

# INTRODUCTION

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This Neighborhood Plan for Government Hill is a unique effort. While the plan will be the first formal neighborhood plan for Government Hill, it builds on ideas generated within the community over several years, including materials developed as part of an informal plan in 2000. As such, this plan reflects an active, on-going interest in the future of the community on the part of neighborhood residents, property owners, and businesses.

The Government Hill Neighborhood Plan is the first of its kind for the Municipality of Anchorage. While other neighborhoods have developed vision statements, capital improvement projects and action items, this neighborhood-specific plan is the first officially adopted plan by the Anchorage Assembly and is an integral element of Anchorage 2020. Through its public outreach process, this plan has garnered broad support and acted as a catalyst to encourage the growth of neighborhood planning in Anchorage.

## A. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

### 1. Government Hill Boundaries

The planning area is defined by the official boundaries of the Government Hill Neighborhood, as defined by the Federation of Community Councils (Includes a context map, indicating abutting features). At the core of the neighborhood are the residential and commercial areas. The neighborhood boundary also encompasses lands below the hill, including the Port of Anchorage, the Alaska Railroad Yards, and properties along Whitney and North Post Roads in Ship Creek.

### 2. Range of Topics Addressed

The plan focuses on the physical aspects of the neighborhood that contribute to its character and its function as a place to live, work, and play. It considers these in a series of planning systems including land use, parks and open space, circulation and access, and urban design. It identifies those features of



May 2012 workshop participants



May 2012 workshop participants



Workshop visioning activity



Kids corner



*Residents of Government Hill, Bob French and Stephanie Kessler, participate in a visioning exercise at the May 2012 public workshop.*

the neighborhood that are valued and should be protected and enhanced, and it also sets forth proposals for improvements in other areas.

The planning discussion concentrates on the core of the neighborhood, those blocks of residential and commercial uses located on the top of the hill.

### 3. Purpose of the Plan

In addition to what is stated in the Executive Summary, the plan is intended to serve as a guide for public and private improvement in the area. To do so, it lays out a framework for planning that will guide the Municipality of Anchorage in coordinating with various agencies and departments to ensure that plan goals and objectives are met.

This plan will guide the development of the Government Hill community, enhancing it as a place to live, work, and promote economic vitality. The GHNP is a policy document and does not modify Title 21, as it relates to land use and development (or take precedence over them).

The plan will also serve as a base of information for neighboring entities to use in their own planning efforts. These include the Port of Anchorage, the Alaska Railroad, and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER).

The plan also serves as a means for the private sector to make informed decisions about investing in the area. This includes residents who own homes and are planning regular maintenance and repairs, businesses that are in the area or may seek to locate there, and developers who wish to build on Government Hill.

Finally, the plan serves as a guide for mitigating potential impacts that may occur when the neighborhood is faced with large-scale development issues such as the Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) project, an influx of residential and commercial investment, road improvements and realignments, and relocation of existing services.

## B. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The plan includes contributions from many residents of Government Hill, businesses, and property owners. At key stages in the project, residents participated in community workshops where they helped to identify key features of the area that are valued, outlined the framework concepts that help to define the neighborhood, and refined specific plan elements.

The plan was developed concurrently with three other projects as part of a Section 106 process to identify historic resources. These include the Historic Preservation Plan for



Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods (HPP), the South Addition Survey Studies (SASS), and the Government Hill Oral Histories Project.

Note that the Historic Preservation Plan for Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods identifies portions of the residential areas of the neighborhood as having historic significance and recommends their nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This neighborhood plan recognizes those areas of historic significance, and anticipates continuing investment in proper maintenance and stewardship of properties located there.

Representatives of major land holdings in the neighborhood also joined in the planning process. These included JBER, the Port of Anchorage, AT&T Alaska (Alascom), and the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Staff with the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) also provided comments.

Some provisions of the GHNP will be implemented through an established overlay district that demonstrates the shared vision of community residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders. Other broader policy provisions will be implemented through discretionary recommendations and subject to approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The information and guidance in the GHNP can be used to influence and inform the planning and design of future development projects -- including public infrastructure projects such as a transportation, trails, and parks. This is to ensure the protection of cultural and historic neighborhood character and the resident quality of life. The plan will also serve as a guide for attracting private-sector investment.

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