



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The West Anchorage District is a roughly 13,200-acre subarea covering the westernmost portions of the Anchorage Bowl. West Anchorage is recognized for its unique neighborhood character, urban international airport, popular commercial corridors, busy general aviation and seaplane base, prized recreational lands, and extensive coastline.

1.1 Plan Role and Purpose

In the context of *Anchorage 2020: Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020)*, neighborhood or district plans are intended to address long-range land use and development issues at a more focused, subarea level. *Anchorage 2020* intended district plans to “include land use and residential intensity maps, which will guide subsequent action on rezonings, plats, and capital improvement programming and design.” District plans are essential for the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) to identify and resolve issues that are unique to particular subareas of the Anchorage Bowl.

Several planning areas were identified in *Anchorage 2020* as needing specific attention and study for unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities. These areas include the Downtown, East Anchorage, Hillside, Midtown, Ship Creek/Waterfront, and University/Medical Districts.

Anchorage 2020 also recommended development of the *West Anchorage District Plan (WADP)* that recognizes “a symbiotic relationship between the airport and surrounding community, and that activities from one can impact the other.” As such, the *WADP* is needed to develop mechanisms and recommendations to address long-standing land use conflicts between the community and the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA). The *WADP* is intended to establish a framework for making future development decisions that align with long-range land use recommendations in *Anchorage 2020*. It also supplements the policies of existing functional plans to support the vision outlined in *Anchorage 2020*.

1.2 Planning Area Boundary

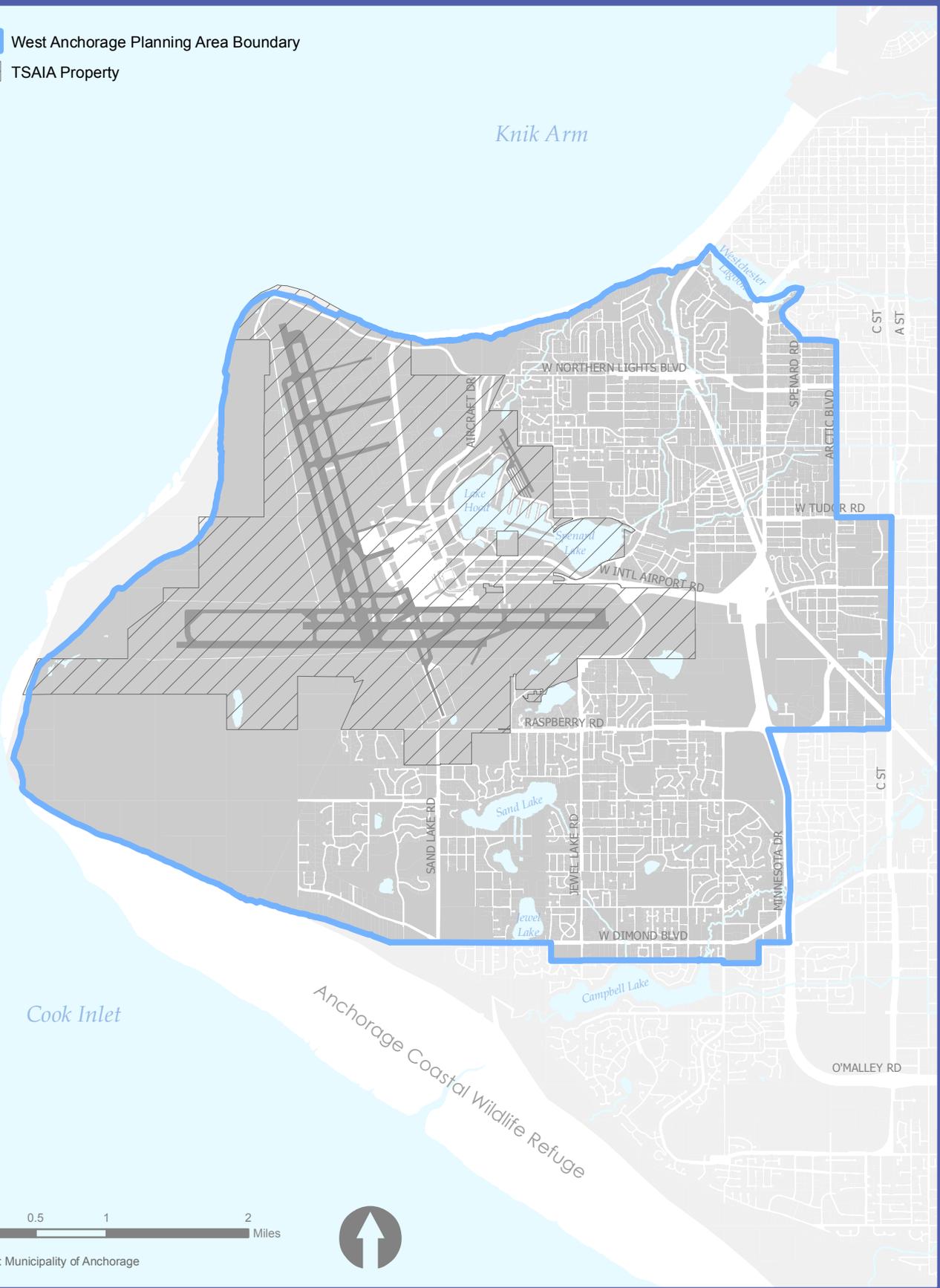
Anchorage 2020 discussed creation of a *West Anchorage District Plan* but left the determination of boundaries to the plan itself. After careful consideration, a specific planning area boundary was established using various criteria including: affinities with the airport and related land use issues, Community Council (CC) boundaries, the adjacent *Midtown District Plan* boundary, major commercial and transportation corridors, and natural and man-made features (e.g., Cook Inlet and airport noise contours). (During plan development, the northeast planning boundary was adjusted to include the northeast corner of the Spenard Community Council. Chapter 2 summaries do not include data from this additional area.)

Generally, the West Anchorage planning area extends from Westchester Lagoon on the north to West Dimond Boulevard on the south and includes all the land extending west of various road segments (Minnesota Boulevard, C Street, Arctic Boulevard, and Spenard Road) to Cook Inlet (Exhibit 1-1). At the beginning of the *WADP* process, the draft *Midtown District Plan (MTDP)* was well underway. Its western planning boundary was established

along the centerline of Spenard Road. Since the *MTDP* included interconnected roadway and transportation recommendations and policies, it was determined that the new *WADP* should not interfere with those efforts. It was also felt that overlapping the two plans would lead to confusion and the potential for inconsistencies. Since that time, the *MTDP* was placed on hold and the *WADP* was approved first.

The Spenard Community Council (SCC) expressed repeated concerns about “breaking up” the SCC area within the two plans. The SCC is generally satisfied with the *WADP* treatment of Spenard but has substantive concerns about recommendations of the *MTDP* (e.g., that Spenard was not designated as its own discrete subarea), the public process associated with that plan, and with future land uses assigned in the trailer parks between Arctic Boulevard and Spenard Road. To address this, the *WADP* includes recommendations to ensure that the portions of Spenard within both the *WADP* and the *MTDP* are considered together in implementing a “strategic plan” where both areas are detail-planned as a unified whole and discrepancies can be harmonized. When the *MTDP* is reactivated, it must revisit and account for *WADP*’s Spenard-area recommendations.

-  West Anchorage Planning Area Boundary
-  TSAIA Property



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Source: Municipality of Anchorage



1.3 Public Outreach

The *WADP* process started in early 2009 with a review of existing plans and policies and by interviewing experts regarding existing conditions in West Anchorage. A summary of this background material is contained in Chapter 2 – Existing Conditions, which is based on the detailed West Anchorage Baseline Profile available on the MOA Community Development Department's Planning Division website.

Table 1 summarizes public involvement and outreach efforts. *WADP* public involvement began in March 2009 with visits to **Community Councils (CCs)** to introduce the project, scope, goals, and schedule, and to solicit members for the **West Anchorage Planning Group (WAPG)**.

The **WAPG** was convened on March 31, 2009. It represented key stakeholders and interests in West Anchorage, and included representation from community councils, residents, TSAIA, local businesses, and recreational users. The WAPG roster is listed in the Acknowledgements page. The WAPG was designed to review and discuss products of the planning process during five milestone-based meetings; additional meetings were added to provide focused discussion on the airport/community interface and land use.

The Planning Team conducted several **"Vision Workshops"** to identify strengths and values, vision and goals, and issues and opportunities. A similar exercise was conducted for a series of seven focus groups in May 2009.

Focus Groups, or one-time stakeholder meetings, were used to compare values and visions of a diverse set of stakeholders and gather information from experts on particular topics. Stakeholder experts were grouped into the following topic areas: Economic Development, Housing and Redevelopment, Quality of Place, Utilities, Ecosystem Quality, and Recreation.

Students and youth are sometimes overlooked in community plans, although they are affected by their implementation. Steller Secondary School students were given the opportunity to choose the *WADP* as a seminar topic in spring 2009, but there was not enough interest to hold the session. Two Mears Middle School classes participated in a workshop on October 9, 2009, to brainstorm about the things they liked about West Anchorage, what they saw as limitations to success in future development, and what were some suggestions for new development. During the school semester, students broke into groups to choose a development project, write essays, and create PowerPoint presentations. Projects were presented on December 8, 2009, to the planning team about a specific development they would like to see and where it should be located.

The integration of all comments generated during the initial phases of public outreach culminated in an **Issues-Goals-Objectives Table** that is available on the municipal Planning Division's website. The contents of this table were then synthesized as plan vision, goals, and objectives statements discussed in Chapter 3.

Finally, **the general public** had an opportunity to review and comment on the *WADP* Public Review Draft, and will be able to review and comment again at subsequent public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Commission and Anchorage Assembly. Ultimately, the Anchorage Assembly will approve an adopting ordinance incorporating the *WADP* as an element of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Table 1.3-1 Summary of Public Outreach for the *West Anchorage District Plan*

Group	2009			2010			2011	
General Public	Issues & Objectives Public Workshop Oct 8						PZC Hearings July 25+	Assembly Hearings TBD
Spenard CC	Project Introduction Jan 7	Visioning Workshop Apr 2		Land Use Workshop Jan 7			Public Draft Presentation Apr 6	
Turnagain CC	Project Introduction Jan 8	Visioning Workshop Apr 3		Land Use Workshop Feb 4			Public Draft Presentation Apr 7	
Sand Lake CC	Project Introduction Jan 12	Visioning Workshop Apr 13		Land Use Workshop Jan 8			Public Draft Presentation Apr 11	
Focus Groups	Economic Development Housing & Redevelopment Quality of Place May 28		Utilities Ecosystem Quality Recreation May 29					
WAPG	Meeting #1: Visioning Workshop Mar 31	Meeting #2: Internal Draft Profile Review Jun 18	Meeting #3: Issues & Objectives Workshop Oct 6	Special Topic Workshops: Land Use, Airport (2) Jan 5, 27 Feb 10	Input Exercises: Vision & Goals Parcel Ranking Mar 17	Internal Draft Plan Review Jul 28	Internal Draft Work Sessions Sep 16, 22, 29	
School/ Youth Project		Steller Classroom Workshop April 1	Mears Classroom Workshop Oct 9	Mears Group Presentations Dec 8				
	2009			2010			2011	

1.4 Use of the Plan

The *WADP* will provide a cohesive, integrated plan for development in West Anchorage and assist government officials, municipal agencies, airport staff, developers, the general public, and others in evaluating specific development, infrastructure and policy proposals in the context of broader district-wide considerations. It is also intended as a common resource for the MOA and TSAIA to use in developing cooperative solutions to impacts of the community and airport on each other.

1.5 Relationship to Other Plans

The *WADP* is one of many elements of the Municipality's Comprehensive Plan. Other elements include various functional plans (e.g., *Areawide Trails Plan*) and other district plans (e.g., the *Hillside District Plan* or the *Midtown District Plan*, which is still a draft). In addition, the *Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport Master Plan* contains important data, assumptions, and long-range development plans within the airport boundary. The zoning code and zoning map are essential to understanding how and where development can occur. Links to additional related functional plans and resources are located on the Planning Department's web site.

1.5.1 Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020)

Anchorage 2020 is the broad overarching policy plan that guides growth and development within the Bowl. It was completed in 2001 and directed that a *WADP* be prepared to study and recommend solutions to long-standing airport compatibility and land use issues. When adopted, the *WADP* will become a formal element of the Comprehensive Plan, establishing the official land use for West Anchorage and providing policy refinement for the area.

1.5.2 Land Use Plan Map

Currently, land use direction in Anchorage is guided by the 1982 *Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Development Plan*. Due to the age of this map, a bowl-wide update was initiated by the MOA and conceptually approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2006 (PZC Resolution 2006-035). In Attachment A of PZC Resolution 2006-035, from pages 1-2, it stated:

While the outcome of individual neighborhood plans may refine the overall Land Use Plan Map, changes to land designations that affect expected use types and densities should remain within the parameters of general conformance with the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map. This ensures that the area specific plans cumulatively achieve the overall Bowl-wide policy for the distribution of future growth.

The *WADP* land use is based on and maintains overall consistency with the 2006 Land Use Plan Map. Minor refinements were included where appropriate. Upon adoption of the *WADP*, The *WADP* Land Use Map will supercede both preexisting maps and become the official Land Use Map for West Anchorage.

1.5.3 Zoning Ordinance (Title 21)

Title 21 of the Anchorage Municipal Code, the Land Use Planning Regulations, regulates the design, construction, and uses of all land, buildings, and structures within the MOA. Title 21 implements the *WADP* Land Use Map through zoning districts, development standards, subdivision regulations, design guidelines, and other development controls. Where zoning districts and *WADP* land use designations differ, development is allowed under the existing zoning category. However, where discretionary zone changes are requested, the new zoning must be consistent with the West Anchorage land use designations.

1.5.4 TSAIA Airport Master Plan

Airport master plans are required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the specific purpose of defining an airport's short- and long-term development strategy for meeting future aviation demand. The plans are prepared to address specific FAA parameters, have a narrow aviation focus, and currently do not include formal municipal oversight. For these reasons, *Anchorage 2020* directed the *WADP* to focus heavily on understanding and responding to airport issues, regulations and plans to achieve "a formal interface and coordination with the TSAIA Master Plan." *WADP* recommendations are not binding on the airport but will be given consideration by TSAIA in future Airport Master Plan updates. The *WADP* addresses the interrelationship between TSAIA and MOA land use actions and identifies cooperative strategies to benefit both the airport and the community.

1.6 Plan Organization

Chapter 1 Introduction contains the purpose and organization of the *WADP*, as well as its boundary, public outreach process, and relationship to other key planning documents.

Chapter 2 Existing Conditions presents an overview of the physical and socioeconomic characteristics that define West Anchorage to provide a planning context for the *WADP*.

Chapter 3 Planning Foundations is a summary of the elements that drive the *WADP* planning process, including focal policies, unique land use components, a list of key planning considerations and synthesized vision, and goals and objectives statements. The plan objectives form an organizational structure that unifies Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4 Plan Elements contains the heart of the plan with specific discussion and recommendations related to land use, transportation, airport, neighborhoods, parks, recreation and open space, and utilities.

Chapter 5 Implementation Plan lists specific actions that derive from Chapter 4 and are needed to make the plan a reality. Action items are only listed if they are not already contained in an adopted functional plan.

Technical Appendices includes a variety of reference materials that illustrate, supplement, or provide greater detail about aspects of the *WADP*.

1.7 Plan Flow Chart

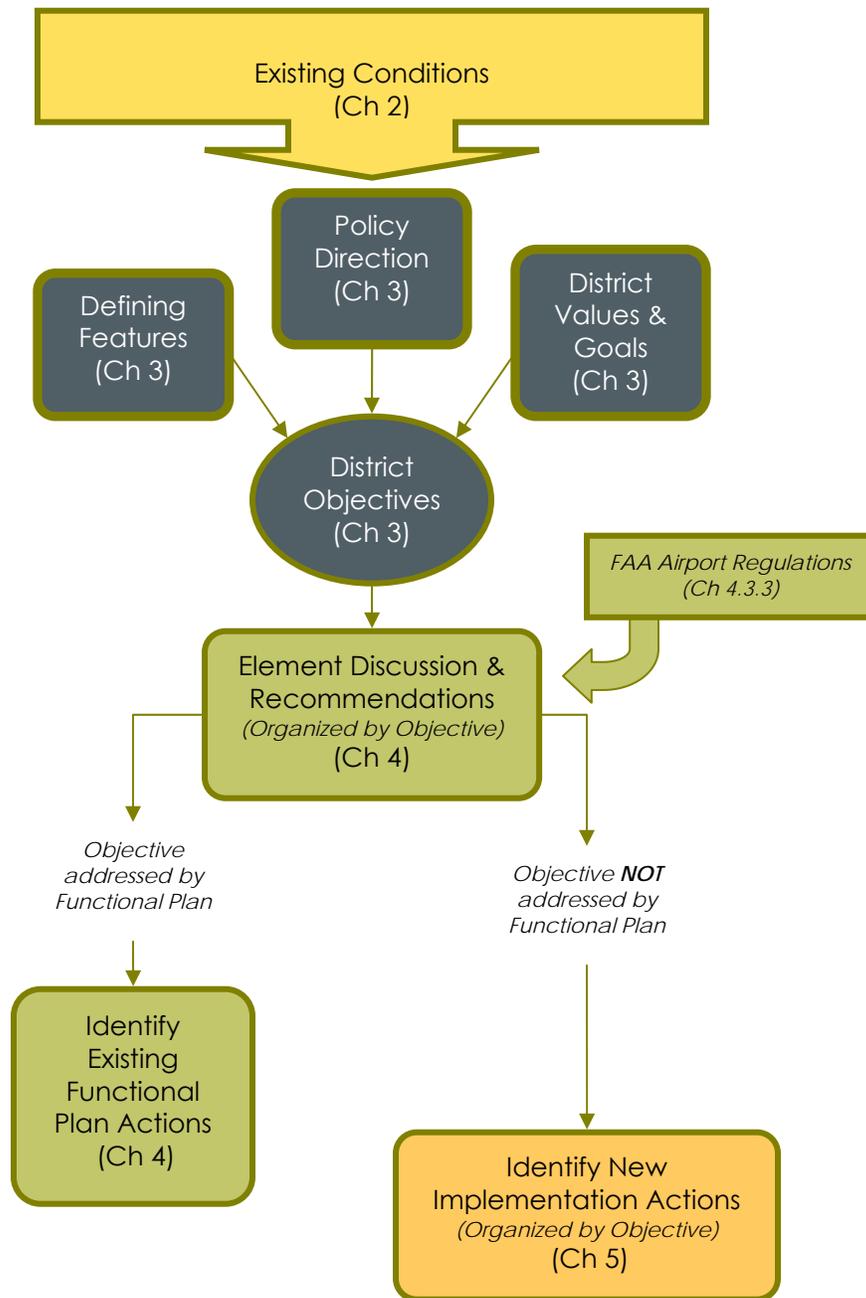


Exhibit 1-2. West Anchorage District Plan Flow Chart