



2. INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

2.1 LOCATION

The University Area Community Council (UACC) area contained the planning limits for this plan. The boundaries of the UMED District planning area are Lake Otis Parkway to the west, Northern Lights Boulevard to the north, Baxter Road to the east, and East Tudor Road to the south. The District includes a large cluster of organizations in the north and west, and residential neighborhoods to the south and east. A variety of small-lot commercial and retail businesses, a strip mall, and multi-family housing are located along Lake Otis Parkway, Tudor Road, and Boniface Parkway. Future UMED District Plan updates may consider areas adjoining this boundary in order to accommodate future growth related to the core UMED District.

Already in progress when the UMED Plan update was initiated, the East Anchorage District Plan (EADP) included a portion of the UMED District during its planning process. The UMED Plan Update carries forward the adopted land use classifications from the EADP for the areas between Boniface and Baxter roads, and Northern Lights Boulevard and Tudor Road.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN UPDATE

The primary purpose of the District Plan Update is to assess existing development and infrastructure issues; identify future land uses, help reground planning elements identified in 2003, and assist in identifying new strategies and programs for implementation.² The public process included input from the organizations, neighborhoods, general public, and professional developers and planners. Each of these stakeholder groups contributed to the District Plan Update through a robust planning process.

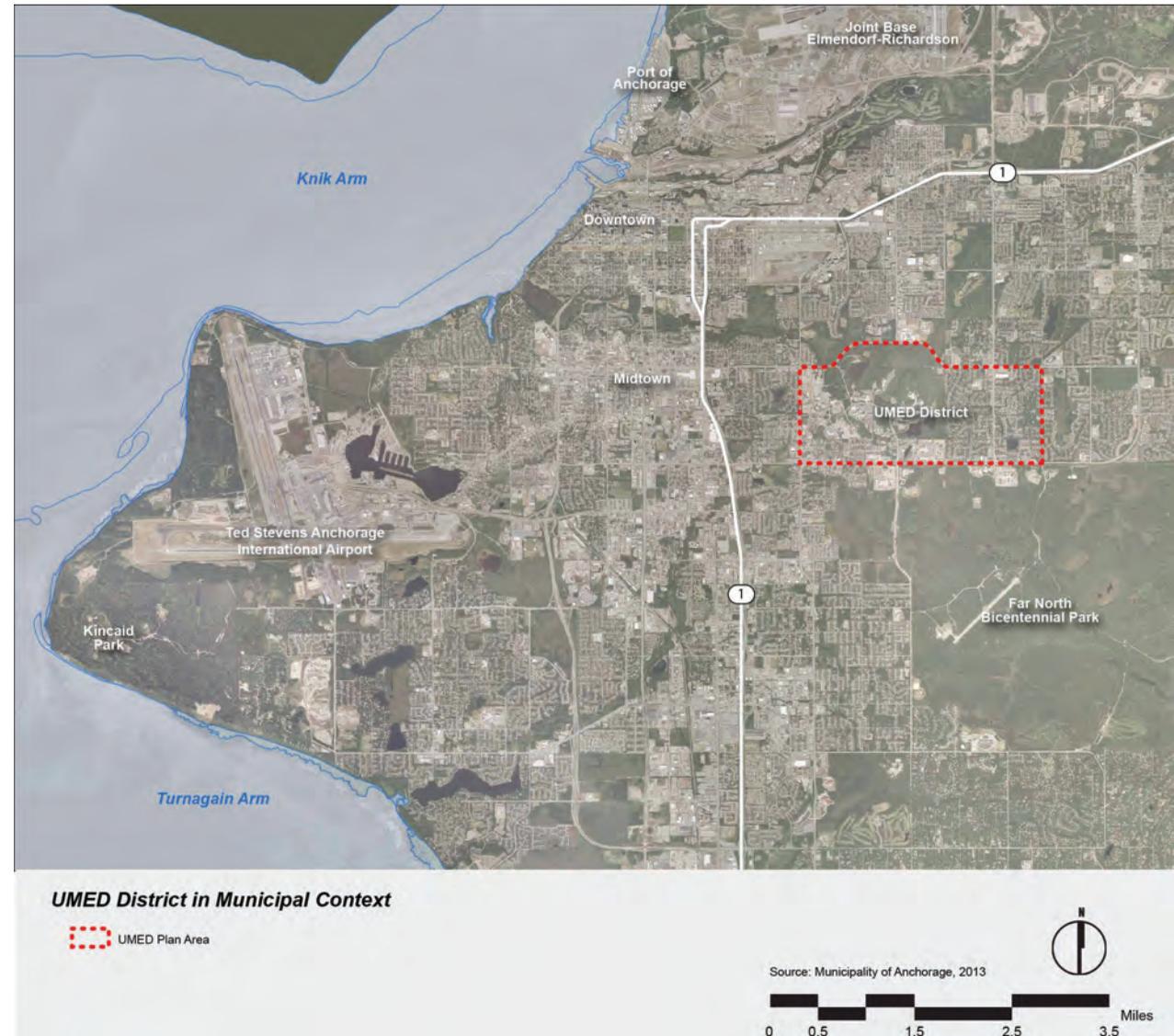


Figure 1. UMED District Plan Boundary in context with the Anchorage Bowl.

2003 UMED DISTRICT FRAMEWORK PLAN

Planning for the UMED District is identified as an element of the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan. A U-Med Universities and Medical District Framework Plan was adopted in 2003, and amended twice: in 2009 to depict local street changes for Piper and Laurel streets, and East 40th Avenue, and in 2012 to approve the Alaska Pacific University Master Plan land use map. This District Plan Update replaces the adopted 2003 U-Med Framework Plan.

The District Plan Update differs from the 2003 U-Med plan, by incorporating a much larger planning boundary that includes residential areas, and the commercial fringe located within the University Area Community Council boundary. The District Plan Update also provides a cogeneration feasibility study; updates design guidelines consistent with Title 21; recognizes the BLM land patents; includes a real estate and mixed-use development analysis in support of high-density development and the UMED Village; and identifies a route for the Northern Access road project.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The District Plan Update presents a broad vision for the future of the UMED District as the location of Alaska's second largest employment center. Civic leaders, municipal and urban planners, designers, engineers, and local residents will use the Plan Update as a framework for supporting and enhancing the outstanding elements that make this area of Anchorage so desirable. The community will be able to use the plan to guide future growth and development, while supporting the protection of the natural resources and the continued enhancement of park, trail, and recreation amenities in the UMED District.



Figure 2. Residential and organizational areas in the UMED District.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE PLANNING PROCESS:

- Provide relevant analysis, recommendations, and case studies that respond to current economic trends and transportation needs and that support the Visions, Goals, Objectives, and Implementation items.
- Take a fresh look to determine cogeneration feasibility.
- Complete a robust and engaging public outreach process.
- Develop a holistic approach to managing parking.
- Include the eastern residential neighborhoods into the expanded UMED District planning area to create a cohesive community, to support future infill and redevelopment, and to identify capital projects or programs that benefit the residential neighborhoods adjoining the organizational core.
- Provide the planning tools to enable a diverse set of stakeholders with individual missions to flourish in the UMED District.

VISION ELEMENT COMPONENTS:

- **Vision Elements:** Where we want to go.
- **Goals:** The goals are the road map.
- **Recommendation or Implementation Elements:** The nuts and bolts of getting the job done.

Several of Alaska's prominent higher-education and medical facilities are located within the District, as well as residential enclaves, and retail and commercial properties. The District continues to realize a high demand for growth in the education and health services sectors with much of the commercial development devoted to medical service providers. The two universities also continue to develop new programs and facilities to meet demand for degree programs such as engineering, nursing, liberal arts, and professional and technical education offerings. The social service programs and medical care provided by MYC, API, ANMC, and PAMC also continue to grow with Alaska's population, therefore increasing treatment offerings.

The planning process engaged those who live, work, study, and recreate within the UMED District. The District Plan Update gives the neighborhoods, businesses, and organizations the opportunity to fulfill their individual and collective missions in a community of sustained viability and vitality.³

This District Plan Update will guide future growth and development in the core UMED area, in the neighborhoods located in the eastern and southern peripheries of the District, and in the commercial perimeter areas. The ongoing implementation and development efforts subsequent to the adoption of the Plan Update will build on continued inclusion and participation of the residential neighborhoods, commercial businesses, the organizations, the MOA, and other partners. Management of publicly owned parks and trails, the newly adopted MOA Title 21 land use code, implementation of the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan, and the Chester Creek

Watershed Management Plan are addressed.

Recommendations for the multimodal transportation system and a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program may have implications for the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) regional planning and funding process.

2.3 VISION ELEMENTS

Eight Vision Elements were developed to articulate the District's planning needs: Supporting Organizational Missions, Quality of Life, Quality of the Built Environment, Transportation & Mobility, Community & Partnerships, Natural Resources, Economic Sustainability, and Growth & Change.

1. **Supporting Organizational Missions** contains recommendations for facilitating resourceful and context-sensitive organizational growth.
2. **Quality of Life** addresses issues of recreation, district identity, and stimulating social gathering places.
3. **Quality of the Built Environment** focuses on urban design that is sustainable, responsive to the natural environment, and aesthetically pleasing.
4. **Transportation and Mobility** advocates for a variety of transportation improvements that improve safety and walkability and that are executed with consideration to natural resources.
5. **Community & Partnerships** summarizes a variety of planning issues that can benefit from cross-organizational collaboration and partnership with the

residential community.

6. **Natural Resources** highlights measures that encourage future development in ways that preserve resources valued by stakeholders within the UMED District.
7. **Economic Sustainability** provides recommendations for strengthening the District's economic potential through mixed-use development and increased housing, and provides tools for financing these developments.
8. **Growth and Change** outlines the key principles that will shape future growth and calls for participatory planning processes on the part of the Municipality to allow for transparency and public outreach.

2.4 METHODOLOGY

This was a participatory planning process. Vision Elements were developed from stakeholder and public input received during meetings held with both organizational representatives and the public. Stakeholder feedback helped the UMED District planning team formulate areas of specific interest and concern. This important input and guidance led to the development of each Vision Element, Goal, Recommendation, and Implementation Item.

Extensive analysis of local transportation systems, sustainable energy, housing, and economic conditions within the UMED District and the Anchorage Bowl was conducted. Case studies and examples from comparable cities and university campuses also shaped the recommendations.

Topics covered include: “town-gown” relationships (working models for communities with a high concentration of higher educational facilities), public-private partnerships, strategies for mixed-use development, campus parking management, natural resource management, trail and pedestrian connectivity, and Transportation Demand Management concepts. Applying these various analyses, the Vision Element chapters range in detail—starting with broad goals for the entire District, to focused recommendations for implementation items.

PLANNING PROCESS PHASES

The planning process consisted of three major phases:

- **PHASE 1:** Public Input: Stakeholder engagement was completed to distill the prominent planning issues and opportunities in the UMED District.
- **PHASE 2:** Existing Conditions and Formulating the Plan: Review of the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan, Chester Creek Watershed Plan 2015, and new Title 21. Case study research, stakeholder check-ins through the UMED Steering Team, Community Council presentations, one-on-one meetings, and the formulation of recommendations was completed
- **PHASE 3:** Public Input: Public Review and Public Hearing drafts of the Plan completed. Open House presentation and Steering Team meetings held. Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission presentations, and Assembly approval.

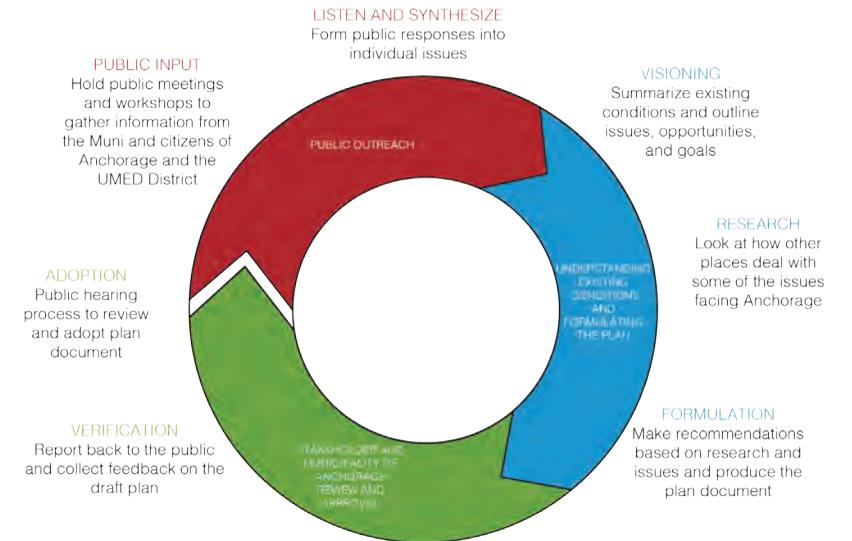


Figure 3. Phases of the process for creating the UMED District Plan Update.

PHASE 1: PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The stakeholder engagement process was conducted to ensure and encourage active participation in the planning process by neighborhoods, organizations, property owners, and businesses. Organizational meetings, public workshops, a visioning session, focus groups, and the UMED Steering Team were organized into four separate outreach and engagement efforts initiated in March 2013 and carried through January 2014. During each engagement effort, a public workshop was scheduled and several organizational stakeholder meetings were held. Over 6,000 post card invitations were sent to property owners to kick off the planning process.

An online survey of staff, students, and residents was conducted. The survey notice was also sent to more than 4,000 members of AK Public Media. Two workshops were also held with students at the UAA and APU campuses in addition to staff presentations at student government meetings. Subsequent and ongoing student outreach by staff includes class presentations with updates about the District Plan Update.

The first and second series of public meetings focused on gathering information about existing conditions in the UMED District, and generated thoughtful discussion on future growth needs, quality of life issues, and the natural environment. Input gathered during these meetings was combined to form the eight Vision Elements that provide the foundation for the UMED District Plan Update.

The third and fourth series of public meetings focused on fine-tuning the Vision Elements, crafting the related Goals, and

determining Recommendations and Implementation items.

UMED Steering Team

UMED Steering Team was established to provide guidance and input on a regular basis throughout the planning process. The Steering Team includes staff from the organizations, MOA Departments, three community councils, and Alaska State representatives below:

- The **Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and Southcentral Foundation (SCF)**, non-profit health organizations owned by and for Alaska Native Peoples They jointly own the **Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC)**.
- **Alaska State Legislators (AK LEG)** Geran Tarr, Andy Josephson, and their staffers.
- The **Alaska Pacific University (APU)**, a private, four-year, liberal arts college that offers undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees.
- The **McLaughlin Youth Center (MYC)**, a rehabilitation and detention center run by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.
- The **Providence Alaska Medical Center (PAMC)**, the largest hospital in Alaska that provides care for a broad range of medical needs.
- The **Trust Land Office (TLO)** manages the land of the Alaska Mental Health Trust, a state corporation that provides integrated mental health programs.
- The **University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)**, a state-run, public university that offers associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees, in addition

to cooperative/collaborate master's and doctoral programs with other universities.

- The **University Area, Rogers Park, and Airport Heights Community Councils (UACC, RPCC, AHCC)**, volunteer-led neighborhood organizations which were established by the MOA to provide a means for local residents, property owners, and businesses owners to communicate directly with community partners, local government, and developers.
- MOA Traffic, Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS), and Parks and Recreation Departments.

It should be noted that the UMED Steering Team volunteered countless hours to attend regular monthly meetings, review and comment on plan drafts, and provide support and participation at all public workshops. The Steering Team will continue to meet on a quarterly basis after plan adoption to assist in implementing the plan. Their work and dedication to this process is most appreciated by the planning team.

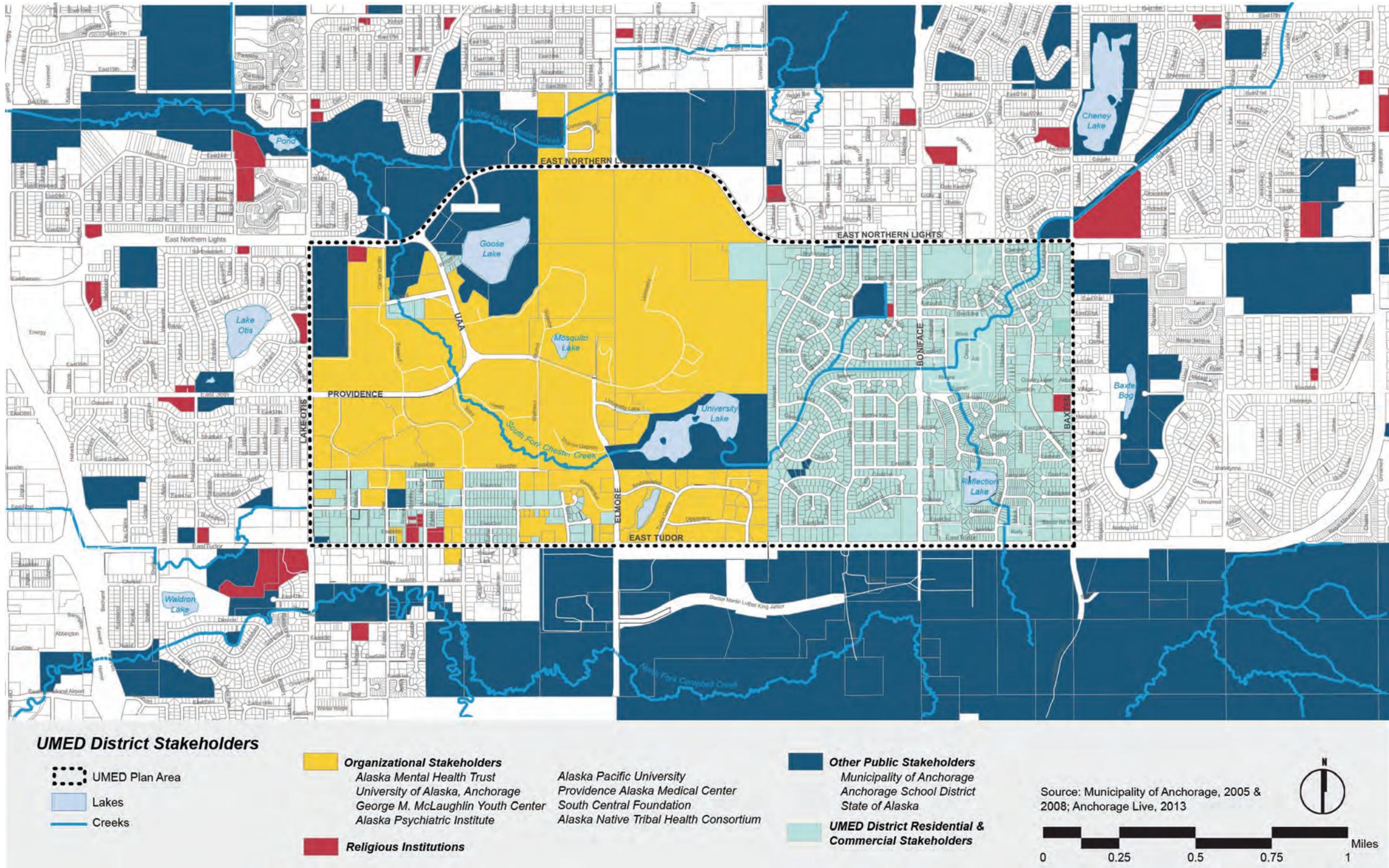


Figure 4. UMED District Stakeholders.

Summary of Meetings and Surveys

All stakeholders were invited to attend through email, Facebook, and the project website. Federation of Community Council meeting notices were distributed, and state legislators also informed their constituents by email throughout the public engagement process. The UMED District planning team met with representatives from the UMED organizations, APU and UAA students, several MOA departments, and the Northern Access Road planning team.

Public Workshop #1 – Kick-off Meeting: March 28, 2013

Workshop goals were: To introduce the project scope and objectives, the planning team, and to gather information and ideas from the public. The workshop provided the UMED District planning team an opportunity to listen and interact in a meaningful way with those participating, and to confirm the best ways to communicate during the entire planning process. Substantive information was gathered to assist the team in forming an overall public perception and desire for the district well into the future. A report-out of the evening was presented at the end to inform the planning team and participants of the highlights of the workshop.

Public Workshop #2 – Open House and Visioning Session I: June 4, 2013

Open house and visioning session goals were: To engage citizens, local groups, and community organizations in a series of focus groups organized by general topic. Focus groups provided input on historic preservation, natural resources, organizational land development, residential and commercial land development, market conditions, and transportation and circulation. The focus groups also mapped areas of interest for further discussion and research by the planning team. A report-out of the evening was given at the end to inform the planning team and participants of the highlights of the workshop.



Figure 5. Public workshop #1.



Figure 6. Public workshop #1.



Figure 7. Public workshop #2.

Public Workshop #3 – Open House and Visioning Session II: August 8, 2013

Open House and Visioning Session Goals: To fine-tune each vision element and to begin the organization of Goals, Recommendations, and Implementation items under each Vision. The planning team members presented the draft Goals, Recommendations, and Implementation items at the public open house to receive final input and comment. Break-out groups focused in at their round-table discussions on issues relevant to each group. A report-out was given at the end of the evening to inform the planning team and participants of the highlights of the open house.



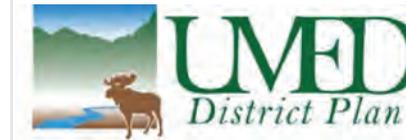
Figure 8. Invitation to public workshop #3.

Public Workshop #4 – Open House: January 16, 2014

The draft recommendations for the plan update were introduced at the Steering Team meeting and at the public open house. Individual and group discussions were facilitated by members of the UMED planning team. The comments from the open house and the Steering Team meetings constituted the final draft of the Vision, Goals, Recommendations, and Implementation Items. From this point forward the team would use this vital information to begin the narrative portion of the plan. As with the previous public engagement efforts, a report out was given to inform the planning team and participants of the highlights of the open house.



Figure 9. Participants at public workshop #3.



**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDE
UMED DISTRICT PLAN
OPEN HOUSE**

Thursday - January 16, 2014
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Community Development Training Room
4700 Elmore Road, Anchorage

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Figure 10. Participant Guide to public workshop #4.

Public Meeting Comments Analysis

A comparison was made between the information received from the general public and that voiced by the organizations, which included the UMED Steering Team members on the eight Vision Elements. That comparison is charted in Figure 11. Quality of Life, Transportation and Mobility, Community and Partnerships and Natural Resources were found to be important to both groups.

This information helped the planning team to formulate recommendations for implementation items in light of these important areas of concern.

GENERAL PUBLIC AND STEERING TEAM PRIORITIES

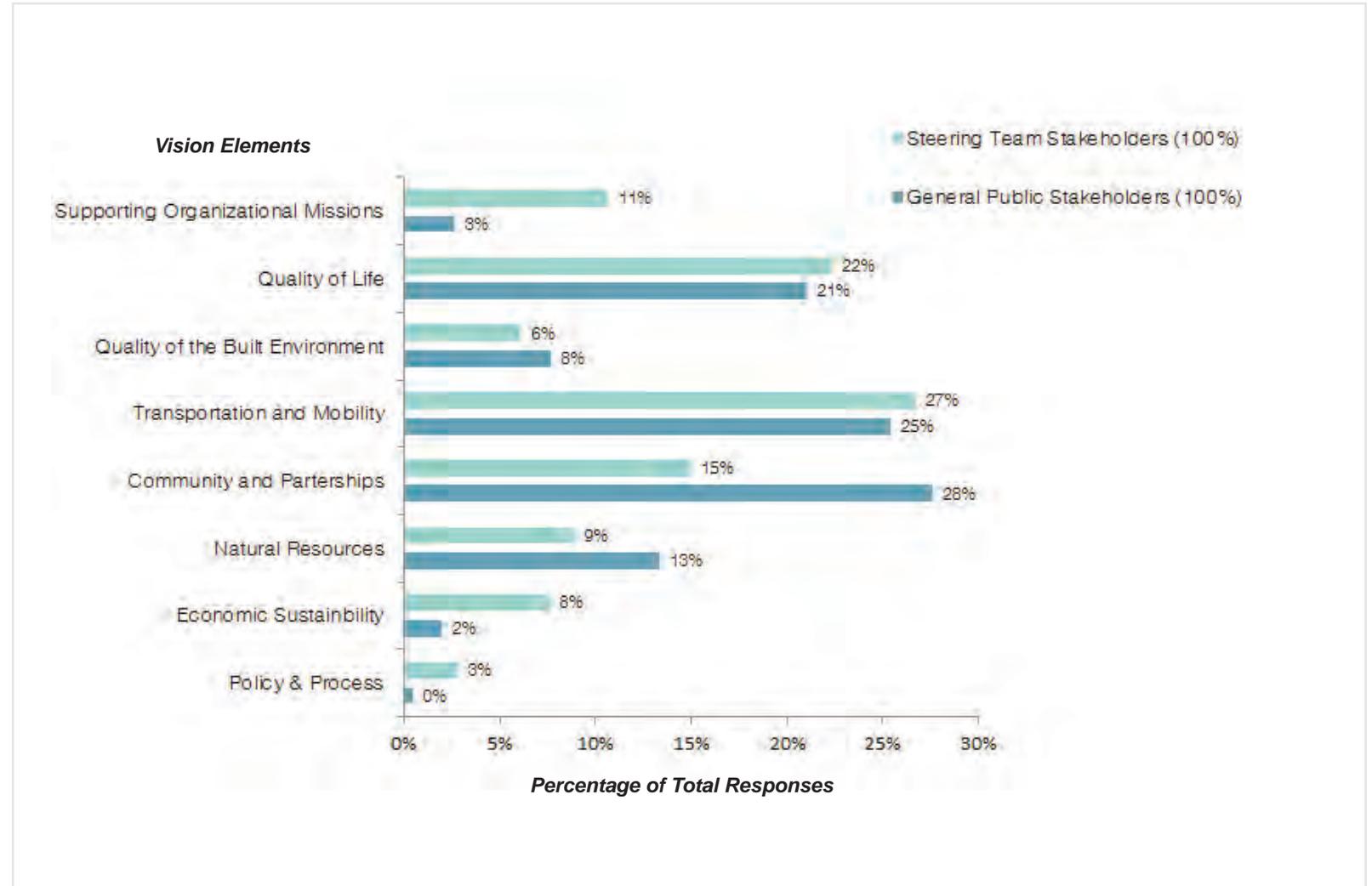


Figure 11. General public and steering team priorities.

SAMPLE QUESTION FROM THE ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

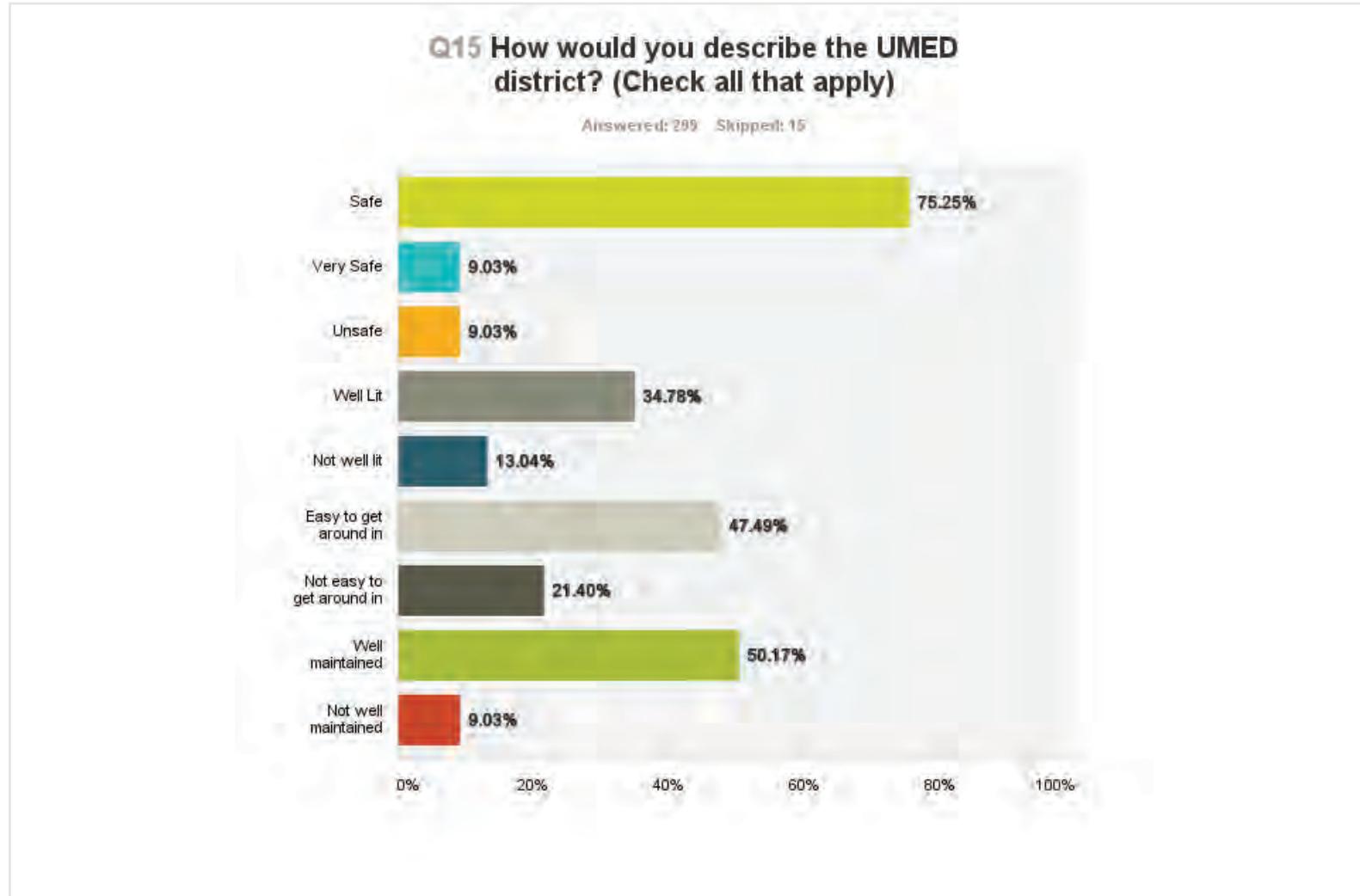


Figure 12. Sample question from the online survey.

Online Survey Analysis

In addition to public meetings, public input was gathered via an online survey consisting of twenty-one questions. The survey was conducted in July 2013. Survey participants were drawn from students, employees, business owners, residents, and other relevant stakeholders. Figure 12 illustrates one of the survey questions, which covered the topics of transit, housing, services, and recreation within the District.

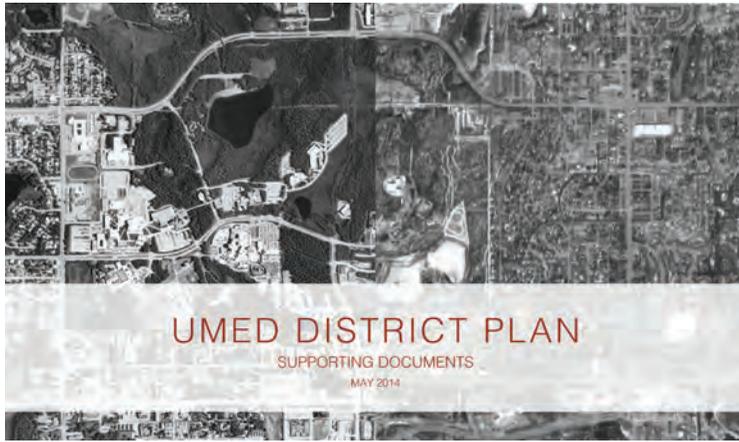


Figure 13. Cover of the UMED District Plan *Supporting Documents*.

PHASE 2. UNDERSTANDING EXISTING CONDITIONS AND FORMULATING THE PLAN

Supporting Documents

The UMED District planning team compiled and published an external report entitled *UMED District Plan Supporting Documents (Supporting Documents)* early in the planning process.

This report established certain baseline information for the UMED District core and the surrounding neighborhoods. This information was used to determine relevant case study research to formulate a foundation for the UMED District Plan. The report contains a large volume of information compiled in a single comprehensive overview and is a first for the UMED District area.

The *Supporting Documents* also introduces and provides a detailed look at existing conditions in the UMED District including: development history; physical characteristics of the natural and built environment; an overview of the groups that use it; a description of the District's trail, park and recreational resources; local economic drivers including commercial, retail and housing conditions; and transportation systems.

The *Supporting Documents* lastly includes a summary of general planning processes and regulations that currently govern the District, from the 1983 Goose Lake Plan to the 2003 U-Med Universities and Medical District Framework Master Plan, to the BLM land patents.

The *Supporting Documents* is referenced throughout this plan as noted in the Introduction. Hard copies are available from the MOA's Planning Department—Long Range Planning Division and online at: muni.org.

Formulating this Plan

The District Plan Update includes the primary planning document and several appendices comprised of Case Studies, Examples, *Supporting Documents* Table of Contents, and the Cogen Report - Executive Summary.

PHASE 3. STAKEHOLDER REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The final phase of the planning effort involved the publishing and review of the UMED District Plan-Public Hearing Draft . A public workshop and open house, along with a work session and presentation to the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), were held. MOA staff presented the Public Hearing Draft to the Anchorage Assembly for adoption. It was important that the stakeholders, including the UMED Steering Team, provided comments and support during the public input process contributing to the successful adoption of the plan.

FORMULATING THE PLAN: APPENDICES HIGHLIGHTS

APPENDICES	HIGHLIGHTS
Appendix 5.1—Case Studies: Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TDM case study analyzes management programs throughout the country and extracts relevant concepts for the UMED District. The case study focuses on: accessibility, congestion, parking management, existing infrastructure maximization, transportation user costs, transportation development costs, environmental sustainability.
Appendix 5.2—Case Studies: Mixed-Use Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section explains the financial mechanisms and the partnerships that enable mixed-use development to occur. The case study examines three developments within relevant university neighborhoods: University Square in Madison, Wisconsin; the Uptown in Cleveland, Ohio; and the University Marketplace in Vancouver, Canada. These case studies explain how revitalization of strip commercial centers, public-private partnerships, and cross organizational collaboration come together in realizing mixed-use development
Appendix 5.3—Case Studies: Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section analyzes how various cities address the issues of water quality, urban forests, land development, and urban wildlife.
Appendix 5.4—Examples: Positive Town-Gown Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section analyzes town-gown relationships from four perspectives: empowering neighbors to communicate with organizations, city planning and policy tools for community-organization interactions, organizational goodwill and commitment to neighbors, and economic benefits of organizational-residential districts. Examples on each topic are briefly summarized and online sources are provided to direct more in-depth.
Appendix 5.5—Examples: Night Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section directs readers to online resources from the International Dark Sky Association, which works to improve night-time lighting and sky friendliness, while ensuring safe night-time lighting.
Appendix 5.6—Examples: Fresh Food Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section discusses examples of mobile food vendors which provide good interim access to fresh foods while the UMED District plans for growth. Online resources are provided to direct more in-depth research. This section also supports the ongoing research on food security.
Appendix 5.7—UMED Cogeneration Report Update - 2013—Executive Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section provides the executive summary of the 2013 Cogeneration Report. The Cogeneration Report examines Centralized versus Distributed Heat and Power Generation (Cogen) that was considered for the UMED District in a 2008 Cogeneration study. The 2013 updated study presents the latest information on combined heat and power generation technologies, and supports the feasibility for micro turbine generation that would provide cost-effective and sustainable heat and power systems.
Appendix 5.8— Supporting Documents—Table of Contents and Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Summary gives a brief overview of the <i>Supporting Documents</i>. Analysis in the <i>Supporting Documents</i> supports many of the recommendations in this plan.



Figure 14. Partial view of the UMED Core Area looking northwest.



Figure 15. Views within the UMED District.

2.5 CONTEXT

LOCATION

The UMED District is located approximately 3 miles southeast of downtown Anchorage. Two university campuses, multiple hospitals, 2 primary schools and 1 secondary school, and several social service providers prosper in the District. Approximately 6,300 people call the District “home.” The District is the second largest (and steadily-growing) employment center in the region, and is a major economic driver for the State of Alaska. Such a strong economic base indicates that the UMED District will continue to grow in the coming years in population, programs, and services. The District Plan Update includes a revised district boundary that newly incorporates the neighborhood area that borders the organizational core to Baxter Road, and that is located within the boundaries of the University Area Community Council. The inclusion of these areas enables a closer look at the potential for mixed-use and higher-density housing development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Key planning considerations in the UMED District include; master planning and development, mixed-use development and economic sustainability, cogeneration opportunities, the multi-modal transportation system including trails and pedestrian elements, support of the vibrant natural resource areas located in the Chester Creek watershed, parks and lakes, new Title 21, relevant design guidelines, and collaborative outreach and communication.

The UMED District Plan is an element of the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan. *See Figure 16: Anchorage 2020.*

MASTER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The UMED organizations, which includes the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), conduct master planning processes that encourage public input and participation by community councils, surrounding neighborhoods, and other interested parties. Master planning facilitates a better understanding of future development needs, articulates the access and management of private land held by the organizations. Public outreach for master plans is also intended to identify important public access opportunities on MOA-managed lands. UMED District plans should be formulated to provide support to these long-term master plans to sustain and grow the UMED District.

The new Title 21 includes section 21.03.110 – Institutional Master Planning: Establishes a framework for development of large institutions such as hospitals and universities. An institutional master plan is intended to “...permit flexibility for large institutions to have greater control over its own land use decision, while providing a level of understanding to the surrounding community about the potential growth of the institution and the resultant impacts, and to the Municipality about the public infrastructure and services that may be necessary to serve the planning area and adjacent neighborhoods.” The institutions within the District are encouraged to develop their Master Plans under this framework to implement the visions and goals of this District Plan. In addition, one of the implementation priorities of this plan is the education of users and property owners on the new Title 21 and the Institutional Master Plan section.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Encouragement of mixed-use development and increased density in the UMED District through infill development and small lot parcel consolidation can provide growth opportunities, economic sustainability, and increased job opportunities. The potential for realizing reduced development costs may also enable developers to conserve the area’s valued natural resources consistent with the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan.⁵ The mixed-use development concept provides goods and services easily accessible by walking or biking, and is important to those who live, work and study in the District. This is especially important considering that the UMED District hosts a permanent residential population, a growing student population, and hundreds of Alaska-wide residents who access the District.

Vibrant local commercial centers developed as mixed-use with housing, office, retail and commercial could provide multiple benefits. The opportunity for a more walkable district that could include a local grocer or other amenities has the ability to reduce vehicle trips outside the District for services that are not currently located there.

Anecdotal information from students and staff alike confirm that once they are in the UMED—they stay in the UMED for the day. Therefore the desire for more food and dining options was high on the priority list of desired amenities.

This planning process capitalized on the opportunity to recommend mixed-use, and higher density housing development with the inclusion of the residential areas.

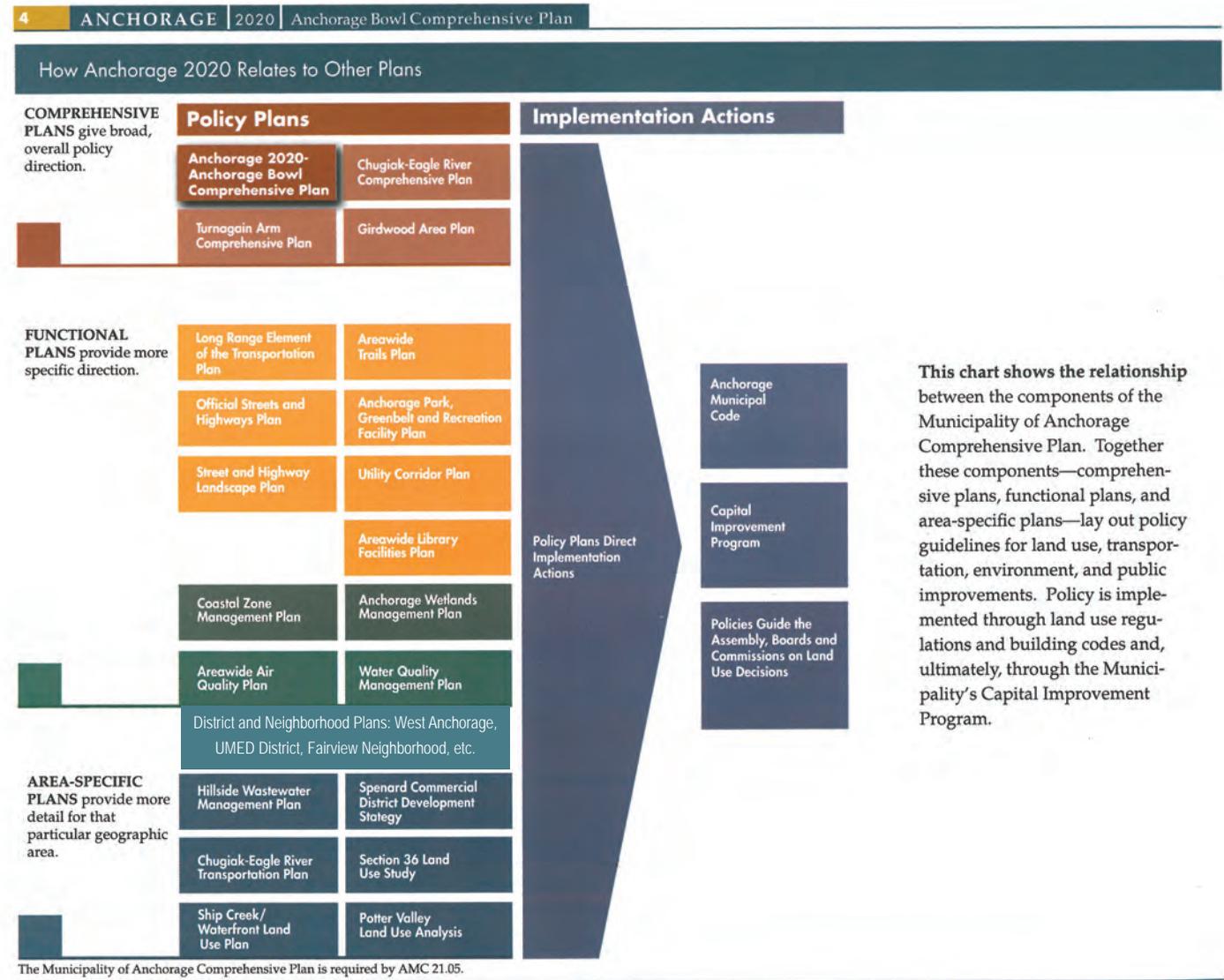


Figure 16. Hierarchy of planning and implementation elements – Anchorage 2020 - Source: Anchorage Bowl 2020 Comprehensive Plan.



Figure 17. Partial view of the UMED Core Area looking north.

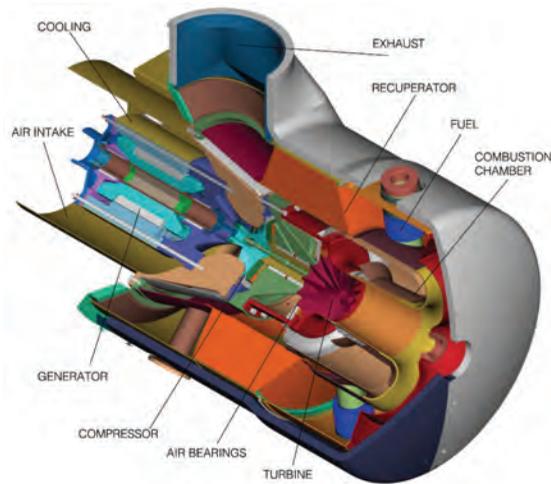


Figure 18. Microturbine model from the Cogeneration Study.

MOA participation could also become a factor when public-private partnerships are considered for new development. This could potentially be through Chapter 12.35-Deteriorated Properties ordinance, Federal Tax Credits or other incentives.

The 2012 Anchorage Housing Market Analysis found that the Anchorage Bowl area will be in a deficit of 8852 housing units by 2030, without increasing the current rate of redevelopment. Higher-density and mixed-use development at strategic locations could help fill some of the gap.

The identification of appropriate land use designations in the Plan area could lead to zoning changes initiated by private property owners. Increased density and compact housing options are consistent with the 2012 Anchorage Housing Market Analysis. The MOA has the opportunity to identify specific opportunity areas for housing development at increased density with this plan.⁶

COGENERATION—COMBINED HEAT AND POWER

The feasibility of a large cogeneration facility to provide combined heat and power (CHP) was explored for the UMED District in 2003. The 2003 study resulted in a multi-million dollar proposal that was later dismissed due to a lack of funding and required infrastructure. Evolving technology in the cogeneration field, that does not require the significant infrastructure or financial investment documented in the 2003 plan, is now a viable option under consideration by the UMED organizations.

The organizations desire to reduce their liability and secure a secondary source of cost-effective power in light of roller coaster fuel costs associated with increased operating costs.

This would be possible in two ways; new CHP technology, and a legal shift in operations by Anchorage Municipal Light and Power (ML&P). To that end, organizations within the Anchorage area are seeking relief from the current ML&P tariff with assistance from the Alaska Regulatory Commission. Several large power users are watching in anticipation of a positive outcome for CHP.

CHP is now a requirement on all large Federal Housing and Urban Development funded projects. CHP is one of the most sustainable methods to significantly reduce annual energy costs, while more fully utilizing limited fossil fuels used to generate electrical power. The average efficiency of fossil-fueled power plants in the U.S. is 33%. This has remained virtually unchanged for 40 years. This means that two-thirds of the energy generated from that fuel is lost in waste heat. CHP systems capture the waste heat and convert it to useful energy for either heating or cooling. CHP achieves overall efficiencies of close to 80%.⁷ CHP efficiencies can translate into increased investment in patient care and student programming notwithstanding the unprecedented fossil fuel efficiencies to be gained.

UMED DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The UMED District is bordered by several major arterials: Tudor Road, Lake Otis Parkway, Northern Lights Boulevard, and Boniface Parkway. In addition, several collector streets are located within the District: Elmore Road, UAA Drive, 36th Avenue/Providence Drive, and Baxter Road. The major arterials accommodate and are key links to and from the UMED District. Approximately 90% of Anchorage's total travel is by single-occupant vehicle or carpool.⁸

UMED District drivers arrive by these primary roadways from destinations throughout the Anchorage Bowl, Girdwood, Eagle River, and the Matsu Valley. Traffic delays are mostly experienced during AM and PM peak rush hours.

Users of the UMED enjoy the walkability of the District and typically access the local streets and trails for exercise during breaks away from the job or classes. It is important then to provide a connected multi-modal transportation network to facilitate access to, from, and around the core UMED District area.

TRAILS AND PEDESTRIAN FEATURES

The UMED District is at the convergence of the Chester and Campbell Creek trail systems. Recent trail improvements provide a contiguous multi-modal trail network for bikes, walkers, skiers and sled dog teams in and through the UMED. However, snow and icy conditions make winter trail and pedestrian corridor maintenance costly. The Nordic Ski Association is one of many partners, whom assist in maintaining ski trails during the winter months including the Chester and Campbell Creek trails.

APU trails are popular for cross-country skiing in winter and walking in summer. APU's trails are private and are primarily dedicated to APU ski team training. The APU trails are maintained to support that function. UAA also has a system of internal trails that connect to the MOA trail system. The public is welcome on both APU and UAA trails. However, future projects may necessitate the removal or relocation of APU or UAA trails as time goes on and new development occurs.

PROPOSED NORTHERN ACCESS ROAD

The Northern Access Road engineering study was completed during the UMED District Plan update process. Identification of a feasible connection through the UMED core was completed by DOWL in the Northern Access Reconnaissance Study Report (2011), which contains a “technical evaluation of transportation needs and potential solutions to meet those needs.” This report presented potential alternatives for transportation improvements, including the implementation of a TDM program. The follow-up 2014 engineering study is intended to further determine an alignment for a proposed northern access through the core UMED area.

The Northern Access to UMED District Concept Report published in June 2014 recommended the roadway cross section depicted in Figure 19. The new road would be built with two vehicular travel lanes, in-street striped bike lanes, a 10-foot separated multi-use paved path, 6-foot sidewalk, and three roundabouts for access to APU, UAA, and at the Providence/Elmore Road intersection. Three grade-separated pedestrian crossings (bridges) are planned connecting to the 6-foot sidewalk and the 10-foot separated multi-use path. The pedestrian facilities would connect to the existing public trail system.¹⁰ With changes in administrations within the UMED organizations, the idea of a northern access project has become more feasible. However, a project would need to be fully funded and be able to mitigate the impacts to the natural area within the core area of the District. This natural area includes Class-A wetlands and prime wildlife habitat.

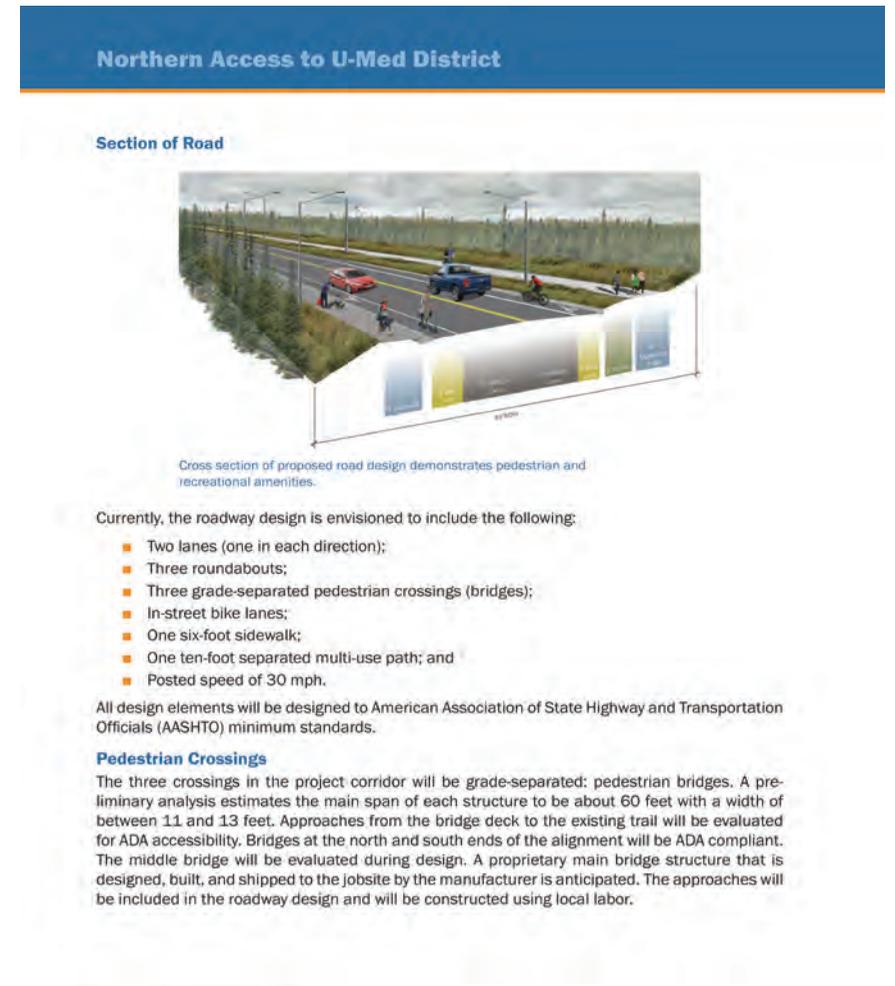


Figure 19. Section of the proposed Northern Access Road - DOT&PF - WWW.UMEDnorthernaccess.com/planview.

PARKING

Parking in the UMED District is provided by the individual organizations for their operational purposes. Parking requirements are found in Title 21. UAA charges its students, faculty, and staff for parking to help defray the cost of providing parking on campus. All other parking within the UMED core area is free. Case study information can be found in the Appendix 5.1 on providing and managing parking.

TRANSIT AND SHUTTLE SERVICES

People Mover Public Transit service in the UMED District experiences the highest ridership demand in the Anchorage area. There is strong potential for implementing an organized Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program in the District to increase transit ridership, carpool and vanpool use in an effort to reduce single-occupant vehicle travel, and to provide cost effective travel options. This could be accomplished by incentivizing the use of alternative modes, redistributing transportation demand to transit, biking, walking, skiing, car-sharing, and/or telecommuting. TDM advocates the increased availability of travel options, manages congestion, reduces constraints on existing parking supplies, can reduce transportation costs to users, may reduce development costs such as off-site parking, and can contribute to meeting the environmental and sustainability goals identified in the Anchorage 2020. Shuttle service is provided in and to the UMED District by UAA and ANTHC from several locations in the Anchorage bowl, and on the respective campus areas. Shuttle stops on organizational campuses are located for convenient access to several locations including outlying parking lots where easier access to adequate parking is found.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Moose, fox, black bear, loons, waterfowl, and migratory song birds are found in the UMED District area.¹¹ A portion of the Chester Creek Watershed containing the south fork of Chester Creek meanders through the UMED District constrained by neighborhoods, roads, trails, and development in the organizational core. Chester Creek is valued for views, trails, wildlife habitat, its contribution to the health of the overall watershed system, and as a unique urban amenity.

However, this portion of the watershed is severely impaired by a variety of impacts from 1970's and 80's development. The importance and functions of the watershed were not considered then.¹² Early development allowed construction within creek corridors including fill and loss of important salmon tributaries. Science and research on these trends led to the formation and adoption of environmental protection laws and code that now guide the development of natural areas in Anchorage.^{13 14}

The South Fork of Chester Creek flows through University Lake (a former gravel pit) and Goose Lake, providing important habitat for a variety of salmon and trout. Recent efforts to restore creek habitat see increased salmon return numbers at local fish counters as a result. The UMED District Plan Update supports rehabilitation of Chester Creek and its important watershed. This is accomplished by aligning UMED District Implementation Items with the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan; the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan* and the individual organizational master plans. Compatible development adjacent to natural areas is defined in the UMED Design Guidelines.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT PATENTS

There are five separate Bureau of Land Management Land Patents in the UMED District Core. These patents were obtained in the early 1970s for the most part by Alaska Methodist University (AMU). AMU subsequently conveyed large portions of the patented properties to the Alaska University system with specific development restrictions. The land patents describe the allowed uses in the area. The patents on APU land have expired. In the larger undeveloped areas of UAA campus, "For School Purposes only" is indicated.

PARKS AND LAKES

Three lakes are located in the core district area close to the UAA and APU campuses. The Goose Lake and University Lake Parks function as regional parks and are owned and managed by the Municipality of Anchorage. These parks draw visitors from across the Anchorage Bowl. A resounding need for adequate parking, public education, and management of these two important recreation resources quickly moved to the forefront of this planning process.

Mosquito Lake is part of a large wetland area located on UAA property. Mosquito Lake is better accessed during winter when the ground freezes and there is snow. Mitigation efforts to manage Mosquito Lake and the adjoining A-class wetlands will be necessary with any future large infrastructure project.

Reflection Lake and the ANTHC pond may also receive attention and additional management actions identified in the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan*.

MOA TITLE 21 – LAND USE PLANNING CODE

In 2013, the Municipality completed a comprehensive rewrite to its development code—Title 21. At that time, the Assembly committed to creating a community education process for the new code. The Assembly continues to allow projects to be submitted under either the new or old code through the end of 2015. This decision is at the discretion of the developer.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Design Guidelines in the 2003 UMED Plan are included and amended with this plan to provide continuity in development for all large projects. They are incorporated in Vision 3: Quality of the Built Environment.



Figure 20. Goose Lake and view of the Chugach Range.

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

UMED planning processes have consistently recommended continued collaboration and communication by and among the many UMED stakeholders. The 2015 Plan Update also supports an ongoing collaborative communication process. This can be accomplished a variety of ways. Recommendations are found in Vision 5: Community & Partnerships. The UMED Steering Team was formed to help lead the 2015 UMED planning effort. That steering team process will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration.

2.6 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The UMED District is classified as a Major Employment Center slated for continued growth potential in Anchorage 2020. The District has stable and well-kept residential neighborhoods with local schools, a variety of recreational opportunities, and contains a large portion of the South Fork of Chester Creek. Chester Creek is considered a prized urban amenity in the midst of our city. Numerous factors will be addressed as the various organizations move forward in their missions to provide much-needed and desired services for Anchorage, and Alaska as a whole.

The stable neighborhoods located within the UMED District enjoy the close proximity and access to urban wooded areas in the Chester Creek Watershed system. However, much of the wooded area located in the core of the UMED is privately owned. Over time this area may be developed. Planned and new development would provide increased services and educational opportunities, anticipated to generate necessary revenue to support the long-term financial needs of educational and research programs.

Ongoing development of the multi-modal transportation system will continue to present challenges and opportunities. The governmental agencies, including the Municipality of Anchorage and Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, both responsible for roads and public trails, must seek to mitigate impacts of the multi-modal transportation system on the surrounding property owners and the prized natural areas as identified in this plan and the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan*.



Figure 21. View of the eastern portion of the UMED District looking south.



Figure 22. Residential development in the UMED District.

Infill and redevelopment of under-utilized properties also present a future opportunity to provide office, retail, commercial, and housing options. The Mixed-Use Case Study by Strategic Economics gave robust recommendations for this type of redevelopment, including public/private partnership success stories and potential locations for development. Property owners considering projects in the UMED District can capitalize on this analysis to pursue future development as the UMED District further grows to meet the needs of our community. Strategic Economics also analyzed the real estate market conditions and identified areas along the perimeter of the UMED District with the most potential for redevelopment. Both efforts support the feasibility of a UMED Village.

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSIONS

Two university campuses—Alaska Pacific University (APU) and University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)—multiple healthcare centers—Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API), and Providence Alaska Medical Center, and community service providers including the McLaughlin Youth Center (MYC)—are located within the UMED District. In addition to providing educational and medical services to the region, these organizations also benefit the immediate community through health and wellness programs and community-based research. As these organizations grow, opportunities arise for cross-organizational and neighborhood collaboration, commercial development, and additional jobs and housing. In addition, this plan aims to improve town-gown relationships by recommending organizational-residential collaboration, community organizing among residents, and expansion of community outreach efforts.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The UMED District has longtime stable neighborhoods interspersed with single-family and a variety of multi-family housing types. There are also two mobile home parks in the area: one of approximately 30 acres on Boniface Parkway, and a second park of over 7 acres on Baxter Road. The two mobile home parks have provided an affordable home ownership option to the community. However as these larger parcels undergo new ownership or increases to land values redevelopment should be planned for and expected.

The UMED District neighborhoods are well situated with easy access to the jobs and services located in the District, Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, and the industrial belt south of Tudor, Midtown and Downtown, Anchorage. Numerous trails link the neighborhoods to the area's parks and schools providing access and recreational opportunities for residents.

For sale and rental housing does not stay on the market for long. The neighborhood areas were largely built in the 70's and early 80's. Much of it during the oil boom years. At that time the cost for constructing off-site infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, lighting, and adequate drainage were often outweighed by the high demand for housing. The result is a lack of sidewalk and pedestrian improvements in most neighborhoods. In the ensuing years the Municipality, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, and developers have been incrementally upgrading existing right-of-ways with Municipal-code required improvements.

Complete streets with sidewalks, adequate lighting, relocated utility boxes and poles, and buffer landscaping is highly-desired. This is in support of the exceptional quality of life found in these neighborhoods and is consistent with the UMED District Design Guidelines.

Neighborhood residents expressed concern about increased traffic, the result of organizational growth, would impact the residential quality of their neighborhoods. Piper Street improvements with a raised intersection and roundabout are successful examples of traffic calming that could be used to mitigate increased traffic to allay resident concerns. Annually the Municipality of Anchorage develops a five-year capital improvement program with input from the neighborhood community councils that may include roadway improvements..

The University Area Community Council is encouraged each spring to submit their list of capital projects such roadway safety, drainage, parks, and trail improvements to the MOA CIP program. The UMED District Plan Update is a means for realizing the Council's annual requests for improvements. Future residential development is envisioned through infill and redevelopment of under-utilized properties.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Much of the District's appeal is traced to the wooded landscape of Chester Creek and the natural areas of the Chester Creek watershed found in the District core and throughout. This includes high value wetlands classified as A, B, or C that provide wildlife habitat and contribute to the overall health of the watershed.¹⁵

The natural areas include wooded areas, wetlands, a continuous creek, several lakes, and varied wildlife all set against panoramic views of the Chugach Mountains. The Chester Creek watershed system serves important biological and ecological functions and contributes to the unique character and quality of life for the District.

This natural environment also serves an important social function in the UMED District. Major parks within the UMED District include Goose Lake Park, University Lake Park, Castle Heights Park, and Folker Park. The Chester Creek wetlands are also used seasonally accessible in winter by skiers and walkers.¹⁷

Trails within the District include: the Chester Creek Trail, Chester/Campbell Creek Trail Link, and trails within University Lake and Goose Lake Parks. Opportunities for recreation make the UMED District a desirable place to work as well as live; and this environment serves to attract students, staff, and faculty to the District. The natural environment found in the UMED District is indicated as an important contributing factor for students when choosing where to pursue a university education.

The multitude of users, however, impacts the very natural resources that draw them to the UMED. Balancing land management, allowed uses, and watershed protection presents both an opportunity and a challenge. Adjoining organizational property owners presented ongoing issues regarding off-leash dogs and the impacts that this issue poses to the many users of their trails and property. This includes children during summer school camps, on posted trails, and in interactions with wildlife.



Figure 23. Views within the UMED District.



Figure 24. Chester Creek within the UMED District.

The University Lake Park master planning effort will help identify ideas for future management of this important natural area.

Future growth also presents challenges to this natural setting as development continues. The desire for achieving a good balance between the District's unique combination of residential, organizational, and natural environments was clearly articulated by stakeholders throughout the development of this plan. Efforts to maximize these development and recreation opportunities, while not further degrading the watershed presents some unique challenges.

The *Chester Creek Watershed Plan* includes low impact development priority items for funding in Table 6.3.¹⁸ Environmental conservation and protection is in the best interest of all stakeholders interested in the long-term development and sustainability of the UMED District. Residents within the UMED District can also participate in such efforts by maintaining their property, addressing dog and other harmful waste, volunteering to maintain lakes and creeks, and choosing alternative transportation modes of travel.

Similarly, academic organizations have an opportunity as educators of future generations to encourage stewardship of our finite resources through future development decisions, and educational programming that provides student participation and support. Residential and organizational growth and natural resource protection will continue to co-exist through unique place-making projects, as funding and programming of natural resource strategies and conservation are found, that help protect our wildlife diversity, and support our growing economy.

The District Plan Update acknowledges and supports the many important functional plans that guide development in the Anchorage Bowl, including the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan*. The acquisition of conservation easements was proposed in the 2003 U-Med Framework Plan. However, a conservation easement program was not established or funded. The District Plan Update supports a conservation easement program with funding from public, private, and land conservation entities such as the Great Land Trust. The program would be established to give private land owners the opportunity to voluntarily identify portions of their property for conservation, watershed protection, and wildlife habitat preservation purposes throughout the Chester Creek Watershed.

Recently, APU mapped an area of "B" wetlands and known moose habitat for a potential conservation easement. APU has communicated their intent to offer the property for protection as an easement.²⁰ Purchase of the APU property by a conservation group or public/private partnership would result in important wildlife habitat protection and management.



Figure 25. Paved trails within the UMED District.



Figure 26. Unpaved trails within the UMED District.

TRAILS ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND

A portion of the MOA's world-class trail system is located along Campbell Creek and Chester Creek. These public trails connect with a system of sidewalks and multi-use pathways, paved and dirt multi-use trails located along roadways, through the parks and wooded areas. Much of this system is located on MOA rights-of way. However, trail users can make connections to the private trails on several of the organizational campuses including PAMC, UAA, ANTHC, and APU. A high value is placed on the recreational opportunities that the public and private trails provide.

There is a challenge for the community as trails on organizational properties are relocated through master plan development. For that reason trails located on private property including the four organizations mentioned above were not considered as part of the multi-modal public trail system for planning purposes. The organizations will continue to provide updated trails maps as development occurs or changes are made to their private trail systems.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The 2003 U-Med Framework Plan, and Northern Access Reconnaissance Study Report recommended Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, transit service increases, and connector street and trail improvements. These alternative can facilitate an increase in the availability and use of alternative modes of travel in and to the UMED District.

Therefore, multi-modal transportation elements including roadway improvements, parking management, increased transit and shuttle services, along with neighborhood pedestrian access are also important elements of this plan.

The UMED District is a hub for commuters. Financially feasible and pedestrian friendly transportation systems are desired by users and residents of the UMED District. The ability to fund and maintain a multi-modal transportation system in the UMED will present opportunities and challenges well into the future as the costs of providing facility improvements, transportation alternatives, and maintenance and operations costs rise.

The MOA must recognize the UMED District as a major provider of employment, and therefore increase the percentage of funding spent within the District on multi-modal transportation system improvements. This funding could be obtained in the AMATS project approval process. This desire was expressed throughout the public outreach process.

CURRENT ZONING IN THE UMED DISTRICT

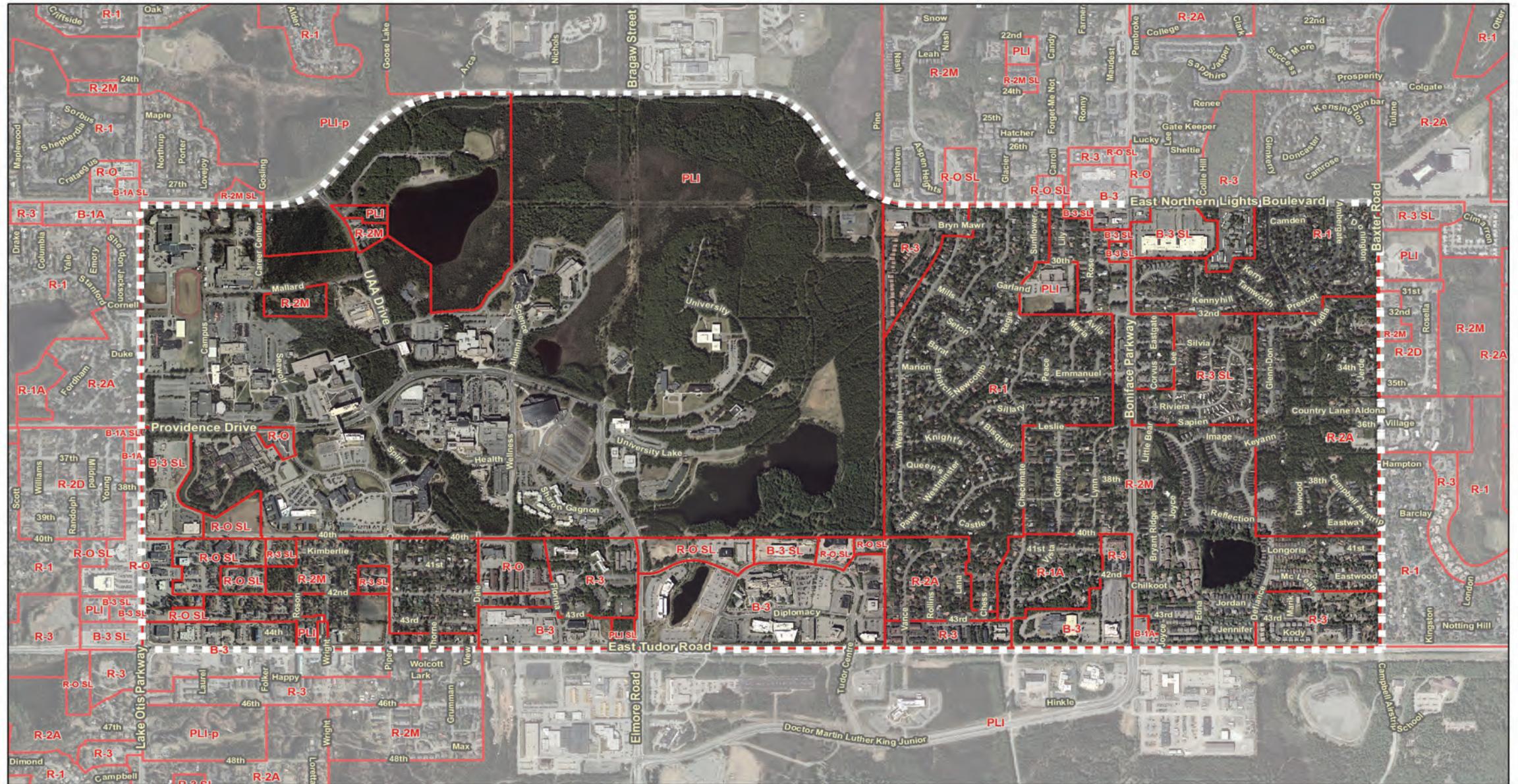
Existing zoning in the UMED District is depicted on the UMED District Zoning Map on the following page. This provides the current snapshot of zoning districts within the UMED District at the adoption of this plan. A full description of uses allowed in each zoning district is found in the Anchorage Land Use Code - Title 21, which is available online at www.municode.com. Hardcopies are also available at the Planning Counter at 4700 Elmore Road, Anchorage, AK.



Figure 27. Piper Street - UMED District Gateway.



Figure 28. Bus stops within the UMED District.



UMED District Existing Zoning

as of March 8, 2016

Imagery: 2015 LIDAR

-  UMED Plan Area
-  Zoning Boundaries

Residential Zoning Districts

- R-1 One-Family
- R-1A One-Family
- R-2A Two-Family
- R-2M Multi-Family
- R-3 Multi-Family
- R-3 SL Multi-Family Special Limitation

Business Zoning Districts

- B-1A Local & Neighborhood
- B-3 General
- B-3 SL General Special Limitation

Other Zoning Districts

- R-O Residential Office
- R-O SL Residential Office Special Limitation
- PLI Public Lands & Institutions
- PLI SL Public Lands & Institutions Special Limitation
- PLI-p Public Lands and Institutions Parks

