



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.



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.

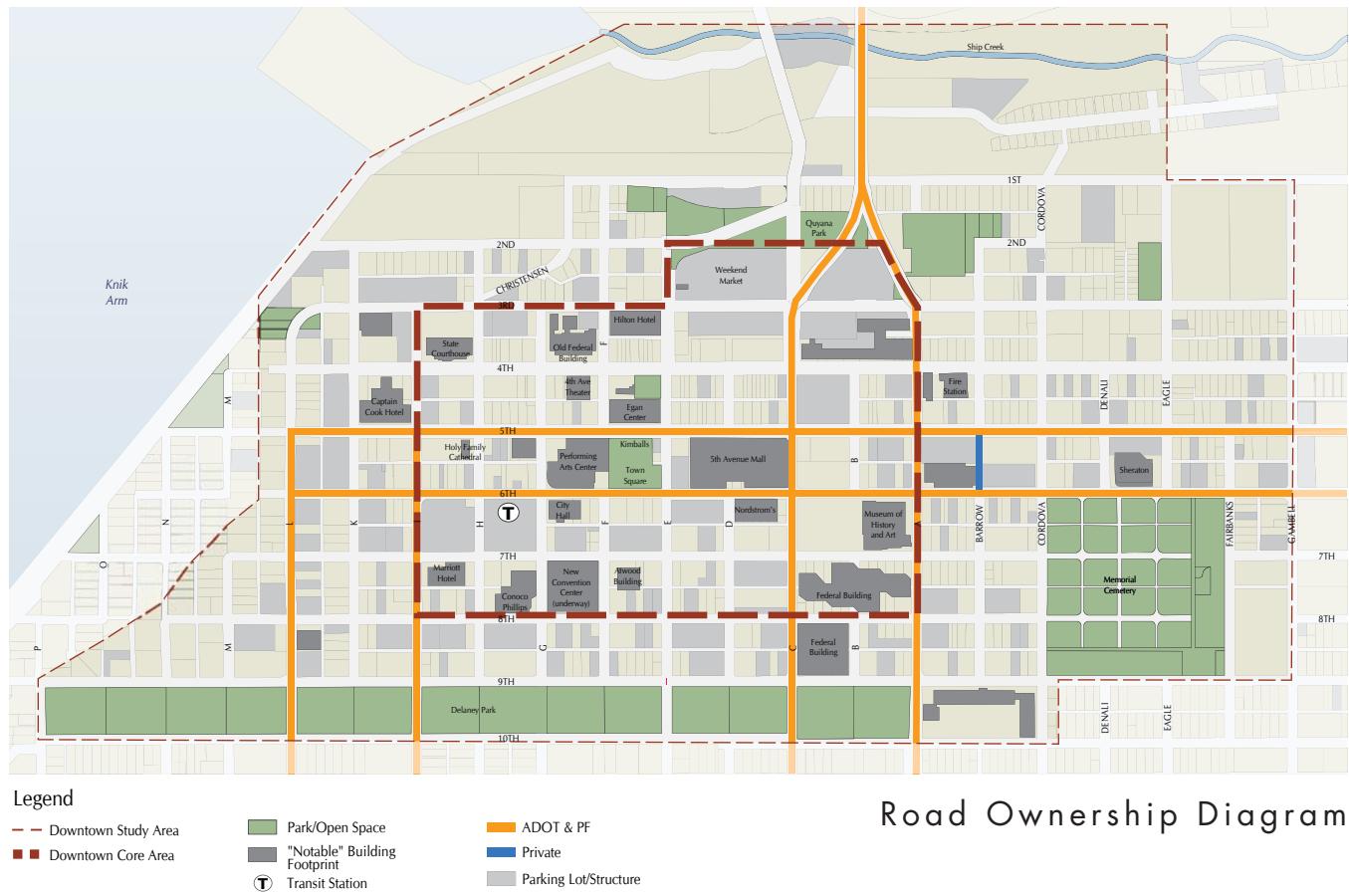
Circulation

- 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 and deter pedestrian use.
- 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.
- 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.
- Downtown lacks direct local transit connections to the airport and rail links.

- 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.
- The proposed Knik Arm Crossing should be incorporated into the Freeway to Freeway Connection to ensure an integrated regional transportation system. If the Knik Arm Crossing were to ultimately remain connected only to the A/C Couplet, it will carry more regional traffic through the Downtown Core. This could negatively impact local circulation and the potential for high-density mixed-use redevelopment.
- 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.



TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION



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).

Parking

- Downtown currently has an abundance of surface parking lots.
- Underutilization of parking supply may also be a result of a lack of wayfinding directional signage, poor pedestrian connections to destinations within Downtown, and unaffordable prices.
- 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 on page 73. The shared ownership requires coordination in operating and maintaining existing facilities. It also demands collaboration in planning and providing for facility and service expansions.

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.



The Downtown transportation network and streetscape design should adhere to ADA standards and cultivate a universally accessible environment.

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 wayfinding

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.

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.



The strategy calls for conversion of E Street to a two-way street north of 4th Avenue.

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 develop and evaluate 10 alternative scenarios for potential circulation systems for Downtown. These scenarios tested the impact of changing the directionality and/or functional classifications of various streets in Downtown. 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

As a result of the transportation analysis, a combination of key street conversions are recommended. These appear 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:

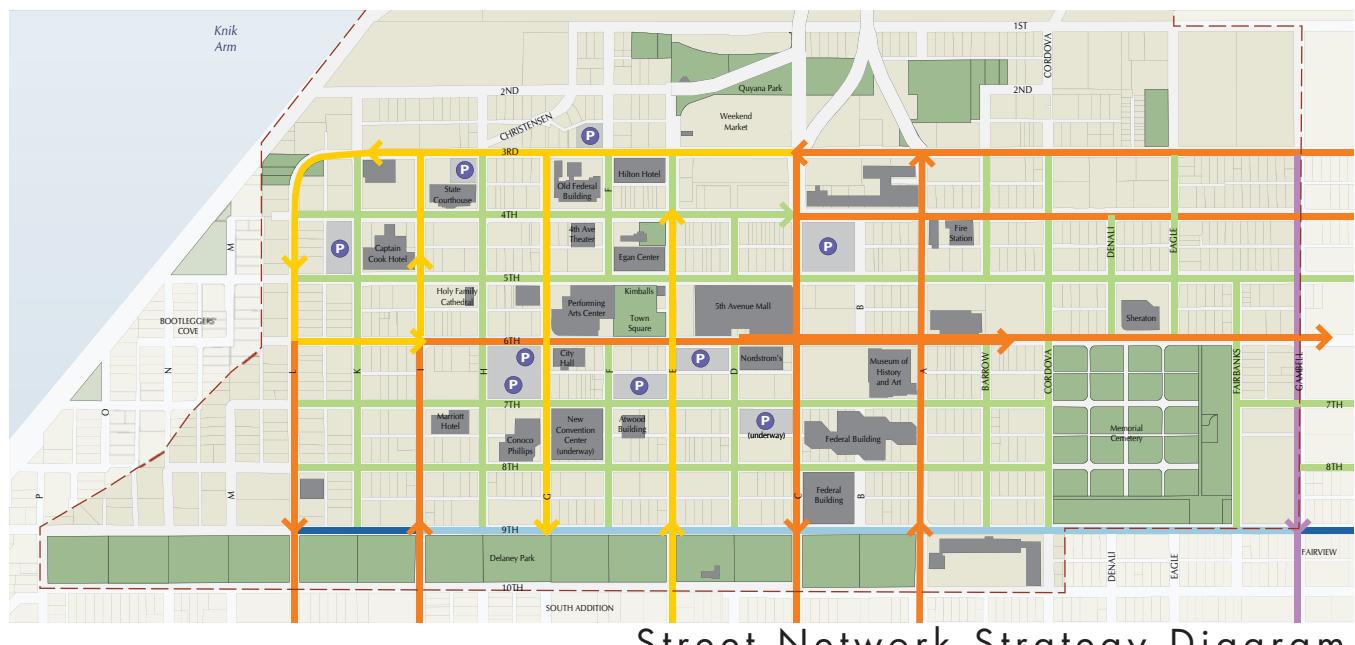
- Make street circulation in Downtown simpler and more intuitive;
- Increase system capacity for local traffic circulation;
- Improve transit access;
- Increase transportation / land use compatibility;
- Improve the pedestrian environment and pedestrian circulation;
- Open more of the Core to less through-traffic and greater opportunities for redevelopment; and
- Provide sufficient capacity for anticipated regional through-traffic and freight mobility.

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.



Changes to 9th Avenue will facilitate better pedestrian access to Delaney Park.



Legend

Downtown Study Area

Park/Open Space

"Notable" Building Footprint

Parking Structure

2 Lanes, One-Way

3 Lanes, One-Way

4 Lanes, One-Way

2 Lanes, Two-Way

3 Lanes, Two-Way

4 Lanes, Two-Way

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

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 in part by reducing driver confusion and out-of direction travel.
- On-street parking should be maintained and expanded wherever possible.

Convert 3rd Avenue to one-way westbound traffic

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.

- 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 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.
- Phase out West 3rd Avenue and L Street as a through-truck route, in conjunction with improvements to the existing street network outside the Downtown area which make other truck routes more feasible and attractive in terms of travel time, traffic flow, turning movements and safety. After such phase-out, truck traffic on West 3rd Avenue should be limited to local access only.
- In conjunction with the planned conversion of 3rd Avenue, reconfigure the intersection of 4th Avenue and C Street to allow for safer and more efficient eastbound truck turning movements and to preserve an outbound truck route to Gambell Street and the Glenn Highway.
- 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.



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.

- 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.



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.

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.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION



Pedestrian oriented mixed-use streets include wider sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking, furniture and other pedestrian amenities.



Residential oriented mixed-use streets are located in residential sub-districts and would feature street tree lawns, landscaping and on-street parking.

2. Street Typology

Functional classifications for streets have historically been based on the movement of motor vehicles. Consideration for adjacent land uses has been minimal in the functional classifications. The Anchorage Long-range Transportation Plan (LRTP) adopted in 2005 recognized the need for a more balanced street classification system that emphasizes adjacent land uses such as unique mixed-use environments like Downtown, and considers other transportation types, including walking, bicycling and transit.

The LRTP identified several street typologies to augment traditional classifications like arterial and collector. Each street typology prioritizes various design elements (sidewalks, on-street parking, lane widths, etc.) by looking at factors related to both the adjacent land uses and the functional classification. The LRTP recommends that a determination of applicable street typology be established through municipal planning prior to future individual street improvement projects.

General concepts for three possible Downtown street typologies are identified for consideration. These concepts derive from the LRTP, the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan, the Downtown Districts Diagram, Street Network Strategy Diagram, Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram and other transportation and circulation strategies of this Plan.

These general concepts could be considered for possible further development and application as part of the public process to update the Downtown land use code. Because it is important that land uses interface with the adjacent streetscape in a downtown environment, street typologies can provide useful guidance for how future on-site property development relates to the type of adjoining street. For example, there could be extra incentives for buildings on a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use street to have more frequent entrances, windows and active ground-floor uses.

The general concepts for street typologies that could be considered include:

- *Mixed-use street:* 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:* The mixed use street typology can be further refined to emphasize the streets of highest pedestrian use. These streets would feature the widest sidewalks, with an unobstructed clear width of at least 8-12 feet where possible, as well as curb-bulb-outs, raised intersections, and other pedestrian amenities where warranted by adjacent activities and where right-of-way and resources allow.



This street scene in Downtown Anchorage reflects many elements of the mixed-use street typology including wider sidewalks, street trees and on-street parking in an area of commercial and retail establishments.

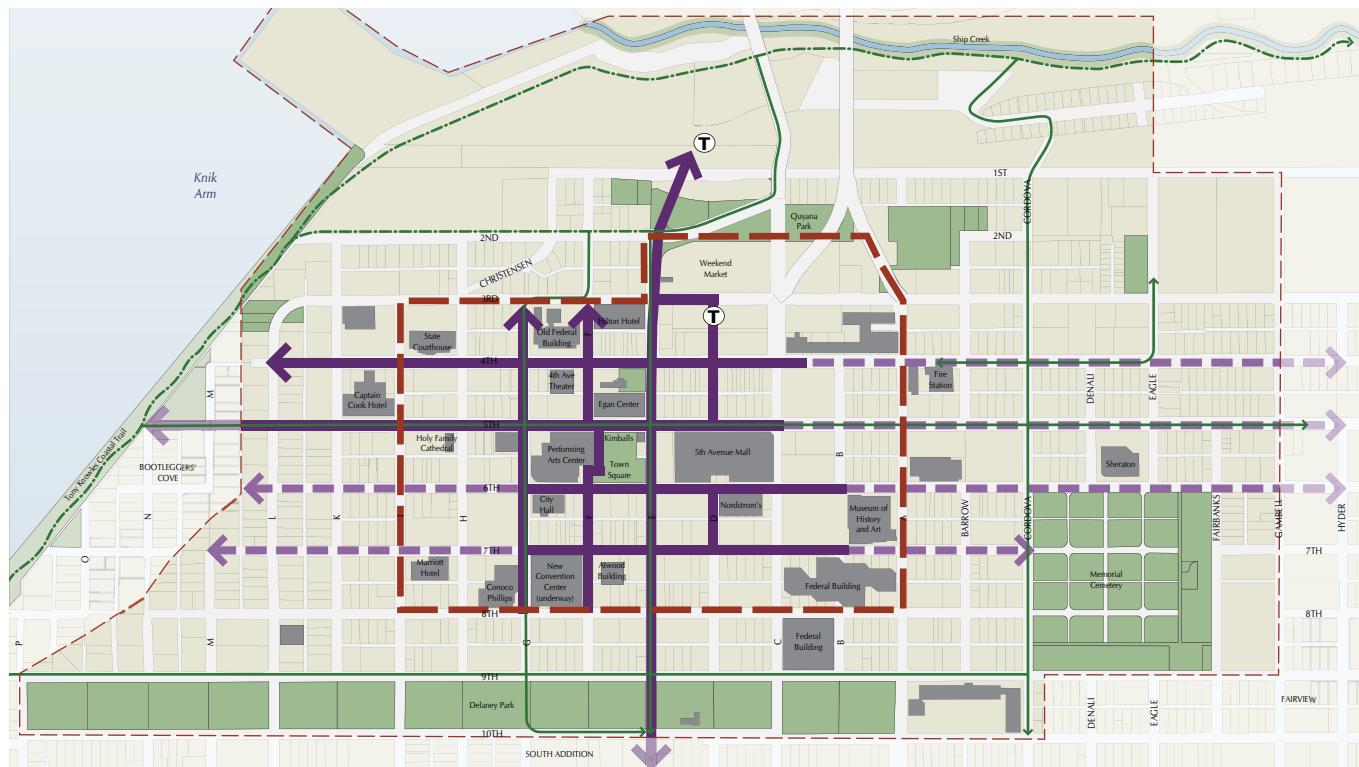
3. Improve the Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment

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.

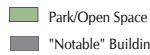
- Improve the Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Connections identified in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram.
- Promote streetscape improvements recommended in the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan (appendices), to enhance pedestrian activity and support development and economic growth.



Pedestrian and Bicycle Diagram

Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core



- Enhance pedestrian crossings for continuity of access around Downtown. Install safe crossings across the A and C, 5th and 6th and I and L couples.
- Calm traffic on the A/C Couplet at key intersections as it passes through Downtown.

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.



Anchorage's trail system connects directly into Downtown, creating opportunities for integrating Downtown into the regional non-vehicular circulation system.



A network of high quality street environments includes wide walkways, sheltered spaces and safe street crossings. It works alongside active ground-floor storefronts and services to draw people and activity Downtown.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Manage traffic speed and volumes on Downtown streets to minimize the perceptions of pedestrian barriers.

- Encourage average speeds of approximately 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
- 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.



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).

4. 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. This Plan builds on the city's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTDP) objective to double the frequency of bus service over the next 20 years on many bus routes serving Downtown, as well as the LRTDP 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 distance people walk to destinations throughout Downtown, and coordinating transit service with destinations and amenities.

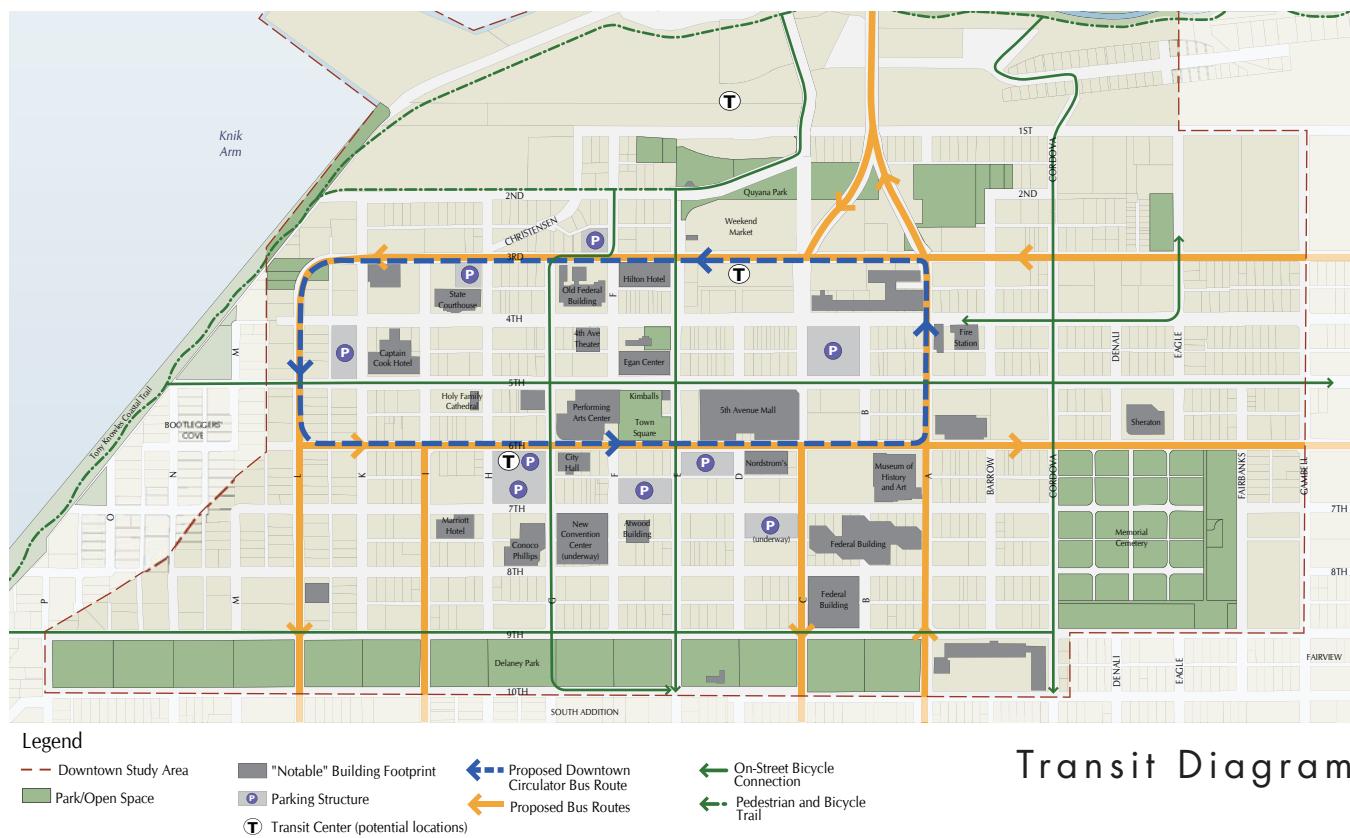
Expand and/or relocate the Transit Center.

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 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.



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.
- As part of the strategies for Downtown to be the city's center for accommodating visitors from all over Alaska, establish a non-stop express transit route connecting 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.
- 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.



The Downtown Circulator should be a special, dedicated bus transit line that is quick, efficient and easily recognizable.

5. 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 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.



Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core
- Park/Open Space
- "Notable" Building Footprint
- Primary Pedestrian Connection
- Secondary Pedestrian Connection
- Proposed Downtown Circulator Bus Route
- Parking Structure
- Transit Station

Parking and Pedestrian Connections Diagram

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

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.



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.



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.

- 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.

Operate Commercial Surface Lots and Parking Facilities to Better Meet Customer Service Needs.

- Require all owners of commercial surface parking lots and parking facilities, including out-of-state owners, to maintain a local office for transactions of business and customer service.
- Require owners of commercial surface parking lots and parking facilities to improve sidewalk maintenance, especially winter snow removal on public areas.



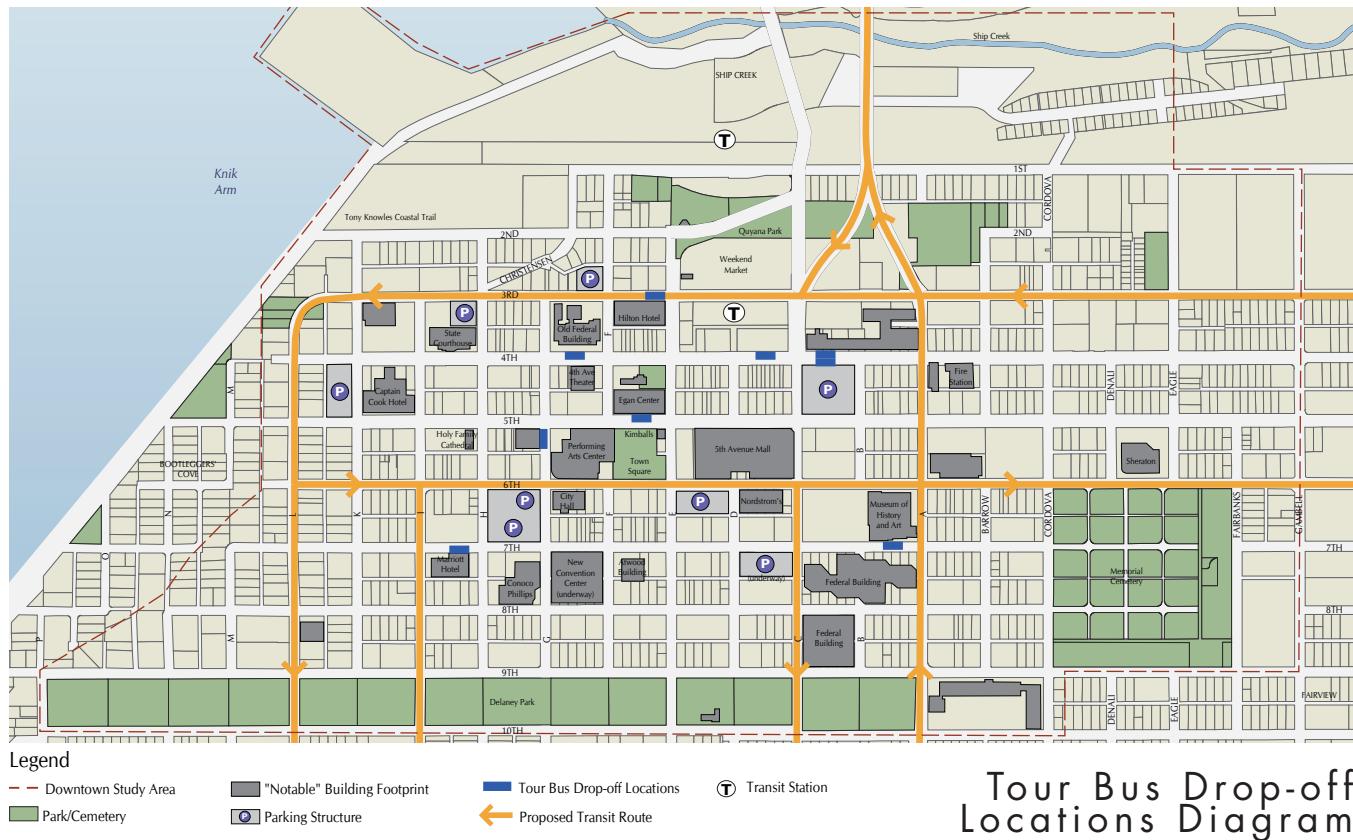
This parking garage has ground-level businesses, landscaping and pedestrian-friendly amenities such as a well marked sidewalk and crosswalk.

6. 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 on the opposite page.

- 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 allow independent bus

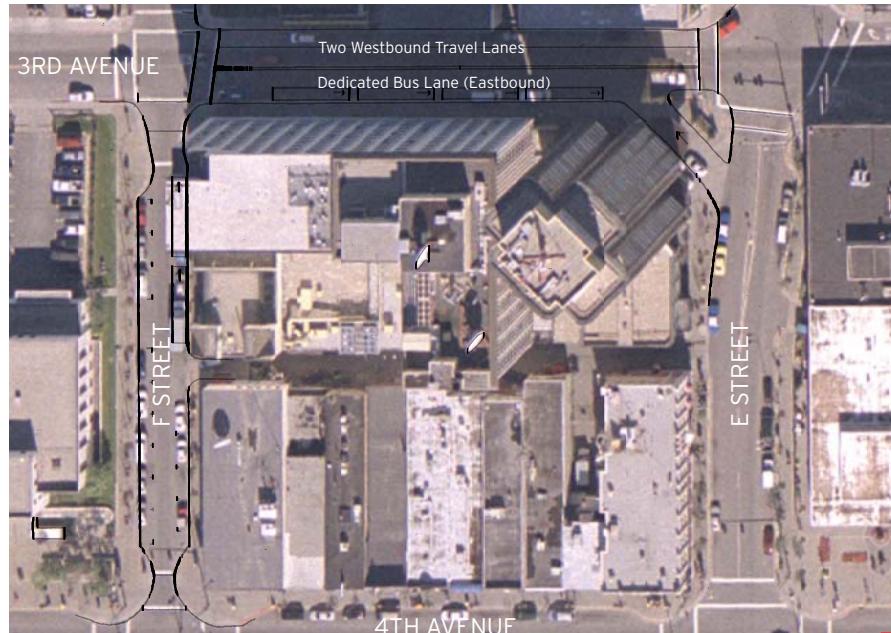


movements, avoid public street crossings by passengers to final destinations (i.e. hotels, hospitality suites, etc.) and allow easy ingress/egress.

- Apply techniques as illustrated to provide adequate tour bus and luggage truck access and operations at key destinations. The illustration to the right shows a two-way treatment of 3rd Avenue on the north side of the Hilton Hotel to accommodate bus loading and unloading. Extension of this eastbound bus lane further east to C Street could provide an efficient route for departing tour buses. Luggage truck and tour bus loading and unloading could also be accommodated on F Street, as shown.

7. 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.



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. Curb-side 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.

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.

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.

