Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan

Anchorage Bowl
Land Use Plan Map

Community Discussion Draft

June 28, 2005
You Are Here

**Policy Map**
Land use policies adopted in 2001 with the Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan.

**Land Use Plan Map**
The “missing” element of Anchorage 2020.

**Zoning Map**
Changes to zoning districts, reflecting the newly updated land use regulations and implementing the Land Use Plan Map.

Municipality of Anchorage Planning Department
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About the Community Discussion Draft

The Municipality is initiating a process to update the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map. This Discussion Draft is a starting point and resource for community dialogue about essential issues and choices for the new Plan Map.

Part 1 of this report introduces the Land Use Plan Map. It explains the reasons for updating the Plan Map now, and what role a new land use plan has in relation to neighborhood plans, the ongoing rewrite of Anchorage’s land use laws and future growth and development in the city.

Part 2 is a guide for understanding and evaluating the draft Land Use Plan Map. It explains the land use designations on the map and shows how the map could be implemented.

A Technical Appendix which provides a land use build-out analysis for the Anchorage Bowl will be available at:

http://www.muni.org/project21/planmap

The Community Planning Process

Community Discussion Draft (June 2005)

Land Capacity Analysis

Community Review and Discussion (June 28-Sept 19)

Next Public Review Draft (October 2005)

Continued Analysis

Continued Community Review

Eventual Adoption (Spring 2006)

Land use planning can be extremely important to members of the community. The Municipality has a series of steps for how citizens, neighborhoods and other organizations may participate in the planning process.

A new Land Use Plan Map means an amendment to Anchorage’s Comprehensive Plan, and the law requires one or more public hearings at the Planning and Zoning Commission before the Assembly may act on any proposed amendment. (AMC 21.05.040). However, public involvement can occur much earlier in the process.

There will be multiple opportunities to communicate concerns and suggestions, and influence the Land Use Plan Map in its earlier and more fundamental stages of development. For example, participating at public meetings and submitting feedback in writing to the Planning Department are among the means available.

Visit the municipal web site or call the Planning Department for more information.
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Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan / Land Use Plan Map

1

Community Discussion Draft

LAND USE PLAN MAP

OVERVIEW

WHY UPDATE THE LAND USE PLAN MAP NOW?

Plans of 1982 and Today

A land use plan map represents a community’s plan for the future. The purpose of Anchorage’s Land Use Plan Map is to provide a guide for future growth and development, and to achieve the policies of the Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan. A Land Use Plan Map is long-term, since it is designed to provide guidance for the next 20 years and beyond. It is comprehensive, because it addresses land use in all parts of the Bowl. As such, it is an essential part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Anchorage last updated its Land Use Plan Map in 1982. Today, zoning changes, new development projects and other decisions about future growth must, by law, still consider the 1982 Plan Map.

Profound changes in the Anchorage Bowl since that time, and adoption of the Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan in 2001 effectively outdated the 1982 Land Use Plan Map. In some cases, as with the Anchorage 2020 land use policies, conflicting information emerges by more recent sources.

Anchorage 2020 Policy Map

The Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan set a new direction for the preferred form of long-term growth and development. Its policies were a dramatic change from the past. It envisioned major new urban elements in the Anchorage Bowl, and indicated their approximate locations using a Land Use Policy Map (see inside cover).

This Policy Map is intended as more of a vision statement than a land use plan map. It highlights key policies of Anchorage 2020 that can be shown graphically. The land use policies and Policy Map of Anchorage 2020 laid a foundation for updates to the Land Use Plan Map. Such updates would come gradually through neighborhood or district plans.

It has, however, become apparent that a new overall Land Use Plan Map is essential now, in order to supplement Anchorage 2020 with contemporary, comprehensive land use designations for guiding land use decisions being made in the Bowl; establish a framework for neighborhood plans; and provide a legal basis for changes to the zoning map which are consistent with community goals.

ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE PLAN MAP

Guiding Anchorage’s Growth

The Land Use Plan Map designates the location, type and intensity of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development. It shows areas that should remain as park and natural areas. It relates public facility investments to the future planned land use activities that will need them.

It helps to ensure that the growing population has adequate housing, employment, business, recreation, and education opportunities, drinking water, roads and utilities. It helps maintain a balance of residential, commercial and industrial land. Public officials, property owners and other members of the community use the Land Use Plan Map as a tool when making decisions about future development.

An updated Land Use Plan Map will supplement Anchorage 2020 in the following ways, in order to achieve Comprehensive Plan policies:
more clearly delineate policy areas from the Anchorage 2020 Policy Map;
address all areas of the Bowl that Anchorage 2020 did not address; and
provide clearer guidance for how to evaluate the location, type and intensity of proposed new land uses.

A Framework for Neighborhood Planning

Anchorage 2020 identified Neighborhood or District Plans as an essential strategy for updating the Land Use Plan Map. These area-specific plans provide more focused and customized guidance for growth in particular parts of town. Each neighborhood or district plan will amend the overall Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map for its particular area. There are currently 10 adopted area specific plans for the Bowl (see the map after page 3).

The Municipality is helping to initiate several new neighborhood plans, including plans for Downtown, Mountain View and Government Hill, and a Tudor Road Public Lands and Institutions Plan update. The Assembly is reviewing a neighborhood planning ordinance, which establishes procedures for preparing neighborhood plans. District Plans for Hillside and Midtown are on the horizon.

In anticipation of neighborhood plans, this draft Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map proposes a relatively conservative approach to achievement of Anchorage 2020 policies. It lays the groundwork for future neighborhood and district planning. Neighborhood planning decisions will benefit from the context of a broader plan for the overall pattern of future growth in the Bowl. Each neighborhood plan will in turn refine the Land Use Plan Map, and provide opportunities for more fully achieving Anchorage 2020 policies and community goals in specific areas of town.

Guidance and Legal Basis for Zoning

A Land Use Plan Map gives long-term policy guidance. It does not implement itself, or automatically change which zones or regulations apply to any parcel of land.

Land Use Designations on the Land Use Plan Map are implemented by zoning districts on Anchorage’s zoning map. Each zone is defined in the municipal land use regulations in Title 21. These regulations contain detailed standards pertaining to permitted uses, development standards, and other criteria that serve to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Plan Map translates Comprehensive Plan policies into geographic Land Use Designations, thereby providing a legal basis for changes to the city’s zoning map. A rezoning which is compatible with the corresponding Land Use Designation on the map is more likely to be consistent with community policies.

Anchorage’s land use regulations are currently undergoing their most significant revision since the 1960s. The draft Land Use Plan Map can assist in the review of the proposed new land use regulations by showing which of the proposed zoning districts may apply to each Land Use Designation on the Land Use Plan Map.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

Key Comprehensive Plan Policies for the Land Use Plan Map

Following are key adopted principles that establish the basis for the draft Land Use Plan Map. It has become apparent, since adoption of Anchorage 2020, that some Comprehensive Plan policies will be more difficult, or take longer to achieve than once envisioned. Anchorage’s anticipated growth, for example, is slower than what was forecast for Anchorage 2020. However, the essential trends and long-term objectives remain the same.

Key Principles:

1. An Emphasis on the Overall, Long-Term Welfare of the Entire Community.
2. An Affordable, Economically Healthy Community, with enough housing and employment opportunities to meet projected demand, in part through conservation of residential lands, key industrial areas, and business centers.

3. Balanced Regional Growth, where plans for the Anchorage Bowl and the nearby communities in Chugiak-Eagle River and Turnagain Arm coordinate for a balanced distribution of growth around the Municipality.

4. Growth through Infill and Redevelopment. Anchorage is entering a new era as it nears its 100th birthday. Although little vacant land remains, the capacity for growth is elastic. Underused properties exist throughout the Bowl. As land values increase, the market will respond with more efficient use of land. So Anchorage will continue to grow. The question is, where and how it will grow.

5. Concentration of Most Commercial Growth and New Community Facilities into Existing Centers, and the evolution of commercial centers into vibrant urban environments that appeal to businesses, residents and investors.

6. Growth Allocation by Subarea of the Anchorage Bowl, whereby growth is allocated relatively evenly among the subareas of the Bowl, with greater housing density in areas designated for mixed-use redevelopment and transit oriented development.

7. Neighborhood Protection, where infill development, essential to future growth and housing affordability, is made neighborhood-compatible in location and design, and thus more acceptable to the surrounding community.

8. Neighborhood Diversity, providing choice of housing types and living environments.

9. A Walkable Community, where mixed-use centers allow for living, working, shopping and leisure in a shared environment; and where neighborhood services are within a convenient travel distance.

10. Parks, Natural Open Spaces and Ecological Functions are conserved and enhanced to preserve the unique livability of the growing city.
Area Specific Plans
(and year of Assembly adoption)

- Central Business District Comprehensive Development Plan (1983)
- Far North / Bicentennial Park Master Plan (1987)
- Section 36 Land Use Study (1991)
- Ship Creek / Waterfront Land Use Plan (1991)
- Hillside Wastewater Management Plan (1992)
- Merrill Field Airport Master Plan (2000)
- Spenard Commercial District Development Strategy (1996)
- Potter Valley Land Use Analysis (1999)
- Tudor Road Public Lands and Institutions Plan (1986)
- Universities and Medical District Framework Master Plan (2003)

Area Specific Plans in Progress

The Comprehensive Plan establishes that neighborhood and district plans will help guide future growth in specific sub-areas of the city. Each neighborhood plan will amend the overall Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map for a particular area. The Municipality is helping to initiate several new neighborhood plans. These new planning efforts include plans for Downtown, Mountain View, and a Tudor Road Public Lands and Institutions Plan update. The hatch lines identify the approximate location of the planning studies in progress. Specific boundaries will be established as part of the neighborhood plans. Plans for Government Hill, Midtown and Hillside are on the horizon.

Community Council Boundaries

Community councils represent the mosaic of neighborhoods that comprise the city, each neighborhood having its own unique identity and land use issues. The municipal Charter and Code establish Community Councils as a primary means for citizen participation in neighborhood development. In 2003, the Assembly updated the Community Council boundaries to better reflect the modern-day geography of actual neighborhood areas, as a prelude to neighborhood planning.
Community Discussion Draft

LAND USE PLAN MAP

INITIAL MAP LIST

The Community Discussion Draft is a set of four maps, each providing information about the same desired future:

- Generalized Land Use Plan Map
- Residential Intensity Map Layer
- Commercial Intensity Map Layer
- Community Facilities Map Layer

Each Map Layer highlights and elaborates on a general category of use from the Generalized Map. For example, the Residential Intensity Map differentiates types of housing densities. The Commercial Intensity Map differentiates the scale and type of commercial centers (eg., neighborhood or regional centers).

A fifth, Composite Map is available as information. It tells the “whole story”: all information from the Map Layers appears together on one map.

The list of maps is likely to evolve during the community planning process. The community may decide to use fewer maps or consolidate the information into one final map. Or the consensus may be to keep layers separate. The five maps are a starting point for discussion.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The pages that follow define the Land Use Designations that appear on the Land Use Plan Map. Reflecting the policies of Anchorage 2020, the set of categories incorporates land use designations not used before in Anchorage, such as commercial / mixed-use centers.

Each Land Use Designation begins with a statement of purpose, and a description of essential use characteristics, such as the predominant uses, intensity of use, and general physical characteristics of new development. The table on the next page summarizes these Land Use Designations.

Locational Criteria

Each Land Use Designation has a set of locational criteria. These are essential to understanding the maps. They provide the rationale for the locations, types and intensities of uses. If there is a question as to why a certain land use appears in a new location, it is advisable to consult its locational criteria. Most criteria are derived from Comprehensive Plan policies.

The set of locational criteria for each Land Use Designation applies in combination rather than individually. It is not necessary that all must be achievable in every location.

Implementation Zoning

Land Use Designations on the Land Use Plan Map only give policy guidance, and must be implemented by zoning districts on Anchorage’s zoning map. Each zoning district is defined in the municipal land use regulations in Title 21, which contain detailed standards pertaining to permitted and conditional uses, site development standards, and performance criteria that serve to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

The table overleaf cross references each Land Use Designation with a defined set of zoning districts that are most compatible with and likely to implement it. Since the land use regulations in Title 21 are being revised, the table refers to the proposed new zones from the current draft land use regulations.

Actual delineation of zoning district boundaries will be established at the time of areawide zoning or an individual rezoning request. Although zoning must generally adhere to the land use boundaries depicted on the Land Use Plan Map, flexibility in interpretation of the boundary may be made by the Assembly.
### Land Use Designations Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Land Use Plan Map Designations</th>
<th>Specific Land Use Designations</th>
<th>Density&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Compatible Implementation Zoning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
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<td>1.1 - 8</td>
<td>R-1, R-2, R-7, NMU-1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low / Medium Intensity</td>
<td>8.1 - 15</td>
<td>R-3, NMU-1</td>
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<td>• Medium Intensity</td>
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<td>R-3, R-4, RMX</td>
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<td>RMX</td>
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<td>FAR [TBD]&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>AC, NMU-2, CCMU</td>
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<td>FAR [TBD]</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Neighborhood Center</td>
<td>FAR [TBD] [See footnote 2]</td>
<td>NMU-1, NMU-2, CCMU</td>
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<td>FAR [TBD]</td>
<td>CCMU</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Regional Commercial Center</td>
<td>FAR [TBD]</td>
<td>RCMU</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>FAR [TBD]</td>
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<sup>1</sup> An explanation of how to measure residential and non-residential density for land use planning purposes appears on page 12.

<sup>2</sup> The method for measuring intensity and providing guidance regarding commercial, mixed-use and industrial intensities is still under consideration. Floor area ratio (FAR) is suggested for community discussion, and will be evaluated along with other alternatives as part of the public review process.
Residential Designations

The draft Anchorage Bowl Residential designations are designed to offer a wide range of housing densities and products to meet the demand of current and future residents. These designations reflect the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the residential uses described below, other uses such as schools, churches, parks, child care facilities and other public or institutional uses may be allowed in residential areas, if determined to be compatible with and oriented toward the needs of the immediate neighborhood. Small-scale, non-obtrusive and convenient shopping and commercial services oriented to residential areas may exist in locations designated by an adopted neighborhood plan.

Limited Intensity Residential

The Limited Intensity Residential designation provides for large-lot, single-family residences in a semi-rural environment, and relieves development pressure in areas where natural conditions and distance to urban services limit growth.

The predominant land use consists of detached houses on lots one acre or larger in size. The intended overall density for new development is less than one housing unit per gross acre. Two-family or attached dwellings are allowed on larger lots. Lot size, setbacks, the custom built nature of residences and the presence of natural vegetation help retain a semi-rural atmosphere and the natural environment. This designation is implemented by the R-5, R-6, R-8, R-9 and R-10 zones.

Following are the Locational Criteria for Limited Intensity Residential on the Land Use Plan Map. As with all other land use designations, these apply in combination rather than individually, and it is not necessary that all must be achievable in every location:

- Areas with an established large-lot, semi-rural development pattern;
- Areas outside of the water / wastewater service boundaries;
- Areas constrained by limited road access; and
- Areas where environmental constraints preclude more intense site development.

Low Intensity Residential

The Low Intensity Residential designation provides for a variety of urban single-family residential neighborhoods.

The predominant land use consists of urban single-family housing, most commonly detached single-family subdivisions. It also includes areas with more compact forms of single-family, such as attached single- and two-family housing, and small-lot houses, for efficient use of land within the urban services boundary. The intended density range is greater than 1 and up to 8 housing units per gross acre. Building scale, single-family character and landscaped setbacks of new development, as well as the low traffic volumes on local streets, contribute to a low intensity living environment.

This designation is implemented by the R-1, R-2 and R-7 zones. Its Locational Criteria are as follows:

- Areas with an established single- or two-family development pattern;
- Areas not severely impacted by land uses of incompatible scale or intensity;
- Areas not subjected to high volumes of through-traffic;
- Areas outside of designated redevelopment / infill areas, transit supportive development corridors, and mixed-use centers; and
- Areas formerly designated for higher intensity but developed with single-family housing, and that remain optimal for single-family use.
Measuring Housing Density. The measurement of housing unit density is intended to express overall gross density levels for a planning area rather than for individual parcels. This helps to predict whether the amount of residential acres provided on the Land Use Plan Map will be adequate to accommodate anticipated population growth.

The measure of density is the number of housing units per gross acre of land. “Gross” means that the acreage counted includes, in addition to the property assigned to the individual residential buildings, all lands used for the streets and pedestrian ways, private common open spaces, and leftover or unusable private land within a neighborhood. It also includes small institutional uses such as small or medium sized churches or group housing facilities within the residentially designated areas on the Land Use Plan Map. As such, gross acres as a measure helps to calculate the total possible number of housing units in a contiguous geographic area of the Anchorage Bowl.

This measure of housing units per gross acre for an entire area of town should not be applied directly as a measure of how many housing units may be allowed per net acre of each specific parcel or development site. Moreover, the density range established by a Residential designation on the Land Use Plan Map may not be achievable on each development site, because of considerations such as site location, topography and the municipal land use regulations.

Measuring Commercial Intensity. The Land Use Plan Map must balance future residential needs with adequate space to accommodate forecasted employment and commerce, particularly in key commercial centers. The Anchorage 2020 / Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan emphasizes that new commercial development should be located in designated commercial mixed-use centers in order to improve Anchorage’s overall land use efficiency, and revitalize existing commercial areas through redevelopment. Certain centers, such as Midtown and Downtown, are intended to receive the highest intensities.

This draft suggests floor area ratio (FAR) as a measure of intensity, in order to measure how well the proposed land use plan focuses new commercial growth in key areas, and provides enough space for employment. The definition of FAR is the ratio of the total gross floor area of a building to the area of the lot on which it is located.

While FAR is suggested in this draft as a measure for community discussion, it will be evaluated along with other alternatives as part of the public review process.
Low / Medium Intensity Residential

The Low / Medium Intensity Residential designation provides for a range of single- and multi-family housing, in neighborhoods that offer a compatible diversity of housing choices.

Residential uses include standard detached houses and small-lot, single-family homes, attached single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, mobile homes, and relatively small apartment projects. The intended overall density range is greater than 8 and up to 15 housing units per gross acre. New development is compatible with the desired physical scale, residential streetscape, and any neighboring single-family homes in a unified neighborhood environment.

Multi-family structures containing up to three dwellings may be allowed at densities of up to 18 housing units per gross acre in small-lot, infill environments such as Mountain View or Fairview, (eg., 6000 square foot lots with rear alley access) through application of special infill design standards, to ensure compatibility with desired neighborhood scale and appearance.

This designation is implemented by the R-3 zone. Locational Criteria:

- Areas that provide a transition from more intense uses or traffic volumes to lower intensity residential areas;
- Areas within unobstructed walking distance of schools, parks, transit and local commercial services;
- Areas within ¼ mile of designated transit-oriented street corridors;
- Areas accessible to major streets without passing through less intensive uses; and
- Areas once designated for intensive multi-family use that are characterized by single-family scale lots and homes.

Medium Intensity Residential

The Medium Intensity Residential designation provides for a quality multi-family / townhouse living environment with design amenities for residents and an efficient use of residential land, locating more housing near public services and commercial / mixed-use centers.

Predominant land uses consist of multi-family complexes and attached townhouses at an intended overall density of greater than 15 and up to 25 dwellings per gross acre. New development consists of 2 to 5 story apartment complexes or townhouses, and provides design amenities such as private open space and recreation areas.

This designation allows and encourages additional density of up to 40 dwellings per acre adjacent to designated Community Activity Centers, for projects that complement these “town center” core areas by engaging the street and offering design features as defined in the land use regulations. Such projects may include limited neighborhood commercial space.

This designation is implemented by the R-4 and RMX zones. Locational Criteria:

- Areas with an established multi-family housing development pattern;
- Areas that provide a transition from intense uses and high traffic volumes;
- Areas accessible to arterials without passing through less intensive uses;
- Areas within walking distance of community facilities, transit, everyday shopping and employment;
- Areas that can provide more housing near transit development corridors and commercial / mixed-use centers;
- Areas once designated for lower intensity that are well positioned for redevelopment and designated by an adopted plan for more intensive use;
- Areas in mid-block locations once designated for non-residential use that are underutilized and well positioned for residential redevelopment.
City Center Intensity Residential

The City Center Intensity Residential designation provides for the highest density housing concentrations near the Downtown and Midtown Major City Centers, providing greater housing opportunities near core urban amenities and supporting vibrant city centers with more residents nearby.

Predominant land uses consist of multi-family complexes. Limited commercial space is allowed within residential projects. The intended overall density is greater than 25 housing units per gross acre. New projects can maximize the locational advantages using structured parking and an intensive multi-story design. New development engages the sidewalk with active uses and entrances, and provides pedestrian connections to nearby activity centers. This designation is implemented by the RMX zone. Locational Criteria:

- Areas designated by an adopted plan as redevelopment/infill areas near Downtown and Midtown;
- Existing high density multi-family near Downtown- or Midtown-vicinity shopping, transit, parks, schools, town centers or major employment;
- Redevelopment / infill areas formerly designated for commercial use that are underutilized and well positioned for high-density residential/mixed-use.

Commercial

The draft Commercial designations allow for a range of shopping, retail services, and low intensity employment. Areas include linear corridors or commercial-residential transitions outside of city activity centers.

Commercial Corridor

The Commercial Corridor designation provides for local and regional retail sales and services on major street corridors.

Predominant land uses include a range of retail sales and service uses as well as similar commercial uses such as fast food, vehicle services and entertainment uses that generate customer vehicle traffic. Some corridors are automobile dependent, characterized by individual low-rise, single-use buildings or strip malls with multiple tenants. Others feature older, small-lot development, transit service, and are positioned for more intensive, pedestrian-oriented redevelopment.

This designation is implemented by the AC, NMU-2, and CCMU zones. Locational Criteria:

- Areas along arterials with single-use retail sites or multi-tenant strip malls;
- Areas designated by an adopted plan for transit oriented (re)development;
- Not intended for further significant geographic expansion at the expense of the residential or industrial land base.

Office – Low Intensity

The Office – Low Intensity designation provides for situations where a range of office uses may be appropriate, but not a broad spectrum of commercial uses.

Predominant uses consist of small- to medium-sized office buildings with business, professional and medical outpatient services. Multi-family or a mix of office and multi-family residential is encouraged. New projects are compatible with nearby residential uses in terms of scale, bulk, landscaped setbacks and traffic volume. Areas historically residential may retain a strong residential character with small office uses. Low intensity lodging, dining, and other such uses may occur.

This designation is implemented by the O zone. Locational Criteria:

- Existing commercial office areas that remain optimal for medical or other office use, and that buffer residential areas from more intensive commercial;
- Areas, such as at land use transitions, where a range of office uses may be
appropriate, but not a broad spectrum of commercial uses; and

- Historically residential areas no longer poised for conventional housing development, where other commercial besides limited office uses would be incompatible.

**Commercial / Mixed-use Centers**

A key community objective is to create vibrant urban environments that appeal to businesses, support economic vitality for the city’s commercial centers, and serve as engines for overall employment growth in the community. Increasing the diversity and intensity of uses in existing commercial areas such as Downtown is also essential to improving Anchorage’s overall land use efficiency. For these reasons, the Comprehensive Plan concentrates most new commercial and civic development in compact centers.

The Commercial / Mixed-use Center designations provide for these focal points of commercial, civic, and cultural activity. Each scale of center serves the surrounding community with shopping, services and employment.

The Centers exhibit the highest degree of interrelationship among land uses. For many, however, this range of activities may remain limited to mostly commercial use within the 20-year horizon. Downtown and a few other centers could evolve as genuine compact, mixed-use centers: away from a pattern of individual, segregated land uses to a greater variety of activities (including residential) that share the same, pedestrian-friendly environment.

**Neighborhood Center**

The Neighborhood Center designation provides for small to medium size commercial convenience centers that serve the surrounding neighborhood or cluster of neighborhoods.

Predominant land uses consist of small scale, non-obtrusive convenience retail and personal services, such as food markets, drug stores, restaurants, and professional services oriented to the needs of the surrounding residential population. The largest centers may be anchored by a full-sized grocery store. It is important that the scale, appearance and function of new development be compatible with adjacent residential uses, and designed with a goal of reducing vehicle trips and driving distances, and to minimize traffic impacts.

This designation is implemented by the NMU-1 and -2 zones. **Locational Criteria:**

- Existing neighborhood centers;
- Areas designated by an adopted plan as neighborhood commercial centers;
- Areas 2 to 20 acres in size serving a population of up to [10,000] residents;
- Areas within walking distance of, or that can provide conveniences to the adjacent neighborhood(s), reducing vehicle trips or driving distances; and
- Areas having frontage on two streets and a locally important street corner.

**Community Activity Center**

The Community Activity Center designation provides focal points of activity for major sub-areas of the Bowl, integrating community-serving retail, public services, and civic facilities. With additional planning and more housing, some commercial activity centers may evolve into core areas of mixed-use town centers envisioned in Anchorage 2020.

A range of retail shopping and services, including grocery stores and day care centers, provide most of the daily needs of residents of surrounding neighborhoods. Community facilities such as post offices, recreational facilities, branch libraries and schools add to the life and vitality of the center. The community activity center allows and encourages mixed-use housing, and is adjacent to medium intensity residential areas. Public improvements and the orientation of new stores to the street help to enhance the pedestrian environment.
This designation is implemented by the CCMU zone. **Locational Criteria** include:

- Areas designated by an adopted plan as mixed-use town centers;
- Areas 30 to 50 acres in size, located 2-4 miles apart, each serving a trade area population of 30,000 - 40,000 residents;
- Centers accessible by walk-in trade from adjacent residential areas; and
- Areas well positioned for higher-intensity redevelopment.

**Regional Commercial Center**

*The Regional Commercial Center designation provides for conglomerations of large-scale commercial uses that serve the wider community, function as vast focus centers of commercial activity, and are allowed and encouraged to evolve as mixed-use centers.*

Major malls with clusters of large retail establishments anchor *Regional Commercial Centers*, serving a trade area of up to an hour travel distance, and significant out-of-town traffic. Supporting uses include low-medium rise offices, hotels, transit hubs, entertainment uses and even housing, and may eventually develop the commercial center into a more physically integrated mix of uses. Employment density does not approach that of *Major City Centers*.

This designation is implemented by the RCMU zone. **Locational Criteria** include:

- Existing retail power centers anchored by large malls and multiple large retail establishments;
- Areas at intersections of arterial streets with nearby access to freeways; and
- Regional focal points of shopping activity that include public services, transit facilities, hotels, and other uses.

**Major City Center**

*The Major City Center designation provides for the highest concentration of employment, civic and cultural institutions, regional commercial, and high-density, mixed-use housing in Downtown and Midtown.*

Land uses consist of high-density office developments at an intended density of 50 or more employees per acre; regional commercial uses; and major civic, cultural and entertainment activities. Supportive retail uses, such as food stores, restaurants and banks mix with office uses. High-density housing is encouraged; low intensity development is discouraged. A shared network of sidewalks and public spaces lends vitality to the center.

CBD, MMU and RCMU zones implement this designation. **Locational Criteria**:

- Major Employment Centers identified in *Anchorage 2020*;
- Areas optimal for concentrations of regional commercial or employment densities at 50+ employees per acre;
- Areas within unobstructed walking distance of high-intensity residential;

**Note:** The *Land Use Plan Map* designates most of Downtown and Midtown as *Major City Center*. A more refined categorization of sub-areas of Downtown and Midtown may result from the Downtown and Midtown Plans.

**Industrial Designations**

**Industrial / Commercial**

*The Industrial / Commercial designation provides for a variety of employment and economic development opportunities in an industrial-type setting.*

Allows a variety of industrial and related uses, including office industrial parks. Building scale, intensity of use and truck traffic avoid severe off-site impacts. Single-commodity bulk retail sales such as building supplies and services are allowed. Other commercial uses that are supportive to industrial functions and character may occur, but are limited in intensity to maintain adequate industrial development opportunities. Lands within *Major Transportation Facility* property boundaries may be used for transportation operations.
This designation is implemented by the I-1, IC and AF zones. **Locational Criteria:**
- Areas with a mix of industrial and compatible commercial activities;
- Industrial enclaves that are too small to be efficient industrial reserves; and
- Areas once designated for industrial use that are subject to encroaching commercial, and yet remain optimal for industrial use as part of the long-term supply of industrial land in the Anchorage Bowl.

**Industrial / Industrial Reserve**

*The Industrial / Industrial Reserve designation provides for areas where municipal policy is to preserve lands for existing and future industrial development.*

This designation is a sanctuary for a wide range of industrial uses. Non-industrial uses are limited to prevent land use conflicts and to preserve land for industrial economic development. Uses may include manufacturing, major transportation operations, research and development, industrial/business parks, warehousing and distribution, equipment and materials storage, vehicle and equipment repair, waste management and similar uses. Certain areas may allow for processing and distribution of natural resources and hazardous materials.

**Park and Natural Resource Use Designations**

**Park and Natural Resource Use**

*The Park and Natural Resource Use designation provides for active and passive recreation, conservation of natural areas, and trail corridors connecting neighborhoods.*

Uses include neighborhood, community, and natural resource use area parks, special use parks, golf courses, greenbelts, and other municipal open spaces formally reserved for recreation or natural conservation, allowing special purpose facilities such as sports complexes or interpretive centers that support park, recreation and natural resource functions. The PR zone is designed to implement this designation. Most other zones are also compatible with park and recreation use. **Locational Criteria** include:
- Areas dedicated as municipal park;
- Areas designated by an adopted plan as park or natural resource use; and
- Municipal lands of high natural value, or that are environmentally sensitive.

**Other Area that Functions as Park, Recreation and Natural Resource**

*This designation applies to non-municipal lands that by formal agreement or easement function as an important part of the publicly accessible park and natural resource system within the planning area boundaries of the Anchorage Bowl.*

This designation is comprised partly of agency lands under permit for park and natural resource use. Such lands are subject to the control of the International Airport, Merrill Field Airport, Alaska Railroad Corporation or other land owning agency. Some permits are renewed on an interim basis. Park uses may not interfere with land owning agency operations.

This designation also includes non-municipal public lands that are designated by adopted plan as park, open space or...
natural resource, or are environmentally unsuitable for development.

Finally, the designation is also comprised of non-municipal public or private outdoor recreation areas that, by easement, formal agreement or commercial activity, function as park, recreation and natural resource.

This designation is implemented by the PLI zone and various zones that allow for park, recreation and natural resource use.

Community Facility Designations

Schools and other public institutions and public utility facilities designated on the Land Use Plan Map are generally existing facilities or known planned facilities. Future facilities can be developed through procedures established in the zoning code. Future specific area public facility plans or public facility site selections will result in amendments to the Land Use Plan Map.

School and Community Institutional

The School and Community Institutional designation provides for small to medium scale institutions that can integrate into the local neighborhood and provide a community service or focus center for the surrounding area.

The predominant land use consists of public and larger private schools with outdoor recreation facilities, including elementary, junior and high schools. Large religious campuses ten acres or larger in size and/or containing large school functions also fall within this designation.

Other community institutions include such uses as community centers, museums, cemeteries and public libraries that serve the immediate area or that are similar to neighborhood serving institutions in terms of physical scale and external impacts.

Additional uses, such as day care facilities, small assemblies, trade schools or other job training facilities may be developed in various non-residential land use areas under procedures established in the zoning code. This designation is implemented by the PLI zone.

Major Institutional

The Major Institutional designation provides for major public or quasi-public institutional uses that serve a wide area of the community, function as major activity centers, and are not usually integrated into residential areas.

Major Institutional uses function as centers of community activity, and consist of large hospitals, university campuses, major public administration campuses that provide services for the visiting public, and major public assemblies such as sports arenas or cultural facilities. Supportive uses such as food, lodging, group housing or offices are encouraged. Physical design mitigates the external impacts of scale, and facilities relate positively to surrounding street and open space networks. This designation is implemented by the PLI zone.

Major institutional uses should cluster as activity centers to support other similar uses and benefit from access to various modes of transportation. Locational Criteria include:

- The Universities-Medical District major employment center; and
- Other existing or known planned major institutional facilities.
- Not intended for expansion into low-intensity residential areas.

Public Utility / Facility

The Public Utility / Facility designation provides for public facilities and infrastructure that are industrial in character.

Predominant land uses consist of public utilities: sewer and water treatment plants, power generation plants, industrial yards, water tank reservoirs, pump stations and facilities for maintenance or fleet services. The designation also applies to facilities such as fire stations or health laboratories not oriented to on-site customer service.

This designation is implemented by the PLI, I-1, I-2 and IC zones.
Major Transportation Facility

Anchorage is defined in part by its role as a regional and global transportation center. It has four major transportation facilities – the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, Merrill Field Airport, the Port of Anchorage, and the Alaska Railroad.

These facilities are identified on the Land Use Plan Map because (a) they comprise an essential and distinct part of the city, and (b) their relationship with adjacent uses.

Strategies to further develop and improve access to these facilities while minimizing impacts to adjacent neighborhoods and other sensitive land uses are to be addressed in part through specific area planning and the revision of municipal land use regulations.

Major Transportation Facility designated areas are comprised of Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport and Merrill Field Airport land uses subject to FAA use regulations; the Port of Anchorage and water transportation related activities such as mixed-use marine facilities with access to water-borne transportation; and the Alaska Railroad Corporation operations areas and railway utility corridor.

Commercial or industrial areas within transportation facility boundaries that are not directly a part of transportation operations, or not dependent on direct access to transportation facilities, may be developed in various non-residential land use areas under procedures established in the municipal land use regulations. For example, Railroad Terminal Reserve areas leased for activities other than railroad operations are generally designated as industrial on the Land Use Plan Map.

The Major Transportation Facility designation may be implemented by the AD, MC, MI, I-1, I-2, IC, and PLI zones.

Government / Institutional Focus Area

Governmental Institutional Focus Area identifies Downtown, generally defined by the Central Business District zones, as the preferred location for municipal, state and federal administrative offices and regional arts and culture facilities. Example facilities include the Civic and Convention Center; City Hall; the Alaska Center for Performing Arts; and the Alaska Museum of History and Art.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the concentration of such facilities Downtown, to strengthen Downtown as a vibrant regional center for commerce, tourism, services, finance, arts and culture, and government offices.

Intermodal / Transit Focus Area

Intermodal / Transit Focus Area identifies planned intermodal transportation centers and potential future commuter railway stations, as well as existing and planned focus areas for transit service. This may be either a single facility site or a wider area of concentrated transit service. Intermodal / Transit focus areas fit into and support urban centers and mixed-use environments by providing alternative transportation choices for residents, employees and visitors.

Special Study Area

There are several public land parcels for which a specific use has yet to be identified. These areas are subject to a site-specific land use study before use designation or development. The Land Use Plan depicts these areas as Special Study Areas using a diagonal line pattern.