and sunlight access are an essential amenity for high density development. In the interest of brevity in the Plan, and to avoid any apparent redundancy, Planning recommends addressing the provision of sunlight and views of the natural setting in a revised version of the first bullet and the new open space bullet, with language to be provided for the Commission's consideration.

50. Issue: Urban Design Goal, Design For the Northern Climate

- Under northern climate goals on page 91: Add a bullet "Evaluate the heat-generating effect of the building, and use design and materials to capture or to reduce the heat effect as seasonally needed." (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: The proposed addition would be more appropriate as a specific design guideline detail rather than be proposed among the overall urban design goals for Downtown. Planning has undertaken substantial research for many years regarding northern city design, has followed the winter city discussions incorporated into Downtown Plan public process and continues to learn more. Planning is not aware or informed of evidence or public comment indicating that the heat effect is an issue at 60 degrees latitude (e.g., Scandinavia/Anchorage) like it may be at 45 north (e.g., Minneapolis/Toronto). Instead, urban design principles emphasize capturing more heat to provide a warm, comfortable pedestrian environment for more of the year. Planning would need evidence or clarification of what is being proposed to support the proposed change.

51. Issue: Environmental Sustainability Goals and Strategies

- The Downtown Plan should address the topic of climate change with policies to reduce contributions to global warming, as well as to cope with it:

- On page 91, add a fourth Urban Design Goal: Design for sustainability, including: encourage durable low-maintenance materials and techniques that will not require frequent replacement; require hardy landscaping.; etc
- Urban Cold Sink/Heat Island: The use of materials and massing can be used to retain heat in winter and reduce heat build-up in summer.
- Energy efficiency. The numerous policies for lighting and sidewalk heating need to have language added to ensure energy efficiency.
- Land use efficiency. Set a goal for reducing the percentage of the road surface area and the parking area used for vehicles.
- Vehicle reduction strategies. Provide policies to reward employers and business centers who actively promote energy-efficient travel modes, and users of smaller vehicles. Promote regional rail commuter service and a goal to capture a certain percent of commuter traffic on transit and ped/bike modes.

Response: Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency are appropriate and very relevant matters to consider in the growth and development of the community. Recent events statewide and beyond, combined with growing scientific evidence of climate change and appreciation of the economic benefits of energy efficient, "green development" have in combination heightened community awareness and readiness to take action on sustainability at the local, state and national levels.

Planning does not object to adding some of the proposed language as specific strategies within specific sections of the plan. For example, energy efficiency language suggested by the commentator for some of the Plan's individual urban design guidelines is supported by Planning (e.g., see issue 52 below)

However, climate change is an areawide community issue that should be addressed in a more systematic way with areawide policies, rather than at the level of the main three urban design goals in the Downtown Plan. Planning does not support a new, fourth Urban Design Goal on page 91 at this late point in the public process. As stated at the top of page 91, the Urban Design goals come from a community process that specifically emphasized strengthening Downtown's competitive advantage as a uniquely urban experience, to achieve revitalization for this specific city center.

52. Issue: Heated (Ice-free) Sidewalk System

- On page 98, insert new bullet to require that energy efficiency will be addressed, and heating system will be activated as needed by temperature and snow conditions. *(Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission)*
- On page 98, heated sidewalks seem like a good idea but how feasible is it? It seems complicated and expensive. Are incentive methods to be included in the upcoming land use regulations? It is premature to commit to recommending a heated sidewalk system without a feasibility study to proceed it. Before committing to it, it would be good to check the approach out more or caveat the current recommendation in some way. *(Bruce Phelps – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning concurs with the first bulleted suggestion. Heated sidewalks are intended to provide an ice-free surface convenient for walking. References to these facilities in the Plan should be changed to "ice-free sidewalks" rather than "heated sidewalks".

A feasibility analysis is intended to be part of the ice-free sidewalks master plan recommended on page 98. The revision of the land use and development code for Downtown will consider an incentive for providing ice-free (heated) sidewalks. Alongside the goal to increase housing Downtown, proposals for ice-free (heated) sidewalks were the most popular proposal to come out of the Downtown Plan process among public participants. Some improvements recommended in the map on page 98 are already programmed, funded or completed.

However the cost feasibility issue remains a challenge, and Planning suggests changing the first bullet on page 98 to read:

Phase I (shown in red on map below): the Downtown Plan process Municipality has identified priority streets for an ice-free in need of heated sidewalks system. Refinement of these priorities and a cost/feasibility/implementation study should be conducted through ~~It should establish~~ an Ice-free Heated Sidewalk Master Plan.

53. Issue: Lighting and Energy Efficiency

- On page 100, insert the concept of energy efficiency into several of the bulleted design guidelines for lighting, including use of light-colored and reflective materials to refract ambient light or light from a small light source. Fourth bullet is probably not responsible: white light from incandescent bulbs is wasteful of energy. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- On page 106, add a guideline under "Building Lighting", lighter-colored façade materials are appropriate at ground level to reduce lighting requirements. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Planning concurs with the idea to add a guideline to encourage the use of light-colored and reflective materials on page 100 to refract ambient light or a low intensity light source, and a guideline on page 106 encouraging lighter building facades. Specific language can be submitted based on this guidance above.

"White light" is a specific design term that refers to color rendition performance and not a specific lighting technology (such as incandescent). It does not have a direct relationship to energy efficiency. The Illumination Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), rates the whiteness of light based on the Color Rendering Index (CRI). Most existing street lights and many older parking lots use high-pressure sodium lamps that have a yellowish glare and a low CRI. Most establishments with newer parking lots and the recently updated municipal street illumination engineering standards are converting to whiter light sources such as metal halide lamps. Because white light provides superior color/object rendition, a white light source can provide the same lighting performance with lower lighting intensities, which can result in greater energy efficiency.

54. Design Guidelines for Wind Protection

- On page 101, under "Pedestrian Shelter", add some bullets to address wind shelter, especially the winter north wind downtown. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)
- On page 104, under "Wind Protection", add a design guideline bullet that requires evaluation of wind effects. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: The Design Guidelines under "Wind Protection" on page 104 encourage the design of overhead projections such as awnings/canopies to lessen wind impacts at the ground level. However, there is merit to also suggesting earlier on page 101 in the "Pedestrian Shelter" that awnings and canopies can be useful in mitigating wind impacts.

Besides overhead projections to block downdrafts, there are additional northern city design principles for wind protection which may be considered in the "Wind Protection" section:

- Provide pedestrians with a choice of calm or windy areas in part through the use of building arcades. Partially enclosed walkways should be oriented to consider prevailing wind directions and winds influenced by nearby buildings. Avoid partially enclosed walkways through tall buildings.
- Locate and orient pedestrian amenities such as benches, planters and lattice screens to shelter pedestrians from adverse wind conditions.

55. E Street Removable Bollards

- On page 128 and 131, if Town Square and E-Street are going to be used for large public events, design E-street for occasional bollard barriers to allow vehicle closure. This creates a temporary pedestrian promenade. Other streets might also be designed for short-term pedestrian promenade use. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: The recommended E Street design incorporates removable bollards for a temporary pedestrian promenade between 5th and 6th Avenues. The Downtown Plan on page 101 recommends consideration for removable bollards in street improvements.

56. Adequate Building Setbacks

- In the first bullet on page 102, the language "no wider than necessary" will reduce the desired width of pedestrian sidewalks to the six foot minimum in many cases. This "maximum limit" on sidewalk width is not friendly to pedestrians. Delete or modify. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Although the sentence was not intended to suggest a narrow sidewalk width, the words "pedestrian network" does seem to leave room for interpretation to mean a very narrow sidewalk width. Planning recommends changing the sentence to, "Buildings should have a strong relationship to the street, with setbacks no wider than necessary to accommodate enhanced sidewalk widths ~~the pedestrian network...~~"

57. Issue: Appearance, Form and Function of Rooftops in Building Massing

- On page 103, under "Massing and Stepping," add bulleted design guideline to ensure that roofs are attractive and are used as outdoor space. Or add a new design section on roof-tops to make sure they are attractive and usable space. (*Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission*)

Response: Planning concurs with the first suggestion, and can suggest specific language using its guidance.

58. Issue: Sunlight Access Protection

- The shadowing effects of taller buildings should be considered as increased density is implemented. (*Jana Hayenga, April 25, 2007 public hearing testimony*)
- Include implementation strategies that ensure winter design standards protecting sunlight and dampening wind tunnels are met until Title 21 revisions for Downtown are adopted. (*Cheryl Richardson – Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)
- The plan's recommended maximum building heights are a concern. Starting with 3 to 7 stories stepping back from Delaney Park to 20+ story buildings in the 40-block Downtown Core, it is hard to imagine being able to walk on the "sunny side of the street" in the future Downtown. Explain the logic behind allowing high-rises and how this affects solar access. (*Cheryl Richardson – Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)
- Page 104 calls for minimizing shadowing effects between March 21 and September 21. If Anchorage is to be a winter city, the Plan will need to protect sunlight in the winter too when direct sunlight provides the comfort that keeps the streets active. (*Cheryl Richardson – Anchorage Citizens Coalition*)

Response: The Urban Design Chapter addresses shadowing impacts through its urban design guidelines for "Sunlight Access" (p. 104) and "Massing and Stepping" (p. 103). The Sunlight Access section establishes the principles, policies and basis for preserving sunlight access. It prioritizes certain sensitive uses, pedestrian connections and public spaces for sunlight access.

It also prioritizes sunlight access protection in the spring and fall to extend the yearly period of warmth and outdoor comfort in pedestrian spaces by up to a third. Summertime is a highlight of outdoor activity in Anchorage. For example, 4th Avenue in the picture below comes alive during spring, summer and fall. Pedestrian activity is essential to Downtown's vitality, so it is in Downtown's interest to employ urban design guidelines that can effectively extend this peak activity season as early into spring and late into fall as practical.



It is in the spring and fall when sunlight access becomes a key factor that determines if an outdoor space is warm and comfortable enough to support prolonged pedestrian activity. This is illustrated by the early springtime scene below, in which "G" Street is receiving enough sunlight in March to be a hospitable place for people in the morning hours.



At Anchorage's latitude in March/September solar radiation is strong enough to greatly increase warmth and comfort, and the sun is high enough to allow sunlight access in built-up districts.

Sunlight protection is far more difficult in the winter in a built-up environment. By mid-winter, the sun is so low that even a two or three story building will cast mid-day shadows over buildings all the way across the street. Sunlight also makes less difference in the level of pedestrian activity in the winter, because activity levels are lower and temperatures too low regardless. However, the Plan does address mid-winter sunlight penetration on page 107, fourth bullet down

Building massing, placement and stepping is often more important than building height alone in determining the shadow impact of a tall building. Page 103 introduces a number of measures including tower step-backs, minimum spacing between towers and slender towers that cast less shadow. Given Anchorage's low sun angles, a building that is 8-stories is probably going to have similar shadowing effects as a 20-story building: Both will cast a very long shadow for most of the year. The key to ensuring neither tower has unnecessary sunlight impacts are standards for placement, step-backs, width and bulk.

The Downtown land use and development code is intended to elaborate on the principles and guidelines in Chapter 6 of the Downtown Plan to provide more detailed information and standards related to building bulk and sunlight access.

For these reasons, Planning believes the issue is adequately addressed in the Plan and changes are unnecessary.

59. Issue: Parking Design Treatment

- On page 108, the goal of accommodating parking requirements within structures is laudable, but how feasible is the recommendation to build underground structures? Does the Downtown Plan conclude that only structure parking can meet parking demand? Provide an introduction to this section that provides a context for these recommendations and make the statement (if true) that parking supply in the future is to be provided through structural parking. (I really don't think you can make this statement, at least at this time, until we know what the land use regulations are to be for the Downtown; these will determine if parking is only to be provided through structures.) *(Bruce Phelps – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning recommends changing the first bullet to read, "Promote the use of structured parking to accommodate the parking spaces needed for development projects. ~~Accommodate Downtown's parking needs in built structures, preferably underground.~~"

This change should help clarify that the purpose of the design guideline is not to state that all of the parking supply in the future is to be provided in structured parking. It does not mandate or set a performance target. It is intended to encourage the use of structured parking in future development projects.

Likewise, the purpose of the second bullet is to simply encourage *greater use of* underground parking, without requiring it or setting a target. Over the twenty-year time horizon of the Downtown Plan, as the value of land increases and new development incentives are established, it is anticipated that underground parking may become more feasible relative to surface parking or above-ground structured parking.

60. Allowing Underground Parking to Extend Above-Grade

- On page 108 in the 5th bullet, the allowance for underground parking structures to extend several feet above the street level contradicts policies on having human action adjoining the street. *(Nancy Pease – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: A widely used best practice in urban design is to raise the ground floor of street facing residential living spaces several feet above sidewalk level for privacy. Allowing underground parking to extend a few feet above street level can be consistent with that goal, while making underground parking more economically feasible. If this is still a concern, Planning recommends changing the bullet to read, "Underground parking structures beneath residential uses can extend several feet above grade, as long as building entrances, front stoops, first-floor living spaces with windows facing the street, streetscape amenities and planting beds are not impacted."

Implementation

61. Issue: Ability of Municipality to Implement the Downtown Plan

- It is questionable that the Municipality has the ability to implement some of the recommendations contained in the Downtown Plan. The Downtown Plan should not include recommendations that have not been thought through in terms of their implementation, or which may not be viable recommendations. Provide a statement

in the beginning of the Implementation Chapter that indicates that the Municipality is fully committed to the recommendations contained in this chapter and that Municipality will provide the time and resources necessary to ensure the implementation of these measures, to the extent that this is practicable (since not all of the actions are the responsibility of the Municipality). And, if a continuing involvement of the private sector is required, more consideration needs to be given to this than the simple statement of this need on p. 123. There should be specific implementation recommendations that pertain to this aspect. If this part is as important as it seems, this section really does need some additional thought. *(Bruce Phelps – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: Planning recommends adding the following language to the bottom of the first column on page 123, to clarify the purpose of the implementation chapter:

This Plan explains what needs to be done to revitalize Downtown over a twenty-year time horizon. While there is no guarantee that all of its strategies and action items will be achieved, the Municipality intends to make every effort to see that the Plan is realized.

In addition, Planning recommends more explanation in the narrative of page 124, such as follows:

It is important to achieve all of the goals and strategies, and that all of the implementation actions in the schedules below be taken. However they are not intended to be taken all at one time. This is a twenty-year plan. The purpose of the implementation chapter is to identify the actions, responsible parties and general timeframes.

62. Issue: Overall Management of the Implementation Process

- The implementation process is multi-faceted and involves a variety of agencies and partners. It will be a huge task to get all of the recommended action items accomplished, and someone needs to be point. A statement needs to be included in the Implementation Chapter naming overall global responsibility for plan update, coordination and plan implementation. Unless one entity is recognized as having responsibility for making the Plan occur, then the Plan may not work or be implemented. *(Bruce Phelps – Planning and Zoning Commission)*

Response: The Implementation Chapter addresses responsibilities for implementation programming on page 125 as the first set of action items of the Implementation Actions Schedule. Action IP-1 recommends that the Downtown Partnership and the Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA) establish a Downtown Advisory Group with responsibility for tracking, prioritizing and advocating for continued implementation. Action IP-2 recommends that a public reminder/indicator kiosk be installed in a civic space such as in Town Square Park that serves as a reminder to the public.

There are several reasons why the Plan, both in IP-1 and IP-2 above and in the introduction page of Chapter 8, emphasizes a community participation and private sector role in maintaining momentum. The community can provide long-term continuity of interest and advocacy as administrations and agency resources change over time. It is difficult to identify any one municipal agency which has the capability or potential authority to coordinate

implementation of all aspects of the Plan. An approach already in practice is coordination of a Downtown projects agency group which meets regularly. The approach taken by the Downtown Plan is consistent with other recent local plans and with what Planning observes occurring in other local community plans.

63. Issue: Downtown Exemptions from Title 21 / Rewrite of Title 21

- Clarify in what ways Downtown is exempt from Title 21 Rewrite. (Planning and Zoning Commission worksession)

Response: While the land use regulations specific to the central business district are being rewritten under the auspices of a separate project from the Title 21 Rewrite project, they are being coordinated with Title 21 Rewrite so that the Downtown zoning districts will fit into the revised Title 21. Except where Title 21 states specifically otherwise, the Downtown districts are not going to be exempt from generally applicable regulations of the revised Title 21. For example, while Downtown may be specifically exempted from having to provide the required minimum number of parking spaces, it may still be subject to the parking maximums and parking lot design standards in the off-street parking section of Title 21.

64. Issue: Title 21 Bonus System

- What is the Downtown Comprehensive Plan doing regarding the "bonus system" referenced on page 2 of Appendix A?

Response: This references the current Title 21 Land Use Regulations bonus point system by which an applicant may receive a height bonus for providing community benefit amenities in a development proposal. The Downtown Plan will be accompanied by a revised set of zoning and development regulations for Downtown. It is intended to propose new incentives that more effectively achieve community development objectives for development.

Attachments: A. Comments Received
B. Planning and Zoning Commission Draft Meeting Minutes of April 25, 2007
C. Kittleson & Associates, Inc., Transportation Network Analysis Report, July 2006
D. AO No. 85-173, Pages 18-19, Height Restrictions Near Town Square Park

NOTE: The above attachments are not included as a part of the PZC Resolution No. 2007-038.


ATTACHMENT B
TO PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION No. 2007-038


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, freight 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 might 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 treed 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.

ATTACHMENT C
TO PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2007-038

June 8, 2007

Sent to Commissioners via email

To Planning & Zoning Commissioners:

Following is a revision to the **Issue-Response Addendum** that Planning Department provided to the Commission this week, regarding Case 2007-076, Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan. The revision is to Issue #20 on page 2 of the Addendum.

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

After receiving clarification from the Parks Director, Planning recommends revising the language of the proposed new narrative sidebar addressing Town Square Park, as follows:

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 recommends consideration of improvements to Town Square Park that can support and enhance these functions. The Downtown Plan also recommends that an overall parks and open space plan be developed for Downtown. That process will identify long term future open space needs and enhancements in Downtown. Any proposed improvements ~~If any substantial or~~ changes to the design of Town Square Park beyond the repair or replacement of existing elements or other existing park were to be proposed by that process, they would will undergo a separate site-specific park master plan process that ~~would~~ includes the public's involvement as well as approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission.

Tom Davis
Senior Planner - Physical Planning Division
Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage

Attachment B

Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes

April 25, 2007

May 14, 2007

June 11, 2007

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

**Assembly Chambers
Z.J. Loussac Library
3600 Denali Street
Anchorage, Alaska**

**MINUTES OF
April 25, 2007
6:30 PM**

A worksession on the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan was conducted at 5:30 p.m., preceding this meeting.

A. ROLL CALL

Present Toni Jones, Chair
 Jim Fredrick
 Nancy Pease
 Andrew Josephson
 Jim Palmer*
 Bruce Phelps
 Lamar Cotten

Excused Art Isham, Vice Chair
 Thomas Vincent Wang

Staff Cathy Hammond
 Jerry Weaver
 Tom Davis

*Arrived at 6:56 p.m.

B. MINUTES – None

C. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Disclosures

COMMISSIONER PEASE requested that members make disclosures regarding items on this evening's agenda. There were no disclosures.

D. CONSENT AGENDA – None

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ACTIONS ON PUBLIC HEARINGS – None

F. REGULAR AGENDA – None

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **2007-076** Municipality of Anchorage. Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan, March 2007.

Staff member TOM DAVIS explained that the Commission is being asked to review and make recommendation to the Assembly on the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan. This is a plan that would be officially adopted as an element of *Anchorage 2020*. Its purpose is to provide guidance for the future growth and development of downtown and establish strategies for the revitalization of Anchorage's city center. The Plan consists of eight chapters, including Chapter 1, an introduction; Chapter 2, an assessment of assets and challenges facing downtown and the trends; Chapter 3, establishing the overall vision, overarching goals and strategy framework; Chapters 4 through 7 relating to goals and strategies regarding land use, economic development, transportation, urban design, and programmatic strategies; and Chapter 8 dealing with specific implementation actions and leader implementers. This is a Plan that has enjoyed strong public participation by a process conducted by a multi-disciplinary consultant team. The Department recommends approval of the draft Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

The public hearing was opened.

DIANNE HOLMES stated that downtown is a great place. Many think the soul of downtown centers around Town Square. Her verbal comments were limited to Town Square Park, but her written comments cover her concerns on the lack of emphasis on transit to solve some of the parking problems, as well as some arts and cultural recommendations. She stated this is her first opportunity to comment on the full Plan. She has four concerns on Town Square: sun rights, redesigning for large events, emphasis on interconnectivity, and the inconsistency in maps. The maps in the Streetscape Plan are not consistent with the March 2007 Plan, especially in the southwest corner of Town Square. It is important to consult the legal actions in the 1980s for this area to resolve the ownership of that corner because it will affect pedestrian access. Regarding that pedestrian access, the

Downtown Plan accommodates the new convention center to the exclusion of some other adopted plans. The 2007 parks bond estimated that \$750,000 was to be expended for connectivity and visibility. The Downtown Plan asserts the Town Square Park has security issues. She asked where this is evident. The Plan states that sun rights should be considered or studied. AO 85-173 must be inserted into this Plan in every instance where air rights are discussed because it sets the maximum height for this three-block area. Of most concern is the recommendation to open Town Square for large venue-generating events. The Park Strip is for such events. Town Square is too small for that purpose without changing its character. Town Square was intended to be an intimate park fitting with the environment and for a quieter complement to the condominiums recommended on the south and east. She asked that the Ruth Moulton Town Square be treated as a separate entity with its own master plan, perhaps as an overlay in the Downtown Plan. She stated there must be a public process for any redevelopment or redesign of Town Square. Town Square only exists because of some hard won battles. She stated that Town Square should not be swallowed by the Downtown Plan.

COMMISSIONER PEASE stated Ms. Holmes's written comments refer to page 66 speaking to opening Town Square for large events, but she could not locate that in the text. MS. HOLMES explained that she analyzed the Plan on the web and the citations may be different. She cited Chapter 8, page 121. COMMISSIONER PEASE asked what is the typical process for redesigning a park, would it not be generated by site analysis. She asked if this plan process is appropriate to designate new uses or should the site plan occur first and feed into the general plan. MR. DAVIS replied that the Downtown Plan is intended to provide general guidance and the recommendations related to Town Square are probably related to the overall intent of the Plan for downtown to become a more convenient venue for large outdoor public events. These events are considered important for maintaining and increasing downtown's position in the public's eye as a key area for gathering. The Plan was probably considering Town Square Park as a key venue for large events today and to improve it to facilitate large events in downtown. He stated that the Parks Plan revision process is public and large; it has not yet begun. He presumed the Town Square Park would likely go through a similar process as Cuddy Midtown Park did recently. COMMISSIONER PEASE asked if the schematic provided by Ms. Holmes is the design proposed in the recent bond issue. MS. HOLMES replied in the affirmative. COMMISSIONER PEASE asked what changes in the southwest corner of Town Square were of concern to her. MS. HOLMES replied that the maps in the Downtown Plan note that it is either park property or generic F Street property that is a pedestrian corridor along F Street connected to the

convention center. She recalled conditions that the Commission placed on this corner in 1984 or 1985 regarding access. CHAIR JONES asked that this be followed up in the Issue-Response Summary.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON asked, assuming that the Municipality is overstating security concerns, what is wrong with that. MS. HOLMES thought it was a way to undermine the character of the Park. The references to increasing visibility involves cutting down the hills, opening up E Street and moving the stage where vendors have located in order to create a pedestrian corridor. If the reflecting pool has barriers, it would not be easy to drain it to put vendors there for various events. There were plans for a publicly funded ice rink, which will have refrigeration. Many people like to go to the Park for its intimate character. Some people refer to grand plazas in Europe, but she thinks maybe this Park is the way the people want it. COMMISSIONER PEASE felt the Downtown Plan addresses this without going into details. She saw the reference as improving Town Square to accommodate more events. She asked if there are references to opening it up or other recommendations that should be left to a park plan revision. MR. DAVIS was not aware of these references, but suggested that this be dealt with in the Issue-Response Summary.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS asked Staff to identify the current management intent for Town Square Park and then differences between that management intent and this Plan and, if there are differences, that they be justified.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON asked that Staff supply information on jurisdictional questions. He understood there was a plan for Town Square and people need to be vigilant to monitor it and now there is a plan for downtown redevelopment. He asked whether procedurally this Downtown Plan must adopt something that has already been finalized.

CHAIR JONES asked if the version of the Downtown Plan supplied to the Commission is the same as on the Internet, including all appendices. MR. DAVIS replied in the affirmative.

JOHN BLAINE, resident on Susitna Street, supported the statements made by Ms. Holmes. He appreciated the concern the Commission has expressed in terms of being careful in Town Square and to engage whoever is needed to ensure that decisions are done in concert. He had concern with what 40 condominium units on the south side will do in terms of access to sunlight from Town Square. He stated he attended some meetings on the Downtown Plan and he did not remember the differences in the document tonight and what was seen then, except there was a proposal to open the southeast entry

into Town Square. It was felt that people on the street could not see into the Park and that would create visual access and better physical access. He stated regarding affordable housing downtown that he owns some condominiums in Knik Arms and if there is a way the Commission can influence public policy to avoid owner/occupants of these types of units being driven out by extraordinary maintenance costs, it would be appreciated. His units are looking at a \$1 million replumbing cost. There are many who live in that development that will be driven out if there is not some way to ameliorate these enormous maintenance costs.

COMMISSIONER PALMER arrived at 6:56 p.m.

CHAIR JONES explained the latter issue is beyond the scope of the Commission's authority. She recommended that Mr. Blaine raise the issue with the Assembly.

COMMISSIONER PEASE understood that Mr. Blaine approves of the idea of opening up the southeast corner of Town Square. MR. BLAINE responded in the affirmative.

COMMISSIONER FREDRICK referred to page 23 of Appendix A, the existing conditions analysis regarding solar access, and noted that it says Town Square Park is currently protected by city-owned air rights for the properties immediately to the south. He would like more information on this from Staff in the Issue-Response Summary.

JANA HAYENGA, South Addition resident and owner of two businesses downtown, stated she serves on the boards of directors for the Anchorage Downtown Partnership and the Community Development Authority. She was approached early in the process to discuss downtown's strengths and weaknesses and what she would like downtown to be in the future. She attended community meetings and planning sessions. She supports the Plan for several reasons. Her shops are located on G Street, which has become known as an arts district. The retailers on G Street banded together to promote a unique character for the street. The Downtown Plan specifically recognizes the importance of such districts in creating neighborhoods of distinct character, functionality, and a sense of place. This is what Anchorage needs. As someone who owns retail shops along G Street, she has worked hard to make her building attractive to pedestrians; she supports the Plan's recommendation to create active and inviting ground floors to entice pedestrians year round. She supports recommendations to improve connectivity between the buildings downtown and various attractions. She stated she is asked daily for the location of the Museum, Ship Creek, and the

Coastal Trail. The Plan recommends an ice-free sidewalk, which she strongly supports, believing that it will encourage walking activity downtown and bring more shoppers, Museum attendees, and residents walking to restaurants after enjoying a performance. The Plan recognizes the unique culture and history of Anchorage and recommends creating an historic overlay zone to preserve and enhance downtown's historic and cultural resources. Her shop is next to the Fourth Avenue Theater and across from the Federal Building. She agreed that both of these buildings should be incorporated into the Plan. Creating an historic overlay zone will ensure that Anchorage preserves these buildings. She reiterated support for the Downtown Plan, which is good for downtown businesses and for the potential walkable city of the future. She supports increased residential density in downtown. She asked that shadowing effects of taller buildings be considered as increased density is implemented.

COMMISSIONER FREDRICK asked if Ms. Hayenga, as a downtown business owner, would be interested in financial participation in heating sidewalks near her businesses. MS. HAYENGA replied in the affirmative.

The public hearing was closed.

MR. DAVIS indicated that the Commission's May 14 meeting is intended for deliberation and action.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS indicated he would provide written comments to Staff for response in the Issue-Response Summary. CHAIR JONES asked if there is a deadline for submittal of written comments. MR. DAVIS replied that in order to provide an Issue-Response Summary timely for the Commission's review, a deadline for submittal would be May 1.

COMMISSIONER PEASE indicated she would submit written comments, but had another question about the parking strategy. There are policies such as on page 37 to distribute parking structures throughout downtown and policies for on-street parking on every street. There are also policies that parking should capture people in vehicles as soon as they enter downtown and then they would continue on foot. She was not sure whether those might work against each other; she questioned whether, if there is parking everywhere, people are in fact encouraged to move their vehicles from parking space to parking space. She also asked if serious consideration was given to points raised in earlier meetings on trying to capture commuters to park on the periphery and then circulate through downtown on the circulator. She did not see parking lots situated to capture that type of

vehicular travel. She imagined there would need to be price incentives to park on the periphery.

COMMISSIONER FREDRICK was concerned about C Street being a “moat” running through the middle of downtown that separates downtown, working against pedestrian connectivity while there will be a massive and attractive addition to the Museum that will attract pedestrians. The Plan does not indicate how it would be more convenient for pedestrians to get from the east to the west and vice versa of C Street. There is one reference on page 41 of the Plan that prospective development of the vacant lot next to the National Park Service building could provide a link between the Museum expansion and the Fifth Avenue Mall. He envisioned some sort of pedestrian tunnel to bridge the C Street gap. He asked whether there is a vision for addressing this pedestrian impediment. MR. DAVIS replied that the third bullet in the second column on page 80 contains a recommendation about improving certain pedestrian crossings. This Plan focuses on ground-level improvements to the pedestrian system.

COMMISSIONER PALMER noted that on page 3 of the Staff memorandum the downtown zoning districts are not included in the Title 21 Rewrite project. He asked if this area is excluded from any other citywide requirements, such as signage. He also had concern what studies have been done to the surrounding areas outside of the business district; if the assumption is believed that traffic will be pushed to those areas, he wished to know what would be the traffic impact to those areas. His final concern is regarding sidewalks. He has lived in many cities and enjoys walking in the inner city, but Anchorage is a winter city six months of the year and heated sidewalks would make downtown more walkable. He asked if studies have been done to show whether increased usability of sidewalks so that people will use the sidewalks will increase downtown use or would people avoid the downtown because they cannot park near where they want to shop or restaurants.

CHAIR JONES indicated she would submit written comments to Mr. Davis. She encouraged members of the public to submit written comments to Staff.

COMMISSIONER COTTEN asked whether the Commission could assume that Staff will answer questions posed in written comments that are submitted. MR. DAVIS replied that Staff intends to respond to all issues and comments raised in either in writing or verbally. CHAIR JONES understood that members of the public would also have an opportunity to submit additional written comments and Staff would respond to those. COMMISSIONER COTTEN indicated he would be interested in cost figures

related to heated sidewalks, given the assumption that property owners or lessees would pay for those improvements.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS assumed that the Issue-Response Summary would specify any recommended changes in the Plan, if changes were found to be reasonable. CHAIR JONES replied that has been the tradition and she would assume it would be done with this Plan. She anticipated that if there were major changes, those would be clearly delineated vis-à-vis the original language so the Commission can compare. MR. DAVIS stated that where the issue or comment results in a change in recommendation, that change would be specified. He noted that there are also errata to the Plan, which the Issue-Response Summary will contain.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS moved to postpone case 2007-076 to May 14, 2007. COMMISSIONER PEASE seconded.

AYE: Cotten, Pease, Josephson, Jones, Fredrick, Phelps, Palmer

NAY: None

PASSED

H. APPEARANCE REQUESTS – None

I. REPORTS – None

J. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

COMMISSIONER PEASE thanked Mr. Davis for giving the Commission the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan documents early. She also found them well laid out and easy to follow.

K. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

~~the project; that permit is underway. Staff has found that this alignment meets the general intent of the Comprehensive Plan policy to locate and design facilities with balanced regard to the environment.~~

~~AYE: Pease, Josephson, Isham, Fredrick, Palmer, Wang, Phelps~~

~~NAY: None~~

~~ABSTAIN: Jones~~

~~PASSED~~

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ACTIONS ON PUBLIC HEARINGS (continued)

- 2. 2007-076** Municipality of Anchorage, Planning Department. Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan, March 2007.

CHAIR JONES stated the public hearing is closed in this matter and the Staff has supplied the Commission with a May 14, 2007 Issue-Response Summary. She recommended that the Commission convene a Committee of the Whole.

COMMISSIONER ISHAM moved to convene a Committee of the Whole.
COMMISSIONER PEASE seconded.

AYE: Pease, Josephson, Jones, Isham, Fredrick, Palmer, Wang, Phelps

NAY: None

PASSED

Staff member TOM DAVIS stated the Commission has been supplied with a packet containing all comments received through the public hearing process, draft minutes from the April 25 hearing, and the Issue-Response Summary document responding to comments from the public, the Commission, the Geotechnical Advisory Commission, and Anchorage Historical Preservation Commission. Staff wishes to review the comments and issues and explain the Department's response to each. The Issue-Response Summary is organized by section of the Downtown Plan with major subtopics within each section. Some issues were organized by topic. The format first enunciates the issue, followed by the Department's response. There were also comments about technical corrections; the Department will submit an errata sheet to the Commission as soon as possible. Attached to the Issue-Response

Summary are several source documents, including the source of the transportation recommendations, a Transportation Network Analysis Report by Kittleson & Associates, Inc. Also included is a more complete copy of AO 85-173 that addresses height restrictions in the vicinity of Town Square Park.

Land Use and Economic Development
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MR. DAVIS explained Issue 1 is a comment and suggestion related to overarching land use goals on page 41 of the Plan. Several of those goals relate to encouraging certain types of development and increasing the intensity of uses. While the Department agrees with the general intent of the comments, they would be more appropriately addressed in Chapter 5, Transportation and Circulation. The Department supports adding a bullet under the first Urban Design Goal on page 91, "Design roadways to reduce and minimize motor vehicle traffic impacts on adjoining outdoor and indoor spaces."

Issue 2 is a comment by a property owner in a designated Residential Mixed Use subarea in downtown. The commentator is concerned about the designation of the area bounded by L Street, I Street and M Street and 6th and 8th Avenues. They question if this is appropriately residentially oriented rather than mixed use and suggest that it either be mixed use or that the definition be expanded to accommodate existing commercial uses and allow for future office/commercial development. The Department explains why this area is appropriately designated as Residential. The Department suggests adding language to clearly state that this district "will accommodate existing office uses and will allow office/mixed-use development at a scale and intensity that is compatible with a residential-oriented district." The details as to the size of commercial or size of residential development will be worked out in the development of the downtown land use code.

Issue 3 speaks to housing feasibility and affordability. The first question is whether it is feasible to believe that Downtown will see market rate, affordable housing. The second suggests adding language to an implementation action to encourage affordable housing development downtown. The Department believes the conditions will change in Downtown, in part because of the implementation of the Downtown Plan. If implemented, the strategies will be more favorable to housing in downtown.

COMMISSIONER PEASE asked if other cities have requirements for a percentage of affordable housing in downtown. MR. DAVIS replied

that some do and some do not; he has seen a requirement that a percentage of units in a residential development be affordable per the HUD definition. For instance, Boulder Colorado requires that 20% of housing units in the central area be affordable. The Anchorage community is interested in encouraging development of affordable housing, but that did not elevate to a requirement. On page 43 of the Plan are the strategies for creating a diverse mix of housing types in downtown. Therein is a requirement to "Ensure that zoning in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods facilitates multi-family residential development as related to zoning," and another bullet that states, "Encourage mixed-income housing developments." These are broad policy statements that do not specify an implementation action or a specific zoning provision. COMMISSIONER PEASE asked if any of the city's district or neighborhood plans that are underway, such as Hillside, Midtown, Fairview or Mountain View, are considering a requirement for affordable housing. MR. NELSON could not respond with certainty. The Fairview Community Council is sponsoring the Fairview Neighborhood Plan and it has not been submitted. The Hillside District Plan is underway. A strong desire was expressed during public forums for housing in downtown. Page 126 of the Plan focuses on convening a downtown housing development task force. A regulatory process to require affordable housing is not proposed at this time.

MR. DAVIS continued his review. Issue 4 speaks to a housing growth target in downtown of 2,500 total housing units by 2025. The issue was that this does not appear to be many units. The commentator also points out that the narrative of the Plan states it is a goal to accommodate and encourage up to 4,000 housing units and asks why that figure is not in the target table. Staff has responded that 2,500 is a projection only and it does not preclude allowing and encouraging up to 4,000 housing units. The projection has to relate to how much housing is anticipated in the Bowl over 20 to 30 years. To reach 2,500 the downtown would have to absorb 10% of the growth in the Bowl in the next 20 years. Increasing the figure to 4,000 would require absorbing 15-20% or more of the housing growth for the overall Bowl. The Department believes 2,500 is an aggressive forecast.

COMMISSIONER PEASE understood that the Plan is projecting a number, but asked how it is supporting that number. She asked whether, if other plans seek aggressive residential development, there will be enough overall growth to sustain all of those projections. She noted that in *Anchorage 2020* there were many town centers and,

because there was not a focus on a particular number of those, only one is coming forward. She wanted some language that says creating a vibrant urban core will be supported with investment. MR. NELSON stated *Anchorage 2020* did lay out a projection and overall policy for housing distribution over a 20-year period, based on projections by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER). Since that time there have been subsequent projections by ISER that are lower. As area plans are developed, those more recent projections are being used as a guide for distribution and targets. It is important to recognize that proportionality of distribution is still being considered. MR. DAVIS added that as part of the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map analysis there has been analysis of what density could be accommodated in the five sub-areas in Anchorage. The northwest subarea, including downtown and midtown, clearly had a deficit in capacity. To the extent downtown and midtown can provide as much housing capacity as possible, the northwest subarea will reach closer to the goals. From 1998 when the analysis that was used in *Anchorage 2020* was done through 2004, there was a net housing gain of 10 in this area, relative to a goal of 7,000 to 10,000 units in that area. COMMISSIONER PEASE understood there are lower projected growth rates citywide and midtown and downtown are being coordinated, but it sounds as if it will be difficult for northwest to meet its projected housing growth. She asked if there should not be a statement that this is where the urban core is being developed and growth in other areas will have to be reconsidered. MR. NELSON stated that everything possible is being done to ensure there is infrastructure to support housing development, but ultimately the degree to which this area can support housing will be based on market conditions, economic opportunities, and local cultural values. A shift is beginning toward a demand for housing in urban core areas. There will be factors beyond a local ability to control. Whether or not these objectives are achieved, efforts will be made to control things that can be controlled locally.

CHAIR JONES remarked that in downtown there are small lots, so property will have to be replatted in order to accommodate higher density development. Many of the drivers for this development are market forces. MR. NELSON stated that a catalyst is needed to generate the first mixed use development that includes housing.

COMMISSIONER PEASE asked whether it is possible to not encourage housing in other areas in order to achieve housing in downtown.

MR. DAVIS next reviewed Issue 5. He stated this comment refers to *Anchorage 2020*, which includes a stated a goal for major employment centers, including downtown. The commentator noticed there are no thresholds for employees per acre in the Downtown Plan. The Department does not object to a target employment density threshold for the core, but recommends stating the threshold more as a goal than a requirement. A density of 50 employees or more per acre is an appropriate goal. This goal is not appropriate for DT-2 or DT-3. A major goal of this plan is to concentrate most development in DT-1.

Issue 6 is various comments regarding page 44 of the Downtown Plan, which is a set of strategies to encourage employment density in the downtown core, specifically related to locating governmental offices. The first comment asks why federal and state offices are not specified in the second bullet, in addition to municipal offices. The Department suggests focusing on municipal offices and instead clarifying that federal and state government levels are priorities in the previous bullet. Another comment was to more strongly state that government offices will be required to locate downtown. The Department suggests this be left as a policy statement.

Issue 7 is a question that was answered.

Issue 8 suggests that the Plan consider a goal for major banks to move from midtown to downtown. Planning feels it is premature to target a specific employment sector. There is an implementation action that calls for a group to identify target sectors.

Issue 9 suggests that the eight targeted land uses on page 29 of the Plan be amended to add Roads and Parking in order to be aware of surface area used for parking. The Department suggests not addressing parking and roads in this way, but rather to include this information in Appendix A or Chapter 2. CHAIR JONES believed that parking is a recruitment target. She note that as a patron of the arts there are times she does not attend events because parking is so inconvenient. Parking is also a target for people who work and who shop downtown. MR. DAVIS stated if the Commission feels parking should be added as a target use, Staff would suggest using the term "Transportation Facility" and also include intermodal transit, transit centers, and structure parking. COMMISSIONER PEASE took more of Mr. Davis's perspective on this issue. She stated she raised the issue in her comments because parking is a use and a measure of the compactness of development. She favored the suggestion of making

this an awareness measure. COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON stated that one of the main ideas in the Plan is to have more retail on ground floors, so with that and heated sidewalks, people will not mind more peripheral parking; people in Seattle do not object to walking downtown because it is interesting.

MR. DAVIS continued his review. Issue 10 speaks to the fact that much of the focus of economic development incentives are on parking and there is little about transit, such as encouraging employers to take part in alternative transportation programs. The Department acknowledges this and suggests adding language that provides a balance: "Reduce parking demand through transit services, programs, incentives and amenities recommended in this plan."

Issue 11 speaks to expedited permitting. The Plan was not changed in response to this comment.

Issue 12 suggests an additional strategy to attract the arts. The Department agrees there could be a strategy regarding encouraging businesses to grow, whether they are art studios or galleries.

Issue 13 addresses a question why there is an arts district corridor along First Avenue as there are others along G Street and in Mountain View. This reference reflects the Alaska Railroad master redevelopment plan for Ship Creek.

Issue 14 asks about Catalytic Site #1, which includes the Transit Center, a food market, and an arts and cultural center at the current location of the Post Office Mall. The question was whether this might take away from other cultural centers in downtown and elsewhere. The Department response is that this type of arts and cultural center will not compete with others. This center would catalyze other centers.

Issue 15 is a question that was answered and also a suggestion to change the criteria for other opportunity sites. Staff may need clarification on the suggestion or its purpose. COMMISSIONER PEASE clarified that there are not many spaces that qualify as totally natural environments downtown. MR. DAVIS stated that Staff then concurs with the suggestion.

Issue 16 deals with parks and open space. There is an observation that the parks and open space goals on page 41 of the Plan and the strategies on 66 of the Plan do not clearly state that existing parks will

be supplemented. The Plan does recommend dramatic increases in density and residential activity in downtown. The Department concurred with the suggestion that the goal statements "maintain and enhance open space" include the word "supplement."

Issue 17 suggests that the Heritage Land Bank be named as a specific implementer to add to open spaces. The Department feels this is premature as the policies and strategies are intended as such and generally do not name the implementers, which occurs in Chapter 8. LU-12 recommends a parks and open space plan for downtown. Through that process Parks and others would identify those entities that could help secure more open space for downtown.

Issue 18 asks why there is a recommendation for a Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for downtown only rather than just for a Parks and Open Space Plan with the Parks & Recreation Commission functioning as an advisory board. The Parks Department explains that the idea behind the Advisory Committee stems from the 2006 Bowl Parks Plan. COMMISSIONER PEASE supported the Staff finding. She noted that in the past some groups have assembled and developed lists of park projects and those lists have become lost. She thinks that this advisory committee would be a good use of citizen time that will help the Parks Department.

Issue 19 relates to the Delaney Park. The Department documents that the public participation process for Delaney has occurred.

Issue 20 relates to changes in Town Square Park. The first comment is whether it is appropriate for the Park to be a venue for large events and whether it is appropriate to make changes for visibility and connectivity. The second issue was jurisdiction, particularly the relationship between the overall Downtown Plan and site planning for parks. The third issue was concerns about adequate public process. The Department notes that the Downtown Plan does not suggest major changes to how the Park is managed today. Town Square is already operated as a large venue and it is seen that way in the Parks Plan. COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON understood there is a constituency that believes the Park does not need improvement. He understood that the Department is aware of that constituency and is sensitive to it.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS thought it would be necessary or appropriate to define the current functions and roles of the Town Square Park in the Downtown Plan. In his review of this section of the

Plan it appeared that a major change was envisioned, but Staff indicates that is not the case. MR. DAVIS thought it may be a good idea to add information on the function of parks per the Park Plan.

CHAIR JONES stated a recent joint briefing was given to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Urban Design Commission regarding the F Street Corridor project. The proposed plans and the various phases were reviewed. At that session, she asked specifically regarding any proposed changes related to Town Square Park and it was confirmed that anything associated with that Park would undergo a public process. She felt it was important and helpful for decision-makers to have the stated function and purpose of the Park in writing.

MR. DAVIS continued with his review. Issues 21 and 22 were questions and the Department provided answers. Issue 21 speaks to the ownership of F Street at the south entrance to the Performing Arts Center. Issue 22 regards air rights and solar access to Town Square Park. AO 85-173 establishes air rights to the south of the Town Square Park, affecting three blocks. Height limitations range from 85 feet to 200 feet, depending on the location of development. On page 104, the Plan provides adequate, overarching general policy guidance about protecting sunlight access to the Park and other sensitive locations.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS felt this is a significant issue. He felt it was useful to refer to the AO. He recommended an informational statement to this effect. MR. NELSON expressed agreement with this suggestion.

Issue 23 refers to the establishment of an Historic Preservation Commission; this has already occurred.

Issue 24 regards the Historic Overlay Zone. Page 68 of the Plan is a map showing conceptual boundaries for this zone. The Department recommends removing the conceptual boundaries from the map because it is premature to suggest those boundaries. The Department further suggests moving language away from specifically recommending the Zone and instead suggests that the Commission be engaged in the development of an Historic Preservation Plan for downtown.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON thought that this type of designation is important to tourists and he would hate to see it drift. MR. DAVIS explained the intent is to give back-up for the designation of historic

preservation and then provide a more comprehensive range of strategies in a plan. COMMISSIONER PHELPS was glad to see the changes Staff proposes. He had concerns with the specificity of the Overlay Zone. He asked that Staff consider the language that recommends a plan and whether they would prefer to recommend developing strategies. MR. NELSON stated that the issue is allowing the Historic Preservation Commission to do further research into this issue and make specific recommendations. COMMISSIONER PHELPS stated if the recommendation is that the Commission develops a plan, the language is correct, but if the intent is that they develop strategies, that does not have the same standing as a plan.

CHAIR JONES asked who has made the designation of historic sites shown on page 68 of the Plan. MR. NELSON replied that in the 1980s an active Historic Preservation Commission nominated a number of sites. The State Historic Preservation Office is also active. There is an intention to become eligible to receive federal financial aid by virtue of an Historic Preservation Plan and a Commission administering that plan. An inventory was also done in the 1980s and there is an intention to update that list. COMMISSIONER PHELPS noted that the Department of Natural Resources, Office of History and Archaeology has a list of historic structures in downtown. It is confidential, but could be reviewed.

MR. DAVIS continued his review. Issue 25 deals with seismically induced ground failure. The Geotechnical Advisory Commission found the basis for the Zones 4 and 5 to be insufficiently summarized in Appendix A. The Geotechnical Advisory Commission recommended a clearer and better presentation of the historical and technical basis for the delineation of those zones, as well as a discussion of the current restrictions in the building code for construction in these zones. Staff concurred.

Issue 26 gets to the Geotechnical Advisory Commission's comments how seismically induced ground failure is addressed in the Downtown Plan. They are concerned that some of the land use districts and recommendations for height, intensity and density appear to be inconsistent with known geohazards in Zones #4 and #5, as well as current building code. They suggest including clarification along with development specifications for these districts. The Geotechnical Advisory Commission also suggests a statement on page 47 preceding language on development specifications to the effect that certain proposed uses or intensities may be more restricted or not allowed

within seismically induced ground failure Zones #4 and 35 subject to a community risk assessment. Commissioner Phelps asked if it is premature to recommend a Seismic Overlay Zone when the seismic community risk assessment is not completed. The Department responds that language would be clarified on page 41 in the seismic hazards goal, and on page 47, 48, 49 and 50 to add references to seismic hazards in the development specifications for the DT-1, DT-2, and DT-3 districts.

The Department also recommends specific changes to Chapter 6, pages 112 and 113 to Chapter 4 and includes an explanatory narrative. The Department further recommends deleting the Seismic Overlay Zone and instead developing an interim zone that is informational in nature.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS thanked Staff for reviewing this issue comprehensively. His question on the community risk assessment is that he presumes it will establish acceptable levels of risk in the downtown area and, as a result, the appropriate land uses in the downtown area. He also presumed it would generate design changes and other land use regulatory changes. He strongly recommended using the term "descriptive ground failure zone." MR. NELSON concurred with these suggestions. He stated the risk assessment study will include building design criteria and identify certain uses that the public feels are inappropriate for location in high risk zones.

CHAIR JONES remarked that most of the areas in Zones #4 and #5 are already developed. Whatever strategies are developed with regard to new construction will apply in limited instances. She raised the question how, if at all, the Municipality might plan to address major renovations to existing buildings.

Transportation Circulation

Issue 27 suggests that the overarching goal related to transportation and circulation mention walking as a primary mode. Staff concurs with the suggestion that Goal 4 include mention of the intention to encourage pedestrian circulation as a primary mode of travel.

Issue 28 suggests clarifying or correcting misleading statements about impacts of regional projects, including the Freeway-to-Freeway project and the Knik Arm Crossing to more clearly state that the Knik Arm Crossing is not necessarily going to have a positive impact on downtown. Staff agrees that this needs to be rephrased and clarified.

New language is suggested. COMMISSIONER PEASE thought that inserting the phrase “negatively impacting” would clarify and suggested including why this is the case. Through traffic, truck traffic, and high speed traffic are negative because: they interfere with local access, which is desirous in residential areas; they interrupt compatibility between transportation and land use; and they negatively affect the pedestrian use of the streetscape. MR. NELSON had no objection to expanding on this topic. COMMISSIONER PHELPS felt the existing language does not properly convey the distribution of benefits and detriments; language regarding the Knik Arm Crossing is too positively stated and should be more neutral. He also felt that there should be mention that the Knik Arm Crossing connection is an integral part of the Freeway-to-Freeway connection; it might be best characterized as an integrated transportation system involving the Freeway-to-Freeway connection and the Knik Arm Crossing.

Issue 29 regarding providing a network of streets generated no change to the Plan.

Issue 30 and Issue 31 question the analytical basis for street conversions and concerns with the change from a 5th/6th to a 3rd/4th couplet. In response, the Department has provided the Kittleson & Associates Transportation Network Analysis as Attachment C. The Department suggests that it be included in Appendix A. page 76 of the Plan contains some discussion of the basis for these suggested changes, but language could be added to that page summarizing some of the benefits of the Kittleson recommendations, including improvements to vehicle circulation, improved transit access and circulation, minimum impacts to regional through traffic contingent on the Freeway-to-Freeway connection, and improving land use-transportation compatibility.

Issue 32 speaks to the extension of the eastbound bus lane on 3rd Avenue. This is supported by the Traffic Department and is a recommendation by Public Transportation to expand an eastbound tour bus lane on 3rd Avenue between F and E Streets up to C Street. CHAIR JONES noted that the trucks with luggage from the tour companies park on 3rd Avenue. She asked where those buses would park when transit buses use that lane. MR. NELSON replied that current operations would continue. Kittleson staff worked with municipal staff, the Hilton Hotel, and tour bus companies and looked

at a full range of alternatives. He clarified the number and direction of travel and parking lanes on the streets.

Issue 33 is a question regarding which side of the street would have on-street parking in a 9th Avenue conversion to three lanes with on-street parking. The Plan does not get to that level of specificity.

Issue 34 recommends adding a section in the Downtown Plan to identify street typologies. This is included in Appendix C, the Downtown Core Street Streetscape Plan. The LRTP developed the concept of street typologies, one of which is mixed use. Appendix C identified most of the streets downtown as mixed-use streets.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS noted there is no back up for these recommendations, which Mr. Davis indicates are from the consultant. He thought the Plan should describe that background, which is a fairly sophisticated transportation modeling effort. MR. DAVIS felt this could be included on page 76.

Issue 35 was a question regarding bulb-outs that was answered.

Issue 36 suggests amending language regarding pedestrian circulation impacts of major couplets. Planning concurred with a minor wording change to page 72.

Issue 37 deals with crossing of major couplets including C Street and a suggestion that the Plan provide some direction regarding pedestrian crossing of C Street between the Museum and the downtown core.

Issue 38 regards traffic signal speed. The Plan recommends a maximum speed of 20 mph and the commentators noted that is a specific number to recommend. Staff responds that number should be expressed as a range of 20 mph or less, per the Kittleson Report. They believe that this speed slows traffic, but will not decrease capacity. This is under discussion with the Traffic Department. MR. NELSON noted that the Freeway-to-Freeway project will reduce much of the through traffic. CHAIR JONES asked if Kittleson looked at the impact of reduced speeds on air quality. MR. DAVIS did not believe so. CHAIR JONES asked where traffic flow would improve in downtown with the Freeway-to-Freeway. MR. NELSON replied that it would initially improve west of Gambell Street and west of C Street.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS presumed that the recommendation for 20 mph is not time certain. He tended to agree with the Department's assessment regarding capacity, but is concerned with signal timing. He suggested there be more discussion that this is meant to be an operational recommendation that should occur prior to the improvements Mr. Nelson is describing. If the speed change is related to operational improvements, those improvements should be specified. COMMISSIONER WANG thought 20 mph is very slow. He did not have the sense that traffic is currently moving slowly.

MR. DAVIS continued with his review. Issue 39 and Issue 40 deal with a downtown bus circulator and the transit center location. The overriding concerns are with moving the transit center from its current central location to a peripheral location, thereby increasing walking distances to the core and possibly reducing the likelihood that people will use transit. There were also concerns whether it is presumptuous to specify a site before more general transit studies have been done. the Public Transportation Department commented that they intend to do a site selection analysis for locating a downtown transit station. The recommendation was based on Kittleson's work, which envisioned a doubling of ridership and frequency of buses in downtown through the 20-year period. A facility with larger capacity than the current facility would be needed with off-street loading and unloading to improve the efficiency of the buses and traffic. Catalytic Site #1 is one that would strongly increase the efficiencies of transit operations downtown. For example, Bus 75 currently loops a 20-block round trip, whereas a location on the periphery could reduce the loop from 15-18 blocks. Locating a transit core on the edge of downtown with strong connections into the downtown core is a strong model in Europe. It is typical in northern European cities for the transit center to be located near the regional rail entry into downtown with a strong pedestrian connection into the core. The Plan recommends only that Catalytic Site #1 be considered. Using the lot to the east of the current center for an off-street loading and unloading area is not conducive to the type of development desired in the core.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON was not sure the northern European cities model is totally analogous to Anchorage because often people are traveling by train in Europe. Although the Commission is against adding the Knik Arm Crossing to the LRTP, if it happens, it might be sensible to move the transit center closer to the location of the former Holiday Inn because it is closer to the Knik Arm Crossing. MR. DAVIS stated Staff is recommending efficiencies in bus services, focusing on

the current local routes. Assuming there is a circulator bus route, a lot of time would be saved for the routes from the south.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON felt a sophisticated escalator system would be needed to transport people up the hill to 4th Avenue. MR. DAVIS indicated this language could be added. MR. NELSON stated there is not disagreement with this, but it is a long process to look at a facility at Catalytic Site #1. This site would not be optimal until the westbound couplet converts from 5th Avenue to 3rd Avenue. The Public Transportation Department has concern that most of the ridership comes from the Conoco Phillips area near the current center. Because of the outstanding questions, the Department is not making a final site selection recommendation.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS stated he uses the bus often and he does not share the opinions of Staff about the new transit center location being more efficient. His concern is that if the downtown center and the efficiency of the transit center are affected, a site feasibility study is needed only after Public Transportation conducts a route study; a systems analysis should precede a recommendation for a site. He would also be more comfortable if Public Transportation fully endorsed this concept.

CHAIR JONES stated circulator buses can be beneficial, dependent on timing and where they stop.

Issue 41 is a question regarding transit oriented development around the transit center, which is answered.

Issue 42 is a suggestion for site criteria for a transit center to include pedestrian connections to the Alaska Railroad facility and the downtown bus transit circulator. Planning concurred with this suggestion.

Issue 43 is a wording change from “possibly” to “ideally” when speaking about serving commuters from the Mat-Su Valley. There were also language changes regarding whether or not the transit center should serve regional bus services.

Issue 44 to improve transit service levels was raised by several individuals. The Downtown Plan does not seem to aggressively promote increases in transit levels areawide or provide performance targets as to what percentage of trips into downtown should be accommodated by transit. The Department’s response is based on the

LRTP; the Downtown Plan takes place in the context of the LRTP policies to double the level of service in terms of reducing headways from 30 to 15 minutes on the 7 major bus routes into downtown by 2025. Public Transportation research and experience demonstrates that 15-minute headway frequency is the threshold where ridership increases. The concept of identifying the percentage of trips into downtown that are transit is not within the scope of the analysis. COMMISSIONER PEASE encouraged establishing a percentage target.

Issue 45 regards several comments recommending a non-stop transit route to the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) when others are not highlighted. He thought that through the public process it was demonstrated that many out of town visitors are from rural Alaska and many visitors travel to the ANMC. COMMISSIONER PEASE suggested that perhaps more stops be added rather than singling out one subgroup for express service. She suggested including reference to the U-Med District.

Issue 46 recommends a citywide parking policy. One strategy would be metered parking in downtown. The Department responds that the municipal parking policy is in Title 21. This year the public hearing draft of Title 21 standards for off-street parking will try to reduce parking requirements in midtown, providing more alternatives, and establishing some parking maximums. This should substantially decrease the differences in terms of how Title 21 addresses parking in downtown versus midtown.

Issue 47 regards parking supply. The Department concurs that there is a conflict between the policy on page 85 that "parking garages should be well distributed and more conveniently located throughout downtown" and the following bullet to "locate public parking at the periphery." The Department suggests de-emphasizing the first bullet. CHAIR JONES asked how to address people who cannot walk long distances. MR. DAVIS stated the Department suggests connecting the garages with the downtown bus circulator with a stronger pedestrian network downtown. CHAIR JONES suggested also looking at the pricing in garages, noting that the typical entrant into the job market cannot afford parking in a parking garage. MR. DAVIS noted that there is also a comment on inefficiencies in the current parking system and the comment suggests additional factors such as convenient location and that the price is too expensive for many downtown workers. Staff concurred that these factors could be added to the list of

factors at the beginning of the chapter and on pages 84 and 85. He stated he would speak with the Community Development Authority and Anchorage Parking Authority to further address this. There is also a suggestion for wayfinding and real-time information on available parking.

Issue 48 is a concern about on-street parking and that the emphasis be changed because it promotes more acreage for surface parking. Staff understands the concern about the vagueness of the strategy, but the overall policy in favor of on-street parking is supported by best practices. COMMISSIONER PEASE asked if there is any fear that when there is a choice between widening a sidewalk or maintaining on-street parking, the latter will prevail. MR. NELSON stated this is a challenge, but in the Department's judgment both are important. On-street parking is important to the economic viability of downtown.

Urban Design

Issue 49 regards the Design for Density goal. The Department concurs with a recommendation to add a bullet under the Urban Design Goal for Density on page 91 to "Provide access to open space and sunlight and preserve views of the natural setting."

Issue 50 suggests adding a bullet to page 91, the Urban Design Goal to Design for the Northern Climate to, "Evaluate the heat-generating effect of the building, and use design materials to capture or to reduce the heat effect as seasonally needed." The Department feels this is more appropriately addressed within the chapter and not as an overarching goal for downtown. The Department would want to see more evidence and clarification on what is being proposed.

Issue 51 regards environmental sustainability goals and strategies. The suggestion is that the Downtown Plan address the topic of climate change with policies to reduce contribution to global warming as well as cope with it. There are five specific recommendations in this regard. The Department agrees that this is an appropriate and relevant issue to address in the growth and development policies for the community. The Department does not recommend including a new goal in the Environmental Sustainability Goals and Strategies. Sustainability is an areawide community concern that should be addressed at an areawide level.

Issue 52 regards a heated (ice-free) sidewalk system. The Department agrees with adding a new bullet to that effect to page 98. There is also

a question whether the heated sidewalk system is feasible or if it is premature to recommend a heated sidewalk system before a feasibility study is conducted. Staff believes the first bullet on page 98 can be clearer and responds to this concern by changing the language of the bullet to more clearly state that the Heated Sidewalk Master Plan address refinement of the heated sidewalk priorities and a cost feasibility implementation study. Heated sidewalks are one of two most popular recommendations, along with providing more housing. Some heated sidewalks are being funded, but cost feasibility is recognized as an issue.

Issue 53 regards lighting and energy efficiency. The Department concurs with adding a bullet that the use of light-colored and reflective building materials on facades to reduce the need for intense lighting. There was also a suggestion that white light is not energy efficient and that was addressed through background information.

Issue 54 regards wind protection. Suggestions were made to add bullets addressing wind shelter under the pedestrian shelter section on page 101. Staff concurred with these suggestions. There was also a suggestion to add a design guideline on page 104 to require evaluation of wind effects.

Issue 55 regards E Street removable bollards. This is a minor suggestion and it is being addressed through the E Street project.

Issue 56 regards adequate building setbacks. The language was leaving room for interpretation that a narrow sidewalk width was encouraged. The Department suggests a wording change to clarify that sidewalk widths should be adequate and enhanced.

Issue 57 regards appearance, form and function of rooftops in building massing. The suggestion is to add a bullet to the design guidelines or add a new Design Section regarding the importance of rooftops. The Department concurs and suggests amending the Building Massing section by adding a bullet regarding rooftops and the importance of their design relative to the skyline.

Issue 58 regards sunlight access protection. There were a variety of comments regarding adequacy of sunlight access in downtown. This is an extremely important issue for downtown that revolves around the density needed and preservation of sunlight. Several changes were recommended, but the Department believes that the massing and

stepping guideline on page 103 and sunlight access guideline on page 104 adequately address the issue.

Issue 59 regards the goal on page 108 of accommodating parking requirements within structures and questioning how feasible is the recommendation to build underground structures. That almost implied that all downtown parking is to be supplied in structures. The Department attempted to clarify that the intent is to promote the use of structured parking to accommodate needed parking spaces.

Issue 60 is a concern about allowing underground parking garages to extend above ground when placed under residential uses. The Department responded with a line item change. It is a best planning practice to raise the first floor of ground level residential units several feet above ground, if only for privacy purposes.

Implementation

Issue 61 regards the ability of the Municipality to implement the Downtown Plan. The issue is whether the Municipality is committed to carrying out the action items in Chapter 8. The comment is that if the Municipality is not committed or is not sure it has the resources to carry out an action, the Plan should not recommend it.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON thought that since this is a comprehensive plan, even if this goal is not followed through, it might be cited as an authority in the future and can be used to defeat arguments in the same way *Anchorage 2020* does. MR. DAVIS noted that this plan is an element of *Anchorage 2020*, once adopted. MR. NELSON stated the Downtown Plan expresses goals and aspirations and, in some respects, may go beyond what is reasonably feasible as far as articulating the vision. There has been a concerted attempt to identify those things that are tangible, achievable, and that would be beneficial to reaching the vision. The Implementation chapter attempts to place a time frame and general indication of cost involved in the implementation measures.

MR. DAVIS stated the Department's response to Issue 61 is to add a line item. COMMISSIONER PHELPS explained the reason for his comment was to establish an overall management responsibility. He noted that a single department has not been identified for overall implementation of the Plan. There is a diffused set of responsibilities among various agencies, but a single agency is not identified for making it all work together. COMMISSIONER PEASE concurred with this comment that citing responsibility gives more assurance to

implementation. MR. NELSON responded that this problem has existed throughout his experience with the Municipality; that is, the Planning Department has not had overall lead responsibility for plans because it is not an operational department. He viewed the responsible parties as the executive level of the Municipality. He felt this comment would be better made to the Assembly or the Mayor's Office.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS remained concerned about the feasibility of Plan recommendations when an entity is not assigned responsibility. He hoped some attempt would be made to identify organizational responsibility before the Plan is approved.

Issue 62 regards overall management of the implementation process has been addressed.

Issue 63 regarding downtown exemptions from Title 21 is informational only

Issue 64 regarding Title 21 bonus system is informational only

CHAIR JONES complimented Mr. Davis for his hard work on the I/R.

COMMISSIONER ISHAM moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole.
COMMISSIONER WANG seconded.

AYE: Pease, Josephson, Jones, Isham, Fredrick, Palmer, Wang, Phelps
NAY: None

PASSED

MR. NELSON suggested that on June 4 Commissioners identify the issues with which they disagree and take action on issues with which there is agreement with Staff. CHAIR JONES anticipated that on June 4 the Commission would convene a Committee of the Whole and reach consensus on large blocks of the proposals in the Downtown Plan.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS stated he would be in Barrow on June 4 and asked if action could be taken on June 11. MR. NELSON felt it was important that the Commissioners participate, so if June 11 is more practical, Staff would not object. COMMISSIONER PEASE indicated she also would be absent June 4. COMMISSIONER ISHAM indicated he may be absent on June 11.

COMMISSIONER ISHAM moved to postpone case 2007-076 to June 11, 2007. COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON seconded.

AYE: Pease, Josephson, Jones, Isham, Fredrick, Palmer, Wang, Phelps
NAY: None

PASSED

I. REPORTS

CHAIR JONES announced a meeting with the Director on Thursday, May 17, 2007. MR. NELSON noted that a memorandum clarifying *Anchorage 2020* Policy #14 dealing with retention of residential lands was distributed this evening and will be discussed at the Director's meeting. The Midtown District Plan is also on the agenda. CHAIR JONES asked that there be discussion of a request the Commission has received for a letter of support for the F Street project and that the email she received on the subject be forwarded to the full Commission.

J. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

K. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Amendment

AYE: Cotten, Pease, Josephson, Fredrick

NAY: Wang, Phelps, Jones

FAILED

Main Motion

AYE: Cotten, Pease, Josephson, Jones, Fredrick, Wang, Phelps

NAY: None

PASSED

COMMISSIONER PEASE moved that the Planning and Zoning Commission grant approval of the Public Review Draft of the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, March 2007 with the suggested changes proposed by Staff numbered 1-49 and the revisions and additions agreed to by the Committee of the Whole.
COMMISSIONER WANG seconded.

COMMISSIONER PEASE noted this Plan was called for in *Anchorage 2020* and is a critical piece of planning to move the city in the direction that comprehensive plan intended that it go, which is a more pedestrian friendly city with reduced dependence on vehicles. In addition, there has been much discussion in recent years of the benefits of pedestrian and bike travel. This lays out, in addition to scoring procedures, design criteria that can now become part of the standard practice as subdivisions are laid out and streets are upgraded. This benefits all of the city, including some of the disadvantaged areas where transportation by vehicle is a struggle.

AYE: Cotten, Pease, Josephson, Jones, Fredrick, Wang, Phelps

NAY: None

PASSED

2. 2007-076

Municipality of Anchorage, Planning
Department. Anchorage Downtown
Comprehensive Plan, March 2007

CHAIR JONES noted that the Commission has completed its work as a Committee of the Whole and is working this evening at somewhat of a disadvantage as Tom Davis, the Staff member who has been primary on this task, was unable to attend due to a medical problem.

Staff member TOM NELSON explained that before the body is the public hearing draft of the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan* dated March 2007, as well as the *Anchorage Core Streets Streetscape Plan* and the Issue-Response Summary prepared by Staff in response to the comments of the Commission and public dated May 14, 2007. The Commission reviewed the Issue-Response Summary as a Committee of the Whole and, as a result of that discussion, the Department prepared an addendum dated June 11, 2007. There was an outstanding concern with Issue 20 regarding Town Square Park. After further consideration, the Commission was given an email from Tom Davis on modification of the language. He stated the Staff has attempted to be responsive to the Commission's and the public's comments. He offered to respond to any further questions.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS stated that one of his principal concerns is the relocation of the transit facility, specifically that it is based upon a comprehensive transit analysis. He believed the response was that the Long-Range Transportation Plan contains a transit component and it envisions a doubling of trips in the downtown area. Therefore, the question is not "if" but "when" the transit center will be necessary and where it will be located. MR. NELSON stated this is correct.

COMMISSIONER PEASE asked for comment on Dianne Holmes's question regarding the utility easement in relation to Town Square Park. MR. NELSON replied that he was not sure of the answer to this question, but was also not sure it was necessary to address this in relation to the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan*. It is important to recognize that the only recommendation for additional improvements in Town Square Park is maintenance of existing facilities. Any change to the use or design of the Park would go through a separate public planning process.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON thought there could be an issue in terms of the public's sense of needing to be vigilant and aware of any changes to the Town Square Park. MR. NELSON agreed there was an extensive process involved in the design of the Town Square Park in the 1980s. There may be a need for a public process to review the Park to see whether there are appropriate changes. In this Plan the importance of the Park is acknowledged, but no changes are being made. COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON noted that often the fact that there could be a change causes distress.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS moved for approval of the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Draft dated March 2007 as modified by Issue-Response Summary of May 7, 2007 and the Issue-Response Addendum of June 11, 2007. COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON seconded.

MR. NELSON clarified that the motion should include the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan as an addendum to the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan*.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS amended his motion to include adoption of the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan. COMMISSIONER JOSEPHSON agreed as the second.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS supported his motion, finding that the comprehensive plan for downtown needs to be revised. The original *Central Business District Plan* was developed in the mid-1980s. Circumstances have changed since that time and in response the Municipality became engaged inside a planning process that was detailed and thorough, and that involved extensive public participation. As a result of analyses there is a firm basis for the recommendations contained in the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan* and the *Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan*. He noted that in this process of review, the review before this body has been thorough. In his review of the Issue-Response documents, all of the issues raised by the Commission were dealt with and the recommendations he saw for changes in the Issue-Response documents made sense to him and he supports them. He felt it was important that the Municipality and this body adopt this plan as a guide for growth in the downtown area, recognizing that there was a thorough and dynamic public process involved. With the adoption of this plan, there should be adequate guidance for the development of this area.

COMMISSIONER PEASE felt Staff has been thorough and thoughtful in responding to the Commission's comments and questions and in the language proposed for change. She was somewhat unsure about the total traffic growth resulting from the intensified development in downtown, as well as from the potential Knik Arm Bridge traffic. On the whole, she felt this was a bold plan that makes important changes that allow downtown to move into a vibrant, compact, pedestrian friendly, urban center. She felt that the implementation of the *Plan* would make downtown a magnet and she was excited about the direction the *Plan* provides.

AYE: Cotten, Pease, Josephson, Jones, Fredrick, Wang, Phelps
NAY: None

PASSED

COMMISSIONER PHELPS moved regarding Issue 20 Town Square Park, to accept the Department's latest modification contained in the June 8, 2007 email from Tom Davis to the Commission to revise the second paragraph of the narrative sidebar to delete the second paragraph and change the third to state "The Downtown Plan recommends consideration of improvements to Town Square Park that can support and enhance these functions. The Downtown Plan also recommends that an overall parks and open space plan be developed for Downtown. That process will identify long term future open space needs and enhancements in Downtown. Any proposed improvements or changes to the design of Town Square Park beyond the repair or replacement of existing elements will undergo a separate site-specific park master plan process that includes the public's involvement as well as approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission. COMMISSIONER COTTEN seconded.

COMMISSIONER PHELPS felt Town Square Park is a special area. There have been discussions about and conflicts over this area for the past 20 years of which he was aware. Many, including he, were concerned that the *Plan* was providing a direction for the Park, which is a concern because of the high level of community involvement in the Park. He was glad to see the language proposed that although some changes may be proposed to the Park, there would be a separate site-specific park plan that includes public involvement and approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

AYE: Cotten, Pease, Josephson, Jones, Fredrick, Wang, Phelps
NAY: None

PASSED

COMMISSIONER PHELPS thanked the Staff for their work on the Issue-Response document and the fact they gave the Commission's and the public's comments due consideration and offered revisions, as appropriate.

CHAIR JONES asked that Mr. Nelson extend the Commission's thanks to Mr. Davis.

Attachment C

Planning Staff Report

PZC Case 2007-076


April 25, 2007


Municipality of Anchorage


MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 25, 2007

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

THRU:  Tom Nelson, Director
Planning Department

THRU:  Cathy Hammond, Planning Supervisor
Physical Planning Division

FROM:  Tom Davis, Senior Planner
Physical Planning Division

SUBJECT: Case 2007-076, Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan

The Planning and Zoning Commission is being asked to review and make a recommendation to the Anchorage Assembly on the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan (hereinafter the Downtown Plan). The Downtown Plan (previously conveyed to the Planning and Zoning Commission members) is a complete revision to the 1985 comprehensive development plan for Anchorage's central business district (CBD).

This memorandum provides the project background and an overview of the Downtown Plan document, explains its relationship to the Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan and the Title 21 Rewrite, discusses several outstanding issues to be addressed, and summarizes the Commission review process.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The Downtown Plan is one of the first neighborhood or district plans recommended in the Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020) to arrive at the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and approval. Neighborhood or district plans are identified as a key implementation strategy of Anchorage 2020. Each neighborhood or district plan is intended to be adopted as an official element of the Comprehensive Plan and supplement it with customized guidance for growth and development in specific areas of town. Other area-specific plans are currently underway in Midtown, Fairview, Mountain View, and the Hillside.

The Downtown Plan is specifically identified as an essential implementation strategy for policies 10, 18, 19, and 23 of Anchorage 2020. Anchorage 2020 policies for Downtown are discussed on page 4 of the Downtown Plan.

Project Background Summary

The current Anchorage CBD Comprehensive Development Plan was adopted in 1983. Based on conditions and growth projections of its era, it provided guidance for new investment in the 1980s and a substantive modification to the CBD land use regulations that are still in effect today.

The new Downtown Plan comes in recognition that the Municipality's current plan and development regulations for Downtown are in need of updating in order to effectively facilitate new growth. Anchorage has changed profoundly since 1983 and so have the market trends that affect Downtown. In addition, the Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2001, set new policy directions for future growth and development. Anchorage 2020 recommends that a greater share of future growth occur as redevelopment within existing city centers. Finally, Anchorage's central business district has entered a new generation of public improvements, and this public commitment to invest in Downtown presented a timely opportunity for revitalizing and attracting new private investments.

In 2005, the Municipality retained a multidisciplinary consulting team to develop a new plan and development regulations for the central business district. The project was led by consultants from Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG). They were assisted by a team of local and national consultants including Robert Odland Consulting, Land Design North, RIM Architects, Northern Economics, Kittelson & Associates, Shannon & Wilson, Inc., and Economic and Planning Systems (EPS). In addition, MAKERS Architecture + Urban Design of Seattle, Washington, developed a streetscape improvements plan for the Downtown core. The consulting team provided a wide range of expertise and experience in downtown planning and development.

Under guidance from a local project management group and project advisory group composed of community leaders and municipal agencies, the consulting team created a process and a draft plan document that was directly responsive to the policies of Anchorage 2020, conditions and trends in the marketplace, and the input of stakeholders and other community participants. Widely recognized for facilitating highly collaborative public processes, the MIG team did an excellent job in garnering the participation, advice, and support from an extensive range of stakeholders. A synopsis of the public process is provided on pages 2 and 3 of the Downtown Plan.

Downtown Plan Overview

The purpose of the Downtown Plan is to guide future growth and development in the Downtown and encourage its revitalization into a vibrant, mixed-use northern city center. The Plan first establishes a Vision Statement and six Overarching Goals (pages 25-27). To achieve these goals, it recommends a three-tiered strategic framework of: (1) future land uses and districts, (2) catalytic development projects and opportunities, and (3) supporting strategies. The supporting strategies include market-based development incentives, transportation and circulation plans, urban design guidelines, and programmatic strategies. Two fold-out diagrams illustrate this strategy framework and its geographic relationships appear on pages 29 and 33 respectively.

The remainder of the document elaborates on this strategy framework in four major chapters: land use and economic development, transportation and circulation, urban design, and program strategies. In particular, the new Downtown districts proposed on pages 47-50 of Chapter 4 and the Urban Design Guidelines on pages 92-112 of Chapter 6 are intended to guide the intensity and character of future development. The plan concludes with an implementation chapter and action chart.

Throughout, the Downtown Plan emphasizes concentration of resources available for investment, coordination of land uses, and linkages between key facilities and catalytic projects—so that new investment and activities are coordinated to achieve their highest impact and stimulate additional development.

Three appendices accompany the public hearing draft. Appendix A, *Phase One Report: Existing Conditions Analysis*, and Appendix B, *Downtown Anchorage Development Feasibility Assessment*, provide information and analysis regarding existing conditions.

Appendix C, *Anchorage Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan* is a policy document intended to supplement the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan. It illustrates in greater detail how streets in the core should be upgraded to enhance pedestrian activity and support economic development.

Downtown Land Use Code Revision

The primary regulatory instrument affecting Downtown is Title 21, the municipal land use code. The revision of Title 21 has been underway for several years. The three Downtown zoning districts were not included in the Title 21 Rewrite project. Instead, the Downtown land use code revision has been integrated into the Downtown Plan process in recognition of Downtown's unique characteristics and to provide a closer link between policy and implementation.

Therefore, the Downtown Plan will be accompanied by an evaluation and revision of the central business district land use code. The new code will provide new development standards and use districts in concert with the Downtown Plan. It is intended to be consistent and compatible with the format for the Title 21 Rewrite. Currently, a proposed regulatory structure for Downtown is under development by Robert Odland Consulting; and a public process to establish a new Downtown code will occur after adoption of the Downtown Plan.

Outstanding Issues to Be Addressed

At the conclusion of the planning process culminating in the public hearing draft, several outstanding issues emerged which the draft Downtown Plan has yet to address. These issues follow and are for consideration by the community and Commission:

1. ***Extension of the eastbound bus lane proposed in the Plan for Third Avenue.*** It is recommended that the Commission consider the extension of the eastbound bus lane proposed for Third Avenue from F to E Street to F to C Street. Chapter 5 Transportation and Circulation recommends the overall conversion of most of Third Avenue to one-way westbound traffic. As part of this,

it supports and illustrates an eastbound lane on the north side of the Hilton Hotel between F and E Streets to accommodate tour bus loading and unloading (page 87). As proposed, this configuration would require departing tour buses to turn right on E Street (contingent on the recommendation to convert part of E Street to two-way traffic).

Extension of the proposed eastbound bus lane further east to C Street could provide a more efficient circulation route for departing tour buses. It could also minimize unnecessary traffic conflicts in Downtown's core pedestrian area south on E Street. Such an extension would need to resolve potential traffic conflicts with a new bus transit center proposed in the plan (pages 52, 53, and 82). While the Downtown Plan should provide policy guidance regarding the extension of the proposed eastbound bus lane, specific traffic engineering issues can be resolved through the Third Avenue One-Way Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Implementation Plan which is proposed on page 78.

2. **Identification of street typologies in the Downtown Plan.** During the latter part of the planning process, it became apparent that the Downtown Plan should probably identify a hierarchy of street typologies in the Downtown. Appendix C, *Downtown Core Streets 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.

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. The LRTP identified several street typologies which prioritize various design elements (e.g., 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*. The LRTP recommends that a determination of applicable street typology be established through municipal planning prior to future individual street improvement projects.

A street typology system could also 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.

A street typology system for Downtown can build on the *Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan* and relate to other recommended strategies in the draft Downtown Plan. The following typologies are suggested for consideration by the Commission:

- a. **Mixed-use street:** The *Downtown 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.
- b. **Pedestrian-oriented street:** As the *Downtown Core Streets 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 Street" is essentially a sub-typology of mixed-use street emphasizing areas of highest pedestrian use.
- c. **Residential-oriented street:** The Residential-oriented Street is based on the LRTP Residential Streets typology and follows on the Downtown Plan's proposed residential-oriented sub-districts and urban design guidelines.

The Planning Department will provide further discussion of the outstanding issues to be addressed during the April 25 worksession presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission and an issue/response paper to be provided during the Commission's review process.

Commission Review and Approval Process

The public hearing draft of the Downtown Plan was released on March 23, 2007. It was distributed to community councils, agencies and other interested parties for review and comment. Public hearing draft comments received to date are included in this packet.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled to hear public comment on the draft Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan in a special meeting on April 25. The draft Downtown Plan will be presented to the Commission that same evening at the worksession held prior to the public hearing.

Following the April 25 public hearing, Planning staff will prepare an **issue/response paper** to address the outstanding issues of concern from the draft plan, other comments received, and concerns identified during the public hearing. The Planning and Zoning Commission will receive the issue/response prior to its deliberations and action on the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan*.

The Commission is tentatively scheduled to deliberate the Downtown Plan at its regular meeting on May 14. Following action, the Commission's recommendations will be forwarded to the Assembly for consideration in that body's deliberations.

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) is also being asked to review and comment to the Assembly, specifically on Chapter 6: Urban Design *Goals and Guidelines*, as well as *Appendix C: Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan*. UDC deliberations are scheduled to occur in mid to late May.

The recommendations of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the urban design comments of the UDC will be forwarded to the Assembly for consideration in that body's deliberations and final action.

Department Recommendation

Upon resolution of the outstanding issues outlined above, the Planning Department recommends approval of the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan and its supplementary *Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan*.

Attachment: Comments Received

Comments Received



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM



DATE: April 17, 2007
TO: Planning Department
Physical Planning Division
FROM: Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Draft
Case No. 2007-076

The Parks and Recreation Department supports the concepts of the Downtown Plan and generally concurs with the strategies and recommendations in particular regarding parks, open space, and pedestrian circulation and amenities.

It will be necessary to identify Operation and Maintenance funding sources to maintain the increased infrastructure as projects are completed.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft plan.

P&Z 042507 Dnt Comp Pla.doc

From: Staff, Alton R.
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2007 5:36 PM
To: Downtown Plan
Cc: Bergt, Randy; Karcz, Jody M.; Schmidt, James W.
Subject: Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Comments



Anchorage
Downtown Comprehensive

Alton R. Staff
Planning Manager
Public Transportation Department
3650A East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99507
907-343-8230

Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Draft Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Downtown Comprehensive Plan, Planning and Zoning Case 2007-076.

The general emphasis of the plan for pedestrian safety and comfort is desirable for Transit customers and encourages bus ridership. Increasing the bus service is of course desirable.

Page #36. Transit Stations - states that two options are under consideration. People Mover plans to have a site selection analysis conducted for a downtown transit station. There may be more than two options for a transit center in the downtown area. It is noted that the suggested Transit Station on 3rd and E Street is outside of the high pedestrian activity area noted in Diagram 4.1 of Appendix A.

Page #72. Connectivity and Accessibility, bullet #4 States: There is a lack of integration between the Transit Center, bus system and parking lots. As our Transit Center is on the ground floor of a parking garage I am not sure what this statement refers to.

Page #83. Initiate a downtown circulator to provide direct access throughout the core on a regular basis. To provide the five (5) minute headway recommended would require perhaps 3 buses. All of our buses are dedicated to existing service during peak periods. As referenced in the plan, funding for such increased transit would have to be established.

Page #83. Coordinate transit services and amenities. I like a lot of the pro transit recommendations but the fifth bullet calls for establishing a non-stop express transit route that connects the Alaska Native Medical Center to downtown. People Mover already has considerable fixed route service to ANMC and the U-Med Area. I question why a specific dedicated route to ANMC is singled out over a dedicated route to perhaps Providence or Alaska Regional Hospital. This would again be a funding and resource question.

April 19, 2007

Mr. Tom Nelson
Planning Director
Municipality of Anchorage
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519

The TRUST
LAND OFFICE

RE: Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Strategies & Guidelines

Dear Mr. Nelson:

The Trust Land Office manages Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands on behalf of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust). As you know, the Trust owns five lots in the Downtown Anchorage area between 7th and 8th Avenues on L Street. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan as an update to our comments of May 18, 2006. We support the Municipality's implementation of the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan, particularly in Downtown through the current planning effort.

The Park Strip North district of the Downtown Plan contains the Trust's's property and is an appropriate designation for the first block north of 9th Avenue, but the area bounded by 6th and 8th Avenues and I and M Streets would be more appropriately contained in a different sub-district. The area is currently somewhat transitional between an existing mixed-use area of office and residential, with a majority of the uses in office. The Plan needs to acknowledge the current uses and the potential for landowners to redevelop their occupied and unoccupied sites in uses that are not strictly residential. The area would be more appropriately included in the Downtown Mixed-use: Legal/Office sub-district due to the proliferation of law offices and the similarity in distribution of office and residential uses. The Trust Land Office therefore respectfully request that the area encompassing the Trust's parcels be redesignated in the Downtown Mixed-use: Legal/Office sub-district. If redesignation is not an option for the MOA at this time, then the Trust Land Office requests that the definition of the Park Strip North district be expanded to allow at a minimum, office space in a mixed-use format.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments. Please feel free to contact me at 269-8421 or alisons@dnr.state.ak.us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Alison L. Smith
Senior Resource Manager

cc: Wendy Woolf, Acting Executive Director
Jeff Jesse, Chief Executive Officer, Trust Authority



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Development Services Department
Right of Way Division



MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 17, 2007
TO: Planning Department, Zoning and Platting Division
THRU: Jack L. Frost, Jr., Right of Way Supervisor *L*
FROM: Lynn McGee, Senior Plan Reviewer *L*
SUBJ: Request for Comments on Planning and Zoning Commission case(s) for April 25, 2007.

RECEIVED

APR 17 2007

Municipality of Anchorage
Zoning Division

Right of Way has reviewed the following case(s) due April 17, 2007.

07-076 Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan, grids 1229, 1230, 1231, 1329, 1330 & 1331
(Public Hearing)
Right of Way Division has no comments at this time.
Review time 15 minutes.

Attachment D

Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan

March 2007 Public Hearing Draft with Appendices A-C

Appendix A: Phase One Report, Exiting Conditions Analysis

Appendix B: Development Feasibility Study

Appendix C: Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan

**These documents are provided under separate cover to the
Assembly.**

**These documents are online at:
http://www.muni.org/planning/CBD_CompPlanPHD_Mar07.cfm**



anchorage

DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PREPARED BY

MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC.
ECONOMIC & PLANNING SYSTEMS
KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES
LAND DESIGN NORTH
NORTHERN ECONOMICS
RIM ARCHITECTS
SHANNON & WILSON

PUBLIC HEARING
DRAFT
MARCH 2007

Acknowledgements

The Downtown Comprehensive planning process is a joint effort led by the Municipality of Anchorage and the Anchorage Downtown Partnership. The following groups and committees have provided much time, work and inspiration in guiding the process. In addition to these representatives, a wide range of other stakeholders and community members have also been invaluable participants in the process for ensuring future success in Downtown.

Mayor's Office

Mayor Mark Begich

Mary Jane Michael, Economic & Community Development Director

Robin Ward, Anchorage Community Development Authority Director

Assembly Members

Allan Tesche, Downtown Anchorage

Dan Coffey, Midtown

Dick Traini, Midtown

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Debbie Osslander, Chugiak/Eagle River

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Paul Bauer, East Anchorage

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Chris Schutte, Anchorage Downtown Partnership, Ltd. Policy and Communications Director

Kevin Kinney, Anchorage Community Development Authority

Robert Kniefel, Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Engineer

Jeff Dillon, Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Director/Downtown Projects Coordinator

Lance Wilber, Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Director

Howard Holtran, Municipal Engineer/Director, Project Management and Engineering

Commissions

Urban Design Commission

Planning and Zoning Commission

Geotechnical Advisory Commission

Downtown Advisory Group

Chris Anderson, Ristorante Orso/Glacier Brewhouse

Hazel Blackmore, Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services

Daphne Brown, Kumin & Associates

Nick Colman, Small Business Owner

Judith Crotty, Wells Fargo Bank

Lynn Dixon, Cook Inlet Book Company

Nancy Harbour, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts

Darrel Hess, Fairview Community Council

Susan Hoedel, Allure Day Spa & Hair Design

Marc Marlow, Developer

Bob Neumann, Grizzly Gifts, Historic Anchorage Hotel, Rumrunners

Deirdre Phayer, Downtown Community Council

Robert Poe, Anchorage Economic Development Corporation

Harvey Prickett, Dean Architects

George Quinto, Alaska Village Initiatives, Inc.

Gindy Shake, Artist Gindy Shake Design

Allan Tesche, Assemblyman, Downtown resident

George Valalis, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce

Gary Wells, Simon Properties/5th Avenue Mall

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Rosemary Dudley, Deputy Project Manager

Robert Odland, Regulations and Zoning

Eric Phillips, Project Associate

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Economic & Planning Systems

Jason Moody, Principal

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Anthony Yi, Senior Engineer

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Land Design North

Terry Schoenthal, Principal

Northern Economics

Pat Burden, President and Principal Economist

Caren Mathis, Senior Consultant

RIM Architects

Larry Cash, Principal

Rolland Reid, Principal

Shannon & Wilson, Inc.

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Kyle Brennan

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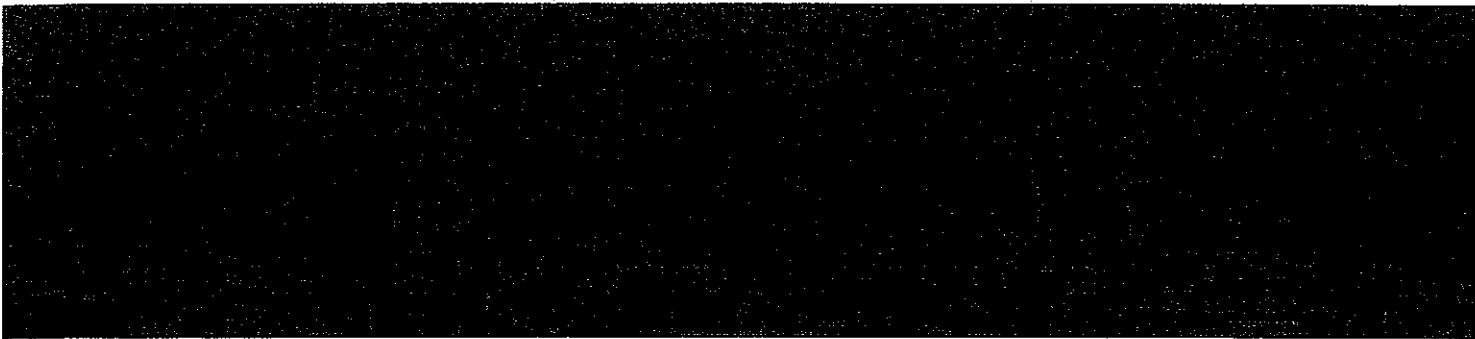
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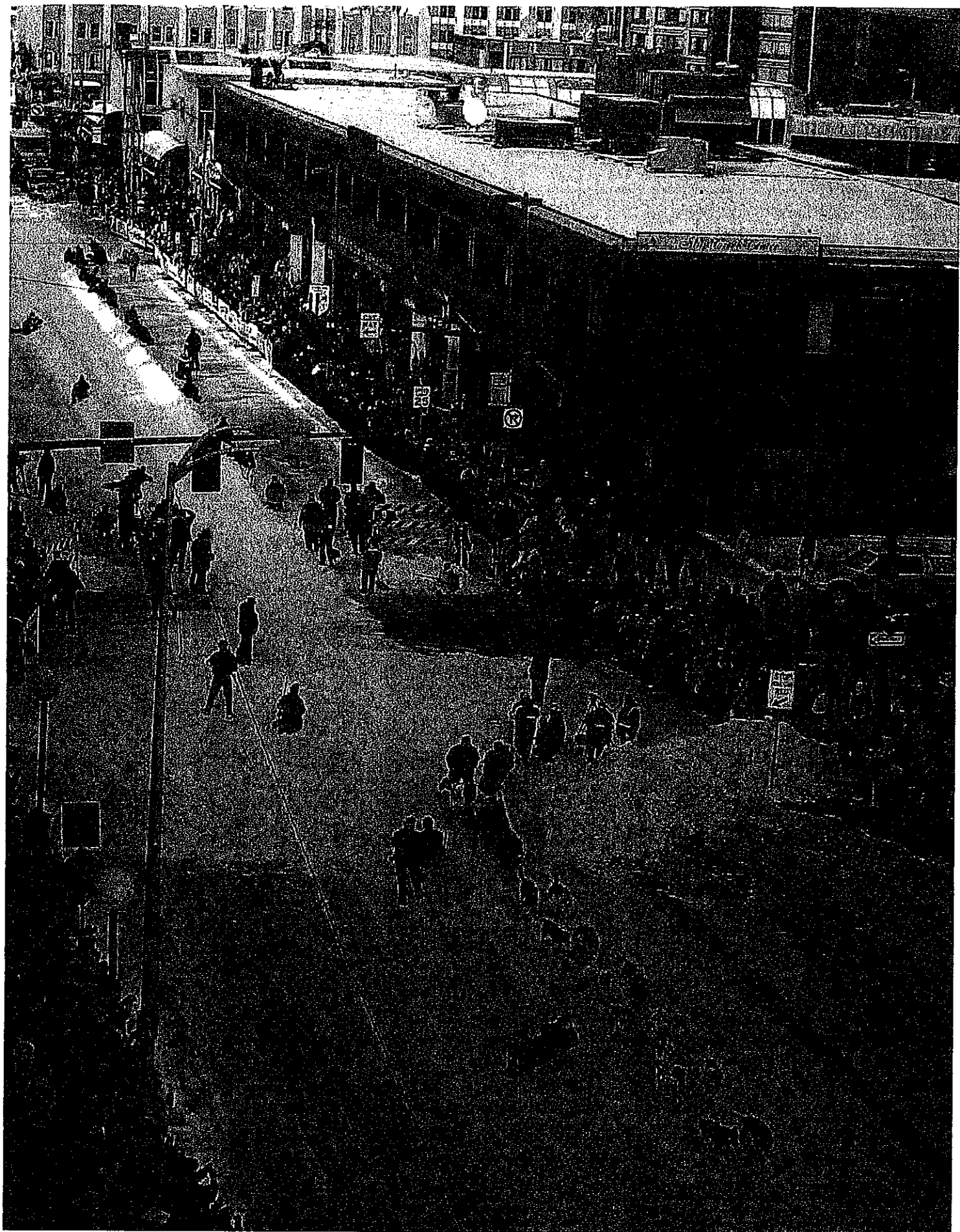
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1 introduction

Nowhere else in Alaska is there an urban center that compares to Downtown Anchorage. With a strong economic base, cultural and historical attractions, natural beauty, and diverse recreational opportunities, Downtown Anchorage has long been considered Alaska's civic and cultural destination.

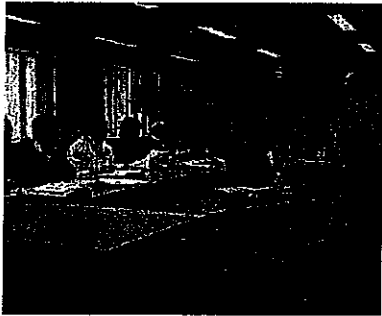
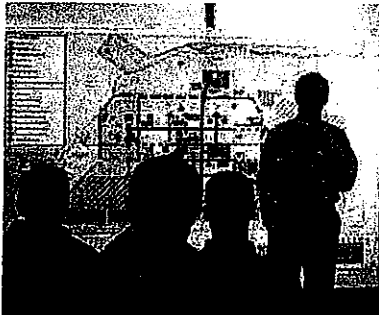
In the first decade of the 21st Century, Downtown Anchorage is at an important crossroads. Construction of the new convention center, expansion of the museum, plus many park and roadway improvements represent the highest level of public investment in the Downtown core in more than twenty years. Thus, now is the time to provide new direction and design standards to guide new growth and transform the city center into a vital, dynamic urban environment with a thriving economy.

Despite these assets, Downtown will only reach its full potential with a strategic planning approach to fully take advantage of this unique time in its history. The Downtown Comprehensive Plan provides a **strategic framework to guide the future development of Downtown**. It outlines a vision for a vibrant Northern city center that serves all of Alaska and welcomes the world—an active, walkable, mixed-use cultural and economic urban hub that is an exciting and livable place for residents, workers and visitors alike.

Central to achieving that vision is **focusing and concentrating limited resources**. Land uses must be coordinated to achieve their highest impact; key facilities and amenities must be strongly linked through streetscape enhancements and good building design; catalytic projects must be developed in the right locations to stimulate additional development; and public improvements must be phased properly so that, when integrated with new development, they create a real sense of place and vitality.

The Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan, coupled with the companion Downtown Land Use Code document, provides the blueprint for achieving success in the coming years.

INTRODUCTION



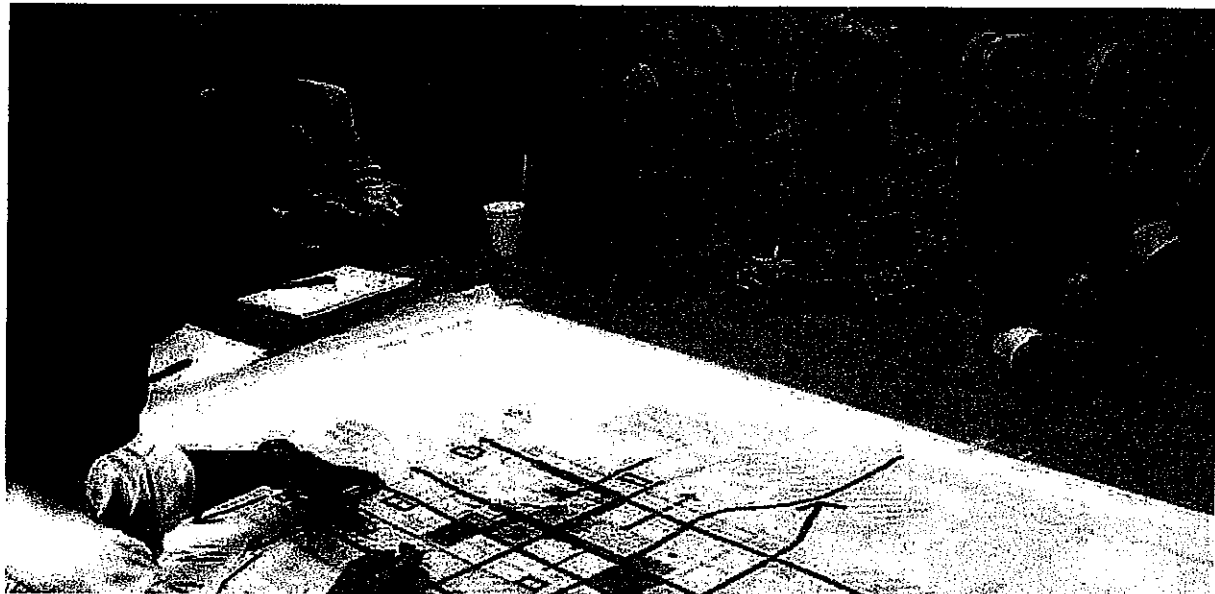
THE DOWNTOWN PLAN PROCESS

The Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan process began in August 2005 with the goal of creating a visionary—yet realistic, strategic and action-oriented—plan to guide Downtown's future. Drawing upon extensive community resources, municipal staff time and energy and consultant team expertise, the planning process was highly collaborative and participatory.

The process included over 60 meetings, including three major public meetings; small group sessions with an extensive range of stakeholders and community leaders; and regular meetings with the citizen-based Downtown Advisory Group,

Mayor, Assembly, Urban Design Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Geotechnical Advisory Commission to guide the plan elements. All of these groups and hundreds of community members were important resources in crafting and refining the Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

The planning process was led by the Municipality's Planning Department and the Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) consultant team. The MIG team was comprised of local and national planners, engineers and economists, including Robert Odland Consulting, Land Design North, RIM Architects, Northern Economics, Kittelson & Associates, Shannon & Wilson, Inc. and Economic and Planning Systems. The Client team



was comprised of the Municipality of Anchorage's Planning, Economic and Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Project Management and Engineering and Traffic departments; Anchorage Downtown Partnership; Anchorage Parking Authority; and Sheila Selkregg and Associates.

Throughout the process, the consultant team and Planning staff engaged the community at large and worked side by side with stakeholders, community members and city officials to create a comprehensive plan that everyone can embrace.

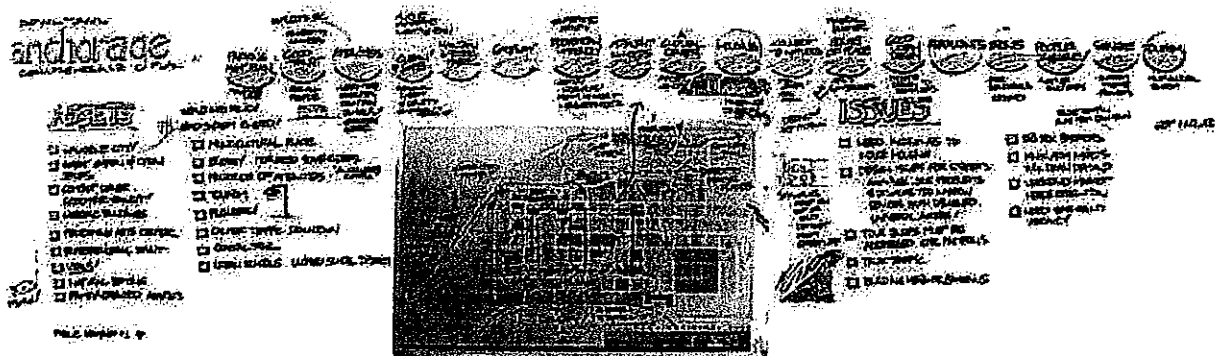
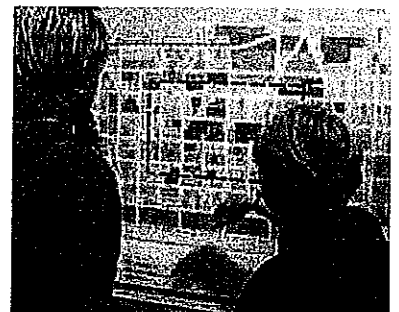
The process began with a three-day planning session in August 2005, during which time the team met with stakeholders, toured the Downtown area, and met with the Mayor and Assembly members.

Following the initial kickoff session, consultants pursued the existing conditions and site analysis. In October 2005, the team reviewed their progress, met with additional stakeholders and introduced the process to the community at large. The Mayor, Assembly members and

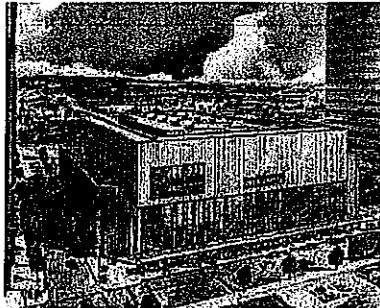
the Downtown Advisory Group (made up of a diverse group of Downtown stakeholders) convened to identify Downtown's strengths, weaknesses and key opportunities. More than 100 citizens attended the first major public workshop to help identify and articulate community members' visions and goals for Downtown.

Four other intensive planning sessions took place to develop alternative plans and strategies for Downtown; refine a concept plan and preferred strategies; draft design guidelines; and present the draft Downtown land use and development code. In March 2006 more than 90 people participated in the second community wide workshop. In May 2006, additional large work sessions were held that focused on review of and feedback on the plan and its emerging components.

The plan's inclusiveness—and the importance placed on hearing all voices and working to build consensus and alignment—will help ensure success during implementation of the plan.



INTRODUCTION



The new Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center is one of many projects that will have a big impact on Downtown's economy and overall levels of activity.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

Projects such as a new Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, expansion of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, and transformation of E Street into an active, pedestrian oriented corridor are just a few of the ongoing plans that will enhance the Downtown environment and attract more people to experience its historic and cultural resources.

A major goal of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan is to provide strategic direction for development and growth, while embracing livability and a sense of place. In doing so, the planning process coordinated with all major ongoing projects and plans. The team worked to fully integrate these initiatives, with the goal of collectively strengthening Downtown Anchorage and firmly positioning it as Alaska's civic, cultural and economic heart.

The Anchorage 2020 Plan

The Municipality initiated a series of planning efforts to provide the city, and the Downtown specifically, with a clear direction to strengthen its standing as a regional destination. The Anchorage Bowl 2020 Comprehensive Plan (The Anchorage 2020 Plan) and the Downtown Development Framework were developed through these efforts. The Anchorage 2020

Plan is the adopted policy framework for guiding growth and development within the Anchorage Bowl. The Anchorage 2020 Plan outlines policies that are designed to shape Downtown into a vibrant northern city center. Three Anchorage 2020 Plan policies and their supporting strategies focus on Downtown and have been incorporated in this plan:

Anchorage 2020 Policy #18:

Strengthen the Central Business District's role as the regional center for commerce, services, finance, arts and culture, government offices, and medium- to high-density residential development.

Anchorage 2020 Policy #19:

Locate municipal, state and federal administrative offices in the Central Business District.

Anchorage 2020 Policy #23:

Downtown is a designated major employment center.

These policies call for a year-round walkable, urban setting with attractive and diverse housing, retail, cultural facilities, art, open space and business development.

Together with the Downtown Development Framework, the Anchorage 2020 Plan sets the stage for the Downtown Comprehensive Plan and Downtown land use code. These documents further articulate

the vision for Downtown Anchorage and identify how Downtown should best enhance its civic, cultural and natural resources through coordinated guidelines and regulations for land use, zoning, economic development and design.

Title 21

The primary regulatory instrument affecting the Downtown area of Anchorage is Title 21 Land Use Planning of the Anchorage Municipal Code (Title 21). Although many sections of Title 21 are applicable to the Downtown, the principal sections are those that address the three central business zoning districts: B-2A, B-2B, and B-2C. Draft revisions of all portions of Title 21 except for these three zoning districts have been prepared as part of a separate project and, at the time of the development of this plan, are undergoing continued revision for public review. A major implementation strategy recommended in the Anchorage 2020 Plan was the revision of Title 21. The three Downtown zoning districts were not a part of the initial revision of Title 21 because municipal officials believed they should be integrated into the Downtown Comprehensive Plan project to provide a closer link between policy and implementation. Therefore, an additional document entitled Downtown land use code accompanies this plan and addresses the zoning districts within the Downtown area.

Downtown Market Study

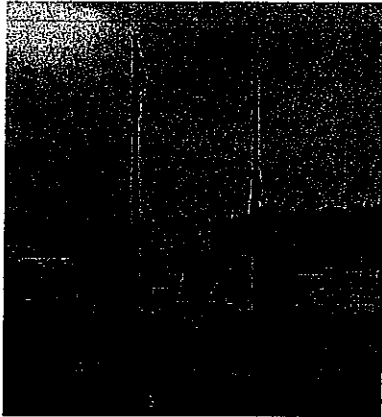
In the fall of 2005, the Municipality and the Anchorage Downtown Partnership hired a marketing and branding firm to conduct a Downtown Market Study to determine the best approach for attracting future visitors and residents to Downtown Anchorage. The impetus for this study was the fact that although Anchorage draws more visitors than any other city in Alaska, most visitors make only a brief stop in Anchorage and spend more time in other parts of Alaska.

The study analyzed what the community, visitor and business perceptions of Downtown Anchorage are today; what visitors are looking for when they visit Downtown Anchorage; and where these visitors are coming from. To gauge the perceptions of local residents, the study also analyzed who currently lives in Downtown; which segments of Anchorage's population would like to live Downtown; and which activities currently attract locals to the city center. The recommendations of this study support the goals identified in the Downtown Comprehensive Plan to continue to embrace the attraction of Downtown for all users.



Anchorage 2020/Anchorage Bowl
Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION



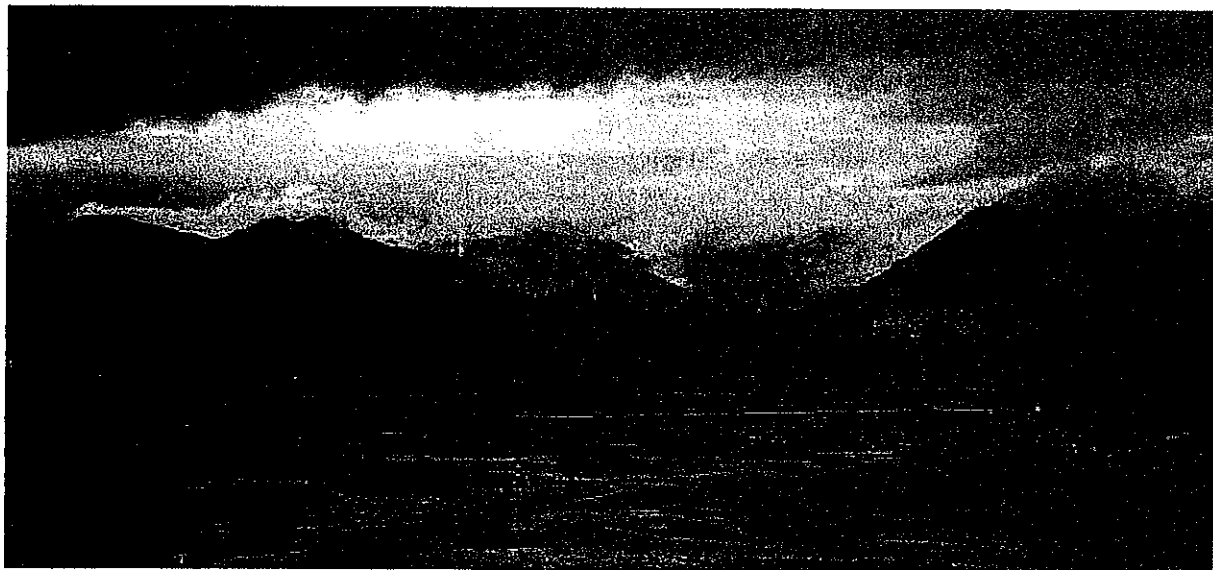
Numerous references and links to Anchorage's history are found throughout Downtown, such as this monument overlooking Ship Creek paying tribute to the historic "Tent City" (above). Picturesque Ship Creek (below) is a source of livelihood and central gathering space for the city's fishermen and outdoor recreationalists, as well as tourists.

HISTORY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

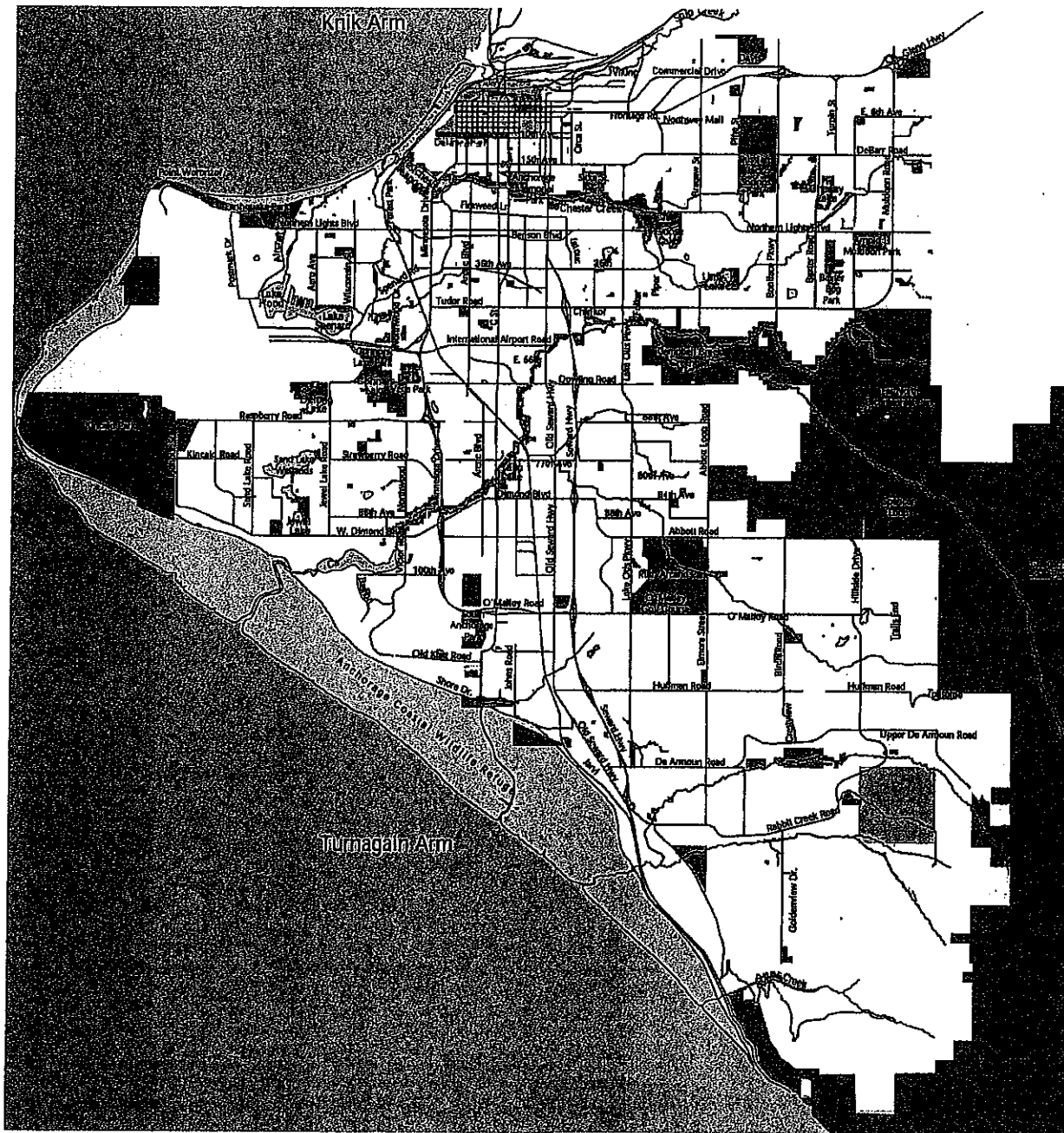
Anchorage has a rich history serving as the state's transportation and trading hub. The area surrounding Ship Creek, just north of what is considered Downtown today, became a temporary tent camp when construction of the Alaska Railroad began. In 1915, this "Tent City" was relocated to a permanent town site on the relatively flat plain above the south side of Ship Creek and in 1920, the new town became incorporated as the City of Anchorage. Growing from these early roots, Anchorage now comprises a metropolitan area of more than 270,000 people spread out across the Anchorage Bowl and in smaller communities along Knik Arm and Turnagain Arm.

Unlike most urban environments, Downtown Anchorage is surrounded by stunning views and connections to regional open space. It is also home to some of the region's most popular cultural and entertainment facilities and annual events. The historic character of Downtown reminds residents and visitors of the diverse culture and rich history of the city.

Downtown Anchorage truly serves as the heart of the region. Its diverse population, services and amenities continue to attract Alaskans and visitors from all over the world. The planning of Downtown must take this regional context and significance into account, coordinating with the interests of the entire Anchorage Bowl to best meet the needs of all.



INTRODUCTION



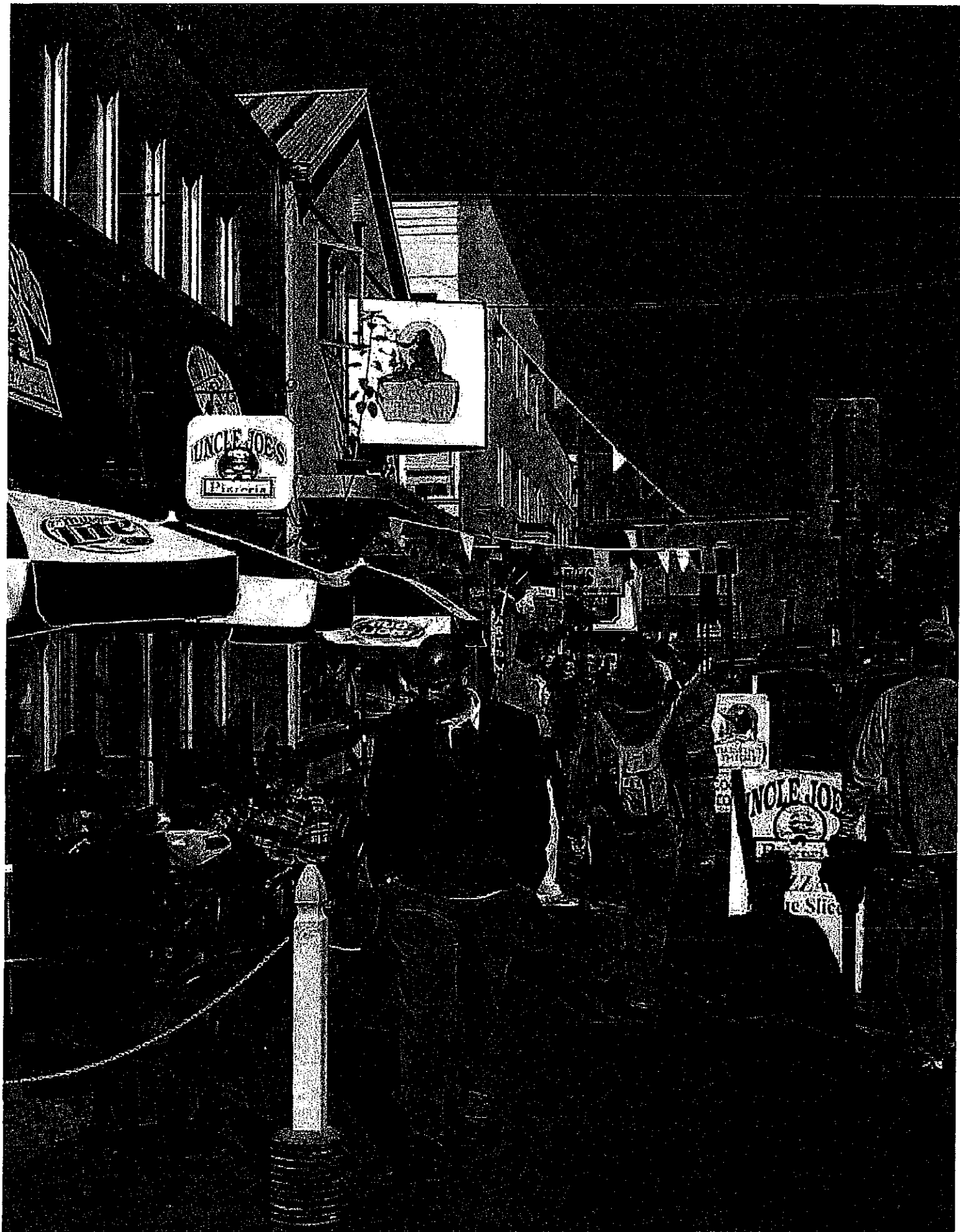
Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Major Water Bodies

- Parks and Open Space
- Mud Flats

Regional Context Diagram

- Primary Roads and Highways
- Railroad



2 downtown anchorage in 2006

Downtown Anchorage is at an exciting time in its history. Not since the major public improvements of the Project 80's era has the city core seen such activity and interest. Throughout the Downtown Study Area, housing opportunities, civic enhancements, open space and recreational improvements are shaping it into a destination for Anchorage residents and visitors alike.

To fully understand the current state of Downtown, the consultant team conducted an analysis of the area's existing conditions. The analysis helped the planning team to understand the city center's strengths and weaknesses; determine what current land use and development trends are beginning to take shape; understand how to best reconcile incongruent development and infrastructure; and identify what enhancements will have the most significant positive impact on Downtown for years to come.

This chapter first identifies the most noteworthy assets and the critical challenges that must be acknowledged as the plan moves forward. It then provides a snapshot of the Downtown market analysis, which outlines who is living, working and shopping in Downtown Anchorage today and where market opportunities exist for future development of various land uses.

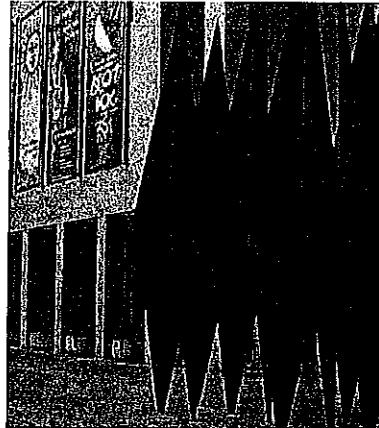
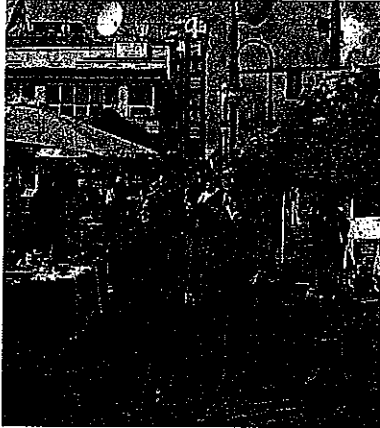
More specific descriptions of existing land use, transportation, and urban design conditions are located in the beginning of Chapters 4, 5 and 6, respectively.

A detailed existing conditions analysis of the following focus areas appears in Appendix A (Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Analysis):

- Natural, Cultural and Social
- Land Use and Development
- Urban Design
- Transportation and Circulation
- Seismic
- Economic
- Regulatory Framework

DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE IN 2006

DOWNTOWN ASSETS AND CHALLENGES



Assets

Downtown Anchorage attracts visitors and locals to experience all that it has to offer. The following assets represent the major strengths of Downtown:

Amenities and Attractions

- **Compact, walkable multi-use district** ideal for public transit, schools and affordable housing.
- **Diverse cultural, historic and entertainment amenities and venues**, including the Performing Arts Center and Art Museum, that are geared towards families and multi-cultural experiences.
- **A compact retail district** that includes a multi-block, four-story shopping mall and over 50 retail shops.
- **A cluster of popular gourmet restaurants** serving an eclectic range of traditional and ethnic cuisine.
- **A broad spectrum of excellent lodging options.**
- **A mix of shops and galleries** featuring Alaska Native and local art.
- **Many civic and government facilities**, including

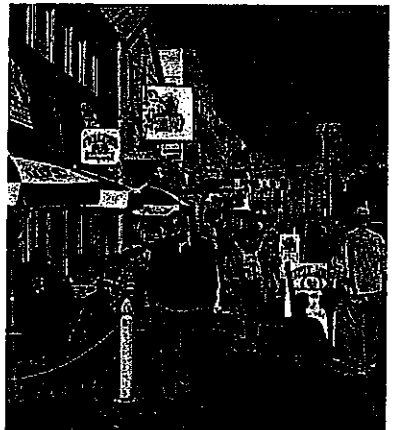
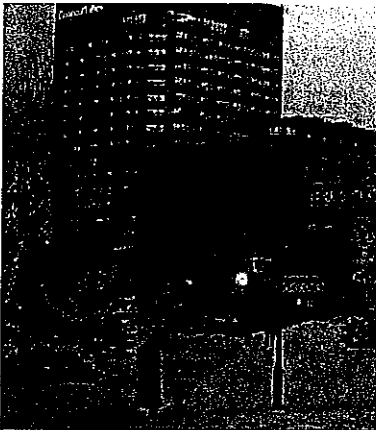
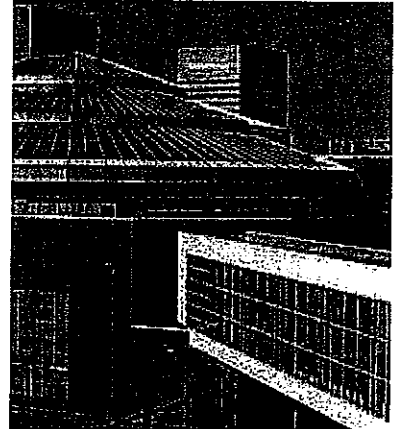
the Denaina Civic and Convention Center, State and Federal Office Buildings and Courthouses, the Alaska Center for Performing Arts, and City Hall.

Connections

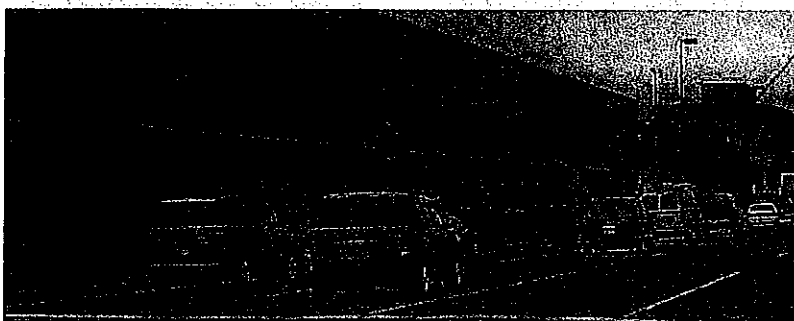
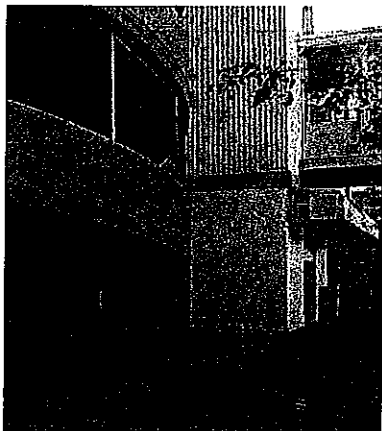
- Direct connections to all regional transportation links including transit and railroad hubs and primary traffic routes such as the Seward and Glenn Highways, A and C Street couplet, and the L and J Street/Minnesota Bypass.
- Numerous connections to adjacent neighborhoods, the Port, and the Railroad Depot via existing pedestrian and bicycle trails.

Setting

- Dramatic natural setting with direct access to Knik Arm and views to the Chugach Mountains and Alaska Range including Denali.
- Diverse mix of building types, from historic frontier homes and classic 1950s and 60s buildings to industrial warehouses near Ship Creek.
- A beautiful environment with ample open space and streetscape plantings.
- A Northern two-season climate with a true winter and a summer season with the "midnight sun."



DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE IN 2006



Challenges

In addition to Downtown's assets, the planning process identified a number of key areas in need of improvement in the city center.

Development Constraints

- The existing zoning code sets higher standards for development in the Central Business District than in other areas of the city.
- Midtown office towers and "big box" retail development compete with Downtown for commercial space.
- Housing development lacks proven incentives.
- Portions of the Downtown area are located within areas designated as potentially high susceptibility to seismically induced ground failure.

Design Conditions

- Many existing buildings are poorly designed for the northern climate or a pedestrian friendly city center. As a result shadowing, wind effects and blank walls have impacted the pedestrian realm.
- Sidewalks and crossings are not designed for winter.

conditions, resulting in areas with a poor streetscape environment.

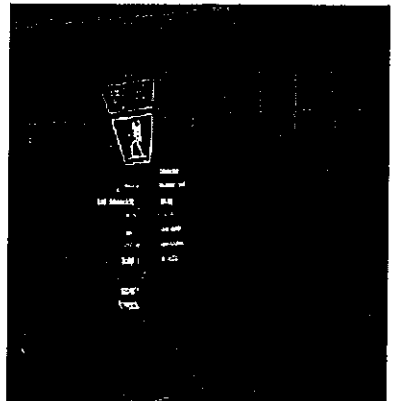
- Wide streets designed for fast-moving vehicles cut through the heart of Downtown.
- Narrow sidewalks, poor lighting, barren parking lots, and buildings with large, blank walls inhibit pedestrian safety and comfort.

Access and Circulation

- Lack of signage and wayfinding weakens connections to amenities, resources and neighborhoods.
- The current circulation system limits easy access/drop-off at primary destinations.
- Tour bus queuing and regional truck traffic create circulation issues.
- Strong perceptions persist around a lack of parking in the city center.

Social Factors

- Seasonal tourism lacks year-round vibrancy.
- There are real and perceived safety concerns due to panhandling, troubled youth and homeless populations.





The population of Downtown Anchorage is growing, especially among people between the ages of 35 and 54.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The overall Anchorage market is strong. Forty four percent of the state's residents live in the metropolitan area. Anchorage is a statewide distribution center and regional hub. More than 80 percent of the Municipality's residents live in the Anchorage Bowl. Downtown is the heart of civic and public activity and a major center of shopping and office employment.

Downtown is also the regional center for civic and cultural activities, retail, and government employment. The Anchorage Museum History and Art, Performing Arts Center, Town Square Park, Egan Convention Center, Visitors Information Center, Weekend Market, shopfront retail, two major department stores and Fifth Avenue Mall, and major hotels and restaurants all contribute to Downtown's vitality.

The industrial activities at the Alaska Railroad Corporation headquarters, rail yard and Port of Anchorage north of the Downtown core are vital transportation and commerce links in the regional and state economy.

In addition, Downtown serves as an employment center with a concentration of local, state, and federal offices and financial, legal, and architectural and engineering professional service offices.

Finally, Downtown is a popular destination for visitors and conventioners, particularly in the summer.

Demographic Overview

Anchorage reflects three population trends that will be powerful influences nationwide in the future:

- Growing number of young, diverse minority residents
- Large number of affluent baby boomers near retirement
- Growing elderly population

These trends, coupled with other economic indicators, provide information about future market potential for housing, services and facilities. The following pages provide an overview of these trends.

Population Growth

The Municipality of Anchorage grew to more than 277,000 people in 2004, comprising more than 44 percent of Alaska's total population. Over 225,000 people reside in the Anchorage Bowl.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Anchorage Bowl population grew by 1.6 percent annually, for an additional 31,560 residents between 1990 and 2000. During the same period, the Downtown Study Area's resident population grew at a faster rate than the Bowl overall, increasing by 6.2 percent annually, adding 648 residents.

The table of Population and Growth Projections on the following page presents population growth projections for the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage Bowl

and the Downtown Study Area. The Downtown study area is expected to add around 2800 new residents, growing by 3.8 percent annually, while the Anchorage Bowl is projected to grow by 1.1 percent annually for an additional 50,000 residents. The overall Municipality is projected to grow by 1.3 percent annually and add over 90,000 residents between 2002 and 2025.

Age

Age distribution provides further details about population composition, and gives an indication of whether the population of a community is generally young or old and growing or declining. In contrast to the other study areas, growth occurred for all age cohorts in the Downtown study area between 1990 and 2000. The age group that experienced the fastest growth was persons ages 35 through 54. This age group grew by 5.5 percent annually between 1990 and 2000.

Race/Ethnicity

Anchorage is an increasingly culturally diverse city. The Anchorage School District has identified more than 90 languages and dialects spoken by its student population. Racial and ethnic minorities are the fastest growing population groups in the Municipality of Anchorage. Racial/ethnic groups comprise about 28 percent of the Anchorage Bowl's population (Municipality of Anchorage, 2002). Alaska Natives and American Indians make up the largest minority, comprising over seven percent of the Municipality of Anchorage's population.

The Downtown study area has an even higher percentage of minority residents than the Anchorage Bowl in general. In 2000, about 37 percent of the people living in the Downtown Study Area were minorities. Almost 22 percent of the population was Alaska Native or American Indian, and about 10 percent of the population was African American.

Population Growth Projections 2002 to 2025			
	2002	2025	Annual percent change
Municipality of Anchorage	268,900	361,100	1.3
Anchorage Bowl	236,130	285,500	1.1
Source: Municipality of Anchorage Transportation Planning Division, 2004, and Northern Economics, Inc., 2005.			

DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE IN 2006

Employment Trends

While the Downtown area is an employment center for residents throughout the Municipality, labor force participation of residents in the study area declined between 2000 and 1990. In 1990, about 56 percent of Downtown residents 16 years and older participated in the labor force; by 2000 labor force participation had fallen to 45 percent. By contrast, 74 percent of persons 16 years and older living in the greater Municipality of

Anchorage were in the labor force.

In contrast to the larger areas of the Municipality of Anchorage including the Anchorage Bowl, the Downtown Study Area experienced an increase in its unemployment rate for residents between 1990 and 2000. The unemployment rate in the Downtown study area increased rapidly between 1990 and 2000, climbing from 11 percent in 1990 to 35 percent in 2000. In the Municipality of

Employment in Downtown Anchorage: Number of Employees by Sector	
Services (Except Health)	7,488
Government	5,664
Retail	1,687
Mining	865
Fire	650
Health Services	589
Wholesale	472
Construction	338
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	300
Manufacturing	207
School	131
University	64
Total Employees	18,455
Based on employment data from the Alaska Department of Labor for the fourth quarter of 2002. Note that boundaries for this data are close but do not match the exact study area for this plan.	

Anchorage, the unemployment rate fell slightly from 7.0 percent in 1990 to 6.8 percent in 2000, while the unemployment rate in the Anchorage Bowl fell from 7.3 percent in 1990 to 7.0 percent in 2000.

The table on the opposite page, **Employment in Downtown Anchorage**, illustrates that the city center employed more than 18,455 people as of 2002. This plan intends to make the Downtown a more attractive and affordable area for workers to live close to their jobs. Downtown attracts more retired people in comparison to other areas of the Anchorage bowl, and thus, a significant portion of Downtown residents will not need access to employment. Rather, they will likely need improved access to services.

Market Potential

The economic ability for Downtown to increase housing densities, services and amenities and employment opportunities forms the basis for mixed-use development to encourage walking and public transit usage. Creating such an integrated environment will lead toward success in Downtown, as well as positively impact Anchorage's long-term economic vitality and quality of life.

Based on predicted population and employment growth, Downtown Anchorage should be prepared to add to its existing mix of residential, retail, office, hotel and land uses in the coming years.

Sections on the following pages describe the current state of supply and demand for each land use. These conditions guided the plan's projections for future growth in these categories.

DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE IN 2006



Most of Downtown's older residential units are in the form of single family houses outside of the Downtown Core.

Residential

A key planning issue, which presents both a challenge and an opportunity, is the need for more housing and a larger resident population within the Downtown Study Area. With stable population and employment growth in Anchorage and public and private investment Downtown through the new convention center, museum expansion, parking facilities and transportation and pedestrian improvements, there are opportunities for higher density residential development and commercial and retail development, and infill and redevelopment in older areas in the Study Area. The housing market analysis reveals a number of essential findings:

- The market is strong in Anchorage, as new units are in demand and prices are rising.
- As the amount of developable land within Anchorage decreases, the feasibility of redevelopment and rehabilitation will increase.
- More than half of new housing units built in Anchorage over the past couple of years have been multifamily developments.
- Housing affordability is an issue that plagues many would-be homeowners—making multifamily dwellings and denser housing development at lower costs per unit more appealing.

Retail

Downtown Anchorage's retail sector includes the Fifth Avenue Mall with its national name brand tenants including Nordstrom and JC Penney, many locally owned shops and restaurants and the Weekend Market.

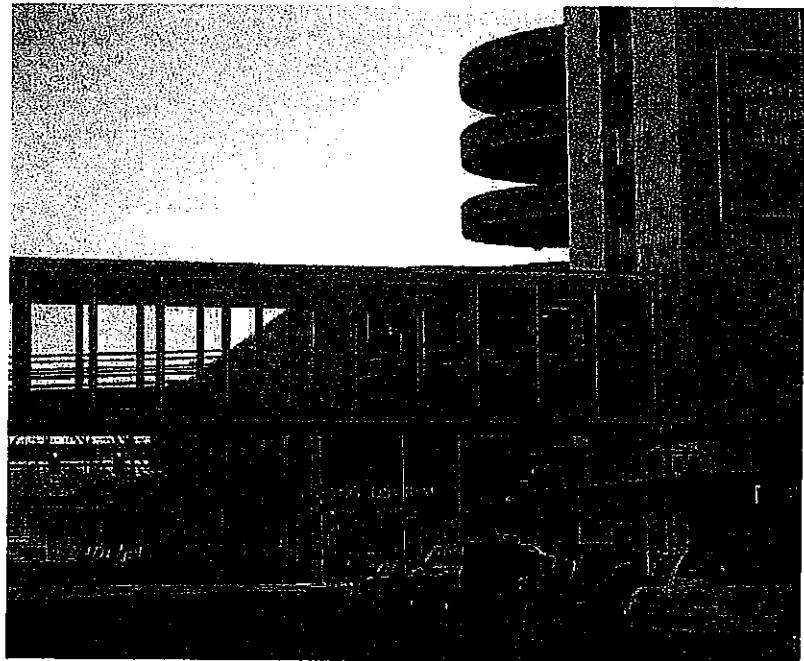
The retail sector is in transition. There has been a shift in the character of retail Downtown over the last 30 years related to seasonal tourism. Originally, retail space was general purpose and served all of the community. There has been a shift from shoe stores, jewelry and watch shops, small pharmacy, and neighborhood grocery to souvenir and t-shirt shops. These new retail stores often do not cater primarily to local residents. Downtown retail is also shifting toward more restaurants and entertainment.

The challenge is to leverage new public and private investments in facilities and infrastructure to support the Downtown retail sector, particularly storefront retail. Significant retail sector market opportunities exist with co-development with the new Civic and Convention Center, building on the strength of Fifth Avenue Mall, the Performing Arts Center and the Weekend Market.

The Fifth Avenue Mall enjoys more than 90 percent tenant occupancy and high growth in revenues (four percent average annual growth over the last five years). Its anchors, Nordstrom and JCPenney, flourish Downtown.

The exodus of retail shops from Downtown during the late 1980s was a reflection of both weakened economic conditions and the development of strip malls and indoor shopping malls in the outlying areas. However, retail establishments and the hospitality industry have returned as traffic to the Performing Arts Center and other thriving entertainment venues including museums, theaters, visitor information centers and the convention center has increased. In large measure, new venues must be designed to draw increased numbers of local residents.

The Weekend Market presents both challenges and opportunities. The Weekend Market has an estimated 668,100 annual visitors. These visitors spend approximately \$12.1 million in the Weekend Market, plus an additional \$9.3 million in other Downtown establishments. The perceived lack of parking in the city center and the impact of the Weekend Market on storefront retailers are important planning considerations. Coordination, joint marketing and physical linkages are needed so that the Weekend Market strengthens Downtown retail and creates new market niches.



Small shops and restaurants line 4th Avenue today (above top), attracting tourists and Downtown workers. JCPenney, Nordstrom and the 5th Avenue Mall serve regional shopping demands (above).

DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE IN 2006



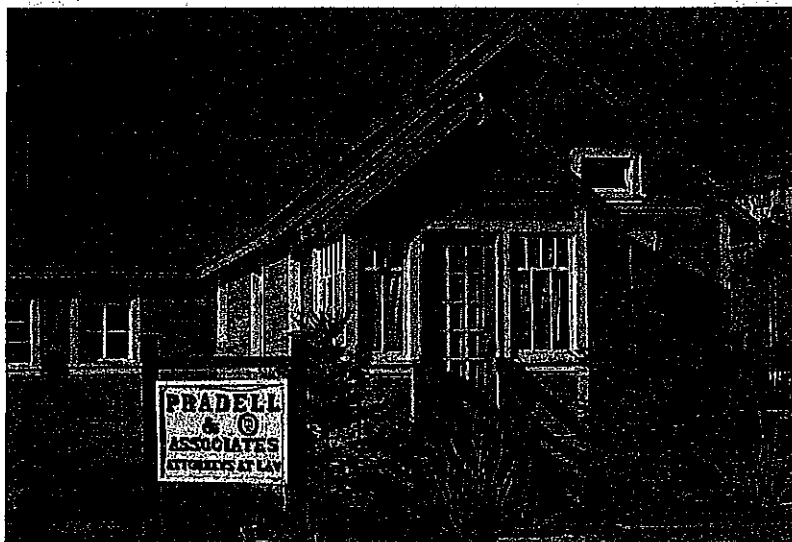
Downtown office space is primarily housed in office towers, such as the Atwood building (above), new mid-rise office complexes (above foreground) or converted single family homes (below).

Office

Over the past several years the market for commercial office space in Anchorage has been strong, as employment levels have grown and the availability of low interest loans for purchasing land and constructing office buildings has attracted investors. The growth in office space has been focused primarily in Midtown. The preference towards Midtown is related to the lower cost of land relative to Downtown, the central location, and free parking. According to Anchorage commercial real estate brokers and municipal tax assessment staff, the market for commercial real estate in the area has remained steady. No new private commercial office space development has occurred in the Downtown Study Area, although some government office space has been constructed.

Employment levels are expected to increase in Downtown but the majority of growth will likely occur in positions related to the retail industry, the hospitality industry (hotel and restaurant positions), and public service and administration positions. As a result, additional commercial office space will be needed to support the growing Anchorage workforce.

A recent trend occurring in the commercial real estate market is the redevelopment of old or less appealing buildings for use as commercial office space. This strategy may become more common as the inventory of buildable lands shrinks and the commercial real estate market stays strong. The situation may also lead to consideration of redeveloping sites in the Downtown Study Area, and a new desire for commercial office space in Downtown. Another trend impacting central business districts nationally is the development of mixed-use projects, and this has begun to occur in Downtown Anchorage. Several residential/office mixed-use projects are currently being considered in the city center. In addition to the private sector, the policy in the Anchorage 2020 Plan to locate civic and public facilities and government office in Downtown should be prioritized and implemented. To encourage these types of development, the Municipality recently completed a comprehensive parking plan update.



Hotel

Hotel and hospitality-related services have long been a staple of the Downtown Anchorage economy. The city is nine hours by air to 95 percent of the industrialized world's population, and it is the gateway into and out of the state. Almost all flights to and from Alaska go through Anchorage. In 2004, over 2.2 million people deplaned at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. Another 400,000 passed through in transit.

Besides being a transportation hub for the state, Anchorage attracts visitors to the many activities, services and destinations located in or near the Anchorage Bowl. In 2004, approximately 900,000 people visited Anchorage. The city is also growing as a desirable convention destination.

The building boom in hotels in the Downtown study area and greater Anchorage suggests a robust market and steadily growing demand for hotel rooms. The number of people visiting Anchorage and subsequently the hotel occupancy is higher during the summer months than the winter months; in June through August occupancy rates are typically 85 to 90 percent while in the winter time occupancy rates are 45 to 60 percent.

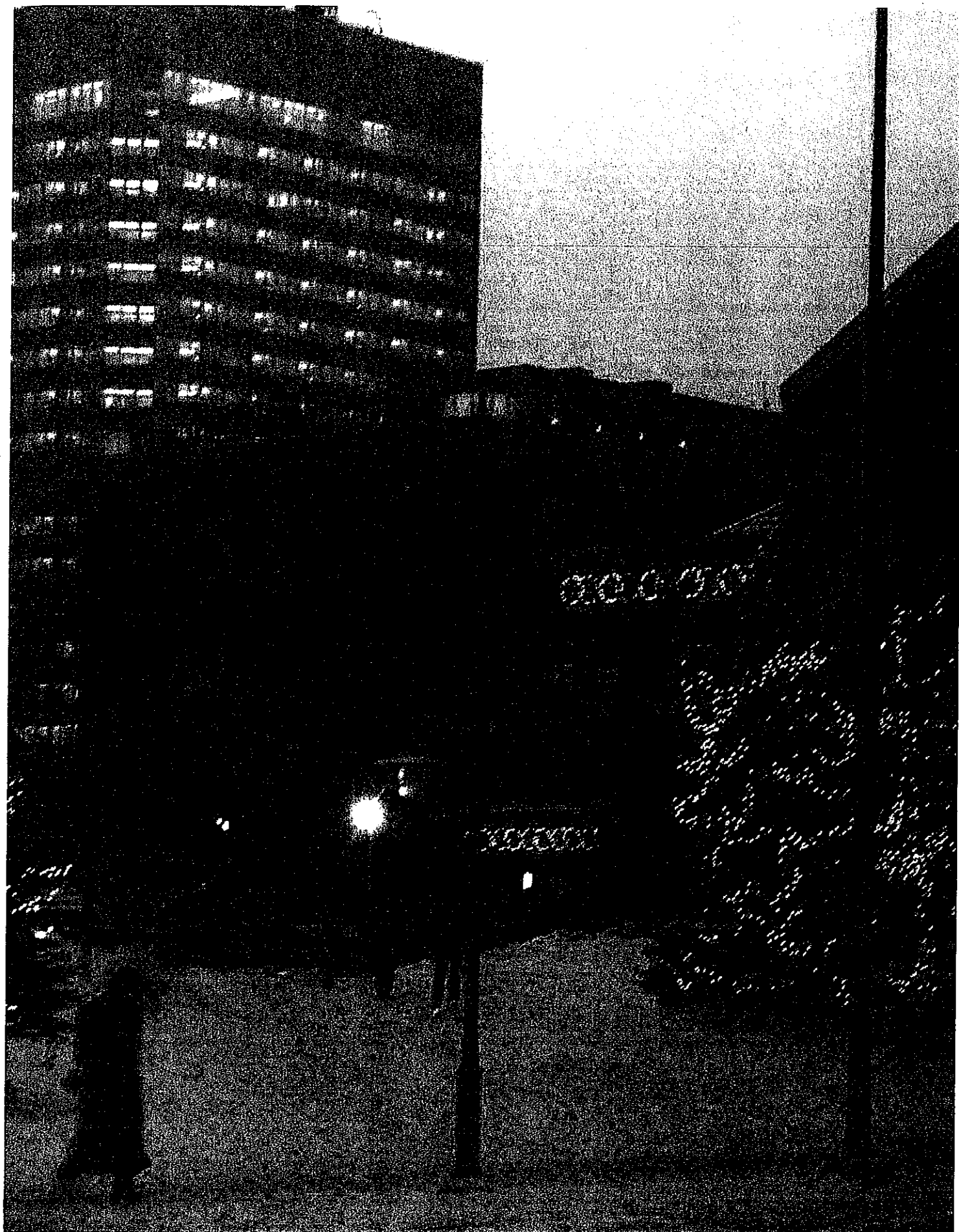
Anchorage has a variety of hotels located throughout the city, but they are largely concentrated in three areas: Downtown, Midtown around A and C streets; and near the International

Airport. All of these areas are a relatively short drive from each other (approximately 10 to 15 minutes) and many business and independent travelers do not base their decisions solely on geographic location.

Downtown Anchorage offers a variety of hotel choices, from high-end, service oriented hotels that offer many amenities, to hotels that are more basic in their services and are less expensive. Currently, there are 21 hotels and 3,407 hotel rooms in the Downtown study area.

A large convention or meeting at the convention center complex, which includes the Egan Center and the new Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, can fill Downtown hotels with attendees, sending other Anchorage visitors to rooms in Midtown and the airport area. There are four hotels within walking distance of the convention center that can offer blocks of rooms and have enough space within the hotel to hold meetings and conventions. The Anchorage Convention and Visitors' Bureau anticipates that the new convention center complex will create demand for approximately 1,000 new hotel rooms in Downtown.

For more information, see Appendix A: Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Analysis.

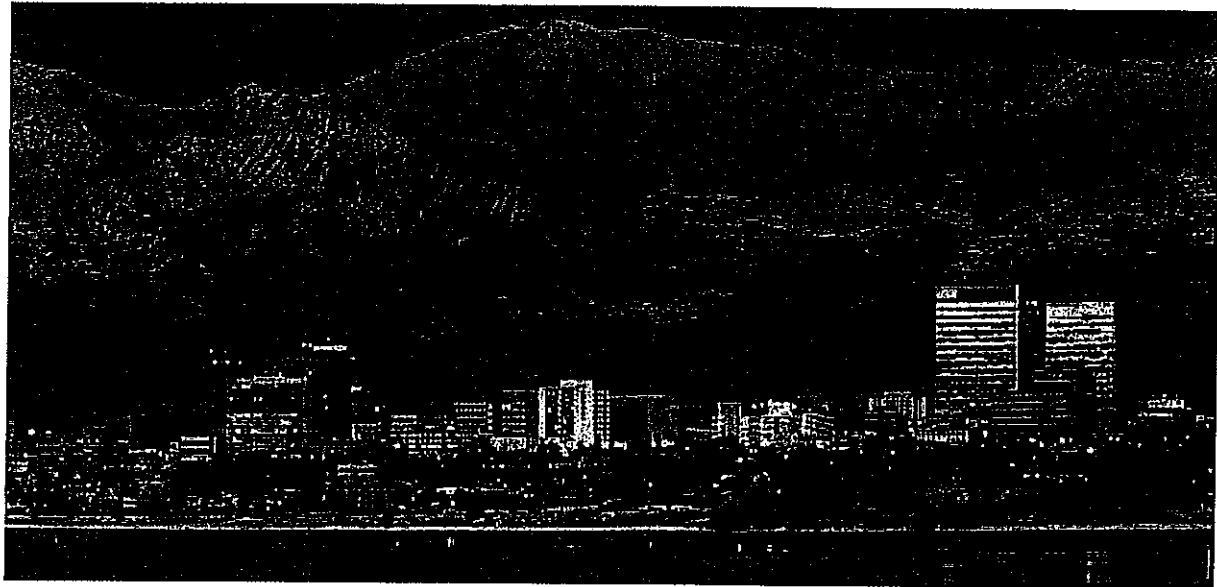


3 strategy for downtown revitalization

Anchorage's existing conditions—its unique setting, economic and social environment and built realm—set the context and foundation for envisioning the future of Downtown.

The vision and strategies must work together—while leveraging recent investments and optimizing limited resources—to create a **strong, implementable strategy for revitalization.**

This chapter first articulates the vision for Downtown Anchorage and describes the overarching goals that must be met to realize this vision. It then provides an overall framework of strategies for improving the entire Downtown environment.



STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE

Anchorage 2020 Plan

In recent years, the community participated in the visioning process for the greater region as part of the Anchorage 2020 Plan. While focused on the entire Anchorage Bowl, the vision principles set forth by the Anchorage 2020 Plan also serve as a foundation for planning Downtown's future. The Anchorage 2020 Plan Vision is highlighted below.

This Vision statement provides general guidance for all Anchorage 2020 policies, including the policies related to Downtown discussed on Page 4.

Downtown Comprehensive Plan

The Downtown Comprehensive Plan articulates a vision and set of overarching goals that are specific to the city center. The vision was created through discussions with a wide range of community members and local stakeholders, including residents, business owners, property owners, developers, the Anchorage Downtown Partnership, and multiple other agencies.

Cultivating a strong, clear vision specific to Downtown is an important milestone in setting its future course. The overarching goals guide the path to achieving that vision. These concepts and direction are illustrated on the following pages.

Anchorage 2020 Plan Vision Statement

Anchorage is:

- A diverse, compassionate community where each individual is valued, and children, families and friendships flourish
- A thriving community built in harmony with our natural resources and majestic setting
- A thriving, sustainable, broad-based economy, supported by an efficient urban infrastructure
- A safe and healthy place to live where daily life is enriched by a wealth of year-round recreational and educational opportunities
- A caring, responsive government that is accessible and equitable for all its citizens
- An active learning community with abundant cultural amenities

Downtown Vision

Downtown Anchorage is a vibrant Northern city center that serves all of Alaska and welcomes the world. Its unparalleled connections to nature and open spaces and its stunning views make Downtown like no other urban environment.

Residents and visitors are attracted to Downtown's innovative urban design, creative use of sustainable technologies, and celebration of Alaska's unique culture.

Downtown embraces a diverse concentration of people, employment, shopping, entertainment, government services, cultural facilities and events, public spaces and housing.

Downtown's comfortable and exciting pedestrian environment, inviting open spaces, events for families and children and mix of cultural and entertainment facilities offer a refined urban living experience in the grandest of settings.

Overarching Goals

1



Create a Downtown for All
Celebrate Anchorage's diversity by offering amenities, goods, attractions and services that appeal to persons of varying ages, backgrounds and incomes. Downtown crowds should be a reflection of the community.

2



Provide More Housing Downtown
Make Downtown a great place to live by developing diverse housing options and resident-serving amenities that will boost commerce, build community and create round-the-clock vibrancy.

3



Jump-Start Development
Coordinate and leverage the substantial public sector investment of major planned projects to catalyze private development.

STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

4



Improve Connectivity

Link amenities, housing, office space, retail and natural resources to enhance Downtown's sense of place and connectivity among destinations. Strengthen inter-modal connections, making it easier for Downtown pedestrians to use Anchorage's air, rail, bus and ferry terminals.

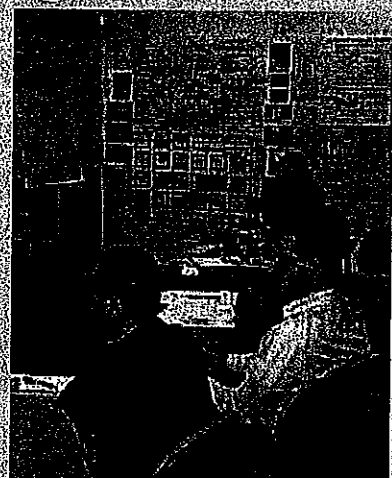
5



Activate the Ground Floor Environment

Ensure that the ground floors of all buildings and sidewalk treatment engage pedestrians and create an active, inviting, urban experience with a comfortable, safe and vibrant pedestrian environment year-round.

6



Provide a Clear, Sensible Regulatory Framework

Establish codes and guidelines to ensure that new development achieves the vision for Downtown while providing clarity and flexibility for the development community.

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Strategy Framework on the opposite page provides a conceptual structure for achieving the Downtown Vision and Overarching Goals. The Strategy Framework prioritizes action categories into a three-tiered hierarchy.

Land Uses

This hierarchy identifies primary and secondary land uses, represented in the blue circles (right). The primary land uses are most important for achieving the vision and goals for Downtown Anchorage and are considered essential to Downtown's development. The secondary land uses augment the primary uses, providing Downtown with distinct destinations, services, activities and workplaces. Without this mix, the goal of achieving a vibrant, mixed-use urban environment will be compromised.

Development Projects and Opportunities

The next tier of Downtown's Strategy Framework is comprised of Development Projects and Opportunities. Each of the Catalytic Development Sites and Opportunity Sites will be developed with a mix of the Primary Land Uses. Each yellow rectangle (right) represents a Catalytic Development Site that should be prioritized for development or redevelopment due to its prime location and potential to strengthen the urban intensity

within the Downtown Core. These sites are described in more detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.

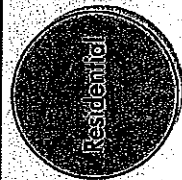
Each red rectangle (right) represents a Catalytic and Opportunity Site within Downtown. These sites are either projects that are currently in the planning process, are already under construction, or have been identified to have potential for development or redevelopment. Their locations are noted on the Strategy Diagram on page 33.

Supporting Strategies

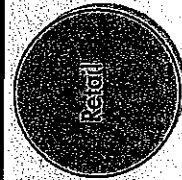
The third tier of the Framework is made up of Supporting Strategies. These strategies are identified to support development of the Primary Land Uses, aid upcoming Development Projects and Opportunities and provide the fabric to knit these individual sites together into a comprehensive Downtown environment. Each of these strategies is addressed in this Plan. The strategies in the first column are addressed in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development. The strategies in the second column are addressed in Chapter 5: Transportation and Circulation. The strategies in the third column are addressed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6: Urban Design. Lastly, the strategies in the fourth column are addressed in Chapter 7: Program Strategies.

Together, these levels provide a framework for addressing issues and ensuring implementation of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

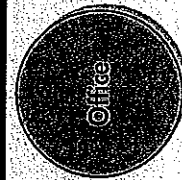
Primary Land Uses



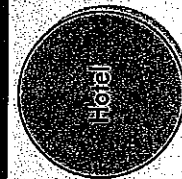
Neighborhood services,
amenities and retail
Range of housing types
Mixed-use buildings



Local-based (year-round)
Tourism
Destination-oriented
Grocery store or market



Municipal agencies
Federal/State government
Private sector



Convention Center
Tourism
Accommodations

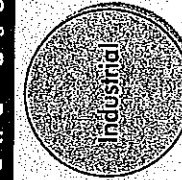
Secondary Land Uses



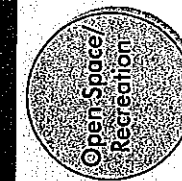
Arts and cultural venues/
galleries/theaters
Regular events/festivals
Restaurants/bars/clubs
Youth-oriented activities



Municipal, state and
federal facilities
Historic landmarks and uses



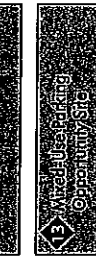
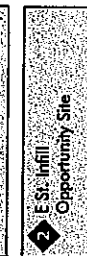
Shipping and rail activity
Fishing
Port services
Live/work buildings



Pedestrian/bicycle
connections
Parks
Natural resources

Development Projects and Opportunities

Catalytic Development Sites



Supporting Strategies

Market Strategies



Transportation and Circulation Strategies



Urban Design Strategies



Program Strategies



Strategy Framework

STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

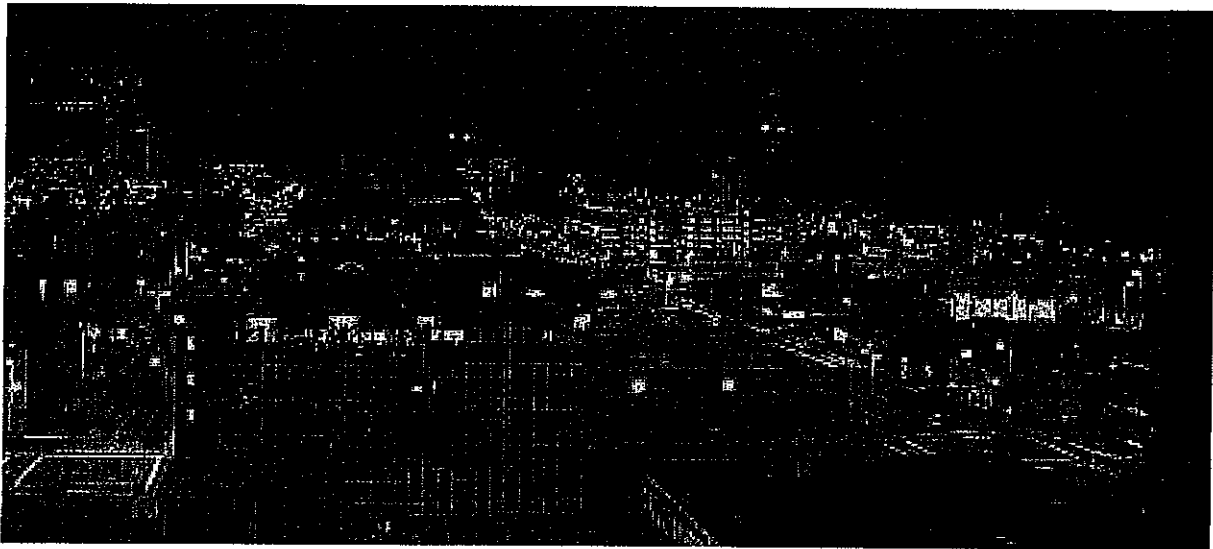
STRATEGY DIAGRAM

The Strategy Diagram on page 33 illustrates the key land uses, adjacencies and interconnections identified as most important for achieving the vision and goals for Downtown. It outlines the relationships among key housing and mixed-use districts, development projects, opportunity sites, streetscape improvements and other physical and perceptual linkages between them. In short, the Strategy Diagram is the visual blueprint or "road map" for Downtown's future development.

The Downtown Study Area encompasses a substantial amount of land, and the majority of recent public and private investments are focused in a Downtown Core within the larger area. These investments must be

enhanced and interconnected. Meanwhile, smaller scale improvements to the public realm in the surrounding Downtown sub-districts will continue to enhance the private investment already occurring on a site by site basis. The concentration of major investments will create a boost of new energy in the core, which can catalyze revitalization throughout the Study Area and into adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

The following pages describe the Strategy Diagram and its key elements in greater detail.



The strategy for Downtown takes advantage of the cultural and commercial momentum, public and private investments and development opportunities within the study area.

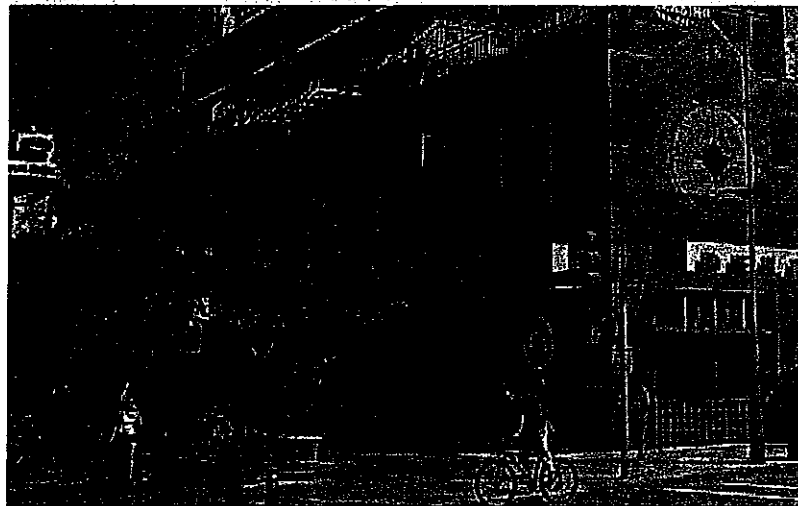
STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Downtown Study Area/ Mixed-Use Core

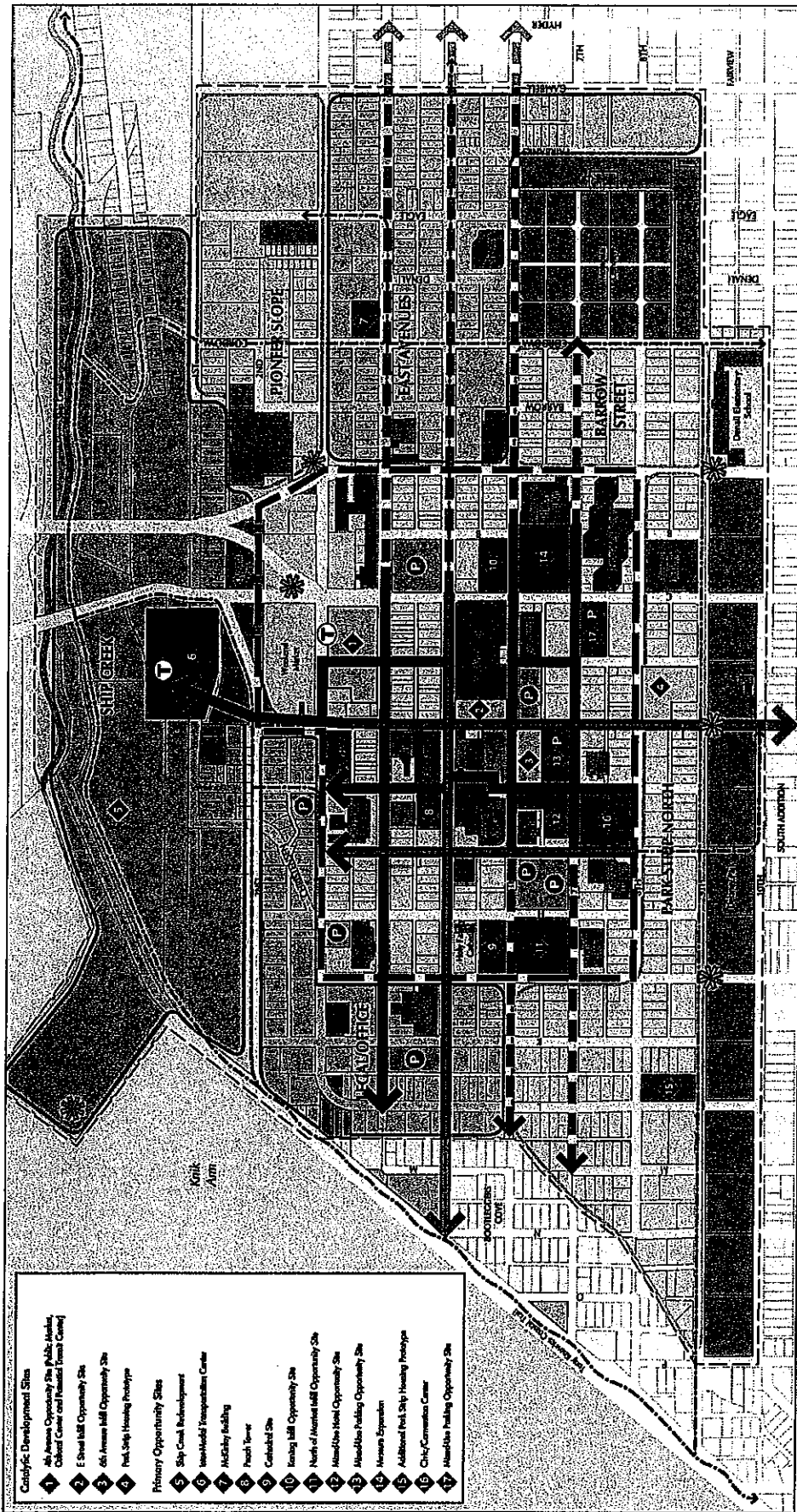
The Downtown Study Area extends from the east edge of Boorlegger's Cove to Gambell Street, and from 10th Avenue to the southern banks of Ship Creek. In initial implementation phases, prioritized improvements should be concentrated within the mixed-use civic, office and commercial-oriented Downtown Core. This will build synergy among new and planned development projects, both public and private, and focus finite resources to create a stable and dynamic city center. While private development interest is encouraged throughout Downtown, major public improvements outside of the core in the adjacent mixed-use districts should occur in subsequent phases. **Prioritization, concentration and strong linkages are the keys to Downtown's revitalization.**

Mixed-Use Districts

Two mixed-use districts are identified within the Downtown Study Area. These districts complement each other and work in conjunction with the focused Downtown Core. Both have their own strategy, character, areas of concentration and preferred development guidelines and prototypes. The specific nature of these districts is described in detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.



Street level environments created by mixed-use development are energized day and night with commercial activity on the ground floor and residential or office space above.



Strategy Diagram

STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

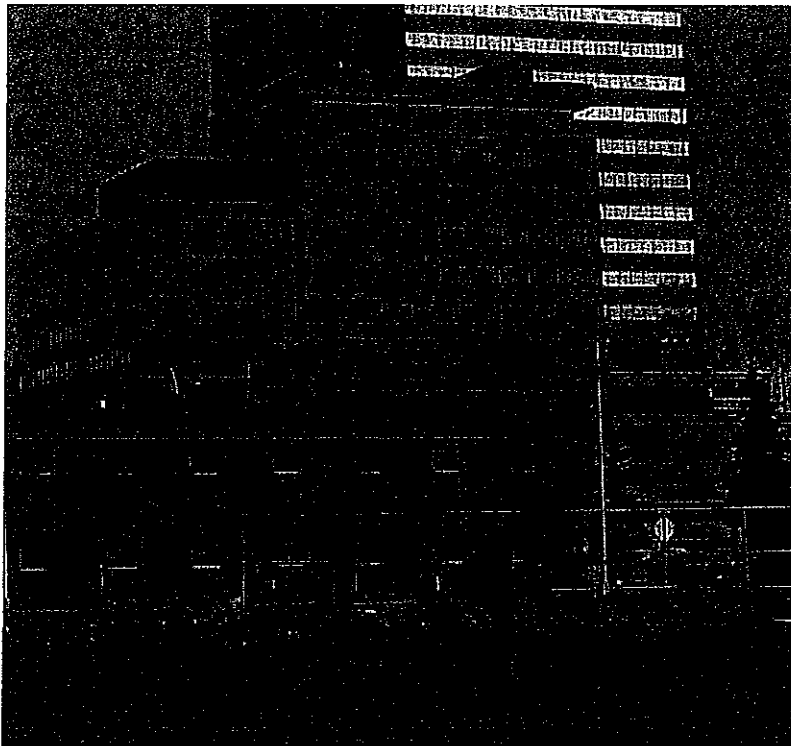
STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Catalytic Development Sites

Four sites are identified as Catalytic Development opportunities because of their potential to add vibrancy to Downtown and leverage further development in the immediate surroundings. Each project will provide the city center with new energy, encourage pedestrian walkability and fit within the overall land use strategy.

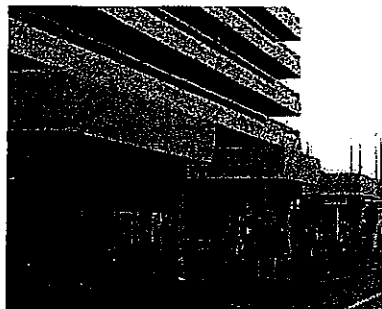
The sites are highlighted on the Strategy Diagram and described in detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.

More than ten additional Opportunity Sites, also noted on the Strategy Diagram, are other important projects or sites in various stages of planning or construction.



Delaney Park is a vital resource that Downtown can leverage for its recreational and open space assets, potential for facilitating connectivity, and ability to catalyze future mixed-use residential development adjacent to the park.

STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



One of Downtown's actively used parking structures is located above the People Mover Station, just west of City Hall, serving municipal employees and the public.

Transit Stations

The current Downtown Transit Center at 6th Avenue and H Street is the hub for citywide bus service. Two options are under consideration—refurbishing the current site or potentially developing a new transit center located on 3rd Avenue across from the Weekend Market. See Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development for further discussion.

In addition, an intermodal train terminal planned for Ship Creek will serve tourists, other visitors, and possibly commuters from the Mat-Su Valley. Connections between the Transit Center and rail terminal will be provided via an escalator between Ship Creek and convenient Downtown walkways.

Parks and Open Space

The areas shown in green on the Strategy Diagram are existing parks and open space within the Downtown Core. They illustrate the tremendous resources that Downtown already possesses. At least two of these parks have been identified for improvements: Town Square and Delaney Park. The connection between these parks will be enhanced by the E Street corridor project, as well as trail and pathway improvements.

Strategies for maintaining, protecting and enhancing Downtown's system of open spaces appear in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.



Peratrovich Park sits adjacent to the old City Hall building and Visitor Center, which makes it ideal for a central gathering space and outdoor performances.

Pedestrian Connections

A successful Downtown requires a safe, attractive and hospitable pedestrian environment. Anchorage's climate requires an extra effort to accommodate and promote pedestrian circulation and comfort during the spring, fall and winter months.

The Strategy Diagram distinguishes between primary and secondary connections in an effort to focus infrastructure investment in the core area where there is anticipated the greatest concentration of activity and highest usage. These connections will be improved through a number of streetscape enhancements discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Such enhancements include wider sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting and other streetscape amenities. Once enhanced primary connections are established, secondary pedestrian connections will be improved between the Downtown Core and other city center districts.

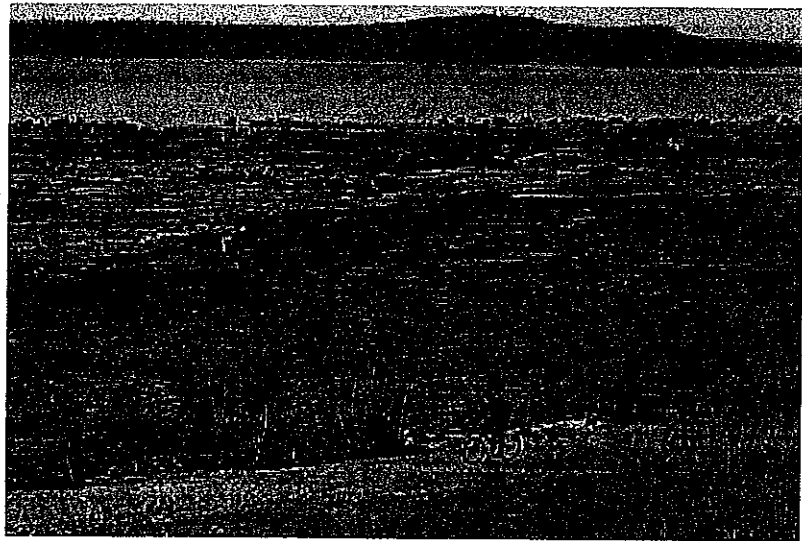
Trails/Connections

Two of Anchorage's most extensive trails enter into the Downtown Study Area: Ship Creek Trail and the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. There are plans underway to connect them along the tidal flats. These trails should be linked to the pedestrian connections to best integrate non-vehicular circulation throughout Downtown. Most importantly, these trails will directly link pedestrians and bicyclists to the transit stations, parks and open space, as well as Downtown's cultural sites,

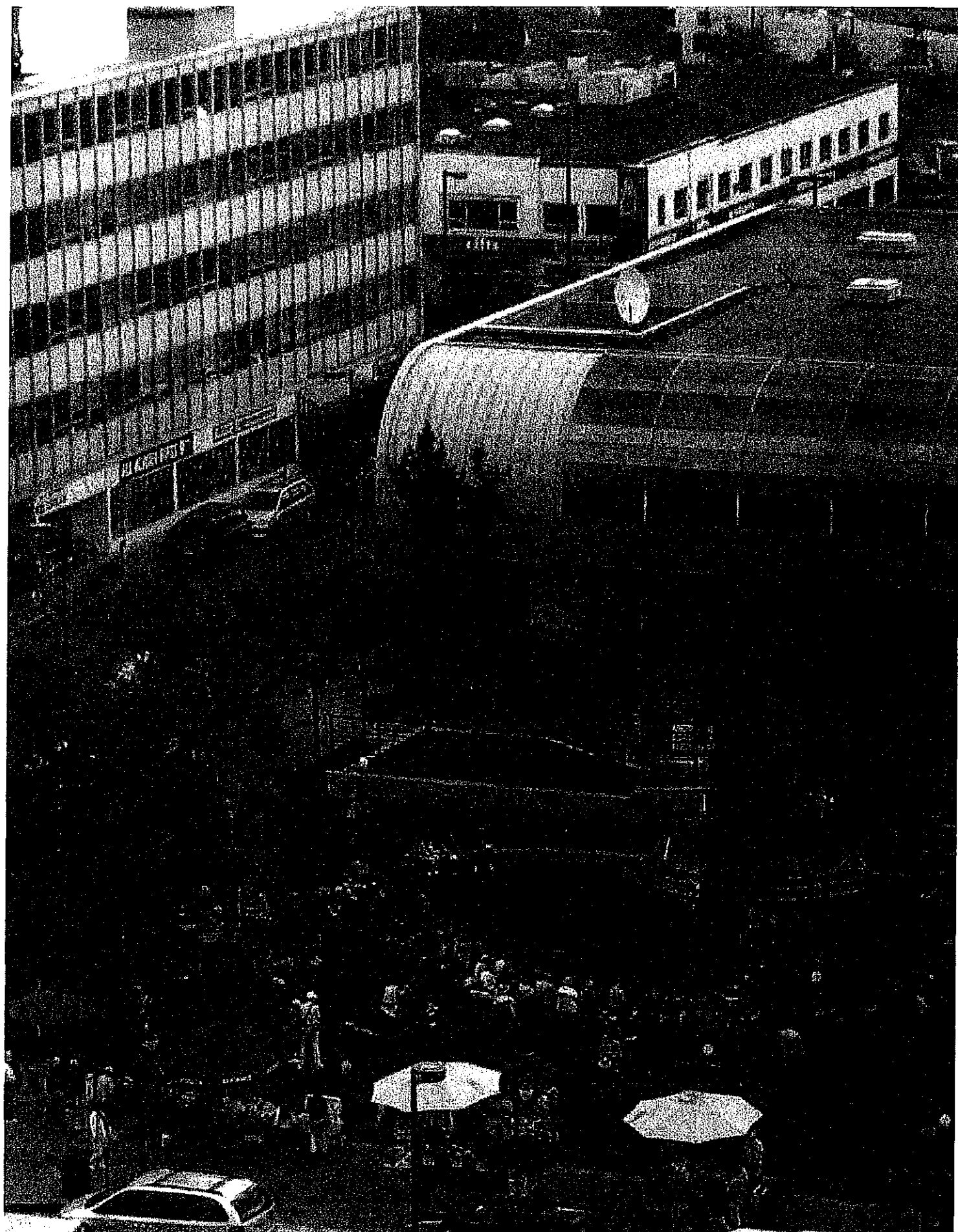
facilities and neighborhoods.

Parking Structures

As Downtown grows and densifies and land values increase, many existing parking lots will be developed with other uses. Mixed-use garages and underground structures will be necessary to accommodate parking for existing and new uses. Existing and new public parking structures should be distributed throughout Downtown in order to provide easy access and connectivity for residents, workers and visitors.



Wildlife sightings are commonplace right next to Downtown (above top). The Coastal Trail provides direct bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the city center.



4 land use and economic development

OVERVIEW

Downtown Anchorage's future as a vibrant and successful center is dependent on its overall economic health and growth potential.

A people-oriented, vibrant, 24/7 experience is the desired future for Downtown Anchorage. To attain that energy and vibrancy, Downtown needs to include a mix of land uses that caters to a variety of people and income levels. The range and types of retail amenities are also critical. These amenities should provide Downtown residents with much-needed facilities, such as schools, fresh food and convenient services. They should be designed with the highest regard to aesthetics, seismic safety and the northern climate.

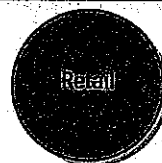
This chapter first provides an understanding of the existing Downtown land uses, as well as projected future demand for these uses. It then recommends strategies necessary to capture economic investment and locate development appropriately. Finally, the chapter identifies the special development and land use character that should be achieved within each Downtown district.

Four primary land use categories are identified below for Downtown Anchorage. These vital drivers for growth should be retained and enhanced in the coming years. Four existing secondary land uses are also identified. They augment the primary land uses to serve Anchorage's residents and employees and create a truly diverse, integrated place.

Primary Land Uses



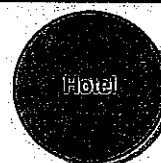
Neighborhood services, amenities and retail
Range of housing types
Mixed-use buildings



Local-based (year-round)
Tourism
Destination-oriented
Grocery store or market



Municipal agencies
Federal/State government
Private sector



Convention Center
Tourism
Accommodations

Secondary Land Uses



Arts and cultural venues/galleries/theaters
Regular events/festivals
Restaurants/bars/clubs
Youth-oriented activities



Municipal, state and federal facilities
Historic landmarks and uses



Shipping and rail activity
Fishing
Port services
Live/work buildings



Pedestrian/bicycle connections
Parks
Natural resources

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

A statewide distribution center and regional hub, Anchorage is the centerpiece of Alaska's commerce and economic activity. Downtown Anchorage plays an important role for both the city and state, providing civic facilities, public activity, shopping and employment options. There is opportunity to leverage Downtown's existing land uses and supplement its underused areas with new development that a) meets the performance targets that Downtown can achieve and b) provides workers, residents and visitors with a balanced mix of land uses that serve them.

The following key considerations are made for the four primary land uses: residential, retail, office and hotel. Then several land use goals and strategies are outlined on the following pages to enhance these primary land uses.

Residential

- Housing development is a key opportunity for revitalizing Downtown.
- There is a slow but steady population growth.
- National trends show an increasing desire for "urban" lifestyles.
- Downtown home values are increasing.
- Downtown needs additional amenities to support housing.

Retail

- Downtown is one of Alaska's primary retail, culture and entertainment destination.
- Downtown faces retail competition with other areas.

Office

- Downtown is competing with other areas for office development.
- Downtown should build upon its strength as a hub of government offices, amenities and density.

Hotel

- Though many tourists arrive in Anchorage, few spend more than one or two nights in Downtown.
- The new convention center will support additional hotel rooms.

Primary residential, retail, office, and hotel land uses will be bolstered through further development of **secondary cultural/entertainment and civic/government land uses**. More destinations with special goods, services or activities will attract people to the city center. Although Downtown Anchorage evolved from the initial construction of the Alaska Railroad, the Port and associated industrial uses, their roles have diminished in importance to Downtown vitality compared with other economic sectors. These uses should continue to be supported where appropriate. Maintaining and enhancing **open space and recreation** areas will also be necessary to attract and retain residents.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The land use and economic development goals outline the physical framework for enhancing Downtown Anchorage.

Seven primary goals (right) guide Downtown's land use and development patterns.

Leverage new public and private investment

Encourage land use patterns and development that connect new public and private investments. Commercial and civic activity associated with new development should complement existing assets and jumpstart new investment.

Increase housing options and accommodate diverse income levels

Provide incentives to encourage Downtown residential development that dramatically increases urban living opportunities for multiple income levels and household types.

Attract government and private offices to Downtown

In the face of competition from outlying areas such as Midtown, create a dynamic urban environment with adequate facilities to retain and attract office uses.

Ensure seismically safe Development

Minimize risks to the public for any future development proposed in seismic hazard zones #4 and #5 (see Seismic Hazards Diagram, page 143).

Ensure that all new Downtown development enhances the pedestrian experience

Encourage mixed-use development with active and engaging ground floor uses to ensure that Downtown offers a vibrant urban experience unique to Alaska.

Increase the intensity of Anchorage's Downtown Core

Fill the heart of Anchorage with greater density of employment, residences, retail stores and cultural and entertainment venues, to create a cohesive central city district. Identify each sub-district of Downtown so each can further develop its own unique character, identity and function, and they complement, rather than compete with, one another.

Maintain and enhance open space

As Downtown densifies and develops, it is critical that the hierarchy of parks and open space is maintained to accommodate new residents and workers.

Recommendations

A series of recommendations are outlined in the following pages in order to meet the land use and economic development goals.

1. Meet Growth Performance Targets

The existing conditions analysis included an assessment of supply and demand for the primary land uses vital for Downtown's evolution into a more active urban center with core office, business, arts and cultural facilities, as

well as higher residential densities. The table below reflects medium to high demand projections for these land uses in the Downtown Study Area for the short-, mid- and long-term development forecast for 2010, 2015 and 2025.

These targets are based on aggressive employment forecasts from the Municipality's Long Range Transportation Plan. These forecasts have been converted to housing units and commercial square footage based on assumptions regarding household size and commercial space per employee. Taken together, these projections represent aggressive, yet plausible assumptions for future growth potential in Downtown. The actual amount of development will depend in part upon the interconnections of these land uses, and public and private investment.

The goal of this plan is to accommodate and encourage up to 4,000 housing units, which is more than the housing demand projection. This is because a demand projection is based in part on current and historical trends. Rather than reflect passive acceptance of current forecasts, this plan prioritizes growth in Downtown, recommending development incentives and land use regulations that will make housing easier to build Downtown. The plan also recognizes that Anchorage's demographic and economic indicators continue to shift in favor of Downtown living. Therefore, if the market opportunity arises, Downtown can and should have the capacity to accommodate up to 4,000 housing units by the year 2025.

2010 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2010*
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	350 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	110,500 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	300,000 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	75 rooms

*Numbers reflect total new development to 2010.

2015 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2015**
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	1,200 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	185,000 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	1,257,500 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	375 rooms

**Numbers reflect total new development to 2015.

2025 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2025***
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	2,500 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	270,000 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	2,425,000 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	1,000 rooms

***Numbers reflect total new development to 2025.

2. Establish Economic Development Strategies

Making Downtown accessible and attractive for residents and visitors throughout the year will require progressive land use planning, design guidelines, development and financial incentives and accompanying land use regulations. The following set of strategies work together with Downtown's land use regulations to intensify land use by developing vacant and under-used parcels; strengthen Downtown's markets for residential, retail, commercial and hotel activities; and catalyze new market niches.

Develop incentives for a diverse mix of housing types Downtown, including affordable and market rate for-sale and rental units.

- Ensure that the zoning in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods facilitates multifamily residential development, and that live/work space is also allowed.
- Offer incentives, through AHFC, Fannie Mae, Anchorage Housing Authority and others, to build public/private partnerships with developers to provide affordable housing, senior housing, housing for special needs people and market rate rental housing.
- Encourage mixed-income housing developments with units for lower-, middle- and upper-income households in the same development.
- Consider the use of tax increment financing and/or tax abatement as revenue sources to reduce develop-



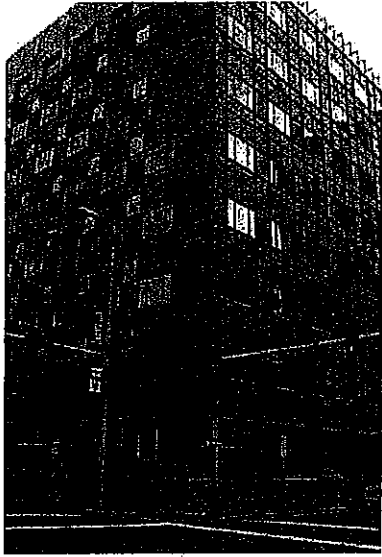
Downtown Vancouver is a good example of a city that balances high-rise development with low-rise townhomes and offices. A portion of new units are affordable.

- ment costs (such as for structured parking) or increase unit values to enhance residential feasibility.
- Develop land assembly and site control strategies.
- Identify a specific publicly owned property to serve as a model for public/private housing development, solicitation of development proposals and provision of creative financing techniques to enable the development.
- Identify other publicly owned properties that may be appropriate for housing development.



Medium density family and senior housing should be encouraged in Downtown's mixed-use residential sub-districts.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The location of City Hall on 6th Avenue (above top) and the Federal Building on 4th Avenue (above) establish a base of government offices and civic facilities Downtown.

Develop a targeted retail recruitment and retention strategy.

- Identify and pursue opportunities for neighborhood retail such as a small grocery store, drug store and/or other services for current and future Downtown residents.
- Identify and pursue additional anchor retail tenants such as another department store and/or cineplex, that can strengthen Downtown's drawing power.
- Identify and pursue retailers that appeal to vacation and convention visitors, including restaurants and "one-of-a-kind" shops in addition to more typical souvenir stores.
- Encourage streetscape and storefront façade improvements, in addition to active ground floor retail uses, to enhance Downtown's comparative advantage as a unique shopping environment.
- Develop coordination, joint marketing and physical linkages between the Weekend Market and Downtown retailers.
- Expand retail services to serve residents and tourists year-round.
- Require ground-floor retail in new buildings in some locations (e.g., 4th and 5th avenues), while allowing it in others (e.g., 9th Avenue).
- Co-locate retail space with new parking garage development.

Strengthen the hub of civic facilities, offices and employment Downtown.

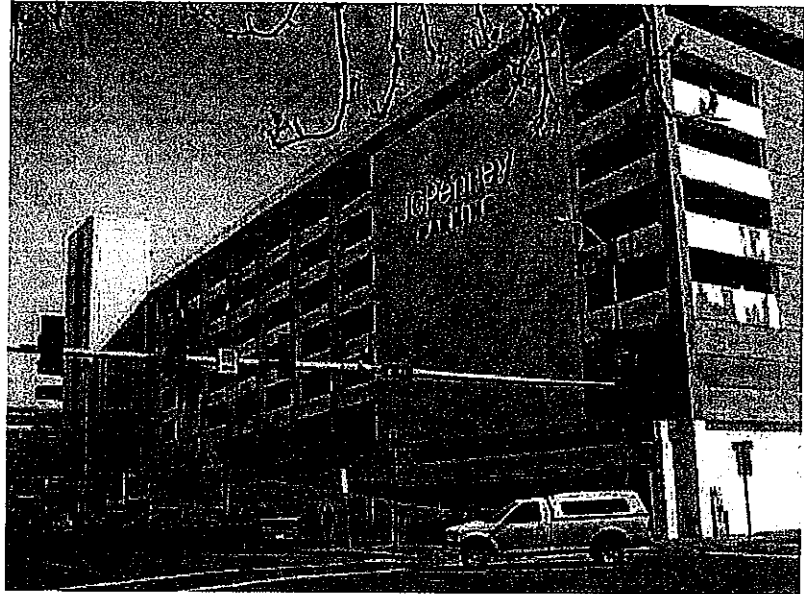
- Make Downtown a priority location for government administrative employment and services.
- Concentrate on attracting and retaining Municipality of Anchorage offices and services, specifically.
- Develop a targeted office recruitment program aimed at identifying and attracting corporate employers, such as native corporations.
- Leverage public and private partnerships with assistance from the Anchorage development authority.
- Seek to reduce development costs (e.g. for structured parking) through tax incentives or other means to enhance office feasibility.
- Encourage office developers to utilize the Downtown parking exemption to enhance the feasibility of development, and ensure that other public parking (publicly or privately owned) is adequate to serve a growing employment base.
- Co-locate office development with new parking garage development.
- Consider parking provisions that offer parking providers with incentives to share parking resources.
- Support a new Downtown location for the transit center.
- Provide capital improvements to the surrounding streetscape environment along with marketing Downtown amenities to employers.
- Establish incentives to make rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of older properties, underused parcels and surface parking lots cost effective.

Increase Downtown's hotel supply and occupancy rates.

- Increase hotel supply to accommodate large conventions.
- Increase the year-round visitor occupancy by marketing Downtown as a winter destination.
- Identify specific publicly and privately owned properties that may be appropriate for hotel development, and solicit hotel developers/operators for those sites.
- Work with cruise operators to identify services and amenities that could enhance visitors' experiences in Downtown and encourage longer stays in local hotels.
- Encourage hotel developers to utilize the Downtown parking exemption to enhance the feasibility of development, and ensure that other public parking (publicly or privately owned) is adequate to serve a growing hotel base.

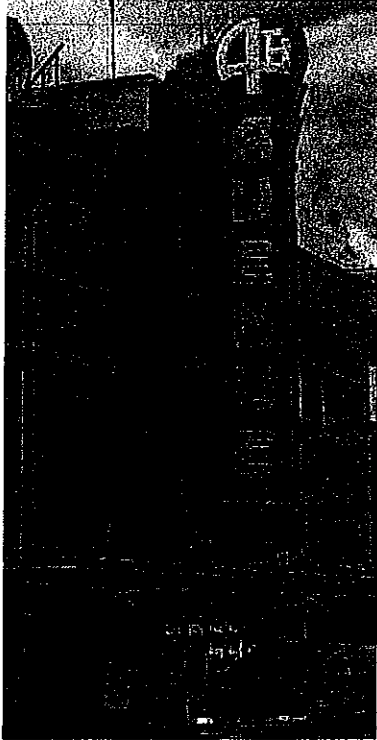
Enhance Downtown's arts, cultural and entertainment focus.

- Develop an outreach/recruitment program for gallery owners.
- Prioritize space for studios and galleries in the arts districts (identified on the Downtown Districts Diagram, opposite page).
- Enhance arts districts' identities through streetscape design.
- Preserve the 4th Avenue Theater by making it a viable operation as a Downtown destination venue.
- Examine the feasibility of an arts and cultural center celebrating Anchorage's diversity through educational, recreational and en-



Incentives to rehabilitate older properties, such as the JCPenney parking garage currently undergoing facade renovations (above top) and consolidation of small lots for catalytic development opportunities (above), should be encouraged.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The 4th Avenue Theater is one of Anchorage's great historic landmarks.



Signs outside parking garages or in strategic Downtown locations can notify drivers of the number of parking spaces available.

entertainment programming in arts, languages, cuisine and other unique cultural traditions.

- Provide fun attractions and events to draw visitors Downtown.

Develop a coordinated parking program.

- Create a distributed parking pattern that allows visitors to park in one garage Downtown and easily traverse the Core area without needing to park again.
- Develop a system-wide wayfinding signage program that directs users to parking and informs them of vacancies.
- Encourage alternatives such as shared parking and automated parking structures.
- Provide gap financing for structured parking.

Develop an expedited permitting strategy.

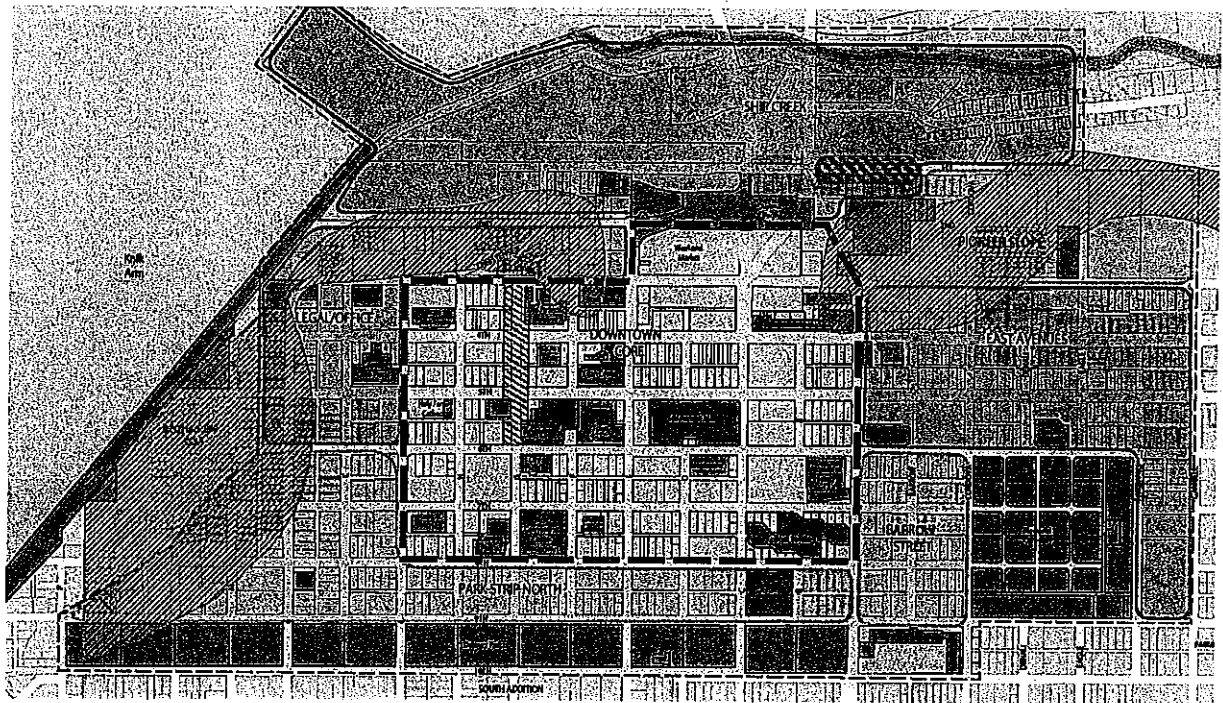
- Develop a program of expedited, fast-track land use and site plan permitting for development proposals that achieve the Plan's land use strategies, district development specifications and urban design guidelines.
- Explore a program of expedited building permits for specific desired land uses such as affordable housing.

3. Establish Downtown Districts

The Downtown is comprised of sub-districts, each with its own character, activities and levels of intensity. The delineation of these districts has not been articulated in previous planning efforts. Designating and reinforcing the districts offers the opportunity to create neighborhoods of distinct character, functionality and sense of place. The Downtown Districts Diagram (below) identifies four districts within the Study Area: Downtown Core,

Downtown Mixed-use, Downtown Mixed-use Residential and Ship Creek.

The following pages define each district with a set of development specifications and design prototypes to guide future development. These include suggested ranges of density and general guidance for land use and the physical character of development.



Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core
- ▨ Seismic Hazard Zone #5

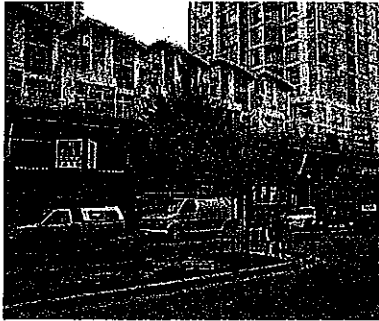
- Park/Open Space
- "Notable" Building Footprint

- Downtown Mixed-Use
- Downtown Mixed-Use; Residential

- Ship Creek
- Arts District/Corridor

Downtown Districts Diagram

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Downtown grocery store with housing, Vancouver, BC



Downtown mixed-use development, Denver, CO



Varying development densities, Oakland, CA

Downtown Core (DT-1)

As the most active and intense part of the city center, the Downtown Core is the priority area for high-density, mixed-use development. This district has the greatest development intensity and building heights in the Municipality, creating a concentration of office, civic, cultural, entertainment, housing and retail uses, all within close proximity to each other. The Core will build on its rich heritage and collection of historic buildings to create an environment of distinctive character and quality. Attractive public and semi-private open spaces for celebration and relaxation should be provided for Anchorage residents, workers and visitors. The arts district on G Street should be enhanced with additional gallery space and streetscape improvements promoting its identity.

Development Specifications:

3 to 20-plus stories; 30 to 80-plus units/acre per Merrill Field flight path

- Ground floor retail, housing, civic/government, cultural/entertainment, office, open space and hotels/visitor services
- Tall building massing set back from street; ground floor design to accommodate sun-lit plazas and public interior spaces (see top image)
- Highly active streetscape with pedestrian amenities, ground floor uses oriented to the sidewalk, multiple building entries and no blank walls—especially on primary pedestrian oriented streets.

Downtown Mixed-use: East Avenues (DT-2)

Two areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by commercial and mixed-use development. These areas consist of a compact mix of office, retail, lodging and entertainment uses, but also accommodate civic uses and encourage residential development

The East Avenues sub-district comprises the eastern end of the city center. It is already home to a variety of uses and building heights. The district is bordered by some light industrial use along Gambell and contains dispersed high rise development. New development should cater to populations interested in a live/work environment.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 10 stories; 20 to 60-plus units/acre per Merrill Field flight path
- Medium to high-density residential, live/work, office, hotel, local-serving retail development (see bottom image)
- Tall building massing is set back from street; steps down to the pedestrian scale at street level and is sensitive to climatic effects.

Downtown Mixed-use: Legal/Office (DT-2)

The Legal/Office sub-district is the second district characterized by broader mixed-use development. It is already a hub for law and professional offices and is home to a number of historic buildings. While some housing is encouraged, the district should

be primarily developed with new medium to high-density office space that will complement office uses in the Downtown Core. Strong connection to the Coastal Trail, respectful relationships to historic structures, and careful transition to Bootlegger's Cove will be important.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 10 stories; 20 to 60-plus units/acre depending on seismic restrictions—a seismic overlay zone to address seismic hazards is discussed at the end of this chapter.
- Housing, offices, small hotels, ground-floor retail (see top image), restaurants/cafes, offices and small-scale public spaces for workers and residents (see middle image)
- Preserve view corridors west and north across the Cook Inlet

Downtown Mixed-use Residential Park Strip North (DT-3):

Three areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by low- to mid-rise residential development. These areas are intended to provide housing opportunities and a great living environment. They include a range of housing types to ensure affordability and accommodate compatible commercial uses such as neighborhood-serving retail, and access to open space. The three mixed-use residential sub-districts should include the following amenities and incentives:

- Services such as grocery stores, day care and drugstores aimed at local residents should be available in

select locations (see bottom image).

- Neighborhood parks, gardens, pleasant streetscapes and pedestrian linkages through blocks should be provided as residential development occurs.
- Tax abatement and other incentives should be applied to encourage residential development; utilize design review to ensure quality.
- A mix of market-rate housing and affordable housing is encouraged; avoid large concentrations of high-income and/or low-income units.
- Residential design should include features such as front stoops, bay windows, facade articulation, balconies or sun rooms and upper level step-backs.

The Park Strip North district is a prime opportunity for developing a mixed-use district comprised primarily of medium density housing. The Park Strip provides a great resource for active or passive recreation and creates a buffer between the Downtown Core and the neighborhoods to the south.

Development Specifications:

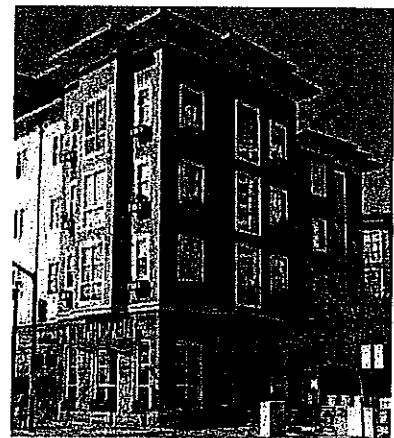
- 3 to 4 stories along park strip and 5 to 7 stories between north half of block between 8th and 9th avenues; 20 to 50 units/acre
- "Stepping up" of density and building height toward the Downtown Core
- Housing and neighborhood serving ground floor retail at key corners and intersections (bottom image)



Mixed-use development, Denver, CO



Downtown plaza, San Diego, CA

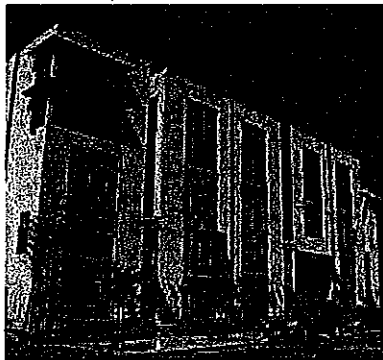


Downtown mixed-use development, San Francisco, CA

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Medium density residential development, Burbank, CA



Live-work housing, Emeryville, CA



Warehouse redevelopment, Vancouver, BC

- Multiple entries on ground floor; individual entrances raised several feet for privacy or screened with landscaping or stoop design

Downtown Mixed-use Residential: Barrow Street (DT-3)

The second area characterized by low- to mid-rise residential development is Barrow Street. A small district situated between the Downtown Core and the Anchorage Memorial Cemetery, Barrow Street has its own identity separate from the Park Strip residences to the west and the East Avenues to the north. Housing in this small, mixed-use neighborhood will be comprised of medium density residential.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 4 stories; 15 to 50 units/acre
- Primarily residential uses; some small home office and corner retail
- Townhouses and condo units with front door entries to street and garage entry from rear (see top image)

Downtown Mixed-use Residential: Pioneer Slope (DT-3)

The Pioneer Slope residential mixed-use development sub-district, is located in a high seismic risk area and is comprised of a diverse mix of uses, including open space, commercial, residential and industrial uses. Numerous parcels are prime sites for seismically-engineered, medium density mixed-use development.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 4 stories; 15 to 30 units/acre

- Primarily residential and live/work uses; some open space, small home office, artist studios, galleries, corner retail and light industrial (see middle image)
- Development takes advantage of existing open spaces and views to the north.

Ship Creek (PC District)

Ship Creek district is distinguished from adjacent Downtown districts by its historic and industrial uses. The area is well-positioned for medium density, residential development, supplemented with commercial uses such as restaurants, small scale hotels, arts production spaces and railroad-related uses. New development should reflect the industrial history of the area, incorporate live-work units and maximize Ship Creek as a recreational resource, while adhering to seismic constraints. The Ship Creek Master Plan and recently adopted Planned Community zoning district design standards further articulate planning and design parameters for the area. The following recommendations should be considered as development occurs:

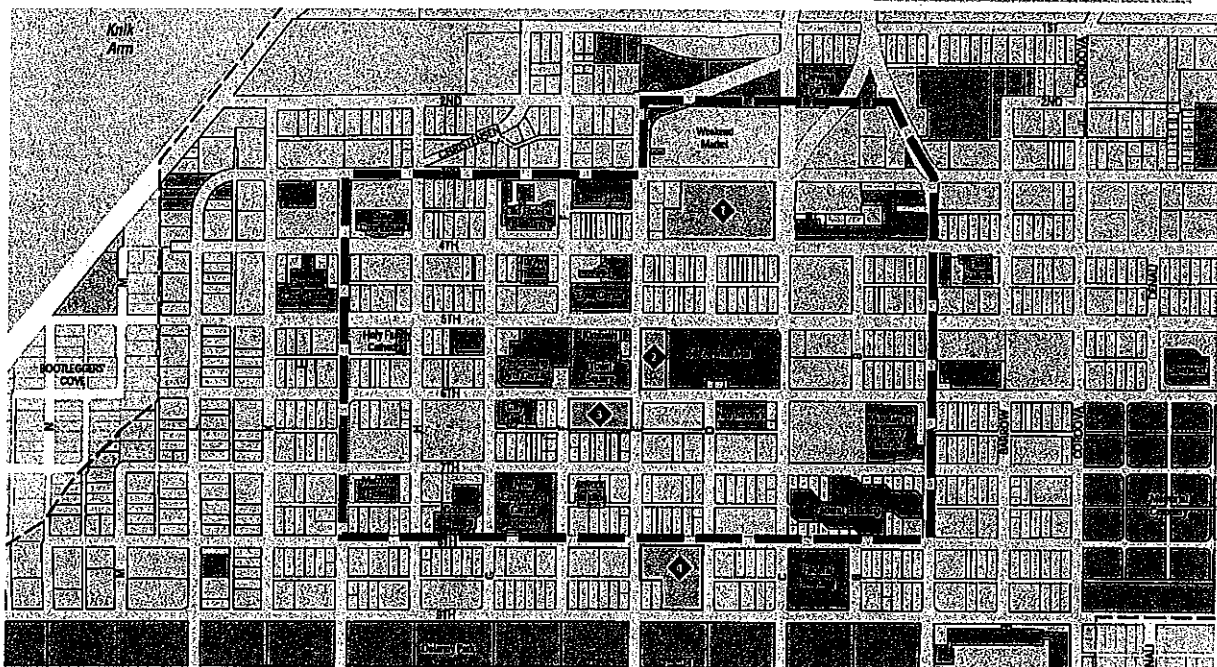
- Support Ship Creek's development strategy to preserve the historic character, promote an arts corridor along 1st Avenue and integrate new development (see bottom image).
- 1st Avenue east of the overpass should be a "slow" traffic street that fosters an arts corridor, providing easy access to shops and galleries and creating a comfortable pedestrian environment.

4. Move Forward on Catalytic Development Sites

Four highly visible projects that will attract additional investment are identified as Downtown's Catalytic Development Sites. They are catalytic due to their prime location in the core, proximity to recent investment, or ability to provide much needed services or activities currently lacking in Downtown. They are also likely to encourage other new investment. These sites, highlighted on the diagram below, have particular importance to Downtown and should be considered top priority for development. The following pages describe the desirable land uses, development program and design character for each of the sites.

A financial feasibility analysis based on the conceptual development programs has been performed for three of the four sites. The *residual land value* of the development projects indicates how much a developer could afford to pay for the existing property and still generate an adequate financial return to pursue development. In order to determine these values, the development revenue estimates (based on lease rates and sales prices), development costs (based on hard and soft costs for buildings and parking) and property operating costs (based on maintenance and leasing estimates) were estimated and then reviewed by local real estate experts, developers and architects.

- 1 4th Avenue Development Site (Possibly Public Cultural Center and Transit Center)
- 2 E Street Infill Development Site
- 3 6th Avenue Infill Development Site
- 4 Park Strip Housing Prototype



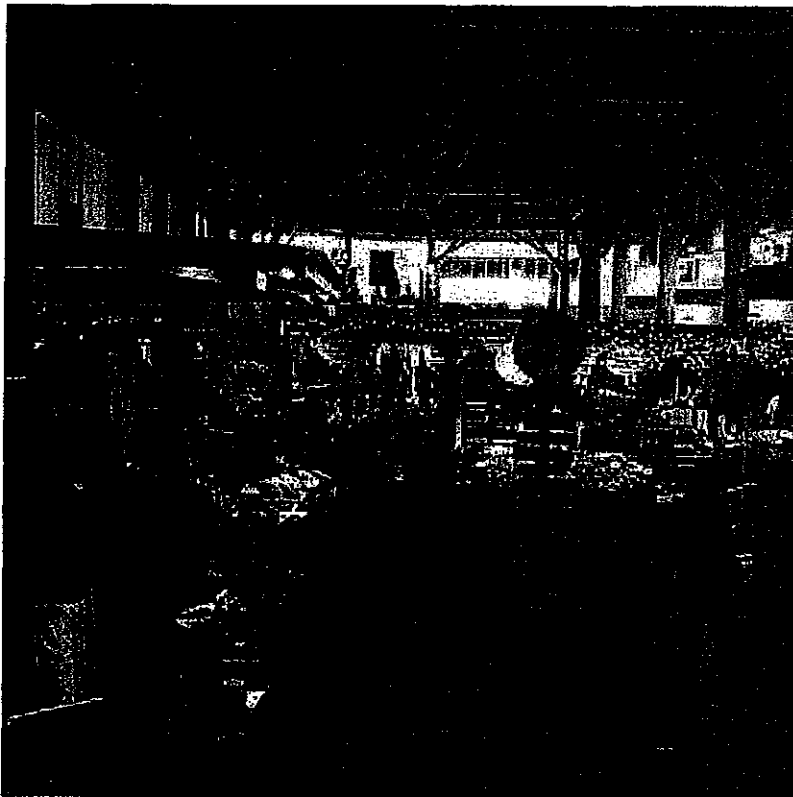
Catalytic Development Sites Diagram

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1

Fourth Avenue Development Site

Situated in a strategic position between central Downtown and Ship Creek, this site should be a low- to mid-rise development with a one-of-a-kind mix of uses, including a Public Market, Arts and Cultural Center and possibly a new Transit Center. The activity of this development can complement the tourist-oriented Weekend Market, located immediately to the north, and create a connection between the Market and 4th Avenue commerce.



The public market in Portland, Maine draws residents and visitors year-round. It offers fresh produce, specialty goods and places to sit and eat.

Public Market

As Downtown housing grows and evolves, the increased number of residents will require amenities that can provide for their daily needs. A Public Market—with food, dry goods and other household items—can meet these needs while being a unique focal point for the Downtown community. The market can also be an attraction for visitors.

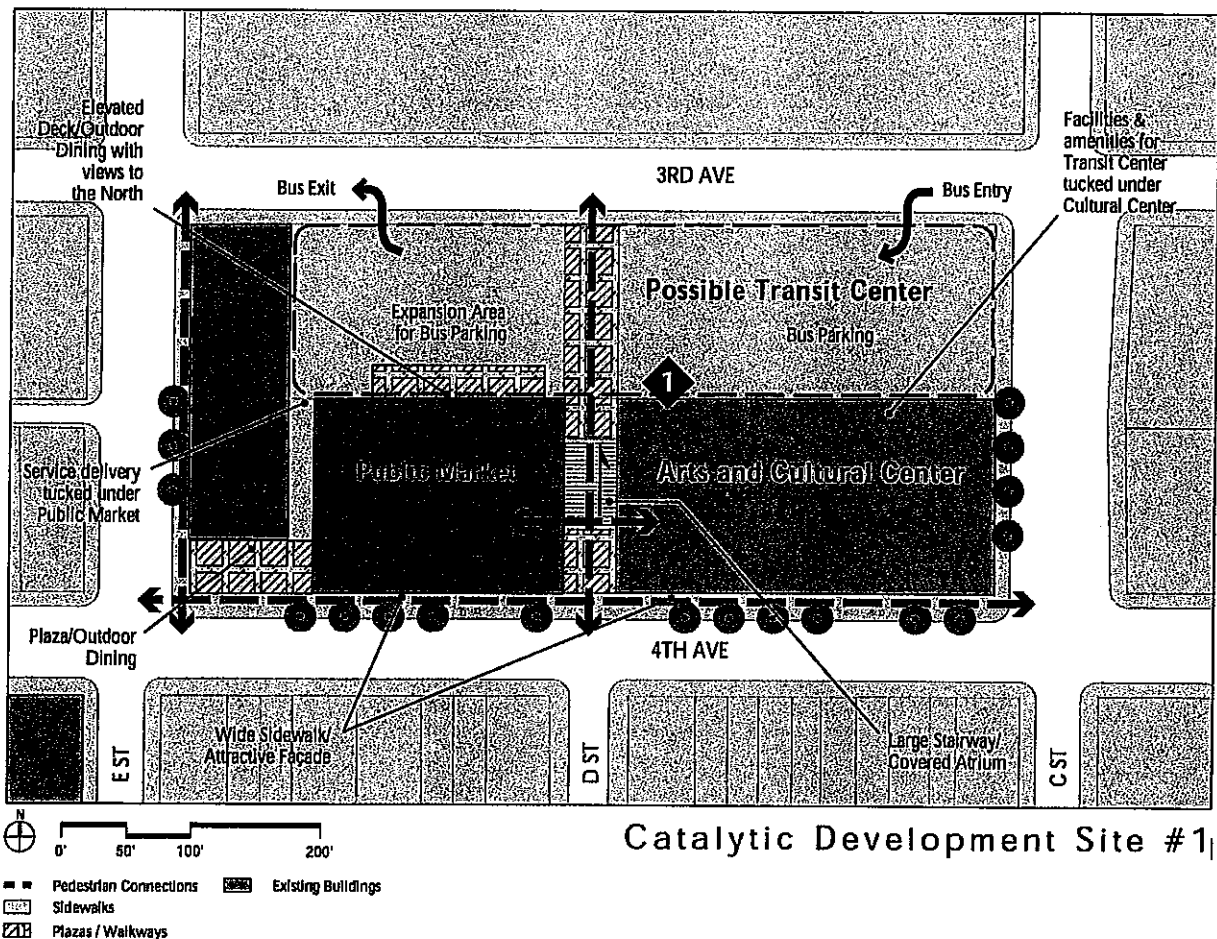
- Create a quality Public Market project that has authenticity as a local-serving commercial enterprise.
- Include retail outlets and services focused mostly on the daily needs of residents, such as fresh food and beverages (including a bakery, butcher and wine seller) and dry goods.
- Include places for eating and relaxing, such as indoor cafe space and counter dining, as well as social gathering spaces.

Arts and Cultural Center

Anchorage is home to an incredible array of cultural diversity, including Alaska Native, European, Asian and Pacific Islander, African and other influences. Downtown should reflect and celebrate that heritage, serving as a “home” where all people are welcome and all cultures and traditions are respected. An arts and cultural center in the heart of Anchorage would help link together the city and state’s diverse peoples and be a place for education, celebration, discussion and reflection.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Create an Arts and Cultural Center that celebrates the area's multi-cultural heritage and truly reflects the diversity of Anchorage and Alaska.
- Complement other arts and cultural facilities, such as the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage Museum of History and Art and local art galleries.
- Encourage Alaska Native and ethnic communities and local artists to be involved in the center's development.
- Position the Arts and Cultural Center as a draw for economic activity, attracting local residents, tourists and in-state visitors and benefiting both the center and the surrounding Downtown businesses.
- Showcase local artists' work to strengthen Downtown's role as an arts and culture hub and improve visibility of Downtown's arts districts/corridors.
- The center should provide space for artists to gain visibility and share their histories and techniques.



LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Waiting areas for transit, both indoor and outside, should be comfortable and well-lit. The transparent awning above provides protection from the elements, while allowing sunshine to access the sidewalk. The proposed Transit Center and Public Market should provide spaces like the one pictured below for passengers to wait for their bus, pick up produce, buy a magazine or relax after the workday.

Transit Center

A potential location for the Transit Center is on the northern half of the site, adjacent to 3rd Avenue. The activity generated by the Public Market and Cultural Center would make a new Transit Center a popular destination for workers and residents. Amenities for riders should be oriented toward pedestrians and provide an interesting and varied north-facing facade. The possible relocation should occur when 3rd Avenue has been re-configured into a one-way westbound avenue. The Transit Center should perhaps serve not only local People Mover buses but also other bus lines serving Southcentral Alaska residents such as the Homer Stage Line, the Seward Bus Line, and the Denali Bus Service.



Alternatively, the existing Transit Center can remain in its current centralized location, serving attractions and destinations in all directions. Refurbishing the Center and making modest curb space adjustments can improve its capacity to stage up to 18 buses. Optional capacity for three additional spaces exists west of H Street on 6th Avenue, allowing for a total of 21 bus staging spaces. The Municipality should use the following Transit Center Site Criteria to guide its decision to refurbish or relocate the center.

Travel Center Site Criteria

- Identify a central location with good access to the facility. Assess ridership data to determine the destinations of daily users.
- Provide adequate space for vehicle storage and passenger transfers.
- Prioritize the safety of passengers, bus drivers, motorists and pedestrians.
- Ensure the facility program accommodates:
 - Room for loading and queuing of up to 20 buses
 - Office/customer service space: 4,000 sq.ft.
 - Waiting and common space: 5,000 sq.ft.
- Give transit vehicles prioritization with traffic signalization and dedicated bus lanes.
- Allow on-street stops in the Downtown Core.
- Create a multi-use facility that provides amenities for Downtown residents, tourists and commuters.

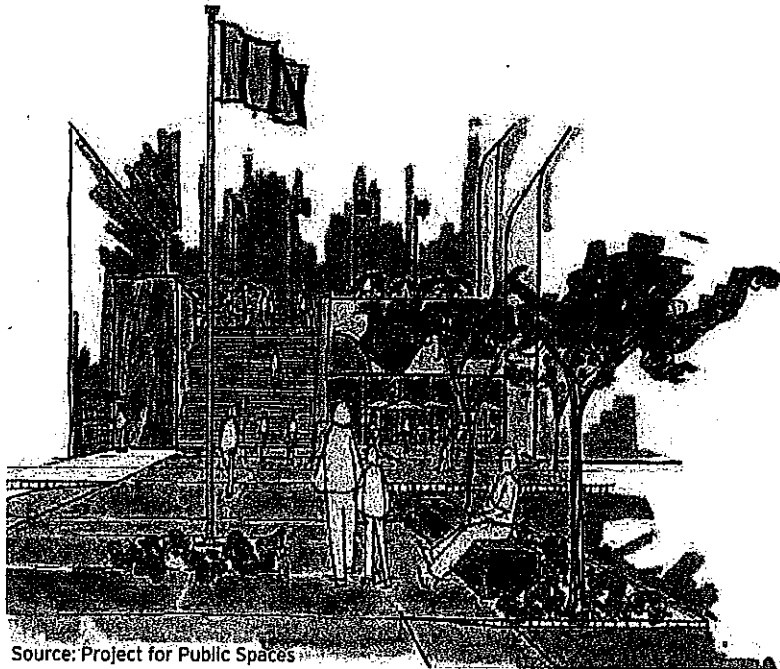
- Promote transit-oriented development around transit center.
- Phase improvements so the existing facility remains in use while a new Transit Center develops.

Building Design

- Create a landmark building that has visual appeal and recognition and benefits from a visible, accessible location in Downtown.
- Ensure the south-facing facade along Fourth Avenue is transparent, inviting and has pedestrian-oriented uses such as displays and outdoor seating on the sidewalk.
- Plazas and outdoor dining areas should be located at the corner of 4th Avenue and E Street and overlooking the Transit Center to the north.

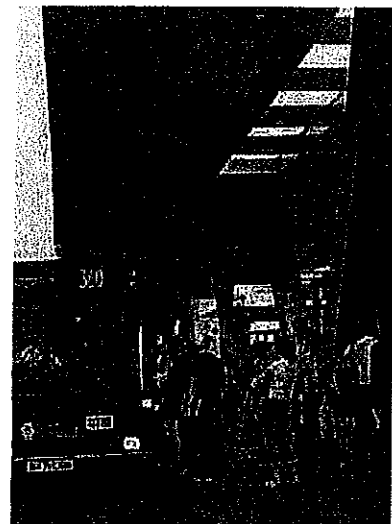
Streetscape, Parking & Circulation

- A prominent open air staircase and arcade will provide north-south mid-block pedestrian connections.
- Parking should be accommodated in the lot to the north.
- Bus queuing for People Mover and tour operators would occur within the existing parking lot. Buses would enter from the northeast corner of the site and exit on the northwest corner.
- Buses would be stored off-site in a lot determined appropriate by People Mover and the Municipality.



Source: Project for Public Spaces

A well-designed open air staircase can provide linkages for shoppers between the 5th Avenue Mall and 4th Avenue shopping areas, the Transit Center, and the Weekend Market (above). Examples of attractive transit center designs are shown below.



LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



New development should open onto the sidewalk and engage Town Square.

2

E Street Infill Development Site

The area just east of Town Square is a prime opportunity site for mixed-use development that would provide connections to Town Square, integrate with the E Street Corridor Improvements and connect to JC Penney's and the 5th Avenue Mall to the east. This site should have a quality mid- to high-rise mixed-use development with one to two levels of retail and housing above. A key characteristic of the site should be a publicly accessible atrium that provides a sun-lit space year-round, taking advantage of its position.

3

Sixth Avenue Infill Development Site

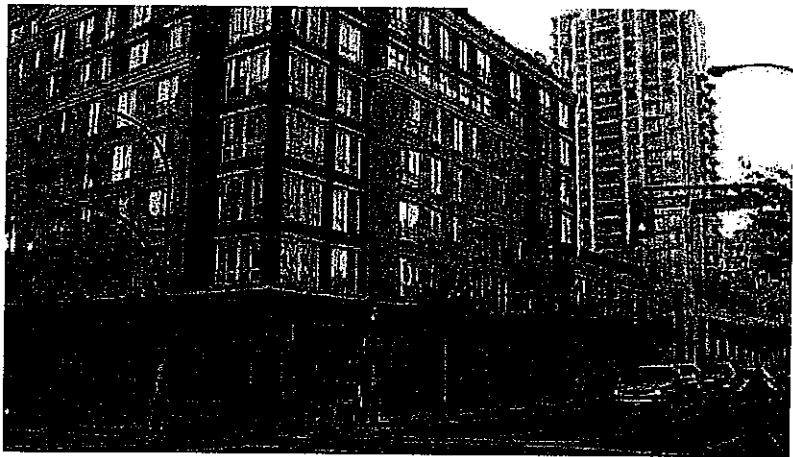
The area across 6th Avenue from Town Square offers prime opportunities for redevelopment. The parcels could be consolidated into a mixed-use development with ground floor retail and housing or hotel above. The building design would have to pay particularly close attention to height restrictions and shadow impacts due to its proximity to Town Square. The ground floor of the site requires a strong retail presence. The Municipality should work with property owners and developers to redevelop the parcels. This site is of particular importance because of its ability to:

- Define and activate the south edge of Town Square
- Provide a critical mass of shopping and activity
- Link 5th Avenue Mall retail with the new Dena'ina Convention Center, City Hall and the Performing Arts Center.

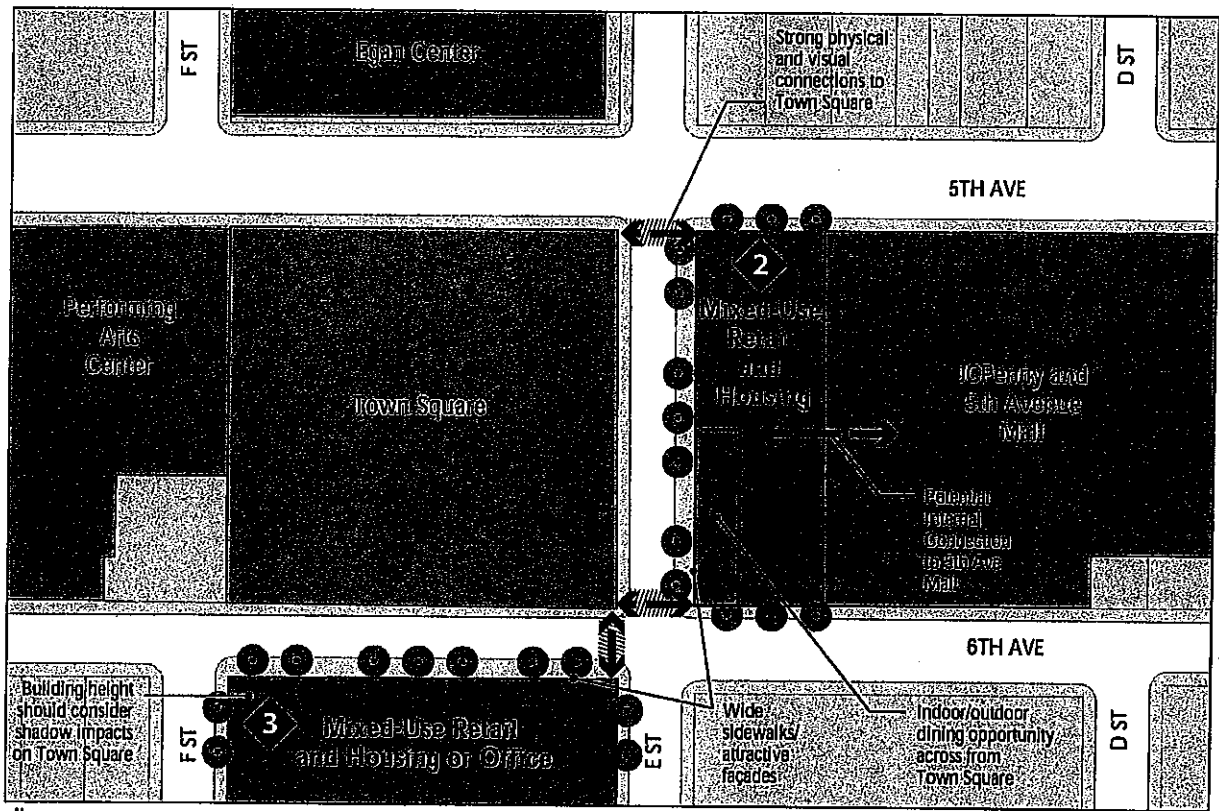


This glass-enclosed cafe extends out of the building's facade with outdoor seating to activate the street environment. Both the E Street Opportunity Site and the Sixth Avenue should incorporate such elements into their design.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



This mixed-use development provides active ground floor retail, variation in its facade treatment and rooftop balconies and courtyards overlooking the public realm. Similar treatment on 6th Avenue would provide direct connections between development and Town Square, activating it day and night.



Catalytic Development Sites #2 and #3

- Pedestrian Connections
- ▨ Sidewalks
- ▨ Plazas

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The repetition of window bays, entrances and lit interior spaces along with storefront displays and creative use of building lighting, should enliven the ground floor environment year-round.

Building Design

- Ensure that the building façade and streetscape treatment are as inviting, transparent and pedestrian friendly as possible.
- Special attention must be paid to create a pedestrian-scale rhythm to openings and visual features along E Street and 5th Avenue.
- The design and articulation of upper stories should consider wind and shadow impacts on Town Square and the streetscape. Wind and shadow studies should be performed to measure these impacts.
- Ensure the ground floor uses actively engage the pedestrian; the ground floor should include retail, outdoor dining and public amenities.

Streetscape, Parking and Circulation

- Ensure that the loading/unloading zone accommodates pedestrian flow. No loading/unloading should occur on 5th Avenue or E Street. The sidewalk materials and treatment of loading zone should be selected with the pedestrian environment in mind.
- Coordinate circulation, drop-off and parking requirements with the Downtown Transportation Plan.
- Ensure that F Street provides a safe, comfortable pedestrian connection between 6th and 7th Avenues.
- Sidewalk conditions/widths should be coordinated with rest of Downtown (particularly E Street Corridor Improvements).



A pedestrian-friendly streetscape can be enhanced by integrating the driveway to the parking garage into the building design, such as the example above, which tucks the garage into the middle of the building, just under the address "1370" (above). The rhythm of bays and building materials should be consistent along the entire facade, incorporating the garage entrance (left).

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Catalytic Development Site 2: Residual Land Value Estimate

Steel Frame Residential	
Units	60
Total Sale Value of Units	\$28,800,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$25,021,550)
Total Residual Land Value for Residential Units	\$3,778,450

Mixed-Use Retail	
Square Footage	60,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$18,318,268
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$16,001,593)
Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage	\$2,316,675

Parking	
Square Footage	60,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space	180
Non-Revenue Spaces for Residential Units***	108
Revenue-Generating Spaces	72
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$1,443,604
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$4,900,000)
Total Residual Land Value for Parking	(\$3,456,396)

COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE	\$2,638,728
Site Area Square Footage	28,595
RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT	\$92

* Excluding parking

** Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc. As such, these parking assumptions are within the range displayed in actual projects, and generate a full integer number of parking spaces when divided by the square footage of the parking area.

***Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 108 spaces for 60 residential units on Site 2. The remaining parking spaces could therefore be used for hourly, daily, or monthly parking for other Downtown patrons and could generate revenues that can help to offset the construction and operations costs.

A development program of 60 condominium units above 60,000 square feet of retail and 180 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$2.5 million for Catalytic Development Site 2. This site, just over one-half acre in size, presents a strong market opportunity for mixed-use development.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A development program of 40 condominium units above 42,000 square feet of retail and 252 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$2 million for Catalytic Development Site 3. The overall feasibility of this site, nearly one acre in size, will depend on whether the existing uses on this site could be incorporated into the redevelopment or be purchased or relocated for less than the estimated residual land value.

Catalytic Development Site 3: Residual Land Value Estimate

Steel Frame Residential	
Units	40
Total Sale Value of Units	\$19,200,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$16,681,034)
Total Residual Land Value for Residential Units	\$2,518,966
Mixed Use Retail	
Square Footage	42,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$12,282,881
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$11,101,587)
Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage	\$1,181,294
Parking	
Square Footage	84,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space	252
Non-Revenue Spaces for Residential Units***	72
Revenue-Generating Spaces	180
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$3,605,045
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$6,860,000)
Total Residual Land Value for Parking	(\$3,254,955)
COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE	\$2,066,978
Site Area Square Footage	42,118
RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT	\$49

* Excluding parking

** Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc. As such, these parking assumptions are within the range displayed in actual projects, and generate a full integer number of parking spaces when divided by the square footage of the parking area.

***Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 72 spaces for 40 residential units on Site 3. The remaining parking spaces could therefore be used for hourly, daily, or monthly parking for other Downtown patrons and could generate revenues that can help to offset the construction and operations costs.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4

Park Strip Housing Prototype

The development of this site on E Street between 8th and 9th Avenues can act as a prototypical project for future construction in the Park Strip North district. This site will consist of mid-rise residential units overlooking Delaney Park. The ground floor will accommodate some neighborhood-serving retail.

The site is currently a State-owned surface parking lot. Parking should be relocated to nearby parking structures or lots.

This example of mixed-use housing in San Francisco, CA illustrates how buildings within the Park Strip North District will step up northward from Delaney Park. The Park Strip Housing Prototype will be a total of four floors along 9th Avenue, and step up to six floors along 8th Avenue. Upper units in the northern half of the development will afford views of the open space resource.



Building Design

- The building massing should step back from 9th Avenue.
- Building massing should be broken into distinguishable bays with variations in materials, setbacks, roof form, heights and balconies.
- Ground floor residential units along 9th Avenue should be designed to face the Park; each unit should have its own stoop with a landscaped buffer between the building and the sidewalk.
- Ground floor units along 8th Avenue should have shared or individual stoops.
- Buildings should be set back to accommodate generous space for private landscaping and stoops that ensures privacy for residents.
- Upper floor units should have shared use of outdoor courtyards or rooftop gardens, designed for both winter and summer use.
- Retail space should be located at the corner of 8th Avenue and E Street and should accommodate outdoor amenities, such as seating, public art and special landscaping.
- Special attention to the facade treatment along E Street will be critical as this intersection serves as one of Downtown's southern gateways. The facade of the retail space should be transparent and inviting.

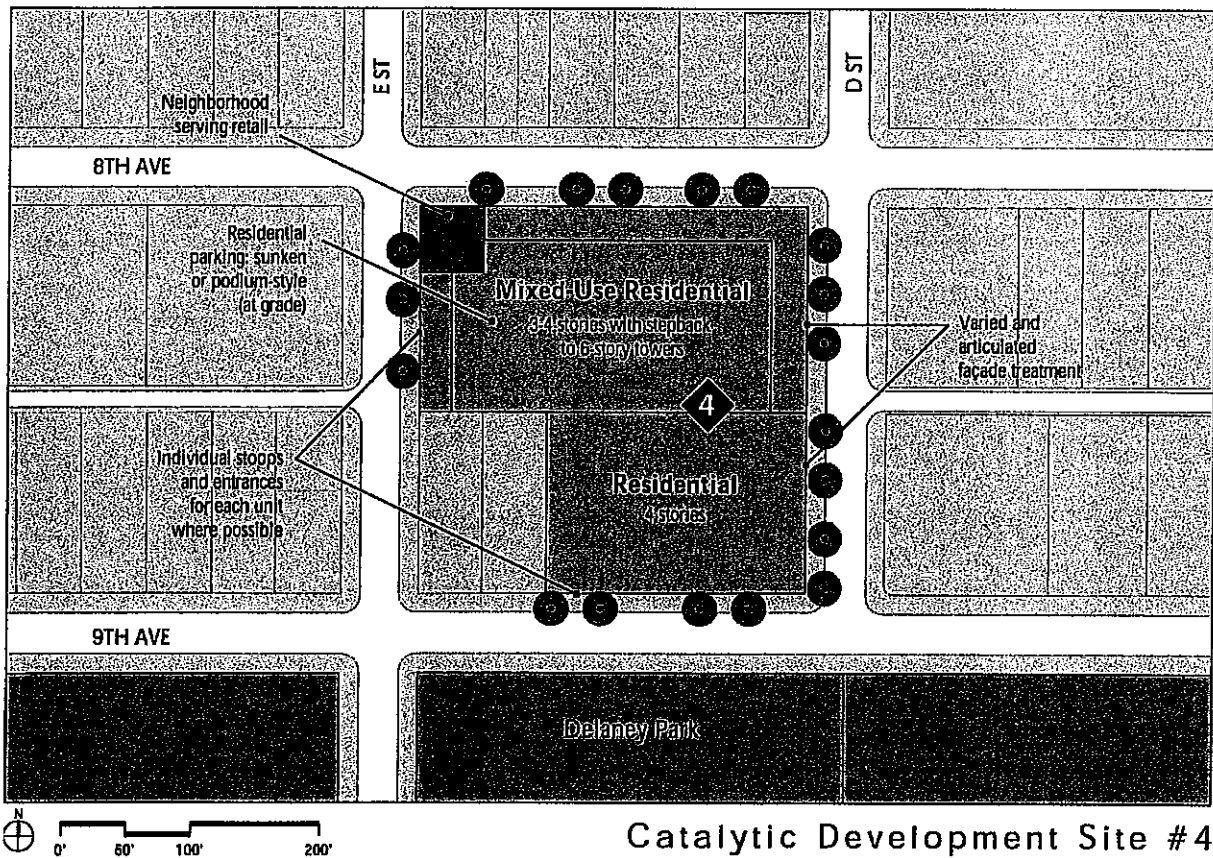
LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Streetscape, Parking and Circulation

- The parking garage should be underground or wrapped with ground floor residential units or the corner retail space.
- Ingress and egress from the parking garage will:
 - Be located along 8th Avenue or D Street.
 - Be no wider than 22 feet at any particular driveway.
 - Be accommodated in no more than two driveways.
- Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate street trees, light fixtures, amenities and a pedestrian movement zone of at least six feet and eight to twelve feet on primary pedestrian streets.



The design should create a varied building facade with the use of color, materials, setbacks and building heights. Ground floor units should be raised several feet above sidewalk level for privacy.



Catalytic Development Site #4

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Catalytic Development Site 4: Residual Land Value Estimate

Wood frame Residential

Units	70
Total Sale Value of Units	\$26,950,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$19,361,038)
Total Residual Land Value for Wood frame Residential	\$7,588,962

Steel frame Residential

Units	170
Total Sale Value of Units	\$81,600,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$70,894,393)
Total Residual Land Value for Steel frame Residential	\$10,705,607

Mixed Use/Retail

Square Footage	14,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$4,274,263
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$3,733,705)
Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage	\$540,558

Parking

Square Footage	137,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space***	411
Revenue-Generating Spaces	0
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$0
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$11,188,333)
Total Residual Land Value for Parking	(\$11,188,333)

COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE

Site Area Square Footage	69,312
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RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT

	\$110
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* Excluding parking

** Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc.

***Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 411 spaces for 240 residential units on Site 4.

A development program of 240 wood frame and steel frame condominium units above 14,000 square feet of retail and 411 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$7.5 million for Catalytic Development Site 4. Owned by the public sector and currently used for surface parking, this one and one-half acre site represents a promising opportunity for development that could demonstrate the market acceptance and financial feasibility of desired urban housing.

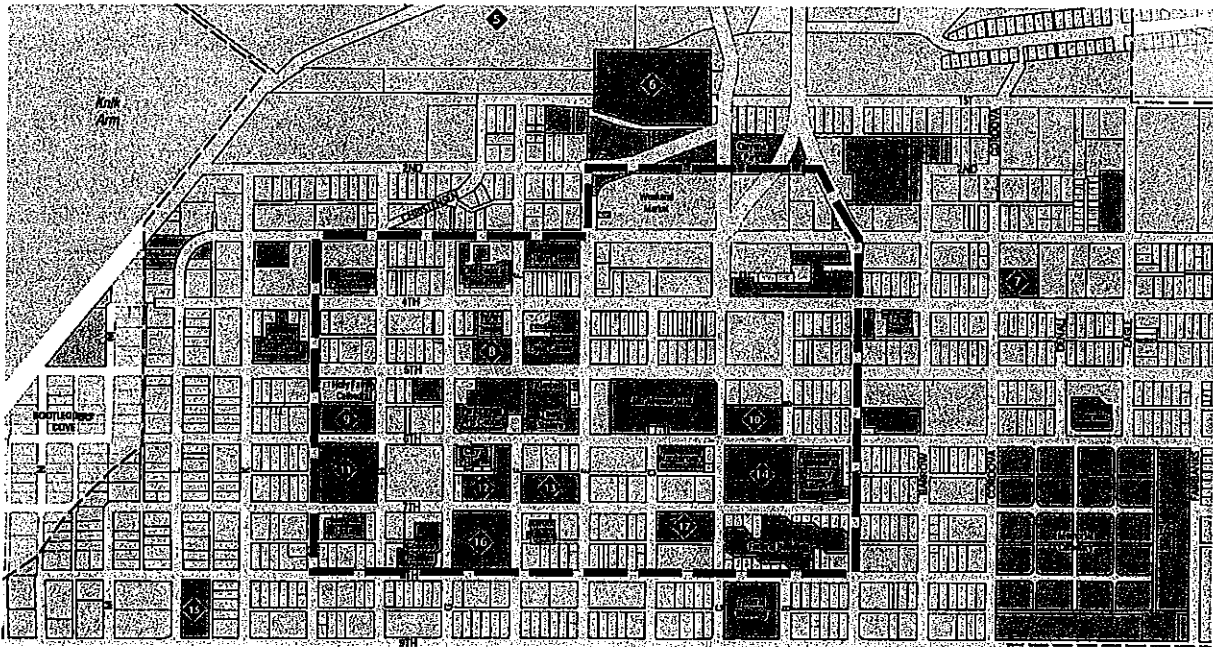
5. Develop Other Opportunity Sites

In addition to the Catalytic Opportunity Sites, there are many other development projects and opportunities that are poised to transform Downtown Anchorage. They range from big ideas that have yet to reach the drawing board to projects under development, including the Anchorage Museum of Art and History Expansion, Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, large scale redevelopment in Ship Creek and a number of other redevelopment opportunities in Downtown. These sites should be especially responsive to upholding the Plan's vision, goals and design guidelines as they will lay the groundwork for Downtown development.

General Criteria

- All new development should include attractive building facades and ground level treatment that creates an active and engaging pedestrian experience.
- Buildings should incorporate pedestrian scale design with multiple entrances, windows, articulated facades and outdoor dining opportunities where feasible. Avoid creating blank walls on any building frontage.
- New projects should be designed to preserve views outward to the natural environments, as well views inward to the city center.

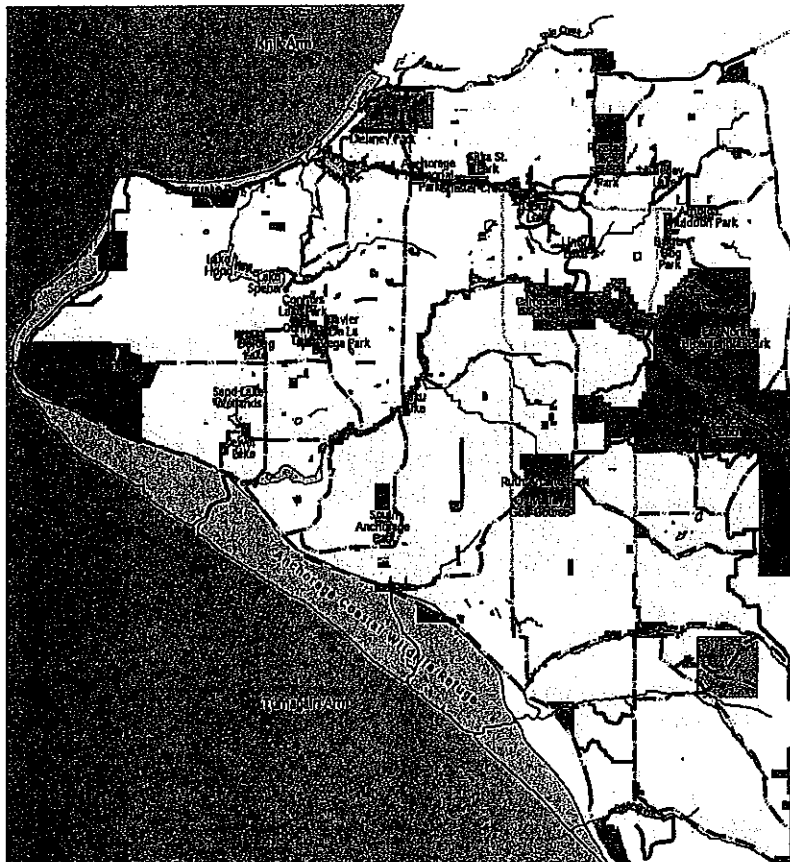
Primary Opportunity Sites	
5	Ship Creek Redevelopment
6	Inter-Modal Transportation Center
7	McKinley Building
8	Peach Tower
9	Cathedral Site
10	Kosleg Infill Opportunity Site
11	North of Marriott Infill Opportunity Site
12	Mixed-Use Hotel Opportunity Site
13	Mixed-Use Parking Opportunity Site
14	Museum Expansion
15	Additional Park Strip Housing Prototype
16	Civic/Convention Center
17	Mixed-Use Parking Opportunity Site



Opportunity Sites Diagram

6. Establish Strategies for Parks and Open Space

Downtown Anchorage has incredible access to the surrounding natural environment, as well as a number of significant parks and open spaces within the Study Area. The following strategies are necessary to create a fully integrated parks and open space network for Downtown and its surroundings.



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Downtown Study Area | Parks and Open Space | Existing Trail |
| Major Water Bodies | Mud Flats | Proposed Trail |

City-wide Open Space Diagram

Maintain and enhance strong pedestrian and bike connections.

- Safe, visible connections between civic plazas, parks and open space corridors are essential to a successful parks and open space network.

Provide space for outdoor recreation within the Downtown Area.

- As Downtown becomes more densely developed, it is important to preserve and maintain its open spaces. These spaces provide respite from the urban environment and should be designed for use year-round.
- Complete the Delaney Park Master Plan and a plan for improvements to Town Square Park.

Provide indoor publicly accessible spaces for year-round use.

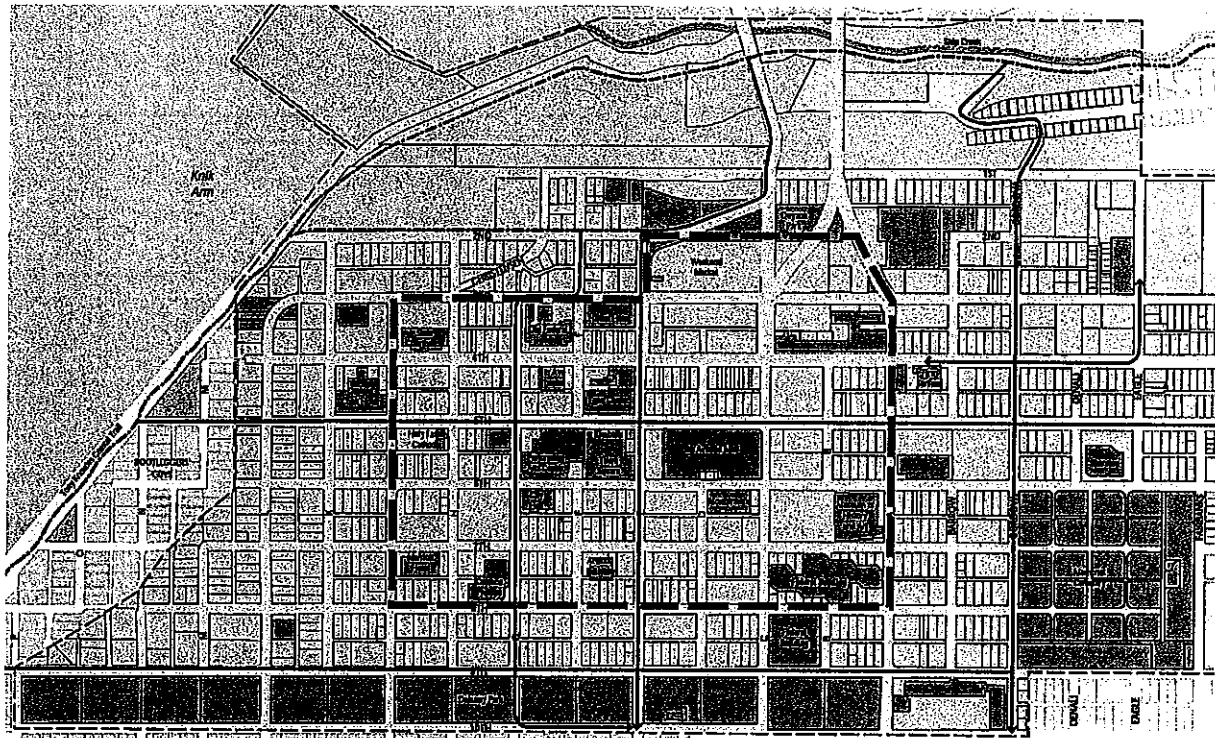
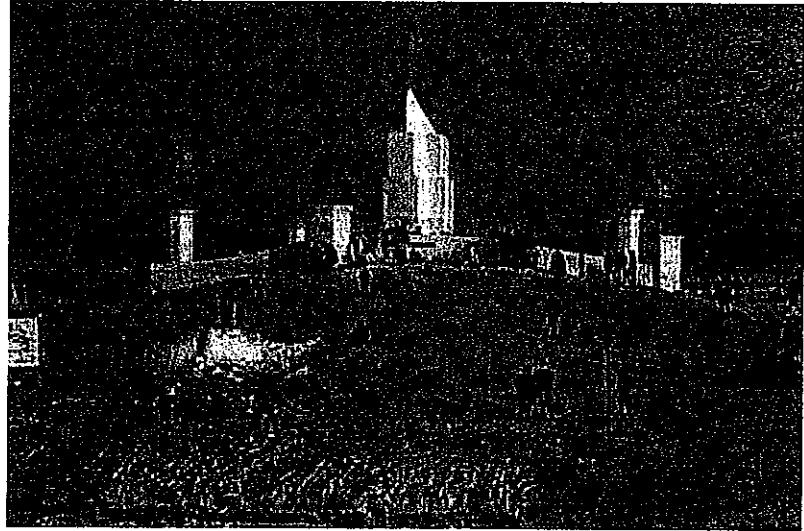
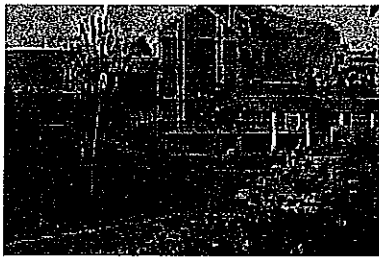
- Public and private developments should integrate publicly accessible spaces with sunlight access and comfortable temperatures into new buildings. These spaces should be linked to the network of pedestrian oriented streets.

Determine appropriate type of activities within the parks and open space network.

- Establish an open space advisory committee to determine what additional types of open spaces and/or recreational opportunities are desirable in the study area.
- Develop a Downtown parks and open space plan identifying future open space needs, acquisition strategies and park design guidelines.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The parks and open space strategy should ensure that Downtown has a range of open spaces that provide space for public gatherings, like Town Square (below), and recreational opportunities for all ages year-round (right). Though Downtown's parks are plentiful, they should be bolstered to serve the growing community with more programmed space and activities.



Legend

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| — Downtown Study Area | ■ Park/Open Space | ← On-Street Bicycle Connection |
| ■ Downtown Core Area | ■ "Notable" Building Footprint | ← Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail |

Downtown Open Space Diagram

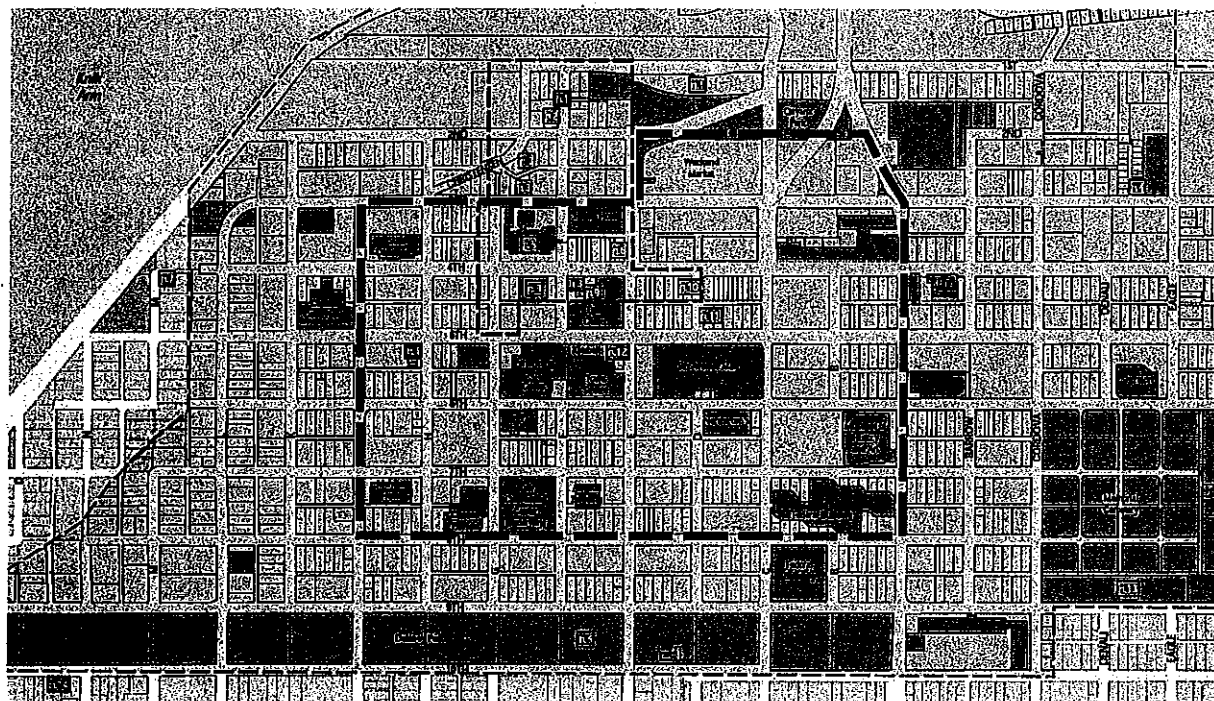
LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

National Register Sites	
101	Alaska Railroad Depot
102	David Leopold House
103	Alaska Engineering Commission Cottages
104	Pioneer School House
105	Old Federal Building
106	The Anchorage Hotel
107	Oscar Anderson House
108	4th Avenue Theatre
109	Old City Hall
110	Wendler Building
111	Lewis and Clark Building
112	Ketchikan Building
113	Anchorage Cemetery
114	Old Oscar House
Historic Sites	
115	Historic Anchorage Homes
116	Resolution Park/Captain Cook Monument
117	Log Cabin Visitor Information Center
118	Holy Family Cathedral
119	Delaney Park

7. Create a Historic Overlay Zone and Commission

There is widespread interest in promoting Anchorage's rich history to Anchorage and Alaska residents and out-of-state visitors, encouraging them to experience more of the city's history and culture while visiting Downtown. There is a rich and diverse collection of significant historic and cultural sites within Downtown Anchorage (most of which are reflected on the diagram below). The plan recommends creating a Historic Overlay Zone to preserve and enhance Downtown's historic and cultural resources. The Downtown Historic Overlay Zone will serve as

a cultural anchor to preserve and celebrate Downtown's heritage and unique sense of place. The 4th Avenue corridor is generally recognized as the historic heart of downtown Anchorage, which supports its designation as the core of an historic zone. Radiating from this core are several other identified buildings that exemplify the same historic development patterns of early Anchorage. Though conceptual zone boundaries are shown below, the exact area of this zone should be established through a separate historic preservation planning effort.



Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core Area
- Park/Open Space
- "Notable" Building Footprint
- Possible Downtown Historic Overlay Zone

Historic and Cultural Resources Diagram

The identified area includes nine commercial or government buildings and several original town site houses which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Economic Benefits

In addition to the cultural benefits of historic zone designation, there are economic benefits that accompany this designation. To build a comparable building with comparable materials today, the costs quickly escalate. Historic preservation projects are more labor intensive than new construction which results in the use of more local labor. New materials are the focus of new construction. There are also financial incentives for individual preservation projects. The Historic Preservation Tax Credit program provides a 20% tax credit for certified historic preservation projects. The New Markets Tax Credit is a 39% tax credit that is targeted toward revitalization efforts. Heritage tourism is now a major component of the tourism industry which can be tapped through historic preservation and the dedication of a historic zone.

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission will work with the community to determine how this designation will affect businesses, visitors and residents in the area. The zone could maintain the size, scale and mass of the buildings located in the zone. There could be active encouragement to preserve and restore the buildings located in the zone through incentives such as tax credits, grants, loans, etc. Other possibilities include public interpretation and heritage education for residents and visitors.

The following steps should be taken to jump-start this effort:

- Establish Historic Preservation Commission to address short and long-term activities, inventory sites and determine appropriate standards and incentives.
- Develop policies and guidelines for historic protection.
- Identify appropriate restrictions of new development and redevelopment for protection of historic landmarks.
- Develop a Historic Overlay Zone through a public planning process.

Downtown's historic sites range from important cultural venues, such as the Fourth Avenue Theatre (top right); the tribute to Alaska's statehood overlooking the original Tent City (upper right); the historic Anchorage Hotel (middle right); and the original cottages constructed for the railroad during early years of operation (bottom right).





5 transportation and circulation

OVERVIEW

This chapter addresses the complexity of Downtown's transportation and circulation system as it relates to the vision for strengthening Downtown as a vital place in which to live, work, shop, conduct business, and support tourism.

The first priority is to optimize multi-modal access to Downtown and create a place that is enjoyable and safe for walking, biking and using public transit. This goal will not only make possible the development density desired in Downtown, it will also enhance the retail experience, boost business, and make Downtown even more of a destination for cultural and social gatherings.

In addition to meeting the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders, the transportation system must also serve local automobile and tour bus access and circulation while reducing the adverse impacts of through-traffic and freight movement.

This chapter identifies specific planning considerations, outlines transportation goals that support the plan's vision, and recommends solutions to realize the full potential of Downtown Anchorage.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION



Narrow sidewalks in some places Downtown can inhibit pedestrian comfort and flow.



Bicycle amenities and access are key to creating an active city center that is less dependent on the automobile.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

A number of factors in Downtown Anchorage currently influence transportation and circulation patterns. Through field observations and reviews of previous transportation studies, several issues and challenges in the Downtown circulation network were identified during the planning process.

Circulation

- Circulation constraints and high-volume streets within the Downtown Core limit higher-density redevelopment opportunities.
- Through traffic and truck traffic adversely impacts Downtown circulation and pedestrian, bicycle and transit movements.
- High vehicular speeds on major couplets (A/C and 5th/6th) make pedestrians uncomfortable.
- Downtown must facilitate easy circulation for tour companies, tour bus routes, bus queuing and safe passenger drop-off.
- The current mixture of one- and two-way streets interrupts the street grid network and causes driver confusion and out-of-direction travel.
- Several "super-blocks" disrupt the grid street network and adversely impact pedestrian and vehicular operations.
- Parade, race and festival routes and staging areas are needed to preserve Downtown's role in promoting community identity.

Connectivity and Accessibility

- Pedestrian movement in many heavily traveled areas is constrained by narrow sidewalks, physical barriers and piecemeal improvements.
- The grade change between the Downtown Core and Ship Creek prevents an easy connection to Alaska Railroad headquarters and the proposed railroad intermodal center.
- Lack of good pedestrian wayfinding in low-light conditions impedes pedestrian movement, especially between Downtown destinations (hotels, Performing Arts Center, Egan Civic Center, 5th Avenue Mall, Delaney Park, Ship Creek, trails, etc.).
- There is a lack of integration between the Transit Center, bus system and parking lots.
- Downtown lacks direct local transit connections to the airport and rail links.
- The planned Seward-to-Glenn Highway freeway to freeway connection and the potential Knik Arm crossing connection directly into that will have significant impacts and benefits to Downtown.
- Street maintenance requirements including winter snow and ice removal affect streetscape design criteria and upkeep.

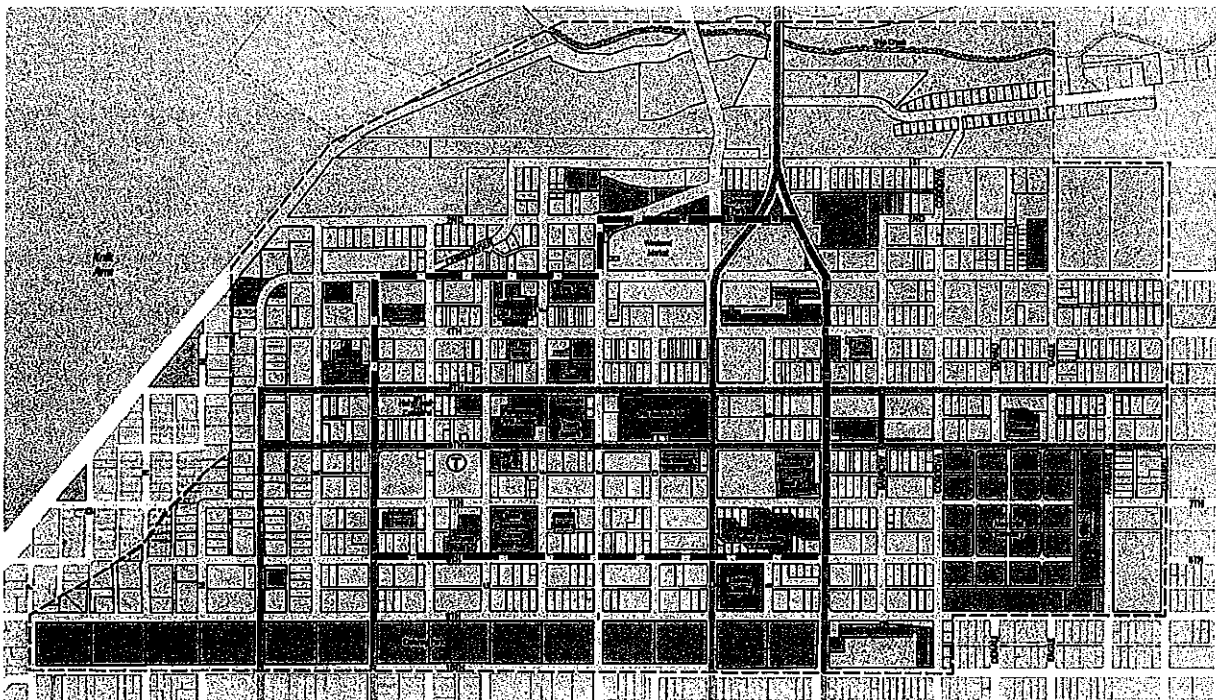
- Ownership of Downtown's streets is split between the Municipality and State, which impacts the form, function and overall integration of the street system. For example, National Highway System requirements prevent certain retail signage, and the Municipality's policies for progressed speeds along certain corridors impact the pedestrian environment.

Parking

- Downtown currently has an abundance of surface parking lots.
- The perception of Downtown's lack of parking is largely due to the timing of on-street parking meters

- and drivers' reluctance to park in surface lots or structures.
- As infill development replaces surface parking lots and Downtown has an increasing number of residents and employees, a coordinated parking strategy will be necessary.

The Downtown street network, roadway ownership and prevalence of parking lots are illustrated in the diagram below. The shared ownership requires coordination in operating and maintaining existing facilities. It also demands collaboration in planning and providing for facility and service expansions.



Legend

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| --- Downtown Study Area | [Pattern] Park/Open Space | [Pattern] ADOT & PF |
| [Pattern] Downtown Core Area | [Pattern] "Notable" Building Footprint | [Pattern] Private |
| | Ⓢ Transit Station | [Pattern] Parking Lot/Structure |

Road Ownership Diagram

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION



TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION GOALS

The Downtown transportation system must support the Downtown vision and accomplish many goals at once. The goals on the opposite page articulate the way in which future transportation should provide access to and within Downtown. These goals provide a framework for analyzing potential transportation improvements in Downtown Anchorage.



On many streets Downtown, pedestrians are exposed to three lanes of fast-moving vehicles (above top). Bus access to, from and around Downtown is key to creating a vibrant urban center (above).

Promote and support walking and transit as the primary circulation modes within the Downtown Core

Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, comfort, and mobility and minimize barriers to walking. Route buses such that transit can be used as a natural extension of the Downtown walk trip.

Provide access to Downtown via multiple modes of transportation

Downtown should be accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders, and motorists for a wide variety of trips, including employment, education, shopping, recreation, and tourism. Improve transit routing to maximize efficiency and the number of destinations served.

Provide convenient public parking locations and way-finding

Manage and market parking in Downtown to allow convenient access to destinations and seamlessly connect parking to pedestrian and transit systems.

Manage public rights-of-way

Downtown's rights-of-way widths are limited. To balance the quality of service provided for each mode, ensure that walking and transit are seen as the priority for local access and circulation. Maintain sufficient capacity in the roadway network to serve regional through-trips on appropriate corridors.

Provide a network of streets that is simple to navigate

Reduce the out-of-direction travel and confusion that results from the current mix of one- and two-way streets. Provide greater redundancy in the street grid to avoid and alleviate congestion. Reduce the number of blocks with "negative circulation", defined as a block that cannot be completely circumnavigated in either direction. Blocks with negative circulation increase out-of-direction travel.



The Downtown transportation network and streetscape design should adhere to ADA standards and cultivate a universally accessible environment.

Recommendations

A number of key recommendations will transform the nature of the city center's transportation network and, in turn, the entire Downtown environment. All recommendations adhere to the goals set forth at the beginning of the chapter; they must be particularly sensitive to the first two goals.

The specific recommendations in this section focus on the following topics:

- Street Conversions
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Improvements
- Transit System Improvements
- Coordinated Parking Management Program
- Tour Bus Operations
- Phasing of Improvements

The changes must be carefully phased over time to maintain appropriate levels of service for users of the multi-modal transportation system. See Appendix B: Transportation Recommendations Memorandum for detailed technical analysis that supports these recommendations.

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 developed and evaluated 10 scenarios modeling alternative circulation systems for Downtown. The purpose of the scenarios was to test many concepts and learn what works and what does not.

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, freight mobility, transit access and construction feasibility. From this analysis, a combination of key street conversions are recommended 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 described on 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). 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.

Convert 9th Avenue to a typical three-lane cross section

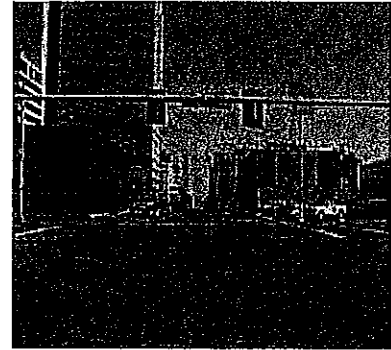
- The near-term conversion of 9th Avenue to a typical three-lane cross section between Gambell and I Streets would allow for the provision of improved pedestrian amenities and on-street parking.
- This change would support efforts to connect all of Downtown with an effective pedestrian system and strengthen connections from Downtown to Delaney Park.
- The conversion requires an operations plan to ensure that bus turning movements, appropriate turn lanes and safe pedestrian crosswalks are incorporated.

Convert D Street and F Street to two-way traffic

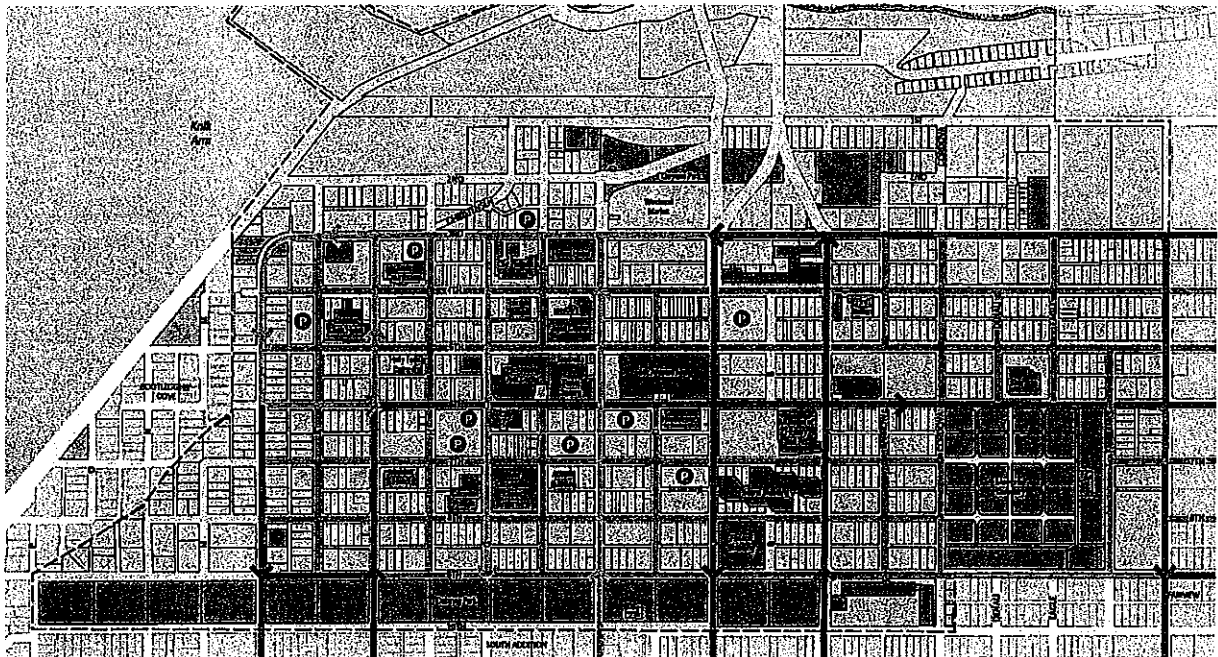
- The near-term conversion of D and F streets to two-way traffic would improve traffic circulation, particularly in the area north of 5th Avenue and west of C Street.
- On-street parking should be maintained and expanded wherever possible.

Convert 3rd Avenue to one-way westbound traffic

- Conversion of 3rd Avenue to one-way westbound is contingent upon the Freeway-to-Freeway connection project being completed. 3rd Avenue would provide a direct



Changes to 9th Avenue will facilitate better pedestrian access to Delaney Park.



Legend

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| --- Downtown Study Area | [Pattern] Park/Open Space | ← 2 Lanes, One-Way | ← 2 Lanes, Two-Way |
| | [Pattern] "Notable" Building Footprint | ← 3 Lanes, One-Way | ← 3 Lanes, Two-Way |
| | [Pattern] Parking Structure | ← 4 Lanes, One-Way | ← 4 Lanes, Two-Way |

Street Network Strategy Diagram

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

connection from the Freeway-to-Freeway into Downtown, with a three-lane cross section likely being provided east of C Street and then transitioning to a two-lane cross section west of C Street.

- 3rd Avenue should be equipped with a continuous sidewalk on both sides. The section west of C Street should have high-quality pedestrian amenities, such as lighting, street furniture, seasonal plantings (baskets or planters) and an ample sidewalk width. Heated sidewalks are highly desirable.
- On-street parking should be maintained and expanded wherever possible.
- Travel speeds on 3rd Avenue should be managed to provide an attractive pedestrian environment, particularly west of C Street. A progressed speed of 20 MPH or less is recommended.



Traffic analysis suggests that 3rd Avenue can convert to a two-lane, one-way westbound street while maintaining parallel parking lanes on both sides and widened sidewalks.

- Truck traffic should be limited to local access only.
- In conjunction with implementation of the Freeway-to-Freeway project, the Municipality should complete a 3rd Avenue One-Way Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Implementation Plan that addresses:
 - Mitigation measures for bus loading, taxi queuing, auto parking and general impacts on business.
 - Downtown tour bus access routes and safe drop-off and pick-up sites.
 - Pedestrian safety.
 - Reducing routing of Downtown through-traffic movement.
 - Efficient routing of downtown-local traffic movement.
 - Efficient truck routing to ensure truck services are not negatively impacted.
 - Impacts on 3rd Avenue businesses to ensure that the conversion strengthens business.

Convert 5th Avenue to two-way traffic

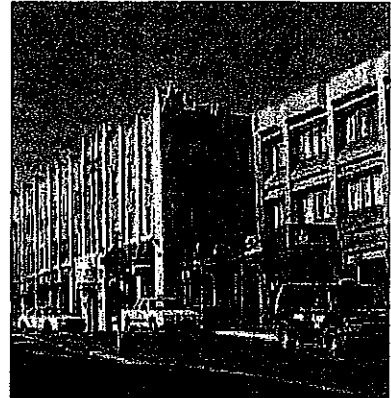
- Conversion of 5th Avenue to two-way traffic is also dependent on the Freeway-to-Freeway connection project being completed, as well as 3rd Avenue being converted to one-way westbound.
- Conversion of 5th and 3rd would result in an attractive walking district being created for the entire Downtown area west of C Street between 3rd and 6th Avenues.

The district would benefit from reduced volumes of traffic, due to the Freeway-to-Freeway project and the street conversions, and lower progressed speeds (recommended at 20 MPH or less).

- Reconfiguring 5th Avenue to a two-way road similar to 4th Avenue will allow for convenient passenger drop-off (tour bus and private vehicle) at the Alaska Center for Performing Arts.
- Two-way traffic on 5th Avenue will potentially reduce auto traffic around the Egan Center, Performing Arts Center and other destinations that receive high foot-traffic.
- Traffic light synchronization will be a critical element to managing traffic flow and maintaining low travel speeds.

Convert E Street to a two-way street north of 4th Avenue

- Following the conversion of 3rd Avenue to one-way traffic, the intersection of 3rd Avenue and E Street will need to allow auto movement north and south.
- Two-way traffic on E Street between 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue will provide motorists an additional opportunity to travel south into Downtown.
- Maintain E Street as a one-way northbound street south of 4th Avenue.
- Coordinate streetscape and infrastructure improvements with the E Street Corridor Enhancement Project.



The strategy calls for conversion of E Street to a two-way street north of 4th Avenue.



The current configuration of three lanes of westbound traffic on 5th Avenue gives more priority to through traffic than to pedestrians in the heart of Downtown.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

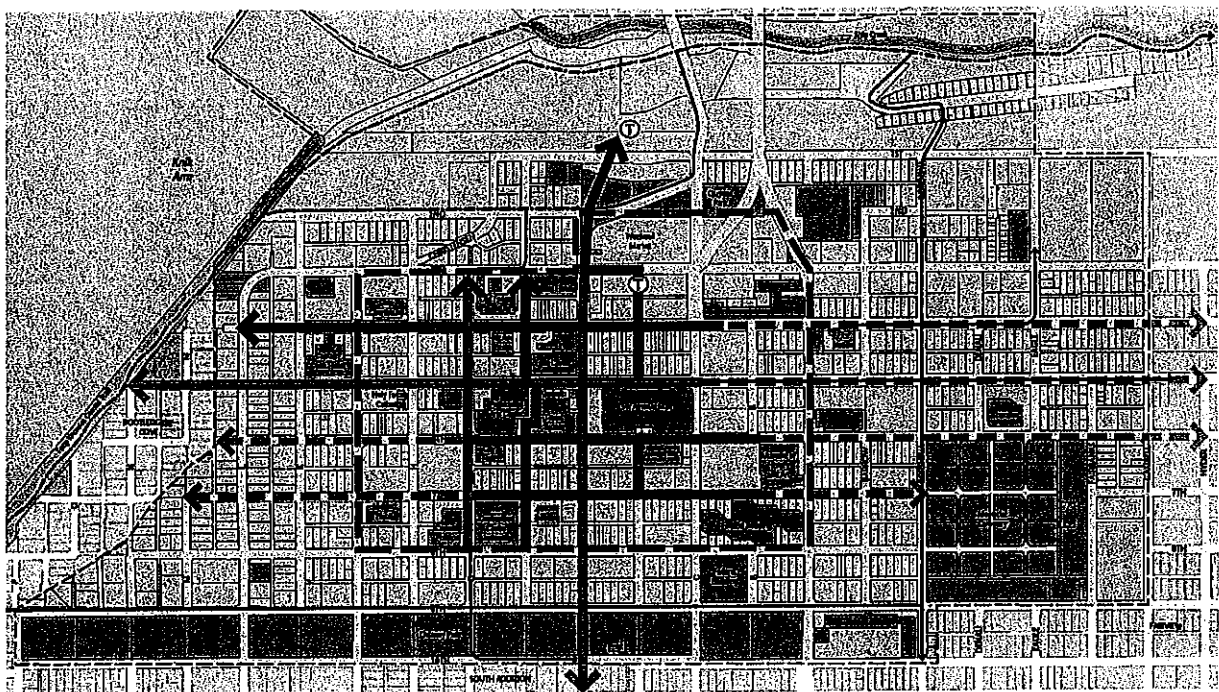
2. Improve the Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment

A safe and attractive pedestrian environment supported by an efficient bicycle and transit network is a key component of the economic health and social vitality of Downtown.

Walking should be considered the primary mode of travel within the Downtown Core. Many improvements to the pedestrian environment would also benefit bicyclists. Opportunities to make improvements for both modes include physical and operational changes.

Create a network of high quality street environments that provide continuous, safe and universal pedestrian access.

- Improve the Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Connections identified in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram.
- Promote streetscape improvements recommended in the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan (appendices), to enhance pedestrian activity and support development and economic growth.
- Enhance pedestrian crossings for continuity of access around Downtown. Install safe crossings across the A and C, 5th and 6th and I and L couplets.



Legend

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| --- Downtown Study Area | [Pattern] Park/Open Space | ← On-Street Bicycle Connection | ← Primary Pedestrian Connection |
| ■ Downtown Core | [Pattern] "Notable" Building Footprint | --- Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail | ← Secondary Pedestrian Connection |
| | | ⊕ Transit Station | |

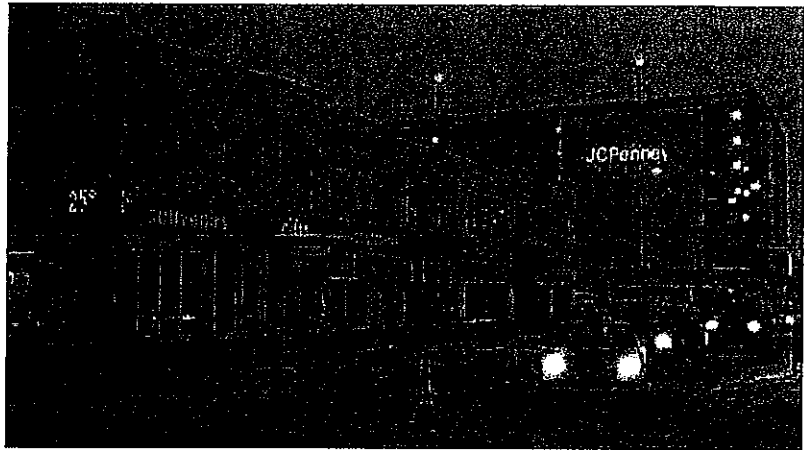
Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram

Connect regional bicycle and pedestrian trails into Downtown.

- Improve the Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails and On-street Bicycle Connections identified on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram.
- Link Anchorage's trails system into Downtown's Pedestrian Connections to integrate non-vehicular circulation throughout Downtown. Directly link pedestrians and bicyclists to Downtown's transit stations, parks and open spaces, cultural sites, facilities and neighborhoods.
- Ensure that safe, identifiable bicycle routes are prioritized. A bicycle lane should be designated as part of the 5th Avenue street conversion. Rights-of-way such as E and G that cannot accommodate a separate bicycle lane should include traffic calming and bicycle amenities.

Manage traffic speed and volumes on Downtown streets to minimize the perceptions of pedestrian barriers.

- Encourage average speeds of 20 MPH or less on all Downtown streets using traffic calming measures such as:
 - Raised intersections
 - Curb extensions
 - Bike lanes
 - Better street lighting
 - Bulb-outs
 - Narrower travel lanes



Forthcoming changes to E Street will help to create a more pedestrian friendly environment (above top). Street level pedestrian design should take into account access to parking areas (above).

- Adjust the progressed speeds of traffic signals along arterials. Traffic signals should provide adequate time for pedestrians to safely cross.

These improvements can be installed individually to address specific problems or system-wide, depending on available funding.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

3. Improve the Downtown Transit System

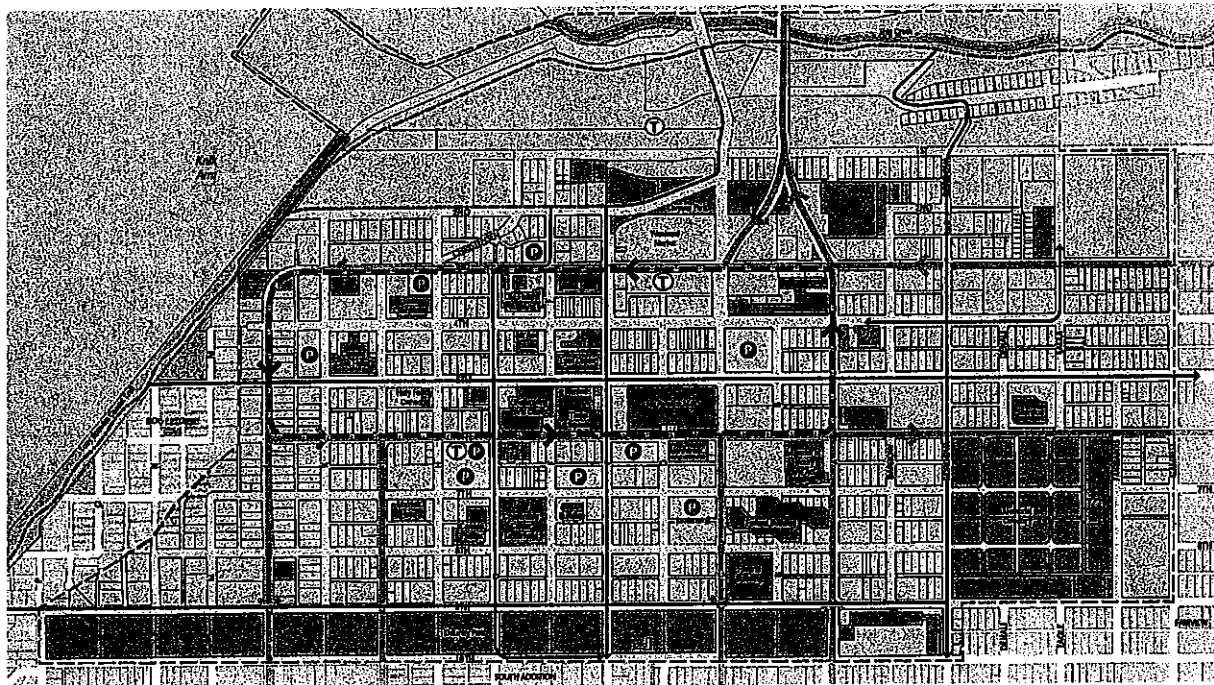
The increased density planned for the city center will significantly increase Downtown traffic volumes unless viable alternatives to driving are provided. Transit should be perceived as the most effective means of extending the distance people walk in Downtown. Transit and share-a-ride programs should also be a viable alternative for Downtown commuters.

Modernize and/or relocate the Transit Center.

- The Municipality should conduct a Transit Center Relocation Feasibility Study to determine the best

location and improvements. This plan suggests the Municipality consider moving the center to Catalytic Development Site #1 on 3rd Avenue, in order to create a safe, accessible multi-use transit facility; improve Downtown transit functionality; and improve overall traffic circulation. See Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development for Transit Center site criteria.

- Improve pedestrian connections to Third Avenue via E Street corridor improvements and the public staircase in line with D Street.
- Off-street loading at the Transit Center will improve the efficiency of both transit and traffic operations in Downtown.



Transit Diagram

Initiate a Downtown Circulator to provide direct access throughout the core on a regular basis.

- The Circulator route (shown in the diagram on the opposite page) will provide a direct link between the Transit Center and many important Downtown destinations.
- This special dedicated bus line would provide close access to every public parking garage within the Core, allowing people to park once and take the Circulator to specific destinations.
- The Circulator headway should not be more than five minutes.
- The Municipality should consider public/private funding strategies, such as Business Improvement District contributions for the operating costs.

Coordinate transit services and amenities.

- Reassess the transit network to determine the best transit routes that will provide Downtown workers, residents and shoppers with convenient and efficient options.
- Locate transit stops outside all major civic and cultural destinations.
- Construct curb extensions at bus stops to facilitate universal accessibility and improve travel time. Transition away from turnouts as part of street and transit improvement projects.
- Provide amenities that make transit use more viable, such as heated bus stops and schedule information.
- Establish a non-stop express transit route that connects the Alaska Na-

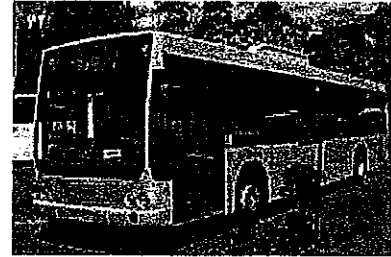
tive Medical Center to Downtown.

- Encourage major Downtown employers to promote employee transit use and provide bonuses to developments that are transit-supportive.
- The Transit Center, Downtown Circulator, and transit routes should be located to efficiently connect Downtown to the larger metropolitan region and provide convenient service coverage for the Downtown area. For example, Downtown transit should connect to the proposed circulator route for the Midtown area.

4. Develop a Coordinated Parking Strategy

Parking management is one of the most important facets of an effective transportation and circulation system. As in most urban environments, there is a perception in Anchorage that Downtown lacks adequate parking. Research on parking garage vacancy rates has shown that there is a surplus of parking spaces during the most active times of the day. In contrast, the number of on-street parking spaces are limited. Lighting and safety within parking structures and meter management have been identified as the greatest barriers to parking in Downtown. As a result, in particular locations the demand for on-street parking exceeds the supply, and drivers searching for vacant parking spaces increase congestion.

Providing parking facilities in the right locations not only alleviates traffic congestion, but can also encourage



The Downtown Circulator should be a special, dedicated bus transit line that is quick, efficient and easily recognizable.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

pedestrian activity. If motorists entering Downtown are able to quickly park, they can complete their journey through Downtown on foot. It is also important to ensure that parking facilities are a well-designed and integrated part of the streetscape experience.

Publicize and provide wayfinding to available parking

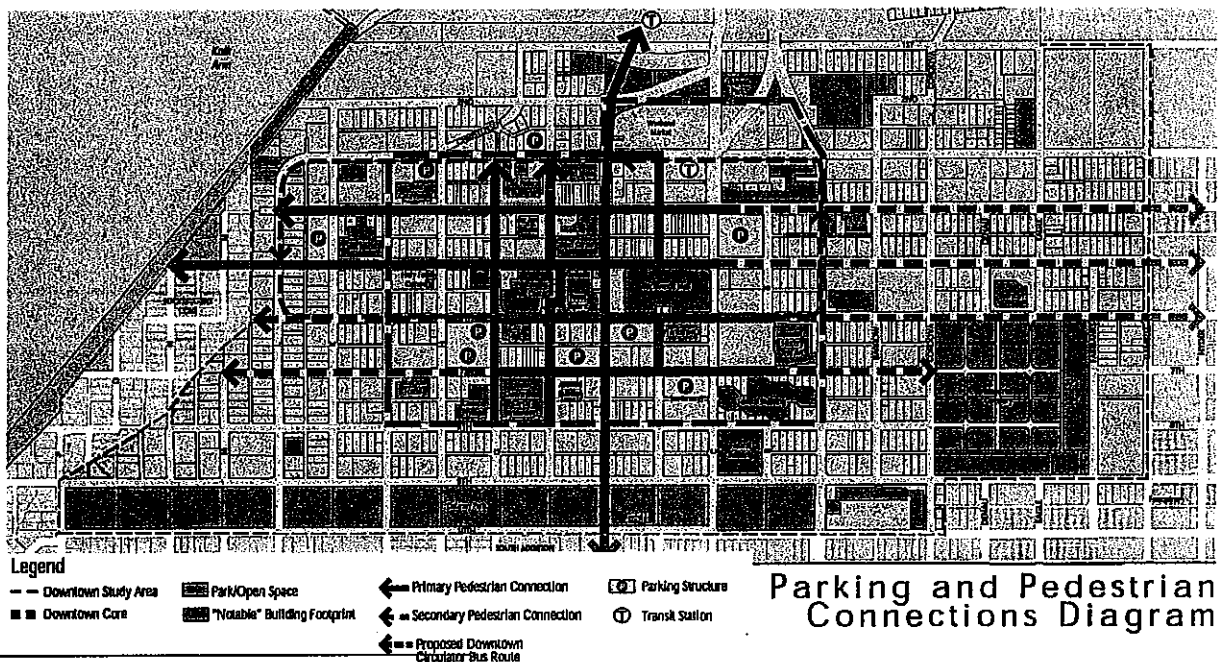
- Publicize and promote the Downtown parking system, including maps that locate parking options for residents and visitors.
- Inform the public that the parking supply Downtown—14,000 spaces, 7,000 of which are operated by the Municipality—exceeds the demand for spaces.
- Utilize technology such as real-time informational signs to publicize the number and location of available parking spaces.

Consider parking fee structure alternatives.

- Explore managing Downtown parking by pricing parking to match demand.
- Alternatively, consider different methods of managing parking that will draw visitors Downtown, including free parking.

Provide on-street parking opportunities.

- Maintain parking lanes wherever possible.
- Transition to the kiosk system of parking meters that accept multiple forms of payment and reduce sidewalk impediments.
- Implement and manage time limits and fees for on-street parking to help encourage parking turnover. On-street parking fee structure and time limits should favor shoppers,



not employees. Greater on-street parking turnover Downtown leads to less congestion. It also benefits businesses by increasing the amount of parking for potential customers.

Strategically locate parking garages.

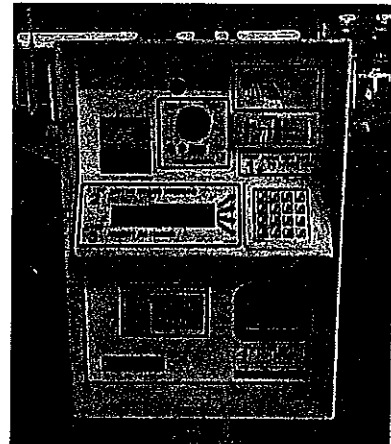
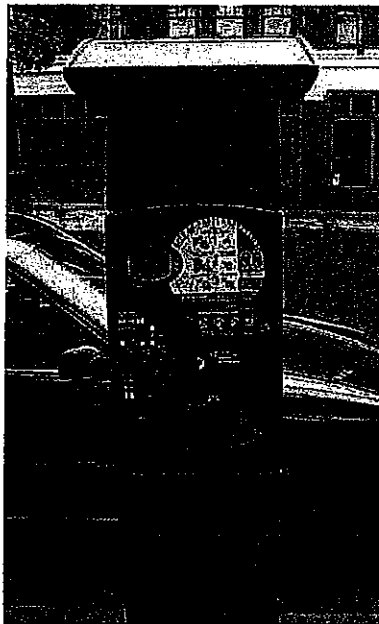
- Parking garages should be well-distributed and more conveniently located throughout Downtown.
- Locate public parking to capture motorists at the earliest and most convenient locations upon entering Downtown.
- Seamlessly connect parking garages to pedestrian-friendly streets and transit systems, including the Downtown Circulator.
- As Downtown builds out in the future, consider developing parking garages under Delaney Park.

Design pedestrian-friendly parking facilities.

- Screen surface lots with landscaping, and put active uses on the ground floor of parking structures. For a more complete description of design guidelines regulating parking facilities, please refer to Chapter 6: Urban Design.
- Require parking structures to be well-lit, easy to navigate and well-marked.



The stereotype of parking garages as unsafe, dark places should be diminished with new parking structure design requirements that ensure well-lit environments with ground-level businesses to attract activity, such as the structure above. Kiosk parking meters, such as the two pictured below, accept multiple forms of payments and are an efficient use of space

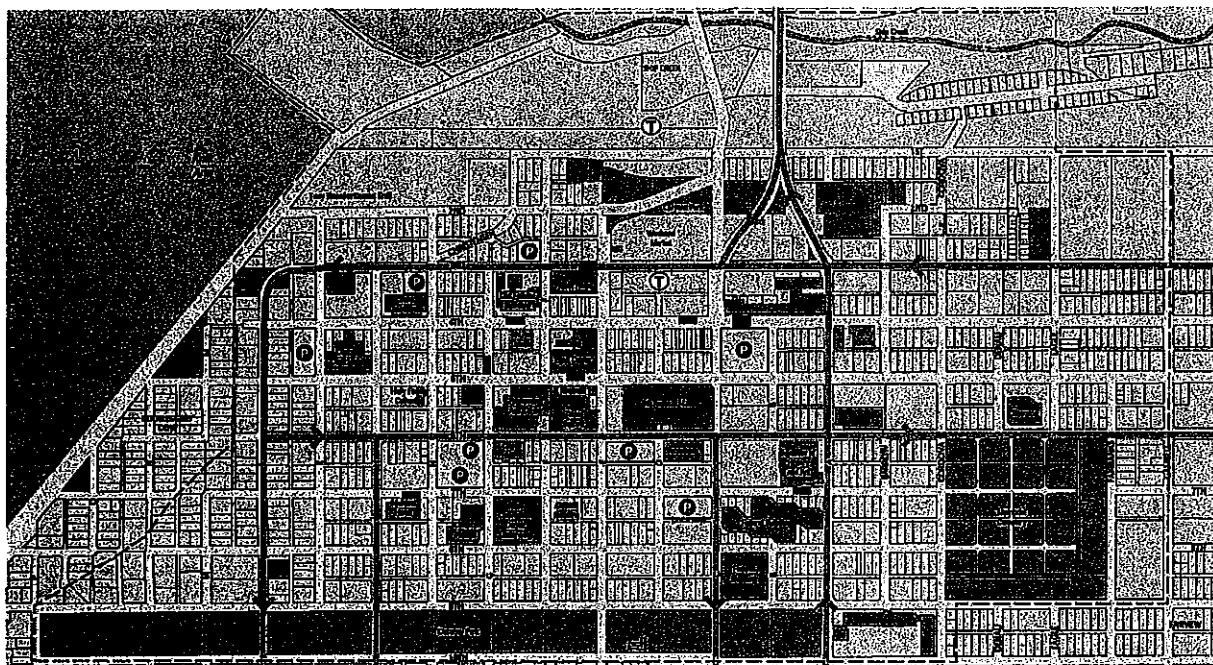


TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

5. Accommodate Tour Bus Operations

Downtown benefits from over 1,700 day-trip cruise passengers arriving via bus to spend three to six hours in the city center. In addition, approximately 1,750 passengers stay overnight in Downtown hotels. The tour bus circulation routes and passenger drop-off locations are critical to the success of Downtown's circulation system.

- Welcome day-trip tourists into the heart of Downtown and position drop-off locations in close proximity to its cultural and commercial amenities. Existing drop-off locations are noted on the diagram below.
- Ensure adequate passenger drop-off locations for overnight passengers at frequented hotels.
- Coordinate tour bus circulation with truck routes and local traffic patterns.
- Avoid bus queuing and idling adjacent to primary pedestrian corridors so that pedestrian comfort is not impacted by exhaust fumes. Locate bus idling on peripheral lots.
- Work with tour bus operators to locate bus and luggage truck operations at sites with adequate curb accessibility, curb approaches, intersection turning radii and efficient routing. Strive to create sites that



Tour Bus Drop-off Locations Diagram

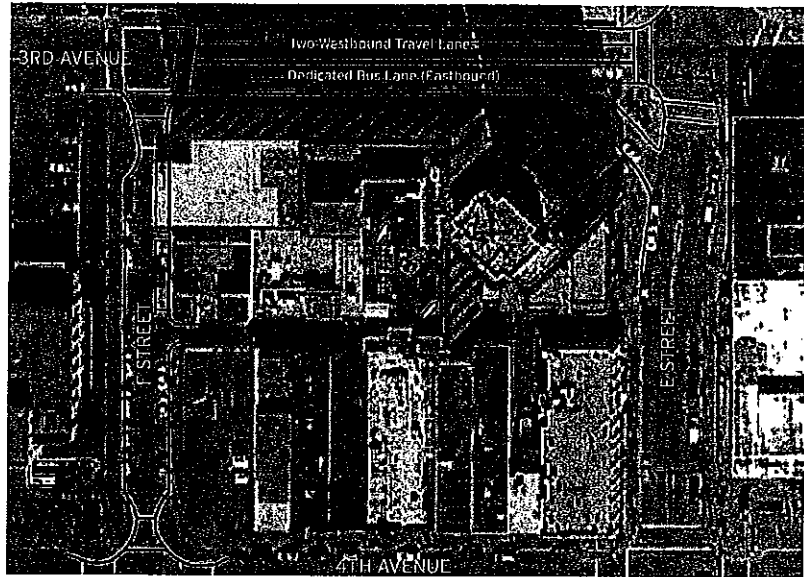
allow independent bus movements, avoid public street crossings by passengers to final destinations (i.e. hotels, hospitality suites, etc.) and allow easy ingress/egress.

- Apply techniques as illustrated at right to provide adequate tour bus and luggage truck access and operations at key destinations. This illustration shows a two-way treatment of 3rd Avenue on the north side of the Hilton Hotel to accommodate bus loading and unloading. Luggage truck and tour bus loading and unloading could also be accommodated on F Street, as shown.

6. Phase Improvements Over Time

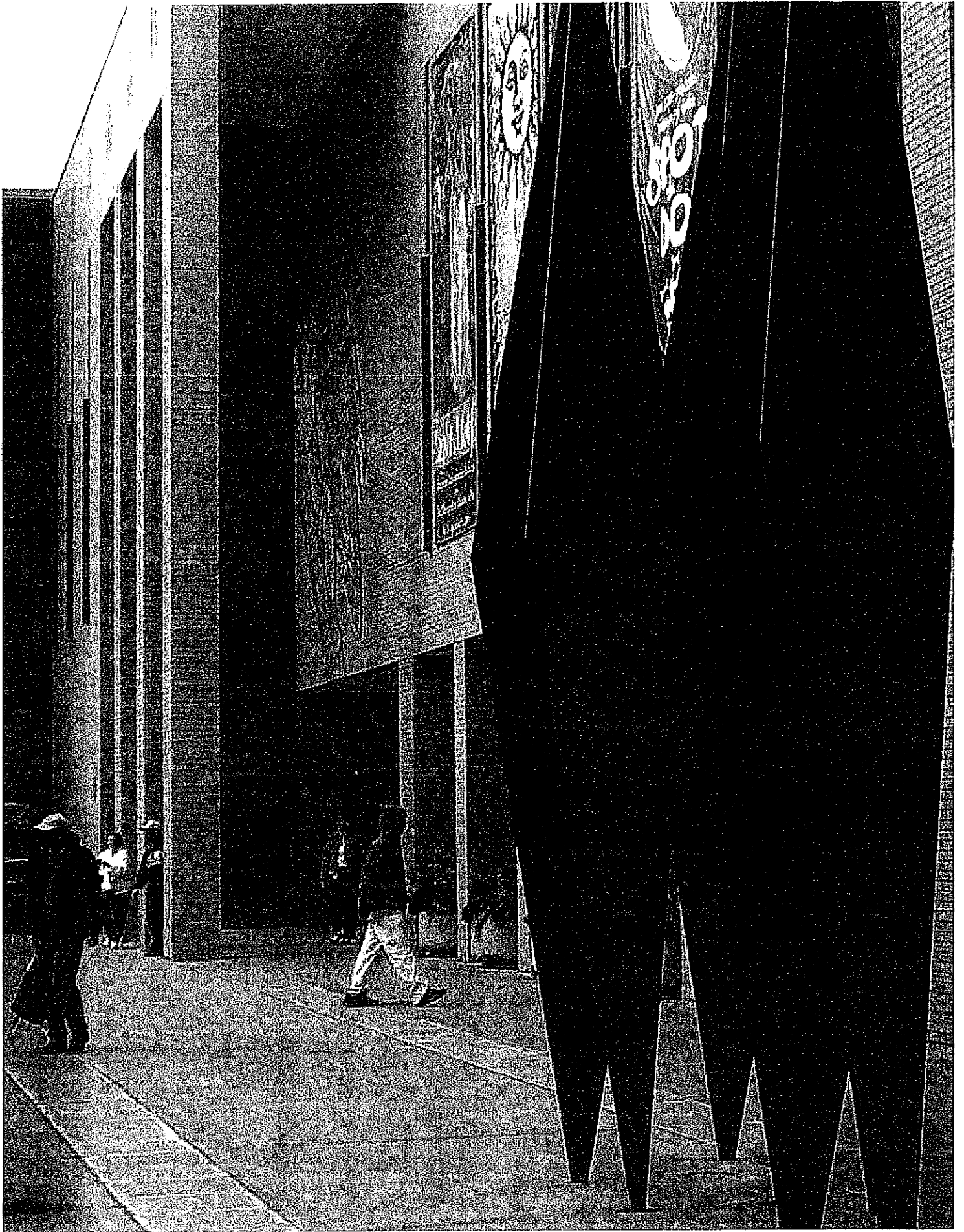
Serving the mixed-use needs of Downtown Anchorage, while also meeting the needs of surrounding areas (ports, industry, warehousing, etc.) and the mobility needs of the region, is a significant load for Downtown. Downtown's streets must simultaneously act as highways, arterials, truck routes, transit routes, bicycle routes, and pedestrian routes. The current network has been sufficient over the past several decades, but it is not appropriate for Downtown's future growth.

The phasing of future improvements will provide appropriate transportation services in a manner well suited to adjacent land uses and development. A phased approach that is sensitive to the myriad complexities of transportation and land use will ultimately result in a stronger, more viable system for Downtown.



This concept provides an example of how tour bus and luggage truck operations can be accommodated at the Hilton Hotel, with conversion of 3rd Avenue to one-way westbound. Curbside access is provided such that passengers have direct access to building entrances without crossing any streets. The same is true for luggage trucks. Bus approach and departure routes allow for independent movement of each bus. Curb frontage is adequate for existing demands with flexibility to expand as demand increases. Curb returns can be shaped and sized to provide generous turning radii to accommodate bus movements.

Success will depend on many factors, such as funding, right-of-way, policy priorities and system flexibility and redundancy. Current policies have not been wholly successful in creating a harmonious relationship between Downtown land use and the transportation system. In addition to the recommendations outlined in the Downtown Comprehensive Plan, future policies should strive to improve local circulation and access in areas with high redevelopment potential. Future policies and projects should also attempt to separate high-volume thoroughfares from streets with multiple pedestrian attractions.



6 urban design

OVERVIEW

Downtown Anchorage is the urban hub of not only Anchorage, but the entire state of Alaska. Its unique history, natural setting, cultural events, and architectural and streetscape design all combine to create an urban design environment like no other in the world.

Recognizing both the strengths and function of the built environment and the physical impacts of existing zoning—and determining what new regulations and guidelines are necessary to enhance these characteristics—is critical during this phase in Downtown's development. By doing so, Downtown Anchorage can celebrate its past, embrace its unique northern climate conditions and become America's best example of a Winter City—designed to be a great place for its residents, workers and visitors.

This chapter reviews the existing conditions of Downtown's urban design; identifies the goals for maintaining and improving the design of the urban environment; and articulates the guidelines needed to enhance the special qualities of the Downtown experience.





Ground floor uses that spill onto wide, well-designed sidewalks combine to make the Downtown environment a place where people want to be.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Downtown faces a number of environmental and physical constraints that affect how people experience the city center. The most pressing constraints that should be addressed with the design guidelines fall into two categories: Pedestrian Environment and Climate-Sensitive Design.

Pedestrian Environment

- Many sidewalks are of insufficient width for pedestrian mobility and comfort.
- There are limited opportunities to stop, sit and relax.
- Icy sidewalks limit pedestrian mobility in the winter.
- The ground level of many buildings does not open onto the sidewalk or provide visual access between the sidewalk and interior spaces. Long blank walls, mirrored glass and a lack of entry ways oriented to the sidewalk affect the pedestrian environment.
- Pedestrian lighting is often poor and inconsistent from one street to the next.
- The prevalence of surface parking lots takes away from an interesting and safe pedestrian experience.
- Parking garages often lack active uses on the first several stories facing the street, creating dead spaces. Garages should be underground or wrapped with mixed-use space.

Climate and Setting

- Existing structures have not maximized sun penetration and wind protection in the public realm. Taller building designs have failed to incorporate canopies, step-backs or other architectural elements to create a more comfortable ground level pedestrian environment. This has resulted in many windy, dark entry plazas, sidewalks and open spaces.
- Many buildings lack appropriately designed pedestrian shelter. Awnings and canopies often block sunlight and shed rain, snow and ice onto the sidewalk.
- The use of heavy equipment and salt to remove snow reduces the lifespan and impacts the aesthetics of the streetscape.
- The streetscape lacks amenities and visual attractions during winter.
- Certain scenic view corridors are impacted by building massing or projections such as skywalks.
- References to local culture or the natural setting are often absent from the design of streets, open spaces and buildings. Downtown does have a significant collection of historic buildings which give the city center a distinctive character along portions of 4th Avenue as well as other locations.

URBAN DESIGN GOALS

Downtown's livability is largely dependent on the design of its public and private realms. The urban design goals aim to strengthen Downtown's uniquely urban experience.

Design for people

Build attractive, well-designed buildings and streetscapes that foster a walkable city center, and have an urban design aesthetic and pedestrian scale that makes people want to live, work and play Downtown.

- Provide walkable, safe, easily accessed connections throughout Downtown and to adjacent districts.
- Activate the ground floor environment by opening buildings towards the street and requiring facade articulation, building setbacks, and other pedestrian-scale design elements.

Design for density

Use sensitive design to assemble a high concentration of commercial, civic, cultural and residential uses. Design each development to be compatible with its neighbors, allowing a mix of uses to coexist. Integrate the variety of uses and activities around shared public streets and spaces, and make buildings open and inviting to this shared public realm.

- Sensitive building design can minimize shadow and wind effects, noise, traffic and light trespass on nearby mixed-use residences.
- Orienting building windows and entrances to the sidewalk helps each development to interact with and contribute to the shared public realm.

Design for the northern climate

Create a great northern city center for all seasons. Make Downtown a comfortable, attractive place to be throughout the year. Extend the warmth, comfort and vibrancy of the peak summer season further into the spring and fall by responding to Alaska's climate in the design of buildings, street environment and public spaces.

- Utilize building design that is optimal for a northern climate.
- Coordinate winter maintenance needs and winter pedestrian access in the design of Downtown's streetscape.



Design elements such as this outdoor heater in Kiruna, Sweden (above top) or this open air atrium in Downtown Denver, CO (above) create more hospitable public spaces throughout the year.

Design Guidelines

As the density of Downtown Anchorage increases, it is especially important to develop guidelines that foster urban development that is compatible with existing uses; are respectful of the natural environment and views; and support creation of an exciting and vibrant northern climate city environment. The guidelines are intended to uphold the vision for Downtown Anchorage and realize its urban design goals.

These guidelines are for both public and private development, ranging from district-wide improvements to individual building design, providing the Municipality, architects and developers with guidance as to community's expectations for the quality and compatibility of design in the city center. They also provide general guidance for the preparation of the Downtown land use and development code, which will establish specific requirements and incentives for future development. In certain cases the design guidelines may also be used to supplement the land use code during discretionary design reviews, such as by a board or commission. In such cases, the guidelines would be recommendations and subject to discretionary review.

The design guidelines for Downtown are divided into two categories:

- Enhance the Public Realm
- Improve the Quality of Building Design

Downtown Land Use and Development Code

In conjunction with the Title 21 Rewrite, the Downtown Comprehensive Plan is accompanied by a separate land use and development code for Downtown. These regulations will be used to implement the Downtown Comprehensive Plan and fit within the framework of the Title 21 Rewrite. The new Downtown development code will:

- Set form-based contextual rules for building type and form.
- Be clear and unambiguous.
- Address areas with high seismic risk with a seismic overlay zone. Land use or design standards may be appropriate in areas with greatest potential for ground failure.
- Define three distinct districts within Downtown, and provide different treatments for the different districts in the Downtown.
- Encourage compatible mixed-uses.
- Encourage multi-family and attached residential uses.
- Use graphics as needed to improve understanding.
- Streamline review processes.
- Use graphics as needed to improve understanding.
- Streamline review processes.

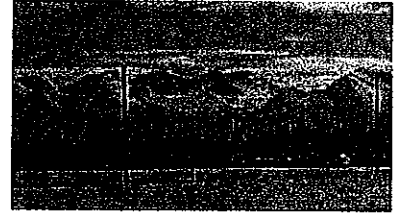
1. Enhance the Public Realm

Public View Protection

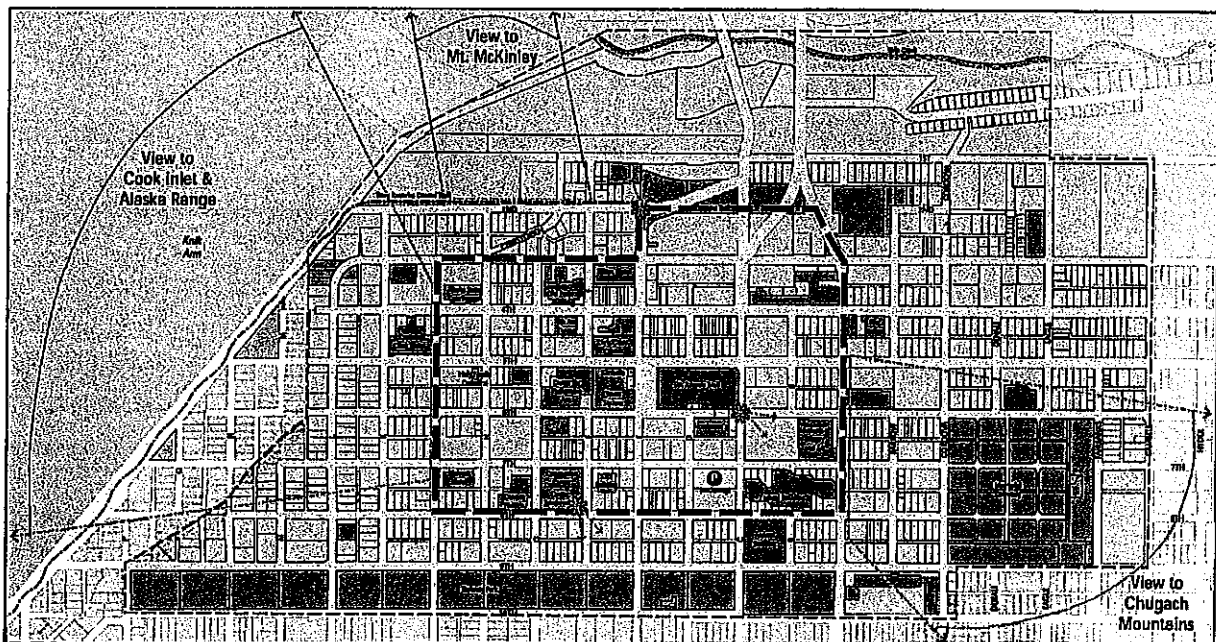
- Preserve visual connections to surrounding natural scenery from street corridors and public spaces.
- Encourage the creation of new vantage points, such as through public viewing areas at the top of buildings.
- Protect the view corridors on the east-west oriented avenues by designing buildings, skywalks and awnings to minimize view obstructions.
- Identify specific vantage points and the priority viewsheds for protection. These viewsheds and vantage

points include (as shown in the Viewshed and Vantage point Diagram below):

- Views of Denali and the waterfront to the north and the Alaska Range and Inlet to the west, especially from streets ending near the bluffs or the water.
- Views south and east to the Chugach Mountain Range.
- Views of landmark buildings, art work or major public spaces or activities.
- Vantage points overlooking the Port and Ship Creek.



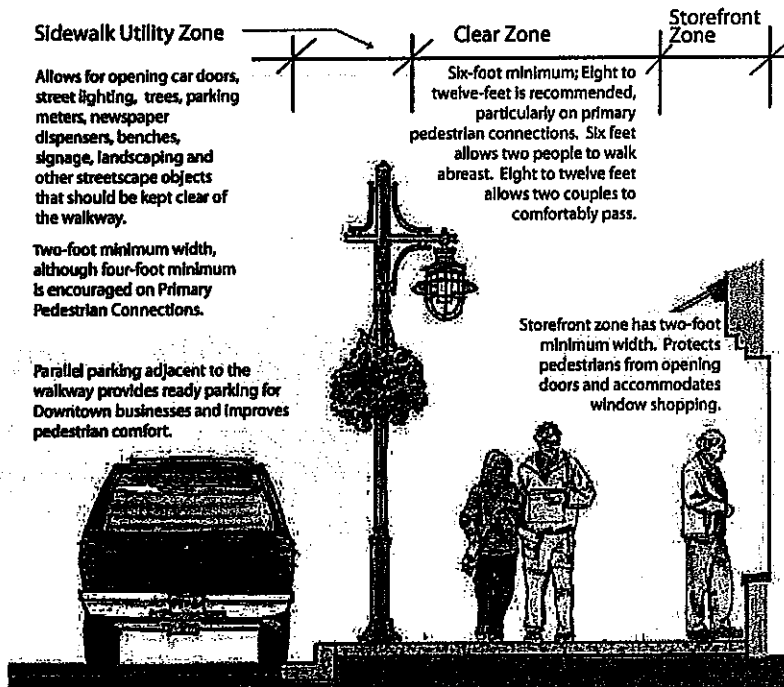
The views from Delaney Park (top right) and the Downtown Core (right) showcase the Chugach Mountains. Viewshed Impacts should be strongly considered for the location and design of new development in Downtown.



Viewshed and Vantage Point Diagram

URBAN DESIGN

Sidewalk Section



This sidewalk maintains a clear pedestrian clear zone and is extended into the parking lane for additional tree planting beds. The sidewalk width also accommodates outdoor seating.

Sidewalk Widths

- Maintain a pedestrian clear zone of a minimum of six feet on all sidewalks (left). Increase the width to between eight and twelve feet wherever possible, especially on Primary Pedestrian Connections.
- Provide a two-foot wide sidewalk storefront zone and a sidewalk utility zone as shown in the diagram (left).
- Include parking lanes on all streets. If sidewalk width is less than six feet, consider constructing tree planting beds in place of one parking space.
- Inventory street rights-of-way to determine where sidewalk widening can occur. Where excess travel capacity exists, widen sidewalks to accommodate at least the minimum clear zone.
- Wherever street conversions or reconstructions occur, give priority to extending sidewalk widths.



Maintaining a minimum six-foot wide sidewalk clear zone width is especially important in ensuring Anchorage is a universally accessible city that accommodates a range of abilities.

Public Streetscape Amenities

- Provide public seating opportunities clustered with other amenities, such as lighting, shelter, trash receptacles, public art and landscaping. Every street block within the Downtown Core should include at least one seating opportunity.
- Encourage dining areas outside restaurants and cafes wherever sidewalk width accommodates. Dining areas should not interfere with the clear zone for pedestrian movement.
- Provide places for stopping, such as something to lean on (e.g., bollards or short fences) or edge spaces along building facades (e.g., niches in the façade, slightly recessed entrances, window bays, porches or verandas).
- Create “secondary seating opportunities” such as steps, pedestals, low walls or edges of monuments or fountains.
- Encourage stopping places that are sunlit, wind-protected spaces, or “sun pockets”.
- Encourage small pedestrian amenities that help make the winter walking environment more hospitable—by creating comfort, convenience and interest—such as gas stoves that provide light decoration and warmth, self-cleaning public restrooms, winter lighting, and heated benches.
- Promote street-level spaces for vendors to sell hot food or drinks.

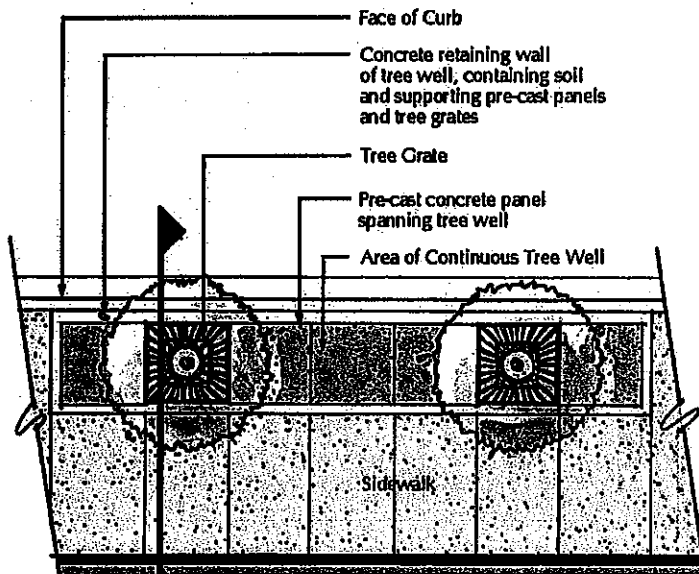
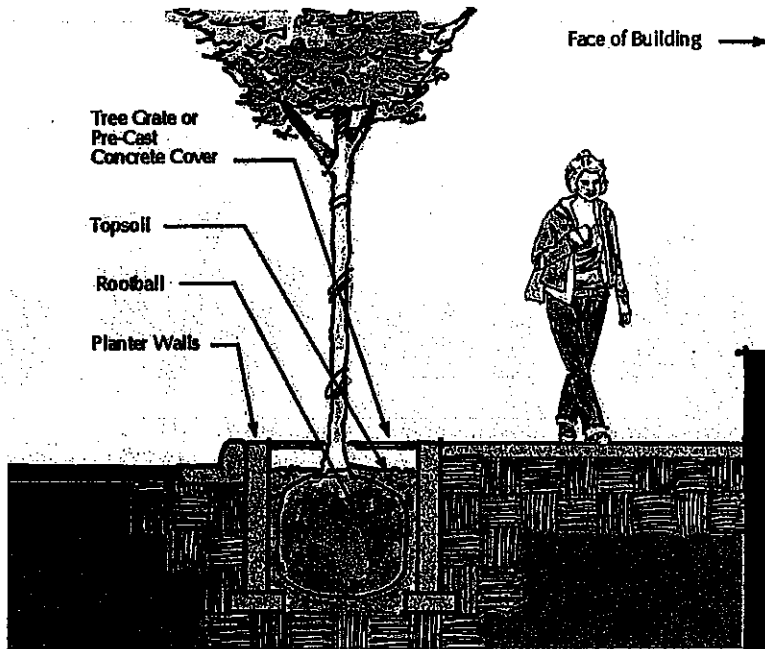


An 18-foot wide sidewalk, pedestrian lighting, annuals planting, and interesting storefronts combine to make a lively streetscape on 4th Avenue (above). Even with wide sidewalks (below), care should be taken to maintain a direct pedestrian travel way suitable for at least two people walking abreast.



URBAN DESIGN

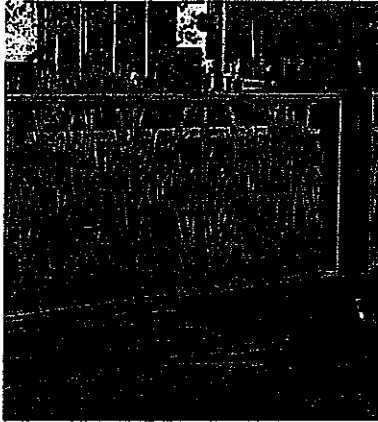
Tree Well (Section)



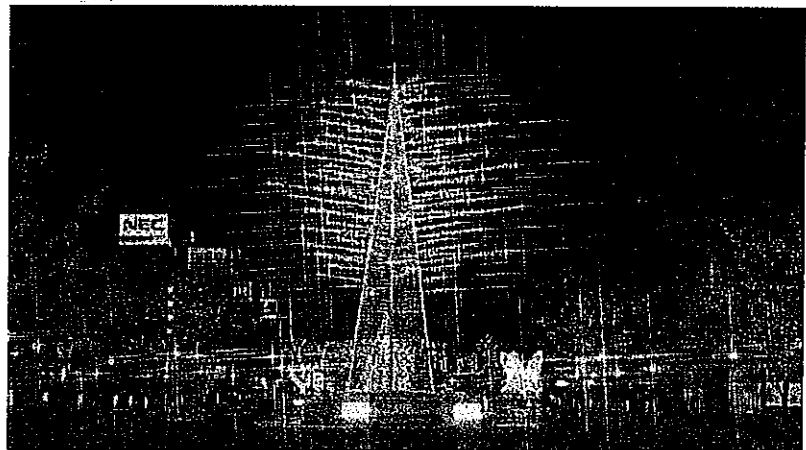
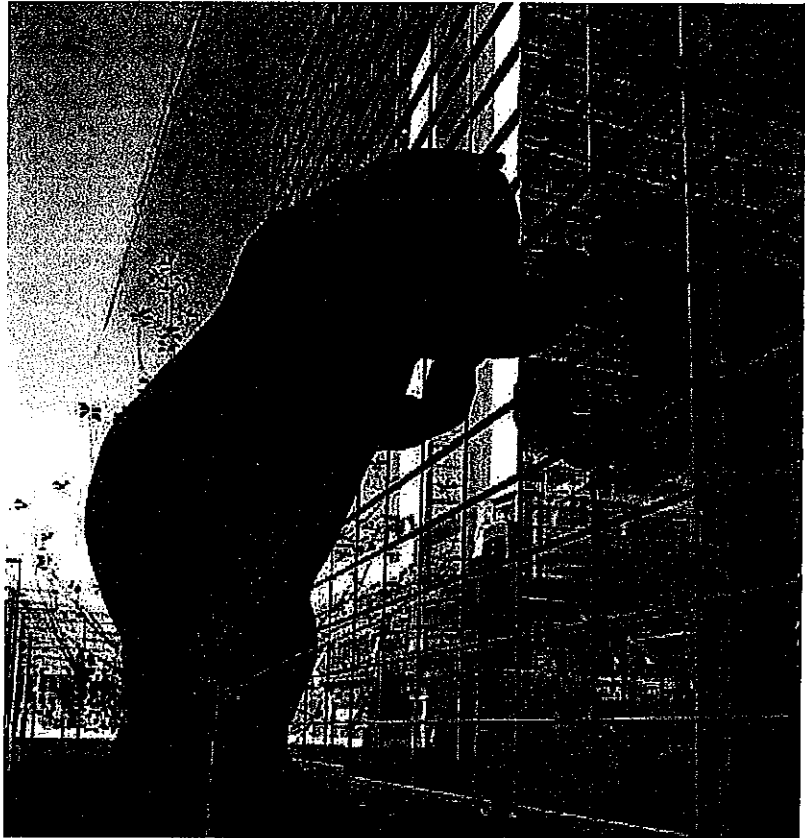
Tree Well (Plan View)

Landscaping and Art Palette

- Encourage the use of landscaping where appropriate for pedestrian safety and aesthetic benefits.
- Plant and maintain street trees where sidewalk width is sufficient for a minimum of five-foot planting bed.
- Use suspended slabs or trench planters to provide more protection to tree roots.
- Where sidewalk widths do not accommodate street tree planting, construct areas for clustered planting and/or public art.
- Preserve mature trees wherever possible.
- Ensure that power outlets for lighting displays are installed at regular intervals and maintained.
- Plant annuals throughout the Downtown Core.
- Encourage integration of public art into public areas, including parks, plazas and sidewalks. Use art to foster a sense of place and promote understanding of the local culture, heritage and natural setting.
- Ensure minimum pedestrian clear zone is maintained. Cluster art features with other streetscape amenities, including seating, lighting, trash receptacles and shelter.
- Introduce seasonal art that celebrates winter, such as water features that become ice sculptures in winter.



Sculptural elements can take on a functional nature. This urban fence (above top) separates pedestrians from adjacent surface parking. Sculpture that integrates art, cultural and natural references and water or lighting elements can be used for small gathering areas (above) or to make a big statement (upper and lower right).

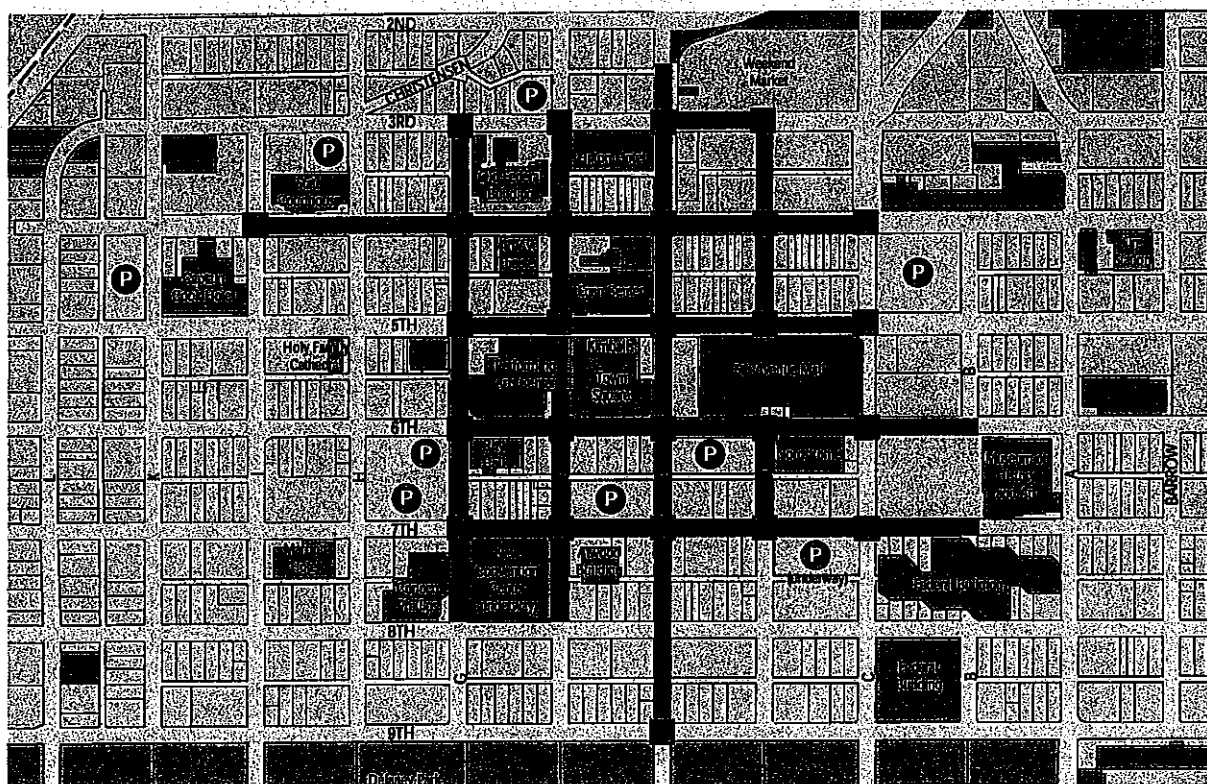




Heated sidewalks in Trondheim, Norway make pedestrian access safe and easy.

Heated Sidewalks

- Phase I (shown in red on map below): the Municipality has identified priority streets in need of heated sidewalks. It should establish a Heated Sidewalk Master Plan.
 - Phase II: Work with property owners to determine distribution and responsibility of infrastructure costs and operating costs.
 - Require new public investment projects to heat selective adjacent sidewalks.
- owners and developers:
- Develop a cost strategy for public/private partnership.
 - Develop a maintenance strategy for public/private partnership.
 - Offer incentives for existing building owners to upgrade access to their properties; consider focusing tax incentives to heated sidewalk construction.

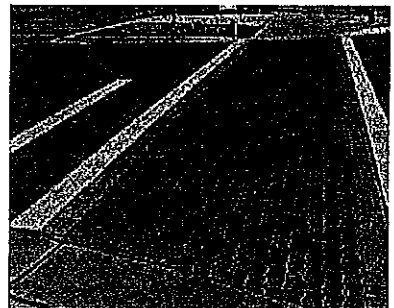
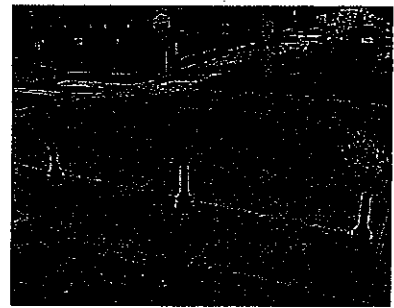
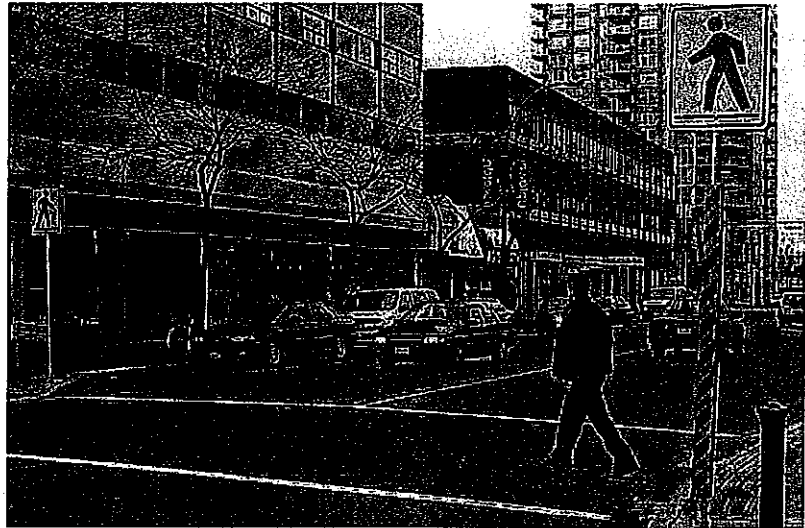


Sidewalk Improvements Diagram



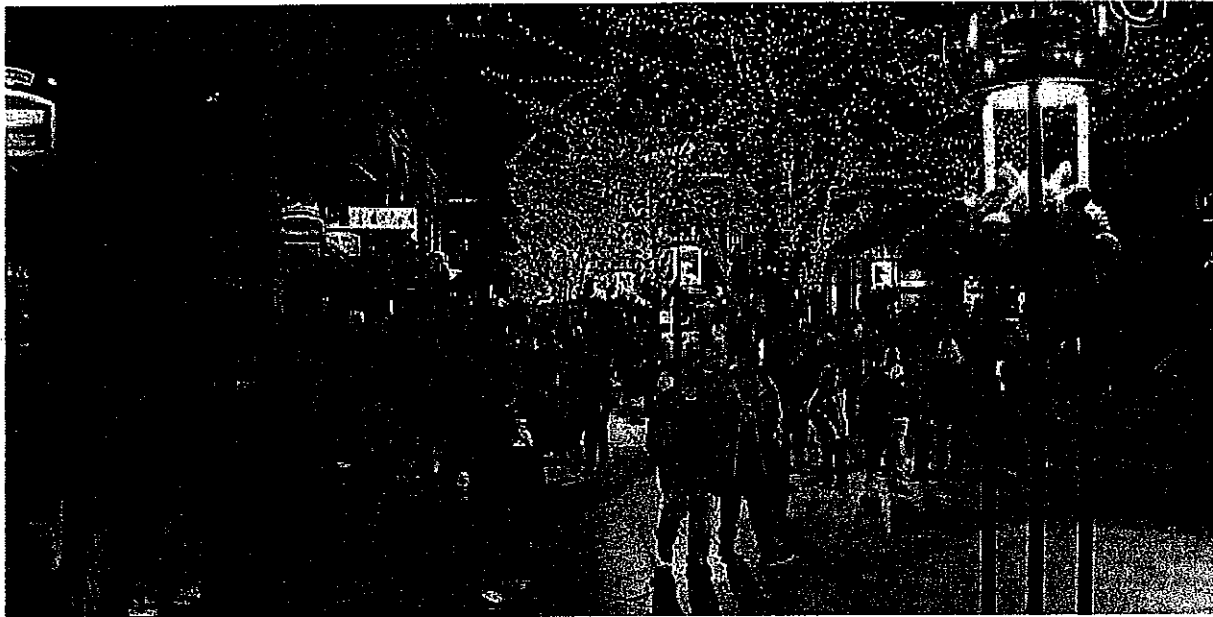
Pedestrian Crossings

- Street crossings are integral to a pedestrian network that provides continuous access throughout Downtown year-round. Make street intersections safe and convenient for pedestrians to cross.
- All intersections with high levels of pedestrian traffic (identified on the Sidewalk Improvements Diagram, opposite page) should be raised or considered for specially-treated crosswalks, through the use of special materials or signage.
- Give preference to raised intersections and crossings because they give pedestrians a continuous, at-grade walking surface while eliminating icy curb cut ramps and standing water. They can also calm traffic and make pedestrians more visible to approaching drivers.
- Ensure that raised crosswalks and intersections are sloped up gradually to minimize impacts on traffic movement and snow removal.
- Incorporate curb bulb-outs at intersections to reduce crossing distances and increase space for sidewalk amenities.
- Minimize vehicular driveways across sidewalks to reduce the impact on pedestrians from cars entering and exiting parking areas.
- Mitigate drainage issues during street reconstructions. Consider relocating drainage catch basins to mid-block to prevent puddling at crosswalks.

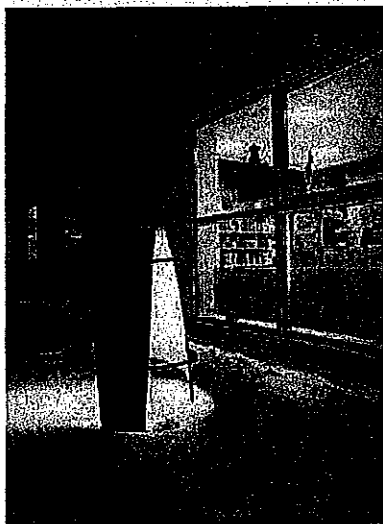


Raised Intersections (middle left and right) or raised crosswalks (bottom left), or special material treatment (top and bottom right) at key pedestrian crossings will help distinguish the pedestrian zone, improve walking conditions and slow down through-traffic.

URBAN DESIGN



Downtown Denver's 16th Street Mall (above) lights up at night and attracts pedestrians with a combination of storefront lighting, street lamps, and decorative tree lighting.



Lighting from building interiors and sculptural elements can bring warmth to the street, improve safety and create intimate spaces in the outdoor environment.

Lighting

- Enhance visibility, public safety and the attractiveness of Downtown in the evenings and during winter with high quality lighting.
- Establish base-level illumination standards for adequate, uniform lighting for sidewalks, streets and open spaces.
- Illuminate sidewalks with pedestrian-scale fixtures to promote comfort, security and safety. Intensify lighting levels at key crossings.
- Area lighting should use white light for its aesthetic benefits and its clear rendering of colors and objects.
- Area lighting should be directed generally downward and use cut-off fixtures to minimize glare and trespass light.
- Illuminate front doors on residential streets.
- Encourage decorative seasonal lighting.
- Lighting fixture styles should provide a unifying urban design element to Downtown while allowing for variety and fostering a sense of place in Downtown's individual sub-districts. The new lighting palette should complement existing Downtown lighting and reflect the distinct sub-district in which it is located.
- Design light poles to accommodate banners and hanging flower baskets.
- Bring indoor illumination to the sidewalk with lighting from building interiors through the windows.

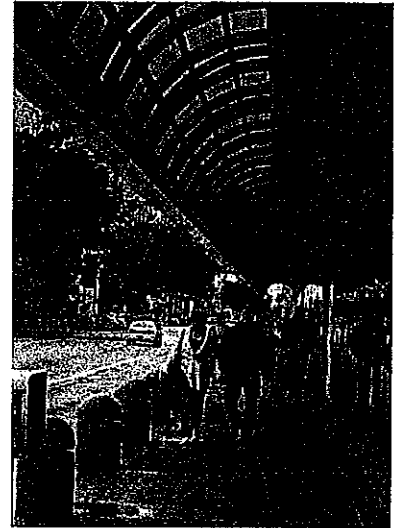
Pedestrian Shelter

- Provide overhead protection that promotes year round comfort and adds color and visual interest.
- Create building arcades along streets with narrow sidewalks. An arcade is indented into the ground floor building wall and creates a sheltered walkway adjacent to the public sidewalk (see top illustration at right and photographs on the next page). Arcades are preferable to awnings or canopies because they permit an extension of sidewalk width, avoid obstructing sunlight or views along the existing sidewalk and can provide a more comfortable, sheltered transition space between the indoors and outdoors.
- The interior of arcades should be wide enough for two couples to pass comfortably, have high enough ceilings to provide ventilation and openness and be illuminated.
- Design awnings and canopies to avoid shedding snow and icy drip lines on the sidewalk.
- Canopies should have transparent roofs that allow sunlight to reach the sidewalk.
- Awnings and canopies should be designed to complement the architectural design of their buildings.

- Primary building entrances along major pedestrian routes, pick-up/drop-off zones and next to transit stops should incorporate overhead protection.
- Encourage publicly accessible indoor spaces and indoor/outdoor transition spaces with seating and amenities for public use. These spaces should be located in areas that have a high level of public use, be directly connected to public streets and open spaces, be visually interesting and afford views and sunlight access.
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Public Events Facilitation

- Coordinate with E and F Street corridor improvements.
- Consider installing removable bollards to prevent vehicular traffic at key public areas.



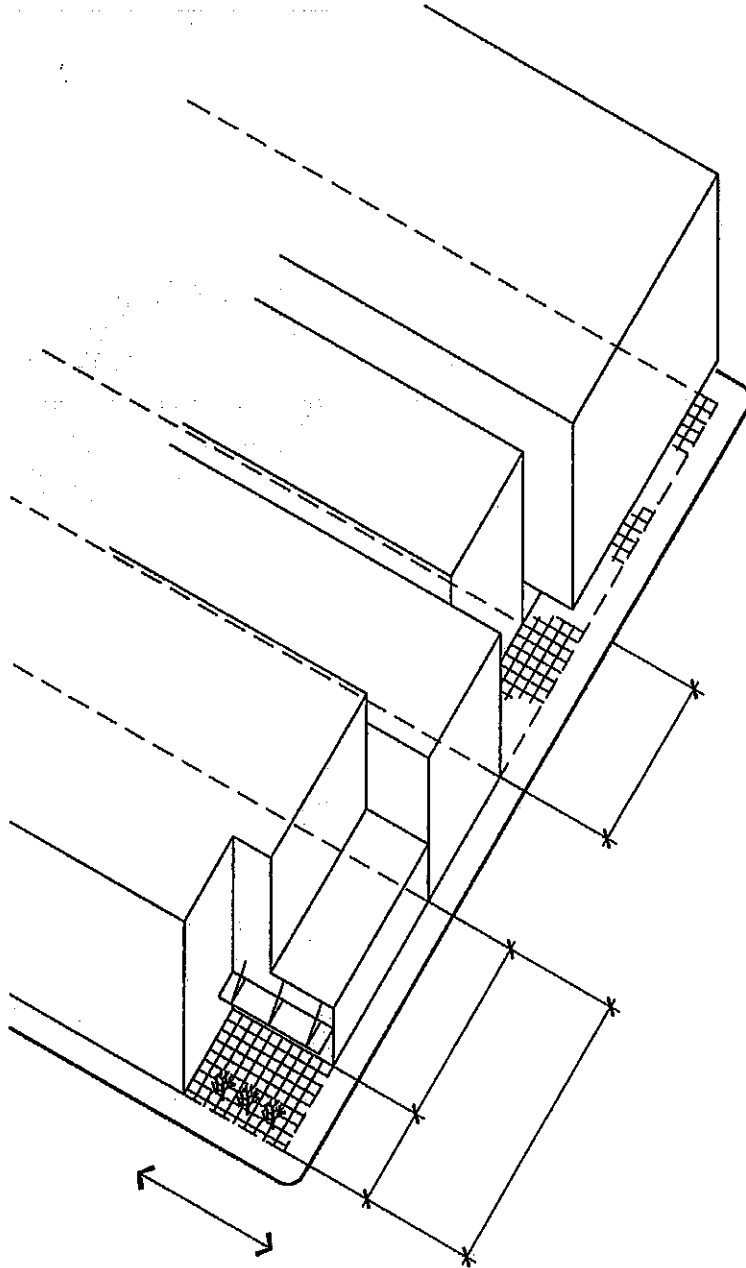
The canopy on the south-facing side of the Egan Center is an example of good northern climate design. Its transparency allows sunlight access, while sheltering pedestrians and preventing the build up of ice and snow.



This private arcade with public-use easement on 4th Avenue (above) provides a small dining area, pedestrian shelter and a much wider sidewalk than would be provided within the public right-of-way.

URBAN DESIGN

Building Setbacks



2. Improve the Quality of Building Design

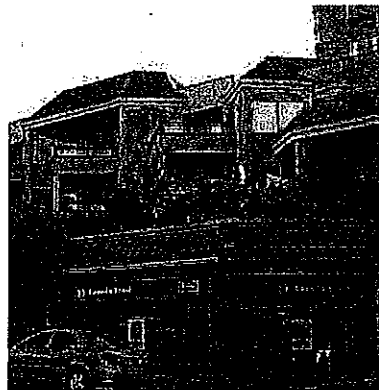
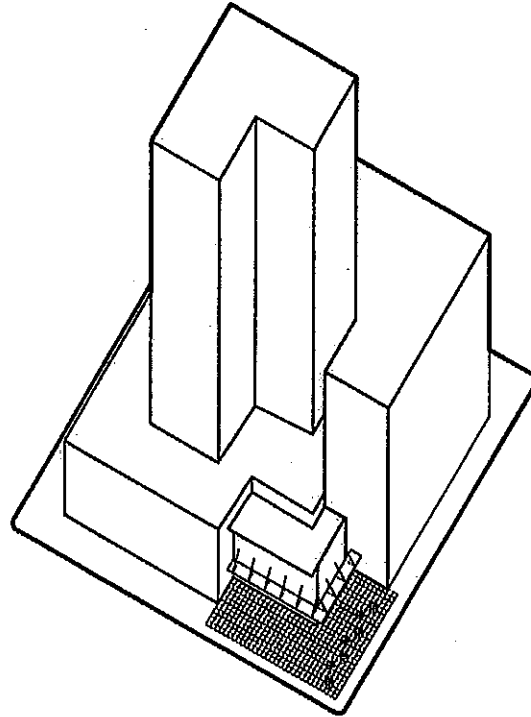
Building Setbacks

- Buildings should have a strong relationship to the street, with setbacks no wider than necessary to accommodate the pedestrian network. However, a strictly uniform "build-to" line along the street is not always necessary, and some variation in the facades can be desirable.
- Provide minor building setbacks from the property line if they permit additional public sidewalk width on streets with insufficient right-of-way.
- Encourage a building setback of up to 12 or more feet where it can deliver significant sunlight access benefits in addition to a wider pedestrian area.
- A limited portion of a building's ground level façade may be set back a greater distance if the additional set back offers:
 - Variety and "relief" from the uniform street wall
 - Pedestrian-scale façade articulation
 - Sunlit "sun pocket" spaces for stopping and relaxing
 - Protection from wind tunnel effects on north-south streets
- Locate building arcades adjacent to, but outside of, the sidewalk area needed for the walkway clear zone.

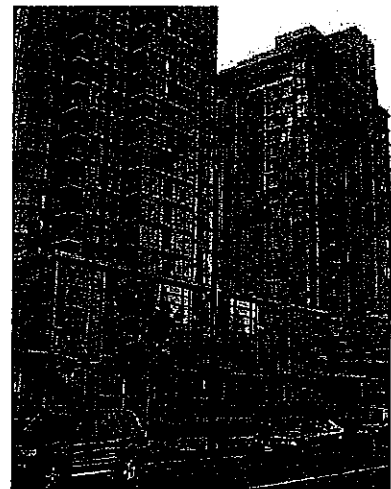
Massing and Stepping

- Provide human scale to buildings along sidewalks and public spaces, in part through variation in the massing of large buildings and stepping back the height of tall buildings.
- Medium- to high-rise buildings should feature slender towers with condensed floor plates. Slender towers stepped back from the street cast less shadow during summer, spring and fall and allow more air, ambient daylight and warm temperatures at the ground level.
- Step back medium- to high-rise buildings at the third or fourth floor and above, toward the middle of the city block, to minimize the shadows they cast and any undesirable wind impacts at the ground level.
- Tower placement, spacing and dimensions should strive to preserve views and daylight in between tall buildings.
- Tower design should be of the highest quality and contribute to the Anchorage skyline. Massing, stepping, modulation, tapering, façade materials, colors and articulation of prominent towers should enhance the image of Downtown.

Building Massing and Stepping

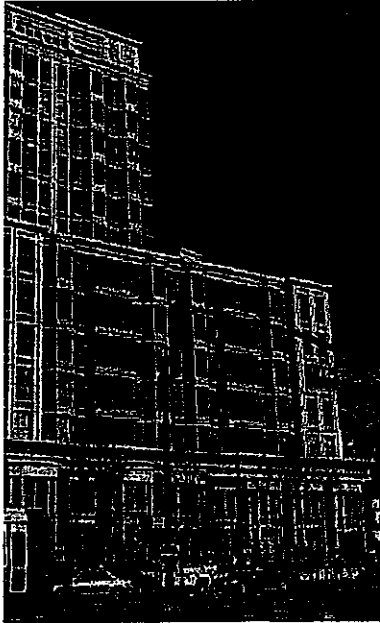


Buildings with upper floors stepped back can incorporate rooftop balconies and provide relief to the streetscape.

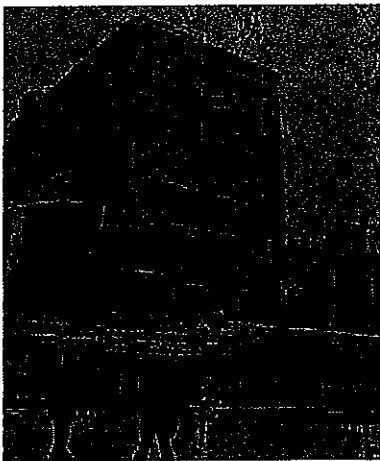


This high-rise construction in Vancouver, BC steps back from the street edge above the second floor.

URBAN DESIGN



This building in San Francisco, CA gradually steps back from the street edge to ensure sunlight access to all units.



This building in Lulea, Sweden has a narrow east-west profile, a roof that slopes down toward the north, and a stepped façade that allows sunlight to reach neighbors for more of the year. Numerous facade elements break up the downward wind flow, lessening wind impacts at the street level.

Sunlight Access

- The lifeblood of a downtown is the pedestrians who enjoy and enliven its public spaces. Pedestrians feed the businesses and cultural venues, bringing vitality and reducing crime. An important factor for a comfortable and attractive outdoor environment is access to sunlight. New buildings should minimize shadows cast on opposing sidewalks or nearby open spaces, particularly in the spring and fall to extend the warmth, comfort and activity level of the summer peak season.
- Minimize mid-day shadows on public open spaces between the Spring and Fall equinoxes.
- Preserve sunlight access to the following sites in Downtown:
 - Public parks and plazas, such as Town Square Park and Delaney Park Strip
 - North side of east-west streets designated as Primary Pedestrian Connections
 - Important civic buildings with large numbers of visitors (e.g., Old Federal Building)
- Evaluate the impact of medium- and high-rise development proposals on sun and shade conditions to determine the appropriate design measures needed to reduce or mitigate any undesirable shadow conditions.

- Private developments should:

- Optimize sunlight access and sky views, particularly for civic buildings, schools, private open spaces and residential districts.
- Locate open spaces (private and semi-public) to capture as much sun as possible during hours of peak use.

Wind Protection

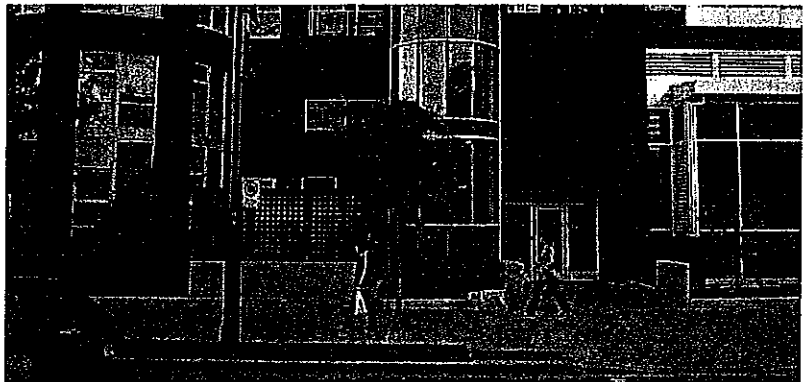
- Medium- to high-rise buildings should be designed to reduce or mitigate undesirable wind impacts on streets, open spaces and other pedestrian activity areas. Buildings which are substantially higher than the surrounding buildings in the area should be designed with regard to wind conditions.
- Evaluate the impact of medium- and high-rise development proposals on wind conditions to determine the appropriate design measures needed to reduce or mitigate any undesirable ground floor wind conditions and down drafts.
- Step towers back from the property line and from the lower level building wall on all designated pedestrian connections and on streets within the residential mixed-use districts.
- Design overhead projections such as awnings/canopies to lessen wind impacts and the ground level.
- Wind impacts at the ground level.

Ground-Level Treatment

- Design buildings with individual façade characteristics that distinguish each from neighboring buildings.
- Use building wall modulation and facade articulation to bring visual interest and a human scale to building frontages.
- Design ground level residential units to face the street with windows, front stoops and street access.
- Design the ground level of non-residential buildings to be transparent and physically and visually oriented toward the sidewalk.
- Design retail storefronts to be comprised mostly of windows, doors and other openings. Windows should provide visual access to interior retail spaces and displays within the building.
- Bays with visual and/or physical access should be created at frequent intervals to avoid long blank walls.
- Design buildings to contribute to the streetscape and open space network (bottom right).

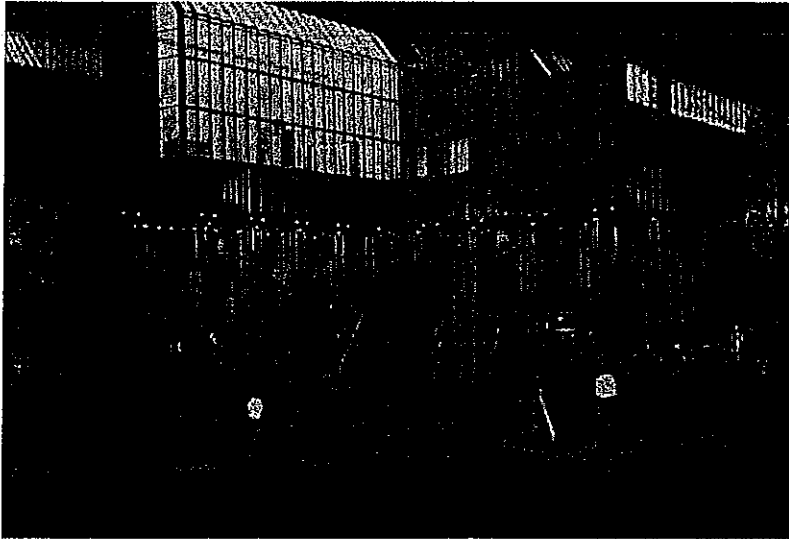


The facades of this mixed-use building (above) and residential building (below) are articulated with individual bays, each with its own window treatment or entry way.

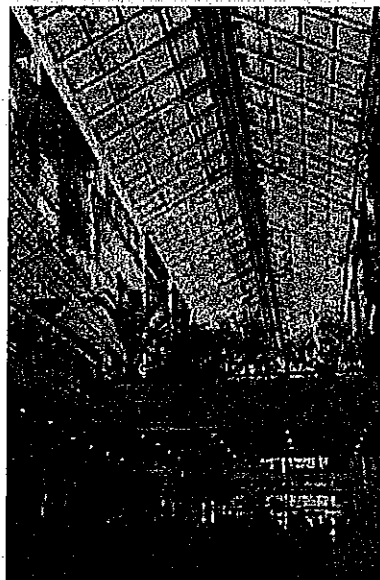
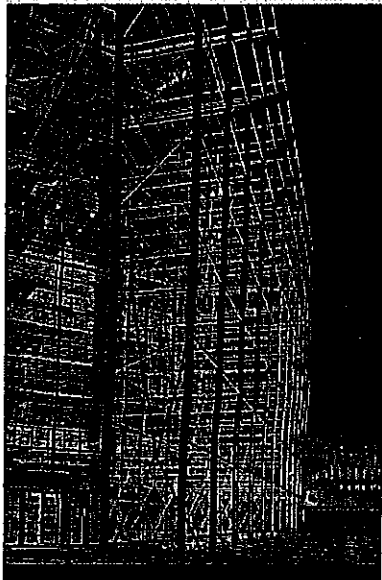


The built environment adjacent to the sidewalk can be as important as the walkway itself. In spite of a narrow walkway and adjacent travel lane (left), an eclectic mix of storefronts increases pedestrian interest.

URBAN DESIGN



These images represent the variety of building materials and lighting techniques that can be used to convey warmth and activate the street in winter months. The commercial and mixed-use buildings in Germany (above), Finland (below left), Norway (below middle) and Sweden (below right) use materials and lighting that illuminate the sidewalk and building facades and create usable, inviting spaces during cold, dark months.

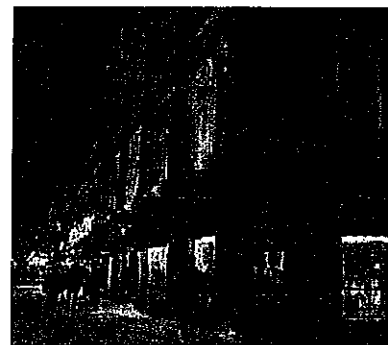


Materials and Texture

- Utilize facade materials that create a warm, transparent building edge at the pedestrian level.
- Incorporate lighter colors and reflective materials on upper floors for aesthetic benefits and to redirect sunlight radiation to public spaces below. Avoid reflective glass near the ground level as it limits pedestrians' ability to see into buildings and inhibits streetscape activity.
- Create light/shadow effects using minor recesses or projections in the façade.

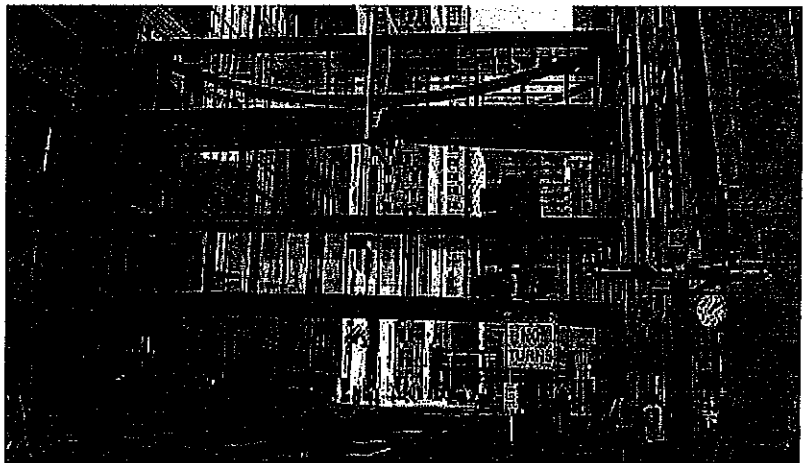
Building Lighting

- Design building lighting to help with wayfinding (i.e., accentuating entry ways and exits) and/or enhance architectural distinction.
- Minimize glare, light trespass and light pollution from building lighting. Light fixtures should in general be located, aimed and shielded so that light is directed downward rather than upward, or directed only onto the building façade.



Skywalks

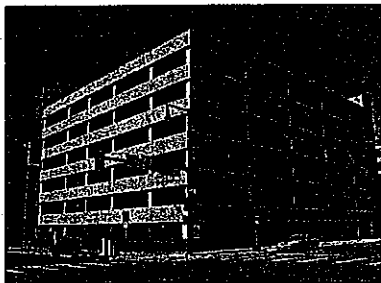
- Minimize the use of skywalks. Special exceptions may be conditionally allowed where:
 - Proposals demonstrate significant special need for a skywalk between related and important uses or functions
 - The area impacted by shadows and blocked views is not a primary pedestrian connection or a view corridor identified in the Downtown Plan
 - Street level alternatives for protecting pedestrians from the elements are explored and exhausted.
- Give preference to street level alternatives to skywalks. These might include: overhead canopies, arcades that can be climate-controlled and illuminated; raised and heated intersection crossings; overhead canopy extensions to the street corner curb or all the way across the street; wind protection; and active ground-floor uses and pedestrian amenities.
- Locate skywalks mid-block rather than at intersections to minimize impacts on views and sunlight access.
- Avoid skywalk crossings of north-south streets; the north-south street corridors are primary sources of winter sunlight into Downtown.
- Discourage skywalks across primary pedestrian connections and view corridors, such as 4th and 5th Avenues.



- Design skywalks with light colored and transparent façade materials to minimize their impacts on sunlight and views.
- Limit skywalks to one story.
- Discourage skywalk designs which accommodate retail uses that can be offered at street level.

Concerns have been raised about skywalks because skywalks often take activity and investment away from the sidewalk, cast deep shadows, obstruct view corridors and disconnect people from the environment. Downtown Anchorage contains several skywalks, some of which do maximize transparency and avoid creating cavernous spaces below (above top). Other cities, such as Minneapolis, MN (above) have constructed too many skywalks and struggle to get life back on the streets and regain their views.

URBAN DESIGN



Traditionally, parking garages have been designed to do little else than store cars (above). Such single-use structures designed with little regard for the comfort of pedestrians and the ground floor are not allowed in Downtown Anchorage. In recent years, garage design has advanced to allow other uses to take place on the ground level, providing a more engaging streetfront.

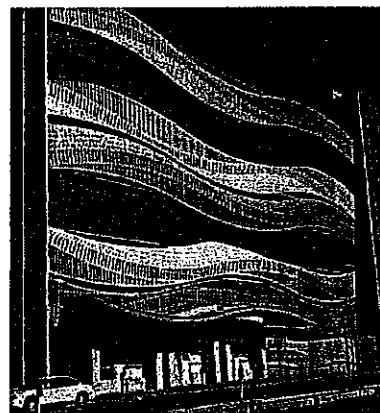
Parking Treatment

- Accommodate Downtown's parking needs in built structures, preferably underground.
- Encourage underground parking in order to minimize impacts on the public realm and reserve more above-ground space for activity-generating uses.
- Above-grade parking structures should be wrapped with active uses on the ground floor, and preferably the second floor as well, that open to the street and conceal parking from the sidewalk.
- The upper floors of the parking structure should be concealed with interesting façade treatment.

- Underground parking structures beneath residential uses can extend several feet above grade, as long as building entrances, streetscape amenities and planting beds are not impacted.
- Improve surface parking lots to accommodate landscaping, buffers and/or ornamental fencing. Improvements should include:
 - Planters, shrubs, other landscaping or fencing at least three feet in height
 - Benches for seating
 - Bicycle parking
 - Trash receptacles
 - Seat walls
 - Light fixtures
 - Public art



This parking structure in Downtown Boulder, CO takes the form of a typical mixed-use commercial/office building, with its entrance and exit set back from sidewalk (in the far right of the photo).



This example uses an artistic facade treatment and ground floor retail to transform the garage into an interesting addition to Downtown Albuquerque, NM.

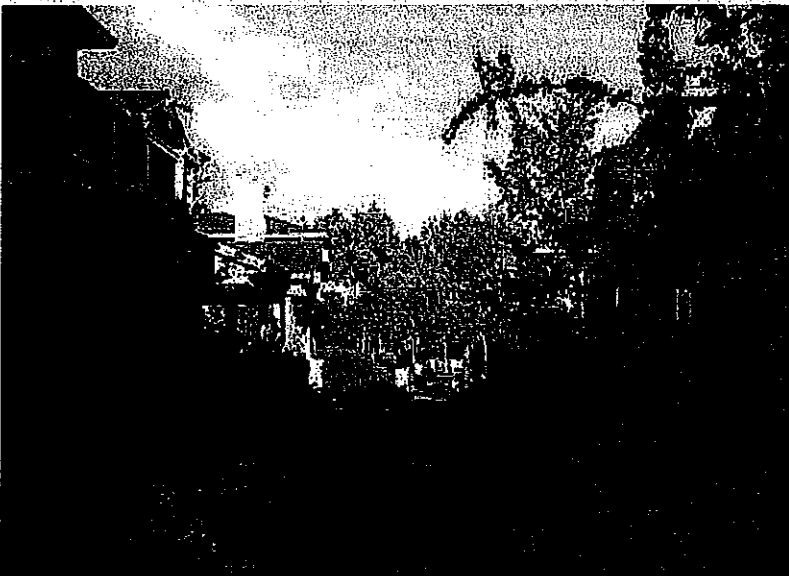
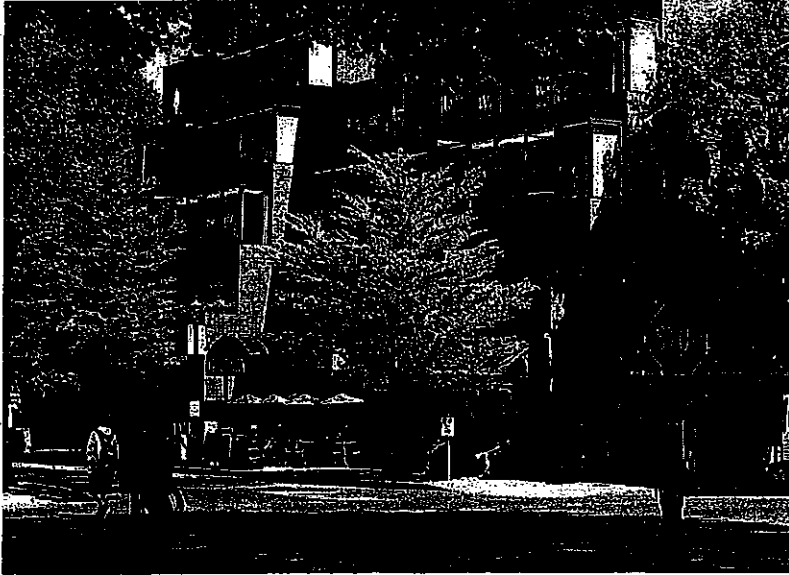
This parking garage in Downtown Pasadena, CA (right) follows cues from adjacent historic architecture and maintains the same scale and rhythm of bays and window treatment.



Parking lot buffers can vary according to adjacent uses. This parking lot in Berkeley, CA (Images below) integrates seatwalls, benches, planters, trees, shrubs and bicycle parking to create a friendly pedestrian environment. These amenities greatly enhance the popularity and use of adjacent shops.



URBAN DESIGN



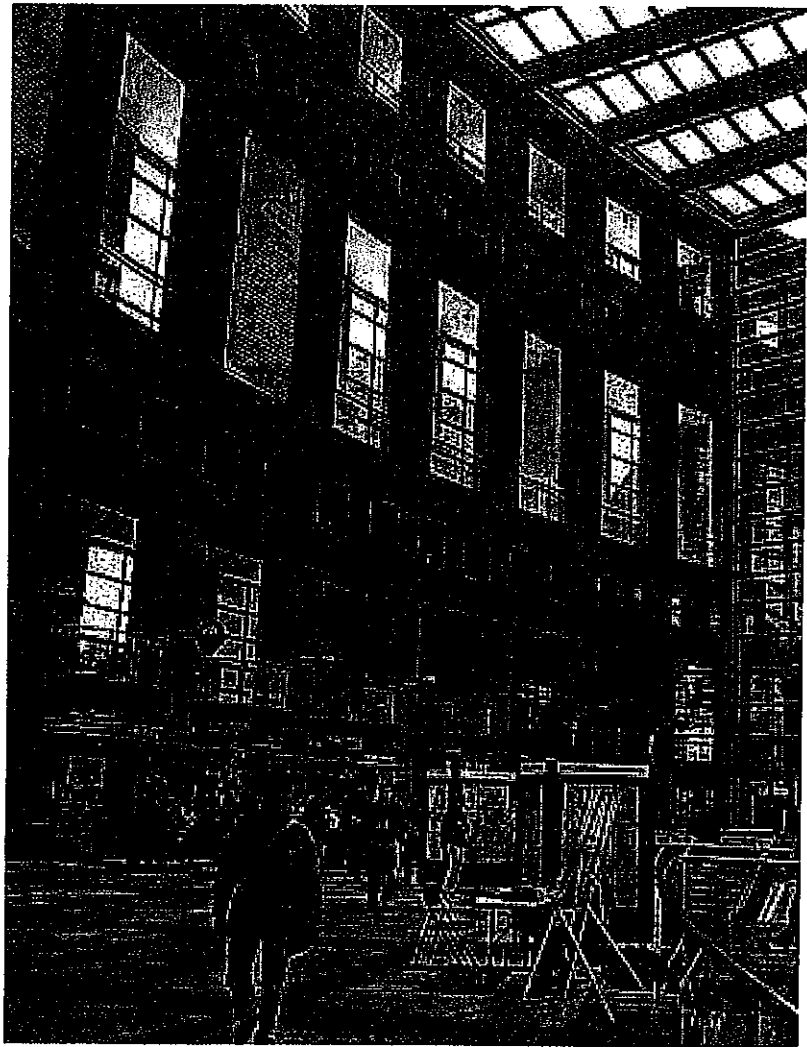
The stepped back, mid-density residential building (above top) and the duplexes and four-plexes facing onto a pedestrian pathway (above) exemplify how residential development can combine varying levels of density and maintain access to open space and sunlight.

Residential Treatment

- Design residential development to be varied in building form and include features such as front stoops, bay windows, façade articulation, balconies or sun rooms and upper level step-backs.
- Line residential streets with grass, landscaping and more street trees to soften the urban environment.
- Provide open spaces, gardens, pedestrian linkages through blocks or neighborhood parks as residential development occurs.
- Reduce noise and glare through design, lighting and materials that buffer or minimize the disturbance created by noise and trespass light.
- Provide multiple entrances to residential buildings along the street, such as individual front stoops and doorways for ground-floor residential units. Individual entrances should be raised several feet for privacy.

Interior Public/Semi-public Spaces

- Design interior publicly accessible spaces such as atria or winter gardens that include high ceilings with a major portion of the roof and/or walls transparent to the sky. They should be temperature controlled and furnished with features and amenities that encourage use by the public.
- Locate interior and semi-interior open spaces to maximize site attributes that enhance the quality and enjoyment of the space. For example, spaces should capture a view, allow sunlight access and be sheltered from wind effects.
- Integrate interior open spaces with Downtown's network of public sidewalks, especially the Primary Pedestrian Connections, in order to enhance the overall pedestrian environment:
 - Interior open spaces should be co-located with a high level of pedestrian activity or public use within or adjacent to the site, or
 - Interior open spaces should adjoin and directly connect to designated Primary Pedestrian Connections.



A well-lit, open atrium like this one in the Vancouver, B.C. Public Library can provide a public gathering space year-round.

URBAN DESIGN



The interpretive wayfinding sign (above) is an example of a small, pedestrian-oriented sign that should be updated on a regular basis with upcoming events.

Wayfinding Signage

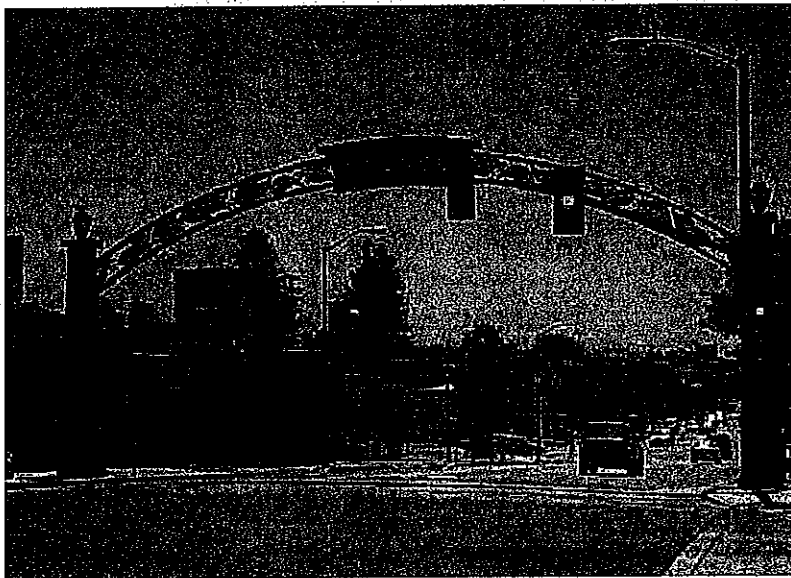
- Install comprehensive signage for multiple users, including:
 - Signage viewable by drivers and pedestrians.
 - Consistent, attractive signage and wayfinding stations with “You are here” maps to direct Downtown pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Wayfinding elements along major arterials (including the A/C couplet) so links are made with other areas of the city.
- Confirm locations and phasing for wayfinding signage per the Signage and Wayfinding program (See Chapter 7: Program Strategies)
- Signage should incorporate Alaska Native art and history to enhance

Downtown Anchorage’s unique identity.

- At key locations such as the Gateways on the Strategy Diagram (page 33), mark the gateways to Downtown in the form of archways, sculptural elements and/or plantings.
- Create a gateway feature marking the entrance to the Downtown Core at 9th Avenue and E Street.

Seismic Constraints

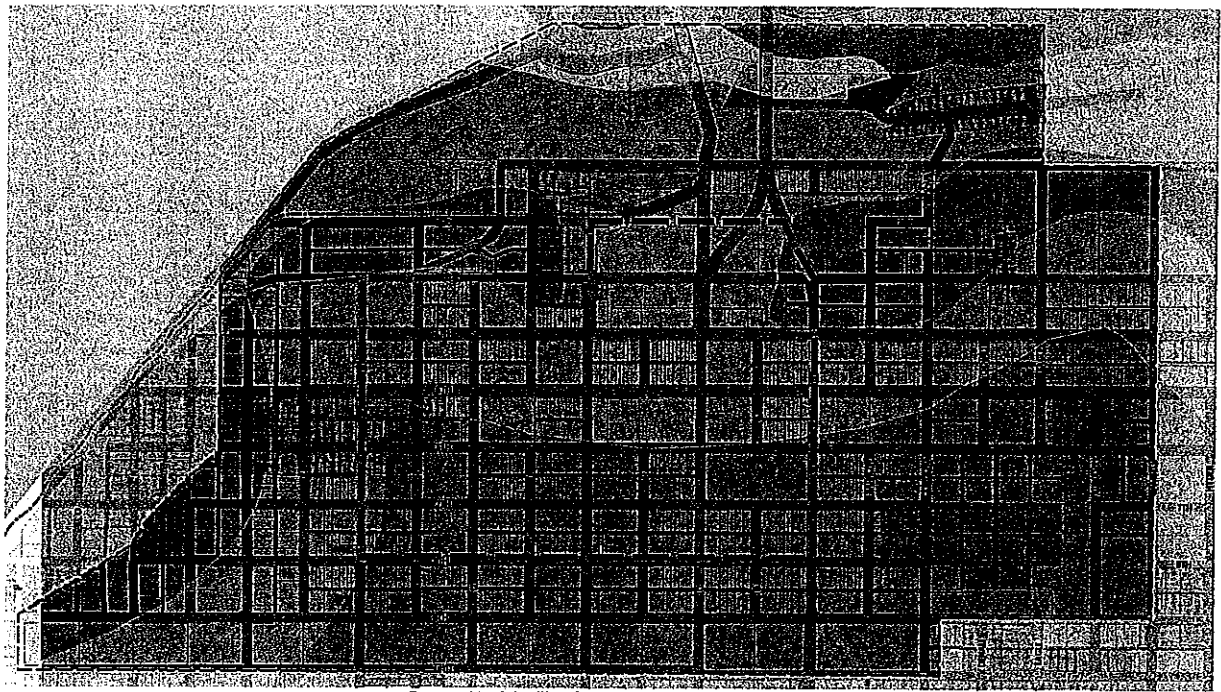
- Limit development intensity within high ground-failure zones.
- Prohibit development of critical public facilities, such as hospitals, police or fire stations, or other high-intensity commercial or high-occupancy residential uses in seismic hazard zones #4 and #5.
- Conduct a risk assessment to assist in determining the level of risk that is acceptable to the community for locating various uses and development intensities within seismic hazard zones #4 and #5.
- Draft new regulations for Downtown that include a seismic hazard overlay district for seismic hazard zones #4 and #5. These regulations should outline the types and intensity of uses that are appropriate or not appropriate for these hazard zones, and the mitigation of risks to the public for developments located in them.
- Establish development restrictions for each hazard zone.



A gateway design element could be used at significant entry points to Downtown to announce the entrance into the unique city center.

The Seismic Hazards Diagram (below) shows the relative potential for seismically-induced ground failure such as land sliding, land spreading, surface cracking and liquefaction. Seismically-related ground failure susceptibility has been rated on the maps on a scale of one (low susceptibility) to five (very high susceptibility).

These seismic zones are referenced in the local amendments to the International Building Code and are the basis for required levels of special geotechnical and structural engineering for proposed development in these areas.

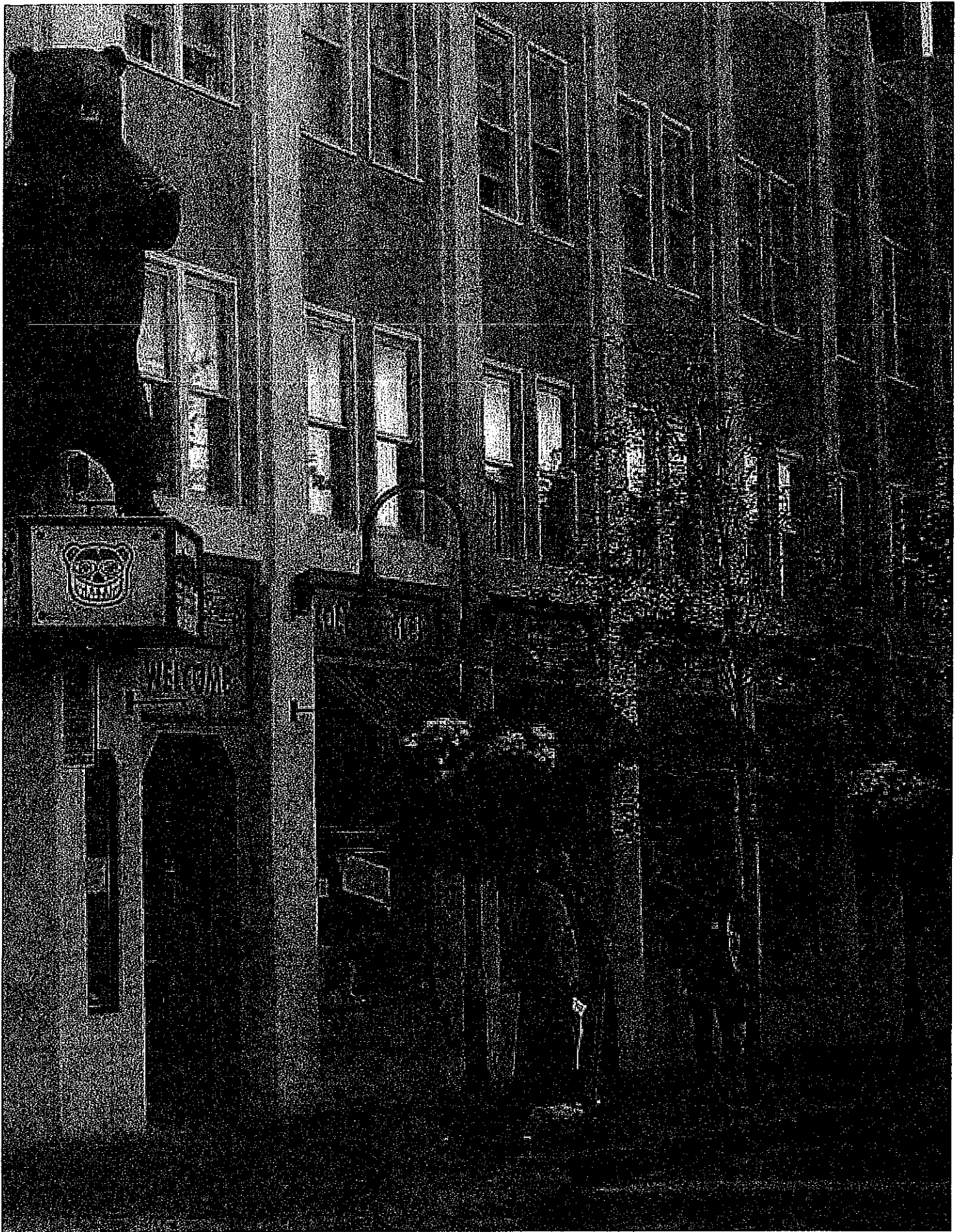


Legend

- Downtown Core Area
- Downtown Study Area
- Zone 5: Very High Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Zone 4: High Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Zone 3: Moderate Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Zone 2: Moderately Low Ground Failure Susceptibility

Note: Areas within Zone 1: Low Ground Failure Susceptibility are off the map.

Seismic Hazards Diagram



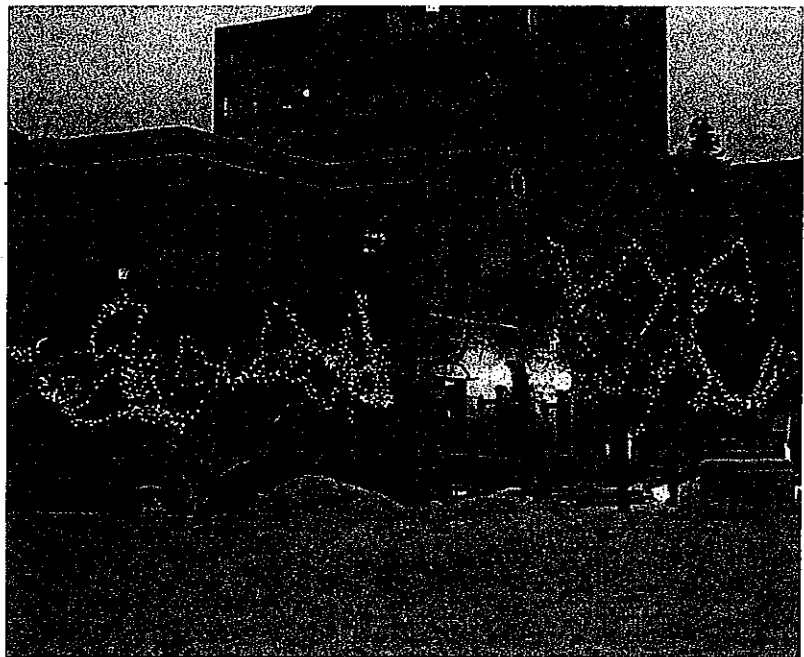
7 program strategies

OVERVIEW

Four overarching program strategies are identified in this chapter which accompany the recommendations listed in previous chapters. The four program strategies have been identified to help Downtown become Anchorage's residents favored place to live, work and play:

- Image and Branding Program
- Signage and Wayfinding Program
- Safety and Security Program
- Activity and Event Program

These strategies are necessary to enhance the Downtown experience for Alaskans and tourists, as well. From Downtown's image and reputation, to people's ease in getting around and their sense of comfort and security, these four programs can help weave the land use, economic development, transportation, and urban design recommendations into a comprehensive Downtown where everyone feels safe and welcome.



PROGRAM STRATEGIES



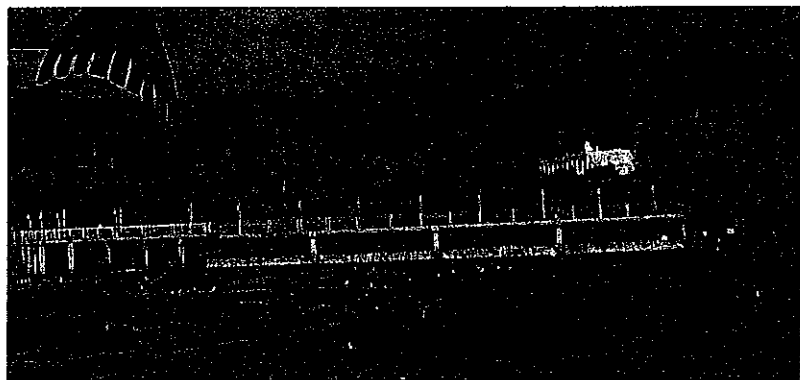
Banners throughout Downtown can help accentuate Downtown's distinct character, like these banners in Downtown Denver.

IMAGE AND BRANDING PROGRAM

An image and branding program is an important strategy in evolving the character and quality of Downtown's social, cultural and natural environments. This program will help to characterize the urban core and establish a distinct Downtown identity.

Recommendations for a complete image and branding program include:

- Promote distinct district characters with marketing, events and branding.
- Promote Anchorage's history and rich cultural diversity.
- Coordinate a marketing strategy to promote tourism nationally:
 - Create benefits for both the local community and out-of-state tourists.
 - Promote the theme of "Alaska's Downtown, America's Winter City."
- Create a task force to promote the "Stay an extra day in Anchorage" campaign.
- Promote Anchorage as Alaska's Downtown to rural communities:
 - Accentuate Downtown as a vibrant "urban oasis" that is safe and easy to visit.
 - Advertise access to the state's premier shopping options.
 - Incorporate shopping and medical visits with cultural and recreational activities.
 - Link with statewide athletic activities such as basketball and wrestling tournaments.
- Market Downtown as a point of entry to Alaska's activities:
 - Market the resource of salmon fishing at Ship Creek.
 - Advertise access to regional bike trails and biking opportunities.
 - Advertise access to regional hiking trails.



Branding Purpose

In late 2005, the Anchorage Downtown Partnership hired a marketing firm to determine how to best market Downtown. Together, they identified a number of distinguishing attributes of Downtown Anchorage that shape residents' perceptions and visitors' experiences. See Anchorage Brand Print for more details.

From this analysis, a comprehensive branding and positioning strategy was formed. The branding strategy for Downtown Anchorage aims to achieve the following:

- It fills the unmet expectations of Downtown residents, Alaska Natives and visitors.
- It is distinct and relevant; only Downtown Anchorage can own this territory as Alaska's Welcome Center.
- It packages together the many things already available that is authentic and fun in Downtown (Oomingmak, Ulu factory, railroad, Iditarod, restaurants, shops).
- Tourists get the Alaska experience even though they will never see all of Alaska's splendor.
- It attracts young, adventure-seeking travelers to visit Downtown on their way in and out of the state.

Branding Statement

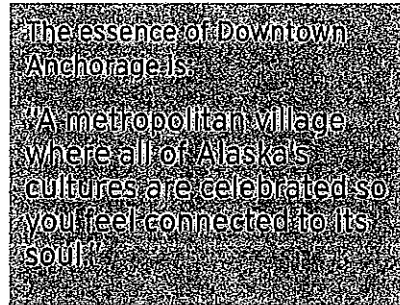
The branding statement that was developed will help connect visitors experience with the soul of Alaska.

- No other Downtown provides the combination of an urban district and the Alaska experience.
- Anchorage residents get the culture and gathering place they expect.
- Alaska Natives can experience connection with one another and be proud of their home land.
- Alaska Natives can be proud of and celebrate their heritage.

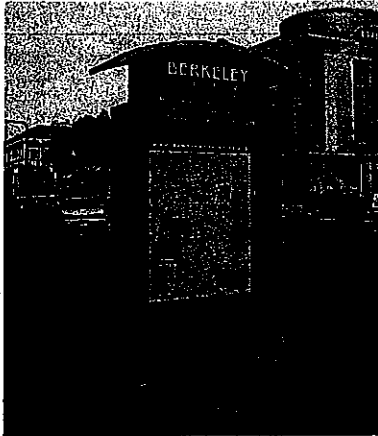
Branding Methods

The next steps for the city are to utilize this branding message and incorporate it advertising, tourism and the Downtown environment, including:

- Package existing products together Downtown already has many cultural attractions and products.
- Focus advertising with a strong message.
- Develop signage distinct from the rest of Anchorage reflective of Alaskan culture and Downtown districts.
- Consider naming streets or parks after Alaska Native tribes or leaders.
- Market Downtown's exceptional arts and cultural facilities, especially the Anchorage Museum of History and Art and the Performing Arts Center.



PROGRAM STRATEGIES



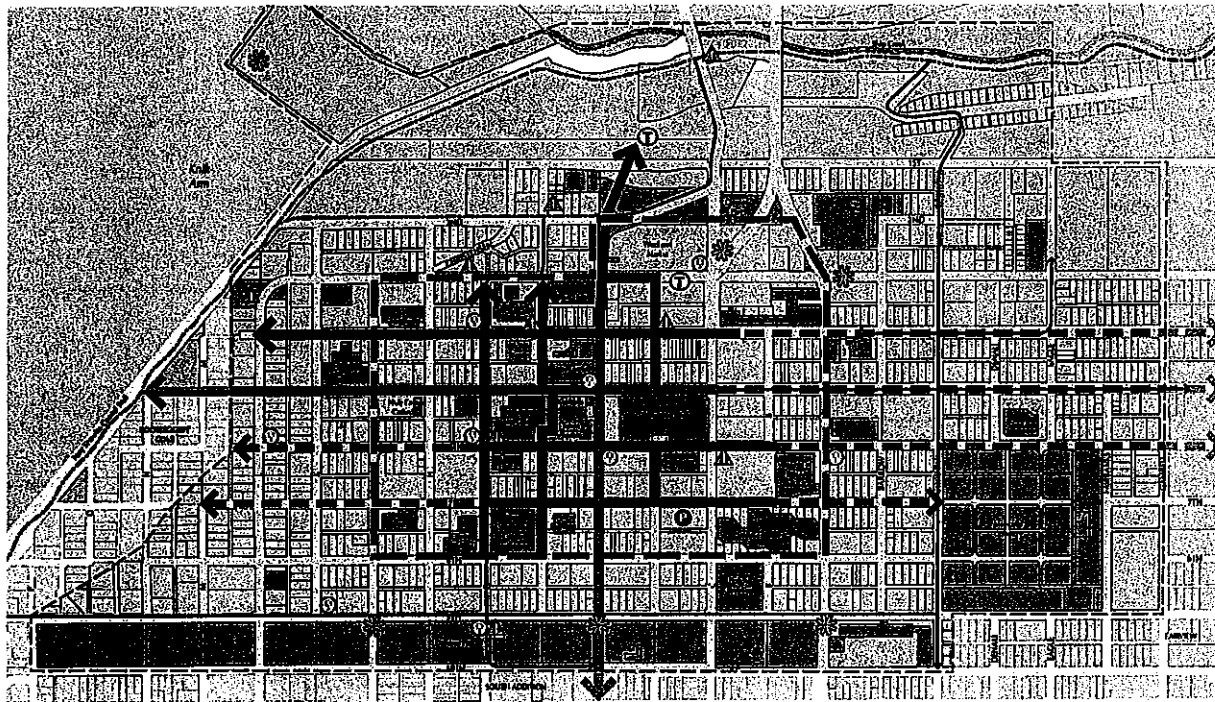
This directional sign serves pedestrians in an active pedestrian area in Downtown Berkeley, CA.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING PROGRAM

Currently, Downtown's wayfinding system is inconsistent and piecemeal. A comprehensive wayfinding system that establishes continuity in Downtown's signs, street furniture and lighting is needed. This system will direct residents and visitors toward key destinations, advertise upcoming events and celebrate significant historic, cultural or natural sites and resources. The system should make travelling to desirable destinations easy—which is essential to attracting more locals and visitors Downtown.

Wayfinding signage is comprised of directional signs to orient and direct pedestrians and drivers (noted on the diagram below). Interpretive signage is in the form of a display board, which describes and illustrates a particular event or resource. Recommendations to help make this program possible, include:

- Establish a Signage and Wayfinding Committee to determine appropriate aesthetics and dimensions of new signage.



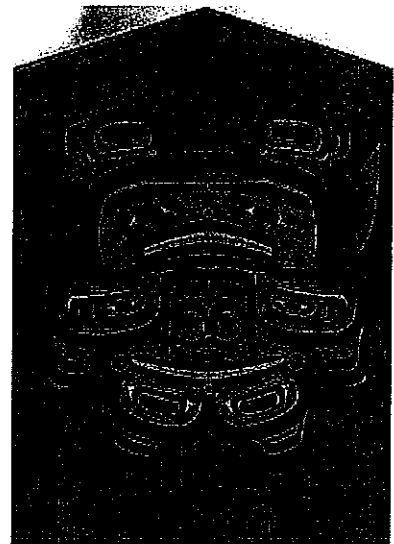
Wayfinding and Signage Diagram

PROGRAM STRATEGIES



Wayfinding and interpretive signage can take many forms. The example of the information kiosk (above left) can be used to supplement the visitor center elsewhere in Downtown. The historic interpretive sign (above right) is an example that exists in Downtown today. Such signs should be incorporated into the comprehensive signage program.

- Create district signage codes unique to their character to bolster their identities.
- Determine significant sites and events that are in need of interpretive signs to showcase their importance in Anchorage's history.
- Integrate Alaska Native art and history into Downtown's streetscape through signage design, particularly that of local/regional tribes. This is essential in distinguishing Anchorage from other cities and celebrating what makes it unique.
- Wayfinding should incorporate work from local artists wherever possible. Consider establishing public art competitions to increase the diversity and quality of Downtown's public art.
- Ensure design guidelines for signage are implemented (See Chapter 6: Urban Design, page 112).
- Consider a "heritage trail" or "urban trail" with a sequence of interpretive signage.



Native Alaskan art should be integrated into Downtown Anchorage's signage and wayfinding elements, such as the example above exhibiting S'Kallam Tribe Carvings from Olympic Peninsula, Washington

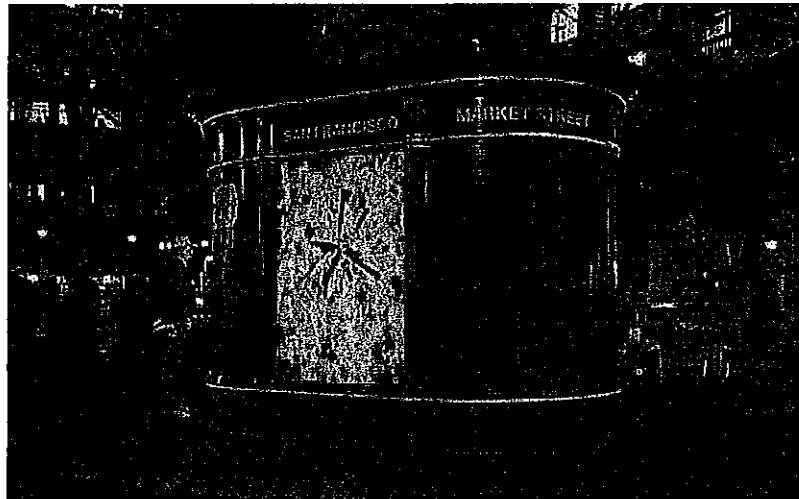
PROGRAM STRATEGIES

SAFETY AND SECURITY PROGRAM

The real and perceived feelings of safety impact how visitors and residents experience Downtown. In addition to an increase in the number of “eyes on the street” and improved lighting Downtown, a number of recommendations are listed below.

- Address issues of safety and understanding for Alaska Natives through a comprehensive cultural sensitivity campaign.
- Provide wayfinding and welcoming outreach strategies for all rural visitors.
- Increase community policing to address public safety concerns in areas considered particularly unsafe, including 4th Avenue between C and E Streets, Town Square and the existing Transit Center.
- Provide distributed social service facilities throughout the city that offer shelter and care for homeless populations.
- Maintain a safe and clean environment by installing regularly-spaced trash and recycling bins and year-round street cleaning.
- Provide access to self-cleaning public restrooms within the Downtown Core.
- Prioritize implementation of a comprehensive street lighting program throughout Downtown to increase visibility and safety on all streets.

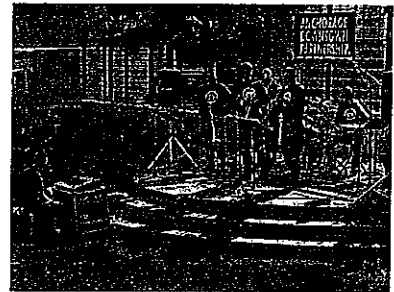
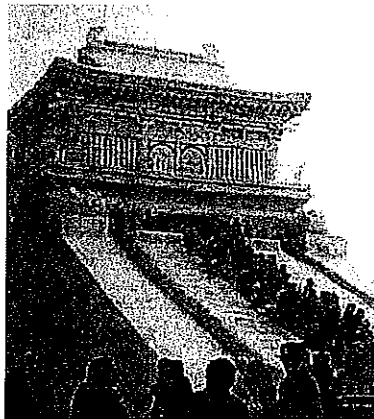
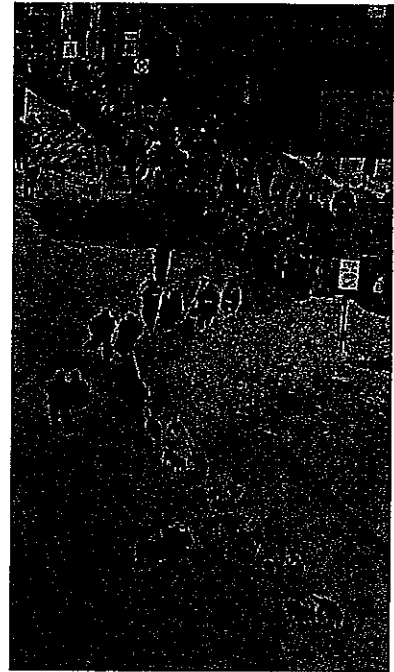
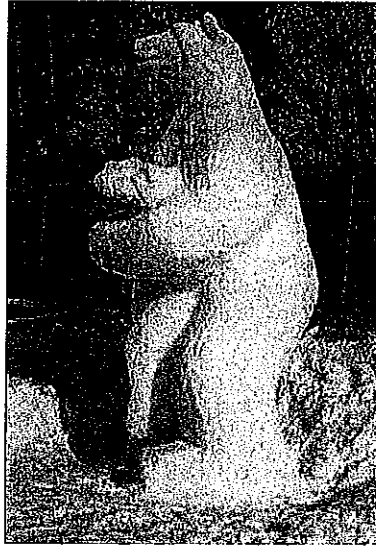
Self-cleaning public restrooms, such as this one in San Francisco (right) are attractive, safe, energy efficient and offer advertising and revenue opportunities for the city.



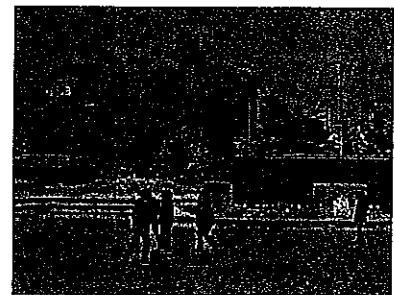
ACTIVITY AND EVENT PROGRAMMING STRATEGY

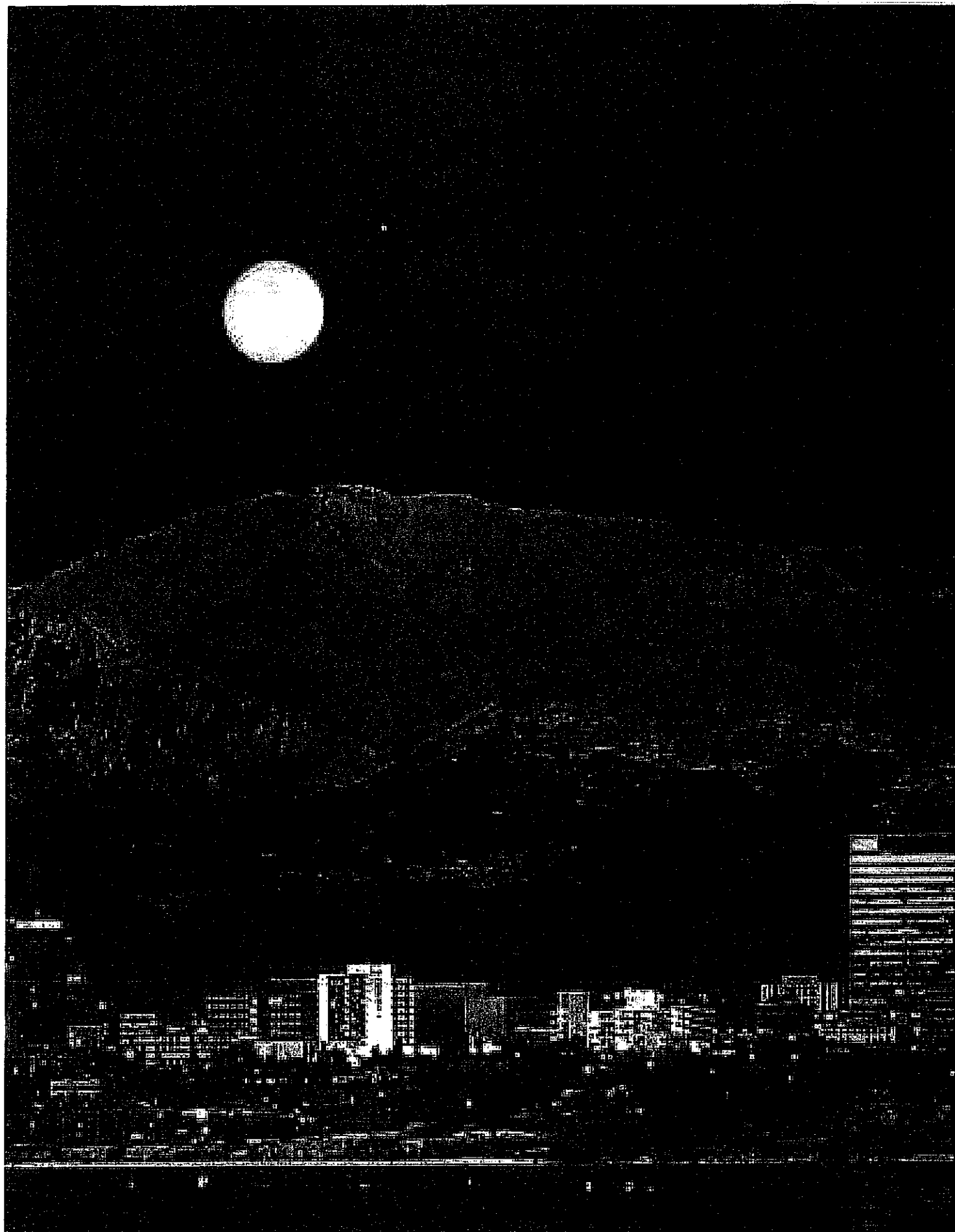
A coordinated approach to activity and event planning can help Downtown build upon existing events, such as First Fridays and the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, and create a range of spectator and participatory events for all user groups year-round.

- Develop strategies for planning and promoting Winter City themed events throughout the year.
- Determine appropriate activities during the shoulder seasons and promote them nationally.
- Promote healthy cultural and recreational activities for youth.
- Improve Town Square, Delaney Park and the Weekend Market site to host large community events that generate city revenue and spark more interest in Downtown.



Events that embrace winter conditions can bring all ages together. Ranging from the small scale (above top) to the large scale (above and top right), community events engage residents, attract visitors and enliven the public spaces. Live music performances in Downtown parks (middle right) are a hit during spring and summer months. Informal events such as ice skating in Town Square (bottom right) will become more popular once perceptions of safety improve.





8 implementation strategies

The implementation actions of this chapter are designed to support and carry out the land use, economic development, transportation, urban design, and program strategy recommendations of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan. They provide the Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Downtown Partnership and other private and public partners with direction to guide future development and investment. Specifically, the implementation action schedule in this chapter outlines general timeframes, costs and responsibilities for a range of actions.

While all of the Plan's recommendations are important, the immediate implementation actions outlined in the following pages will establish a significant foundation upon which to build. The path to realizing these recommendations will require a focused, clear approach. These specific actions identified here will help to provide the organizational and programmatic infrastructure that will lead to successful fruition of the Downtown vision.

To ensure completion of the Plan's recommendations, regular reviews of the status of the implementation actions are paramount. As part of these periodic reviews, the responsible implementer(s) listed for each action should reassess the resources available to complete each action according to the time frame, and adjust the time frame or priorities as needed. Most importantly, private sector stewards, community members and plan advocates who are dedicated to the Plan's realization should maintain the momentum by continuing to meet as a Downtown Advisory Group, reviewing the status of the actions and acting as project leaders to track project implementation. Finally, a highly graphic and publicly visible checklist should be placed in a civic space to publicize and celebrate the Plan's benchmarks so its momentum continues to build.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation Actions Schedule

Specific implementation actions in the charts below implement the Downtown Comprehensive Plan's strategies and recommendations. Actions are assigned a time frame for action and an implementation leader or leaders. They are adopted with the understanding that some actions will need to be adjusted and others replaced with more feasible proposals, and future circumstances may affect a proposed implementer's ability to take action.

Time frames are approximate and will have to be determined by available resources. A very generalized indicator of the potential cost of each action is also provided.

Many of the near term actions are either already underway or programmed during the recommended time frame. Until applicable actions are implemented, the Plan's strategies and recommendations are intended to guide municipal decision-making.

KEY TO PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS IN SCHEDULE

MUNICIPAL (MOA) AGENCIES:

ACDA	Anchorage Community Development Authority
APD	Anchorage Police Department
GAC	Geotechnical Advisory Commission
OECD	Office of Economic and Community Development
Parks	Parks and Recreation Department
Planning	Planning Department
PM&E	Project Management and Engineering Department
Traffic	Traffic Engineering Department
Transit	Public Transportation Department/People Mover

OTHER PARTNERS:

ACVB	Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau
ADOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Alaska Railroad	Alaska Railroad Corporation
Downtown Partnership	Anchorage Downtown Partnership

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation Programming

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
IP-1	Establish a Downtown Advisory Group to track the achievement of the Plan, review the status and prioritization of implementation actions, and advocate for the Plan's realization.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (ACDA)
IP-2	Install and maintain a highly graphic Plan Implementation Checklist in a Downtown civic space to publicize and celebrate achievement of the Plan's benchmarks.	1 year	\$	MOA (Parks and Recreation) Downtown Partnership
COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000				

Land Use and Economic Development Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
LU-1	Enact a new Downtown land use and development code and amend the Downtown zoning map to reflect the recommended land use strategies, design guidelines and proposed Downtown district specifications.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (Planning)
	Develop Catalytic and Opportunity Sites			
LU-2	Determine feasibility and programming of a new Public Market and Cultural Center as a public/private partnership at Catalytic Development Site #1: Fourth Avenue Development Site.	1-2 years	\$	Property Owner MOA (Planning) MOA (ACDA) Downtown Partnership
LU-3	Develop Catalytic Development Site #2: E Street Infill Development Site. Support private development of mixed-use retail and housing (Pages 56-60). Ensure design and construction adheres to development specifications for the Downtown Core (Pages 47-50).	2-5 years	\$\$\$	Property Owner MOA (ACDA)
LU-4	Develop Catalytic Development Site #3: 6th Avenue Infill Development Site. Support private development of mixed-use retail and housing (Pages 56-61) by helping property owners consolidate parcels. Ensure design adheres to specifications for the Downtown Core (Pages 47-50).	3-7 years	\$\$\$	Property Owner MOA (ACDA)
COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000				

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Land Use and Economic Development, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
LU-5	Develop Catalytic Development Site #4: Park Strip Housing Prototype. Evaluate feasibility and programming of a new publicly owned housing project. Ensure design adheres to building design, streetscape, parking and circulation criteria (Pages 62-64).	2-5 years	\$\$\$	MOA (ACDA) State of Alaska
	Jump-start Housing Development			
LU-6	Convene a Downtown housing development task force to develop incentives, funding opportunities and land assembly/site location strategies for a diverse mix of housing types Downtown.	1 year	\$ Programmatic	MOA (ACDA)
	Establish Economic Development Strategies			
LU-7	Develop a targeted recruitment program with strategies to attract specific businesses from the retail, office and hotel sectors, and including identification of opportunity sites and locations. Key sectors include: 1. Retail anchors such as a department store; 2. Entertainment attractions such as a cineplex or additional restaurants; 3. Neighborhood retail uses especially grocery stores and pharmacies; 4. Corporate employers, such as Native Corporations, and office developers; 5. Hotel developers/operators; and 6. Art galleries and cultural attractions.	1-2 years	\$\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (ACDA)
LU-8	Develop coordination between the Weekend Market and Downtown retailers, including joint marketing and physical linkages.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (ACDA) Downtown Partnership
LU-9	Work with cruise operators to identify services and amenities that could enhance visitors' experiences in Downtown and generate longer hotel stays.	1-2 years	\$	ACVB Downtown Partnership
LU-10	Create an expedited permitting program for Downtown development proposals that meet community standards.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Planning)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Land Use and Economic Development, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Maintain and Enhance Parks and Open Space			
LU-11	Establish a Downtown Park Community Advisory Group to help determine open space and recreational needs and opportunities in the Downtown area.	1 year	Programmatic	MOA (Parks)
LU-12	Develop a Downtown Park and Open Space Plan which identifies future open space needs and includes acquisition strategies, incentives and open space design guidelines.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Parks)
LU-13	Complete the Delaney Park Master Plan, and its first-phase implementation, coordinated with street improvement plans for 9th Avenue.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (Parks)
LU-14	Improve Town Square Park to be a more effective venue for large community events.	1-2 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks)
	Create a Historic Preservation Commission and Overlay Zone			
LU-15	Establish a Historic Preservation Commission that can address immediate and long term historic preservation policies, initiatives and incentives; inventory historic resources.	1 year	\$	MOA (OECD)
LU-16	Work with the community to establish a Historic Overlay Zone.	2-3 years	\$	MOA (OECD) MOA (Planning)
	Respond to Seismic Hazards			
LU-17	Conduct a seismic hazard risk assessment study of seismic hazard zones 4 and 5 to determine the extent and regulations for a seismic overlay zone.	1 year	\$	MOA (Planning) MOA (GAC)
LU-18	Enact a seismic overlay zone to address land use and development in areas with greatest potential for ground failure.	2-3 years	\$	MOA (Planning) MOA (GAC)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Transportation and Circulation Strategies Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Street Conversions and Reconstructions			
T-1	Convert 9th Avenue to a typical three-lane cross section, coordinating with transit operations planning and pedestrian improvements recommended by this Plan and the Delaney Park Master Plan.	1-2 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-2	Convert D Street to a two-way traffic street, adhering to the Core Streets Streetscape Plan design guidelines.	2-5 years	\$\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-3	Convert F Street to a two-way traffic street, adhering to the Core Streets Streetscape Plan design guidelines.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-4	Reconstruct G Street between 3rd and 5th Avenues in accordance with the Core Streets Streetscape Plan.	2-5 years	\$\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-5	Reconstruct 7th Avenue between the Denaina Convention Center and C Street in accordance with the Core Streets Streetscape Plan.	3-7 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-6	Make streetscape improvements to 6th Avenue between E and D Streets in accordance with the Core Streets Streetscape Plan.	3-7 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E) ADOT & PF
T-7	Construct Phase 1 of the E Street Corridor Enhancement Project in the central Downtown Core between 4th and 8th Avenues.	1 year	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks) MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-8	Program the construction of Phase 2 of the E Street Corridor Enhancement Project including pedestrian connections to Delaney Park and the Alaska Railroad Intermodal Transportation Facility.	3-7 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks) MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E) Alaska Railroad
T-9	Convert 3rd Avenue to one-way westbound traffic. Prepare a 3rd Avenue one-way westbound traffic and pedestrian safety plan, and ensure redesign includes continuous sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, on-street parking, reduced travel speeds and areas for bus loading.	5-7 years	\$\$\$	ADOT & PF MOA (Traffic)
T-10	Convert 5th Avenue to two-way traffic, contingent on the conversion of 3rd Avenue.	7 or more years	\$\$\$	ADOT & PF MOA (Traffic)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

Transportation and Circulation Strategies Implementation, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Improve the Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment			
T-11	Develop a Pedestrian Improvements Plan and coordinated Implementation program for Improving the Downtown Plan's designated primary and secondary pedestrian connections, enhanced intersection crossings, pedestrian and bicycle trails, on-street bicycle connections and other pedestrian amenities and traffic calming strategies. Include street amenities for transit ridership (Page 83) such as curb extensions at bus stops, heated bus stops and schedule information.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (Parks) MOA (Planning) MOA (Transit) Downtown Partnership
T-12	Adjust the timing of traffic signals on arterials in the Downtown to reduce average speeds to 20 MPH or less within Downtown.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) ADOT & PF
	Improve the Downtown Transit System			
T-13	Conduct a Transit Center Relocation Feasibility Study which includes consideration of Catalytic Development Site #1 and a reassessment of transit routes through Downtown to improve convenience.	1 year	\$\$	MOA (ACDA) MOA (Transit) MOA (Traffic)
T-14	Relocate the Transit Center and/or transit routes through Downtown, contingent on the results of the relocation feasibility study.	2-5 years	\$\$\$	MOA (ACDA) MOA (Transit)
T-15	Initiate a Downtown Circulator bus route	3-5 years	\$\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Transit)
T-16	Initiate a direct, non-stop transit route between Downtown and the Alaska Native Medical Center and overall Universities/ Medical District.	3-5 years	\$\$	MOA (Transit)
	Develop a Coordinated Parking Strategy			
T-17	Improve parking wayfinding signage to advertise the location and number of available spaces.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (ACDA)
T-18	Program the transition of on-street parking from individual parking meters to a kiosk system of parking meters.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (ACDA)
T-19	Construct a parking structure at 7th Avenue and C Street.	2-5 years	\$	MOA (ACDA)
T-20	Install safety precautions in parking structures including improved lighting and security patrols.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (ACDA)
	Accommodate Tour Bus Operations			
T-21	Establish tour bus circulation routes and the locations for queuing, idling, loading and passenger drop-off.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Urban Design Strategies Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
UD-1	As part of the Downtown park and open space plan (LU-12 above), identify and prioritize scenic view corridors, and potential measures and incentives for their protection.	1 year	\$	MOA (Planning)
UD-2	As part of the Pedestrian Improvements Plan (T-11 above) and Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan, identify and prioritize pedestrian amenities, including funding sources and potential locations. Amenities include public art, landscaping, seating opportunities self-cleaning restrooms, and other amenities recommended in the Downtown Plan.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Parks) MOA (Traffic)
UD-3	Complete a Heated Sidewalk Master Plan to determine the appropriate technology, construction phasing, financing and public/private responsibilities for heated sidewalks.	1 year	\$	MOA (ACDA) MOA (Traffic)
UD-4	Construct one or several priority blocks of heated sidewalks as a model for future areas.	2-3 years	\$\$\$	MOA (PM&E) MOA (Traffic)
UD-5	Complete construction of the remaining phases of heated sidewalks.	3-7 years	\$\$\$	MOA (PM&E) MOA (Traffic)

Programming Strategies Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Enhance the Image and Branding Program			
P-1	Coordinate and improve marketing efforts.	1-2 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (OECD)
P-2	Build upon the Brand Print recommendations to promote Anchorage's heritage, culture and distinct Downtown sub-districts.	1-2 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (OECD)
P-3	Market Anchorage and Downtown as a winter destination to increase year-round hotel occupancy rates	Ongoing	\$	ACVB
	Develop a Signage and Wayfinding Program			
P-4	Establish a Downtown Signage and Wayfinding Committee.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-5	Develop a comprehensive Downtown streetscape and wayfinding signage design palette.	1-2 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

PROGRAM STRATEGIES

Programming Strategies Implementation, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
P-6	Design distinct district signage.	2-3 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-7	Identify significant sites and event locations for interpretive signage.	2-3 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
Strengthen the Safety and Security Program				
P-8	Establish a Downtown Safety and Security Committee to strengthen current efforts to improve safety and Security Downtown.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (APD)
P-9	Initiate a program for wayfinding and welcoming for Alaska Natives and all visitors from rural Alaska.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership
P-10	Increase community policing in certain areas identified in the Plan.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership
P-11	Prioritize locations for trash/recycling bins, public restrooms and street lighting.	1 year	\$	MOA (PM&E) MOA (Parks) MOA (Traffic)
P-12	Enhance year-round street cleaning Downtown.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) Downtown Partnership
P-13	Install self-cleaning public restrooms Downtown.	1 year	\$	MOA (PM&E) Downtown Partnership
Enhance Activity and Event Programming				
P-14	Strengthen activity/event programming and promotion for events throughout the year, including winter and shoulder season events.	Ongoing	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-15	Promote activities for youth and families with children.	Ongoing	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-16	Improve Town Square Park for large community events.	1-2 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks)
P-17	Implement the Delaney Park Master Plan and improve Delaney Park as a venue for large community events.	1-2 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks)
P-18	Improve the Weekend Market Site as a venue for large community events.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (ACDA)
COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000				

MARCH 2007