



Chapter 1:

Existing Conditions

In order to advance the vision for the District, it is important to understand current conditions and build on the momentum of existing municipal goals and plans. This chapter identifies existing planning documents, highlights key assets and opportunities, and describes current social and economic conditions.

Framework for Positive Change

Several other planning documents already in place provide an existing framework for East Anchorage District to move toward positive change in the future. Along with the East Anchorage District Plan, they support the transformation of East Anchorage. The East Anchorage District Plan aligns with existing document goals and details specific recommendations to further advance positive change in the area.

ANCHORAGE 2020 PLAN

Anchorage 2020 Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, adopted in February 2001 guides land use policy within the City of Anchorage. The Land Use Policy Map from the Anchorage 2020 Plan identified one town center, three neighborhood commercial centers and two transit supportive corridors within the East Anchorage study area.

ANCHORAGE HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS

In March 2012, the City developed a comprehensive housing study for the Municipality of Anchorage. It evaluated projected housing demand between 2010 and 2030 and analyzed financial feasibility of different housing types, especially compact housing.

Study Area Location and Boundary

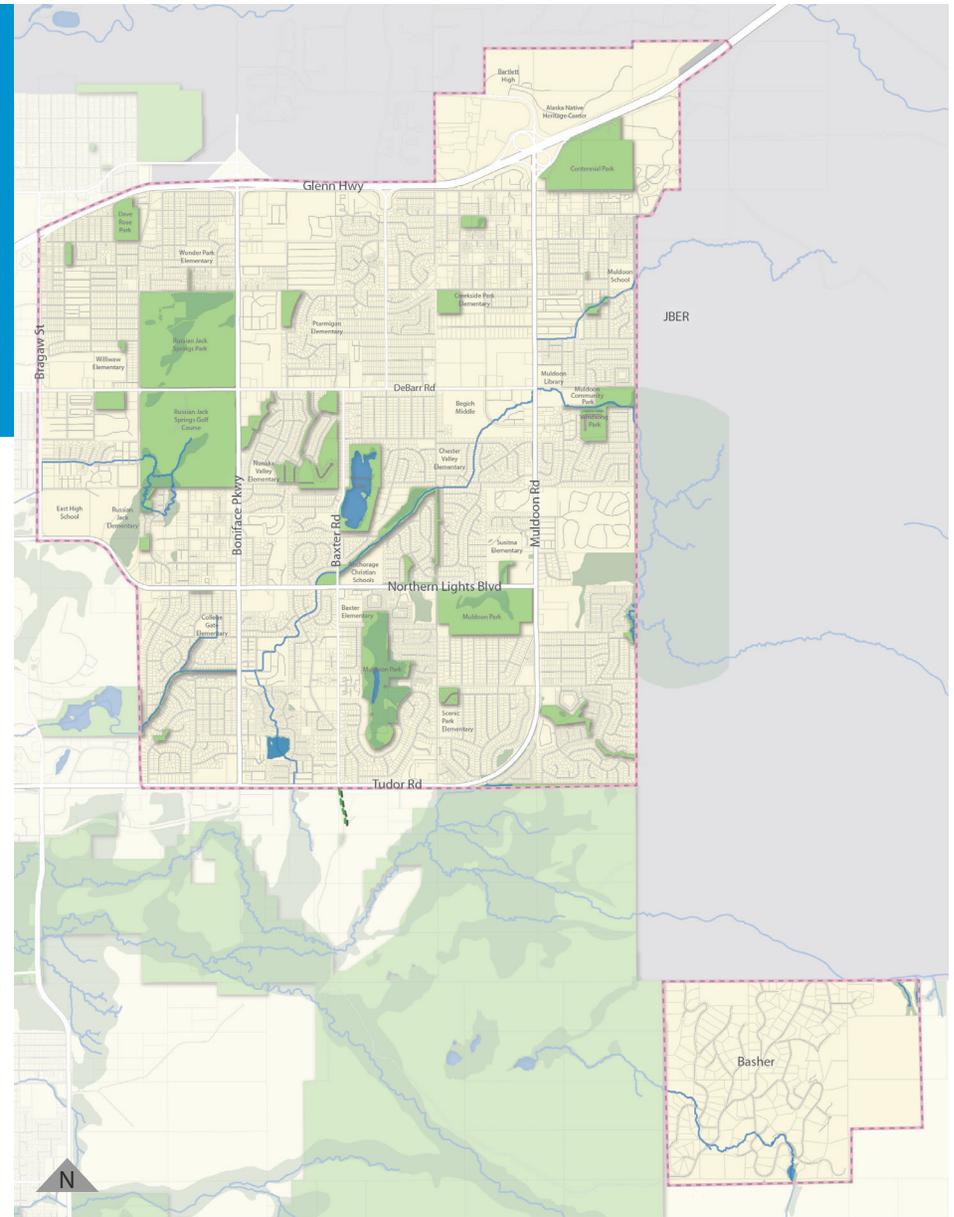
The East Anchorage District planning area includes the northeast corner of the Anchorage Bowl, bounded by the Glenn Highway to the north, JBER to the east, Tudor Road to the south, and Bragaw Street to the west. In addition, the Stuckagain Heights (Basher) area – southeast of Tudor Road at the southeast end of the Campbell Airstrip Road – is also included in the study area, although it is not depicted in every map throughout the Plan.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was approved in May 2012 and provides direction for the allocation of almost \$4 billion in transportation infrastructure improvements over the next 20 years. It includes the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, comprised of pedestrian, bicycle and trails plans. The Plan focuses on eight broad-level goals, covering a wide range of themes such as safety, efficiency, mode choice, and environmental impacts. Recommendations include specific infrastructure improvements such as signal timing, bus system expansion and roadway reconstruction. Improvements include those that will affect the District, such as Muldoon Rd.

TITLE 21 REWRITE PROJECT

The previous version of Title 21 (Anchorage's main zoning code document) was adopted in the 1960s, with amendments being made in a piece meal fashion over the



past 50 years. The Rewrite Project focused on bringing code into alignment with existing plans, especially the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan. Adopted in March 2013, the Rewrite encourages infill and redevelopment, protection of existing neighborhood character, and expanded transportation options. It also establishes a standardized review process.

BICYCLE PLAN

Adopted in March 2010, the Bicycle Plan is one of three components of the Comprehensive Plan's Non-motorized Vehicle Plan. Its purpose is to increase bicycle infrastructure and mode share by identifying a network of commuter routes along collector and arterial streets that will have signs and striping. Plan goals center on improved better connectivity, maintenance of bicycle infrastructure, and making it safe for cyclists to share the road with motor vehicles.

PEDESTRIAN PLAN

The Anchorage Pedestrian Plan was adopted by the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) in October 2007. It is also a sub-component

of the Non-Motorized Vehicle Plan. It aims to double pedestrian trips and reduce pedestrian injuries from vehicle crashes over the next twenty years by increasing pedestrian infrastructure and improving the year-round pedestrian environment. Strategies to achieve this goal include implementing pedestrian-friendly street design and development patterns, and raising public awareness of health benefits related to walking.

TRAILS PLAN

The Anchorage Trails Plan, currently under development, will replace the 1997 Areawide Trails Plan. It is the final component of the Comprehensive Plan's Non-Motorized Vehicle Plan. The Plan focuses on enhancing and expanding the existing recreational trail system in Anchorage. It will focus on general recreational trails as well as specialized trails for cross-country skiing, horseback riding, dog mushing, skijoring, and snowmobiling, as well as recreational bicycling.



Key Assets

The following key assets should be leveraged in future redevelopment of the area. These were informed by community stakeholder interviews and their experience, perspective and knowledge of East Anchorage.

- Schools
- JBER
- Proximity to U-Med District
- Cultural Centers & Social Services
- Access to Recreation & Entertainment
- Access to Nature, Open Space & Trails
- Employment & Commercial Centers
- Diverse Communities
- Strong Regional Connections

SCHOOLS



East Anchorage is home to numerous schools that range from early childhood to higher education. There are 17 public and private schools in the East District serving pre-kindergarten through 12th grades. Additionally, the U-Med District, adjacent to the East Anchorage planning area, is home to two universities.

JBER



JBER serves as an important source of military and civilian employment for East Anchorage and attracts relocating families to the nearby neighborhoods. The base population including family members, civilians and retirees is near 37,000. The base's active duty population is just over 16,000 (as of 2011). With only 3,200 housing units on the base, many families live in nearby neighborhoods. There are five elementary schools, all run by the Anchorage School District, and two youth centers and a hospital on the base.

PROXIMITY TO U-MED DISTRICT



The U-Med district, on the southwestern edge of the East Anchorage study area, is home to the Alaska Native Medical Center campus, comprised of the Alaska Native Medical Center Hospital, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, and the Southcentral Foundation. Alaska Pacific University and the University of Alaska, Anchorage and Providence Hospital provide employment and educational opportunities.

CULTURAL CENTERS & SOCIAL SERVICES



East Anchorage is home to a rich concentration of community facilities and social services collaborating to meet the needs of the diverse local population. These include youth development programs (the Northeast Muldoon Boys and Girls Club, Cook Inlet Tribal Council youth offerings) and several important cultural learning centers (the Muldoon Library, Alaska Botanical Gardens, Alaska Museum of Natural History, and the Alaska Native Heritage Center) and diverse places of worship. Social services in the area include outpatient rehabilitation centers, senior housing, and the Alaska Job Center Network. The Cook Inlet Tribal Council also contributes social support services and community programming to East Anchorage neighborhoods.

ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES & ENTERTAINMENT



A roller skating rink, movie theater, sports fields, dojo academy, and golf course can all be found in East Anchorage. The Tikahnu Commons complex has become a major regional shopping destination for local residents.

ACCESS TO NATURE, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS



The 11,000 acres of parkland and 250 miles of trails and greenbelts in Anchorage are a few of its most prized assets. East Anchorage benefits from proximity to many small and large parks and adjoining trails. Additionally, to the east, the District abuts the edge of the majestic Chugach Mountains and Chugach State Park.

There are at least 18 parks within or nearby East Anchorage. The two largest in the area are Russian Jack Springs Park, a 600-acre park featuring a 9-hole golf course, and the Far North Bicentennial Park with numerous trails and other recreational facilities.



Trails in the area provide recreational access to small lakes and creeks; South Fork Chester Creek, Cheney Lake and Reflection Lake are all within or very close to East Anchorage. There are also nature trails in Baxter Bog Park and Arnold L. Muldoon Park.

EMPLOYMENT & COMMERCIAL CENTERS



While there are few large employment centers within the East Anchorage study area, several are adjacent or nearby. JBER, the U-Med district, Downtown, and Midtown are the most notable. Smaller commercial centers are located throughout the area at the intersections of most major arterials. The largest is Tikahtnu Commons.

DIVERSE COMMUNITIES



Nearby Mountain View neighborhood is recognized as one of the most diverse in Anchorage, with a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual population, representing many of the over 100 languages spoken in Anchorage Public Schools. East Anchorage is also home to diverse community groups, including four community councils, the American Legion (providing resource for veterans), Anchorage Crime Stoppers, numerous places of worship, and Native Alaskan healthcare systems.

STRONG REGIONAL CONNECTIONS



East Anchorage is connected to the surrounding region by proximity to major transportation corridors such as Glenn Highway to the north and Muldoon Road on its eastern boundary. Glenn Highway is the primary travel corridor to Downtown and Midtown Anchorage from the northern communities of Chugiak-Eagle River, as well as the eastern portion of JBER. Major employment and commercial centers are within a 10-15 minute drive of East Anchorage, but too far to walk. Additionally, the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport is within a 20-minute drive, at the western end of the city. The Transit Center at Muldoon and DeBarr provides a central location for access to public transit, including the six Anchorage People Mover bus lines serving the area, each with hourly or half-hourly service during the weekdays.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite East Anchorage's many assets, there are a few critical challenges to be addressed in order to spur transformation. There are also significant opportunities to leverage existing investment, improve connections, and develop or redevelop a variety of uses.

LOCAL CONNECTIVITY

Although major arterials connect the District with downtown and other neighborhoods, there is a lack of local connections between the strip commercial development on these busy arterials and the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Inter-neighborhood travel frequently requires using the major arterials because local neighborhood connections do not currently exist.

AGING BUILDING STOCK

Aging commercial strips in East Anchorage – for example, the stretch of Muldoon Road between DeBarr and Northern Lights – is prime for redevelopment. Existing one-story commercial buildings previously used for light industrial uses can be adapted to become more advantageous locations for new and growing local businesses providing goods and services desired by the community. Refreshing the facades and architectural details of these buildings also provides an opportunity to create an enhanced community aesthetic to

complement the beautiful vistas. Increased services and pedestrian activity along the road will also attract more business customers, and make nearby residential options more attractive to renters and homebuyers.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The District is characterized by residential neighborhoods and shallow lot strip commercial on major arterials. Much of the strip commercial is aging and has seen few updates in recent decades. The disjointed strip commercial development, residential land uses and the busy arterial roadways contribute to that sense of disconnection.

MOBILE HOME PARKS

While *Anchorage 2020* and other Municipal plans and policies identify the ongoing need to retain mobile home parks and other non-traditional home ownership and support affordable housing, the reality is that mobile home parks are privately owned parcels subject to market changes and owner interests. The historical trend often moves these parks into new ownership, which can lead to eventual redevelopment at these sites to other residential units. The District includes approximately 13 mobile home parks

distributed across the planning area. Most of these are older parks and some of the owners have discussed considerations for future uses that change the housing type and/or the land use at the site. The potential residential density upgrades when these parks are redeveloped cannot be overlooked and has been factored into the housing capacity analysis (see Chapter 4).

MULDOON ROAD CORRIDOR

Another challenge centers on the Muldoon Road corridor, characterized by the aging commercial structures fronting Muldoon. Many older units are vacant or less able to hold long-term tenants or land uses. Many of these structures will likely need significant renovation or additions over the next decade. The Plan highlights this corridor as an area primed for major redevelopment, evolving into a diversity of community serving retail, office, and services with a mix of higher density residential. This new vibrant corridor could serve as a focus of community activity for the northeast corner of the District and contribute to higher property values, sustainable buildings, walkability, and better access to adjacent neighborhoods to reduce automobile trips.

Social and Economic Conditions in the District

East Anchorage is home to approximately a fifth of Anchorage's population, 56,300 residents in 2010. There are 21,000 housing units within the study area. The median household income of \$66,989 in East Anchorage is slightly lower than Anchorage as a whole, \$73,000 (Census 2010). There are more people renting their home in East Anchorage than the City as a whole; 68% compared to 58%.

Income in Anchorage is higher than state or national averages. The median income in Anchorage in 2009 was \$72,832, compared to a state median of \$66,953 or a national median of \$50,221. Income is not projected to grow substantially over the 20-year period. University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute for Social and Economic Research projects that per capita personal income will remain relatively flat over the 20-year period, increasing from about \$40,196 per person in 2010 to \$40,832 in 2030 (adjusted to 2009 dollars).

The segments of the population in Anchorage expected to increase over the next 20 years are the age groups between 20-40 years old and 60 and older.