

Destination Downtown:



anchorage

DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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MARK BEGICH, MAYOR**

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1 introduction

Nowhere else in Alaska is there an urban center that compares to Downtown Anchorage. With a strong economic base, cultural and historical attractions, natural beauty, and diverse recreational opportunities, Downtown Anchorage has long been considered Alaska's civic and cultural destination.

In the first decade of the 21st Century, Downtown Anchorage is at an important crossroads. Construction of the new convention center, expansion of the museum, plus many park and roadway improvements represent the highest level of public investment in the Downtown core in more than twenty years. Thus, now is the time to provide new direction and design standards to guide new growth and transform the city center into a vital, dynamic urban environment with a thriving economy.

Despite these assets, Downtown will only reach its full potential with a strategic planning approach to fully take advantage of this unique time in its history. The Downtown Comprehensive Plan provides a **strategic framework to guide the future development of Downtown.** It outlines a vision for a vibrant Northern city center that serves all of Alaska and welcomes the world—an active, walkable, mixed-use cultural and economic urban hub that is an exciting and livable place for residents, workers and visitors alike.

Central to achieving that vision is **focusing and concentrating limited resources.** Land uses must

be coordinated to achieve their greatest synergy and potential; key facilities and amenities must be strongly linked through streetscape enhancements and good building design; catalytic projects must be developed in the right locations to stimulate additional development; and public improvements must be phased properly so that, when integrated with new development, they create a real sense of place and vitality.

The Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan, coupled with the companion Downtown Land Use Code document, provides the blueprint for achieving success in the coming years.



THE DOWNTOWN PLAN PROCESS

The Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan process began in August 2005 with the goal of creating a visionary—yet realistic, strategic and action-oriented—plan to guide Downtown’s future. Drawing upon extensive community resources, municipal staff time and energy and consultant team expertise, the planning process was highly collaborative and participatory.

The process included over 60 meetings, including three major public meetings; small group sessions with an extensive range of stakeholders and community leaders; and regular meetings with the citizen-based Downtown Advisory Group,

Mayor, Assembly, Urban Design Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Geotechnical Advisory Commission to guide the plan elements. All of these groups and hundreds of community members were important resources in crafting and refining the Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

The planning process was led by the Municipality’s Planning Department and the Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) consultant team. The MIG team was comprised of local and national planners, engineers and economists, including Robert Odland Consulting, Land Design North, RIM Architects, Northern Economics, Kittelson & Associates, Shannon & Wilson, Inc. and Economic and Planning Systems. The Client team



was comprised of the Municipality of Anchorage's Planning, Economic and Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Project Management and Engineering and Traffic departments; Anchorage Downtown Partnership; Anchorage Parking Authority; and Sheila Selkregg and Associates.

Throughout the process, the consultant team and Planning staff engaged the community at large and worked side by side with stakeholders, community members and city officials to create a comprehensive plan that everyone can embrace.

The process began with a three-day planning session in August 2005, during which time the team met with stakeholders, toured the Downtown area, and met with the Mayor and Assembly members.

Following the initial kickoff session, consultants pursued the existing conditions and site analysis. In October 2005, the team reviewed their progress, met with additional stakeholders and introduced the process to the community at large.

The Mayor, Assembly members and the Downtown Advisory Group (made up of a diverse group of Downtown stakeholders) convened to identify Downtown's strengths, weaknesses and key opportunities. More than 100 citizens attended the first major public workshop to help identify and articulate community members' visions and goals for Downtown.

Four other intensive planning sessions took place to develop alternative plans and strategies for Downtown; refine a concept plan and preferred strategies; draft design guidelines; and present the draft Downtown land use and development code. In March 2006 more than 90 people participated in the second community wide workshop. In May 2006, additional large work sessions were held that focused on review of and feedback on the plan and its emerging components.

The plan's inclusiveness—and the importance placed on hearing all voices and working to build consensus and alignment—will help ensure success during implementation of the plan.



INTRODUCTION



The new Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center is one of many projects that will have a big impact on Downtown's economy and overall levels of activity.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

Projects such as a new Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, expansion of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, and transformation of E Street into an active, pedestrian oriented corridor are just a few of the ongoing plans that will enhance the Downtown environment and attract more people to experience its historic and cultural resources.

A major goal of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan is to provide strategic direction for development and growth, while embracing livability and a sense of place. In doing so, the planning process coordinated with all major ongoing projects and plans. The team worked to fully integrate these initiatives, with the goal of collectively strengthening Downtown Anchorage and firmly positioning it as Alaska's civic, cultural and economic heart.

The Anchorage 2020 Plan

The Municipality initiated a series of planning efforts to provide the city, and the Downtown specifically, with a clear direction to strengthen its standing as a regional destination. The Anchorage Bowl 2020 Comprehensive Plan (The Anchorage 2020 Plan) and the Downtown Development

Framework were developed through these efforts. The Anchorage 2020 Plan is the adopted policy framework for guiding growth and development within the Anchorage Bowl. The Anchorage 2020 Plan outlines policies that are designed to shape Downtown into a vibrant northern city center. Three Anchorage 2020 Plan policies and their supporting strategies focus on Downtown and have been incorporated in this plan:

Anchorage 2020 Policy #18:

Strengthen the Central Business District's role as the regional center for commerce, services, finance, arts and culture, government offices, and medium- to high-density residential development.

Anchorage 2020 Policy #19:

Locate municipal, state and federal administrative offices in the Central Business District.

Anchorage 2020 Policy #23:

Downtown is a designated major employment center.

These policies call for a year-round walkable, urban setting with attractive and diverse housing, retail, cultural facilities, art, open space and business development.

Together with the Downtown Development Framework, the Anchorage 2020 Plan sets the stage for the Downtown Comprehensive Plan and Downtown land use code. These documents further articulate the vision for Downtown Anchorage and identify how Downtown should best enhance its civic, cultural and natural resources through coordinated guidelines and regulations for land use, zoning, economic development and design.

Title 21

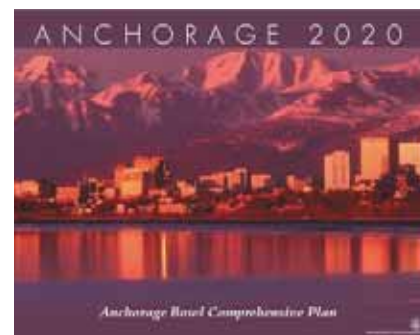
The primary regulatory instrument affecting the Downtown area of Anchorage is Title 21 Land Use Planning of the Anchorage Municipal Code (Title 21). Although many sections of Title 21 are applicable to the Downtown, the principal sections are those that address the three central business zoning districts: B-2A, B-2B, and B-2C. Draft revisions of all portions of Title 21 except for these three zoning districts have been prepared as part of a separate project and, at the time of the development of this plan, are undergoing continued revision for public review. A major implementation strategy recommended in the Anchorage 2020 Plan was the revision of Title 21. The three Downtown zoning districts were not a part of the initial revision of Title 21 because municipal officials believed they should be integrated into the Downtown Comprehensive Plan project to provide a closer link between policy and implementation.

Therefore, an additional document entitled Downtown land use code accompanies this plan and addresses the zoning districts within the Downtown area.

Downtown Market Study

In the fall of 2005, the Municipality and the Anchorage Downtown Partnership hired a marketing and branding firm to conduct a Downtown Market Study to determine the best approach for attracting future visitors and residents to Downtown Anchorage. The impetus for this study was the fact that although Anchorage draws more visitors than any other city in Alaska, most visitors make only a brief stop in Anchorage and spend more time in other parts of Alaska.

The study analyzed what the community, visitor and business perceptions of Downtown Anchorage are today; what visitors are looking for when they visit Downtown Anchorage; and where these visitors are coming from. To gauge the perceptions of local residents, the study also analyzed who currently lives in Downtown; which segments of Anchorage's population would like to live Downtown; and which activities currently attract locals to the city center. The recommendations of this study support the goals identified in the Downtown Comprehensive Plan to continue to embrace the attraction of Downtown for all users.



Anchorage 2020/Anchorage Bowl
Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION



Numerous references and links to Anchorage's history are found throughout Downtown, such as this monument overlooking Ship Creek paying tribute to the historic "Tent City" (above). Picturesque Ship Creek (below) is a source of livelihood and central gathering space for the city's fishermen and outdoor recreationalists, as well as tourists.

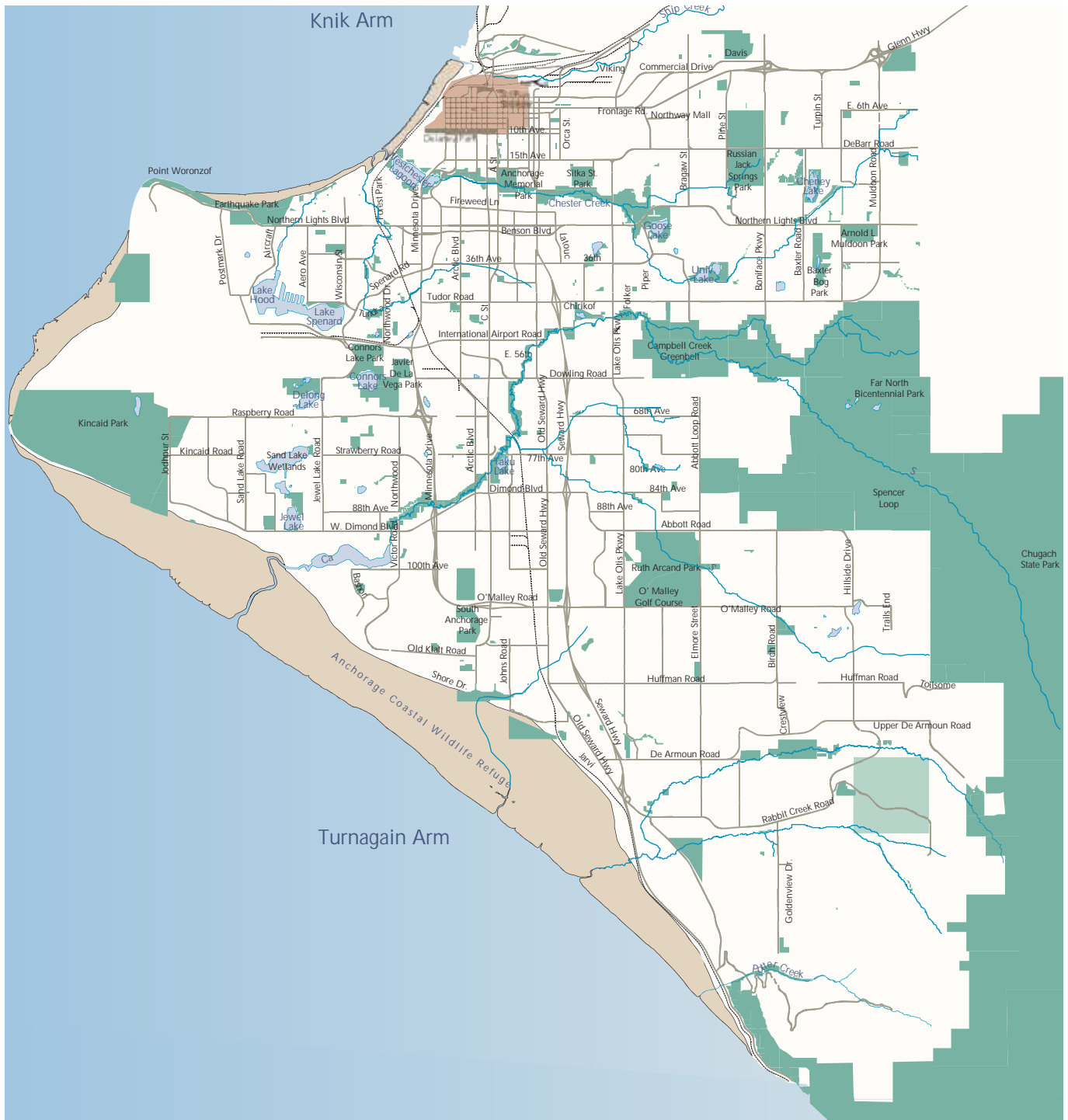
HISTORY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Anchorage has a rich history serving as the state's transportation and trading hub. The area surrounding Ship Creek, just north of what is considered Downtown today, became a temporary tent camp when construction of the Alaska Railroad began. In 1915, this "Tent City" was relocated to a permanent town site on the relatively flat plain above the south side of Ship Creek and in 1920, the new town became incorporated as the City of Anchorage. Growing from these early roots, Anchorage now comprises a metropolitan area of more than 270,000 people spread out across the Anchorage Bowl and in smaller communities along Knik Arm and Turnagain Arm.

Unlike most urban environments, Downtown Anchorage is surrounded by stunning views and connections to regional open space. It is also home to some of the region's most popular cultural and entertainment facilities and annual events. The historic character of Downtown reminds residents and visitors of the diverse culture and rich history of the city.

Downtown Anchorage truly serves as the heart of the region. Its diverse population, services and amenities continue to attract Alaskans and visitors from all over the world. The planning of Downtown must take this regional context and significance into account, coordinating with the interests of the entire Anchorage Bowl to best meet the needs of all.





Legend

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Downtown Study Area | Parks and Open Space | Primary Roads and Highways |
| Major Water Bodies | Mud Flats | Railroad |

Regional Context Diagram





2 downtown anchorage in 2006

Downtown Anchorage is at an exciting time in its history. Not since the major public improvements of the Project 80's era has the city core seen such activity and interest. Throughout the Downtown Study Area, housing opportunities, civic enhancements, open space and recreational improvements are shaping it into a destination for Anchorage residents and visitors alike.

To fully understand the current state of Downtown, the consultant team conducted an analysis of the area's existing conditions. The analysis helped the planning team to understand the city center's strengths and weaknesses; determine what current land use and development trends are beginning to take shape; understand how to best reconcile incongruent development and infrastructure; and identify what enhancements will have the most significant positive impact on Downtown for years to come.

This chapter first identifies the most noteworthy assets and the critical challenges that must be acknowledged as the plan moves forward. It then provides a snapshot of the Downtown market analysis, which outlines who is living, working and shopping in Downtown Anchorage today and where market opportunities exist for future development of various land uses.

More specific descriptions of existing land use, transportation, and urban design conditions are located in the beginning of Chapters 4, 5 and 6, respectively.

A detailed existing conditions analysis of the following focus areas appears in Appendix A (Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Analysis):

- Natural, Cultural and Social
- Land Use and Development
- Urban Design
- Transportation and Circulation
- Seismic
- Economic
- Regulatory Framework

DOWNTOWN ASSETS AND CHALLENGES



Assets

Downtown Anchorage attracts visitors and locals to experience all that it has to offer. The following assets represent the major strengths of Downtown:

Amenities and Attractions

- **Compact, walkable multi-use district** ideal for public transit, schools and affordable housing.
- **Diverse cultural, historic and entertainment amenities and venues**, including the Performing Arts Center and Art Museum, that are geared towards families and multi-cultural experiences.
- A **compact retail district** that includes a multi-block, four story shopping mall and over 50 retail shops.
- A cluster of **popular gourmet restaurants** serving an eclectic range of traditional and ethnic cuisine.
- A broad spectrum of **excellent lodging options**.
- A mix of **shops and galleries featuring Alaska Native and local art**.
- Many **civic and government facilities**, including

the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, State and Federal Office Buildings and Courthouses, the Alaska Center for Performing Arts, and City Hall.

Connections

- Direct **connections to all regional transportation links**, including transit and railroad hubs and primary traffic routes such as the Seward and Glenn Highways, A and C Street couplet, and the L and I Street/Minnesota Bypass.
- **Numerous connections to adjacent neighborhoods, the Port, and the Railroad Depot** via existing pedestrian and bicycle trails.

Setting

- **Dramatic natural setting** with direct access to Knik Arm and views to the Chugach Mountains and Alaska Range including Denali.
- **Diverse mix of building types**, from historic frontier homes and classic 1950s and 60s buildings to industrial warehouses near Ship Creek.
- A beautiful environment with ample **open space and streetscape plantings**.
- A Northern **four season climate** with a true winter and a summer season with the "midnight sun."





Challenges

In addition to Downtown's assets, the planning process identified a number of key areas in need of improvement in the city center:

Development Constraints

- The existing zoning code sets higher standards for development in the Central Business District than in other areas of the city.
- Midtown office towers and "big box" retail development compete with Downtown for commercial space.
- Housing development lacks proven incentives.
- Portions of the Downtown area are located within areas designated as potentially high susceptibility to seismically-induced ground failure.

Design Conditions

- Many existing buildings are poorly designed for the northern climate or a pedestrian friendly city center. As a result shadowing, wind effects and blank walls have impacted the pedestrian realm.
- Sidewalks and crossings are not designed for winter

conditions, resulting in areas with a poor streetscape environment.

- Wide streets designed for fast-moving vehicles cut through the heart of Downtown.
- Narrow sidewalks, poor lighting, barren parking lots, and buildings with large, blank walls inhibit pedestrian safety and comfort.

Access and Circulation

- Lack of signage and wayfinding weakens connections to amenities, resources and neighborhoods.
- The current circulation system limits easy access/drop-off at primary destinations.
- Tour bus queuing and regional truck traffic create circulation issues.
- Strong perceptions persist around a lack of parking in the city center.

Social Factors

- Seasonal tourism lacks year-round vibrancy.
- There are real and perceived safety concerns due to panhandling, troubled youth and homeless populations.





The population of Downtown Anchorage is growing, especially among people between the ages of 35 and 54.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The overall Anchorage market is strong. Forty four percent of the state's residents live in the metropolitan area. Anchorage is a statewide distribution center and regional hub. More than 80 percent of the Municipality's residents live in the Anchorage Bowl. Downtown is the heart of civic and public activity and a major center of shopping and office employment.

Downtown is also the regional center for civic and cultural activities, retail, and government employment. The Anchorage Museum History and Art, Performing Arts Center, Town Square Park, Egan Convention Center, Visitors Information Center, Weekend Market, shopfront retail, two major department stores and Fifth Avenue Mall, and major hotels and restaurants all contribute to Downtown's vitality.

The industrial activities at the Alaska Railroad Corporation headquarters, rail yard and Port of Anchorage north of the Downtown core are vital transportation and commerce links in the regional and state economy.

In addition, Downtown serves as an employment center with a concentration of local, state, and federal offices and financial, legal, and architectural and engineering professional service offices.

Finally, Downtown is a popular destination for visitors and conventioners, particularly in the summer.

Demographic Overview

Anchorage reflects three population trends that will be powerful influences nationwide in the future:

- Growing number of young, diverse minority residents
- Large number of affluent baby boomers near retirement
- Growing elderly population

These trends, coupled with other economic indicators, provide information about future market potential for housing, services and facilities. The following pages provide an overview of these trends.

Population Growth

The Municipality of Anchorage grew to more than 277,000 people in 2004, comprising more than 44 percent of Alaska's total population. Over 225,000 people reside in the Anchorage Bowl.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Anchorage Bowl population grew by 1.6 percent annually, for an additional 31,560 residents between 1990 and 2000. During the same period, the Downtown Study Area's resident population grew at a faster rate than the Bowl overall, increasing by 6.2 percent annually, adding 648 residents.

The table of Population and Growth Projections on the following page presents population growth projections for the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage Bowl

and the Downtown Study Area. The Downtown study area is expected to add around 2800 new residents, growing by 3.8 percent annually, while the Anchorage Bowl is projected to grow by 1.1 percent annually for an additional 50,000 residents. The overall Municipality is projected to grow by 1.3 percent annually and add over 90,000 residents between 2002 and 2025.

Age

Age distribution provides further details about population composition, and gives an indication of whether the population of a community is generally young or old and growing or declining. In contrast to the other study areas, growth occurred for all age cohorts in the Downtown study area between 1990 and 2000. The age group that experienced the fastest growth was persons ages 35 through 54. This age group grew by 5.5 percent annually between 1990 and 2000.

Race/Ethnicity

Anchorage is an increasingly culturally diverse city. The Anchorage School District has identified more than 90 languages and dialects spoken by its student population. Racial and ethnic minorities are the fastest growing population groups in the Municipality of Anchorage. Racial/ethnic groups comprise about 28 percent of the Anchorage Bowl's population (Municipality of Anchorage, 2002). Alaska Natives and American Indians make up the largest minority, comprising over seven percent of the Municipality of Anchorage's population.

The Downtown study area has an even higher percentage of minority residents than the Anchorage Bowl in general. In 2000, about 37 percent of the people living in the Downtown Study Area were minorities. Almost 22 percent of the population was Alaska Native or American Indian, and about 10 percent of the population was African American.

Population Growth Projections 2002 to 2025

	2002	2025	Annual percent change
Municipality of Anchorage	268,900	361,100	1.3
Anchorage Bowl	236,130	285,500	1.1
Downtown study area	1,894	4,673	3.8
Source: Municipality of Anchorage Transportation Planning Division, 2004, and Northern Economics, Inc., 2005.			

Employment Trends

While the Downtown area is an employment center for residents throughout the Municipality, labor force participation of residents in the study area declined between 2000 and 1990. In 1990, about 56 percent of Downtown residents 16 years and older participated in the labor force; by 2000 labor force participation had fallen to 45 percent. By contrast, 74 percent of persons 16 years and older living in the greater Municipality of Anchorage were in the labor force.

In contrast to the larger areas of the Municipality of Anchorage including the Anchorage Bowl, the Downtown Study Area experienced an increase in its unemployment rate for residents between 1990 and 2000. The unemployment rate in the Downtown study area increased rapidly between 1990 and 2000, climbing from 11 percent in 1990 to 35 percent in 2000. In the Municipality of Anchorage, the unemployment rate fell slightly from 7.0 percent in 1990 to 6.8 percent in 2000, while the unemployment rate in the Anchorage Bowl fell from 7.3 percent in 1990 to 7.0 percent in 2000.

Employment in Downtown Anchorage: Number of Employees by Sector

Services (Except Health)	7,488
Government	5,664
Retail	1,687
Mining	865
Fire	650
Health Services	589
Wholesale	472
Construction	338
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	300
Manufacturing	207
School	131
University	64
Total Employees	18,455

Based on employment data from the Alaska Department of Labor for the fourth quarter of 2002. Note that boundaries for this data are close but do not match the exact study area for this plan.

The table on the opposite page,

Employment in Downtown

Anchorage, illustrates that the city center employed more than 18,455 people as of 2002. This plan intends to make the Downtown a more attractive and affordable area for workers to live close to their jobs. Downtown attracts more retired people in comparison to other areas of the Anchorage bowl, and thus, a significant portion of Downtown residents will not need access to employment. Rather, they will likely need improved access to services.

Market Potential

The economic ability for Downtown to increase housing densities, services and amenities and employment opportunities forms the basis for mixed-use development to encourage walking and public transit usage. Creating such an integrated environment will lead toward success in Downtown, as well as positively impact Anchorage's long-term economic vitality and quality of life.

Based on predicted population and employment growth, Downtown Anchorage should be prepared to add to its existing mix of residential, retail, office, hotel and land uses in the coming years.

Sections on the following pages describe the current state of supply and demand for each land use. These conditions guided the plan's projections for future growth in these categories.



Most of Downtown's older residential units are in the form of single family houses outside of the Downtown Core.

Residential

A key planning issue, which presents both a challenge and an opportunity, is the need for more housing and a larger resident population within the Downtown Study Area. With stable population and employment growth in Anchorage and public and private investment Downtown through the new convention center, museum expansion, parking facilities and transportation and pedestrian improvements, there are opportunities for higher density residential development and commercial and retail development, and infill and redevelopment in older areas in the Study Area. The housing market analysis reveals a number of essential findings:

- The market is strong in Anchorage, as new units are in demand and prices are rising.
- As the amount of developable land within Anchorage decreases, the feasibility of redevelopment and rehabilitation will increase.
- More than half of new housing units built in Anchorage over the past couple of years have been multifamily developments.
- Housing affordability is an issue that plagues many would-be homeowners—making multifamily dwellings and denser housing development at lower costs per unit more appealing.

Retail

Downtown Anchorage's retail sector includes the Fifth Avenue Mall with its national name brand tenants including Nordstrom and JC Penney, many locally owned shops and restaurants and the Weekend Market.

The retail sector is in transition.

There has been a shift in the character of retail Downtown over the last 30 years related to seasonal tourism. Originally, retail space was general purpose and served all of the community. There has been a shift from shoe stores, jewelry and watch shops, small pharmacy, and neighborhood grocery to souvenir and t-shirt shops. These new retail stores often do not cater primarily to local residents. Downtown retail is also shifting toward more restaurants and entertainment.

The challenge is to leverage new public and private investments in facilities and infrastructure to support the Downtown retail sector, particularly storefront retail. Significant retail sector market opportunities exist with co-development with the new Civic and Convention Center, building on the strength of Fifth Avenue Mall, the Performing Arts Center and the Weekend Market.

The Fifth Avenue Mall enjoys more than 90 percent tenant occupancy and high growth in revenues (four percent average annual growth over the last five years). Its anchors, Nordstrom and JCPenney, flourish Downtown.

The exodus of retail shops from Downtown during the late 1980s was a reflection of both weakened economic conditions and the development of strip malls and indoor shopping malls in the outlying areas. However, retail establishments and the hospitality industry have returned as traffic to the Performing Arts Center and other thriving entertainment venues including museums, theaters, visitor information centers and the convention center has increased. In large measure, new venues must be designed to draw increased numbers of local residents.

The Weekend Market presents both challenges and opportunities. The Weekend Market has an estimated 668,100 annual visitors. These visitors spend approximately \$12.1 million in the Weekend Market, plus an additional \$9.3 million in other Downtown establishments. The perceived lack of parking in the city center and the impact of the Weekend Market on storefront retailers are important planning considerations. Coordination, joint marketing and physical linkages are needed so that the Weekend Market strengthens Downtown retail and creates new market niches.



Small shops and restaurants line 4th Avenue today (above top), attracting tourists and Downtown workers. JCPenney, Nordstrom and the 5th Avenue Mall serve regional shopping demands (above).



Downtown office space is primarily housed in office towers, such as the Atwood building (above), new mid-rise office complexes (above foreground) or converted single family homes (below).

Office

Over the past several years the market for commercial office space in Anchorage has been strong, as employment levels have grown and the availability of low interest loans for purchasing land and constructing office buildings has attracted investors. The growth in office space has been focused primarily in Midtown. The preference towards Midtown is related to the lower cost of land relative to Downtown, the central location, and free parking. According to Anchorage commercial real estate brokers and municipal tax assessment staff, the market for commercial real estate in the area has remained steady. No new private commercial office space development has occurred in the Downtown Study Area, although some government office space has been constructed.

Employment levels are expected to increase in Downtown but the majority of growth will likely occur in positions related to the retail industry, the hospitality industry (hotel and restaurant positions), and public service and administration positions. As a result, additional commercial office space will be needed to support the growing Anchorage workforce.

A recent trend occurring in the commercial real estate market is the redevelopment of old or less appealing buildings for use as commercial office space. This strategy may become more common as the inventory of buildable lands shrinks and the commercial real estate market stays strong. The situation may also lead to consideration of redeveloping sites in the Downtown Study Area, and a new desire for commercial office space in Downtown. Another trend impacting central business districts nationally is the development of mixed-use projects, and this has begun to occur in Downtown Anchorage. Several residential/office mixed-use projects are currently being considered in the city center. In addition to the private sector, the policy in the Anchorage 2020 Plan to locate civic and public facilities and government office in Downtown should be prioritized and implemented. To encourage these types of development, the Municipality recently completed a comprehensive parking plan update.



Hotel

Hotel and hospitality-related services have long been a staple of the Downtown Anchorage economy. The city is nine hours by air to 95 percent of the industrialized world's population, and it is the gateway into and out of the state. Almost all flights to and from Alaska go through Anchorage. In 2004, over 2.2 million people deplaned at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. Another 400,000 passed through in transit.

Besides being a transportation hub for the state, Anchorage attracts visitors to the many activities, services and destinations located in or near the Anchorage Bowl. In 2004, approximately 900,000 people visited Anchorage. The city is also growing as a desirable convention destination.

The building boom in hotels in the Downtown study area and greater Anchorage suggests a robust market and steadily growing demand for hotel rooms. The number of people visiting Anchorage and subsequently the hotel occupancy is higher during the summer months than the winter months; in June through August occupancy rates are typically 85 to 90 percent while in the winter time occupancy rates are 45 to 60 percent.

Anchorage has a variety of hotels located throughout the city, but they are largely concentrated in three areas: Downtown, Midtown around A and

C streets; and near the International Airport. All of these areas are a relatively short drive from each other (approximately 10 to 15 minutes) and many business and independent travelers do not base their decisions solely on geographic location.

Downtown Anchorage offers a variety of hotel choices, from high-end, service oriented hotels that offer many amenities, to hotels that are more basic in their services and are less expensive. Currently, there are 21 hotels and 3,407 hotel rooms in the Downtown study area.

A large convention or meeting at the convention center complex, which includes the Egan Center and the new Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, can fill Downtown hotels with attendees, sending other Anchorage visitors to rooms in Midtown and the airport area. There are four hotels within walking distance of the convention center that can offer blocks of rooms and have enough space within the hotel to hold meetings and conventions. The Anchorage Convention and Visitors' Bureau anticipates that the new convention center complex will create demand for approximately 1,000 new hotel rooms in Downtown.

For more information, see Appendix A: Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Analysis.



3 strategy for downtown revitalization

Anchorage's existing conditions—its unique setting, economic and social environment and built realm—set the context and foundation for envisioning the future of Downtown.

This chapter first articulates the vision for Downtown Anchorage and describes the overarching goals that must be met to realize this vision. It then provides an overall framework of strategies for improving the entire Downtown environment.

The vision and strategies must work together—while leveraging recent investments and optimizing limited resources—to create a **strong, implementable strategy for revitalization.**



THE VISION FOR
DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE

Anchorage 2020 Plan

In recent years, the community participated in the visioning process for the greater region as part of the Anchorage 2020 Plan. While focused on the entire Anchorage Bowl, the vision principles set forth by the Anchorage 2020 Plan also serve as a foundation for planning Downtown’s future. The Anchorage 2020 Plan Vision is highlighted below.

This Vision statement provides general guidance for all Anchorage 2020 policies, including the policies related to Downtown discussed on Page 4.

Downtown Comprehensive
Plan

The Downtown Comprehensive Plan articulates a vision and set of overarching goals that are specific to the city center. The vision was created through discussions with a wide range of community members and local stakeholders, including residents, business owners, property owners, developers, the Anchorage Downtown Partnership, and multiple other agencies.


Cultivating a strong, clear vision specific to Downtown is an important milestone in setting its future course. The overarching goals guide the path to achieving that vision. These concepts and direction are illustrated on the following pages.

Anchorage 2020 Plan Vision Statement

Anchorage is:

- A diverse, compassionate community where each individual is valued, and children, families and friendships flourish.
- A northern community built in harmony with our natural resources and majestic setting.
- A thriving, sustainable, broad-based economy supported by an efficient urban infrastructure.
- A safe and healthy place to live where daily life is enriched by a wealth of year-round recreational and educational opportunities.
- A caring, responsive government that is accessible and equitable for all its citizens.
- An active learning community with abundant cultural amenities.

Downtown Vision

An aerial photograph of downtown Anchorage, Alaska, showing a dense urban environment with various buildings, streets, and pedestrian activity. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A prominent building on the right has a vertical sign that reads 'ADVENTURE'. A street-level view in the lower left shows a 'SOUVENIRS' shop and people walking.

Downtown Anchorage is a vibrant Northern city center that serves all of Alaska and welcomes the world. Its unparalleled connections to nature and open spaces and its stunning views make Downtown like no other urban environment.

Residents and visitors are attracted to Downtown's innovative urban design, creative use of sustainable technologies, and celebration of Alaska's unique culture.

Downtown embraces a diverse concentration of people, employment, shopping, entertainment, government services, cultural facilities and events, public spaces and housing.

Downtown's comfortable and exciting pedestrian environment, inviting open spaces, events for families and children and mix of cultural and entertainment facilities offer a refined urban living experience in the grandest of settings.

Overarching Goals

1



Create a Downtown for All

Celebrate Anchorage's diversity by offering amenities, goods, attractions and services that appeal to persons of varying ages, backgrounds and incomes. Downtown crowds should be a reflection of the community.

2



Provide More Housing Downtown

Make Downtown a great place to live by developing diverse housing options and resident-serving amenities that will boost commerce, build community and create round-the-clock vibrancy.

3



Jump-Start Development

Coordinate and leverage the substantial public sector investment of major planned projects to catalyze private development.

4



Improve Connectivity

Link amenities, housing, office space, retail and natural resources to enhance Downtown's sense of place and connectivity among destinations. Promote walking as an important mode of local circulation within Downtown. Strengthen intermodal connections, making it easier for Downtown pedestrians to use Anchorage's air, rail, bus and ferry terminals.

5



Activate the Ground Floor Environment

Ensure that the ground floors of all buildings and sidewalk treatment engage pedestrians and create an active, inviting, urban experience with a comfortable, safe and vibrant pedestrian environment year-round.

6



Provide a Clear, Sensible Regulatory Framework

Establish codes and guidelines to ensure that new development achieves the vision for Downtown while providing clarity and flexibility for the development community.

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Strategy Framework on the opposite page provides a conceptual structure for achieving the Downtown Vision and Overarching Goals. The Strategy Framework prioritizes action categories into a three-tiered hierarchy.

Land Uses

This hierarchy identifies primary and secondary land uses, represented in the blue circles (right). The primary land uses are most important for achieving the vision and goals for Downtown Anchorage and are considered essential to Downtown's development. The secondary land uses augment the primary uses, providing Downtown with distinct destinations, services, activities and workplaces. Without this mix, the goal of achieving a vibrant, mixed-use urban environment will be compromised.

Development Projects and Opportunities

The next tier of Downtown's Strategy Framework is comprised of Development Projects and Opportunities. Each of the Catalytic Development Sites and Opportunity Sites will be developed with a mix of the Primary Land Uses. Each yellow rectangle (right) represents a Catalytic Development Site that should be prioritized for development or redevelopment due to its prime location and potential to strengthen the urban intensity within the Downtown Core. These

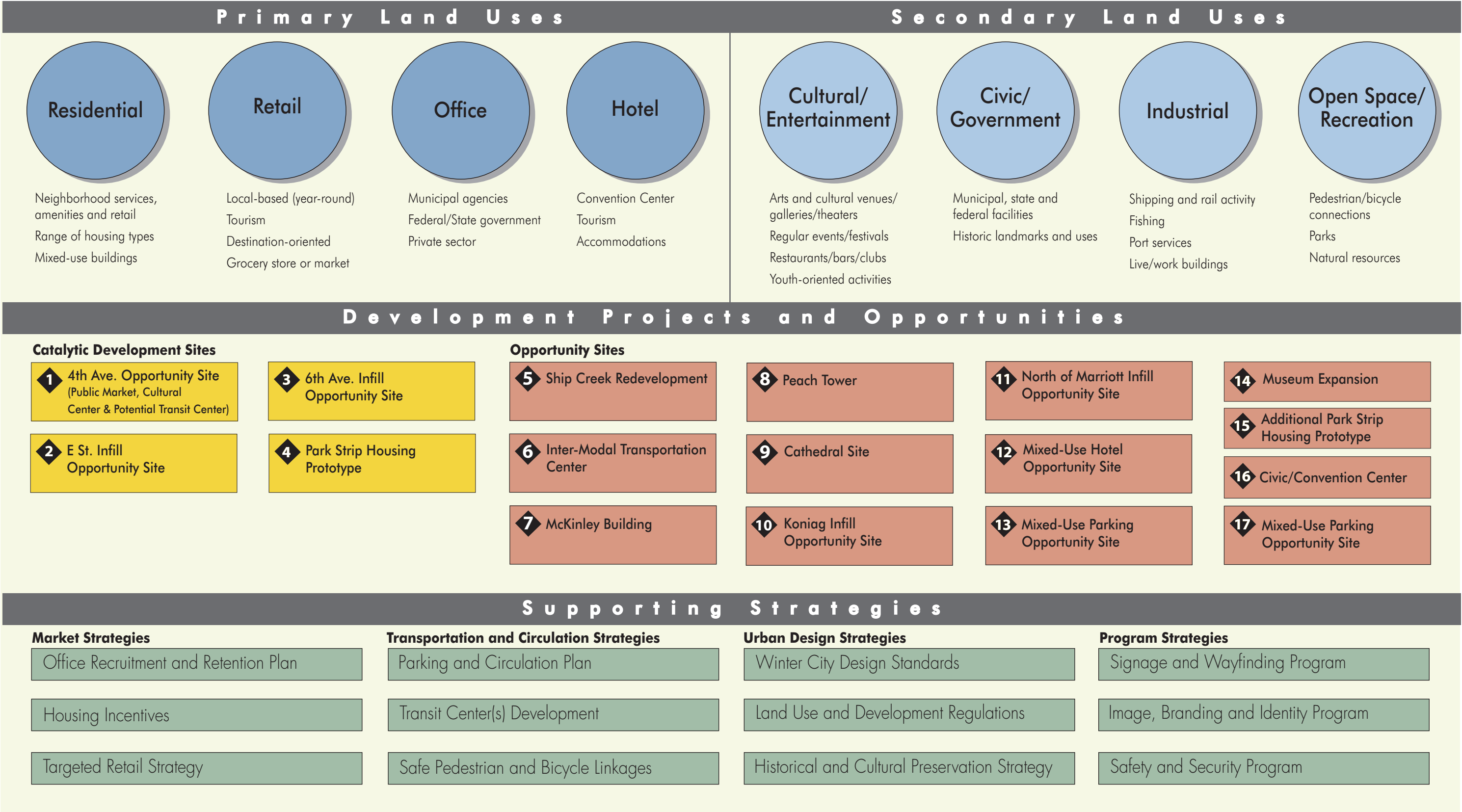
sites are described in more detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.

Each red rectangle (right) represents an Opportunity Site within Downtown. These sites are either projects that are currently in the planning process, are already under construction, or have been identified to have potential for development or redevelopment. Their locations are noted on the Strategy Diagram on page 33.

Supporting Strategies

The third tier of the Framework is made up of Supporting Strategies. These strategies are identified to support development of the Primary Land Uses, aid upcoming Development Projects and Opportunities and provide the fabric to knit these individual sites together into a comprehensive Downtown environment. Each of these strategies is addressed in this Plan. The strategies in the first column are addressed in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development. The strategies in the second column are addressed in Chapter 5: Transportation and Circulation. The strategies in the third column are addressed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6: Urban Design. Lastly, the strategies in the fourth column are addressed in Chapter 7: Program Strategies.

Together, these levels provide a framework for addressing issues and ensuring implementation of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan.



STRATEGY DIAGRAM

The Strategy Diagram on page 33 illustrates the key land uses, adjacencies and interconnections identified as most important for achieving the vision and goals for Downtown. It outlines the relationships among key housing and mixed-use districts, development projects, opportunity sites, streetscape improvements and other physical and perceptual linkages between them. In short, the Strategy Diagram is the **visual blueprint or “road map” for Downtown’s future development.**

The Downtown Study Area encompasses a substantial amount of land, and the majority of recent public and private investments are focused in a Downtown Core within the larger area. These investments must be enhanced and interconnected. Meanwhile, smaller scale improvements to the public realm in the surrounding Downtown sub-districts will continue to enhance the private investment already occurring on a site by site basis. The concentration of major investments will create a boost of new energy in the core, which can catalyze revitalization throughout the Study Area and into adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

The following pages describe the Strategy Diagram and its key elements in greater detail.



The strategy for Downtown takes advantage of the cultural and commercial momentum, public and private investments and development opportunities within the study area.

Downtown Study Area/ Mixed-Use Core

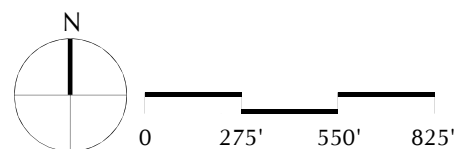
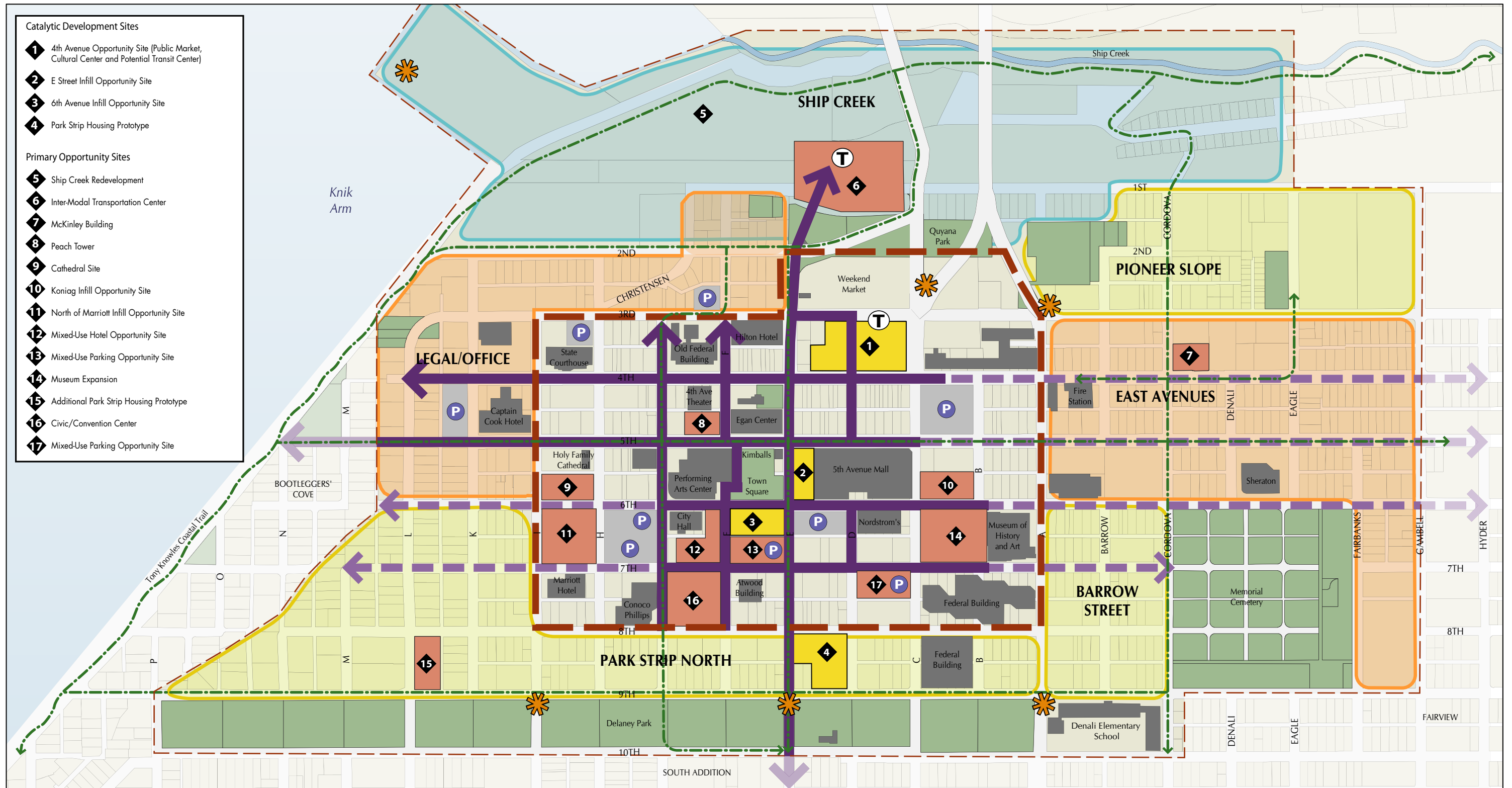
The Downtown Study Area extends from the east edge of Bootlegger's Cove to Gambell Street, and from 10th Avenue to the southern banks of Ship Creek. In initial implementation phases, prioritized improvements should be concentrated within the mixed-use civic, office and commercial-oriented Downtown Core. This will build synergy among new and planned development projects, both public and private, and focus finite resources to create a stable and dynamic city center. While private development interest is encouraged throughout Downtown, major public improvements outside of the core in the adjacent mixed-use districts should occur in subsequent phases. **Prioritization, concentration and strong linkages are the keys to Downtown's revitalization.**

Mixed-Use Districts

Two mixed-use districts are identified within the Downtown Study Area. These districts complement each other and work in conjunction with the focused Downtown Core. Both have their own strategy, character, areas of concentration and preferred development guidelines and prototypes. The specific nature of these districts is described in detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.



Street level environments created by mixed-use development are energized day and night with commercial activity on the ground floor and residential or office space above.



Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| — Downtown Study Area | ◆ Catalytic Development Site | — Downtown Mixed Use; Focus on Residential | ← Primary Pedestrian Connection |
| — Downtown Core | ◆ Opportunity Site | ✱ Gateway | ← Secondary Pedestrian Connection |
| ■ Park/Open Space | — Ship Creek | Ⓣ Transit Station | ← Bike/Pedestrian Connection |
| ■ "Notable" Building Footprint* | — Downtown Mixed Use | Ⓟ Parking Structure | |

*These footprints are intended to better orient the viewer to the map and do not suggest that these are the only buildings of significance in Downtown.

Strategy Diagram

Catalytic Development Sites

Four sites are identified as Catalytic Development opportunities because of their potential to add vibrancy to Downtown and leverage further development in the immediate surroundings. Each project will provide the city center with new energy, encourage pedestrian walkability and fit within the overall land use strategy.

The sites are highlighted on the Strategy Diagram and described in detail in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.

More than ten additional Opportunity Sites, also noted on the Strategy Diagram, are other important projects or sites in various stages of planning or construction.



Delaney Park is a vital resource that Downtown can leverage for its recreational and open space assets, potential for facilitating connectivity, and ability to catalyze future mixed-use residential development adjacent to the park.



One of Downtown's actively used parking structures is located above the People Mover Station, just west of City Hall, serving municipal employees and the public.

Transit Stations

The current Downtown Transit Center at 6th Avenue and H Street is the hub for citywide bus service. Two options are under consideration—refurbishing the current site or potentially developing a new transit center located on 3rd Avenue across from the Weekend Market. See Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development for further discussion.

In addition, an intermodal train terminal planned for Ship Creek will serve tourists, other visitors, and possibly commuters from the Mat-Su Valley. Connections between the Transit Center and rail terminal will be provided via an escalator between Ship Creek and convenient Downtown walkways.

Parks and Open Space

The areas shown in green on the Strategy Diagram are existing parks and open space within the Downtown Core. They illustrate the tremendous resources that Downtown already possesses. At least two of these parks have been identified for improvements: Town Square and Delaney Park. The connection between these parks will be enhanced by the E Street corridor project, as well as trail and pathway improvements.

Strategies for maintaining, protecting and enhancing Downtown's system of open spaces appear in Chapter 4: Land Use and Economic Development.



Peratrovich Park sits adjacent to the old City Hall building and Visitor Center, which makes it ideal for a central gathering space and outdoor performances.

Pedestrian Connections

A successful Downtown requires a safe, attractive and hospitable pedestrian environment. Anchorage's climate requires an extra effort to accommodate and promote pedestrian circulation and comfort during the spring, fall and winter months.

The Strategy Diagram distinguishes between primary and secondary connections in an effort to focus infrastructure investment in the core area where there is anticipated the greatest concentration of activity and highest usage. These connections will be improved through a number of streetscape enhancements discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Such enhancements include wider sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting and other streetscape amenities. Once enhanced primary connections are established, secondary pedestrian connections will be improved between the Downtown Core and other city center districts.

Trails/Connections

Two of Anchorage's most extensive trails enter into the Downtown Study Area: Ship Creek Trail and the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. There are plans underway to connect them along the tidal flats. These trails should be linked to the pedestrian connections to best integrate non-vehicular circulation throughout Downtown. Most importantly, these trails will directly link pedestrians and bicyclists to the transit stations, parks and open space, as well as Downtown's cultural sites, facilities and neighborhoods.

Parking Structures

As Downtown grows and densifies and land values increase, many existing parking lots will be developed with other uses. Mixed-use garages and underground structures will be necessary to accommodate parking for existing and new uses.

Existing and new public parking structures should be located to capture motorists at the earliest and most convenient locations upon entering Downtown, and be linked to the high quality pedestrian connections throughout the core to provide easy access and connectivity for residents, workers and visitors.



Wildlife sightings are commonplace right next to Downtown (above top). The Coastal Trail provides direct bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the city center.



4 land use and economic development

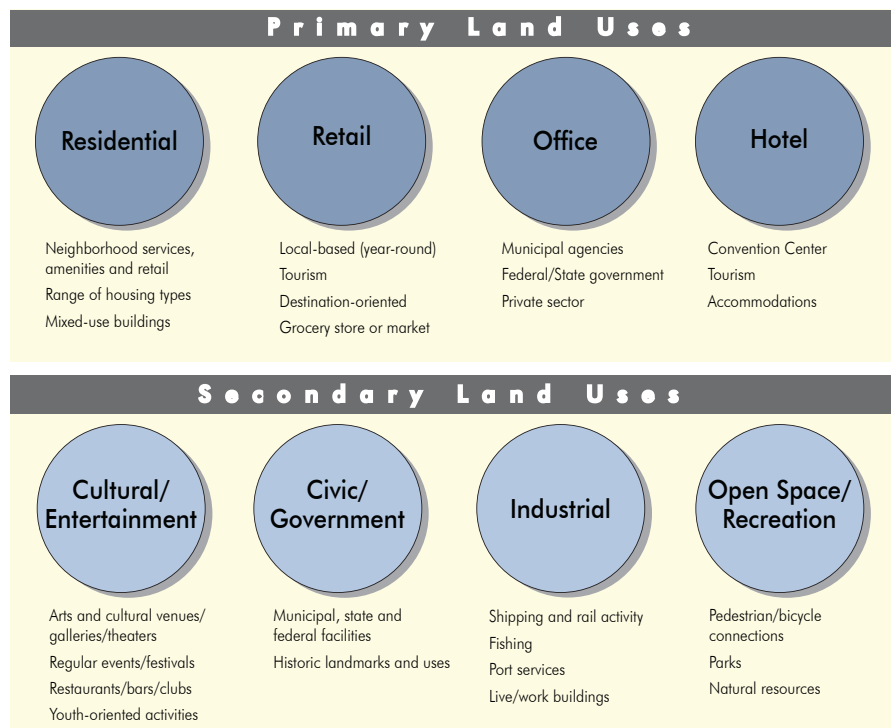
OVERVIEW

Downtown Anchorage's future as a vibrant and successful center is dependent on its overall economic health and growth potential.

A people-oriented, vibrant, 24/7 experience is the desired future for Downtown Anchorage. To attain that energy and vibrancy, Downtown needs to include a mix of land uses that caters to a variety of people and income levels. The range and types of retail amenities are also critical. These amenities should provide Downtown residents with much-needed facilities, such as schools, fresh food and convenient services. They should be designed with the highest regard to aesthetics, seismic safety and the northern climate.

This chapter first provides **an understanding of the existing Downtown land uses**, as well as **projected future demand** for these uses. It then recommends **strategies necessary to capture economic investment and locate development** appropriately. Finally, the chapter identifies the special development and land use character that should be achieved within each Downtown district.

Four primary land use categories are identified below for Downtown Anchorage. These vital drivers for growth should be retained and enhanced in the coming years. Four existing secondary land uses are also identified. They augment the primary land uses to serve Anchorage's residents and employees and create a truly diverse, integrated place.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

A statewide distribution center and regional hub, Anchorage is the centerpiece of Alaska's commerce and economic activity. Downtown Anchorage plays an important role for both the city and state, providing civic facilities, public activity, shopping and employment options. There is opportunity to leverage Downtown's existing land uses and supplement its underused areas with new development that

- a) meets the performance targets that Downtown can achieve and
- b) provides workers, residents and visitors with a balanced mix of land uses that serve them.

The following key considerations are made for the **four primary land uses: residential, retail, office and hotel**. Then several land use goals and strategies are outlined on the following pages to enhance these primary land uses.

Residential

- Housing development is a key opportunity for revitalizing Downtown.
- There is a slow but steady population growth.
- National trends show an increasing desire for "urban" lifestyles.
- Downtown home values are increasing.
- Downtown needs additional amenities to support housing.

Retail

- Downtown is one of Alaska's primary retail, culture and entertainment destination.
- Downtown faces retail competition with other areas.

Office

- Downtown is competing with other areas for office development.
- Downtown should build upon its strength as a hub of government offices, amenities and density.

Hotel

- Though many tourists arrive in Anchorage, few spend more than one or two nights in Downtown.
- The new convention center will support additional hotel rooms.

Primary residential, retail, office, and hotel land uses will be bolstered through further development of **secondary cultural/entertainment and civic/government land uses**. More destinations with special goods, services or activities will attract people to the city center. Although Downtown Anchorage evolved from the initial construction of the Alaska Railroad, the Port and associated industrial uses, their roles have diminished in importance to Downtown vitality compared with other economic sectors. These uses should continue to be supported where appropriate. Maintaining and enhancing **open space and recreation** areas will also be necessary to attract and retain residents.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The land use and economic development goals outline the physical framework for enhancing Downtown Anchorage.

Seven primary goals (right) guide Downtown's land use and development patterns.

Leverage new public and private investment

Encourage land use patterns and development that connect new public and private investments. Commercial and civic activity associated with new development should complement existing assets and jumpstart new investment.

Increase housing options and accommodate diverse income levels

Provide incentives to encourage Downtown residential development that dramatically increases urban living opportunities for multiple income levels and household types.

Attract government and private offices to Downtown

In the face of competition from outlying areas such as Midtown, create a dynamic urban environment with adequate facilities to retain and attract office uses.

Maintain, supplement and enhance open space

As Downtown densifies and develops, it is critical that the hierarchy of parks and open space is maintained and supplemented to accommodate new residents and workers.

Ensure that all new Downtown development enhances the pedestrian experience

Encourage mixed-use development with active and engaging ground floor uses to ensure that Downtown offers a vibrant urban experience unique to Alaska.

Increase the intensity of Anchorage's Downtown Core

Fill the heart of Anchorage with greater density of employment, residences, retail stores and cultural and entertainment venues, to create a cohesive central city district. Identify each sub-district of Downtown so each can further develop its own unique character, identity and function, and so they complement, rather than compete with, one another.

Ensure seismically safe development

Minimize the life safety risks to building occupants and economic vulnerability of property owners and the community as a whole for any future development proposed in areas with potentially high or very high ground failure susceptibility.

Recommendations

A series of recommendations are outlined in the following pages in order to meet the land use and economic development goals.

1. Meet Growth Performance Targets

The existing conditions analysis included an assessment of supply and demand for the primary land uses vital for Downtown's evolution into a more active urban center with core office, business, arts and cultural facilities, as

well as higher residential densities. The table below reflects medium to high demand projections for these land uses in the Downtown Study Area for the short-, mid- and long-term development forecast for 2010, 2015 and 2025.

These targets are based on aggressive employment forecasts from the Municipality's Long Range Transportation Plan. These forecasts have been converted to housing units and commercial square footage based on assumptions regarding household size and commercial space per employee. Taken together, these projections represent aggressive, yet plausible assumptions for future growth potential in Downtown. The actual amount of development will depend in part upon the interconnections of these land uses, and public and private investment.

The goal of this plan is to accommodate and encourage up to 4,000 housing units, which is more than the housing demand projection. This is because a demand projection is based in part on current and historical trends. Rather than reflect passive acceptance of current forecasts, this plan prioritizes growth in Downtown, recommending development incentives and land use regulations that will make housing easier to build Downtown. The plan also recognizes that Anchorage's demographic and economic indicators continue to shift in favor of Downtown living. Therefore, if the market opportunity arises, Downtown can and should have the capacity to accommodate up to 4,000 housing units by the year 2025.

2010 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2010*
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	350 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	110,500 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	300,000 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	75 rooms

*Numbers reflect total new development to 2010.

2015 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2015**
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	1,200 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	185,000 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	1,257,500 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	375 rooms

**Numbers reflect total new development to 2015.

2025 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2025***
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	2,500 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	270,000 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	2,425,000 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	1,000 rooms

***Numbers reflect total new development to 2025.

2. Establish Economic Development Strategies

Making Downtown accessible and attractive for residents and visitors throughout the year will require progressive land use planning, design guidelines, development and financial incentives and accompanying land use regulations. The following set of strategies work together with Downtown's land use regulations to intensify land use by developing vacant and underused parcels; strengthen Downtown's markets for residential, retail, commercial and hotel activities; and catalyze new market niches.

Develop incentives for a diverse mix of housing types Downtown, including affordable and market rate for-sale and rental units.

- Ensure that the zoning in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods facilitates multifamily residential development, and that live/work space is also allowed.
- Offer incentives, through AHFC, Fannie Mae, Anchorage Housing Authority and others, to build public/private partnerships with developers to provide affordable housing, senior housing, housing for people with special needs and market rate rental housing.
- Encourage mixed-income housing developments with units for lower-, middle- and upper-income households in the same development.



Downtown Vancouver is a good example of a city that balances high-rise development with low-rise townhomes and offices. A portion of new units are affordable.

- Consider the use of tax increment financing and/or tax abatement as revenue sources to reduce development costs (such as for structured parking) or increase unit values to enhance residential feasibility.
- Develop land assembly and site control strategies.
- Identify a specific publicly owned property to serve as a model for public/private housing development, solicitation of development proposals and provision of creative financing techniques to enable the development.
- Identify other publicly owned properties that may be appropriate for housing development.



Medium density family and senior housing should be encouraged in Downtown's mixed-use residential sub-districts.



The location of City Hall on 6th Avenue (above top) and the Federal Building on 4th Avenue (above) establish a base of government offices and civic facilities Downtown.

Develop a targeted retail recruitment and retention strategy.

- Identify and pursue opportunities for neighborhood retail such as a small grocery store, drug store and/or other services for current and future Downtown residents.
- Identify and pursue additional anchor retail tenants such as another department store and/or cineplex, that can strengthen Downtown's drawing power.
- Identify and pursue retailers that appeal to vacation and convention visitors, including restaurants and "one-of-a-kind" shops in addition to more typical souvenir stores.
- Encourage streetscape and storefront façade improvements, in addition to active ground floor retail uses, to enhance Downtown's comparative advantage as a unique shopping environment.
- Develop coordination, joint marketing and physical linkages between the Weekend Market and Downtown retailers.
- Expand retail services to serve residents and tourists year-round.
- Require ground-floor retail in new buildings in some locations (e.g., 4th and 5th avenues), while allowing it in others (e.g., 9th Avenue).
- Co-locate retail space with new parking garage development.

Strengthen the hub of civic facilities, offices and employment Downtown.

- Make Downtown a priority location for federal, state and local government administrative employment and services.
- Concentrate on attracting and retaining Municipality of Anchorage offices and services, specifically.
- Develop a targeted office recruitment program aimed at identifying and attracting corporate employers, such as native corporations.
- Leverage public and private partnerships with assistance from the Anchorage development authority.
- Seek to reduce development costs (e.g. for structured parking) through tax incentives or other means to enhance office feasibility.
- Encourage office developers to utilize the Downtown parking exemption to enhance the feasibility of development, and ensure that other public parking (publicly or privately owned) is adequate to serve a growing employment base.
- Co-locate office development with new parking garage development.
- Consider parking provisions that offer parking providers with incentives to share parking resources.
- Support a new Downtown location for the transit center.
- Provide capital improvements to the surrounding streetscape environment along with marketing Downtown amenities to employers.
- Establish incentives to make rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of older properties, underused parcels and surface parking lots cost effective.

Increase Downtown's hotel supply and occupancy rates.

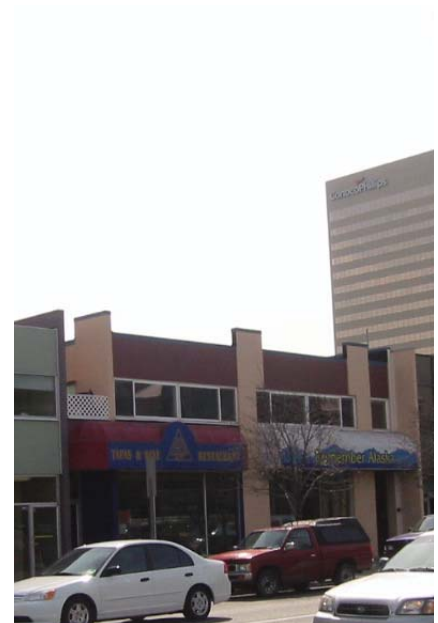
- Increase hotel supply to accommodate large conventions.
- Increase the year-round visitor occupancy by marketing Downtown as a winter destination.
- Identify specific publicly and privately owned properties that may be appropriate for hotel development, and solicit hotel developers/operators for those sites.
- Work with cruise operators to identify services and amenities that could enhance visitors' experiences in Downtown and encourage longer stays in local hotels.
- Encourage hotel developers to utilize the Downtown parking exemption to enhance the feasibility of development, and ensure that other public parking (publicly or privately owned) is adequate to serve a growing hotel base.



Enhance Downtown's arts, cultural and entertainment focus.

- Develop an outreach/recruitment program for gallery owners.
- Encourage the development of studio and gallery space in the arts districts (identified on the Downtown Districts Diagram), recognizing that Downtown arts can complement arts districts elsewhere in the community.
- Enhance arts districts' identities through streetscape design.
- Preserve the 4th Avenue Theater by making it a viable operation as a Downtown destination venue.

- Examine the feasibility of an arts and cultural center celebrating Anchorage's diversity through educational, recreational and entertainment programming in arts, languages, cuisine and other unique cultural traditions.
- Provide fun attractions and events to draw visitors Downtown.



Incentives to rehabilitate older properties, such as the JCPenney parking garage currently undergoing facade renovations (above top) and consolidation of small lots for catalytic development opportunities (above), should be encouraged.



The 4th Avenue Theater is one of Anchorage's great historic landmarks.



Signs outside parking garages or in strategic Downtown locations can notify drivers of the number of parking spaces available.

Develop a coordinated parking program.

- Create a distributed parking pattern that allows visitors to park in one garage Downtown and easily traverse the Core area without needing to park again.
- Develop a system-wide wayfinding signage program that directs users to parking and informs them of vacancies.
- Reduce parking demand through transit services, programs, incentives and amenities recommended in this plan.
- Encourage alternatives such as shared parking and automated parking structures.
- Provide gap financing for structured parking.

Develop an expedited permitting strategy.

- Develop a program of expedited, fast-track land use and site plan permitting for development proposals that achieve the Plan's land use strategies, district development specifications and urban design guidelines.
- Explore a program of expedited building permits for specific desired land uses such as affordable housing.

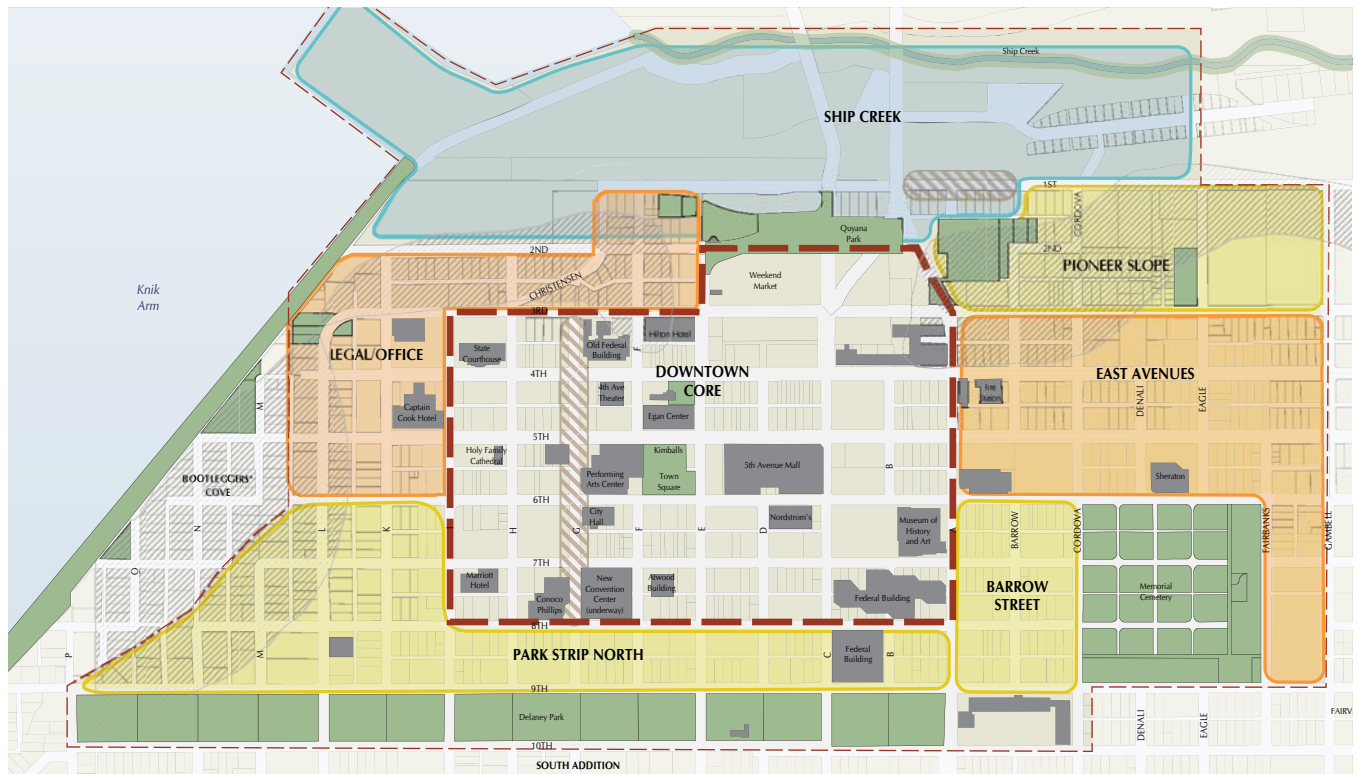
3. Establish Downtown Districts

The Downtown is comprised of sub-districts, each with its own character, activities and levels of intensity. The delineation of these districts has not been articulated in previous planning efforts. Designating and reinforcing the districts offers the opportunity to create neighborhoods of distinct character, functionality and sense of place. The Downtown Districts Diagram (below) identifies four districts within the Study Area: Downtown Core,

Downtown Mixed-use, Downtown Mixed-use Residential and Ship Creek. The following pages define each district with a set of development specifications and design prototypes to guide future development. These include suggested ranges of density and general guidance for land use and the physical character of development.

Seismic Ground Failure Zones

Certain proposed uses or intensities may be limited or restricted within Seismically Induced Ground Failure Zones #4 and/or #5, subject to current building code, and other potential municipal requirements that may result from a Seismic Risk Assessment (discussed in the seismic hazards section at the end of Chapter 4).



Downtown Districts Diagram

Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Park/Open Space
- Downtown Mixed-Use
- Downtown Mixed-Use; Residential
- Downtown Core
- "Notable" Building Footprint
- Ship Creek
- Arts District/Corridor
- Seismic Ground Failure Zone #5



Downtown grocery store with housing, Vancouver, BC



Downtown mixed-use development, Denver, CO



Varying development densities, Oakland, CA

Downtown Core (DT-1)

As the most active and intense part of the city center, the Downtown Core is the priority area for high-density, mixed-use development. This district has the greatest development intensity and building heights in the Municipality, creating a concentration of office, civic, cultural, entertainment, housing and retail uses, all within close proximity to each other. The Core will build on its rich heritage and collection of historic buildings to create an environment of distinctive character and quality. Attractive public and semi-private open spaces for celebration and relaxation should be provided for Anchorage residents, workers and visitors. The arts district on G Street should be enhanced with additional gallery space and streetscape improvements promoting its identity.

Development Specifications:

- 3 to 20-plus stories; 30 to 80-plus units/acre per Merrill Field flight path
- Ground floor retail, housing, civic/government, cultural/entertainment, office, open space and hotels/visitor services.
- High concentrations of employment, with densities reaching 50 or more employees per acre.
- Tall building massing set back from street; ground floor design to accommodate sun-lit plazas and public interior spaces (see top image)

- Highly active streetscape with pedestrian amenities, ground floor uses oriented to the sidewalk, multiple building entries and no blank walls—especially on primary pedestrian oriented streets.
- Certain proposed uses, intensities and building heights may be more restricted within seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5. Seismic constraints in 3rd and 4th Avenues are anticipated to limit the height and size of structures.

Downtown Mixed-use: East Avenues (DT-2)

Two areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by commercial and mixed-use development. These areas consist of a compact mix of office, retail, lodging and entertainment uses, but also accommodate civic uses and encourage residential development.

The East Avenues sub-district comprises the eastern end of the city center. It is already home to a variety of uses and building heights. The district is bordered by some light industrial use along Gambell Street and contains dispersed high rise development. New development should cater to populations interested in a live/work environment.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 10 stories; 20 to 60-plus units/acre per Merrill Field flight path, and depending on seismic restrictions within seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5.

- Medium to high-density residential, live/work, office, hotel, local-serving retail development (see bottom image).
- Tall building massing is set back from street; steps down to the pedestrian scale at street level and is sensitive to climatic effects.

Downtown Mixed-use: Legal/Office (DT-2)

The Legal/Office sub-district is the second district characterized by broader mixed-use development. It is already a hub for law and professional offices and is home to a number of historic buildings. While some housing is encouraged, the district should be primarily developed with new medium to high-density office space that will complement office uses in the Downtown Core. Strong connection to the Coastal Trail, respectful relationships to historic structures, and careful transition to Bootlegger's Cove will be important.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 10 stories; 20 to 60-plus units/acre depending on seismic restrictions—a seismic overlay zone to address seismic hazards is discussed at the end of this chapter.
- Housing, offices, small hotels, ground-floor retail (see top image), restaurants/cafes, offices and small-scale public spaces for workers and residents (see middle image)
- Preserve view corridors west and north across the Cook Inlet.

Downtown Mixed-use Residential (DT-3)

Three areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by low- to mid-rise residential development. These areas are intended to provide housing opportunities and a great living environment. They include a range of housing types to ensure affordability and accommodate compatible commercial uses such as neighborhood-serving retail, and access to open space. The Mixed Use Residential District accommodates existing office uses and will allow office/mixed-use development at a scale and intensity that is compatible with a residential-oriented district. The three mixed-use residential sub-districts should include the following amenities and incentives:

- Services such as grocery stores, day care and drugstores aimed at local residents should be available in select locations (see bottom image).
- Neighborhood parks, gardens, pleasant streetscapes and pedestrian linkages through blocks should be provided as residential development occurs.
- Tax abatement and other incentives should be applied to encourage residential development; utilize design review to ensure quality.
- A mix of market-rate housing and affordable housing is encouraged; avoid large concentrations of high-income and/or low-income units.
- Residential design should include features such as front stoops, bay windows, facade articulation, balconies or sun rooms and upper level step-backs.



Mixed-use development, Denver, CO



Downtown plaza, San Diego, CA



Downtown mixed-use development, San Francisco, CA



Medium density residential development, Burbank, CA



Live-work housing, Emeryville, CA



Warehouse redevelopment, Vancouver, BC

Park Strip North (DT-3):

The Park Strip North sub-district is a prime opportunity for developing a mixed-use district comprised primarily of medium density housing. The Park Strip provides a great resource for active or passive recreation and creates a buffer between the Downtown Core and the neighborhoods to the south.

Development Specifications:

- 3 to 4 stories along park strip and 5 to 7 stories on north half of block between 8th and 9th avenues; 20 to 50 units/acre
- “Stepping up” of density and building height toward the Downtown core.
- Housing and neighborhood serving ground floor retail at key corners and intersections.
- Multiple entries on ground floor; individual entrances raised several feet for privacy or screened with landscaping or stoop design.
- Residential density and building height may be more restricted within high seismic ground failure zones, especially near the bluff over Bootleggers Cove.

Downtown Mixed-use Residential: Barrow Street (DT-3)

The second area characterized by low- to mid-rise residential development is Barrow Street. A small sub-district situated between the Downtown Core and the Anchorage Memorial

Cemetery, Barrow Street has its own identity separate from the Park Strip North residences to the west and the East Avenues to the north. Housing in this small, mixed-use neighborhood will be comprised of medium density residential.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 4 stories; 15 to 50 units/acre
- Primarily residential uses; some small home office and corner retail
- Townhouses and condo units with front door entries to street and garage entry from rear (see top image)

Downtown Mixed-use Residential: Pioneer Slope (DT-3)

The Pioneer Slope residential mixed-use development sub-district is located in seismically induced ground failure zone #5, with very high ground failure susceptibility and is considered for a diverse mix of low to medium density uses, including open space, commercial, residential and industrial uses.

Development Specifications:

- 2 to 4 stories; 15 to 30 units/acre
- Primarily residential and live/work uses; some open space, small home office, artist studios, galleries, corner retail and light industrial (see middle image)
- Development takes advantage of existing open spaces and views to the north.

Ship Creek (PC District)

Ship Creek district is distinguished from adjacent Downtown districts by its historic and industrial uses. The area is well-positioned for medium density, residential development, supplemented with commercial uses such as restaurants, small scale hotels, arts production spaces and railroad-related uses. New development should reflect the industrial history of the area, incorporate live-work units and maximize Ship Creek as a recreational resource, while adhering to seismic constraints. The Ship Creek Master Plan and recently adopted Planned Community zoning district design standards further articulate planning and design parameters for the area.

The following recommendations should be considered as development occurs:

- Support Ship Creek’s development strategy to preserve the historic character, promote an arts corridor along 1st Avenue and integrate new development.
- 1st Avenue east of the overpass should be a “slow” traffic street that fosters an arts corridor, providing easy access to shops and galleries and creating a comfortable pedestrian environment.

Catalytic Development Sites

- 1 4th Avenue Development Site (Possibly Public Market, Cultural Center and Transit Center)
- 2 E Street Infill Development Site
- 3 6th Avenue Infill Development Site
- 4 Park Strip Housing Prototype

4. Move Forward on Catalytic Development Sites

Four highly visible projects that will attract additional investment are identified as Downtown’s Catalytic Development Sites. They are catalytic due to their prime location in the core, proximity to recent investment, or ability to provide much needed services or activities currently lacking in Downtown. They are also likely to encourage other new investment. These sites, highlighted on the diagram below, have particular importance to Downtown and should be considered top priority for development. The following pages describe the desirable land uses, development program and design character for each of the sites.

A financial feasibility analysis based on the conceptual development programs has been performed for three of the four sites. The *residual land value* of the development projects indicates how much a developer could afford to pay for the existing property and still generate an adequate financial return to pursue development. In order to determine these values, the development revenue estimates (based on lease rates and sales prices), development costs (based on hard and soft costs for buildings and parking) and property operating costs (based on maintenance and leasing estimates) were estimated and then reviewed by local real estate experts, developers and architects.



Catalytic Development Sites Diagram

1

Fourth Avenue Development Site

Situated in a strategic position between central Downtown and Ship Creek, this site should be a low- to mid-rise development with a one-of-a-kind mix of uses, including a Public Market, Arts and Cultural Center and possibly a new Transit Center. The activity of this development can complement the tourist-oriented Weekend Market, located immediately to the north, and create a connection between the Market and 4th Avenue commerce.



The public market in Portland, Maine draws residents and visitors year-round. It offers fresh produce, specialty goods and places to sit and eat.

Public Market

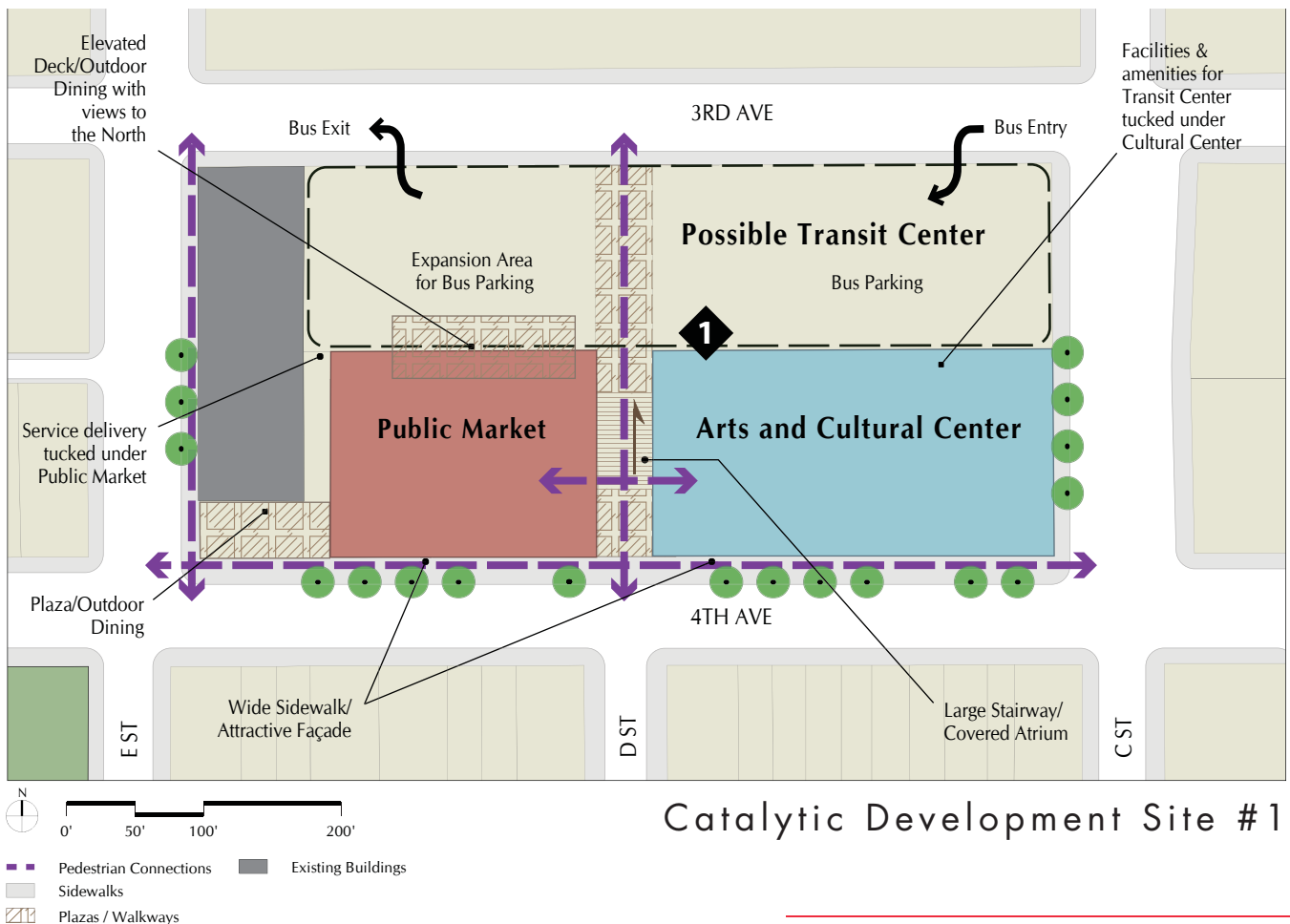
As Downtown housing grows and evolves, the increased number of residents will require amenities that can provide for their daily needs. A Public Market—with food, dry goods and other household items—can meet these needs while being a unique focal point for the Downtown community. The market can also be an attraction for visitors.

- Create a quality Public Market project that has authenticity as a local-serving commercial enterprise.
- Include retail outlets and services focused mostly on the daily needs of residents, such as fresh food and beverages (including a bakery, butcher and wine seller) and dry goods.
- Include places for eating and relaxing, such as indoor cafe space and counter dining, as well as social gathering spaces.

Arts and Cultural Center

Anchorage is home to an incredible array of cultural diversity, including Alaska Native, European, Asian and Pacific Islander, African and other influences. Downtown should reflect and celebrate that heritage, serving as a “home” where all people are welcome and all cultures and traditions are respected. An arts and cultural center in the heart of Anchorage would help link together the city and state’s diverse peoples and be a place for education, celebration, discussion and reflection.

- Create an Arts and Cultural Center that celebrates the area's multi-cultural heritage and truly reflects the diversity of Anchorage and Alaska.
- Complement other arts and cultural facilities, such as the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage Museum of History and Art and local art galleries.
- Encourage Alaska Native and ethnic communities and local artists to be involved in the center's development.
- Position the Arts and Cultural Center as a draw for economic activity, attracting local residents, tourists and in-state visitors and benefiting both the center and the surrounding Downtown businesses.
- Showcase local artists' work to strengthen Downtown's role as an arts and culture hub and improve visibility of Downtown's arts districts/corridors.
- The center should provide space for artists to gain visibility and share their histories and techniques.





Waiting areas for transit, both indoor and outside, should be comfortable and well-lit. The transparent awning above provides protection from the elements, while allowing sunshine to access the sidewalk. The proposed Transit Center and Public Market should provide spaces like the one pictured below for passengers to wait for their bus, pick up produce, buy a magazine or relax after the workday.



Transit Center

The Downtown Plan recommends that the existing Transit Center be relocated or expanded (see page 84).

A potential location for the Transit Center is on the northern half of the site, adjacent to 3rd Avenue. The activity generated by the Public Market and Cultural Center would make a new Transit Center a popular destination for workers and residents. Amenities for riders should be oriented toward pedestrians and provide an interesting and varied north-facing facade. The possible relocation should occur when 3rd Avenue has been reconfigured into a one-way westbound avenue. The Transit Center should, to the extent its location and service capacity enable, serve not only local People Mover buses but also any regional bus transit services that may come into operation and other bus lines servicing Southcentral Alaska residents such as the Homer, Seward, and Denali bus services.

Alternatively, the existing Transit Center can remain in its current centralized location, serving attractions and destinations in all directions. Refurbishing the Center and making modest curb space adjustments can improve its capacity to stage up to 18 buses. Optional capacity for three additional spaces exists west of H Street on 6th Avenue, allowing for a total of 21 bus staging spaces. The Municipality should use the following Transit Center Site Criteria to guide its decision to refurbish or relocate the center.

Travel Center Site Criteria

- Identify a central location with good access to the facility. Assess ridership data to determine the destinations of daily users.
- Provide adequate space for vehicle storage and passenger transfers.
- Where possible encourage adequate space to also accommodate other bus lines providing service to other communities in Southcentral Alaska.
- Prioritize the safety of passengers, bus drivers, motorists and pedestrians.
- Ensure the facility program accommodates:
 - Room for loading and queuing of up to 20 buses
 - Office/customer service space: 4,000 sq.ft.
 - Waiting and common space: 5,000 sq.ft.
- Give transit vehicles prioritization with traffic signalization and dedicated bus lanes.
- Allow on-street stops in the Downtown Core.
- Create a multi-use facility that provides amenities for Downtown residents, tourists and commuters.
- Promote transit-oriented development around transit center.
- Provide pedestrian connections to the Alaska Railroad Intermodal Facility and other key destinations.
- Ensure that the location is consistent with a potential Downtown Circulator loop route.
- Phase improvements so the existing facility remains in use while a new Transit Center develops.

Building Design

- Create a landmark building that has visual appeal and recognition and benefits from a visible, accessible location in Downtown.
- Ensure the south-facing facade along Fourth Avenue is transparent, inviting and has pedestrian-oriented uses such as displays and outdoor seating on the sidewalk.
- Plazas and outdoor dining areas should be located at the corner of 4th Avenue and E Street and overlooking the Transit Center to the north.

Streetscape, Parking & Circulation

- A prominent open air staircase and arcade will provide north-south mid-block pedestrian connections.
- Parking should be accommodated in the lot to the north.
- Bus queuing for People Mover and tour operators would occur within the existing parking lot. Buses would enter from the northeast corner of the site and exit on the northwest corner.
- Buses would be stored off-site in a lot determined appropriate by People Mover and the Municipality.



Source: Project for Public Spaces

A well-designed open air staircase can provide linkages for shoppers between the 5th Avenue Mall and 4th Avenue shopping areas, the Transit Center, and the Weekend Market (above). Examples of attractive transit center designs are shown below.





New development should open onto the sidewalk and engage Town Square.

2

E Street Infill Development Site

The area just east of Town Square is a prime opportunity site for mixed-use development that would provide connections to Town Square, integrate with the E Street Corridor Improvements and connect to JCPenny and the 5th Avenue Mall to the east. This site should have a high quality mixed-use development with one to two levels of retail and housing above that. A key characteristic of the site should be a publicly accessible atrium that provides a sun-lit space year-round, taking advantage of its position.

3

Sixth Avenue Infill Development Site

The area across 6th Avenue from Town Square offers prime opportunities for redevelopment. The parcels could be consolidated into a mixed-use development with ground floor retail and housing or hotel above. The building design would have to pay particularly close attention to height restrictions and shadow impacts due to its proximity to Town Square. The ground floor of the site requires a strong retail presence. The Municipality should work with property owners and developers to redevelop the parcels.

This site is of particular importance because of its ability to:

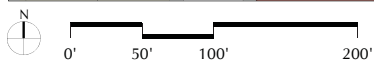
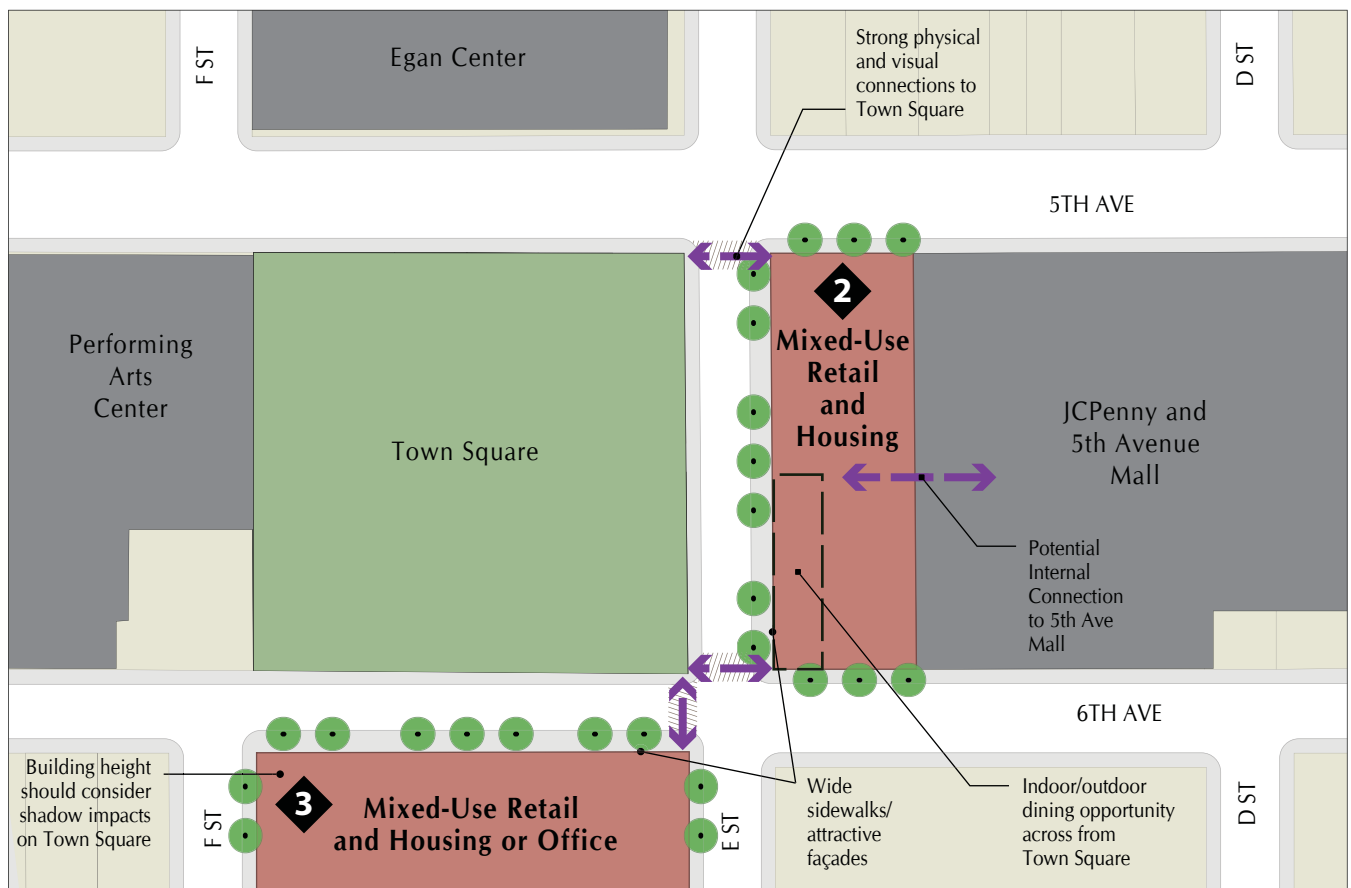
- Define and activate the south edge of Town Square
- Provide a critical mass of shopping and activity
- Link 5th Avenue Mall retail with the new Dena'ina Convention Center, City Hall and the Performing Arts Center.



This glass-enclosed cafe extends out of the building's facade with outdoor seating to activate the street environment. Both the E Street and Sixth Avenue Infill Development Sites should incorporate such elements into their design.



This mixed-use development provides active ground floor retail, variation in its facade treatment and rooftop balconies and courtyards overlooking the public realm. Similar treatment on 6th Avenue would provide direct connections between development and Town Square, activating it day and night.



- Pedestrian Connections
- Sidewalks
- Plazas

Catalytic Development Sites #2 and #3



The repetition of window bays, entrances and lit interior spaces along with storefront displays and creative use of building lighting, should enliven the ground floor environment year-round.

Building Design

- Ensure that the building façade and streetscape treatment are as inviting, transparent and pedestrian friendly as possible.
- Special attention must be paid to create a pedestrian-scale rhythm to openings and visual features along E Street and 5th and 6th Avenues.
- The design and articulation of upper stories should consider wind and shadow impacts on Town Square and the streetscape. Wind and shadow studies should be performed to measure these impacts.
- Ensure the ground floor uses actively engage the pedestrian; the ground floor should include retail, outdoor dining and public amenities.
- Encourage structured parking to be underground, to help avoid unnecessary building heights and reserve more above-ground space for activity-generating uses near Town Square Park.
- Preserve sunlight access to Town Square Park through building heights and massing. Ensure that Catalytic Development Site #3 adheres to height limitations which are already established by municipal ordinance (AO 85-173).

Streetscape, Parking and Circulation

- Ensure that the loading/unloading zone accommodates pedestrian flow. No loading/unloading should occur on 5th or 6th Avenues or E Street. The sidewalk materials and treatment of loading zone should be selected with the pedestrian environment in mind.
- Coordinate circulation, drop-off and parking requirements with the Downtown circulation and parking strategies of this Plan.
- Ensure that F Street provides a safe, comfortable pedestrian connection between 6th and 7th Avenues.
- Sidewalk conditions/widths should be coordinated with rest of Downtown (particularly E Street Corridor Improvements).



A pedestrian-friendly streetscape can be enhanced by integrating the driveway to the parking garage into the building design, such as the example above, which tucks the garage into the middle of the building, just under the address "1370" (above). The rhythm of bays and building materials should be consistent along the entire facade, incorporating the garage entrance (left).

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Catalytic Development Site 2: Residual Land Value Estimate

Steel frame Residential	
Units	60
Total Sale Value of Units	\$28,800,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$25,021,550)
Total Residual Land Value for Residential Units	\$3,778,450
Mixed-Use Retail	
Square Footage	60,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$18,318,268
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$16,001,593)
Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage	\$2,316,675
Parking	
Square Footage	60,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space	180
Non-Revenue Spaces for Residential Units***	108
Revenue-Generating Spaces	72
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$1,443,604
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$4,900,000)
Total Residual Land Value for Parking	(\$3,456,396)
COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE	\$2,638,728
Site Area Square Footage	28,595
RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT	\$92

* Excluding parking

** Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc. As such, these parking assumptions are within the range displayed in actual projects, and generate a full integer number of parking spaces when divided by the square footage of the parking area.

***Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 108 spaces for 60 residential units on Site 2. The remaining parking spaces could therefore be used for hourly, daily, or monthly parking for other Downtown patrons and could generate revenues that can help to offset the construction and operations costs.

A development program of 60 condominium units above 60,000 square feet of retail and 180 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$2.5 million for Catalytic Development Site 2. This site, just over one-half acre in size, presents a strong market opportunity for mixed-use development.

A development program of 40 condominium units above 42,000 square feet of retail and 252 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$2 million for Catalytic Development Site 3. The overall feasibility of this site, nearly one acre in size, will depend on whether the existing uses on this site could be incorporated into the redevelopment or be purchased or relocated for less than the estimated residual land value.

Catalytic Development Site 3: Residual Land Value Estimate

Steel frame Residential	
Units	40
Total Sale Value of Units	\$19,200,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$16,681,034)
Total Residual Land Value for Residential Units	\$2,518,966
Mixed-Use Retail	
Square Footage	42,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$12,282,881
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$11,101,587)
Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage	\$1,181,294
Parking	
Square Footage	84,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space	252
Non-Revenue Spaces for Residential Units***	72
Revenue-Generating Spaces	180
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$3,605,045
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$6,860,000)
Total Residual Land Value for Parking	(\$3,254,955)
COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE	\$2,066,978
Site Area Square Footage	42,118
RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT	\$49

* Excluding parking

** Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc. As such, these parking assumptions are within the range displayed in actual projects, and generate a full integer number of parking spaces when divided by the square footage of the parking area.

***Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 72 spaces for 40 residential units on Site 3. The remaining parking spaces could therefore be used for hourly, daily, or monthly parking for other Downtown patrons and could generate revenues that can help to offset the construction and operations costs.

4

**Park Strip Housing
Prototype**

The development of this site on E Street between 8th and 9th Avenues can act as a prototypical project for future construction in the Park Strip North district. This site will consist of mid-rise residential units overlooking Delaney Park. The ground floor will accommodate some neighborhood-serving retail.

The site is currently a State-owned surface parking lot. Parking should be relocated to nearby parking structures or lots.

This example of mixed-use housing in San Francisco, CA illustrates how buildings within the Park Strip North District will step up northward from Delaney Park. The Park Strip Housing Prototype will be a total of four floors along 9th Avenue, and step up to six floors along 8th Avenue. Upper units in the northern half of the development will afford views of the open space resource.



Building Design

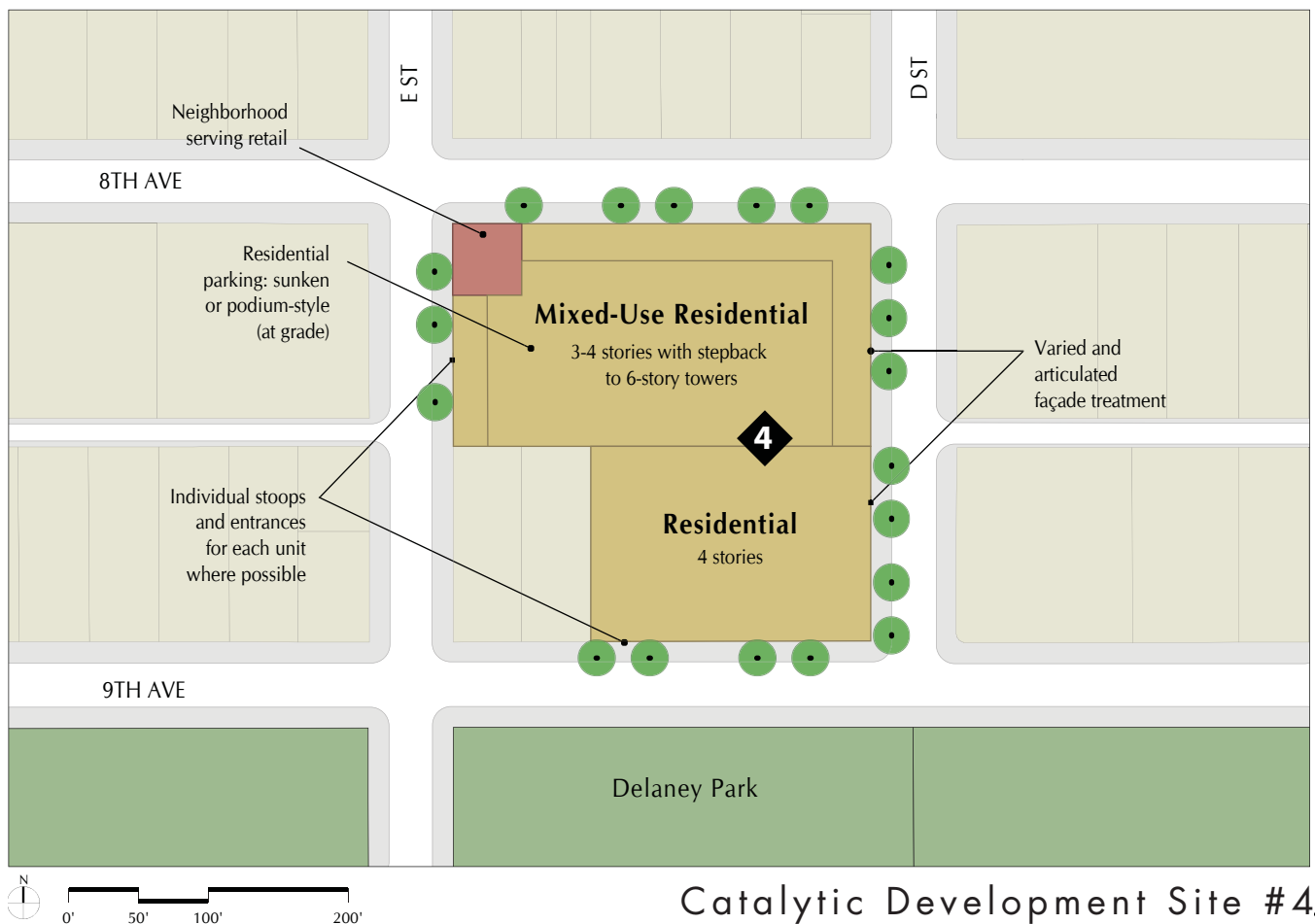
- The building massing should step back from 9th Avenue.
- Building massing should be broken into distinguishable bays with variations in materials, stepbacks, roof form, heights and balconies.
- Ground floor residential units along 9th Avenue should be designed to face the Park; each unit should have its own stoop with a landscaped buffer between the building and the sidewalk.
- Ground floor units along 8th Avenue should have shared or individual stoops.
- Buildings should be set back to accommodate generous space for private landscaping and stoops that ensures privacy for residents.
- Upper floor units should have shared use of outdoor courtyards or rooftop gardens, designed for both winter and summer use.
- Retail space should be located at the corner of 8th Avenue and E Street and should accommodate outdoor amenities, such as seating, public art and special landscaping.
- Special attention to the facade treatment along E Street will be critical as this intersection serves as one of Downtown's southern gateways. The facade of the retail space should be transparent and inviting.

Streetscape, Parking and Circulation

- The parking garage should be underground or wrapped with ground floor residential units or the corner retail space.
- Ingress and egress from the parking garage will:
 - Be located along 8th Avenue or D Street.
 - Be no wider than 22 feet at any particular driveway.
 - Be accommodated in no more than two driveways.
- Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate street trees, light fixtures, amenities and a pedestrian movement zone of at least six feet and eight to twelve feet on primary pedestrian streets.



The design should create a varied building facade with the use of color, materials, setbacks and building heights. Ground floor units should be raised several feet above sidewalk level for privacy.



LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Catalytic Development Site 4: Residual Land Value Estimate

Wood frame Residential	
Units	70
Total Sale Value of Units	\$26,950,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$19,361,038)
Total Residual Land Value for Wood frame Residential	\$7,588,962
Steel frame Residential	
Units	170
Total Sale Value of Units	\$81,600,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$70,894,393)
Total Residual Land Value for Steel frame Residential	\$10,705,607
Mixed-Use Retail	
Square Footage	14,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$4,274,263
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$3,733,705)
Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage	\$540,558
Parking	
Square Footage	137,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space***	411
Revenue-Generating Spaces	0
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$0
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$11,188,333)
Total Residual Land Value for Parking	(\$11,188,333)
COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE	\$7,646,793
Site Area Square Footage	69,312
RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT	\$110

* Excluding parking

** Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc.

***Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 411 spaces for 240 residential units on Site 4.

A development program of 240 wood frame and steel frame condominium units above 14,000 square feet of retail and 411 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$7.5 million for Catalytic Development Site 4. Owned by the public sector and currently used for surface parking, this one and one-half acre site represents a promising opportunity for development that could demonstrate the market acceptance and financial feasibility of desired urban housing.

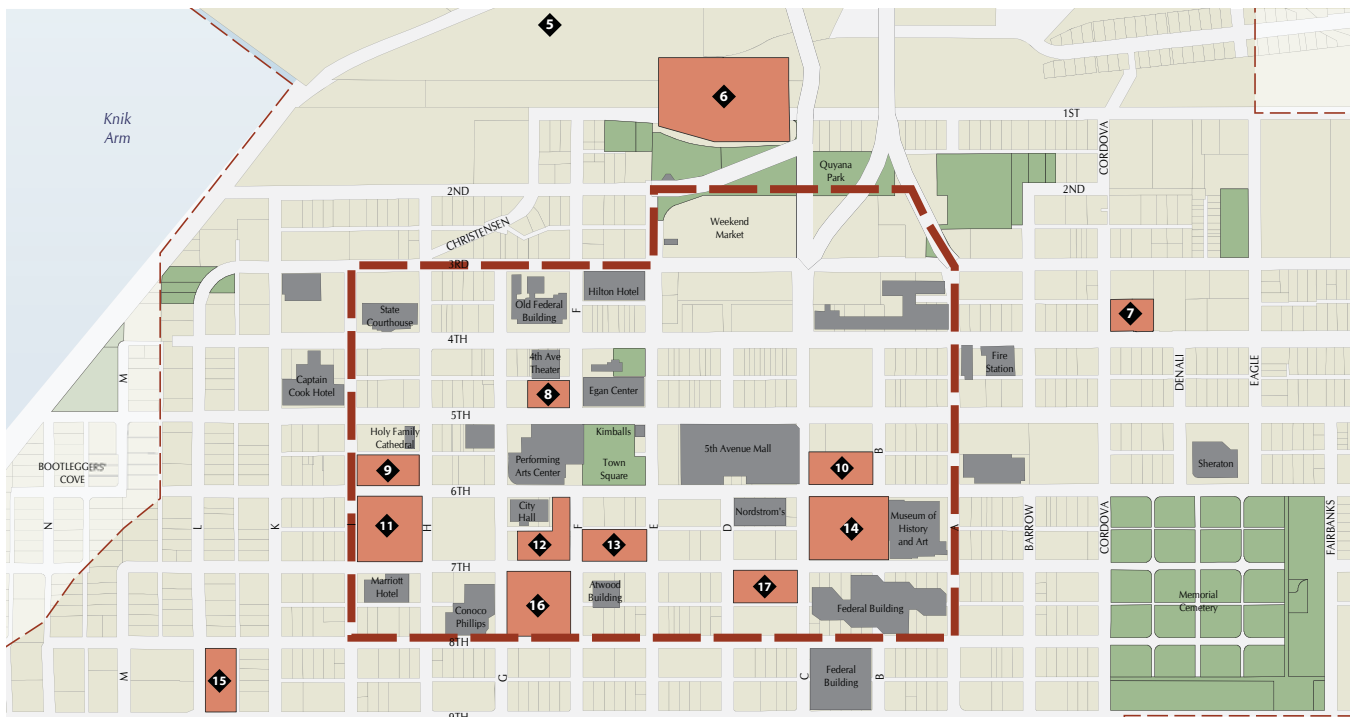
5. Develop Other Opportunity Sites

In addition to the Catalytic Opportunity Sites, there are many other development projects and opportunities that are poised to transform Downtown Anchorage. They range from big ideas that have yet to reach the drawing board to projects under development, including the Anchorage Museum of Art and History Expansion, Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, large scale redevelopment in Ship Creek and a number of other redevelopment opportunities in Downtown. These sites should be especially responsive to upholding the Plan's vision, goals and design guidelines as they will lay the groundwork for Downtown development.

General Criteria

- All new development should include attractive building facades and ground level treatment that creates an active and engaging pedestrian experience.
- Buildings should incorporate pedestrian scale design with multiple entrances, windows, articulated facades and outdoor dining opportunities where feasible. Avoid creating blank walls on any building frontage.
- New projects should be designed to preserve views outward to the natural environments, as well views inward to usable outdoor public space within the city center.

Primary Opportunity Sites	
5	Ship Creek Redevelopment
6	Inter-Modal Transportation Center
7	McKinley Building
8	Peach Tower
9	Cathedral Site
10	Koniag Infill Opportunity Site
11	North of Marriott Infill Opportunity Site
12	Mixed-Use Hotel Opportunity Site
13	Mixed-Use Parking Opportunity Site
14	Museum Expansion
15	Additional Park Strip Housing Prototype
16	Civic/Convention Center
17	Mixed-Use Parking Opportunity Site



Opportunity Sites Diagram

6. Establish Strategies for Parks and Open Space

Downtown Anchorage has incredible access to the surrounding natural environment, as well as a number of significant parks and open spaces within the Study Area. The following strategies are necessary to create a fully integrated parks and open space network for Downtown and its surroundings.

Maintain and enhance strong pedestrian and bike connections.

- Provide safe, visible connections between civic plazas, parks and open space corridors as an essential part of the parks and open space network.

Provide space for outdoor recreation within the Downtown Area.

- As Downtown becomes more densely developed, it is important to preserve, maintain and supplement its open spaces. These spaces provide respite from the urban environment and should be designed for use year-round.
- Complete the Delaney Park Master Plan and a plan for improvements to Town Square Park.



Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core Area

- Dedicated Park
- "Notable" Building Footprint

- ← On-Street Bicycle Connection
- ← Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail

Downtown Dedicated Parks

Provide indoor publicly accessible spaces for year-round use.

- Public and private developments should integrate publicly accessible spaces with sunlight access and comfortable temperatures into new buildings. These spaces should be linked to the network of pedestrian oriented streets.

Determine appropriate type of activities within the parks and open space network.

- Establish an open space advisory committee to determine what additional types of open spaces and/or recreational opportunities are desirable in the study area.
- Develop a Downtown parks and open space plan identifying future open space needs, acquisition strategies and park design guidelines.



Town Square Park and the Performing Arts Center (PAC).



The parks and open space strategy should ensure that Downtown has a range of open spaces that provide space for public gatherings, like Town Square (below), and recreational opportunities for all ages year-round (right). Though Downtown's parks are plentiful, they should be bolstered to serve the growing community with more programmed space and activities.

Town Square Park

The Downtown Plan strategy for Town Square Park builds on Town Square's current role and function as a community gathering area with programmed events on weekends and holidays and more informal community use during the week. This strategy is consistent with the 2006 Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource and Recreational Facility Plan, which designates Town Square Park as a "Community Use: Town Center Park" (Appendix B, Page 7).

The management intent is to have Town Square remain as a desirable place for the community to gather and to participate in special events and also as a place for active and/or passive use the majority of the time. The programs and use areas in the park should continue to serve all members of the community.

The Downtown Plan recommends consideration of improvements to Town Square Park that can support and enhance these functions. The Downtown Plan also recommends that an overall parks and open space plan be developed for Downtown. That process will identify long-term future open space needs and enhancements in Downtown.

Any proposed improvements or changes to the design of Town Square Park beyond the repair or replacement of existing elements will undergo a separate site-specific park master plan process that includes the public's involvement as well as approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

7. Establish Strategies for Downtown Historic Preservation

Downtown Anchorage features a rich and diverse collection of significant historic and cultural sites that has increasingly become a major focal point of attraction for both Alaskan residents and out-of-state visitors.

This section recommends the development of an overarching historic preservation strategy specifically for Downtown, to be undertaken by the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission (AHPC), to identify historic resources, issues and opportunities, and create a

framework of historic preservation policies, guidelines and strategies for Downtown. The general policy objectives for this effort would be to:

- Promote public awareness of Downtown's historic resources and their value for the future of Downtown and the overall community;
- Promote consideration of historic resources in planning and development decisions by the public and private sectors;
- Promote strategic partnerships to further the interests of historic preservation; and

National Register Sites	
n.1	Alaska Railroad Depot
n.2	Leopold David House
n.3	Alaska Engineering Commission Cottages
n.4	Pioneer School House
n.5	Old Federal Building
n.6	The Anchorage Hotel
n.7	Oscar Anderson House
n.8	4th Avenue Theatre
n.9	Old City Hall
n.10	Wendler Building
n.11	Loussac-Sogn Building
n.12	Kimball Building
n.13	Anchorage Cemetery
n.14	Gill Oscar House
Historic Sites	
h.1	Historic Anchorage Homes
h.2	Resolution Park/Captain Cook Monument
h.3	Log Cabin Visitor Information Center
h.4	Holy Family Cathedral
h.5	Delaney Park Strip



Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core Area
- Park/Open Space
- "Notable" Building Footprint

Historic and Cultural Resources Diagram

- Leverage historic resources as cultural and economic development assets for the future growth and vitality of Downtown.

One of the outcomes of this public process could be consideration of a historic overlay zone in Downtown. An historic overlay zone could help to define key areas and to serve as a cultural anchor to preserve and celebrate downtown's heritage and unique sense of place. It could provide a focus area for incentives, programs and development guidelines related to historic preservation.

Other potential outcomes could include actions or programs such as:

- Maintaining an inventory of historic resources;
- Recommend procedures for the identification and designation of historic resources;
- Providing financial incentives such as grants, tax relief, loans and/or loan guarantees;
- Providing information to historic property owners on methods of maintaining and rehabilitating, etc.

- Developing guidelines for historic preservation and identifying appropriate zoning and development provisions applicable to historic properties; and/or
- Expanding public information and interpretive programs and activities.

These strategies are derived from the powers and duties of the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission, and should be refined and developed through a public process involving property owners, businesses and other community stakeholders.



Downtown's historic sites range from important cultural venues, such as the Fourth Avenue Theatre (top right); the tribute to Alaska's statehood overlooking the original Tent City (upper right); the historic Anchorage Hotel (middle right); the Wendler Building on Fourth Avenue (above); and the original cottages constructed for the railroad during early years of operation (bottom right).

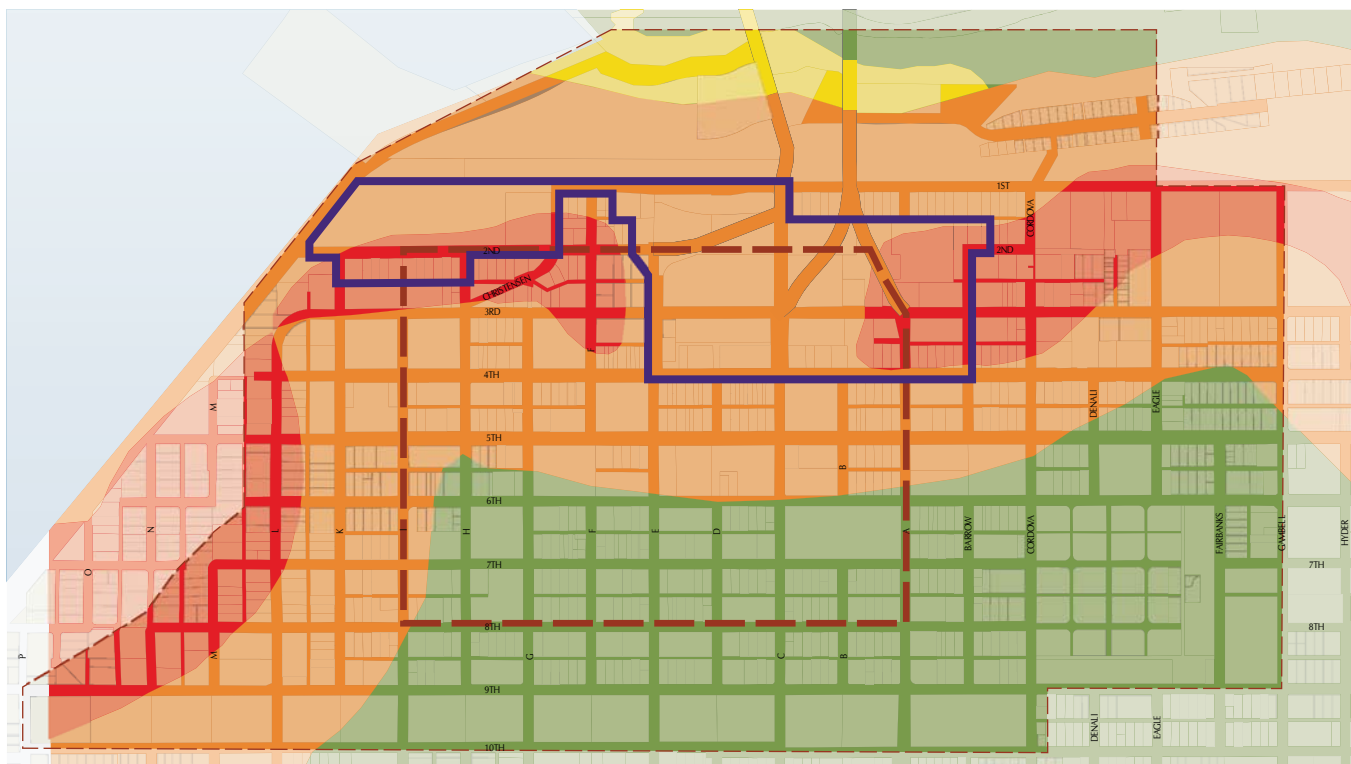


8. Address Seismic Hazards

One goal of this Plan is to address the seismic hazards which affect some areas of Downtown. This section provides strategies to help minimize the life/safety risks to the public and economic vulnerability of property owners and the overall community for future development in areas with high ground failure susceptibility.

The Seismically Induced Ground Failure Zones (hereafter called seismic ground failure zones) depicted on the Seismic Hazards Diagram are based

on the areas of destructive land sliding and ground spreading that occurred during the 1964 M 9.2 earthquake, and based on many studies performed in the area since that event. Of these hazard areas, seismic ground failure zones 4 and 5 are the most susceptible to land sliding and ground spreading should another major earthquake occur. The International Building Code and its local amendments, reference the mapped seismic ground failure zones and require various levels of site-specific geotechnical analysis to be completed as part of the building permit process.



Source: Municipality of Anchorage 1980 Anchorage Coastal Resource Atlas, Volume 1: The Anchorage Bowl

Legend

- Downtown Core Area
- Zone 5: Very High Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Downtown Study Area
- Zone 4: High Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Buttriss Area

Seismic Hazards Diagram


- Zone 3: Moderate Ground Failure Susceptibility
 - Zone 2: Moderately Low Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Note: Areas within Zone 1: Low Ground Failure Susceptibility are off the map.

In addition to the seismic ground failure zones, a downtown buttress area was established by the Alaska State Housing Authority as part of an Urban Renewal Study which was completed following the 1964 earthquake. The buttress area was established to stabilize adjacent downtown lands from sliding when the next major earthquake occurs. Development restrictions were established for the buttress area, including restrictions on building height and weight, and limits regarding excavation and fill. These conditions were included in restrictive covenants which were in place until sunsetting in 2005. Additional background regarding seismic ground failure zones, the buttress area and current building permit requirements is provided in Appendix A of this Plan.

The following strategies are recommended to address future development in seismic ground failure zones 4 and 5 in the Downtown area:

- Conduct a seismic risk assessment to assist the community in determining an acceptable level of risk associated with locating various types of development in seismic hazard areas.
- Consider in the seismic risk assessment the life/safety of building occupants, the potential loss or damage to critical facilities such as hospitals, which would be needed after a major earthquake, and economic loss of buildings and infrastructure.
- Include in the seismic risk assessment recommendations for changing municipal requirements regarding appropriate land uses, building design criteria and other regulatory changes within seismic ground failure zone 4 or 5.
- Until a full seismic risk assessment is completed, consider an interim descriptive ground failure overlay zone for the downtown area to provide information about current building code requirements and geotechnical review procedures for seismic ground failure zones 4 and 5.
- Consider the possible re-establishment of development restrictions affecting the buttress area when land use regulations are being developed to implement the Downtown Plan.





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.

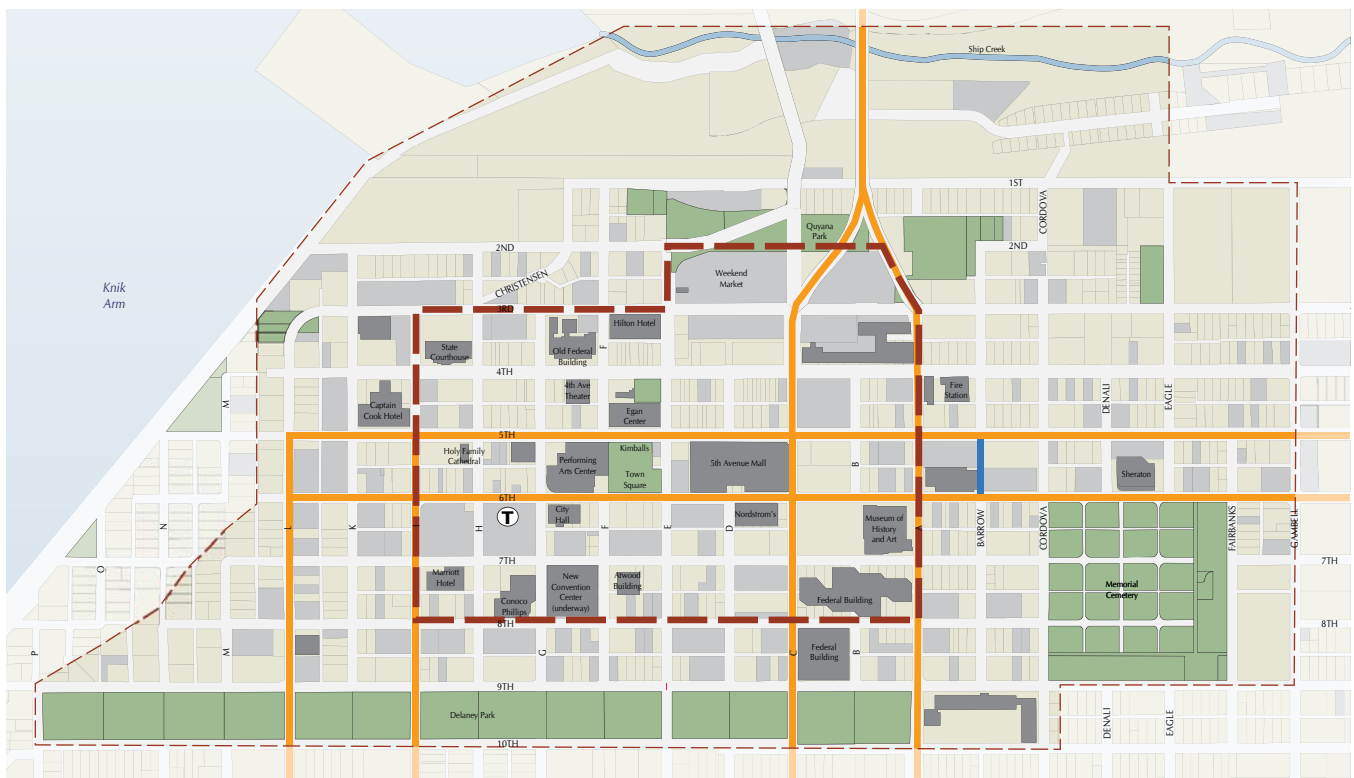
Circulation

- 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.



Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core Area
- Park/Open Space
- "Notable" Building Footprint
- Ⓣ Transit Station
- ADOT & PF
- Private
- Parking Lot/Structure

Road Ownership Diagram

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.

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).



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

In combination, these street conversions will:

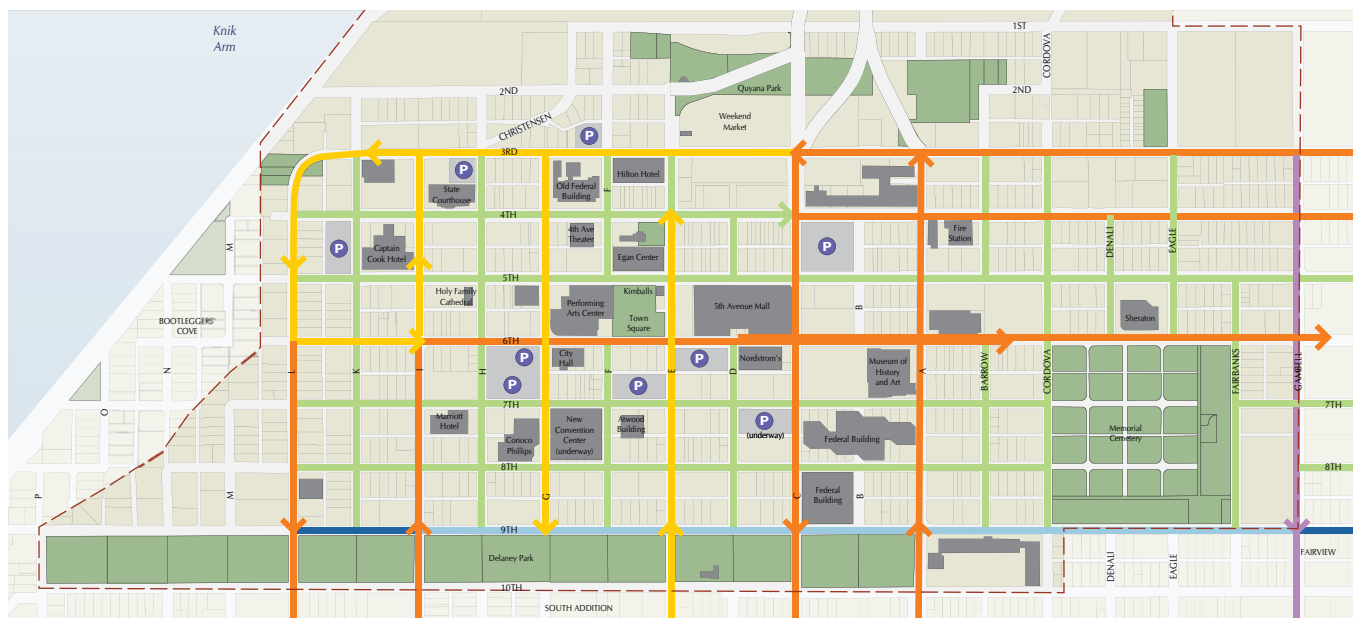
- Make street circulation in Downtown simpler and more intuitive;
- Increase system capacity for local traffic circulation;
- Improve transit access;
- Increase transportation / land use compatibility;
- Improve the pedestrian environment and pedestrian circulation;
- Open more of the Core to less through-traffic 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.



Street Network Strategy Diagram

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

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.

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.



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.



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.

- *Residential oriented mixed-use street:* The residential oriented mixed use street is based on the LRTP mixed-use and residential streets typologies, and follows on the Downtown Plan's proposed residential oriented sub-districts and urban design guidelines. These streets would feature on-street parking and tree lawns between the sidewalk and street curb. Landscaping and front porches between residential buildings and the street would be encouraged.



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.

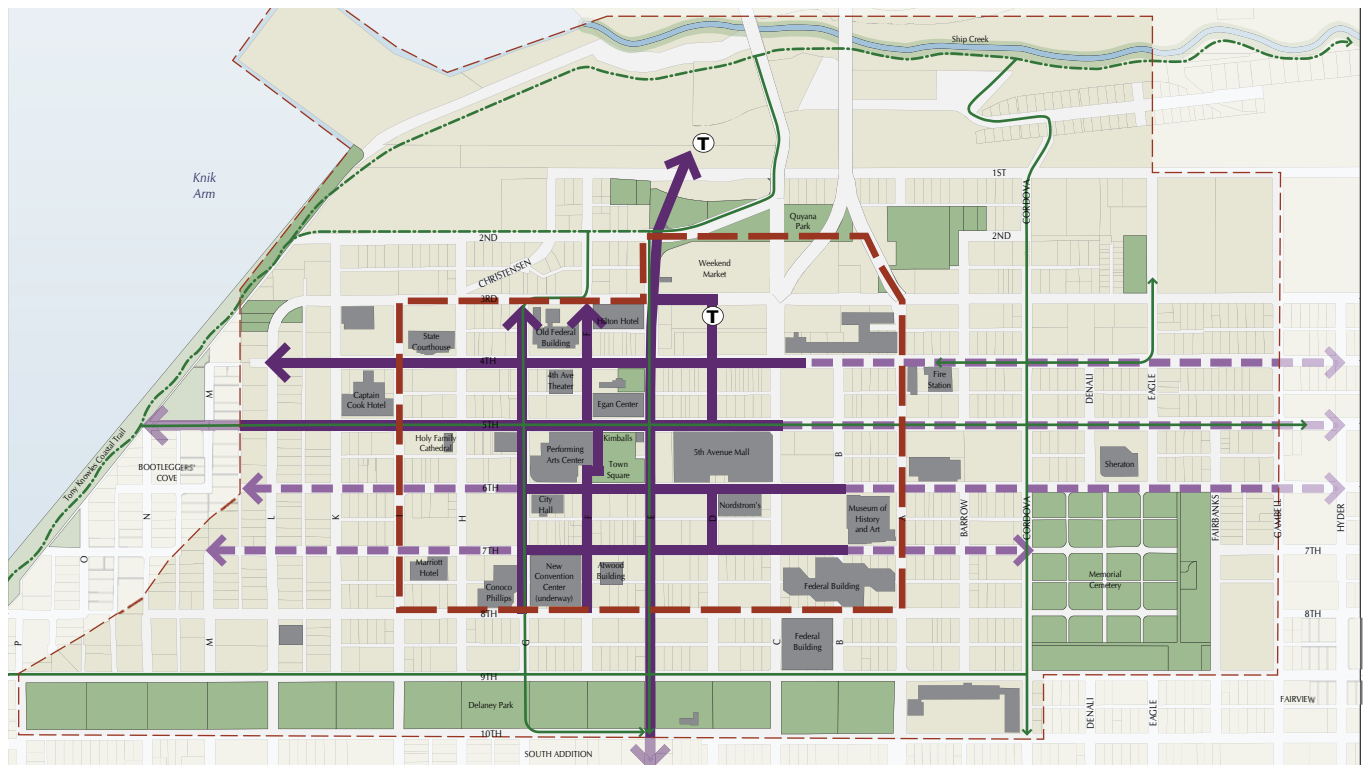
3. Improve the Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment

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

- Enhance pedestrian crossings for continuity of access around Downtown. Install safe crossings across the A and C, 5th and 6th and I and L couplets.
- 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 (LRTP) objective to double the frequency of bus service over the next 20 years on many bus routes serving Downtown, as well as the LRTP 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.

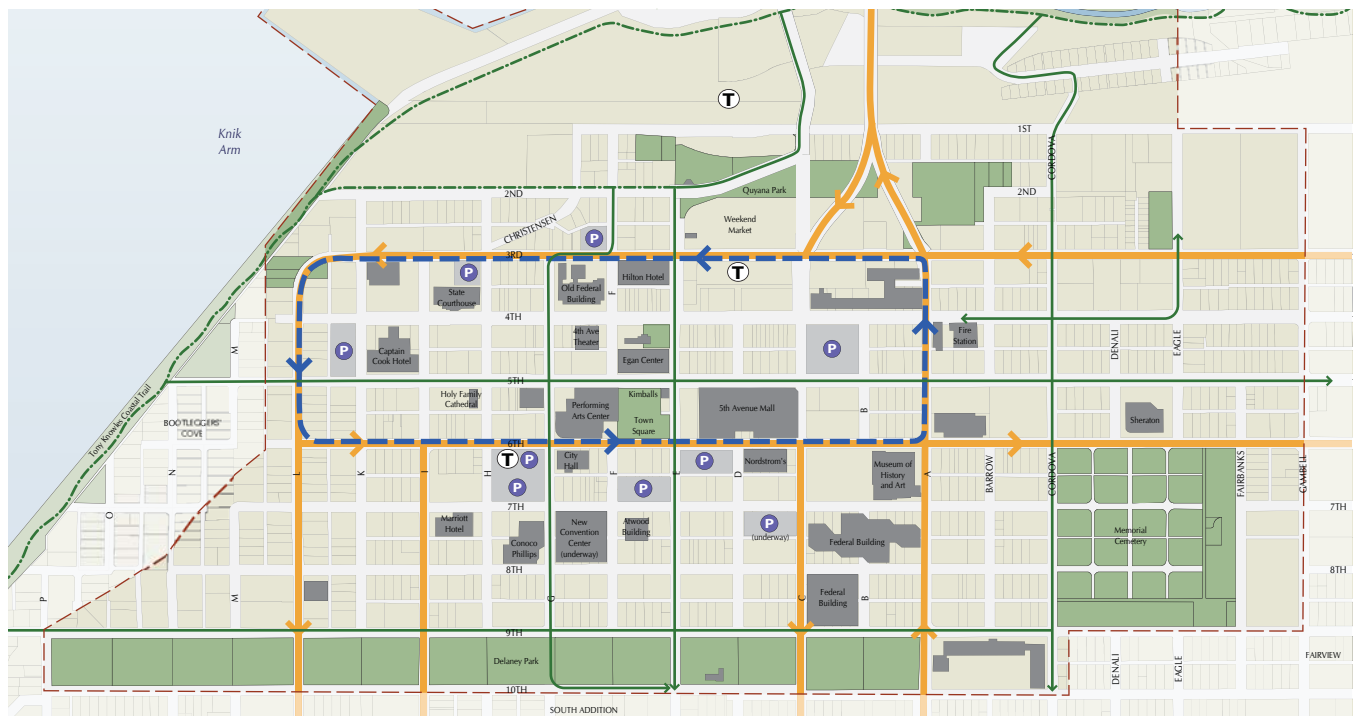
Expand and/or relocate the Transit Center.

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.



Legend

— Downtown Study Area
 ■ Park/Open Space

■ "Notable" Building Footprint
 P Parking Structure
 T Transit Center (potential locations)

— Proposed Downtown Circulator Bus Route
 — Proposed Bus Routes

— On-Street Bicycle Connection
 — Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail

Transit Diagram

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.



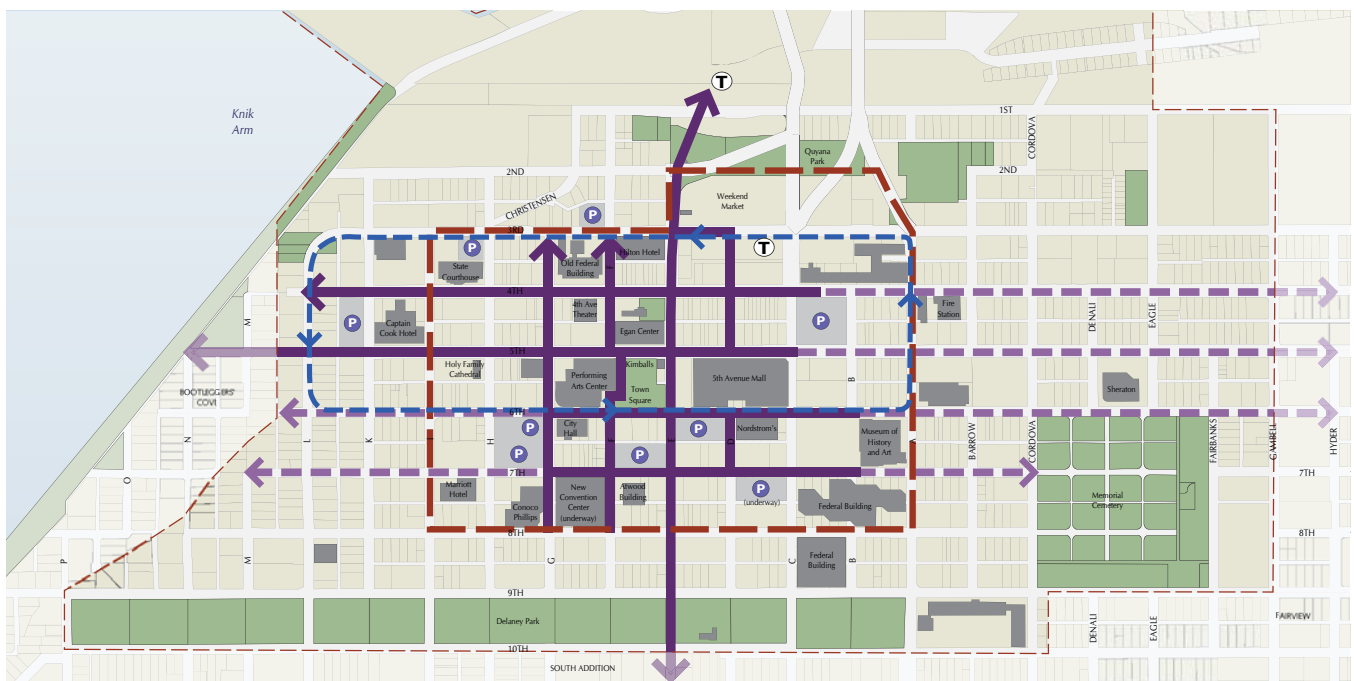
The Downtown Circulator should be a special, dedicated bus transit line that is quick, efficient and easily recognizable.

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
- P Parking Structure
- T Transit Station

Parking and Pedestrian Connections Diagram

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.

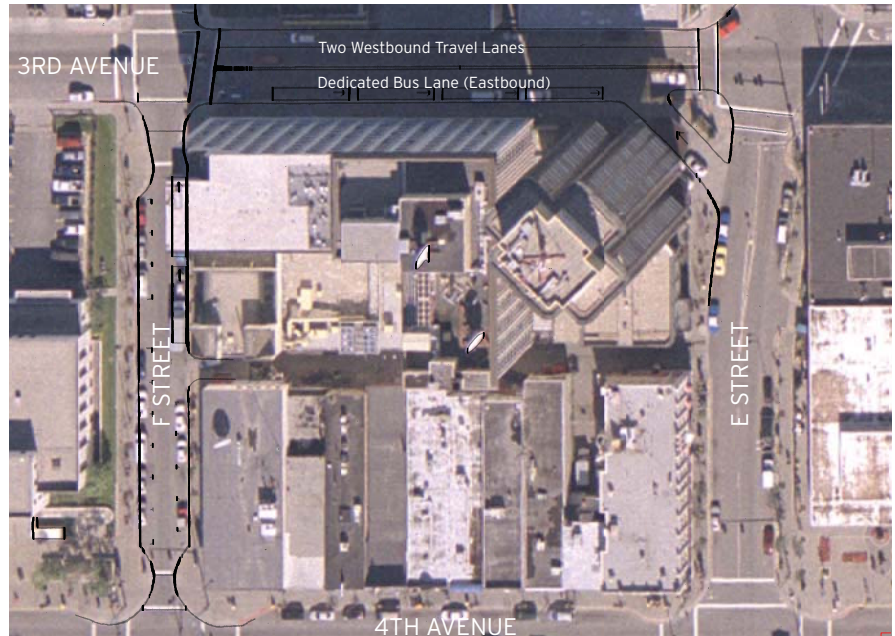
- Ensure adequate passenger drop-off locations for overnight passengers at frequented hotels.
- Coordinate tour bus circulation with truck routes and local traffic patterns.
- Avoid bus queuing and idling adjacent to primary pedestrian corridors so that pedestrian comfort is not impacted by exhaust fumes. 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



Tour Bus Drop-off Locations Diagram

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.



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. Curbside 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.

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.

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.



6 urban design

OVERVIEW

Downtown Anchorage is the urban hub of not only Anchorage, but the entire state of Alaska. Its unique history, natural setting, cultural events, and architectural and streetscape design all combine to create an **urban design environment like no other in the world.**

Recognizing both the strengths and function of the built environment and the physical impacts of existing zoning—and determining what new regulations and guidelines are necessary to enhance these characteristics—is critical during this phase in Downtown’s development. By doing so, Downtown Anchorage can celebrate its past, embrace its unique northern climate conditions and become America’s best example of a Winter City— designed to be a great place for its residents, workers and visitors.

This chapter reviews the existing conditions of Downtown’s urban design; identifies the goals for maintaining and improving the design of the urban environment; and articulates the guidelines needed to enhance the special qualities of the Downtown experience.





Ground floor uses that spill onto wide, well-designed sidewalks combine to make the Downtown environment a place where people want to be.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Downtown faces a number of environmental and physical constraints that affect how people experience the city center. The most pressing constraints that should be addressed with the design guidelines fall into two categories: Pedestrian Environment and Climate-Sensitive Design.

Pedestrian Environment

- Many sidewalks are of insufficient width for pedestrian mobility and comfort.
- There are limited opportunities to stop, sit and relax.
- Icy sidewalks limit pedestrian mobility in the winter.
- The ground level of many buildings does not open onto the sidewalk or provide visual access between the sidewalk and interior spaces. Long blank walls, mirrored glass and a lack of entry ways oriented to the sidewalk affect the pedestrian environment.
- Pedestrian lighting is often poor and inconsistent from one street to the next.
- The prevalence of surface parking lots takes away from an interesting and safe pedestrian experience.
- Parking garages often lack active uses on the first several stories facing the street, creating dead spaces. Garages should be underground or wrapped with mixed-use space.

Climate and Setting

- Existing structures have not maximized sun penetration and wind protection in the public realm. Taller building designs have failed to incorporate canopies, step-backs or other architectural elements to create a more comfortable ground level pedestrian environment. This has resulted in many windy, dark entry plazas, sidewalks and open spaces.
- Many buildings lack appropriately designed pedestrian shelters. Awnings and canopies often block sunlight and shed rain, snow and ice onto the sidewalk.
- The use of heavy equipment and salt to remove snow reduces the lifespan and impacts the aesthetics of the streetscape.
- The streetscape lacks amenities and visual attractions during winter.
- Certain scenic view corridors are impacted by building massing or projections such as skywalks.
- References to local culture or the natural setting are often absent from the design of streets, open spaces and buildings. Downtown does have a significant collection of historic buildings which give the city center a distinctive character along portions of 4th Avenue as well as other locations.

URBAN DESIGN GOALS

Downtown's livability is largely dependent on the design of its public and private realms. The urban design goals aim to strengthen Downtown's uniquely urban experience.

Design for people

Build attractive, well-designed buildings and streetscapes that foster a walkable city center and have an urban design aesthetic and pedestrian scale that makes people want to live, work and play Downtown.

- Provide walkable, safe, easily accessed connections throughout Downtown and to adjacent districts.
- Activate the ground floor environment by orienting buildings towards the street and requiring façade articulation, building setbacks, and other pedestrian-scale design elements.
- Design roadways to reduce and minimize motor vehicle traffic impacts on adjoining outdoor and indoor spaces.

Design for density

Use sensitive design to assemble a high concentration of commercial, civic, cultural and residential uses. Design each development to be compatible with its neighbors, allowing a mix of uses to coexist. Integrate the variety of uses and activities around shared public streets and spaces, and make buildings open and inviting to this shared public realm.

- Sensitive building design can minimize shadow and wind effects, noise, traffic and light trespass on nearby mixed-use residences.
- Orienting building windows and entrances to the sidewalk helps each development to interact with and contribute to the shared public realm.
- Access to open spaces can ameliorate higher densities.

Design for the northern climate

Create a great northern city center for all seasons. Make Downtown a comfortable, attractive place to be throughout the year. Extend the warmth, comfort and vibrancy of the peak summer season further into the spring and fall by responding to Alaska's climate in the design of buildings, street environment and public spaces.

- Utilize building design that is optimal for a northern climate.
- Coordinate winter maintenance needs and winter pedestrian access in the design of Downtown's streetscape.



Design elements such as this outdoor heater in Kiruna, Sweden (above top) or this open air atrium in Downtown Denver, CO (above) create more hospitable public spaces throughout the year.

Design Guidelines

As the density of Downtown Anchorage increases, it is especially important to develop guidelines that foster urban development that is compatible with existing uses; are respectful of the natural environment and views; and support creation of an exciting and vibrant northern climate city environment. The guidelines are intended to uphold the vision for Downtown Anchorage and realize its urban design goals.

These guidelines are for both public and private development, ranging from district-wide improvements to individual building design, providing the Municipality, architects and developers with guidance as to community's expectations for the quality and compatibility of design in the city center. They also provide general guidance for the preparation of the Downtown land use and development code, which will establish specific requirements and incentives for future development. In certain cases the design guidelines may also be used to supplement the land use code during discretionary design reviews, such as by a board or commission. In such cases, the guidelines would be recommendations and subject to discretionary review.

The design guidelines for Downtown are divided into two categories:

- Enhance the Public Realm
- Improve the Quality of Building Design

Downtown Land Use and Development Code

In conjunction with the Title 21 Rewrite, the Downtown Comprehensive Plan is accompanied by a separate land use and development code for Downtown. These regulations will be used to implement the Downtown Comprehensive Plan and fit within the framework of the Title 21 Rewrite. The new Downtown development code will:

- Set form-based contextual rules for building type and form.
- Be clear and unambiguous.
- Address areas with high seismic risk with a seismic overlay zone. Land use or design standards may be appropriate in areas with greatest potential for ground failure.
- Define three distinct districts within Downtown, and provide different treatments for the different districts in the Downtown.
- Encourage compatible mixed-uses.
- Encourage multi-family and attached residential uses.
- Use graphics as needed to improve understanding.
- Streamline review processes.

1. Enhance the Public Realm

Public View Protection

- Preserve visual connections to surrounding natural scenery from street corridors and public spaces.
 - Encourage the creation of new vantage points, such as public viewing areas at the top of buildings.
 - Protect the view corridors on the east-west oriented avenues by designing buildings, skywalks and awnings to minimize view obstructions.
- Identify specific vantage points and the priority viewsheds for protection. These viewsheds and vantage points include (as shown in the Viewshed and Vantage point Diagram below):
 - Views of Denali and the waterfront to the north and the Alaska Range and Inlet to the west, especially from streets ending near the bluffs or the water.
 - Views south and east to the Chugach Mountain Range.
 - Views of landmark buildings, art work or major public spaces or activities.
 - Vantage points overlooking the Port and Ship Creek.



The views from Delaney Park (top photo) and the Downtown Core (bottom photo) showcase the Chugach Mountains. Viewshed impacts should be strongly considered for the location and design of new development in Downtown.

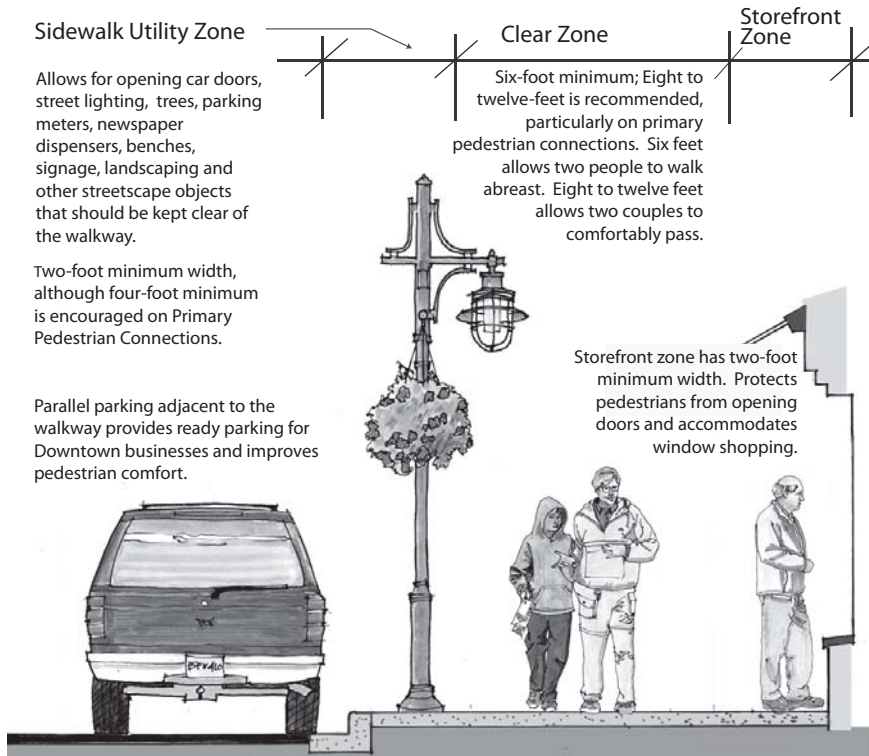


Legend

- Downtown Core Area
- Downtown Study Area
- Coastal Trail
- Viewshed
- "Notable" Building Footprint
- Park/Cemetery
- ★ Notable Vantage Point

Viewshed and Vantage Point Diagram

Sidewalk Section



This sidewalk maintains a clear pedestrian clear zone and is extended into the parking lane for additional tree planting beds. The sidewalk width also accommodates outdoor seating.

Sidewalk Widths

- Maintain a pedestrian clear zone of a minimum width of six feet on all sidewalks (left). Increase the width to between eight and twelve feet wherever possible, especially on Primary Pedestrian Connections.
- Provide a two-foot wide sidewalk storefront zone and a sidewalk utility zone as shown in the diagram (left).
- Include parking lanes on all streets. If sidewalk width is less than six feet, consider converting one on-street space into a bulb-out with a tree planting bed.
- Inventory street rights-of-way to determine where sidewalk widening can occur. Where excess travel capacity exists, widen sidewalks to accommodate at least the minimum clear zone.
- Wherever street conversions or reconstructions occur, give priority to extending sidewalk widths.



Maintaining a minimum six-foot wide sidewalk clear zone width is especially important in ensuring Anchorage is a universally accessible city that accommodates a range of abilities.

Public Streetscape Amenities

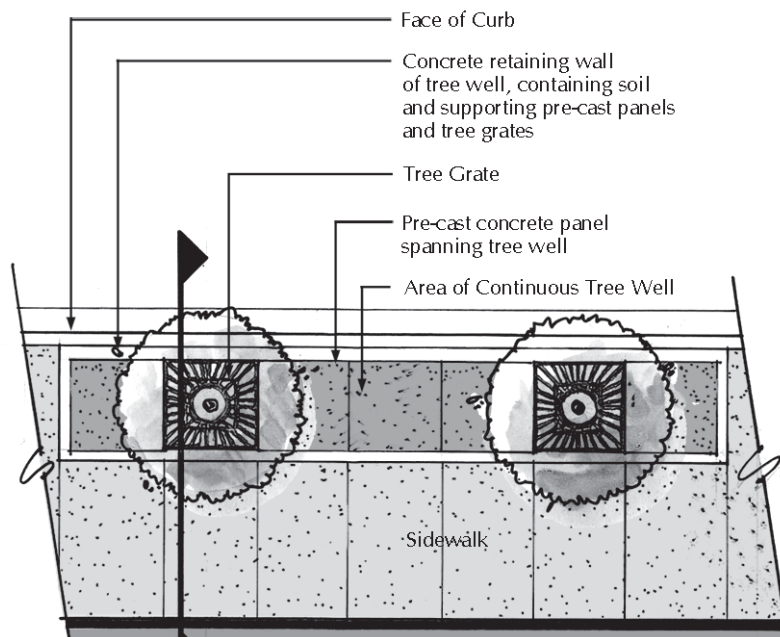
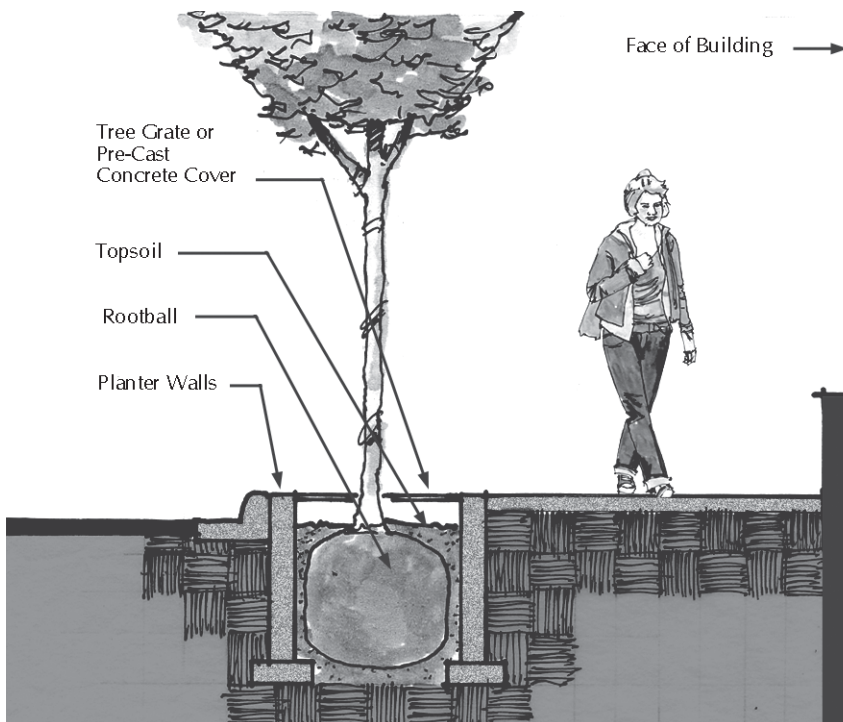
- Provide public seating opportunities clustered with other amenities, such as lighting, shelter, trash receptacles, public art and landscaping. Every street block within the Downtown Core should include at least one seating opportunity.
- Encourage dining areas outside restaurants and cafes wherever sidewalk width accommodates. Dining areas should not interfere with the clear zone for pedestrian movement.
- Provide places for stopping, such as something to lean on (e.g., bollards or short fences) or edge spaces along building facades (e.g., niches in the façade, slightly recessed entrances, window bays, porches or verandas).
- Create “secondary seating opportunities” such as steps, pedestals, low walls or edges of monuments or fountains.
- Encourage stopping places that are sunlit, wind-protected spaces, or “sun pockets”.
- Encourage small pedestrian amenities that help make the winter walking environment more hospitable—by creating comfort, convenience and interest—such as gas stoves that provide light decoration and warmth, self-cleaning public restrooms, winter lighting, and heated benches.
- Promote street-level spaces for vendors to sell hot food or drinks.



An 18-foot wide sidewalk, pedestrian lighting, annuals planting, and interesting storefronts combine to make a lively streetscape on 4th Avenue (above). Even with wide sidewalks (below), care should be taken to maintain a direct pedestrian travel way suitable for at least two people walking abreast.



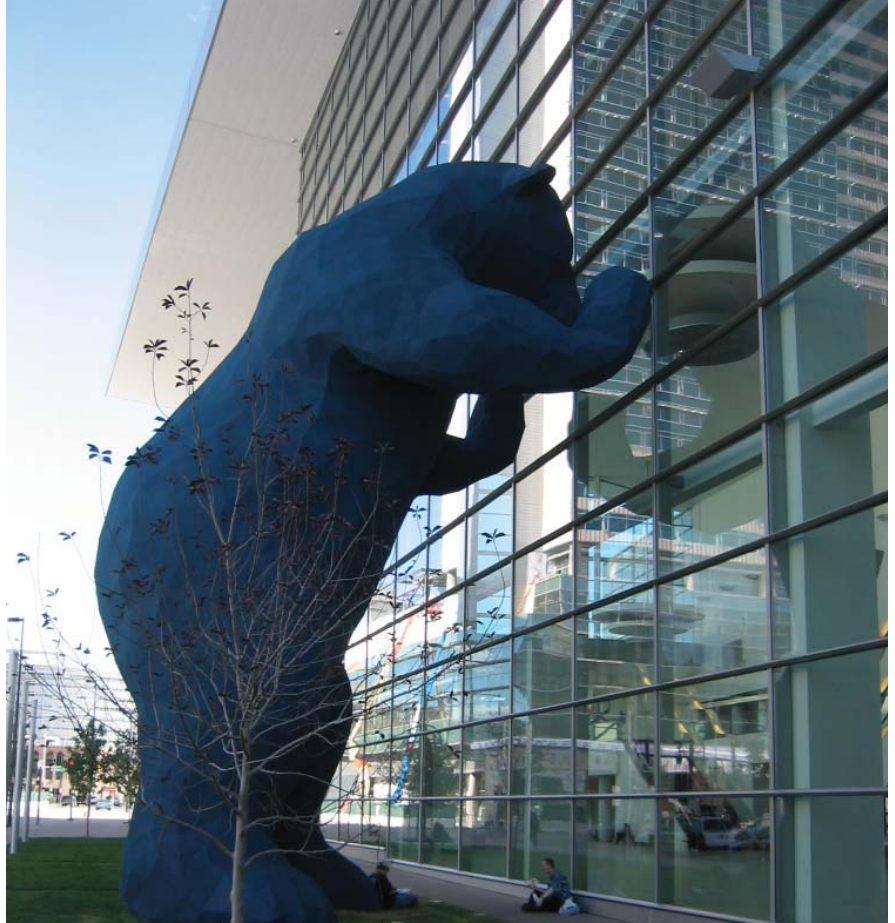
Tree Well (Section)



Tree Well (Plan View)

Landscaping and Art Palette

- Encourage the use of landscaping where appropriate for pedestrian safety and aesthetic benefits.
- Plant and maintain street trees where sidewalk width is sufficient for a minimum of five-foot planting bed.
- Use suspended slabs or trench planters to provide more protection to tree roots.
- Where sidewalk widths do not accommodate street tree planting, construct areas for clustered planting and/or public art.
- Preserve mature trees wherever possible.
- Ensure that power outlets for lighting displays are installed at regular intervals and maintained.
- Plant annuals throughout the Downtown Core.
- Encourage integration of public art into public areas, including parks, plazas and sidewalks. Use art to foster a sense of place and promote understanding of the local culture, heritage and natural setting.
- Ensure minimum pedestrian clear zone is maintained. Cluster art features with other streetscape amenities, including seating, lighting, trash receptacles and shelter.
- Introduce seasonal art that celebrates winter, such as water features that become ice sculptures in winter.



Sculptural elements can take on a functional nature. This urban fence (above top) separates pedestrians from adjacent surface parking. Sculpture that integrates art, cultural and natural references and water or lighting elements can be used for small gathering areas (above) or to make a big statement (upper and lower right).





Heated sidewalks in Trondheim, Norway make pedestrian access safe and easy.

Heated Sidewalks

- Phase I (shown in red on map below): the Downtown Plan process has identified priority streets for an ice-free sidewalks system. Refinement of these priorities should be conducted through an ice-free (heated) sidewalk cost/feasibility/implementation study.
 - Phase II: Work with property owners to determine distribution and responsibility of infrastructure costs and operating costs.
- Require new public investment projects to heat selective adjacent sidewalks.
 - Provide incentives for property owners and developers:
 - Develop a cost strategy for public/private partnership.
 - Develop a maintenance strategy for public/private partnership.
 - Offer incentives for existing building owners to upgrade access to their properties; consider focusing tax incentives to heated sidewalk construction.



Sidewalk Improvements Diagram



Pedestrian Crossings

- Street crossings are integral to a pedestrian network that provides continuous access throughout Downtown year-round. Make street intersections safe and convenient for pedestrians to cross.
- All intersections with high levels of pedestrian traffic (identified on the Sidewalk Improvements Diagram, opposite page) should be raised or considered for specially-treated crosswalks, through the use of special materials or signage.
- Give preference to raised intersections and crossings because they give pedestrians a continuous, at-grade walking surface while eliminating icy curb cut ramps and standing water. They can also calm traffic and make pedestrians more visible to approaching drivers.
- Ensure that raised crosswalks and intersections are sloped up gradually to minimize impacts on traffic movement and snow removal.
- Incorporate curb bulb-outs at intersections to reduce crossing distances and increase space for sidewalk amenities.
- Minimize vehicular driveways across sidewalks to reduce the impact on pedestrians from cars entering and exiting parking areas.
- Mitigate drainage issues during street reconstructions. Consider relocating drainage catch basins to mid-block to prevent puddling at crosswalks.



Raised intersections (middle left and right) or raised crosswalks (bottom left), or special material treatment (top and bottom right) at key pedestrian crossings will help distinguish the pedestrian zone, improve walking conditions and slow down through-traffic.



Downtown Denver's 16th Street Mall (above) lights up at night and attracts pedestrians with a combination of storefront lighting, street lamps, and decorative tree lighting.



Lighting from building interiors and sculptural elements can bring warmth to the street, improve safety and create intimate spaces in the outdoor environment.

Lighting

- Enhance visibility, public safety and the attractiveness of Downtown in the evenings and during winter with high quality lighting.
- Establish base-level illumination standards for adequate, uniform lighting for sidewalks, streets and open spaces.
- Illuminate sidewalks with pedestrian-scale fixtures to promote comfort, security and safety. Intensify lighting levels at key crossings.
- Area lighting should use white light for its aesthetic benefits and its clear rendering of colors and objects.
- Area lighting should be directed generally downward and use cut-off fixtures to minimize glare and trespass light.
- Illuminate front doors on residential streets.
- Encourage decorative seasonal lighting.
- Lighting fixture styles should provide a unifying urban design element to Downtown while allowing for variety and fostering a sense of place in Downtown's individual sub-districts. The new lighting palette should complement existing Downtown lighting and reflect the distinct sub-district in which it is located.
- Design light poles to accommodate banners and hanging flower baskets.
- Bring indoor illumination to the sidewalk with lighting from building interiors through the windows.

Wayfinding Signage

- Install comprehensive signage for multiple users, including:
 - Signage viewable by drivers and pedestrians.
 - Consistent, attractive signage and wayfinding stations with “You are here” maps to direct Downtown pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Wayfinding elements along major arterials (including the A/C couplet) so links are made with other areas of the city.
- Confirm locations and phasing for wayfinding signage per the Signage and Wayfinding program (See Chapter 7: Program Strategies)
- Signage should incorporate Alaska Native art and history to enhance Downtown Anchorage’s unique identity.
- At key locations such as the Gateways on the Strategy Diagram (page 33), mark the gateways to Downtown in the form of archways, sculptural elements and/or plantings.
- Create a gateway feature marking the entrance to the Downtown Core at 9th Avenue and E Street.

Public Events Facilitation

- Coordinate with E and F Street corridor improvements.
- Consider installing removable bollards to prevent vehicular traffic at key public areas.



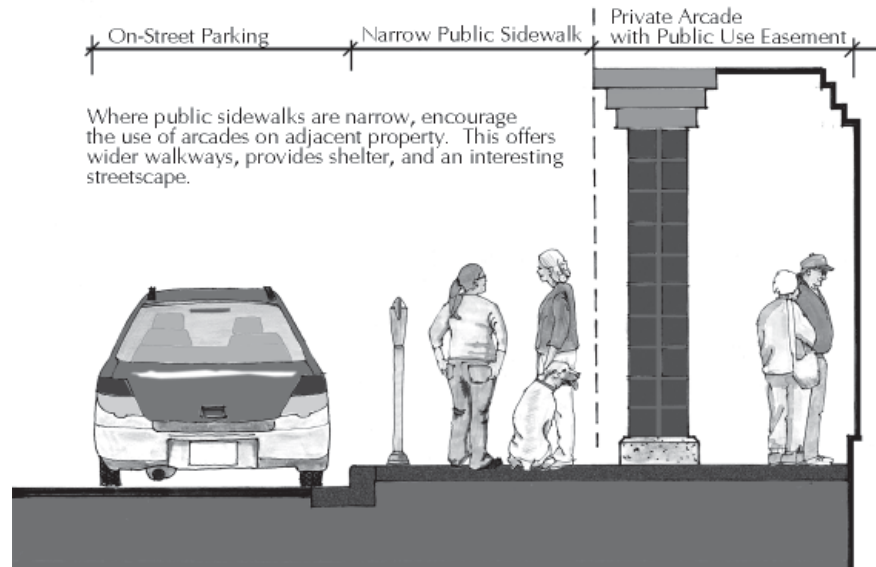
The interpretive wayfinding sign (above) is an example of a small, pedestrian-oriented sign that should be updated on a regular basis with upcoming events.



A gateway design element could be used at significant entry points to Downtown to announce the entrance into the unique city center.

Pedestrian Shelter

- Provide overhead protection that promotes year round comfort and adds color and visual interest.
- Create building arcades along streets with narrow sidewalks. An arcade is indented into the ground floor building wall and creates a sheltered walkway adjacent to the public sidewalk (see top illustration at right and photographs on the next page). Arcades are preferable to awnings or canopies because they permit an extension of sidewalk width, avoid obstructing sunlight or views along the existing sidewalk and can provide a more comfortable, sheltered transition space between the indoors and outdoors.
- The interior of arcades should be wide enough for two couples to pass comfortably, have high enough ceilings to provide ventilation and openness and be illuminated.
- Design awnings and canopies to avoid shedding snow and icy drip lines on the sidewalk.
- Canopies should have transparent roofs that allow sunlight to reach the sidewalk.



This private arcade with public-use easement on 4th Avenue (above) provides a small dining area, pedestrian shelter and a much wider sidewalk than would be provided within the public right-of-way.



The canopy on the south-facing side of the Egan Center is an example of good northern climate design. Its transparency allows sunlight access, while sheltering pedestrians and preventing the build up of ice and snow.

Pedestrian Shelter cont'd

- Awnings and canopies should be designed to complement the architectural design of their buildings.
- Primary building entrances along major pedestrian routes, pick-up/drop-off zones and next to transit stops should incorporate overhead protection.
- Encourage publicly accessible indoor spaces and indoor/outdoor transition spaces with seating and amenities for public use. These spaces should be located in areas that have a high level of public use, be directly connected to public streets and open spaces, be visually interesting and afford views and sunlight access.

The recessed ground floor on Downtown's Fire Station 1 below provides a wider sidewalk and overhead shelter. The transparent, illuminated storefront interior increases the sense of activity, visibility and safety.



The indoor/outdoor transition space above provides sheltered seating along the building wall. Outdoor sun pockets or glass-enclosed seating shown on page 56 illustrate ways to respond to winter climates.

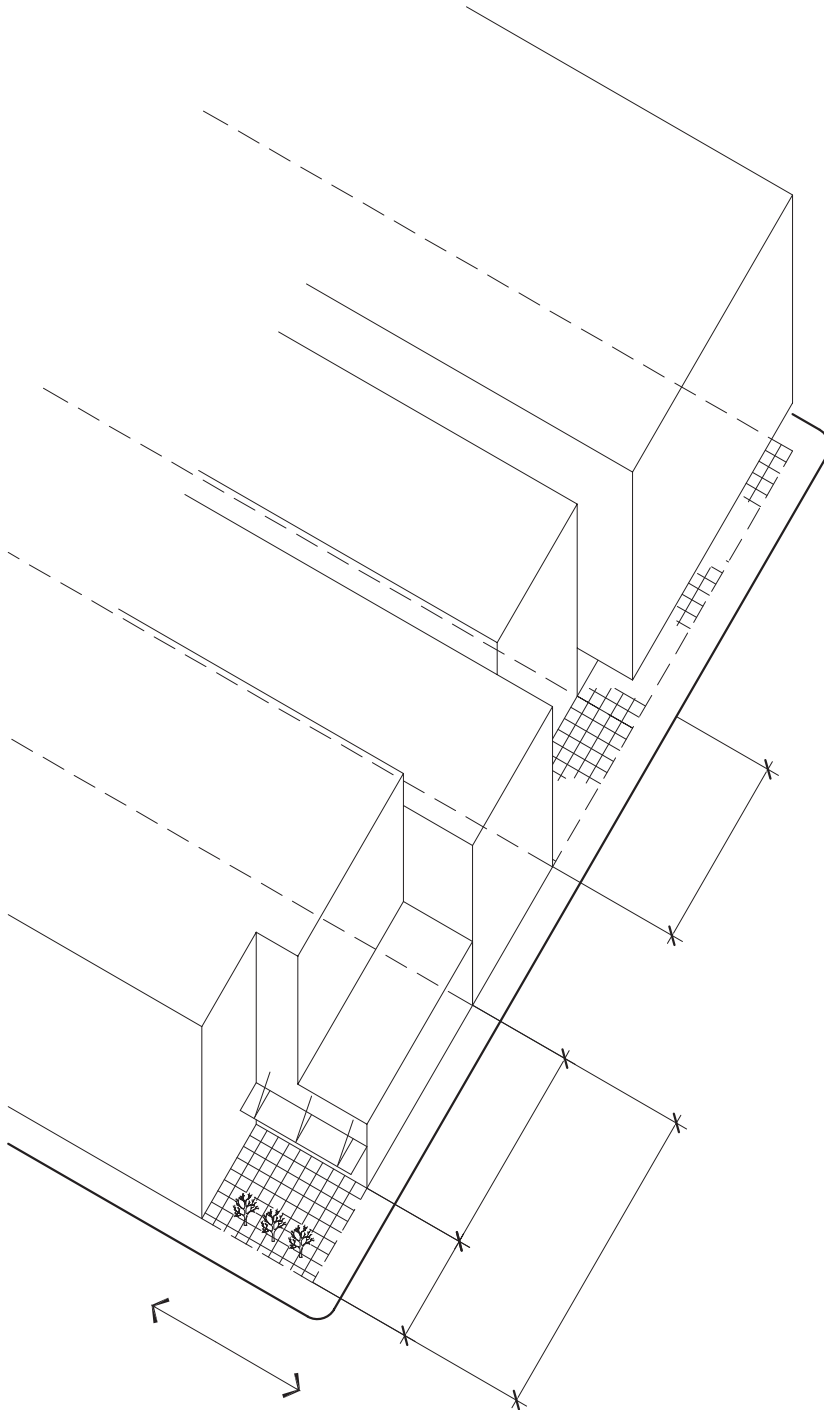
The arcades at right and above right feature high ceilings for openness, daylighting and ventilation. They are designed with aesthetically attractive colonnade forms and warm, light colors. Ceiling lighting and transparent storefronts provide evening illumination. Arcades can also include climate control features—such as fans in hot climates or heaters in northern climates.



The retractable awning below right shelters a shop entrance in Scandinavia during rainy, snowy or cold periods. High quality, durable materials are essential for awnings and other forms of moveable, retractable or seasonal shelter.



Building Setbacks



2. Improve the Quality of Building Design

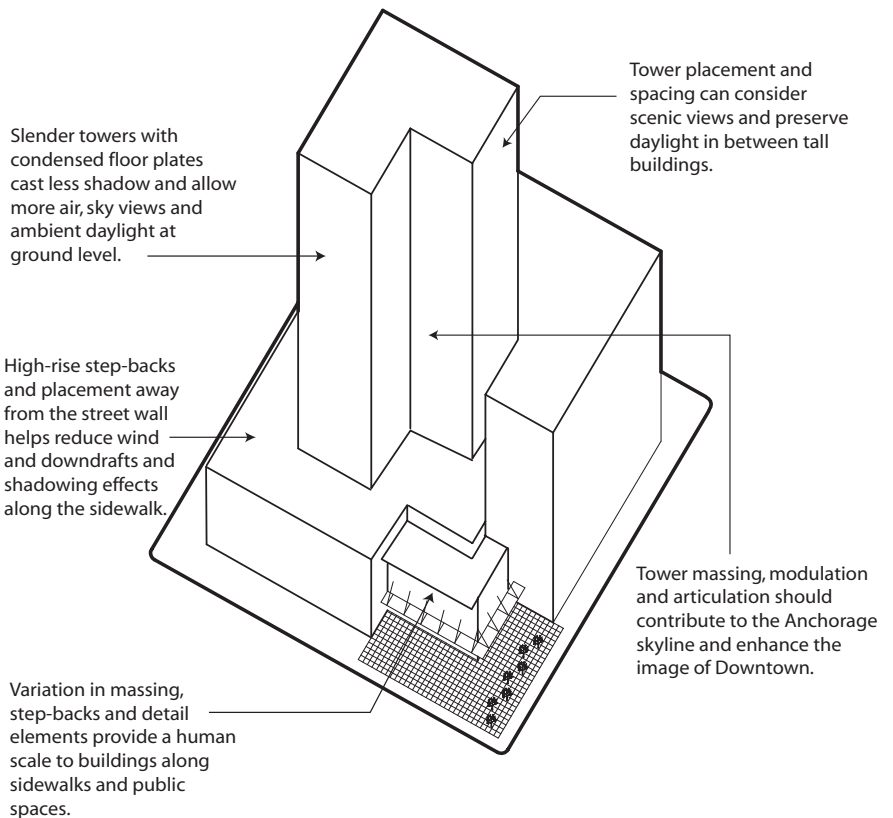
Building Setbacks

- Buildings should have a strong relationship to the street, with setbacks no wider than necessary to accommodate sidewalk widths recommended in the *Sidewalk Widths* design guidelines of this chapter.
- Provide minor building setbacks from the property line if they permit additional public sidewalk width on streets with insufficient right-of-way.
- Encourage a building setback of up to 12 or more feet where it can deliver significant sunlight access benefits in addition to a wider pedestrian area.
- A limited portion of a building's ground level façade may be set back a greater distance if the additional set back offers:
 - Variety and "relief" from the uniform street wall
 - Pedestrian-scale façade articulation
 - Sunlit "sun pocket" spaces for stopping and relaxing
 - Protection from wind tunnel effects on north-south streets
- Locate building arcades adjacent to, but outside of, the sidewalk area needed for the walkway clear zone.

Massing and Stepping

- Provide human scale to buildings along sidewalks and public spaces, in part through variation in the massing of large buildings and stepping back the height of tall buildings.
- Medium- to high-rise buildings should feature slender towers with condensed floor plates. Slender towers stepped back from the street cast less shadow during summer, spring and fall and allow more air, ambient daylight and warm temperatures at the ground level.
- Step back medium- to high-rise buildings at the third or fourth floor and above, toward the middle of the city block, to minimize the shadows they cast and any undesirable wind impacts at the ground level.
- Tower placement, spacing and dimensions should strive to preserve views and daylight in between tall buildings.
- Tower design should be of the highest quality and contribute to the Anchorage skyline. Massing, stepping, modulation, tapering, façade materials, colors and articulation of prominent towers should enhance the image of Downtown.
- Encourage roofs that are attractive and that can be used as outdoor spaces.

Building Massing and Stepping



Buildings with upper floors stepped back can incorporate rooftop balconies and provide relief to the streetscape.



This high-rise construction in Vancouver, BC steps back from the street edge above the second floor.



This building in San Francisco, CA gradually steps back from the street edge to ensure sunlight access to all units.



This building in Lulea, Sweden has a narrow east-west profile, a roof that slopes down toward the north, and a stepped façade that allows sunlight to reach neighbors for more of the year. Numerous facade elements break up the downward wind flow, lessening wind impacts at the street level.

Sunlight Access

- The lifeblood of a downtown is the pedestrians who enjoy and enliven its public spaces. Pedestrians feed businesses and cultural venues, bringing vitality and reducing crime. An important factor for a comfortable and attractive outdoor environment is access to sunlight. New buildings should minimize shadows cast on opposing sidewalks or nearby open spaces, particularly in the spring and fall to extend the warmth, comfort and activity level of the summer peak season.
- Minimize mid-day shadows on public open spaces between the Spring and Fall equinoxes.
- Preserve sunlight access to the following sites in Downtown:
 - Public parks and plazas, such as Town Square Park and Delaney Park Strip. Meet or exceed existing sunlight access protections for Town Square Park including the height limitations established by municipal ordinance (AO 85-173)
 - North side of east-west streets designated as Primary Pedestrian Connections
 - Important civic buildings with large numbers of visitors (e.g., Old Federal Building)
- Evaluate the impact of medium- and high-rise development proposals on sun and shade conditions to determine the appropriate design measures needed to reduce or mitigate any undesirable shadow conditions.

- Private developments should:

- Optimize sunlight access and sky views, particularly for civic buildings, schools, private open spaces and residential districts.
- Locate open spaces (private and semi-public) to capture as much sun as possible during hours of peak use.

Wind Protection

- Medium- to high-rise buildings should be designed to reduce or mitigate undesirable wind impacts on streets, open spaces and other pedestrian activity areas. Buildings which are substantially higher than the surrounding buildings in the area should be designed with regard to wind conditions.
- Evaluate the impact of medium- and high-rise development proposals on wind conditions to determine the appropriate design measures needed to reduce or mitigate any undesirable ground floor wind conditions and down drafts.
- Step towers back from the property line and from the lower level building wall on all designated pedestrian connections and on streets within the residential mixed-use districts.
- Promote pedestrian arcades, sheltered transition areas or overhead projections such as awnings/canopies to lessen wind impacts at the ground level.
- Promote consideration for adverse wind conditions in the location and orientation of street furniture and pedestrian amenities.

Ground-Level Treatment

- Provide visually interesting human-scale design elements such as façade articulation and detailing at the ground floor level.
- Design buildings with individual façade characteristics that distinguish each from neighboring buildings.
- Use building wall modulation and facade articulation to bring visual interest and a human scale to building frontages.
- Design ground level residential units to face the street with windows, front stoops and street access.
- Design the ground level of non-residential buildings to be transparent and physically and visually oriented toward the sidewalk.
- Design retail storefronts to be comprised mostly of windows, doors and other openings. Windows should provide visual access to interior retail spaces and displays within the building.
- Bays with visual and/or physical access should be created at frequent intervals to avoid long blank walls.
- Design buildings to contribute to the streetscape and open space network (bottom right).



The facades of this mixed-use building (above) and residential building (below) are articulated with individual bays, each with its own window treatment or entry way.



The built environment adjacent to the sidewalk can be as important as the walkway itself. In spite of a narrow walkway and adjacent travel lane (left), an eclectic mix of storefronts increases pedestrian interest.



These images represent the variety of building materials and lighting techniques that can be used to convey warmth and activate the street in winter months. The commercial and mixed-use buildings in Germany (above), Finland (below left), Norway (below middle) and Sweden (below right) use materials and lighting that illuminate the sidewalk and building facades and create usable, inviting spaces during cold, dark months.



Materials and Texture

- Utilize facade materials that create a warm, transparent building edge at the pedestrian level.
- Incorporate lighter colors and reflective materials on upper floors for aesthetic benefits and to redirect sunlight radiation to public spaces below. Avoid reflective glass near the ground level as it limits pedestrians' ability to see into buildings and inhibits streetscape activity.
- Create light/shadow effects using minor recesses or projections in the façade.
- Encourage the use of lighter colored building façade surfaces that can bring warm light to the sidewalk environment by refracting ambient light or low intensity façade illumination.

Building Lighting

- Design building lighting to help with wayfinding (i.e., accentuating entry ways and exits) and/or enhance architectural distinction.
- Minimize glare, light trespass and light pollution from building lighting. Light fixtures should in general be located, aimed and shielded so that light is directed downward rather than upward, or directed only onto the building façade.

Skywalks

- Minimize the use of skywalks. Special exceptions may be conditionally allowed where:
 - Proposals demonstrate significant special need for a skywalk between related and important uses or functions
 - The area impacted by shadows and blocked views is not a primary pedestrian connection or a view corridor identified in the Downtown Plan
 - Street level alternatives for protecting pedestrians from the elements are explored and exhausted.
- Give preference to street level alternatives to skywalks. These might include: overhead canopies, arcades that can be climate-controlled and illuminated; raised and heated intersection crossings; overhead canopy extensions to the street corner curb or all the way across the street; wind protection; and active ground-floor uses and pedestrian amenities.
- Locate skywalks mid-block rather than at intersections to minimize impacts on views and sunlight access.
- Avoid skywalk crossings of north-south streets; the north-south street corridors are primary sources of winter sunlight into Downtown.
- Discourage skywalks across primary pedestrian connections and view corridors, such as 4th and 5th Avenues.



- Design skywalks with light colored and transparent façade materials to minimize their impacts on sunlight and views.
- Limit skywalks to one story.
- Discourage skywalk designs which accommodate retail uses that can be offered at street level.

Concerns have been raised about skywalks because skywalks often take activity and investment away from the sidewalk, cast deep shadows, obstruct view corridors and disconnect people from the environment. Downtown Anchorage contains several skywalks, some of which do maximize transparency and avoid creating cavernous spaces below (above top). Other cities, such as Minneapolis, MN (above) have constructed too many skywalks and struggle to get life back on the streets and regain their views.



Traditionally, parking garages have been designed to do little else than store cars (above). Such single-use structures designed with little regard for the comfort of pedestrians and the ground floor are not allowed in Downtown Anchorage. In recent years, garage design has advanced to allow other uses to take place on the ground level, providing a more engaging streetfront.

Parking Treatment

- Promote the use of structured parking to accommodate the parking spaces needed for development projects.
- Encourage underground parking in order to minimize impacts on the public realm and reserve more above-ground space for activity-generating uses.
- Above-grade parking structures should be wrapped with active uses on the ground floor, and preferably the second floor as well, that open to the street and conceal parking from the sidewalk.
- The upper floors of the parking structure should be concealed with interesting façade treatment.
- Underground parking structures beneath residential uses can extend several feet above grade, as long as building entrances, front stoops, first floor living spaces with windows facing the street, streetscape amenities and planting beds are not impacted.
- Improve surface parking lots to accommodate landscaping, buffers and/or ornamental fencing. Improvements should include:
 - Planters, shrubs, other landscaping or fencing at least three feet in height
 - Benches for seating
 - Bicycle parking
 - Trash receptacles
 - Seat walls
 - Light fixtures
 - Public art



This parking structure in Downtown Boulder, CO takes the form of a typical mixed-use commercial/office building, with its entrance and exit set back from sidewalk (in the far right of the photo).



This example uses an artistic facade treatment and ground floor retail to transform the garage into an interesting addition to Downtown Albuquerque, NM.

This parking garage in Downtown Pasadena, CA (right) follows cues from adjacent historic architecture and maintains the same scale and rhythm of bays and window treatment.



Parking lot buffers can vary according to adjacent uses. This parking lot in Berkeley, CA (images below) integrates seatwalls, benches, planters, trees, shrubs and bicycle parking to create a friendly pedestrian environment. These amenities greatly enhance the popularity and use of adjacent shops.





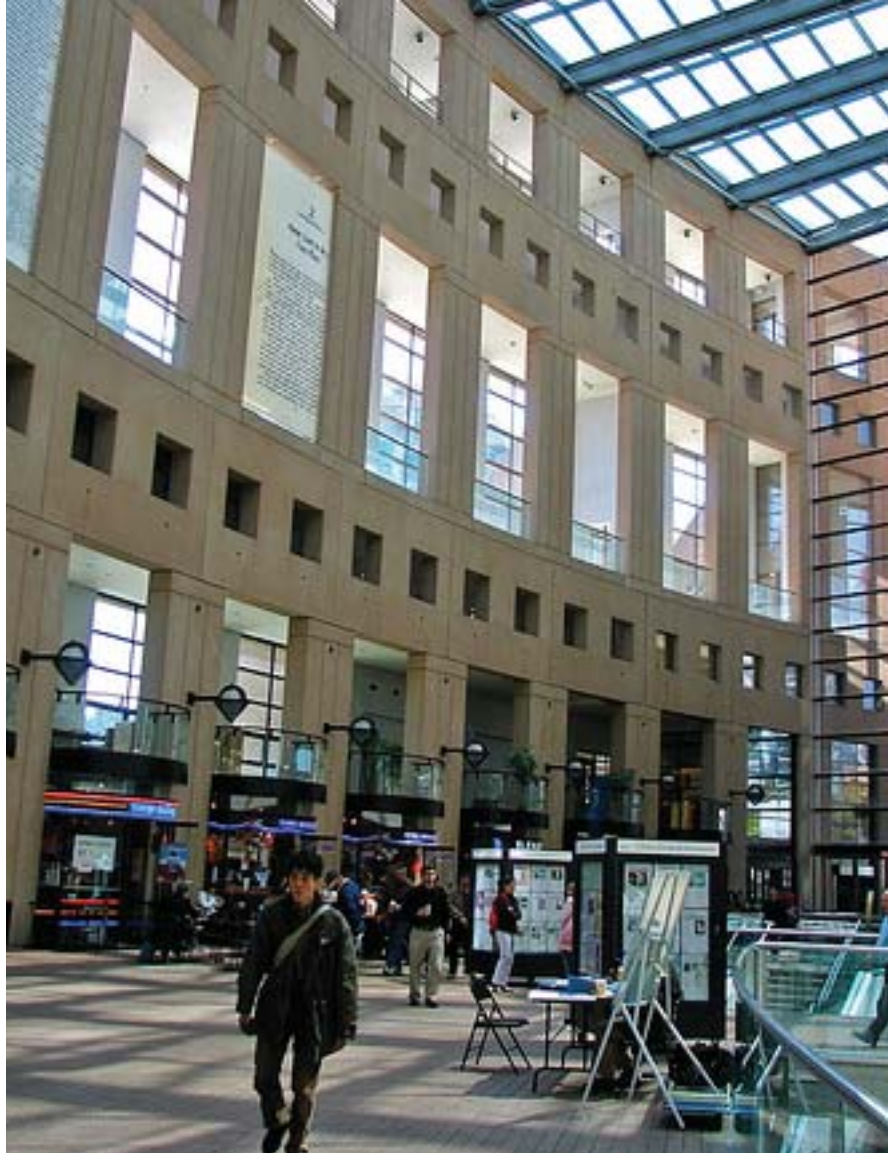
The stepped back, mid-density residential building (above top) and the duplexes and fourplexes facing onto a pedestrian pathway (above) exemplify how residential development can combine varying levels of density and maintain access to open space and sunlight.

Residential Treatment

- Design residential development to be varied in building form and include features such as front stoops, bay windows, façade articulation, balconies or sun rooms and upper level step-backs.
- Line residential streets with grass, landscaping and more street trees to soften the urban environment.
- Provide open spaces, gardens, pedestrian linkages through blocks or neighborhood parks as residential development occurs.
- Reduce noise and glare through design, lighting and materials that buffer or minimize the disturbance created by noise and trespass light.
- Provide multiple entrances to residential buildings along the street, such as individual front stoops and doorways for ground-floor residential units. Individual entrances should be raised several feet for privacy.

Interior Public/Semi-public Spaces

- Design interior publicly accessible spaces such as atria or winter gardens that include high ceilings with a major portion of the roof and/or walls transparent to the sky. They should be temperature controlled and furnished with features and amenities that encourage use by the public.
- Locate interior and semi-interior open spaces to maximize site attributes that enhance the quality and enjoyment of the space. For example, spaces should capture a view, allow sunlight access and be sheltered from wind effects.
- Integrate interior open spaces with Downtown's network of public sidewalks, especially the Primary Pedestrian Connections, in order to enhance the overall pedestrian environment:
 - Interior open spaces should be co-located with a high level of pedestrian activity or public use within or adjacent to the site, or
 - Interior open spaces should adjoin and directly connect to designated Primary Pedestrian Connections.



A well-lit, open atrium like this one in the Vancouver, B.C. Public Library can provide a public gathering space year-round.



7 program strategies

OVERVIEW

Four overarching program strategies are identified in this chapter which accompany the recommendations listed in previous chapters. The four program strategies have been identified to help Downtown become Anchorage's residents favored place to live, work and play:

- Image and Branding Program
- Signage and Wayfinding Program
- Safety and Security Program
- Activity and Event Program

These strategies are necessary to enhance the Downtown experience for Alaskans and tourists, as well. From Downtown's image and reputation, to people's ease in getting around and their sense of comfort and security, these four programs can help weave the land use, economic development, transportation, and urban design recommendations into a comprehensive Downtown where everyone feels safe and welcome.





Banners throughout Downtown can help accentuate Downtown's distinct character, like these banners in Downtown Denver.

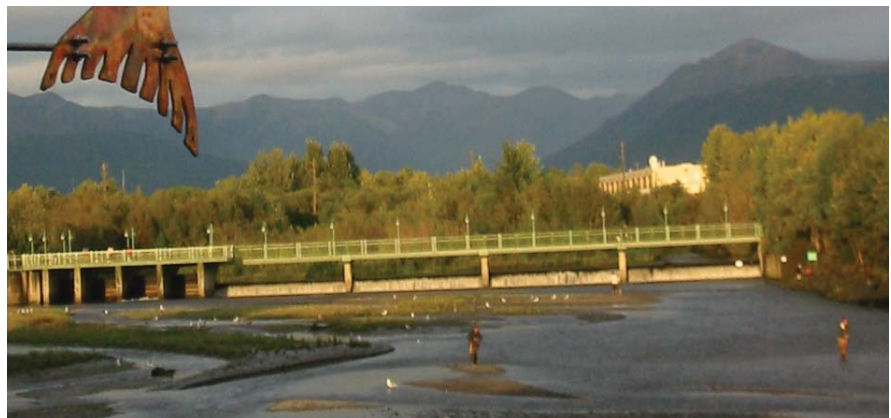
IMAGE AND BRANDING PROGRAM

An image and branding program is an important strategy in evolving the character and quality of Downtown's social, cultural and natural environments. This program will help to characterize the urban core and establish a distinct Downtown identity.

Recommendations for a complete image and branding program include:

- Promote distinct district characters with marketing, events and branding.
- Promote Anchorage's history and rich cultural diversity.
- Coordinate a marketing strategy to promote tourism nationally:
 - Create benefits for both the local community and out-of-state tourists.
 - Promote the theme of "Alaska's Downtown, America's Winter City."

- Create a task force to promote the "Stay an extra day in Anchorage" campaign.
- Promote Anchorage as Alaska's Downtown to rural communities:
 - Accentuate Downtown as a vibrant "urban oasis" that is safe and easy to visit.
 - Advertise access to the state's premier shopping options.
 - Incorporate shopping and medical visits with cultural and recreational activities.
 - Link with statewide athletic activities such as basketball and wrestling tournaments.
- Market Downtown as a point of entry to Alaska's activities:
 - Market the resource of salmon fishing at Ship Creek.
 - Advertise access to regional bike trails and biking opportunities.
 - Advertise access to regional hiking trails.



Branding Purpose

In late 2005, the Anchorage Downtown Partnership hired a marketing firm to determine how to best market Downtown. Together, they identified a number of distinguishing attributes of Downtown Anchorage that shape residents' perceptions and visitors' experiences. See Anchorage Brand Print for more details.

From this analysis, a comprehensive branding and positioning strategy was formed. The branding strategy for Downtown Anchorage aims to achieve the following:

- It fills the unmet expectations of Downtown residents, Alaska Natives and visitors.
- It is distinct and relevant; only Downtown Anchorage can own this territory as Alaska's Welcome Center.
- It packages together the many things already available that is authentic and fun in Downtown (Oomingmak, Ulu factory, railroad, Iditarod, restaurants, shops).
- Tourists get the Alaska experience even though they will never see all of Alaska's splendor.
- It attracts young, adventure-seeking travelers to visit Downtown on their way in and out of the state.

Branding Statement

The branding statement that was developed will help connect visitors experience with the soul of Alaska.

- No other Downtown provides the combination of an urban district and the Alaska experience.
- Anchorage residents get the culture and gathering place they expect.
- Alaska Natives can experience connection with one another and be proud of their home land.
- Alaska Natives can be proud of and celebrate their heritage.

Branding Methods

The next steps for the city are to utilize this branding message and incorporate it advertising, tourism and the Downtown environment, including:

- Package existing products together Downtown already has many cultural attractions and products.
- Focus advertising with a strong message.
- Develop signage distinct from the rest of Anchorage reflective of Alaskan culture and Downtown districts.
- Consider naming streets or parks after Alaska Native tribes or leaders.
- Market Downtown's exceptional arts and cultural facilities, especially the Anchorage Museum of History and Art and the Performing Arts Center.

The essence of Downtown Anchorage is:

"A metropolitan village where all of Alaska's cultures are celebrated so you feel connected to its soul."



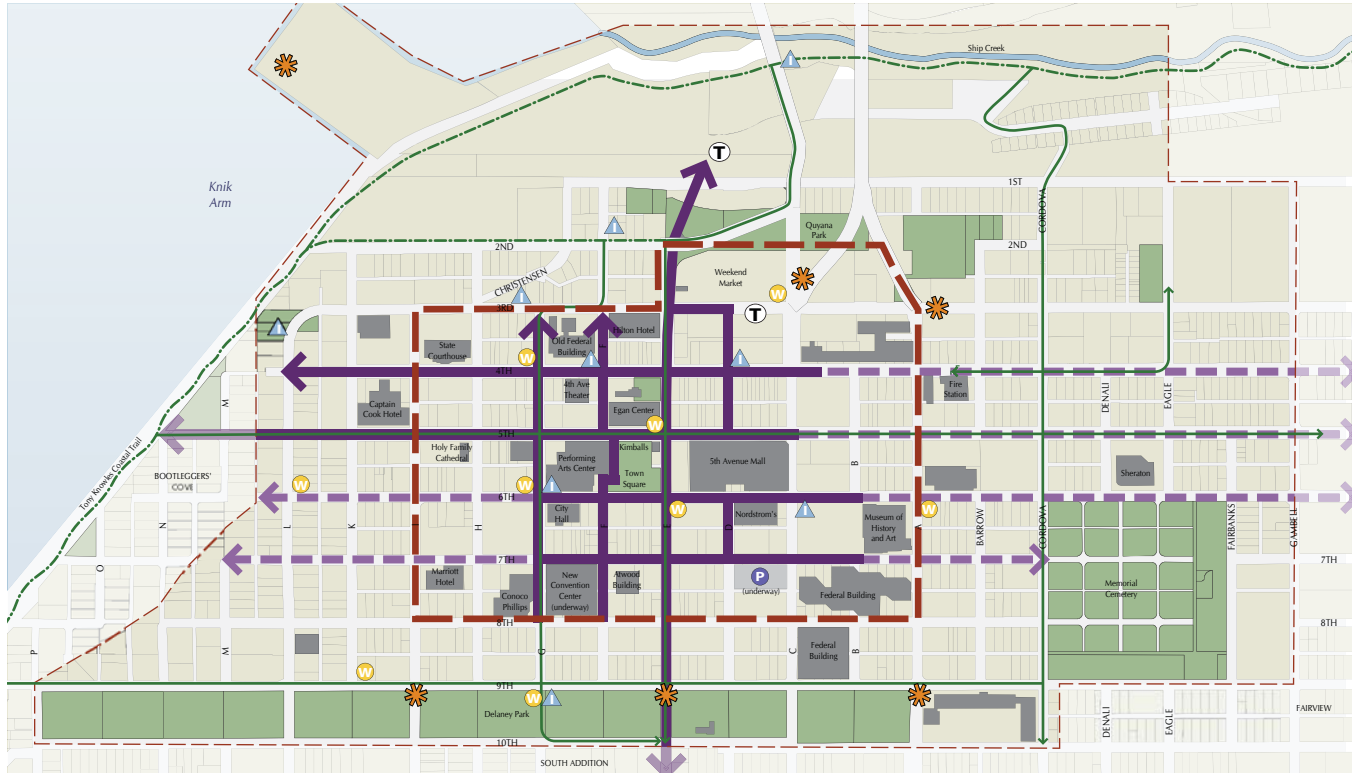
This directional sign serves pedestrians in an active pedestrian area in Downtown Berkeley, CA.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING PROGRAM

Currently, Downtown's wayfinding system is inconsistent and piecemeal. A comprehensive wayfinding system that establishes continuity in Downtown's signs, street furniture and lighting is needed. This system will direct residents and visitors toward key destinations, advertise upcoming events and celebrate significant historic, cultural or natural sites and resources. The system should make travelling to desirable destinations easy—which is essential to attracting more locals and visitors Downtown.

Wayfinding signage is comprised of directional signs to orient and direct pedestrians and drivers (noted on the diagram below). Interpretive signage is in the form of a display board, which describes and illustrates a particular event or resource. Recommendations to help make this program possible, include:

- Establish a Signage and Wayfinding Committee to determine appropriate aesthetics and dimensions of new signage.



Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| — Downtown Study Area | W Regional Signage & Wayfinding | → Primary Pedestrian Connection |
| ■ Downtown Core | ▲ Interpretive Signage | → Secondary Pedestrian Connection |
| ■ Park/Open Space | ★ Gateway | → On-Street Bicycle Connection |
| ■ "Notable" Building Footprint | T Transit Station | → Bike/Pedestrian Trail |

Wayfinding and Signage Diagram



Wayfinding and interpretive signage can take many forms. The example of the information kiosk (above left) can be used to supplement the visitor center elsewhere in Downtown. The historic interpretive sign (above right) is an example that exists in Downtown today. Such signs should be incorporated into the comprehensive signage program.

- Create district signage codes unique to their character to bolster their identities.
- Determine significant sites and events that are in need of interpretive signs to showcase their importance in Anchorage's history.
- Integrate Alaska Native art and history into Downtown's streetscape through signage design, particularly that of local/regional tribes. This is essential in distinguishing Anchorage from other cities and celebrating what makes it unique.
- Wayfinding should incorporate work from local artists wherever possible. Consider establishing public art competitions to increase the diversity and quality of Downtown's public art.
- Ensure design guidelines for signage are implemented (See Chapter 6: Urban Design, page 101).
- Consider a "heritage trail" or "urban trail" with a sequence of interpretive signage.



Native Alaskan art should be integrated into Downtown Anchorage's signage and wayfinding elements, such as the example above exhibiting S'Kallam Tribe Carvings from Olympic Peninsula, Washington.

SAFETY AND SECURITY PROGRAM

The real and perceived feelings of safety impact how visitors and residents experience Downtown. In addition to an increase in the number of “eyes on the street” and improved lighting Downtown, a number of recommendations are listed below.

- Address issues of safety and understanding for Alaska Natives through a comprehensive cultural sensitivity campaign.
- Provide wayfinding and welcoming outreach strategies for all rural visitors.
- Increase community policing to address public safety concerns in areas considered particularly unsafe, including 4th Avenue between C and E Streets, Town Square and the existing Transit Center.
- Provide distributed social service facilities throughout the city that offer shelter and care for homeless populations.
- Maintain a safe and clean environment by installing regularly-spaced trash and recycling bins and year-round street cleaning.
- Provide access to self-cleaning public restrooms within the Downtown Core.
- Prioritize implementation of a comprehensive street lighting program throughout Downtown to increase visibility and safety on all streets.

Self-cleaning public restrooms, such as this one in San Francisco (right) are attractive, safe, energy efficient and offer advertising and revenue opportunities for the city.



ACTIVITY AND EVENT PROGRAMMING STRATEGY

A coordinated approach to activity and event planning can help Downtown build upon existing events, such as First Fridays and the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, and create a range of spectator and participatory events for all user groups year-round.

- Develop strategies for planning and promoting Winter City themed events throughout the year.
- Determine appropriate activities during the shoulder seasons and promote them nationally.
- Promote healthy cultural and recreational activities for youth.
- Develop improvement plans based on a public process to improve Town Square Park, Delaney Park and the Weekend Market site to host large community events that generate city revenue and spark more interest in Downtown.



Events that embrace winter conditions can bring all ages together. Ranging from the small scale (above top) to the large scale (above and top right), community events engage residents, attract visitors and enliven the public spaces. Live music performances in Downtown parks (middle right) are a hit during spring and summer months. Informal events such as ice skating in Town Square (bottom right) will become more popular once perceptions of safety improve.





8 implementation strategies

The implementation actions of this chapter are designed to support and carry out the land use, economic development, transportation, urban design, and program strategy recommendations of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan. They provide the Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Downtown Partnership and other private and public partners with direction to guide future development and investment. Specifically, the implementation action schedule in this chapter outlines general time-frames, costs and responsibilities for a range of actions.

While all of the Plan's recommendations are important, the immediate implementation actions outlined in the following pages will establish a significant foundation upon which to build. The path to realizing these recommendations will require a focused, clear approach. These specific actions identified here will help to provide the organizational and programmatic infrastructure that will lead to successful fruition of the Downtown vision.

This Plan explains what needs to be done to revitalize Downtown over a twenty-year time horizon. While there is no guarantee that all of its strategies and action items will be achieved, the Municipality intends to make every effort to see that the Plan is realized.

To ensure completion of the Plan's recommendations, regular reviews of the status of the implementation actions are paramount. As part of these periodic reviews, the responsible implementer(s) listed for each action should reassess the resources available to complete each action according to the time frame, and adjust the time frame or priorities as needed. Most importantly, private sector stewards, community members and plan advocates who are dedicated to the

Plan's realization should maintain the momentum by continuing to meet as a Downtown Advisory Group, reviewing the status of the actions and acting as project leaders to track project implementation. Finally, a highly graphic and publicly visible checklist should be placed in a civic space to publicize and celebrate the Plan's benchmarks so its momentum continues to build.



Implementation Actions
Schedule

Specific implementation actions in the charts below implement the Downtown Comprehensive Plan’s strategies and recommendations. Actions are assigned a time frame for action and an implementation leader or leaders. They are adopted with the understanding that some actions will need to be adjusted and others replaced with more feasible proposals, and future circumstances may affect a proposed implementer’s ability to take action.

Time frames are approximate and will have to be determined by available resources. A very generalized indicator of the potential cost of each action is also provided.

Many of the near term actions are either already underway or programmed during the recommended time frame. Until applicable actions are implemented, the Plan’s strategies and recommendations are intended to guide municipal decision-making.

It is important to achieve all of the goals and strategies, and that all of the implementation actions in the schedules below be taken. However they are not intended to be taken all at one time. This is a twenty-year plan. The purpose of the implementation chapter is to identify the actions, responsible parties and general timeframes.

KEY TO PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS IN SCHEDULE

MUNICIPAL (MOA) AGENCIES:

ACDA	Anchorage Community Development Authority
APD	Anchorage Police Department
GAC	Geotechnical Advisory Commission
OECD	Office of Economic and Community Development
Parks	Parks and Recreation Department
Planning	Planning Department
PM&E	Project Management and Engineering Department
Traffic	Traffic Engineering Department
Transit	Public Transportation Department/People Mover

OTHER PARTNERS:

ACVB	Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau
ADOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
AEDC	Anchorage Economic Development Corporation
Alaska Railroad	Alaska Railroad Corporation
Downtown Partnership	Anchorage Downtown Partnership

Implementation Programming

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
IP-1	Install and maintain a highly graphic Plan Implementation Checklist in a Downtown civic space to publicize and celebrate achievement of the Plan's benchmarks.	1 year	\$	MOA (Parks and Recreation) Downtown Partnership
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

Land Use and Economic Development Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
LU-1	Enact a new Downtown land use and development code and amend the Downtown zoning map to reflect the recommended land use strategies, design guidelines and proposed Downtown district specifications.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (Planning)
	Develop Catalytic and Opportunity Sites			
LU-2	Determine feasibility and programming of a new Public Market and Cultural Center as a public/private partnership at Catalytic Development Site #1: Fourth Avenue Development Site.	1-2 years	\$	Property Owner MOA (Planning) MOA (ACDA) Downtown Partnership
LU-3	Develop Catalytic Development Site #2: E Street Infill Development Site. Support private development of mixed-use retail and housing (Pages 56-60). If development occurs prior to adoption of the new Downtown code provided for in LU-1, encourage design and construction to adhere to development specifications for the Downtown Core (Pages 47-50).	2-5 years	\$\$\$	Property Owner MOA (ACDA)
LU-4	Develop Catalytic Development Site #3: 6th Avenue Infill Development Site. Support private development of mixed-use retail and housing (Pages 56-61) by helping property owners consolidate parcels. If development occurs prior to adoption of the new Downtown code provided for in LU-1, encourage design to adhere to specifications for the Downtown Core (Pages 47-50).	3-7 years	\$\$\$	Property Owner MOA (ACDA)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Land Use and Economic Development, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
LU-5	Develop Catalytic Development Site #4: Park Strip Housing Prototype. Evaluate feasibility and programming of a new publicly owned housing project. If development occurs prior to adoption of the new Downtown code provided for in LU-1, encourage design to adhere to building design, streetscape, parking and circulation criteria (Pages 62-64).	2-5 years	\$\$\$	MOA (ACDA) State of Alaska
	Jump-start Housing Development			
LU-6	Convene a Downtown housing development task force to develop incentives, funding opportunities and land assembly/site location strategies for a diverse mix of housing types and income levels Downtown.	1 year	\$ Programmatic	MOA (ACDA)
	Establish Economic Development Strategies			
LU-7	Develop a targeted recruitment program with strategies to attract specific businesses from the retail, office and hotel sectors, and including identification of opportunity sites and locations. Key sectors include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retail anchors such as a department store; 2. Entertainment attractions such as a cineplex or additional restaurants; 3. Neighborhood retail uses especially grocery stores and pharmacies; 4. Corporate employers, such as Native Corporations, and office developers; 5. Hotel developers/operators; and 6. Art galleries and cultural attractions. 	1-2 years	\$\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (ACDA)
LU-8	Develop coordination between the Weekend Market and Downtown retailers, including joint marketing and physical linkages.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (ACDA) Downtown Partnership
LU-9	Work with cruise operators to identify services and amenities that could enhance visitors' experiences in Downtown and generate longer hotel stays.	1-2 years	\$	ACVB Downtown Partnership
LU-10	Create an expedited permitting program for Downtown development proposals that meet community standards.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Planning)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

Land Use and Economic Development, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Maintain and Enhance Parks and Open Space			
LU-11	The Parks and Recreation Commission shall determine open space and recreational needs and opportunities in the Downtown area and make recommendations for amendments to the existing Park Plan to implement those recommendations.	1 year	Programmatic	MOA (Parks)
LU-12	Complete the Delaney Park Master Plan, and its first-phase implementation, coordinated with street improvement plans for 9th Avenue.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (Parks)
LU-13	Complete a public process to create an improvement plan for Town Square Park.	1-2 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks)
	Create a Historic Preservation Commission and Overlay Zone			
LU-14	The Historic Preservation Commission shall inventory historic sites and structures and shall develop immediate and long term historic preservation policies, initiatives and incentives and make recommendations to the Assembly for Ordinances and/or Resolutions relative to historic preservation.	1 year	\$	MOA (OECD)
LU-15	Work with the community to establish a Historic Overlay Zone.	2-3 years	\$	MOA (OECD) MOA (Planning)
	Respond to Seismic Hazards			
LU-16	Conduct a seismic hazard risk assessment study of seismic hazard zones 4 and 5 to determine the extent and regulations for a seismic overlay zone.	1 year	\$	MOA (Planning) MOA (GAC)
LU-17	Enact a seismic overlay zone to address land use and development in areas with greatest potential for ground failure.	2-3 years	\$	MOA (Planning) MOA (GAC)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Transportation and Circulation Strategies Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Street Conversions and Reconstructions			
T-1	The Traffic Department and other appropriate departments of the Municipality, including the Parks and Recreation Department, are directed to review the pros and cons of converting 9th Avenue to a typical three-lane section, coordinating with transit operations planning and pedestrian improvements. Upon completion of this review, a report is to be made to the Assembly on this issue of what, if any changes should be made to 9th Avenue to accommodate traffic, transit, bike and pedestrian requirements within the context of the Delaney Park Master Plan.	1-2 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-2	Convert D Street to a two-way traffic street, adhering to the Core Streets Streetscape Plan design guidelines.	2-5 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-3	Convert F Street to a two-way traffic street, adhering to the Core Streets Streetscape Plan design guidelines.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-4	Reconstruct G Street between 3rd and 5th Avenues in accordance with the Core Streets Streetscape Plan.	2-5 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-5	Reconstruct 7th Avenue between the Den'aina Convention Center and C Street in accordance with the Core Streets Streetscape Plan.	3-7 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-6	Make streetscape improvements to 6th Avenue between E and D Streets in accordance with the Core Streets Streetscape Plan.	3-7 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E) ADOT & PF
T-7	Construct Phase 1 of the E Street Corridor Enhancement Project in the central Downtown Core between 4th and 8th Avenues.	1 year	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks) MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E)
T-8	Program the construction of Phase 2 of the E Street Corridor Enhancement Project including pedestrian connections to Delaney Park and the Alaska Railroad Intermodal Transportation Facility.	3-7 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks) MOA (Traffic) MOA (PM&E) Alaska Railroad
T-9	Convert 3rd Avenue to one-way westbound traffic. Prepare a 3rd Avenue one-way westbound traffic and pedestrian safety plan, and ensure redesign includes continuous sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, on-street parking, reduced travel speeds and areas for bus loading.	5-7 years	\$\$\$	ADOT & PF MOA (Traffic)
T-10	Convert 5th Avenue to two-way traffic, contingent on the conversion of 3rd Avenue.	7 or more years	\$\$\$	ADOT & PF MOA (Traffic)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

Transportation and Circulation Strategies Implementation, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Improve the Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment			
T-11	The Traffic Department and other appropriate departments of the Municipality are directed to develop and implement strategies to enhance pedestrian, transit and bicycle amenities in the Downtown core area while continuing to accommodate vehicular traffic. In addition, consideration should be given to other amenities such a public art, landscaping, self-cleaning rest rooms, seating opportunities and other amenities.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) MOA (Parks) MOA (Planning) MOA (Transit) Downtown Partnership
T-12	Adjust the timing of traffic signals to reduce average speeds to approximately 25 MPH within the Downtown area bounded by and including A Street on the east, L Street on the west, 9th Avenue on the south, and 3rd Avenue on the north.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) ADOT & PF
	Improve the Downtown Transit System			
T-13	Conduct a Transit Center Relocation Feasibility Study which includes consideration of Catalytic Development Site #1 and a reassessment of transit routes through Downtown to improve convenience.	1 year	\$\$	MOA (ACDA) MOA (Transit) MOA (Traffic)
T-14	Relocate the Transit Center and/or transit routes through Downtown, contingent on the results of the relocation feasibility study.	2-5 years	\$\$\$	MOA (ACDA) MOA (Transit)
T-15	Initiate a Downtown Circulator bus route	3-5 years	\$\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Transit)
T-16	Initiate a direct, non-stop transit route between Downtown and the Alaska Native Medical Center and overall Universities/ Medical District.	3-5 years	\$\$	MOA (Transit)
	Develop a Coordinated Parking Strategy			
T-17	Improve parking wayfinding signage to advertise the location and number of available spaces.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (ACDA)
T-18	Institute a one year demonstration project on a selected downtown street to test the use, reliability and public acceptance of kiosk type parking meters in Anchorage's winter environment.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (ACDA)
T-19	Construct a parking structure at 7th Avenue and C Street.	2-5 years	\$	MOA (ACDA)
T-20	Install safety precautions in parking structures including improved lighting and security patrols.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (ACDA)
	Accommodate Tour Bus Operations			
T-21	Establish tour bus circulation routes and the locations for queuing, idling, loading and passenger drop-off.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Urban Design Strategies Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
UD-1	Identify and prioritize scenic view corridors and potential measures and incentives for their protection.	1 year	\$	MOA (Planning)
UD-2	Complete an ice free (heated) sidewalk implementation study to determine the appropriate technology, construction phasing, financing and public/private responsibilities for heated sidewalks.	1 year	\$	MOA (ACDA) MOA (Traffic)
UD-3	Construct one or several priority blocks of heated sidewalks as a model for future areas.	2-3 years	\$\$\$	MOA (PM&E) MOA (Traffic)
UD-4	Complete construction of the remaining phases of heated sidewalks.	3-7 years	\$\$\$	MOA (PM&E) MOA (Traffic)

Programming Strategies Implementation

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
	Enhance the Image and Branding Program			
P-1	Coordinate and improve marketing efforts.	1-2 years	\$	Downtown Partnership ACVB AEDC
P-2	Build upon the Brand Print recommendations to promote Anchorage's heritage, culture and distinct Downtown sub-districts.	1-2 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (OECD)
P-3	Market Anchorage and Downtown as a winter destination to increase year-round hotel occupancy rates	Ongoing	\$	ACVB
	Develop a Signage and Wayfinding Program			
P-4	Establish a Downtown Signage and Wayfinding Committee.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-5	Develop a comprehensive Downtown streetscape and wayfinding signage design palette.	1-2 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-6	Design distinct district signage.	2-3 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
	COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000			

Programming Strategies Implementation, continued

	Action	Time Frame	Cost	Proposed Implementer
P-7	Identify significant sites and event locations for interpretive signage.	2-3 years	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
Strengthen the Safety and Security Program				
P-8	Initiate a program for wayfinding and welcoming for Alaska Natives and all visitors from rural Alaska.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership
P-9	Increase community policing in certain areas identified in the Plan.	1 year	\$	Downtown Partnership
P-10	Prioritize locations for trash/recycling bins, public restrooms and street lighting.	1 year	\$	MOA (PM&E) MOA (Parks) MOA (Traffic)
P-11	Enhance year-round street cleaning Downtown.	1-2 years	\$	MOA (Traffic) Downtown Partnership
P-12	Install self-cleaning public restrooms Downtown.	1 year	\$	MOA (PM&E) Downtown Partnership
Enhance Activity and Event Programming				
P-13	Strengthen activity/event programming and promotion for events throughout the year, including winter and shoulder season events.	Ongoing	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-14	Promote activities for youth and families with children.	Ongoing	\$	Downtown Partnership MOA (Parks)
P-15	Implement the Delaney Park Master Plan and improve Delaney Park as a venue for large community events.	1-2 years	\$\$\$	MOA (Parks)
P-16	Improve the Weekend Market Site as a venue for large community events.	1-2 years	\$\$	MOA (ACDA)
COST BREAKDOWN: \$ = < \$100,000; \$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000; \$\$\$ = >\$500,000				

