

CHAPTER 3. Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Anchorage 2020: Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020), the Anchorage Bowl comprehensive plan, guides community planning by providing a framework for decisions about land use and transportation. It also provides direction for public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community. Anchorage 2020 is a public declaration of a general vision for the city's future that was articulated by Anchorage citizens (during a 5-year-long process) and adopted by the Anchorage Assembly in February 2001.

The Anchorage 2020 vision “balances growth with the retention of the city’s natural features and quality of life.” The plan recognizes that the biggest challenges facing the community is “meeting future demands for housing, commercial development, public open space, roads, and public facilities with a dwindling land supply and limited public funds.”

The Anchorage 2020 goal statements, which articulate the desires of the community for the future, provide guidance for the LRTP process. This chapter reviews the comprehensive plan goals and

presents the specific transportation-related goals of the LRTP. These goals have been identified to guide decisions about transportation improvements that are consistent with Anchorage 2020.

Several sidebar boxes on the following pages present information about relevant components of Anchorage 2020 and how they pertain to development of the LRTP.

How Does Anchorage 2020 Address Transportation Improvements?

Anchorage 2020 focuses primarily on land use planning and development issues related to land use. In recognition that land use and transportation are intertwined, the comprehensive plan also provides guidance on making transportation improvements. People use some form of transportation to travel between land uses—where they live, work, shop, conduct business, and recreate. Land uses that are far apart have a different impact on the transportation network (and vice versa) than those that are located close together. Anchorage 2020 identifies the following policy principles to guide transportation development:

- Transportation improvements are balanced among transit, pedestrian, and road improvements.
- Improvements are made to selected east-west and north-south arterials.
- Transit frequency is increased and routes are expanded.
- Transit-supportive development corridors, pedestrian-accessible developments, and multimodal roadways and trail networks are promoted.
- Freight movement is facilitated throughout the community, especially between the port, international airport, railroad, and industrial reserves.
- Streetscape standards revitalize road corridors for all users.
- Commuter rail and intermodal transit services tie Anchorage to outlying communities.
- Neighborhood through-traffic movements are minimized.

Anchorage 2020 Goals: A Framework for Guiding Development

Anchorage 2020 goal statements that express the community's aspirations for growth and development are grouped by topics. The goals excerpted below provide important guidance for planning long-range transportation development.

Transportation and Land Use Goals (pages 37-38)

Residential Uses: A variety of housing types and densities in safe, attractive neighborhoods that offer a choice of urban, suburban, and rural lifestyles that are appropriate for northern conditions and are in harmony with our natural setting.

Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, and Transportation Uses: A balanced supply of commercial, industrial, institutional, and transportation land uses that is compatible with adjacent land uses and has good access to transportation networks.

Mobility and Access: A transportation system, based on land use, that moves people and goods safely, conveniently, and economically, with minimal adverse impact on the community.

Transportation Choices: An efficient transportation system that offers affordable, viable choices among various modes of travel that serve all parts of the community.

General Land Use Issues: A forward-looking approach to community growth and redevelopment.

Design and Environment Goals (pages 38-39)

Neighborhood Identity and Vitality: A variety of safe, pleasant, and distinctive neighborhoods responsive to the diverse needs of residents, with good access to schools, recreation, natural areas, and community facilities.

Transportation Design and Maintenance: A safe, energy-efficient transportation system that is designed and maintained for year-round use and that respects the integrity of Anchorage's natural and built northern environment.

Economic Viability: A built environment based on design standards that sustain long-term economic viability and growth and that promote affordable residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Air Quality: Clear healthful air that is free of noxious odors and pollutants.

Public Services and Improvements Goals (page 38)

Community Facilities: A well-planned mix of public and institutional facilities that meets the health, education, governmental, and social needs of all citizens.

Parks, Trails, and Recreation: A sustainable and accessible system of recreation facilities, parks, trails, and open spaces that meets year-round neighborhood and community-wide needs.

Arts and Culture: A community that encourages arts and cultural activities as a catalyst for education, communication, economic development, and social progress.

General Goals (page 41)

Civic Involvement: A civic community that encourages public involvement in decision-making.

Natural Hazards: Coordinated and proactive public policies, emergency plans and procedures, and educational programs that minimize the risk to the community from natural hazards and disasters.

Safety: A community where people and property are safe.

Land Use Concepts Shape Future Growth

The Figure 3-1 map showing Anchorage 2020 land use areas depicts planned changes to land use policy. Key features are highlighted in the text below.

Major Employment Centers. These areas will become the focus for the highest concentration of office employment in the city, increasing employment density and enhancing people's ability to walk or to take public transportation to their work destinations.

Redevelopment/Mixed Use Areas. Redevelopment of underused parcels and development that fills vacant parcels will create pedestrian-oriented residential and mixed-use development that supports major employment centers.

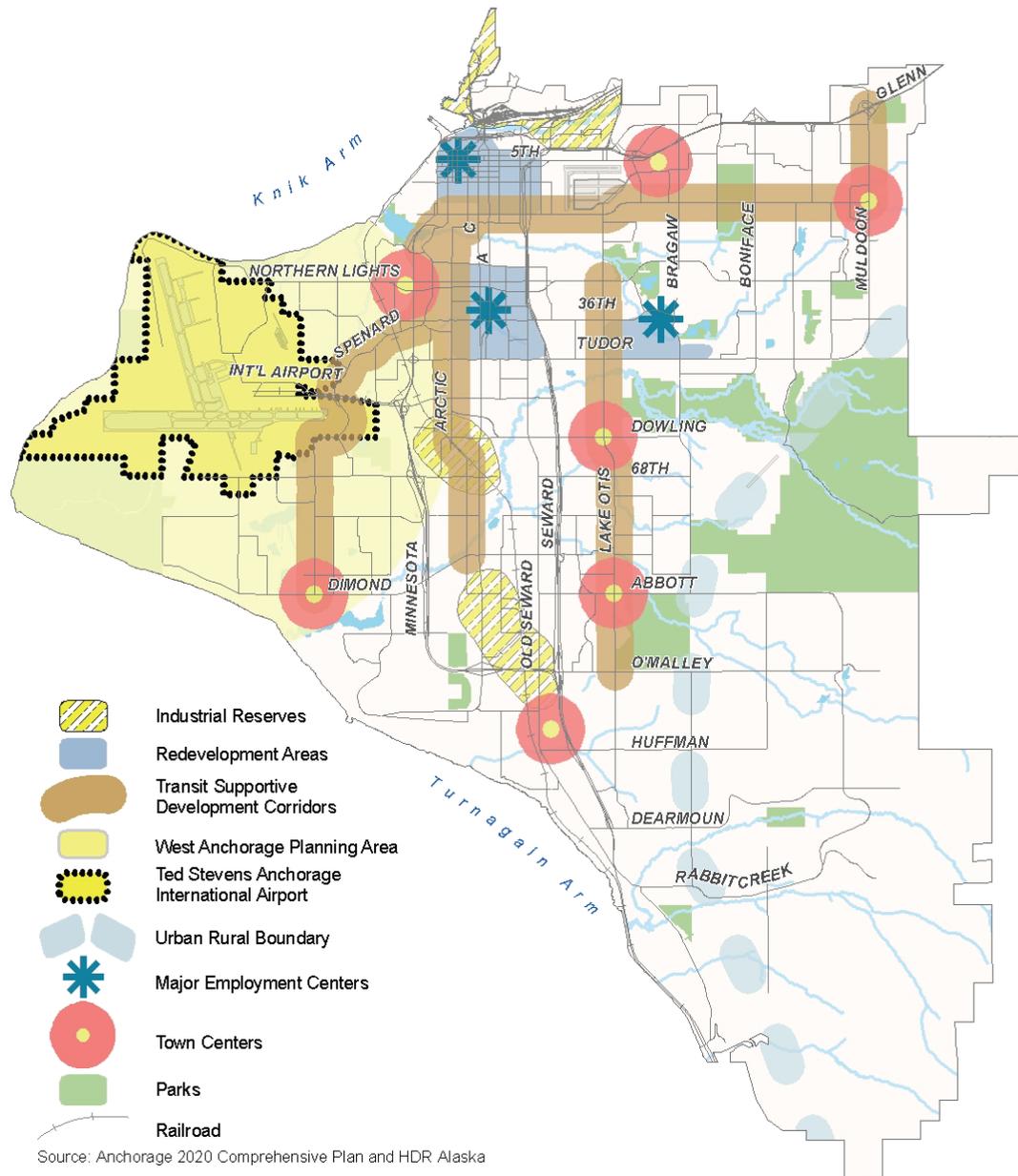
Transit-Supportive Development Corridors. Higher-density housing and pedestrian-friendly streets will be coupled with increased transit service.

Town Centers. These areas will consist of a mix of retail shopping, services, public facilities, and medium- to high-density residential uses.

Industrial Reserves. Definition of these areas will ensure that strategically located industrial land is primarily used for industrial purposes.

Urban-Rural Conceptual Boundary. This line defines the conceptual boundary or location that separates the urban and rural service area and related development policies.

Figure 3-1. Land Use Policies from Anchorage 2020



Anchorage 2020 Community Vision

Anchorage is . . .

A diverse, compassionate community where each individual is valued, and children, families, and friendships flourish.

A northern 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.

— Anchorage 2020, page 37

Goals Guiding LRTP Development

The LRTP Roundtable Committee, a citizen advisory committee (discussed in Chapter 2), created the following overarching goal to guide development of the LRTP:

Develop a balanced multi-modal transportation system based on Anchorage 2020 guidance (goals, polices, strategies, and maps) that serves as a catalyst to enhance the quality of life enjoyed by the current and future residents of Anchorage.

To achieve the overarching goal, the committee members also defined specific goal statements and objectives. The discussion below provides goals, objectives, and details about how each goal is relevant to Anchorage 2020 guidance.

Goal 1: Safety and Health

Provide a transportation system that moves people and goods safely throughout the Municipality.

Objectives

- Improve the safety and security of people on all modes and in all areas.
- Reduce vehicular and pedestrian crashes.
- Decrease emergency response time and reduce risk to the community from natural hazards and disasters.
- Promote a walkable city with safe winter walking conditions.

- Minimize conflicts between freight and passenger/pedestrian travel.
- Minimize exposure to transportation-related air pollutants, including carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds such as benzene.

How does Goal 1 help implement Anchorage 2020?

Goal 1 relates to the comprehensive plan goal of “public facilities . . . that meet the health needs . . . of all citizens.” It emphasizes safe travel, reducing the physical, social, and economic costs of traffic crashes, making travel on all modes secure and safe at all times, and particularly protecting people on foot.



Congestion, like this on the Glenn Highway near Merrill Field, compromises mobility for everyone—from cars and buses in the traffic to emergency response vehicles trying to get through.

Photo courtesy of HDR Alaska, Inc.

Goal 1 also helps realize the comprehensive plan’s general vision for “a community where people and property are safe.” It recognizes that safe environments around schools and enabling emergency responders to achieve quicker response are important. The Fire Department is quick to point out that if traffic is stopped, the fire truck moves no faster than the car sitting next to it.

Goal 1 speaks to broader community health issues such as protecting our air quality by controlling vehicle emissions and making Anchorage a more walkable community. A community that is more physically active is healthier. Improving facilities and providing better connectivity and easier access will accommodate nonmotorized travel by bicycle and on foot, whether on a sidewalk after dinner, to a bus stop on a morning commute, or on a trail to an adjacent neighborhood.

Goal 2: Build, Operate, and Maintain Quality, Affordable, and Attractive Improvements

Develop an attractive and efficient transportation network that takes into account the cost of building, operating, and maintaining a system that considers the equity of all users, and the secondary costs associated with all other community values.

Objectives

- Prioritize the projects within the LRTP to optimize the overall capital costs associated with each project.
- Consider the life-cycle costs associated with operating and maintaining the projects within the LRTP.
- Optimize the travel choices within the transportation system to maximize the associated benefits for all users while minimizing the costs to taxpayers.
- Balance the project purpose with aesthetic considerations.
- Match street and highway design to the use and character of the road, recognizing that character may vary from primarily commercial to primarily residential.

How does Goal 2 help implement Anchorage 2020?

Goal 2 expresses the community desire for visually attractive and fiscally responsible



To encourage winter use of the pedestrian and transit system that promotes year-round travel choices, snow maintenance on sidewalks and around bus stops must be improved.

improvements. It states that transportation facilities should be community assets. The goal draws from the Anchorage 2020 mandate for improvements that are “well-planned” – with all costs (such as pedestrian amenities, operation and maintenance costs, and impacts to communities) considered upfront – and that “sustain long-term economic viability and growth.” This goal also helps implement the comprehensive plan call for balanced transportation improvements by directing transportation planners to consider issues like equity, sustainability, and secondary costs – evaluation criteria sometimes overlooked when assessing improvements.

Goal 4: Optimize Community Connectivity

Establish community connectivity with safe, convenient, year-round auto and non-auto travel routes within and between neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public facilities.

Objectives

- Promote the even distribution of traffic loads between streets by enhancing the existing grid pattern of streets.
- Establish an adequate number of access points from subdivisions to adjacent higher order streets.
- Enhance the physical connectivity between neighborhoods by increasing the number of roadway and pedestrian connections.



Photo courtesy of Municipality of Anchorage

This multi-use building—housing shops, offices, and residences—in Downtown meets the goals of Anchorage 2020.



Photo courtesy of HDR Alaska, Inc.

Missing and discontinuous sidewalks demonstrate the need for improved connections.

- Improve safe and convenient connectivity from schools to neighborhoods, parks, and other recreational and commercial areas by use of bike trails, pedestrian trails, sidewalks, and transit.

How does Goal 4 help implement Anchorage 2020?

The comprehensive plan notes the importance of having good access to all types of land use (residential, commercial, industrial, institutional), as well as to schools, recreation and natural areas, and community facilities. It also stresses the need for solutions to balance the roles of neighborhoods, schools, and recreation areas as both transportation destinations and valued community elements.

The focus of Goal 4—connectivity—helps implement this vision by encouraging transportation connections that support community

values, health, and safety. This goal also works to reduce Anchorage's dependency on automobile travel by emphasizing the connectivity of sidewalks, bike trails, and pedestrian trails to link community travel destinations.

Goal 5: Improve Mobility and Access in Anchorage and the Region

Improve access to goods, jobs, services, housing, and other destinations. Provide mobility for people and goods throughout the region in a safe, affordable, efficient, and convenient manner.

Objectives

- Develop mechanisms for improving regional cooperation and planning to address important transportation issues.
- Reduce the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita.
- Increase opportunities for multi-purpose trips in planned mixed use centers.
- Promote the development of an effective roadway network through improvements in intersection and efficient roadway capacity.
- Improve the existing transportation system efficiency through the implementation of effective and innovative transportation system management (TSM), transportation demand management (TDM), and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) strategies.



Photo courtesy of CH2M HILL

Improved pedestrian safety, efficient traffic flow, and landscaped roadways enhance livability in Anchorage.

How does Goal 5 help implement Anchorage 2020?

The focus of Goal 5 is mobility, the ability of people to move from place to place. This goal builds on the comprehensive plan's directive for a transportation system that "moves people and goods safely, conveniently, and economically." Figure 3-1 depicts key land use changes such as the development of major employment center and town center hubs that are part of land use policies from Anchorage 2020.

Goal 5 recognizes that stronger regional collaborative mechanisms will be needed to address regional travel issues and improvements. It reduces congestion and travel delay to ensure reasonable access to jobs, education, services, and other opportunities and provide efficient freight flows. Anchorage 2020 mixed-use and other development policies are leveraged to enable multi-purpose trip

consolidation and encourage walking, bicycling, and non-driver mode options. Goal 5 also stresses good management and operation of our transportation systems – achieving optimum efficiency, offering travel options and incentives to reduce automobile dependency, and deploying advanced technologies to make our transportation systems work better.

Goal 6: Transportation Choices

Provide a transportation system that provides viable transportation choices among various modes.

Objectives

- Promote the development of a safe network of trails and sidewalks that provide reasonable access to work, schools, parks, services, shopping, and the natural environment, especially for those who live relatively close to areas where trails and sidewalks will actually provide opportunities for frequent and regular use by citizens.
- Improve the year-round reliability and travel time of transit without increasing automobile travel time and while assessing whether the increased costs are offset by increased ridership.
- Optimize the year-round accessibility to, and the convenience of, travel choices.

How does Goal 6 help implement Anchorage 2020?

Anchorage 2020 stresses the importance of having choices through a transportation system with mode options, one that makes travel

convenient and affordable across the city and for all segments – year-round.

Goal 6 recognizes that walking, cycling, and transit options are needed, and that they must be made accessible, attractive and competitive to be viable. Goal 6 calls for transportation improvements that make traveling by other modes (by bus, bike, or foot) more convenient to transit-dependent riders and more attractive to riders who currently choose to travel by automobile.

Anchorage is a northern community, and transportation facilities must be operational year-round for them to be true travel options. Goal 3 also reflects the value that Anchorage residents place in the ability to be outdoors.



Photo courtesy of HDR Alaska, Inc.

L RTP goals specifically articulate the comprehensive plan's general commitment to transit.

Goal 7: Preserve and Enhance the Natural and Developed Environment

Design and maintain a transportation system that respects the integrity of Anchorage's natural and built environment and protects Anchorage's scenic vistas.

Objectives

- Minimize adverse impacts on the community, such as neighborhood through traffic movements.
- Preserve and improve air quality to maintain the health and welfare of Anchorage citizens.



Photo courtesy of HDR Alaska, Inc.

The mandate for fiscally responsible projects means that capital, operation, and maintenance costs must all be considered for every element of an improvement, including landscaping such as this Fairview roadside planting.

- Minimize noise and light pollution impacts.
- Minimize the impacts on the natural environment, such as water resources, fish habitat, watersheds and wetlands, and parklands.
- Design and landscape roads to maintain and enhance the attractiveness of neighborhoods, open space, and commercial corridors and centers.
- Use context-sensitive design strategies to support the development of mixed-use centers (such as town centers, employment centers, and redevelopment areas) and transit-supportive corridors with more pedestrian- and transit-oriented street environments.
- Reinforce the link between transit and land use by establishing as a priority the building of transit-friendly residential and commercial development in Downtown.

How does Goal 7 help implement Anchorage 2020?

“Minimal adverse impact on the environment,” “minimal adverse impact on the community,” respect for “the integrity of Anchorage’s natural and built northern environment,” “in harmony with our natural setting,” “clear healthful air” . . . these key phrases quoted from Anchorage 2020 set the context for Goal 7. This goal is about protecting the environment and balancing transportation improvements with community values. It promotes transportation improvements that protect and enhance the air breathed, the sounds heard, and the magnificent landscape enjoyed every day.



Photo courtesy of HDR Alaska, Inc.

Both Anchorage 2020 and the LRTP stress the importance of designing transportation improvements in harmony with the natural and built environment.

Goal 7 is also about protecting neighborhoods. The importance of maintaining and improving the quality of Anchorage neighborhoods is expressed consistently throughout Anchorage 2020. The relationship between how travel is conducted and where residents live is evident in air quality issues, as well as in the effects of traffic on neighborhoods, including detractions such as cut-through vehicles and heavy traffic on arterials that surround neighborhoods. Goal 7 also states that aesthetics and visual quality matter.

