

CHAPTER 1

Overview

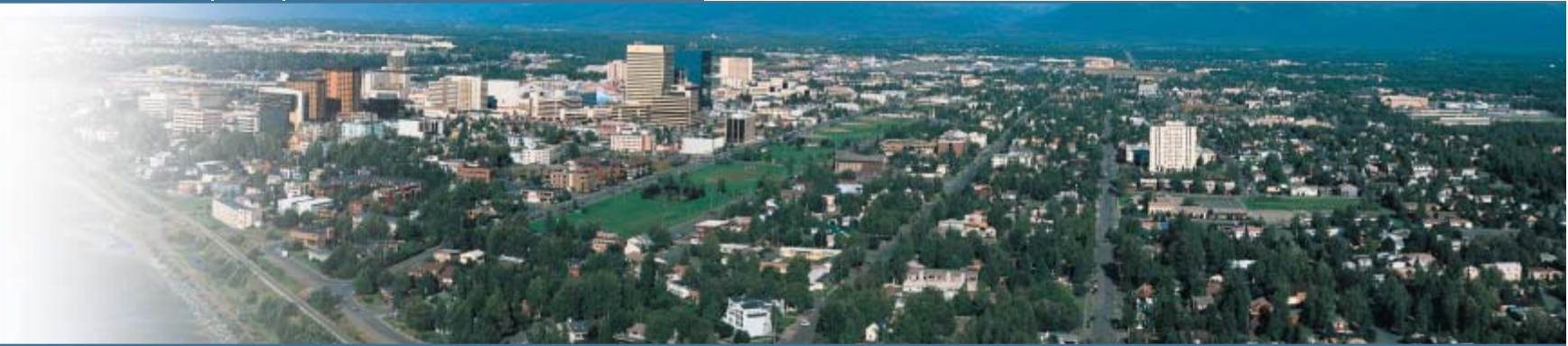
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Overview

Chapter Summaries



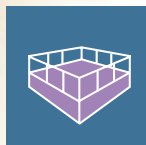
Overview

Chapter 1 - Overview describes the role and purpose of the Plan, outlines the plan development process, and relates this Plan to Anchorage's earlier comprehensive plans.



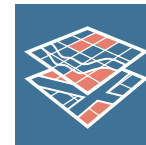
Anchorage Today

Chapter 2 - Anchorage Today gives a snapshot of the community today. It describes population and economic trends, land use and development trends, and transportation and public infrastructure. Critical planning issues are highlighted.



Foundations

Chapter 3 - Foundations presents the community's goals for the future of Anchorage, as approved earlier in the Draft Goals and Objectives document.



Land Use Policies

Chapter 4 - Land Use Concept Plan encompasses the preferred alternative for Anchorage's future growth and development, a growth allocation map, an open space concept plan, and a policy map. Chapter 4 also lays out guiding principles for design and environment and for public services and improvements.



Implementation

Chapter 5 - Plan Implementation outlines proposed policies and strategies to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Policies and strategies are related to the goals they promote and are detailed in Chapter 5 for inclusion in an action plan.

NOTE: ANCHORAGE 2020-ANCHORAGE BOWL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN is abbreviated as ANCHORAGE 2020 throughout this Plan.

Role & Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

ANCHORAGE 2020 is a blueprint to guide development in the Anchorage Bowl over the next 20 years. It includes land use policies and specific action strategies. The Plan is general in nature. It will be further refined by ordinances, by revised land use and zoning maps, by area-specific plans, and by other policy tools.

ANCHORAGE 2020 provides a framework for decisions about land use and transportation, as well as public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community. These issues include the protection of aesthetic values and the community's revenue base. **ANCHORAGE 2020** reflects the goals expressed by Anchorage citizens and approved by their representatives. Once adopted, the Plan becomes a public declaration of the policies that will guide decisions of the Municipal Assembly, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and other municipal planning boards and commissions as they address community growth issues, development of public infrastructure, and review private-sector development proposals.

ANCHORAGE 2020 focuses on the Anchorage Bowl, the major urbanized area of the Municipality. Other settled areas—Chugiak-Eagle River, Girdwood, and Turnagain Arm—are covered by separate comprehensive plans. Each area plan is an element of the overall Comprehensive Plan for the Municipality. Additional elements of the Comprehensive Plan include coordinated plans for transportation, trails, parks and recreation, wetlands management, wastewater management, and other specialized topics. Many policies in **ANCHORAGE 2020** affect other plan elements. This means that some other comprehensive plan elements will need to be re-evaluated and revised after adoption of **ANCHORAGE 2020**.

What this plan does:

- **Focuses attention on major issues** facing the community, and helps address them by assessing the consequences of different choices.
- **Serves as the best estimate of the future**—an estimate that is guided by specific community goals. The Plan reflects what is most likely to happen if adopted policies and strategies are followed.
- **Provides a general direction** for future growth by guiding and requiring the development of new ordinances, subarea plans, and other enforceable measures.
- **Outlines general patterns of development** within the community for reference when developing other plans and making land use decisions.

What this plan does *not* do:

- **Does *not* make decisions** about individual properties.
- **Does *not* decide where specific public facilities**, such as fire stations and schools, will be located.
- **Does *not* preclude future decisions** by prescribing the future in great detail.

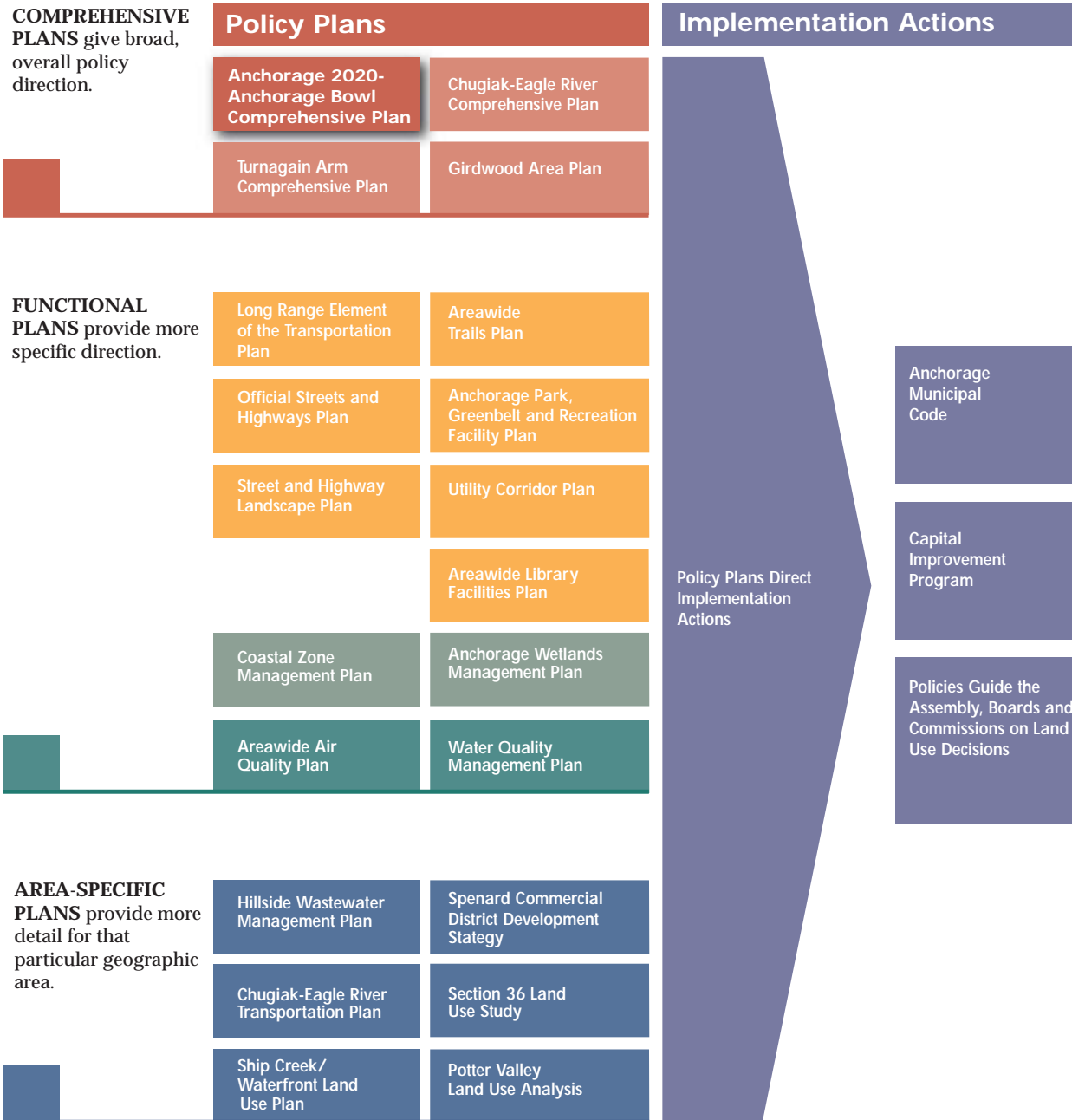
NOTE: **ANCHORAGE 2020** contains many sketches, photographs, and illustrations. These are intended to generally illustrate the concepts presented in the Plan.

The comprehensive plan has the following purposes:

Anchorage Municipal Code, 21.05.020.

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to set forth the goals, objectives and policies governing the future land use development of the Municipality that guide the assembly in taking legislative action to implement the plan.

How Anchorage 2020 Relates to Other Plans



This chart shows the relationship between the components of the Municipality of Anchorage Comprehensive Plan. Together these components—comprehensive plans, functional plans, and area-specific plans—lay out policy guidelines for land use, transportation, environment, and public improvements. Policy is implemented through land use regulations and building codes and, ultimately, through the Municipality’s Capital Improvement Program.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about the Comprehensive Plan



Why is the Plan being revised?

Anchorage needs to plan both for projected population growth over the next 20 years and for the facilities and services required to support that growth. Based on population forecasts and housing and commercial development trends, nearly all the remaining developable vacant land in the Anchorage Bowl will be used in the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan is being revised to address the direction of future growth and the quality of life associated with it.

Since it is the mission of municipal government to accommodate growth in an orderly way and deliver public services as efficiently as possible, the Municipal Code requires that the Comprehensive Plan be revised every 20 years and re-evaluated every 10 years. The last revision of the Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan was 1982. A revision of the Comprehensive Plan is needed now to prepare for municipal-wide and regional planning.

How will the Plan be used?

The Plan will guide policy makers, community councils, the general public, municipal agencies, landowners, and developers in evaluating whether or not regulatory measures, public infrastructure investments, and proposed land use changes meet the Plan's goals. The policies and strategies presented in Chapter 5 will be used to implement the Plan.

Who is in charge of making this Plan work?

Public support is the most important factor in making this Plan work. This means support from elected officials, board and commission members, municipal staff, the development community, community councils, and the general public. The Planning Department is responsible for many of the land use implementation strategies, from developing changes in municipal land use regulations to initiating subarea land use plans. However, most other municipal departments are also included in plan oversight and implementation.

How will this Plan be implemented?

This Plan will be implemented by the Municipal Assembly and the various land use decision-making boards and commissions, including the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Platting Board. The policies and strategies recommended in Chapter 5 are proposed to be the main implementation tools. These strategies are designed to guide municipal and private land use decisions in achieving the Plan's goals.

How will the Plan affect my property and my taxes?

The Plan will not directly affect property values or taxes. However, proposed implementation measures may affect land development patterns and, therefore, the value of individual parcels of land. Such measures may include new or revised zoning classifications, development guidelines and other items that guide where and how devel-

opment takes place. The Plan generally promotes more intense land use and development.

Will this Plan change the zoning in my neighborhood?

The Plan makes broad recommendations for future land use, but it makes no zoning changes. It does recommend as a next step that the current Land Use and Residential Intensity Maps be updated as neighborhood or district plans are adopted to conform with the revised Comprehensive Plan. It also proposes the preparation of neighborhood plans as a basis for localized zoning revisions.

Does this Plan protect Anchorage's natural areas and open space?

During the plan development process, citizens identified the protection of natural areas and open space as a high priority. The Plan recommends several action strategies to protect these areas. Further public involvement and financial commitment will be necessary to acquire and preserve additional public open space.

Will there be more traffic congestion?

Many policies and strategies address traffic congestion. Improved transportation efficiency and land use decisions supporting multi-modal transportation are significant strategies that, if followed, can reduce congestion and minimize future traffic conflicts.

Public Participation Timeline



Open house at Goldenview Middle School

Comprehensive Plan Development Process

This Comprehensive Plan was developed through a process that integrated extensive public involvement with analyses of population, economic, and land use trends. The planning process began with a community vision that led to the creation of goals and objectives. Building on that foundation, several long-range growth scenarios were developed, from which a preferred growth scenario and the Land Use Concept Plan emerged. Policies and strategies were then drafted as tools to implement the Plan.

Community Vision

The development of ANCHORAGE 2020 began in 1996 and 1997 when over 2,000 residents helped define community values and create a new community vision, which is described in Chapter 3. Also in 1997, planning staff prepared a series of reports on current trends and drafted a list of critical issues and challenges. The community's vision, together with the informational reports and critical issues, formed the basis for the next step in the planning process—developing goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

In early 1998, a diverse Citizen Task Force of 250 citizens took part in seven groups to help draft goals and objectives for ANCHORAGE 2020. The results of their efforts were presented at a community meeting in April 1998.

Following the citizens' work, planning staff prepared a draft of the goals and objectives for public review and comment. After further refinement, the Draft Goals and Objectives document was forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for its consideration. The Commission held two public hearings and

unanimously approved the Draft Goals and Objectives in January 1999. Goals from the approved document are listed in Chapter 3.

Background Data for the Plan

Several related technical studies made critical contributions to plan development:

- **An inventory of commercial and industrial land uses** and future land requirements (*Anchorage Bowl Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study*, 1996).
- **A municipal-wide inventory of existing residential land use**, housing, and vacant land (1998).
- **An inventory of natural open space** and wildlife habitat compiled by The Great Land Trust (1999).
- **A fiscal impact analysis** comparing the costs and benefits of alternative land use planning scenarios (2000).
- **A transportation model** (underway) to analyze the interplay of land use and transportation planning choices.

Land Use Scenarios for Growth & Development

Based on the Draft Goals and Objectives, a housing and land use inventory, and a vacant land analysis, four alternatives for future growth and development were prepared. The four land use alternatives, or scenarios, illustrated how different policy choices could shape future land use, housing, transportation, and open space within the community. The scenarios (described in Chapter 4 and in the Appendix) were published and distributed community-wide in September 1999.

The scenarios were the focus of a broad community dialogue during the early fall of 1999. Over 250 people attended 5 open houses to review the scenarios. More than 100 people, representing a cross-section of the community, took part in 7 workshops. Over 150 citizens wrote to give their opinions. Altogether, more than 500 persons participated in this phase of the planning project. All comments received were compiled and evaluated.

This phase of plan development concluded with a town meeting in October 1999 where planning staff reported the results of the scenarios' review to the community.

A preferred scenario was then developed that incorporated the most favored planning ideas from the various scenarios. The preferred scenario provided the framework for the Land Use Concept Plan.

Land Use Concept Plan

The Land Use Concept Plan in Chapter 4 portrays the preferred land use scenario. It consists of three maps that address major new land use policies, the allocation of additional population and housing, and future open space conservation possibilities.

The Land Use Policy Map brings together land use, transportation, design, environment, and public improvement policies to identify new urban elements in the Anchorage Bowl. New urban elements include major employment centers, town centers, neighborhood commercial centers, industrial reserves, transit-supportive development corridors, an urban/rural services boundary, and a West Anchorage planning area.

The Growth Allocation Map shows the scale of projected population increases in the Anchorage Bowl and additional housing needed for each subarea of the community. The Conceptual Natural Open Space Map



identifies existing natural open spaces important for recreation, local wildlife, and water quality. It does not represent the future pattern of preserved open space, but instead shows a range of possibilities for future planning and management.

Implementation

Goals, planning principles, policies, and strategies are the key elements of **ANCHORAGE 2020**. Chapter 3 contains goals that were created through an extensive public process. Chapter 5 provides policies and strategies as the basis for an action plan to implement **ANCHORAGE 2020**.



Mountain View Community Center



Outdoor sports are a highlight of Anchorage summers!

Anchorage 2020—A New Direction

This Comprehensive Plan recognizes that Anchorage has changed profoundly since 1982. Its economy has stabilized. Job and population growth have slowed. Its population has become more rooted. The demands of rapid growth have faded, and quality of life issues have moved to the forefront.

Throughout the plan development process, the community expressed a consistent vision for Anchorage's future—a vision that balances growth with the retention of the city's natural features and quality of life.

Anchorage's first era of urban growth has consumed much of its suitable vacant land supply. Few large tracts of vacant land remain available for development within the Bowl. Past public and private development decisions have fixed basic land use and transportation patterns.

As it begins a new century, Anchorage is in transition to a new era of urbanization. The challenge now 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. Anchorage's future development will depend increasingly on more effi-

cient use of its existing infrastructure and its remaining vacant and underdeveloped land.

More efficient land use is just part of the picture. Better design standards can raise the quality of development. A strong commitment to protect natural open spaces and critical wildlife habitats will maintain the quality of the natural environment. These strategies fit well with Anchorage's goal to enhance its economic vitality in a world economy in which quality of life is a competitive asset.

Anchorage 2020 is the fourth comprehensive plan for the Anchorage Bowl. Earlier plans reflected the circumstances and civic spirit of their eras.



1961

In 1961, the City of Anchorage prepared its first plan, **Anchorage, Alaska Metropolitan Area General**

Plan—1980. This document, completed just after statehood but before borough incorporation, reflected the optimism and concerns of a young city surrounded by a fast-urbanizing area. The plan envisioned a metropolitan area of 250,000 residents by 1980, identified future neighborhoods, located future employment centers, and proposed many of Anchorage's greenbelts, trails, and parks.



1976

The 1976 **Comprehensive Development Plan Ordinance**

was developed during the Trans-Alaska Pipeline era, a year after the City of Anchorage and the Greater Anchorage Area Borough unified to become the Municipality of Anchorage. This plan created a new basis for borough-wide planning. It proposed continuing expansion into what were then still rural areas of the Bowl.



1982

When the 1982 **Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive**

Development Plan was adopted, Anchorage was in the midst of economic and building booms that were transforming the cityscape. Expectations for the future were high. This plan's priorities stressed planning for new land development and public infrastructure to keep pace with rapid growth.

Pictures of a Plan

How Did We Get Here?

These sketches are part of a scroll illustrating the many public work sessions and mileposts throughout the comprehensive planning process. Planning Department staff—cartographers, landscape architects, and community planners—took notes and made sketches during the comprehensive plan meetings.

