



OUR DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT PLAN 2021

A VISION FOR NOW



OUR DOWNTOWN
The Heart of Anchorage

A Project to Implement the Downtown Comprehensive Plan

OUR DOWNTOWN 2021 DOWNTOWN DISTRICT PLAN

Executive Summary

This plan is a “targeted” review and update of the 2007 Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive plans should receive a 10-year “targeted” review as described in Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) 21.03.070.B.2. Targeted Plan Review (10-year intervals). [Complete] A targeted review of the plan at least once every 10 years, or in conjunction with an area-wide rezoning, in order to make it consistent with: 1.) Economic and demographic trends, 2.) Recent and proposed land use decisions, and 3.) Adopted studies and plans.

Anchorage is at a turning point in our history with unstable economic times brought on by the Great Recession and the Covid-19 Pandemic. This targeted review and update is timely and needed to bring clarity and direction to the next 10-20 years of development in Our Downtown. This update would not have been possible without the assistance of the public, agencies, partners, utility providers, design professionals, developers, businesses and property owners that took the time to participate in meetings and share your thoughts and expertise.

The planning process included research into current economic and demographic trends and a progress summary on the 2007 Downtown Plan implementation. A listing of Assembly-adopted development incentives and land use actions was compiled. Additionally, all plans or studies that focused on Downtown were included in the compilation published as the Trends Report.

In 2020, the Municipality completed the reformat of the Downtown zoning districts. The reformat project created a separate Title 21 section in code for Downtown (Chapter 21.11: DOWNTOWN). Comments received during the 2020 reformat project were also incorporated into this plan update.

A public survey, stakeholder, one-on-one meetings and subcommittee meetings contributed direction to the plan update. GIS mapping was completed by the MOA, instrumental in depicting existing conditions and this plan’s recommendations.

This plan update provides the goals, policies and action items needed to support economic recovery. This plan is intended to give the present and next generations a Downtown where residents and visitors will want to live, work and play.

Thank you to all who participated!

The Planning Team



Planning Department
MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



HUDDLE



AGNEW
& BECK

~ It is with gratefulness and respect the Planning Team wishes to acknowledge the traditional homeland of the Dena’ina Athabaskans and the contributions Alaska Native Peoples make to our community and society today.

We would especially acknowledge the traditional importance of the area considered for this Downtown Plan (Dgheyay Kaq) and including Ship Creek (Dgheyay Leht) as the traditional First Salmon Ceremony site. ~

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ACRONYMS and Abbreviations

2007 Downtown Plan - 2007 Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan

4NHPP - Anchorage's Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan

ACDA - Anchorage Community Development Corporation

ACS - Alaska Communications Services

ADP - Anchorage Downtown Partnership

ADOLWD - Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce

ADOT&PF - Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

AEDC - Anchorage Economic Development Corporation

AHFC - Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

AIDEA - Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority

AMATS - Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions

ARRC - Alaska Railroad Corporation

Assessor - MOA Assessor

AWWU - Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility

CD - Community Development

CEA - Chugach Electric Association

CPTED - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

DOT & PF - Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

DTCC - Downtown Community Council

FVCC - Fairview Community Council

GAC - Geotechnical Advisory Commission

GDIC - Geographic Data and Information Center

GCI - General Communications, Inc.

HPC - Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission

MOA - Municipality of Anchorage

NRHP - National Register of Historic Places

NVE - Native Village of Eklutna

Parks - MOA Parks Department

Planning - MOA Planning Department

PM&E - MOA Project Management and Engineering Department

RED - MOA Real Estate Department

Visit Anchorage - Anchorage Visitor and Convention Bureau

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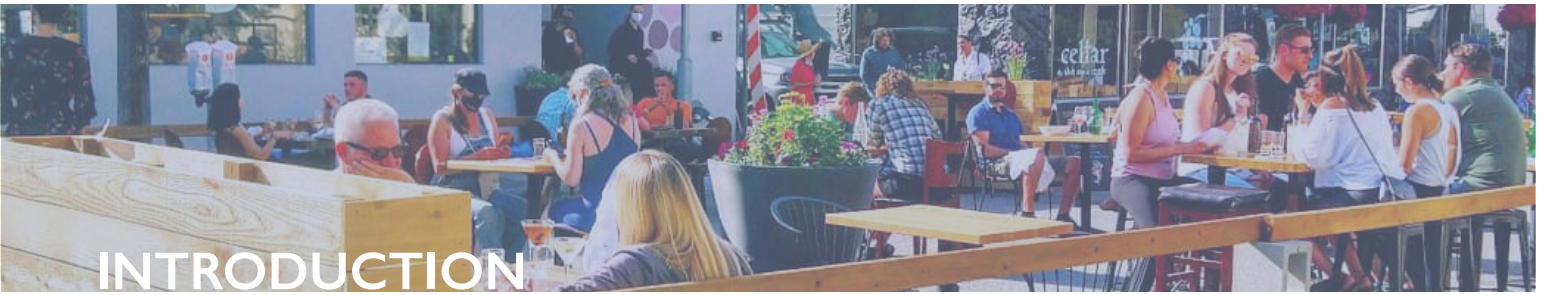
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INTRODUCTION

Contributing Factors

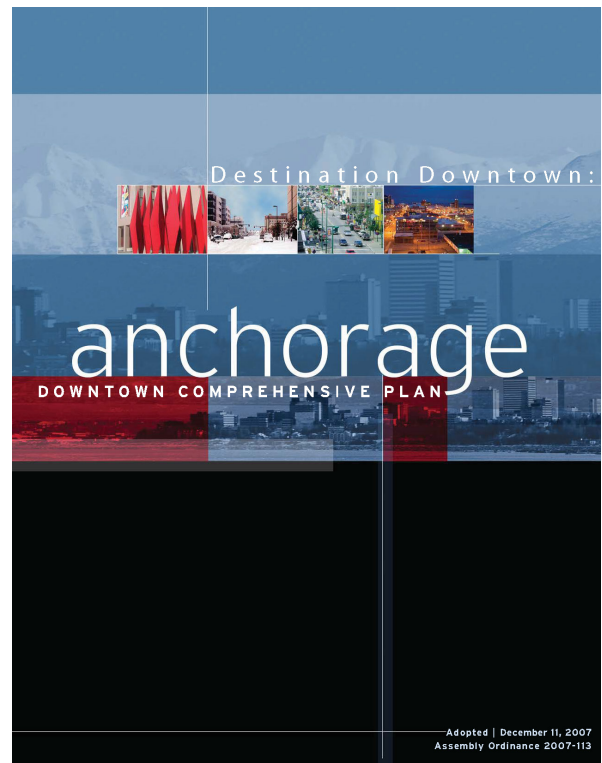
2017 Downtown Plan Update

The Downtown District Plan 2021 is the result of a “targeted” review and update of the 2007 Downtown Plan. This Plan advocates for bringing focus and concentration of limited MOA and community resources to Our Downtown - The Heart of Anchorage. This plan update makes recommendations on projects and actions that should be prioritized for funding and immediate community action. These recommendations and actions support fixes to the downtown code, fosters public/private partnerships, identifies processes to expedite project development, supports existing public and private agency programming, and ultimately supports the synergy needed to make Downtown welcoming, vital, and safe for all residents and visitors.

This plan also recognizes our unique cultures and histories, celebrates the wonder of the surrounding environment, and advocates for a strong economy brought about by our location next door to a strategic military installation and two cargo hubs for both Alaska and the world.

What was Specifically Done to Update the Plan?

- Each chapter from the 2007 Downtown Plan was reviewed for relevant and timely content. Much of that content was carried forward.
- An online survey was completed with over 300 people responding with 1200 comments, and two subcommittees were formed for input and comments.
- A new Revitalization Strategy Map including focused development areas, cultural districts, and opportunity sites was developed similar to the 2007 Strategy Framework.
- A new land use plan map was developed from the 2007 Strategy Framework, subcommittee and community council comments.
- Chapter-specific goals, policies and action items were developed based on public, agency, online survey, community council’s and subcommittee’s comments and recommendations.
- Research into the completion of 2007 Downtown Plan action items was done. Some action items were carried forward, some were revised to be relevant to this time.



Why should we direct focus and resources in Downtown?

Revitalization Ideas From 2016

Anchorage has experienced unprecedented natural, social, and economic events since its founding in 1915. These events have made us a resilient community. Downtown advocates visiting Anchorage in the recent past, including a delegation from Oklahoma City and Smart Growth America, recommended some vital tools and actions intended to help us jump-start new investment and provide focus on where our community might find the biggest gains. This plan update incorporates recommendations and guidance from the Oklahoma City delegation and Smart Growth America.

Oklahoma City Delegation Recommendations

In 2016, a delegation from Oklahoma City was invited by the Rasmuson Foundation to visit Anchorage.¹ Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) published the [report](#) including five theme statements and recommendations resulting from their visit. The Oklahoma delegation shared how the many tools they used to revitalize downtown Oklahoma City could work in Anchorage.

The following theme statements and recommendations from the Oklahoma report are just as relevant today as they were five years ago:

“Focus on Downtown.” Great cities have great downtowns. Focus on Downtown first and make it a great place to be. Downtown is the part of town that belongs to all of us. Anchorage needs to develop a Downtown where people want to live—do this by bringing things people want to downtown, activities and events that draw people in.

“Start by building great housing to make Anchorage a desirable place to live.” To make Anchorage a desirable place to live, housing must come first if we want Our Downtown to be a vibrant place to live, work, and play. Anchorage must focus first on building housing, then on bringing other services and amenities to the area.

“Lead by Example.” Anchorage residents must lead the way when it comes to investing in our city. To thrive and grow, we need to convince outside businesses and developers to partner with us and invest in Anchorage. New investors will not come to the table without seeing the Municipality and Anchorage residents making an investment of our own in the city’s future. Changes in tax revenue allocation or expenditures may be needed to ensure a proportionate share of what is collected Downtown is used there.

“Embrace Anchorage’s Fiscally Conservative Nature.”

Anchorage is a fundamentally conservative place. Residents are wary of changes that might hit their pocketbooks. To make needed investments in our future, we will embrace our conservative roots and build trust by showing examples of good financial management. Create a master plan or business plan for Downtown.

“Get Important Input from the Women in the Community.”

At every turn, ask women what they want. Women drive decisions in the home and the workplace. Women research their options and choose places to live and work based on what appeals most to them. They are thought leaders within their families. Cities that do not anticipate their needs will not succeed.²

Smart Growth America Also Came to Anchorage

Smart Growth America also visited Anchorage in 2016 for 3 days to conduct a community-wide workshop on the topic of [Planning and Fiscal and Economic Health](#).³ The results of the workshop included the overarching vision to “Focus the Effort.”

“Focus the Effort.” The Planning Department took this recommendation to heart and started working with several MOA departments and the Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA) to bring new mixed-use development to Downtown in a specifically designated area we termed “A Few Good Blocks,” depicted on the next page.

New development included Elizabeth Place, Qanchi Place, Block 96, and the new Fire Island Bakery and all are found in this focused area recommended by Smart Growth America.



Smart Growth America
Making Neighborhoods Great Together

1: [OKC-Report_FINAL.pdf \(aedcweb.com\)](#)

2: [Why It’s Important to Have Women in Your Life Who Succeed - archive \(darlingmagazine.org\)](#)

3: [SGA Workshop-MOA FINAL Report-6-8-16.docx \(muni.org\)](#)

Smart Growth America Recommendations

“Publish an Incentives Handbook.” ACDA developed an incentives webpage based on the Strategic Development and Finance Guide completed by the Dorsey & Whitney Group in 2016. In 2019, the Anchorage Assembly approved the 4-unit housing tax incentive for Downtown and west Fairview. The 4-unit housing tax incentive is another tool to be added to the Dorsey & Whitney guide.

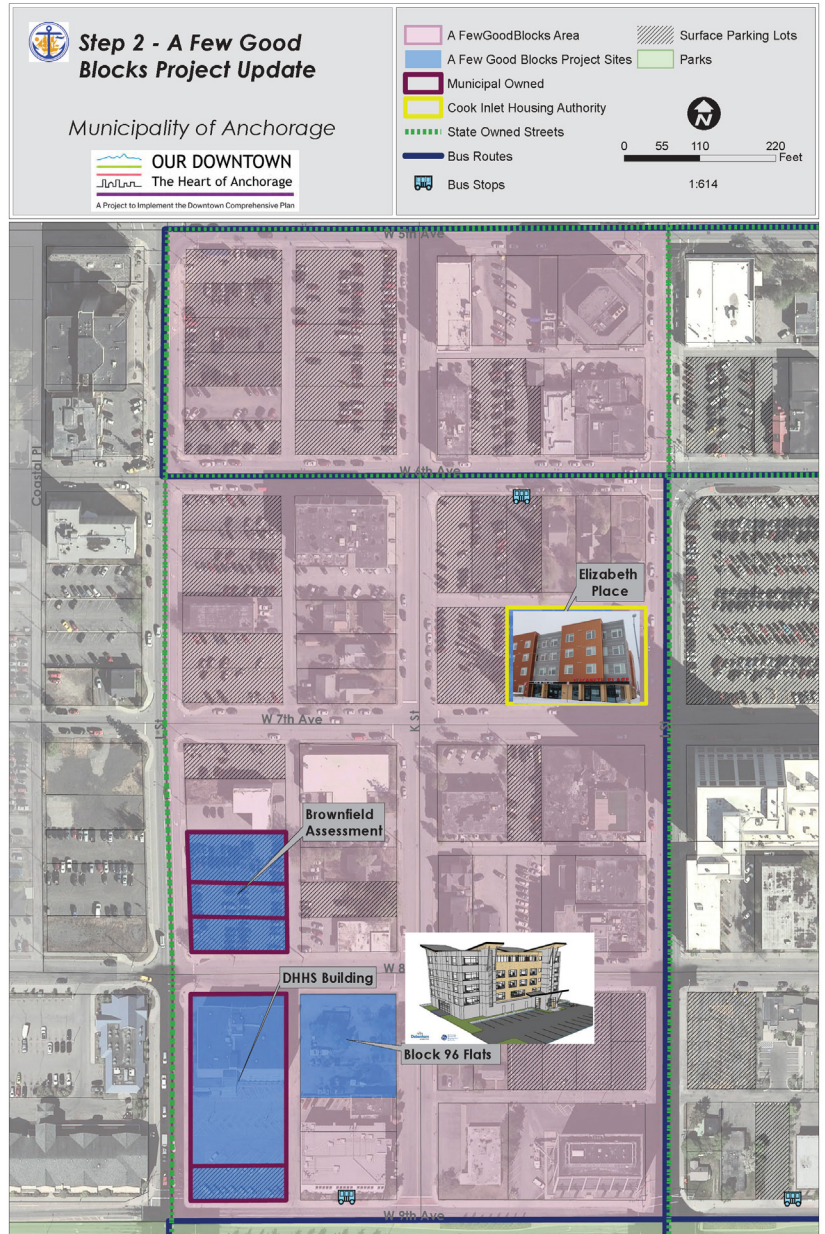
“Create a Redevelopment Authority.” ACDA serves as the redevelopment authority with the ability through code to bond for development projects. ACDA manages the public-owned parking in Downtown and is involved in several large-scale mixed-use projects for Downtown.

“Define a Specific Redevelopment Area that Includes the MOA owned 7th Avenue and I Street Property as an Anchor for a Redevelopment Pilot Project.” Use the existing fiscal tools to incentivize the pilot project. The A Few Good Blocks Area, as recommended by Smart Growth America and defined by the Planning Department, was approved by the Mayor’s Office in 2016. The Planning Department initiated communications with MOA Real Estate, ACDA, the development community and private property owners, and non-profits to catalyze new development. This plan advocates for an expansion of the 2016 Few Good Blocks to encompass a larger area where continued focused redevelopment can be achieved.

“Make Connections to Surrounding Neighborhoods – Make Downtown a Walkable and Desirable Place to Live, Work, and Play.” This plan advocates for an engineering study to determine optimal ownership, operation, uses, and improvements to streets, sidewalks, and trails as proposed in the 2007 Downtown Plan. Overwhelming public comment in support of a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly Downtown was heard throughout this planning process at both public meetings and through the online survey.

“Fund and Implement a Community Homeless Plan.” Anchored Home was adopted in 2018 to guide the MOA and community in efforts to resolve and prevent homelessness. Millions of dollars have been allocated to implement the Anchored Home plan.

“Make Downtown Safe.” Several efforts are occurring to make Downtown Anchorage safe, including additional police patrols, the Anchorage Police Department’s headquarters’ move to Downtown, and the downtown patrols of Safety Ambassadors of Anchorage Downtown Partnership, Ltd (ADP).



Map #5: The A Few Good Blocks Area depicting MOA- or ACDA-owned properties in blue. The area includes 5th—9th Avenues and I to L Streets. This map is included in the Trends Report. Mapping by the Planning Department.

Community Partners

These recommendations would not be possible without our community partners, including AEDC, ADP, ACDA and ACC, and the good work each agency does to make Our Downtown a great place.

AEDC's Live.Work.Play.

AEDC has a vision through its [Live.Work.Play.](#) initiative to see Anchorage become the #1 City in America to Live, Work, and Play by 2025. Live.Work.Play. is a grassroots effort focused on community improvement and engagement for the people who live here. This important AEDC initiative provided recommendations on development incentives and housing development for Downtown.

Live: Affordable, available, and livable housing is cited by local businesses as a challenge to attracting and retaining employees in Anchorage. The Housing Area of Focus addresses this issue through several avenues, including a geographic focus on Downtown - the most desirable neighborhood in Anchorage. Tools such as tax incentives and unit lot subdivisions are designed to increase neighborhood density among other approaches.

Work: By 2025, the face of business has changed. Technological advancements will empower a new workforce, employees and businesses can operate from anywhere. Businesses take advantage by adapting to new and advancing technology and by implementing and educating the business community and workforce. Downtown is a prime area for technology upgrades, nomad-type housing, and access to training and employee development.

Play: To be the #1 community to play, Anchorage must have a fully supported and diverse arts and cultural environment like that found in Downtown. Recreation is an essential part of living in Anchorage. We define our sense of place through recreational pursuits. Whether fishing along streams, hiking in our mountains, or playing in our fields, we live a “big, wild life.” Additionally, as the entertainment hub of Alaska, Anchorage provides many great opportunities for entertainers to share their gift with locals and visitors.



Anchorage Downtown Partnership – Clean, Safe, Vital Downtown

ADP is one of the lead entities in the development and implementation of the Downtown Anchorage Comprehensive Plan.

We work to bring the public and private sectors together as partners in downtown Anchorage’s redevelopment and revitalization. ADP’s mission is to improve the economy of downtown Anchorage by building connections that ensure success of public/private development, redevelopment, vitality, and economic growth in the Downtown Improvement District.

Clean: ADP works to maintain a clean, attractive, and orderly downtown. This effort is to ensure downtown Anchorage as the best place to live, work, shop, and play.

Safe: ADP Safety Ambassadors (SAs) are the “eyes and ears” of Downtown. These ambassadors serve and assist the Downtown Improvement District’s (DID) local businesses and downtown patrons through street patrolling. Safety Ambassadors work closely with the Anchorage Police Department and other emergency response services and are a vital part of making downtown Anchorage a better – and safer – place.

Vital: A key part of the ADP mission is increasing the vitality of Downtown. What constitutes “vitality” in a downtown district: the life, energy, enthusiasm, and health of our local businesses, residents, visitors, and places.



Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA)

Development, Revitalization, and Community are the three tenets guiding ACDA in its vision for a vibrant and prosperous Municipality of Anchorage, facilitated by innovative community development and public parking. Its mission to deliver quality development and public parking services within the Municipality helps Anchorage be successful in providing a Downtown that's welcome to all.

Development: ACDA brings together resources to create development using innovation, partnerships, and sound planning. ACDA is working to expand the tools available to encourage development in Anchorage.

Revitalization: ACDA is “bookending” Downtown with vibrant spaces like K Street Eats and The Rooftop. This is just one way we are revitalizing the community.

Community: ACDA views community development as more than just new construction of buildings; it also means adding value to our community with services and partnerships.



Anchorage Chamber of Commerce

The Anchorage Chamber of Commerce has a vision is to advance a successful business climate by attending to the civic, economic and cultural betterment of our community. The ACC provides support to the community through its Advocacy, Connectivity and Education programming.

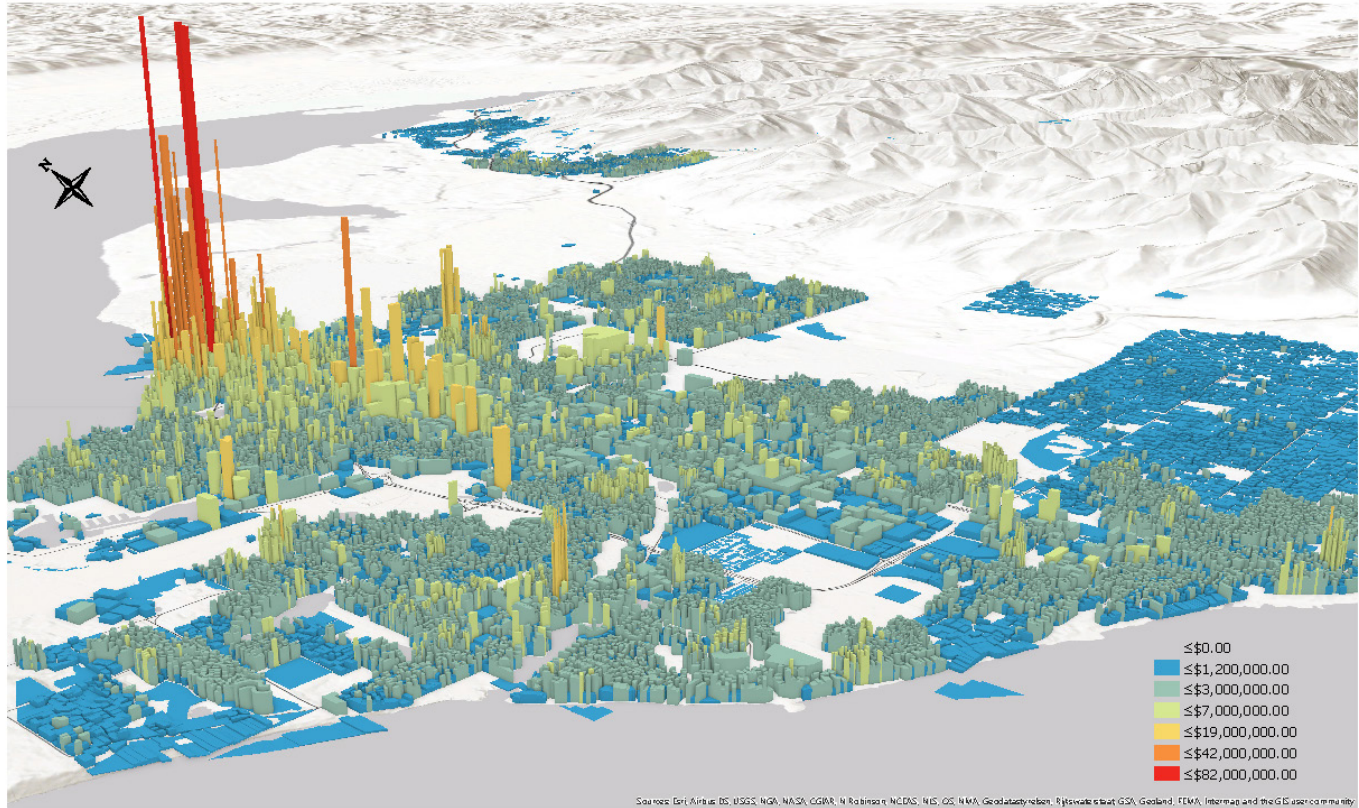
Investing in our Downtown is Important

Anchorage Property Tax Assessment

Downtown Anchorage has the highest concentration of assessed property value, which generates the highest concentration of property taxes for the Municipality as a whole.

Taxable Value per Acre by Parcel (2019)

Municipality of Anchorage
Planning Department



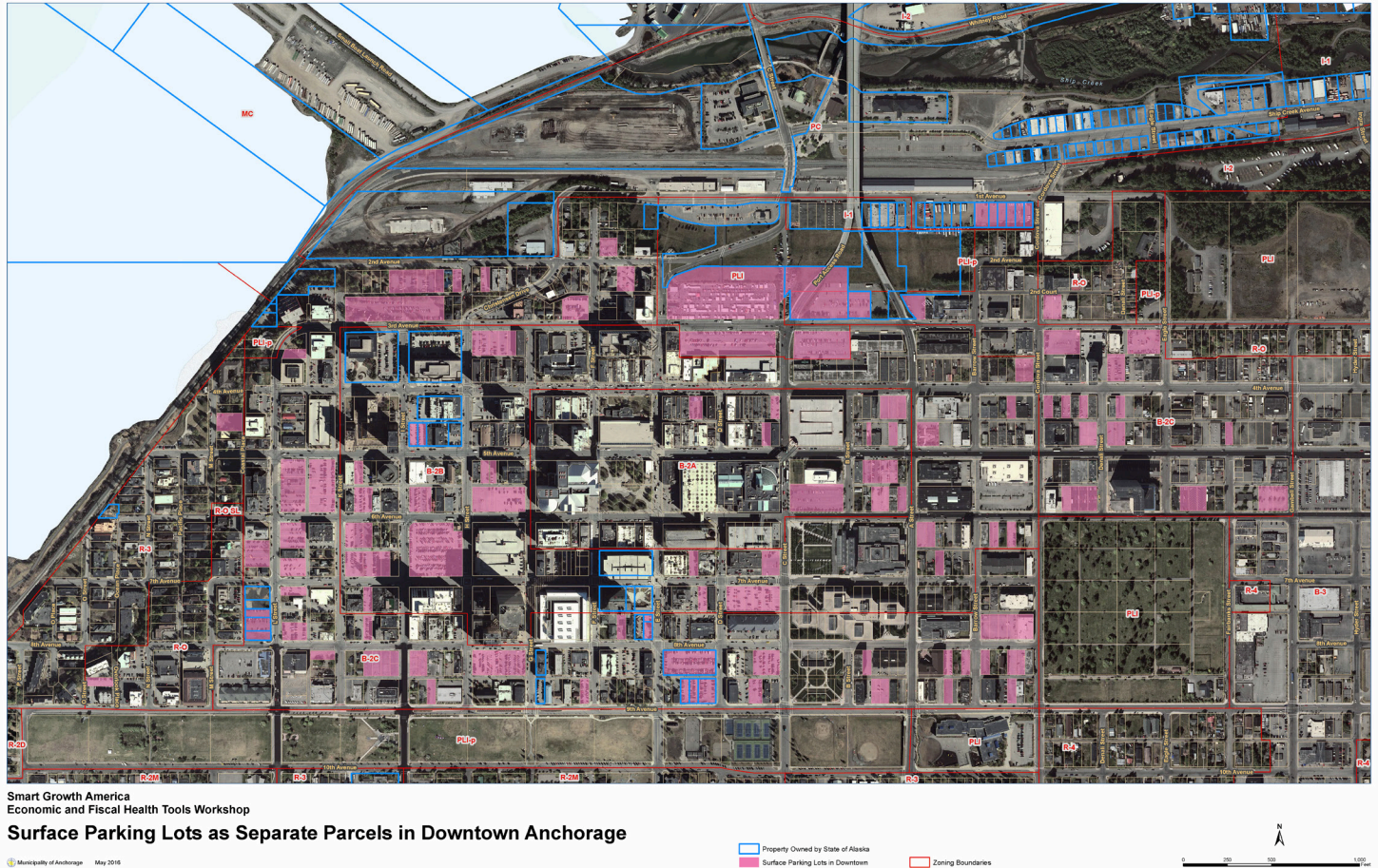
Map #1: Taxable Value Per Acre by Parcel: Assessor 2019 data – This map is included in the Trends Report. Mapping by the Planning Department.

Downtown property owners also pay into the [Downtown Improvement District](#) special assessments, which may result in Downtown properties paying the highest taxation in Anchorage. Map #1 above depicts the taxable value per acre by parcel of properties throughout the Municipality.

The large red spikes visually indicate Downtown property values far outpace any other areas in Anchorage, including Midtown. This map tells us that Downtown drives our municipal revenues and creates opportunities for all of Anchorage. Filling empty lots in Downtown will add new wealth to our community for the services, infrastructure, and programs we need to better our quality of life.

The Impact of Surface Parking Lots on Downtown

Below is a parking lot map identifying all open areas classified as parking lots in the MOA Assessor data file in a data capture created for the Smart Growth America workshop in 2016. Following the map is a parking statics discussion from the results of an ACDA Parking Inventory Utilization Analysis completed for the Anchorage Parking Strategic Plan in 2007.



Map #2: Surface Parking Lots as Separate Parcels: Assessor 2016 data – Mapping
by the Planning Department.

ACDA Parking Study 2007

ACDA Parking Inventory Utilization Analysis

The parking inventory analysis parsed out 8 study area zones in Downtown from Gambell Street to the Coastal Trail and portions along N Street and from 2nd Avenue on the north to 9th and 10th Avenues on the south.

Off Street Parking Inventory – ACDA and Private Spaces

The Off-Street parking inventory included ACDA and private lots, which tallied to 9,612 spaces. Of these 9,612 parking spaces, ACDA manages 3,925 or approximately 41%. The remaining 5,687 spaces or approximately 59% were privately owned.

On-Street Meters – ACDA

On-street meters in Downtown tallied to 1,536 spaces, all managed by ACDA.

Percent Occupied On-Street – Peak Time Parking

A peak hour parking survey was completed during the peak time of day at either 9:30 a.m. in one zone, or 12:30 p.m. in the remaining 7 zones. The 8 different parking zones tallied differing percentages of use depending on where the zone was located. The usage or percent occupied varied from 56% to 84%. No one zone was 100% occupied. An average count was also completed for these same spaces during off-peak hours finding overall the on-street parking was used anywhere from 52% to 74%. Again, no one zone was 100% occupied.

ACDA managed Percent Occupied Off-Street Parking

ACDA manages off-street parking in 7 of the 8 zones used for the analysis. Of the 7 zones, ACDA parking tallied from 49% to 81% occupied. Private off-street parking was found in all 8 zones and tallied from 58% to 74% occupied. This use translated to ACDA having 1,705 off- and on-street spaces left available. 1,870 private parking spaces were left available.

Comparison of Use vs. Available Parking On or Off Street

Combined ACDA and private parking spaces left unused for this analysis tallied 3,575 and 1,870 spaces respectively for a total of 5,445 spaces or over 56% were going unused in the Downtown area. A minimal calculation of a parking space size is 264SF (square feet) when within in a parking lot. This does not include driveways and turning radius space. An on-street parking space is a little less in size.

By multiplying the number of unused parking spaces by the average size of a parking space, we come to approximately 1.5 million square feet of buildable at-grade space was most likely lost every day to unused parking according to the analysis completed in 2007. It should be noted that 2007 was experiencing a much better economy than Anchorage is experiencing today in 2021. We could therefore surmise there is exponentially even more available at-grade buildable space in Downtown. When you factor we could build anywhere from 2 to several stories in Downtown, the cost to our community of these unused parking spaces is monumental.

Tallied Parking Spaces	5,445 spaces
Estimated Size of One Space	264 square feet
Total Estimated Space	1,437,480 square feet

The vast amount of Downtown surface parking lots, many of which are privately owned as noted in the analysis above, does not indicate prosperity, investment, or dreams realized for Anchorage and especially Downtown.

These empty spaces indicate lost revenue to our community that could be used for vital services and benefits that we are currently unable to provide.



Lead by Example

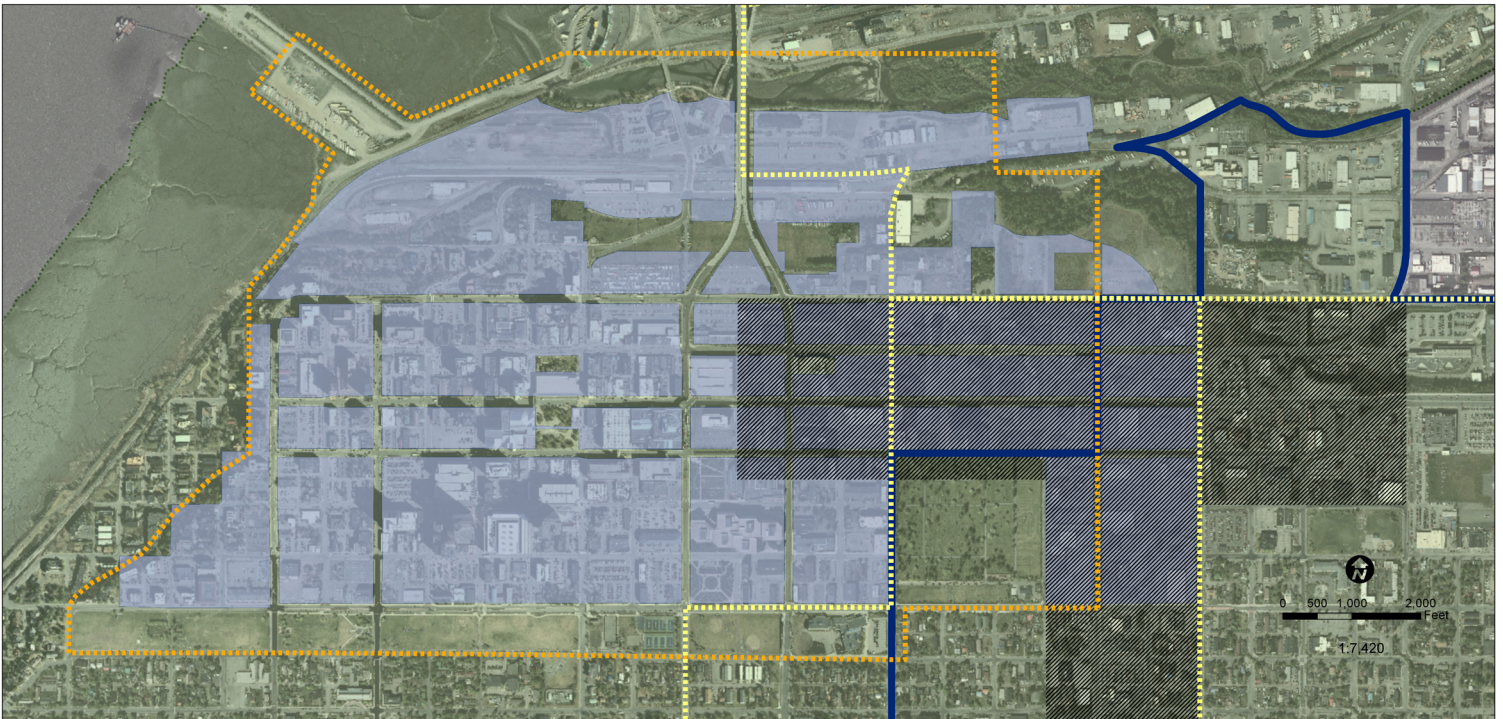
This strategy advocates for the MOA leading by example by focusing MOA investments and incentives in focused development areas to leverage limited resources and catalyze new development. The MOA can also encourage potential partnerships with state agencies and private developers to realize redevelopment in Downtown. The following map depicts MOA-adopted incentives through Assembly ordinance, adopted plan areas with incentives, and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) federal opportunity zones.

This would demonstrate our commitment as a partner to improve development opportunities. For a good return on investment in Downtown, this may include upgrades and extensions of needed water, sewer, streets, trails, and high-speed internet to reap both short-term and long-term

benefits. These off-site infrastructure improvements are some of the most expensive costs associated with development. Knowing early on what improvements are needed will help developers and the agencies set their priorities and funding. Short term may include more housing and healthy lifestyle options, long term will include more businesses in retail, commercial, and tourism to support the local economy.

Incentives

The two recent Assembly-adopted ordinances identify areas for tax abatement as an economic development incentive. The housing incentive encompasses all Downtown. This includes the East Downtown/Fairview Tax Abatement Zone (A.O. 2014-71), and the Downtown Housing Incentive (A.O. 2019-12 as amended) respectively (See Map #3).



<p>Step 2- Economic Development Incentives Downtown Anchorage</p> <p>Municipality of Anchorage</p>		
 		
<p>Opportunity Zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HUD Opportunity Zones (2) 	<p>Plans With Incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2007 Downtown Planning Boundary Fairview Neighborhood Plan 	<p>Assembly_Ordinances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairview/East Downtown Revitalization Area (AO 2014-71(S)) Chapter 12.60 Housing Tax incentives (AO 2019-12) (1) Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan

Map: Planning and GDIC Departments 2020

These incentives are intended to “enable” a significant investment in physical infrastructure that expands the tax base of the Municipality. The tax incentive areas are located within the Downtown/Fairview Redevelopment Focus Area identified in the 2040 Land Use Plan and are consistent with the goals and objectives of the 2007 Downtown Plan and the Fairview Neighborhood Plan - 2014. A further discussion of the incentives is included in Chapter 3 with action items associated with these incentives in Chapter 8.

The Anchorage Assembly may approve tax abatement requests submitted by developers or property owners for three types of property development. The property must be (1) declared a [Deteriorated property](#), (2) declared an [Economic Development property](#), or (3) approved for a minimum 4-unit new housing project.

Deteriorated and Economic Development Tax abatement can be approved from 5-10 years under each abatement request. Developers or property owners must make the case that in the long run the Municipality will gain by approving the property tax abatement request for any of the three tax abatement proposals.

The housing tax incentive encompasses all Downtown and can be approved for up to 12 years. The housing tax exemption is only applicable through February 29, 2024.

The Deteriorated Property or Economic Development Property Tax Abatement can be requested throughout Anchorage. The Tax Abatement can also be approved across a zone area, which was approved in 2014 for East Downtown/Fairview Neighborhood.

Also available but not shown on the map is the federal [CPACE](#) creative finance program that encourages energy-efficiency in older buildings at a long-term fixed rate. The program will replace aging mechanicals, windows, etc. The loan goes with the property, not the owner.

Tax abatement is just one tool the Assembly can use to incentivize new and redevelopment in the Municipality. There are other tools currently being pursued through the Alaska legislature that could also support economic development and may be able to help Anchorage when adopted locally.

Additionally, federally designated opportunity zones can also contribute to our economy by awarding tax incentives for job creation, new development, and neighborhood revitalization. The Federal Qualified Opportunity Zone legislation was created by The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to spur economic growth in low-income communities by allowing investors to defer federal taxes by taking capital gains from other investments and investing in these designated areas. East Downtown-Fairview contains an opportunity zone starting at 3rd Avenue and Cordova Street extending east to the Mountain View Community Council area.

Anchorage, like the other large cities in Alaska is dependent upon the Alaska legislature to fix certain administrative language to enable Alaska cities to employ additional economic development and housing incentives. This could include New Market Tax Credits, Historic Property Tax Credits, or potential Tax Increment Financing.

Federal Investment

All government agencies including federal, state and local, can step up and invest in Our Downtown. The federal government can continue to make improvements to its properties similar to the recent historic Federal Building remodel of the joint federal agencies information center. Investments by government agencies help them attract knowledgeable and trained workforces who are looking to a new home for a good work life balance and affordability in a vibrant community.

State of Alaska Lands and Rights of Way in Downtown

The State owns several surface parking lots along L Street (Trust Land Office) and 8th Avenue (Alaska Housing Finance). AKDOT&PF can assist in making Downtown great by addressing the impacts of speeding traffic on 5th and 6th avenues to make them more pedestrian oriented and friendly.

The Alaska Railroad (ARRC) owns the entire Ship Creek and surrounding slopes where additional industrial and housing development may be developed.

The ARRC has recently attracted private capital to build out the [Downtown Edge](#) housing project, which brought in eight townhouse-style [condos](#). An infusion of infrastructure upgrades in Ship Creek could generate a large return on investment by the ARRC as envisioned in the 2014, Ship Creek Framework Plan. The State could also help the Municipality finish the Port of Alaska upgrades that provides

80% of all goods shipped to the State. Bonding capacity by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) could bring funding into direly needed Port and Ship Creek improvements.

Municipality and Private Utility Investment

The MOA can assist by providing the short-term tax incentives, allocation of appropriate Cares Act funding, and the code amendments recommended in this plan. MOA Project Management & Engineering (PM&E), AWWU, Chugach Electric, GCI and ACS can invest in infrastructure improvements by aligning annual capital improvements with known planned development. The Utility Subcommittee recommends a Utility Coordination process that would assist developers “early” in the project to help reduce costs and delays.

Banks or Non-Profit Investment

New financing sources are needed to help offset the financing gap to help some projects “pencil.” What we heard is the gap in funding either makes or breaks a project. This plan supports new incentives to help bridge the funding gap to allow projects to be financially feasible or “pencil out.” State financing agencies, as well as local banks, and other stakeholder groups, including non-profits, could expand their investment portfolios into programs and projects to support a more secure future for Downtown.



Photo - Planning Department 2021

New Revenue Sources

Oklahoma City successfully marketed and used the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) tax by transparently conveying information on the specific projects the taxes would be spent on and the project timing. This information satisfied the city's residents in a number of ways according to information provide on Oklahoma City's MAPs [project website](#). The city collects the MAPS tax dollars in advance of paying for a project. The City begins work on the projects only after MAPs tax dollars hit the city coffers. It takes a concerted effort to manage resident expectations about the timeline of progress under this system because the funding takes time to build up before it can be spent; most people understand the concept of "saving up."

There may be potential for Anchorage to initiate a MAPS tax to build the infrastructure improvements needed for more cost effective and affordable development projects. A recent survey of local businesses by AEDC found several businesses agreed with this kind of investment. The online survey for this planning process found of the 300 people answering to a 1% sales tax to fund new revenue for housing and redevelopment, 63% said yes, 25% said no, and 13% left it to the planners.

A Perfect Storm of Public and Private Investment Can Turn the Tide

Our Downtown needs a "perfect storm" with all involved coming together and committing to this effort. Anchorage has Ted Stevens International Airport, the Port of Alaska, Alaska Railroad Headquarters, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, the UMED District, Girdwood and the Alyeska Ski Resort, Chugach State Park, and Chugach National Forest, the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail and its world class trail connecting system, and the Eagle River Nature Center to name just a few outstanding amenities. Investing our resources, time, and efforts in Our Downtown is going to help keep our jobs, seniors, kids, events, historic buildings and cultural sites here while giving our community a welcoming place to share with Alaska and the rest of the world.

Planning Process

The planning process to complete the review and update of the 2007 Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan (2007 Downtown Plan) kicked off just as the COVID-19 shut-downs started. The Planning Team pivoted away from in-person meetings to Teams and Zoom meetings to reach our community. We found that more people were able to participate in the planning process through online meetings and by taking the project survey.

The news about [jobs](#) and the pandemic impacts has not been all bad according to the monthly reporting of AEDC. During the chaos, [new businesses started](#), buildings were remodeled, permitting is up, and houses are being sold. Employment indicators in early 2021 show some jobs are back. Downtown and throughout Anchorage, businesses are re-opening with increased occupancy and capacity. This positive news may have guided the public's perception of Downtown and what is needed or desired there now and in the future.

OUR DOWNTOWN – Public Online Survey (April 8 thru April 30, 2021 at

www.ourdowntownanchorage.com)

As public in-person meetings stopped in January 2020, the Planning Team shifted its public engagement focus to holding several online (Microsoft Teams or Zoom) meetings with interested groups, agencies, infrastructure and utility providers, and the design community. The most important element of outreach was a public online survey. The survey was completed by 370 people. These supportive members of Downtown provided over 1,200 comments and recommendations on how this plan can support Our Downtown into the future. This volume of survey results led to an amended set of goals and new or amended implementation actions.

Those actions include updates to the Downtown Zoning Districts, development incentives, utility coordination and upgrades, several focus areas for redevelopment, multi-modal street upgrades to accommodate increased pedestrian and bicycle use, adaptive reuse and renovation of historic

buildings, designation of historic and cultural districts, the need for wayfinding, creative placemaking through interpretive information. Many comments came in regarding affordable housing and reducing the burden on developers, preservation of the 4th Avenue Theatre façade, support and solutions for the homeless. A major rebrand of Downtown was also suggested. The complete survey results can be found at the project website.

Stakeholders – Subcommittees – Developers

The Planning Team initiated a variety of groups and committees to assist with different topics of discussion. A large Stakeholder group consisting of Downtown Anchorage agencies and businesses and MOA Departments helped provide overall guidance and support. Additionally:

- A Technical Advisory Committee consisting of MOA and State agency staff gave input on Maintenance and Operation, specific department planning issues and other items of concern for the plan.
- The Utility Subcommittee laid out their individual business or agency concerns including operational tariffs, code or development impediments.
- The Urban Design Subcommittee focused on a large set of questions and issues heard from developers along with the experiences they have had professionally providing projects in Downtown. These discussions led to the most recommendations related to incentives and the Downtown Zoning Districts update.
- Developer one-on-one interviews were held. Developers were given specific questions which led to learning about their concerns, successes, issues, and recommendations.
- The Planning Team met with the Downtown Community Council individually and participated in each monthly meeting held throughout the planning process.
- Government Hill and Fairview community councils received intermittent presentations and information during the planning process.
- The AMATS Citizen Advisory Committee received a presentation and was encouraged to provide

recommendations on the street, pedestrian and bicycle action items.

The input and recommendations received from these groups or individuals is incorporated into plan recommendations and action items.

OUR DOWNTOWN—Downtown Zoning Districts Reformat (2019-2020)

The reformat of the [Downtown Zoning District](#) code was adopted and approved for use in May 2020. The code reformat clarifies the bonus point system, streamlines project review process, and provides more flexibility in some Title 21 land use code requirements. There are more changes to be made to the code. During this planning process several recommendations were given regarding code updates. The recommendations are discussed in Chapter 6 – Urban Design and in Chapter 8 – Implementation Actions.

What Did the Team Hear That Is Most Important?

Safe pedestrian and trail connections are highly desired.

The public desires Downtown to be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Actions to support this desire may include reducing speed limits, moving designated truck route traffic off 3rd Avenue between C to L streets, focused effort on sidewalk and lighting improvements, a bicycle boulevard, connecting the Coastal and Ship Creek trails, and a study to determine how the proposed street conversions will work as recommended in the 2007 Downtown Plan and carried forward in this plan update.



Photo - Planning Department 2021

Downtown Plan Accomplishments

In 2007, when the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan (2007 Downtown Plan) was adopted, several multi-million-dollar public investments were planned or close to completion at that time. During the last 13 years, the public invested in the Dena'ina Convention Center, Anchorage Museum, Lenny Pacillo Parking Garage, and Town Square Park. Several streets were reconstructed, including 9th Avenue and F and G streets around the Dena'ina Convention Center.

Despite the 2008 recession, major losses in oil and gas revenues, and a pandemic, the community has still managed to implement some of the actions identified in the 2007 Downtown Plan. Forty-seven implementation actions are listed in Chapter 8, 14 or 25% are completed, 17 or 29% received little action or no action, and 27 or 46% received some action and are ongoing. Coupled with the recent completed mixed-use housing developments, the renovations of Key Bank and proposed new redevelopment projects, the community and its partners are finding new and creative ways to incentivize redevelopment and infill as envisioned by the 2007 Plan.

There is still more work to do to continue the progress made over the last few years.

What Code Directed this Planning Process?

AMC 21.03., 21.03.070B.2. Targeted Plan Review Guidance

The Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007 as an area-specific element of the Municipality of Anchorage Comprehensive Plan. The municipal code provides a process for re-evaluating and updating the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The targeted update to the 2007 Downtown Comprehensive Plan was guided by the requirements found in Anchorage Municipal Code.

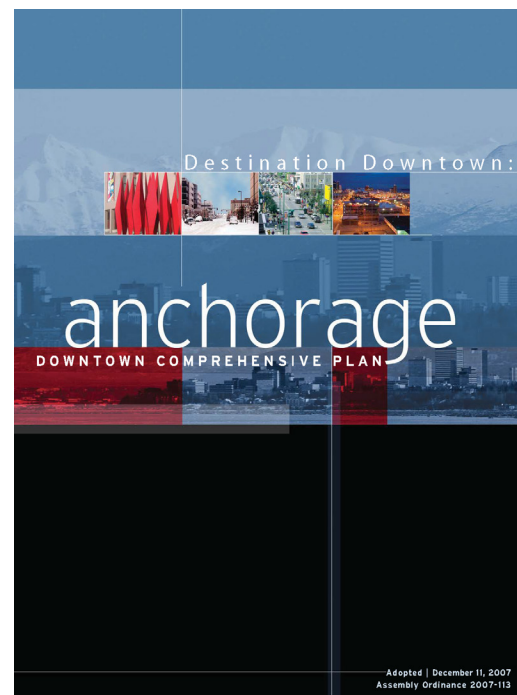
The Planning Department considered the current conditions and trends of our economy and the demographic profile of the Downtown area. The team also factored in the Assembly-adopted plans, studies, land use regulations, and tax incentives that have occurred since the 2007 plan adoption. An overview of this background information is found in the [Trends Report](#), Appendix A of this plan.

This plan update will also provide direction to the update of the Downtown Zoning Districts, an implementation action identified in the 2007 Downtown Plan and the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan and briefly described previously. The code update will provide a land use development code consistent

with the goals and policies of this plan, factoring in public input heard throughout the entire Our Downtown Planning process. Comprehensive plan updates can typically take 2-3 years to complete. The Planning Team, with community support, fast-tracked the planning process. We appreciate the attention to detail, meaningful comments, and overwhelming community support of this plan update.

Targeted Review and Chapter Updates

- 2007 Downtown Vision was updated.
- 2007 Downtown Plan overarching goals were affirmed with no changes.
- Chapter 2 - Includes a brief on existing conditions gleaned from the Trends Report and was updated.
- Chapter 3 - Strategy Framework and Strategy Diagram were completely updated including chapter-specific goals, policies and action items.
- Sections of Chapters 4 - Land Use and Economic Development, 5-Transportation and Circulation, and 6-Urban Design were updated including chapter-specific goals, policies and action items added.
- Chapter 8 - Implementation Actions was updated with many new actions items, a few 2007 implementation actions remained.



Early Action Items Recommendation

The following Early Action Items are included in the introduction chapter to bring attention to current successes that are recommended for ongoing MOA and community support, and new actions based on partner and public comment. These early action items are intended to help jump-start the Downtown economic development including new housing, businesses, cultural and tourism opportunities. Funding is needed for several projects. New funding will take the commitment and support of all community members.

EA-1: Continue to Invest in the Few Good Blocks Area
Concentrate on an expansion of the pilot project area of the 2016 Smart Growth Few Good Blocks to include (9th to 2nd avenues and G to M streets). Elizabeth Place, Block 96 Lofts, 7th & L, 6th Avenue Hotel Project, 8th and I MOA properties, proposed 2nd Avenue project all within this area. Use the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan land capacity determination to calculate the existing and up-front utility needs and upgrades. Seek funding to advance a utility survey and upgrade project in the Few Good Blocks through FEMA/HUD/CDBG or other agency funding. This project would further catalyze mixed-use and residential housing projects to help address housing and economic recovery. (Works with RVS-3 and LU-1).

EA-2: Develop a Downtown focused Capital Improvement Program

Work with each utility provider and in the MOA CIB/CIP to prioritize the Few Good Blocks Area for funding and upgrades by establishing a Utility Coordination Subcommittee that meets quarterly or as needed. The MOA would provide coordination of the committee either through the Planning or Project Management & Engineering Departments. (Works with RVS-1).

EA-3: Create the Utility Coordination Subcommittee Liaison within Planning and/ or PM&E
Establish the process to engage utility providers and developers at pre-application meetings for proposed projects in the Downtown area early in the exploratory phase of projects to identify missing or needed off-site improvements. (Works with RVS-1).

EA-4: Fund and Complete the Downtown Zoning Districts Update

Seek funding to complete the update to the Downtown Zoning Districts. Use LU-12, LU-18, and LU-20, UD-1, UD-2, UD-6 and QOL-14, along with specific recommendations from the Urban Design Subcommittee process. (See Appendix C for the subcommittee's reports and recommendations).

EA-5: Identify and Establish New Sources of Funding

Work to identify and establish new sources of revenue to assist in filling the financial gap. (Works with RVS-3 and LU-1). Possible sources of funding could include:

- State financing agencies, such as AIDEA and AHFC.
- Local funding, such as MESA payments by ACDA.
- Local, state, federal, and foundation funding to capitalize a Housing Trust Fund.
- Infrastructure funding, such as MAPS from Oklahoma City.
- EA-6: Fairview/East Downtown & Downtown Residential Property Tax Abatement Ordinances

Renew both the Fairview/East Downtown tax abatement area for at least another 10 years; it is set to sunset in 2024 (A.O. 2014-71(S)) and the Downtown Housing Tax Incentive and Exemption (A.O. 2019-12 Amended) set to sunset in 2024. Consider extending the length of time for the abatement to 15 years and add mixed-use housing and commercial projects as eligible. When amending these timeframes, reduce the complicated and expensive submittal process incorporated in Chapter 12.35, by modeling the application process outlined in Downtown Housing Tax Incentive and Exemption ordinance. (Works with LU-3).

EA-7: Fund and Complete the Downtown Anchorage Streets Engineering Study

Seek funding for and complete the study with AMATS funding. To be completed by PM&E or the Planning Department with technical support from Public Works, MOA Traffic, AMATS and DOT&PF. The study would include street conversions, street closures, the Bike Boulevard concept, and Coastal Trail connectors (Overlaps with T&C-1, T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11, and T&C-18).

EA-8: Historic and Cultural District Information

Update Complete the study to determine a recommendation on historic or cultural districts and contributing and non-contributing resources to complete Local Landmark Register historic or cultural district nominations for approval by the Anchorage Assembly. (Works with QOL-20).



Photo - 2021 Planning Department

G Street Arts District - Covid19 closure allowed for outdoor dining, keeping businesses open and employees working.

Downtown History & Regional Context

“The coast of southcentral Alaska is penetrated by a long watery arm that extends over 150 miles from the Pacific Ocean in the mouth of the Knik River in the north. Dena’ina Athabascans occupy the shoreline of this inlet, which they call Tikahtnu, “Big water river” in the Dena’ina language. The upper most reaches of the arm are the home to the K’enaht’ana branch of the Dena’ina whose villages, fish camps, trails, battlegrounds, graves and other sites dotted and crisscrossed the land and water of the area. The K’enaht’ana region was never settled nor colonized by Russians who established and maintained a trading post further south on Tikahtnu at present-day Kenai. Following purchase by the United States in 1867, the region remained isolated until late in the 19th Century when several military exploratory expeditions and a few mineral prospectors briefly passed through the area (Fall and Kari 2004). A small port named Knik was established at a Dena’ina village site on the western shore of Tikahtnu in 1906 to provide mail and supplies to Euro American settlers, but in 1914 things changed dramatically and rapidly. At a site at the mouth of Dgheyaytnu, today known as Ship Creek (Orth 1971), a tent camp was built as a construction base for the Alaska Railroad and became Anchorage; today Anchorage is the largest city in Alaska and 50% of the entire population of Alaska lives in this area.”

(From Dena’ina Heritage and Representation in Anchorage, a Collaborative Project by Stephen J. Langdon, Ph.D. and Aaron Leggett – Courtesy of Aaron Leggett, Chief Native Village of Eklutna).



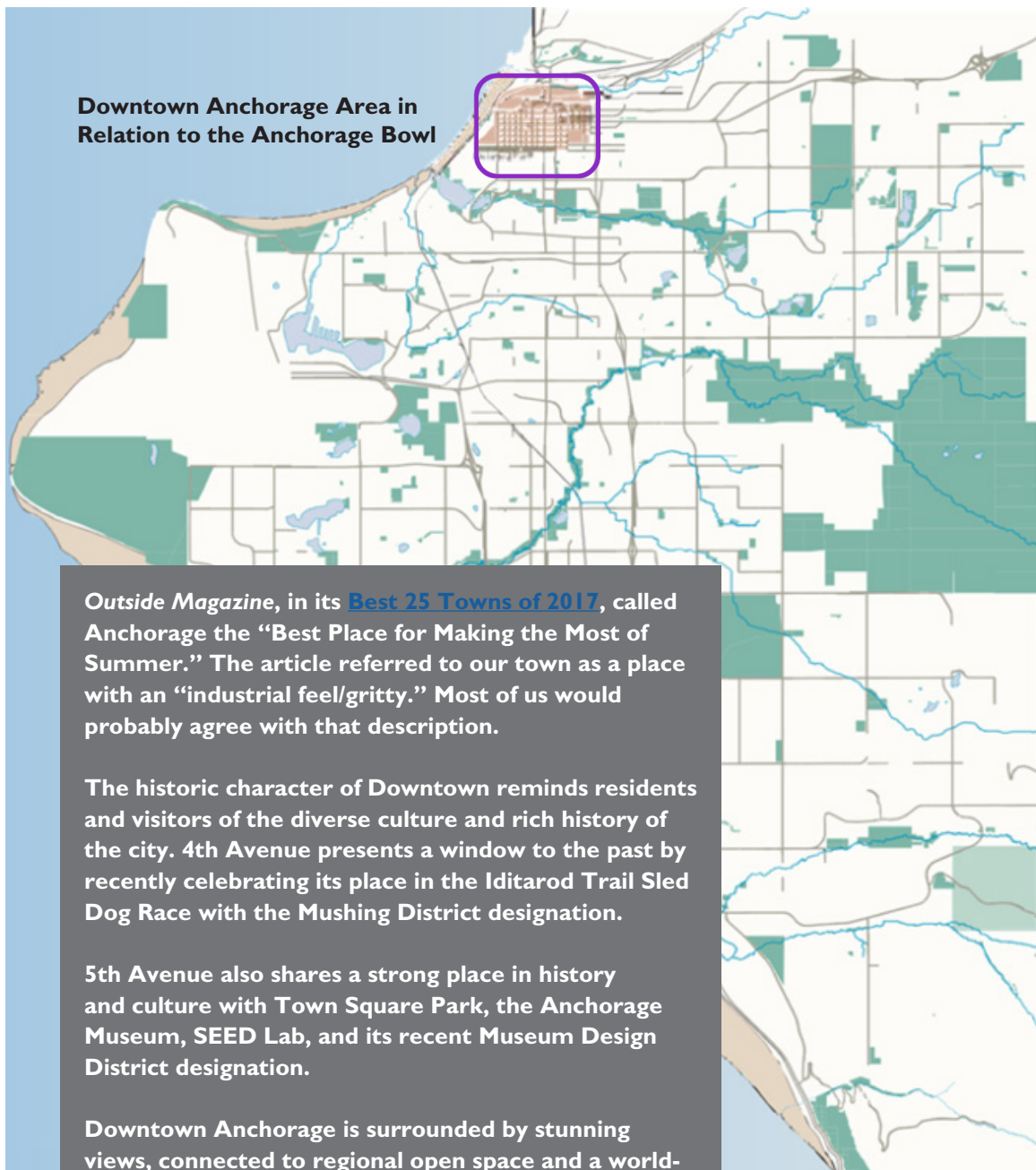
Photo 2012 - Page & Turnbull

Downtown's History

Anchorage's occupation and settlement story winds through centuries of Dena'ina families traversing the land to hunt, fish, and camp. Their prehistory is followed by European and American fur traders and gold seekers. Dena'ina families remain in Anchorage today continuing to contribute to Anchorage's development, sharing their rich culture and heritage.

Anchorage Today

Anchorage is a metropolitan area of more than 280,000 people spread out across the Anchorage Bowl and in smaller communities along Knik Arm and Turnagain Arm. Our population has risen and fallen in the past decades mostly due to the highs and lows of the oil economy. Currently, Anchorage's population is at a historic low. This is due to many factors (AEDC's [economic forecasts](#)). Over 100 languages are spoken in Anchorage according to the 2010 census. The most culturally diverse census block in the United States is in the Mountain View area. Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA) is the fourth largest cargo airport in the world. The Port of Alaska receives and moves goods consumed by 90% of the State. Tourism was a fast-growing economic sector up until 2019, and is rebounding in 2021. Oil prices remain about the same but have been inching higher as travel increases and the Lower-48 economy recovers.

Regional Context

Relationship to Other Plans

This targeted plan gives strategic direction to Downtown development while embracing livability, a sense of place, and the quality of life Alaskans desire for the heart of our city.

The Plan is required to coordinate with other adopted plans and studies and to identify land use actions that have been approved since 2007. [This Plan updates and replaces the 2007 Downtown Plan](#). This Plan is the area-specific element of Anchorage 2020. Anchorage 2020 and the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan provide general direction for Downtown.

Following are goals and policies from these areawide plans that apply to Downtown. The Downtown districts and subdistricts in this plan fall within the “City Center” land use designation of the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan. Other plans that will help guide development in the Downtown area also include the Ship Creek Framework Plan -2014, the Fairview Neighborhood Plan – 2014, and the Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan – 2013.

Anchorage 2020 Vision Statement

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

Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan Policies Directly Related to Downtown

- #18 – Strengthen the Central Business District’s role as the regional center for commerce, services, finance, arts and culture, government offices, and medium-high-density residential development.
- #19 - Locate municipal, state, and federal administrative offices in the Central Business District.
- #23 - Downtown is a major employment center.

Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan Goals Related to Downtown

- #1 – Anchorage achieves residential and commercial growth, which improves community resiliency and citizens’ quality of life as it supports their vision for the future expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.
- #2 – Infill and redevelopment meet the housing and employment needs of residents and businesses in Anchorage.
- #3 – Centers and Corridors: Mixed-use, walkable commercial centers and corridors thrive within their neighborhood context, offer housing affordable to a range of incomes, and enable business growth. “By encouraging business and housing growth in urban centers, this Plan makes it possible for more people to live near or more easily access job opportunities, social activities, and services for everyday needs (page 18).”
- #5 – Coordinated and targeted infrastructure investments catalyze new growth, provide an acceptable return on investment, and equitably improve safety and quality of life. “Coordination of infrastructure projects allows the Municipality to set “Placemaking” in motion as an economic development strategy (pp 20-21).”
- #6 – Anchorage coordinates transportation and land use to provide safe, efficient, and affordable travel choices.
- #7 – Infill development is compatible with the valued characteristics of the surrounding properties and neighborhoods.
- #8 – Anchorage maintains, improves, and strategically expands parks, greenbelts, riparian corridors, and trail corridors to enhance land values, public access, neighborhoods and mixed-use centers.

Ship Creek Framework Plan – 2014

The Ship Creek Framework Plan is a Comprehensive Plan element adopted by the Anchorage Assembly (A.O. 2014-79). The Plan identifies a unifying “big idea” and provides the vision for the future development and is consistent with the goals of the 2007 Downtown Plan update. The Framework Plan envisions a multi-modal transportation facility like the 2007 Downtown Plan. The Framework Plan also recommends additional access routes from the Ship Creek area that would be advantageous to reducing traffic on Downtown streets. The Framework Plan supports mixed-use development with housing, commercial, and retail, a new cruise ship docking area and several connections to existing trails for a walkable and bikeable experience. The Framework Plan Implementation Section (7) accounts for seismic, financing, urban design, trail connections, and economic analysis that are supported by the 2007 Downtown Plan update.

Fairview Neighborhood Plan – 2014

The Fairview Neighborhood Plan is a Comprehensive Plan element adopted by the Anchorage Assembly (A.O. 2014-108). The Plan has specific guidance to create an overlay district in the East Downtown area which would include design guidelines like what is provided in the 2007 Downtown Plan update.

The East Downtown Area is included in the study area boundary of the 2007 Downtown Plan update and includes updates to the Land Use and Zoning for Fairview. The Fairview Neighborhood Plan supports mixed-use development of commercial high-density residential properties in the Fairview/East Downtown tax abatement zone and encourages use of HB50 to allow AHFC to finance mixed-use development.

The Fairview Neighborhood Plan also accounts for a coordinated program to address homelessness, the installation of interpretive signage, provision of community events, and a focus on utility locations and coordination. The Fairview Neighborhood Plan promotes incentivizing development through several strategies also recommended in the 2007 Downtown Plan update. Marketing of investment properties with real estate professional and developer coordination will provide awareness and is consistent with the 2007 Downtown Plan update. Both the Fairview and the 2007 Downtown Plan update support the completion of the Glenn-to-Seward Highway project to alleviate through traffic off Downtown and Fairview streets.

Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan (4NHPP) - 2013

The 4NHPP is a Comprehensive Plan element adopted by the Anchorage Assembly (A.O. 2013-12). The 4NHPP devotes an entire chapter to Downtown Anchorage and mirrors the recommendations of the 2007 Downtown Plan Update. The

Update incorporates recommendations from the 4NHPP regarding historic building reuse, nominations to the Anchorage Local Landmark Register, designation of Downtown Historic Districts. Wayfinding and Interpretive information are very important to both plans to provide historic and cultural information to the traveling public in addition to Alaska and Anchorage residents.

The 4NHPP includes a map with locations identified as “Opportunities for Preservation.” This map is referred to in the 2007 Downtown Plan update. A list of Landmarks to Save specific to Downtown will be used in future historic and cultural preservation efforts including the wayfinding and interpretive project proposed in the 2007 Downtown Plan update. There are Downtown-specific Policies and Implementation Strategies that will also influence historic and cultural resources in Downtown. By fostering a visually cohesive historic central business district, as each plan does, our community will be able to understand our past as we look to the future.

Trends Report

The Trends Report was developed to support the targeted review of the 2007 Downtown Plan. The Trends Report provides information consistent with the elements identified for a 10-year targeted plan review. The Trends Report can be found at: www.ourdowntownanchorage.com These elements include current economic and demographic information, recent and proposed land use decisions, and contributing information from adopted plans and studies.

A report out on Chapter 8-Implementation Strategies and the Strategy Diagram (page 33) from the 2007 Downtown Plan is also included. The Trends Report is not intended to update the in-depth analysis of Appendix A from the 2007 Downtown Plan. Contributing Elements in the Trends Report include the 2020 3-Year Economic Outlook Report – AEDC, Downtown Anchorage Residential Market Study – Agnew::Beck, Downtown Plan Implementation – Chapter 8, Recent and Proposed Land Use Decisions, Contributing Plans and Studies, Downtown Zoning Districts Code Update, and Existing Conditions Maps.

2019 COVID Pandemic

Can We Move Forward and Recover? The recovery Anchorage needs to move our economy forward places the community once again at a crossroads. Do we keep doing business the same, managing government services the same, and building the same? Or do we initiate every tool in the toolbox to turn around the economy and boost private and public investment to let investors know [Anchorage is Open for Business Again?](#) This plan advocates using every tool we can and adopting new ones where needed to help.

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EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of a variety of existing conditions relevant to Downtown Anchorage in 2021. The overview is intended to be a brief description of status or actions. In-depth information is provided in the Trends Report an appendix to the plan update and includes the following:

- Current economic, demographic, and employment trends.
- Report out on the growth performance targets from the 2007 Downtown Plan related to hotel, housing, and office development.
- What plans, studies, and land use decisions were approved by the Anchorage Assembly and how do those relate to Downtown.
- Historic and cultural places are mentioned due to the adoption of the Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan and the recommendations for Downtown found in that plan.
- Development or incentives tools are described and includes a map of where those tools can be used. Finally, this chapter revisits the assets and challenges listed in the 2007 Downtown Plan.
- Information and ideas heard through the public and subcommittee engagement process have been added.

Covid-19 Economic Impacts

Anchorage is in an economic downturn due to the Great Recession and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Readers should consider this overview a snapshot in time presenting a somewhat ever-changing economic condition. Economic information for this chapter came from the 2020 and 2021 3-year Outlook Reports published by the experts at the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC). Housing information was reported by Agnew::Beck through a residential market study completed specifically for the plan update.

Economic Conditions, Housing, and Demographic Information

Impacts from the 5-year recession that began in 2015, and were exacerbated by the 2019 pandemic including job losses, businesses closing, and lost tourism visitation and revenue. However, there is good news in 2021 as tourists [have come back to Alaska](#) making Anchorage their basecamp for much of their visit. Described as “Independent Travelers,” tourism numbers are up, hotels, motels, VRBOs and Airbnb are booked to capacity. In ramping up to provide the experiences tourists and residents desire, tour operators, restaurants, and retail shops are all scrambling [to find workers](#), with many asking, “Where have the workers gone?” This is good news for the economy and a complete 180 from 2020.

Downtown Housing and Demographic information was researched and provided by Agnew::Beck in the Downtown Residential Market Study produced for the 2007 Downtown Plan update. [New housing starts](#) and completions in Downtown has resulted in over 300+ new housing units of differing types and scales of affordability since 2016. With this new housing, residents are returning to Downtown.

The AEDC reports can be found [online](#) at the AEDC website.

The Agnew::Beck Downtown Residential Market Study is an appendix to the accompanying Our Downtown Trends Report and is also available online.

All reports, studies, and other information supporting this plan is available at: www.ourdowntownanchorage.com or www.muni.org.

Growth Performance Targets

Chapter 4 in the 2007 Downtown Plan recommended Growth Performance Targets for the years 2010, 2015, and 2025. The Growth Performance Targets are discussed as part of this Existing Conditions chapter. This discussion includes a short summary on projected growth performance numbers, what has occurred, and some conclusions. The Growth Performance Targets are also discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 in relationship to the Land Use and Economic Development Goals and Recommendations included in this plan update.



Photo - 2021 Planning Department

Adopted Plans and Studies, Land Use Actions

Planning staff reviewed all land use, tax incentive, and regulatory changes completed after 2007. Adopted plans and studies related to Downtown and completed after 2007 were also reviewed. A status summary on the Implementation Actions from Chapter 8 of the 2007 Downtown Plan was completed. This included interviews with the implementers identified in Chapter 8. Findings from this research were also captured in the Trends Report available at the project website.

An additional 300+ new housing units were built or are in process of development since 2018. This new housing has increased Downtown population by approximately 360 new residents for the 2017-2022 period. That's great news for Downtown.

Economic & Demographic Update

Anchorage-wide Population

The year 2020 was the fourth straight year of population decline. Anchorage's population totaled 288,970 in 2020, a net loss of 3,500 residents (1.2%) from 2019. This is an overall loss of approximately 12,067 residents since the peak population of 301,037 in 2013. Municipal-wide population has returned to 2010 population levels with this ongoing loss of population.

Anchorage-wide Growth Predictions

Anchorage's population is forecasted to continue falling to around 286,200 by 2023, a continued steady decline from 2013.

However, the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan forecasts population growth to 317,000 people in its "Low Growth" scenario by 2040, a .3% estimated Average Annual Growth Rate. The 2040 Plan, adopted in 2017, didn't have the pandemic to consider in its forecasts. Therefore, it is difficult to predict how much the pandemic will impact Anchorage's population loss, recovery and long-term growth as time goes on.

Downtown Resident Population

According to the Downtown Anchorage Residential Market Study, approximately 800 people lived within the Downtown core area in 2019, identified as Census Tract 11. This number is down from the 938 estimated residents (per ACS 2018 estimate) in Census Tract 11. The population density of Downtown Anchorage is relatively low at roughly 3 residents per acre compared to places like Boise, Salt Lake City, and Minneapolis which have more concentrated population in their downtowns.

Downtown Resident Diversity and Income

According to the Downtown Anchorage Residential Market Study, Downtown residents are diverse in race, income distribution, and age groups and include a large population percentage of Black, Alaska Native, and other people of color (43%). A growing share of residents are in their 20s, 30s, and mid-60s.

Downtown income distribution is relatively even among residents, which is important to equality, cohesion, and economic growth. However, 51% of Downtown residents are cost-burdened with over 30% of their income used on rent.

Anchorage-wide Employment

Anchorage entered 2020 with the expectation the economy would add jobs. This was a cheery outlook after four consecutive years of job loss according to AEDC's 2020 3-Year Economic Outlook. An average of 149,945 jobs were recorded in 2019, representing a net decline from 2018 of only about 300 jobs (0.2%), the smallest annual decline since the recession began in 2015. Statewide, employment trends also turned positive in 2019 (showing an increase of 0.7%).

Hopes were high that Anchorage would see positive job numbers in 2020. Then came COVID-19. In March 2020, the pandemic-related employment cuts started. April 2020 saw real damage as the local economy shed about 16,000 jobs. April 2020 was the largest monthly jobs decline in Anchorage's history.

However, it's not all bad news! The AEDC 2021 Forecast Report estimates 4,000 jobs will be added this year (2021) across all sectors of employment. As noted above, now we need the workers to fill these jobs.

This may include jobs located in Downtown at some of the largest and smallest businesses. A deeper dive into the employment numbers and job sectors follows below, including statistics on retail, leisure and hospitality, office, and oil and gas. These sectors all provide employment in Downtown.

An analysis of census data for Census Tract 11 revealed 404 of those Downtown residents noted above were employed. The data does not indicate the location of these employed Downtown residents. The 2007 Downtown Plan process completed an in-depth look at jobs in Downtown revealing

thousands of jobs in all sectors. This plan update did not complete that same study due to the Pandemic and the shift to more people working remotely.

Retail Employment

Downtown's retail sector includes the 5th Avenue Mall, boutiques, and shops, and the Anchorage Museum. The 5th Avenue Nordstrom and Black Diamond closures contributed to the citywide loss of retail sector (2,700) jobs (17.4%) as the city entered a "hunker-down" phase of the pandemic. The sector gradually added jobs back as restrictions on retail operations were eased. Overall, in Anchorage the retail sector employed an average 15,200 people in 2020, about 1,300 jobs (7.9%) below 2019, marking the industry's fifth consecutive year of employment decline.

AEDC expects the retail sector to add 400 jobs in 2021, estimated in AEDC's 2021 Economic Forecast. While the retail sector will regain some of the jobs lost in 2020, average annual employment in 2021 is expected to fall short of pre-pandemic levels. Some retailers have fared better in the pandemic (grocery stores and hardware in particular), but many retailers have not survived.

The ADP continues to plan summer and winter events, First Fridays, and special "Shop Local" weekends to support businesses and workers. ADP facilitated street closures in Downtown to accommodate outdoor dining over several months in 2020 and early 2021. Their 2021 summer event schedule is again brimming with great music acts and a variety of family experiences. ADP continues to provide the resources needed for Downtown to be [Clean, Safe, and Vital!](#)



Photo - 2021 Planning Department

2007 Growth Performance Target - Retail Space

The 2007 Downtown Plan used an “aggressive growth model” for multi-year projections on growth and development in Downtown. An additional 185,000 square feet of retail space was projected by 2015. Downtown didn’t receive that level of investment but it still managed to grow retail space in the last 13 years. Retail floor space increases were realized by the 5th Avenue Mall and the Fur Rendezvous Building for a total of 8,100 square feet. Several marijuana businesses set up in Downtown, mostly in existing under-used buildings. The difference between what was realized and what was projected is about 176,900 square feet.

Leisure and Hospitality Employment

Employment dropped sharply in the leisure and hospitality sector due to the Pandemic. In Anchorage, the sector lost about 7,700 jobs between March and April of 2020 citywide. Employment improved over the next few months, but even at its peak remained about 5,000 jobs below 2019. The sector ended 2020 averaging about 13,300 jobs, 4,300 jobs (25%) below 2019.

Hotel / Entertainment / Recreation Employment

Hotel/entertainment/recreation employment were particularly impacted as the 2020 visitor season vanished. Visitor industry indicators all point to the season’s loss:

- Passenger enplanements (boardings) at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport experienced a 59% decline from the same period in 2019 but are back up in 2021.
- There were no cruise ship calls in 2020. 2022 should bring cruise ships again.
- Anchorage’s hotel room demand was down 41% in summer 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. We know hotels are now all booked summer 2021, helping to reverse the loss in hotel income and tax revenue.

Food Service Employment

In Anchorage, food services, which generally account for about two-thirds of leisure and hospitality sector employment, had about 3,000 fewer jobs in June 2020 compared to June 2019, a 25% decline.

2007 Growth Performance Target - Hotel

The 2007 Downtown Plan projected the addition of 375 hotel rooms by 2015 through the “aggressive growth model.”

Downtown lost 323 hotel rooms with the conversion of the Lofts and Inlet Tower but gained that same amount of housing. Significant hotel growth in Anchorage is occurring in Midtown south of Downtown drawing a significant portion of the hotel market there.

These two factors are contributing to a shortfall of projected hotel rooms in the 2007 Downtown Plan. However, several hotel proposals from boutique to major developments are in the works for Downtown. This includes the [Key Bank Building’s](#) \$60 million renovation by Peach Investments, LLC, and the [6th Avenue Hotel](#) project by ACDA and partners. These are two recent investments demonstrating a vote of confidence in Downtown.

Downtown Visitor Experience

Downtown visitor accommodations provide amenities and rooming options within easy walking of restaurants, trails, shopping, cultural and entertainment experiences, and grand views. Many Downtown visitors come to learn about our history. [Heritage tourists stay longer](#) and spend more money. Our Downtown provides a variety of experiences and access heritage tourists are looking for.

Office Development and Employment

Financial Sector

The financial activities sector includes banks, credit unions, investment firms, insurance companies, and real estate agents and managers. It will average approximately 7,200 jobs in 2020 and is expected to hold steady in 2021 for the Anchorage area. In 2021, some return to employment normalcy in the financial activities sector can be expected as the recovery from the pandemic continues. That gain is expected to be largely offset by continuation of the long-term decline in banking sector employment. Net effect will be no change between 2020 and 2021 in terms of annual average employment.

Professional and Business Services Sector

The professional and business services sector experienced a COVID-19 related loss of about 1,700 jobs between March and April 2020. The employment picture improved over the next few months. However, employment at its highest point in 2020 remained about 1,000 jobs below 2019. The sector ended 2020 averaging about 16,500 jobs, 900 jobs below 2019. AEDC expects the professional and businesses services sector to add back about 300 jobs in 2021, rising to an annual average of 16,800 jobs.

Oil and Gas Sector

AEDC expects oil and gas industry employment in Anchorage to average 2,100 jobs in 2021, 100 jobs above the 2020 average. The forecast of 100 new jobs is an annual average and does not reflect the full extent of the recovery. By another measure, AEDC expects by December 2021 there will be 2,300 oil and gas jobs in Anchorage, a 300-job improvement over December 2020. Many of these oil and gas jobs are in the ConocoPhillips building Downtown.

2007 Growth Performance Target - Office

The 2007 Downtown Plan projected office space construction of an additional 1,257,500 square feet by 2015. New construction or substantial renovations adding new office space has not been realized from this projection. However, some redevelopment and renovations have. This includes the current Key Bank Building on 5th Avenue, and the completed NANA Corporation building on 9th Avenue and I Street, the Solar Building at 441 W. 5th Avenue, and the Anchorage Police Department Headquarters on 4th Avenue. Office space upgrades and development are good for Downtown.

Conclusions

Employment Impacts

The Pandemic impacted most sectors of employment in Anchorage. This chapter is a moment in time and not meant to convey the outlook on job growth or business recovery from the Pandemic. AEDC is the expert providing information for this chapter and before this plan may be adopted the economy could be booming back and what was quoted from the AEDC 2020 and 2021 Outlook Reports will be overcome.

Hotel and Motel Expansions

Hotel and motel expansions are vital to the economy of Anchorage, for the room taxes and retail sales generated and the other numerous benefits derived from a redeveloped, active, and vital Downtown.

A commercial land assessment study commissioned by the Municipality in 2012 determined Downtown would be the leading location for lodging development at roughly 2.9 million square feet.

Downtown visitors staying at Downtown hotels have a visitor experience like no other area of Anchorage. That's what Downtown hotels could market.

Several recommendations for code updates related to design and placemaking, coupled with the current tax incentives offered by the Municipality, could help spur growth in the hotel sector for Downtown.

Office and Commercial Expansions

Some of the new office development could be planned as Maker and Shared-Use spaces. High-speed internet will be required for those “[Digital Nomads](#)” who can destination work from wherever they wish to call home. They are finding support and information from www.Digitalnomads.world who states online: “Perhaps nowhere else does the comforts of the modern age combine with the freedom and adventure of living on the edge of vast unspoiled nature.” Nomads are coming to Anchorage for extended months to get the Alaska experience.

Anchorage Housing

Anchorage-wide Housing Update

AEDC's [2020 3-Year Economic Outlook Report](#) projected 420 new housing units in 2020. This estimate was based on MOA housing permit data through the first three months of 2020. With about 117,000 housing units in Anchorage, the annual growth rate of housing construction has hovered around 0.3% annually for the last several years. Multi-family units compose about half of all new units. Giving a perspective on housing growth, across Anchorage 345 housing units were added in 2019. This is roughly 90 units fewer than were added in 2018. Multi-family projects accounted for 149 of these units while single-family homes contributed 185 units. 16 mobile homes were also added in 2019.

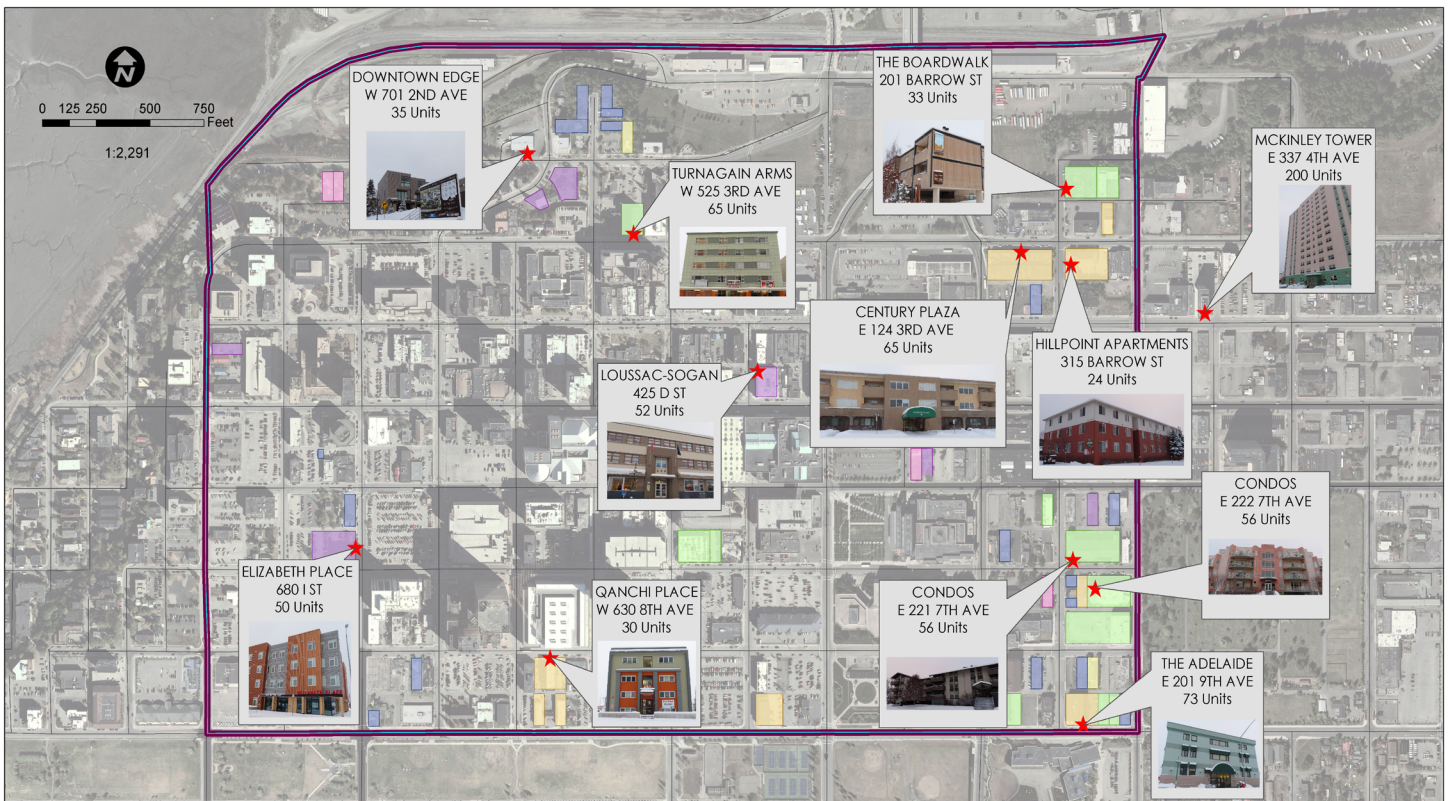
Downtown Housing

Table #1: Downtown Housing Estimate (Source: Agnew::Beck)

Table #1 – Downtown Housing Estimate (Source - Agnew::Beck):

	Total Housing Units	% of Total	Average Units per Property	Minimum Units per Property	Maximum Units per Property	# of Properties
Rental Apartments	238	39%	44	6	73	9
Condos	229	37%	16	1	65	14
Mixed-Use Residential	112	18%	19	1	52	6
4-Plex or Smaller	16	3%	2	2	4	7
Single Family	19	3%	1	1	1	19
Total/Average	614	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	55

Approximately 614 housing units are in the core Downtown Anchorage area represented by Census Tract 11. This housing number is a combination of single-family, condominiums, mixed-use residential, 4-plex or smaller, and rental apartments, with 55 separate Downtown buildings housing residential units as noted in Table 1. Census Tract 11 was used to analyze the number of units in Downtown consistent with the 2007 Downtown Plan. A few additional buildings located just outside the Core were also counted as depicted on the map below. The largest residential property in Tract 11 is the Adelaide on East 9th Avenue at 73 units and McKinley Tower with 200 units just outside Census Tract 11. **(Map: Step 2 – Existing Housing Units Downtown Anchorage from the Trends Report).**



Existing Housing Units Downtown Anchorage
Municipality of Anchorage

OUR DOWNTOWN
The Heart of Anchorage

A Project to Implement the Downtown Comprehensive Plan

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- ★ Existing_Housing
- Censu Tract 11 Boundary
- Mixed Residential Commercial
- Residential Other
- Single-Family Residential
- Condo
- Apartments
- 4-Plex, Triplex, Duplex

What does it cost to develop housing in Anchorage?

Key Findings Agnew::Beck Pro Forma Study: The Agnew::Beck pro forma tests the feasibility of multi-family rental housing in five different areas of Anchorage. The results indicate that regardless of location in Anchorage, market rate rental housing faces financial feasibility challenges, despite a strong demand for multifamily housing. When we use realistic rents given existing market conditions in Anchorage and compare

the capitalized value of the income stream to the total development costs, a financing gap results. This is consistent with economic findings during the 2007 Downtown Anchorage Comprehensive Plan where financial feasibility was identified as an issue. Construction costs are too high relative to the rents that can be achieved.

Summary Pro Forma Findings

No Incentives + Market Rate Rents

12-Year Property Tax Incentive Reduces Gap by ~50%

Site Name	E 15 th Ave/ A St	E Tudor Rd/Piper St	Downtown Example	W 44 th / Northwood Dr	W Dimond Blvd/Arlene St
Census Tract	West Fairview	Campbell Park East	Downtown (Tract 11)	Northwood	Dimond/Jewel Lake
Lot Size (acres)	1.03	3.98	0.50	9.96	6.21
Zoning District	R4: Multifamily Residential	R3: Mixed Residential	B2C: Central Business District, Periphery	R3SL: Mixed Residential*	R3A: Residential Mixed Use
Housing Units	31	112	40	180	130
Total Development Costs (TDC)	\$7,653,541	\$27,014,814	\$10,025,347	\$48,255,178	\$32,278,705
per sqft	\$243	\$239	\$251	\$250	\$248
per unit	\$243,489	\$242,232	\$250,634	\$268,084	\$247,637
Net Operating Income	\$250,186	\$906,070	\$352,385	\$1,485,283	\$1,030,308
Property Tax Payment	\$82,083	\$289,859	\$98,511	\$512,465	\$343,905
Value of Income Stream (discounted cash flow, 8%)	\$2,881,018	\$10,479,645	\$4,164,155	\$16,945,963	\$11,826,266
Project Gap	(\$4,772,523)	(\$16,535,169)	(\$5,861,192)	(\$31,309,215)	(\$20,452,439)
Gap as % of TDC	62%	59%	58%	65%	63%

Agnew::Beck | 1

Table #2 – Summary of Pro Forma Findings

Table #2 indicates the results of five hypothetical projects throughout Anchorage with one in Downtown. As shown, a 40-unit rental housing project costs roughly \$10 million to construct and yields \$4 million in capitalized value, resulting in a \$5.8 million gap. Some developers who are also their own general contractor can construct a project for less cost, but the financial feasibility gaps still exist. The Downtown Housing Tax Incentive reduces the gap by roughly 50 percent, but additional solutions are still required to make projects pencil.

2007 Growth Performance Target – Housing

The projection for additional housing was 350 units by 2010, 1,200 units by 2015, and 2,500 units by 2025. The housing goal of the 2007 Downtown Plan was “to accommodate and encourage up to 4,000 housing units, which was more than the housing demand projection.” The plan recommended development incentives to help support housing, several of which have been adopted since 2007. The plan also stated refined development regulations were needed to accomplish this number. The Downtown zoning districts reformat approved in May 2020 will help achieve this target. This Plan update is also needed to provide the direction to complete the in-depth update to the Downtown Title 21 code as envisioned in 2007 and by the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan. Housing, a safe pedestrian system, and bicycle connectivity were the primary focus of public comments over this planning process.

New Housing Summary

Housing development envisioned by the 2007 Downtown Plan was first initiated around 2016, by the ARRC and Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA). Elizabeth Place (50 units) and Qanchi Place (30 units), both built by CIHA were the first CIHA projects completed in Downtown. The ARRC partnered with the Petersen Group to build The Downtown Edge (35 units), with several of those units sold in 2019-2020. Two projects by ACDA include a mixed-use [6th Avenue Hotel](#) project, projected to add a substantial number of hotel (156) and housing (32) units, and the [Block 96 Flats](#) on 8th Avenue proposed with (44) market rate studio and one-bedroom apartments. Incentives to build each of these projects were needed to help them be financially feasible.

Plans and Studies, Land Use Decisions

Plans and Studies

The “targeted” plan review is required to also look at adopted plans and studies and land use decisions. Since 2007, the Anchorage Assembly has reviewed or adopted over 15 plans and studies with some relationship to Downtown. This includes the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, Fairview Neighborhood Plan, AMATS TIP, and Anchorage’s Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan, and the Ship Creek Framework Plan. Studies include the Gambell Street Revitalization Project, Anchored Home, Former Native Service Hospital Master Plan, and the Anchorage Climate Action Plan. Within these plans and studies are a mix of numerous actions and recommendations that require funding and community support to be initiated and completed.

Land Use Decisions

Land use decisions are adopted by Assembly ordinance usually recommended for approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission. The rezone of the historic Native Hospital site on 3rd Avenue will allow housing, mixed use, commercial and active open space development. The adoption of the 4-unit housing tax incentive (A.O. 2019-12), Downtown Zoning Districts reformat (A.O. 2020-38), and the Fairview / East Downtown Economic Development Tax Abatement Zone (A.O. 2014-71(S)) are all intended to spur and support new development. However, the market for commercial and housing will ultimately dictate what will be built in the future. The Trends Report also noted 61 permits were approved for the Downtown area from 2007 forward. These permits run the gamut in size and investment from marijuana shops to the multi-million-dollar Key Bank Building renovation on 5th Avenue.



Photo 2016 Planning Department

Historic and Cultural Places

Downtown Anchorage is home to several architectural and historically significant buildings. These include the Captain Cook Hotel, 4th Avenue Theatre, Federal Building, Loussac Sogn Building, Wendler Building, Pioneer Schoolhouse, NANA Building, Anchorage Museum, and Dena'ina Convention Center. The story associated with each building is unique and meaningful to our history and culture.

MOA-Owned Historic Properties

The MOA owns several National Register Listed Historic Properties in Downtown, including Cottage 25 on 3rd Avenue, the Oscar Anderson House in Elderberry Park, Pioneer Schoolhouse in Crawford Park, and Old City Hall in Peratrovich Park. Private historic properties include the 4th Avenue Theatre, Loussac-Sogn Building, Wendler Building, Historic Anchorage Hotel, and Leopold David House are also National Register listed.

Cultural Sites or Districts

Cultural sites or districts include Ship Creek, Museum Design District, 4th Avenue Mushing District, and 2nd to 4th Avenues Denali Views District in the center of our city.

The history and culture that accompanies these special places are what makes them unique and treasured by residents and [visitors alike](#). Carolyn Childs of My Travel Research extolls the benefits to the traveler and the community in her online blog: [How Culture and Heritage Tourism Boosts More Than A Visitor Economy](#) (mytravelresearch.com).

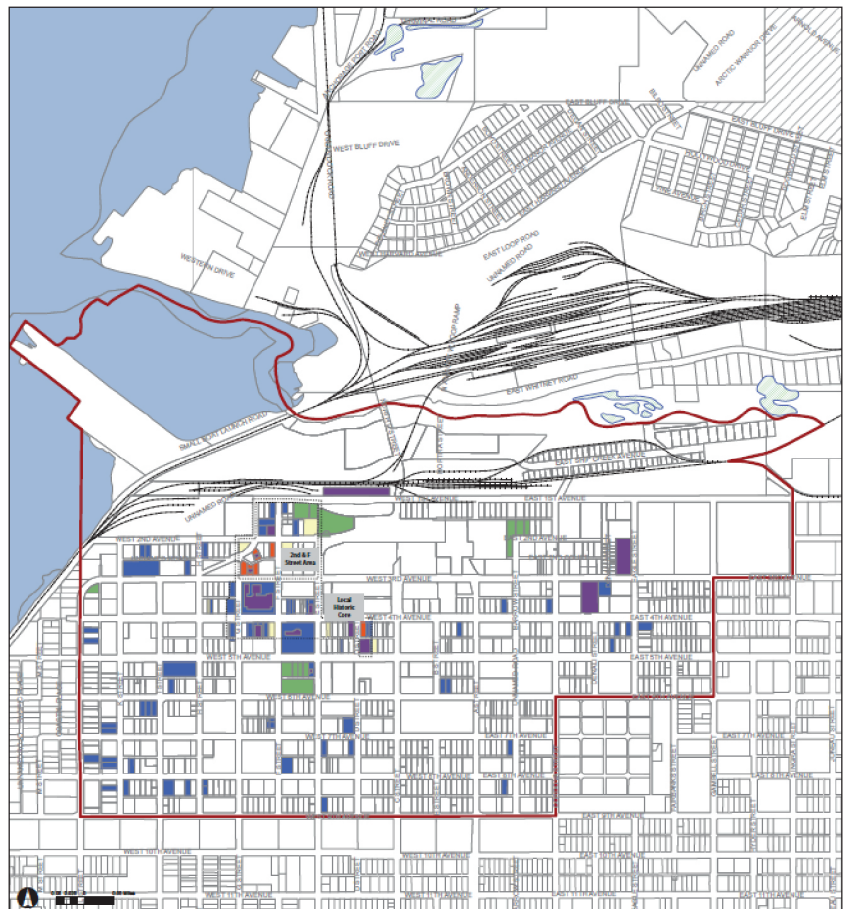
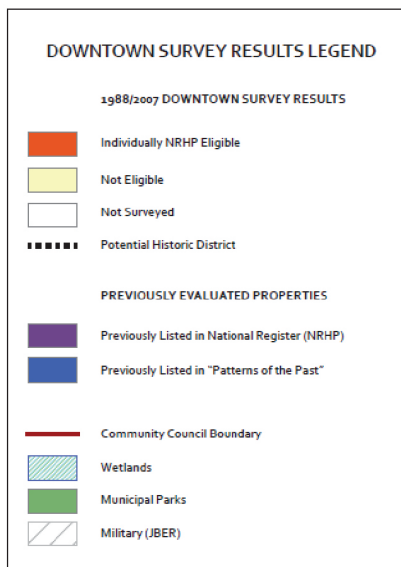
The Municipality adopted the [Anchorage Original Neighborhood's Historic Preservation Plan](#) in 2013, and completed the [2015 Original Neighborhoods Interpretive Plan](#) to guide the preservation and celebration of our historic and cultural resources, and to support a renewed focus on our history and culture. The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan also provides for historic and cultural preservation including historic building adaptive reuse and designating historic districts, buildings, and places.

The 2007 Downtown Plan acknowledged the importance of historic districts and historic buildings to Anchorage's cultural and tourism economy by stating historic districts should be designated, and historic buildings, cultural places, and viewsheds can be recognized.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN FOR ANCHORAGE'S FOUR ORIGINAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown Survey Results (1988 & 2007)

Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc. (AHPI) surveyed 46 properties in Downtown in 1988; the survey report was updated in 2007. The "2nd and F Street Area" was found to retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register as a historic district, while the "Local Historic Core" was found to lack the integrity needed for National Register eligibility.





Photos - Planning Department

Land Use Code

Title 21 Downtown Zoning Districts

Code Reformat - Our Downtown - Step 1

The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, adopted in 2017, called for reformatting the Downtown zoning districts into the current Title 21 zoning code format intended as the first step towards modernizing Downtown's development regulations.

Downtown land use code was still regulated by an older version of Title 21 originally written in the 1980s making it difficult to use in today's development context.

The Planning Department completed the Downtown zoning districts (B-2A, B-2B, and B-2C) reformat, which was approved by the Assembly in April 2020.

The code reformat clarified and streamlined the existing land use regulations for Downtown and gave Downtown property owners access to the advantages of the modern, more user-friendly format of current Title 21. The Downtown-specific regulations were also located together in a new chapter (21.11) devoted to Downtown to allow for easier use, greater transparency, and flexibility.

As part of the current Title 21 Zoning Code, Downtown property owners and developers now have use of approval procedures and contemporary forms of regulatory flexibility, such as the Alternative Equivalent Compliance process not previously available to Downtown developments.

Other Title 21 Development Code incentives for developers' use include the following examples:

- Concurrent processing, which allows simultaneous processing of applications for different permits and approvals that may be required for the same development project.
- Minor modifications, which allow for administrative approval for minor deviations from development standards.
- Alternative Equivalent Compliance, which allows landscaping and building design requirements to be met with alternative designs standards that are equivalent to the code requirement.
- Reduced private open space requirements (formerly called "usable yard" in old Title 21) as an incentive for providing higher-quality, usable spaces.
- More flexible landscaping bed requirements.
- Exemption from minimum parking requirements (carried over from old Title 21).
- Clarified the bonus incentives for allowing additional floor area height and consolidated the approval standards for the urban design amenities that earn bonus building height into one section to reduce cross-reference errors and helps streamline development reviews.
- Entitlements and incentives for the renovation and reuse of historic structures.

Code Update - Our Downtown - Step 3

Title 21 Chapter 11: DOWNTOWN will be able to accommodate more substantive amendments to improve the land use regulations from recommendations included in this plan update. Step 3 of this 3-step process will update the Downtown Chapter including a review of the bonus point system and design standards.

Downtown Assets and Challenges

Assets

The 2007 Downtown Plan identified the most noteworthy assets and critical challenges facing Downtown. The 2007 Plan also included many goals, recommendations, and implementation actions that expressed the community's vision for Downtown.

This section reaffirms Downtown's fundamental assets with some updates. Downtown Anchorage is much the same today as it was in 2007. Downtown still attracts visitors and locals to experience all that it has to offer. Assets include amenities and attractions, connections, and a beautiful setting.

Amenities and Attractions

- Compact, walkable multi-use district ideal for public transit, schools, and affordable housing.
- Diverse cultural, historic, and entertainment amenities and venues located in a compact retail district including the Anchorage Museum, Museum Design District, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts, Mushing District, 4th and 5th Avenues historic district geared towards families, multi-cultural experiences, and celebrating the true north.
- 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, and Old 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 ARRC Historic Railroad Depot via existing pedestrian and bicycle trails.

Setting

- Dramatic natural setting with direct access to Knik Arm

and views to the Chugach, Talkeetna, and Alaska ranges.

- A bird's eye view of the Great One—Denali and Mount Susitna.
- Diverse mix of building types, from historic frontier homes, World War II bungalows, classic midcentury modern 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

Some challenges remain the same since the 2007 Downtown Plan was adopted. Public input and comments from the 2021 online survey garnered similar and additional challenges.

Development Constraints

- Housing development finds it difficult to “pencil.”
- Sea of parking lots.
- Design guidelines need clarification.
- Portions of the Downtown area are located within areas designated as potentially high susceptibility to seismic-induced ground failure.
- Building setback requirement.
- Bulk tower regulations discourage going taller, making building more costly.
- Bonus point system out of date.
- Alternative Building Tower Design process needs to be streamlined.
- Parking lot landscaping requirement too restrictive.
- Utility upgrades are expensive.
- Not enough incentives to get more housing.
- Small lots – No process in place to consolidate small lots.
- Better communication is needed early on in project development between infrastructure providers, including the utility companies and the project developers to avoid cost overruns and project delays.

Design Conditions

- Many existing buildings were poorly designed for the northern climate or pedestrian-friendly city center.
- Shadowing, wind effects, and blank walls have impacted pedestrian spaces as a result.
- Sidewalks and crossings are not designed for winter conditions, resulting in areas with 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.
- Sign code not relevant for Downtown – discourages creativity and ability to convey the Downtown context. Doesn't consider that art is not a sign sometimes.
- Sunlight access and wind survey studies aren't incentivized to get good design.
- Trees are not supported with adequate subsurface soil cavities, resulting in lost landscaping investment—standards need to be changed for landscaping.
- Wayfinding and interpretive signs should not be part of sign code.
- Open space requirement should consider surrounding public park land as potential asset to requirement.
- CPTED doesn't necessarily fix an issue.

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.
- Truck traffic on 3rd Avenue makes it difficult for pedestrians and bicycle riders to use.
- The perception of a lack of parking in the city center.
- Conversely there is too much parking.
- Speed limits are too fast Downtown.
- Missing trolley circulator to move workers and visitors around Downtown.
- One-way streets are hard to navigate.

Social Factors

- Seasonal tourism lacks year-round activity and vibrancy.
- Safety concerns due to panhandling, public inebriation and abuse of public properties.
- Solutions to housing and caring for homeless populations.

Public Comments Regarding Assets and Challenges for the Plan

The two subcommittees formed for the plan update assisted the Planning Team in discussions of several issues including the cost and timing of development, design standards, and landscaping.

A Utility Subcommittee and an Urban Design Subcommittee both provided invaluable input as utility providers and private-sector partners in making Downtown great. More importantly the subcommittees contributed several ideas to streamline and achieve great design.

The comments from two subcommittees were added to the challenges noted from their experiences in supporting Downtown development.

Comments from the online survey also added information that was used to develop a set of recommendations for Chapter 8—the implementation section of this plan. Online survey participants contributed invaluable experiences in Downtown including what they liked and what needed fixing.

The Downtown Community Council provided insight and examples of the assets and challenges facing Downtown for those that work and own property here.



Photo 2021 - Planning Department



Photo 2021 - Planning Department



Photo 2021 - Planning Department

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DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

Overview

This chapter updates the 2007 Downtown Plan Vision, Goals, Strategy Framework, and Strategy Diagram. This chapter also adds new policies and actions.

- The 2007 Vision was reaffirmed and updated with one sentence added at the end. “Our Downtown belongs to everyone!”
- The 2007 Overarching Goals were reaffirmed with the addition of bicycling to Goal 4.
- The 2007 Strategy Framework was a 3-part diagram depicting land use types, redevelopment opportunity sites and four strategies including marketing, transportation, urban design, and programming. The framework is replaced with new themes as noted in Chapter with a nod to the recommendations from the Oklahoma City (OKCity) delegation and Smart Growth America (SGA). The updated strategies are disbursed within four topic-relevant chapters including Economic Development, Transportation & Circulation, Urban Design, and Quality of Life.
- The new Revitalization Map replaces the Strategy Map with recommended Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts, and Opportunity Sites. This new map is similar to the 2007 recommendation. However, the map is accompanied with many focused actions to spur revitalization.
- The new Land Use Plan Map replaces the Strategy Framework Map with an actual land use plan recommendation containing districts and sub-districts as encouraged by Title 21 code related to comprehensive plan amendments.

These guiding tenants and maps work together to support chapter-specific goals, policies and action items, which are all intended to working together to create a straightforward and implementable plan for Downtown revitalization. The Assembly is encouraged to add an annual allocation for plan implementation when they adopt this plan update.

Our Downtown Vision

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.

Our Downtown belongs to everyone!

Downtown District Plan Goals

The following overarching goals from the 2007 Downtown Plan still reflect the dream of what the community would like Our Downtown to be. The goals articulate a Downtown that is welcoming, leverages public and private sector resources, encourages businesses and government agencies to choose Downtown, has adequate housing for those who wish to live there, provides incentives for new or redevelopment, is connected by a great street and trail system that accommodates pedestrians, bicycles and cars, provides and creates a comfortable connection between the street, sidewalk and buildings, and provides an useable land use and development code that can flex without added costs.

Overarching Goals

1. Create a Downtown for all:

Celebrate Anchorage's Alaska Native heritage and many other cultures by offering amenities, goods, attractions, and services that appeal to persons of varying ages, backgrounds, and incomes. Downtown crowds should reflect the community.

2. Jump-start development:

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

3. Be economically sustainable:

Support business and civic agencies large and small to locate and stay in Downtown by promoting a favorable business environment that meets their financial requirements.

4. Provide more housing Downtown:

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

5. Improve connectivity:

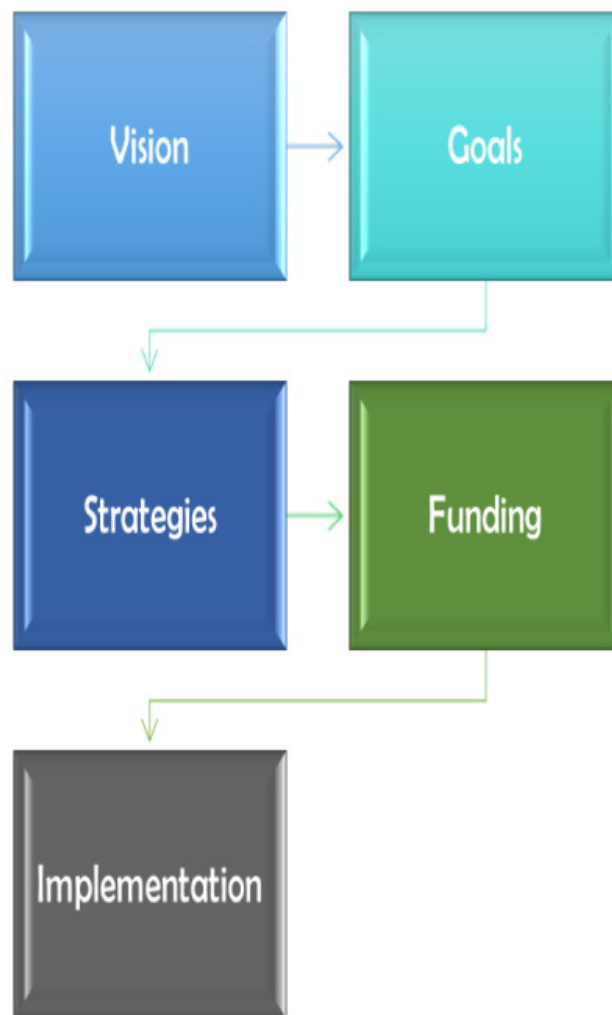
Link amenities, housing, office space, retail, and natural resources to enhance Downtown's sense of place and connectivity among destinations. Promote walking as an important mode of local circulation within Downtown. Encourage bicycling connections within Downtown and to the surrounding community. Strengthen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

6. 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.

7. 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.



Plan Strategies

The following strategies help guide and prioritize Implementation Actions for Chapter 8. The 2007 Downtown Plan strategies were reimagined with this plan update and include what was most important to the community and developers, supplemented by ideas from the OKCity delegation and SGA.

The following strategy statements are a compilation of what the planning team heard.

1. “Focus the Effort.”

Start with the Revitalization Map in this chapter, supported by the Land Use Plan Map, land use goals, and recommendations in Chapter 4.

2. “Build Great Housing.”

Urban design, proposed code updates, a Utility Coordination Process, and a Parking Coordination Process are provided in Chapter 6 to support new housing and commercial in Downtown.

3. “Get Important Input from Women in the Community.”

Quality of Life recommendations include wayfinding, interpretive projects, marketing, branding, safety and security. Activity and special events programming are included in Chapter 7.

4. “Lead by Example.”

Expanding incentives and finding ideas to encourage public-private Partnerships are included in Chapter 4.

5. “Make Connections to Surrounding Neighborhoods.”

Manage streets for optimal safety while providing connections for pedestrians and bicyclists, ??Great Streets Engineering Study. These are included in Chapter 5.

6. “Make Downtown Safe.”

Support ADP’s Clean, Safe, Vital Program, PM&E’s lighting upgrade projects and, snow management; implement Community Homeless Plan. These are also included in Chapter 7

Strategy #1 - Focus the Effort

Focus the Effort designates locations in Downtown recommended for concentrated resources and other investment. Taking to heart the Smart Growth America’s recommendations excerpted below, the Revitalization Map created for this plan update was developed to identify Areas, Districts, and Sites to create that “critical mass” needed to spark redevelopment and revitalization. Revitalization is already happening in the 2016 A Few Good Blocks Area. This plan update takes these tenets even further with its recommendations for Areas, Districts, and Sites.

Excerpt from Smart Growth America, 2015

Focus the effort: Economic development is increasingly about placemaking. A key to creating a successful downtown is engendering a sense of place associated with a specific area. The challenge is to have enough activity concentrated within a walkable area, to create a “critical mass.”... In the early stages, it is important to work to help a “hot spot” emerge.

Focus within the focus area: To begin successful implementation requires a smaller target area in which to concentrate efforts. Mapping and inventorying surface parking lots and parcel ownership should be compiled to understand what strategic sites are available.

Start by getting a few really good blocks.

Designate an area where (1) new development or redevelopment is already occurring, (2) there is a substantial amount of community and private resources committed, (3) the areas and sites contain transit routes and are located within the Downtown Redevelopment Focus Area adopted by the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, (4) the areas and sites are an existing incentive area adopted by the Anchorage Assembly and the Federal government, (5) the areas and sites are approved with a Growth-Supporting Feature including Transit-supportive Development or Greenway-supported Development, (6) the areas and sites are zoned for the recommended development, or (7) the areas or sites implement one or more Assembly-adopted and/or approved plans or studies. -SGA Final Report, 2015

Focus the Development

Focused development areas, cultural districts, and opportunity sites are proposed in this plan consistent with what was recommended by the Oklahoma City delegation and Smart Growth America. Oklahoma City has a track record of revitalization that Anchorage could emulate, in addition to the Smart Growth America recommendations that are already working as noted previously in this introduction. The proposed Focused Development Strategy is included in Chapter 3.

Therefore, this plan recommends a Focused Development Strategy to include reinvestment in locations where:

- The return on investment of existing infrastructure is furthered as new customers are added.
- New development or redevelopment is already occurring in these areas, districts or sites and is creating a renewed interest in the surrounding parcels.
- Focusing development helps the service providers to plan and work early-on with owners to right size the improvements needed to support the planned development.
- There is potential to be included as a project within an Assembly-approved Redevelopment Focus Area, which all of Downtown was identified as in the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan.
- A property is located within the Fairview/East Downtown Tax Abatement Area.
- The area is within the 2040 Land Use Plan's Transit-Supportive Development or Greenway-Supported Development designated areas.
- The location, when developed will implement one or more Assembly-adopted and/or approved plans or studies and,
- The area is within a Federally-[Qualified Opportunity Zone](#) and the benefits of this designated zone can be obtained for new or existing businesses.

Focused Development Areas

A Few Good Blocks 2016

A Few Good Blocks 2016 was initiated by the Planning Department and the Office of Economic and Community Development after a 3-day visit and public workshop held by Smart Growth America in 2016. Smart Growth America recommended the following:

- Define a specific redevelopment area that includes the MOA-owned 7th Avenue and I Street property as an anchor for a redevelopment pilot project, and
- Use the existing fiscal tools to incentivize the pilot project.

From these recommendations, A Few Good Blocks was defined as 9th to 5th Avenues and I to L Streets, with approval from the Administration. The Planning Department completed a mapping analysis of the utilities and property ownership for the 2016 Few Good Blocks area and initiated outreach to property owners, including MOA departments, to seek ideas for redevelopment. From this initial effort, Elizabeth Place was completed, and the Block 96 Lofts at 8th and K are in design.

This plan update proposes to expand the Few Good Blocks to include 9th Avenue to the ARRC Railroad line and from G Street to Coastal Place. In addition, to extending this boundary, the plan proposes a special study to determine development impediments and to seeking grant funding that could initiate new development in this Focused Development Area.

1 A Few Good Blocks 2021

Expanded out from the 2016 Smart Growth area noted above. This area now includes 9th to the ARRC railroad line, to include the ARRC Rail project area and G to M streets where recent housing developments include Elizabeth Place, Qanchi Place, the 6th Avenue Hotel Project, the Block 96 Lofts, and the new Fire Island Mixed-use Bakery building.

Fairview/East Downtown Economic Revitalization Area

Fairview/East Downtown Economic Revitalization Area was adopted by the Anchorage Assembly in 2014 for a 10-year period. Implementation Strategy LU-6 from the Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan directs the Municipality to develop “incentives, funding opportunities and land assembly/site location strategies for a diverse mix of housing types and income levels.” As such, development and/or redevelopment is encouraged in this area by allowing greater tax abatement incentives.

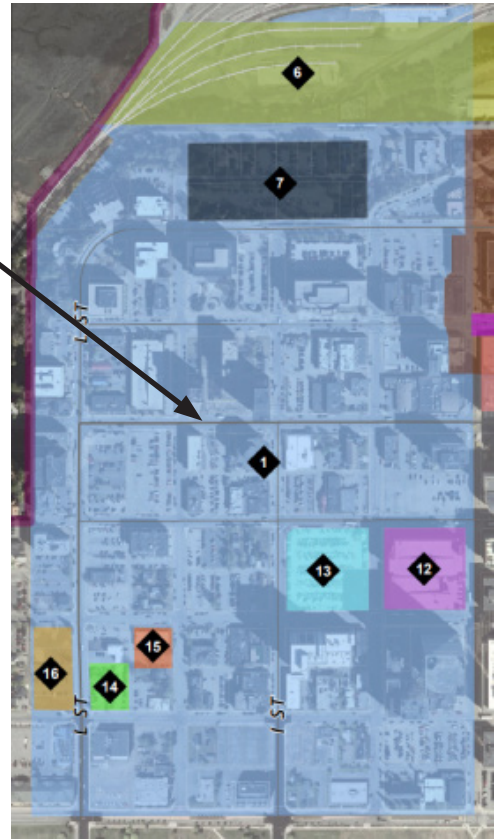
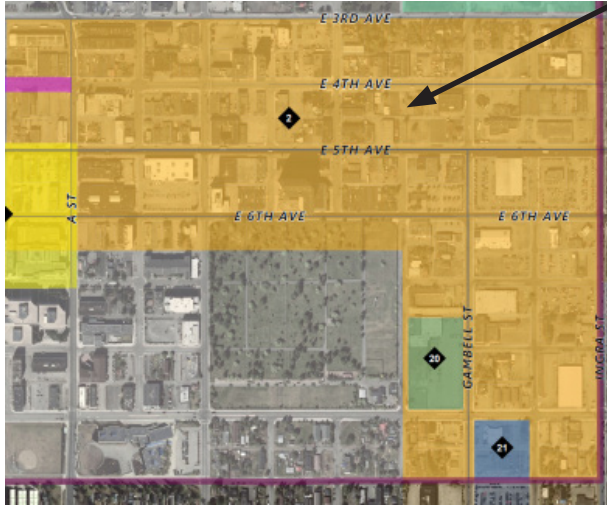
The Focus Areas include public and private properties, several parking lots or undeveloped properties, and some older buildings and new construction. These areas also have great access to views and trails and provide connections to transit routes.

2 The East Downtown/West Fairview Deteriorated and Economic Development Properties Tax Abatement Area

Adopted by the Assembly in 2014, this T-Shaped Area also encompasses a portion of the Mountain View Federal Opportunity Zone (FOZ) adopted by Congress.

2 - Proposed Focused Development Areas

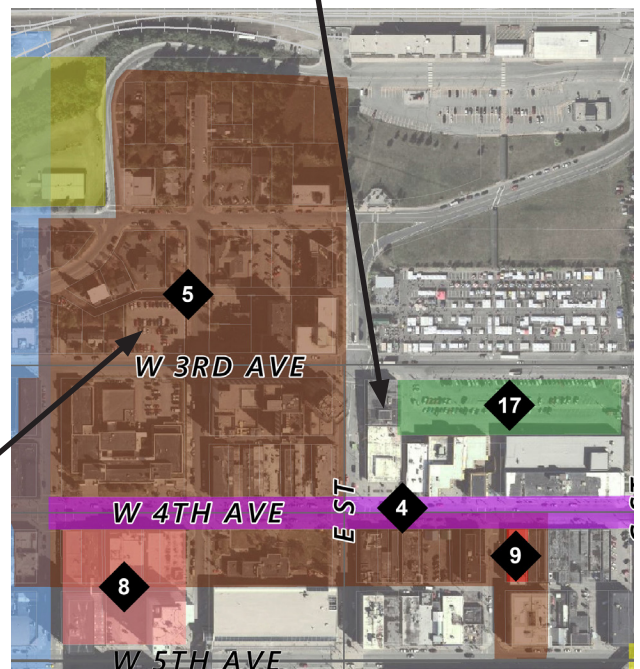
- 1 A Few Good Blocks 2021— Expanded out from the 2016 Smart Growth-focused area, this area now includes 9th to 2nd Avenues and G to M Streets where recent housing developments including Elizabeth Place, Qanchi Place, the 6th Avenue Hotel Project, the Block 96 Lofts, and the new Fire Island Mixed-use Bakery.
- 2 The East Downtown/West Fairview Deteriorated and Economic Development Properties Tax Abatement Area – Adopted by the Assembly in 2014, this T-Shaped Area also encompasses a portion of the Mountain View Federal Opportunity Zone (FOZ) adopted by Congress.



3 - Proposed Cultural Districts



- 3 Anchorage Museum Design District - Proclaimed by the Mayor in 2018, the area encompasses A to C Streets and 5th to 7th Avenues.
- 4 4th Avenue Mushing District – Proclaimed by the Mayor in 2019, includes 4th Avenue from A to G Streets.



- 5 2nd to 4th Avenues proposed Historic Districts - Determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places these areas could also be eligible for the Anchorage Local Landmark designation. The proposed Downtown historic districts are found in [Anchorage’s Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan](#).

Cultural Districts

Cultural Districts may include a variety of old and new buildings, parks or greenspace, art installations, trails and walkways, and other natural features, such as viewsheds and creeks. A wide range of land uses, landscapes, and geographic locations within downtowns can be reasonably labeled a “[Cultural District](#)” according to Americans for the Arts. More than 90 cities in the United States have planned or implemented Cultural Districts, positioning arts and culture at the center of their urban revitalization efforts. Anchorage is a young city by European settlement comparison. However, we have a long and rich prehistory that should be honored and revered, and a settlement history to celebrate and support within these Cultural Districts.

Two Cultural Districts were designated by Mayor Proclamation in 2018, the Anchorage Museum Design District and the 4th Avenue Mushing District. Two proposed historic district areas were evaluated in 2010 by the MOA and were found to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Anchorage Local Landmark Register may ultimately be the tool the community uses to publicly designate and honor these cultural districts. As previously noted in Chapter One, Heritage tourism visitors stay longer and spend more money. Heritage tourism is particularly relevant to the social and economic well-being of communities. It is the one activity forecast for growth in an otherwise stagnant domestic tourism market. Heritage tourism utilizes the cultural and historical capital of a region and contributes to the growth of a sector. [Heritage tourism](#) also puts an economic value on heritage assets, thereby contributing to their preservation for future generations.

The Cultural Districts include public and private properties, some of which are at least 100 years old. The Districts are located within the historic street corridors of Downtown. The Districts are numbered in the order they are found on the Revitalization Map.

3

Anchorage Museum Design District

Proclaimed by the Mayor in 2018, the area encompasses A to C Streets and 5th to 7th Avenues.

4

4th Avenue Mushing District

Proclaimed by the Mayor in 2018, includes 4th Avenue from A to G Streets.

5

2nd to 4th Avenues proposed Historic Districts

Determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, these areas could also be eligible for the Anchorage Local Landmark Register designation. The proposed Downtown historic districts are identified in [Anchorage’s Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan](#).

Opportunity Sites

Fifteen opportunity sites are recommended with this plan update. A few of the sites are carried over from the 2007 Downtown Plan. Some locations or sites are owned by public agencies including MOA Real Estate, ACDA, AHFC, TLO, and ARRC. Several opportunity sites are privately owned and some locations are already under construction or have planning and design occurring for construction. It is important to recognize opportunities for new or redevelopment with this plan to ensure coordination with infrastructure planning and funding, and tax incentive applications.

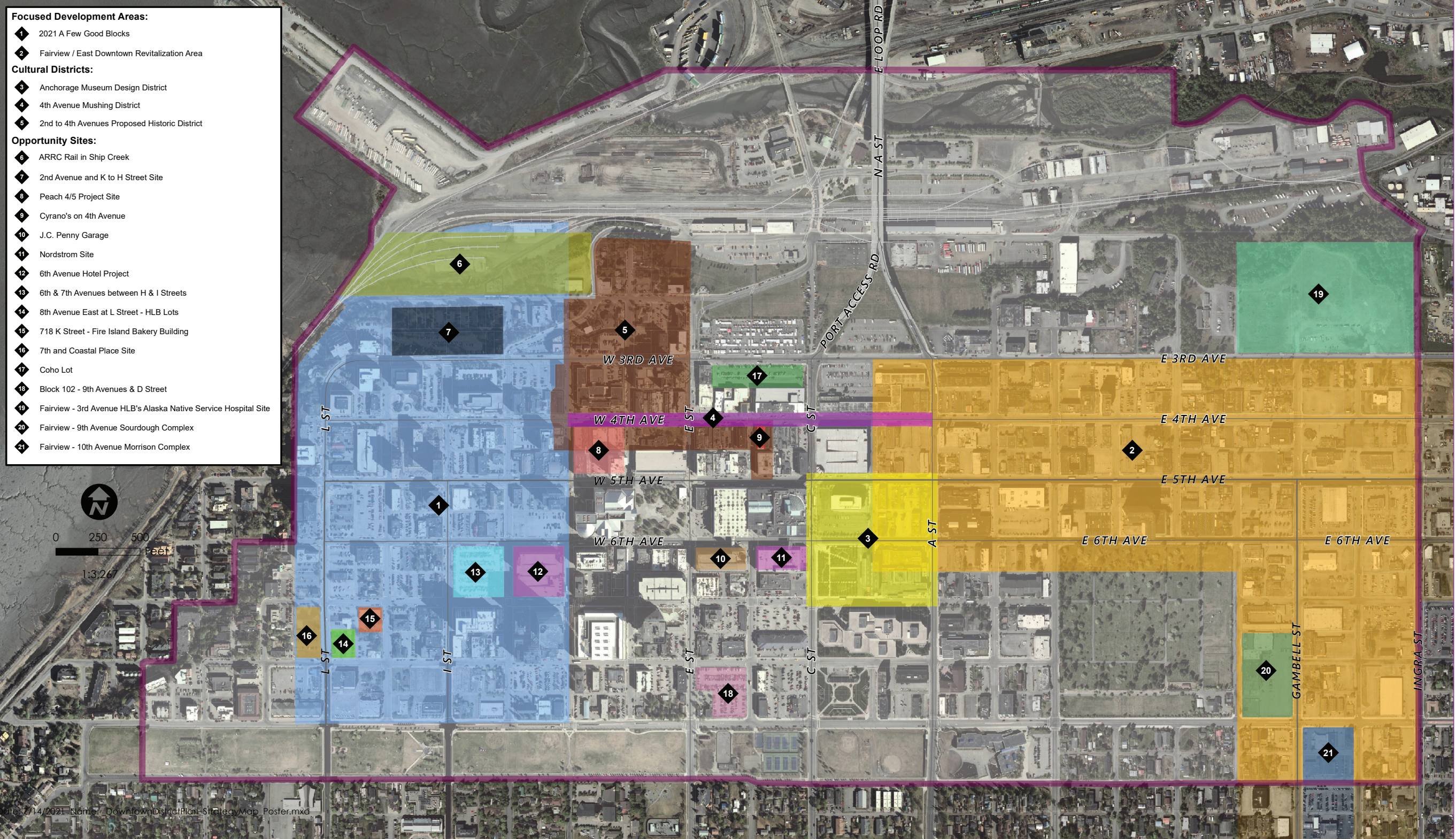
The Opportunity Sites include the following public and private properties. The sites are numbered in the order they are found on the Revitalization Map:

- 6 ARRC Rail in Ship Creek**
11 acres currently under development by the Alaska Railroad.
- 7 2nd Avenue and K Street**
A consortium of owners would be required to develop the 4-5 lots.
- 8 Peach 4/5 Project**
Includes lots from F to G Street and 4th and 5th Avenues.
- 9 Cyrano's on 4th Avenue**
Listed for sale. A proforma has shown this site is viable for mixed-use.
- 10 J.C. Penny Garage**
Will need substantial investment, a public / private partnership has been proposed.
- 11 Nordstrom site**
Will need substantial investment and approval by multiple property owners.
- 12 6th Avenue Hotel Project**
Formerly the 6th Avenue Transit Center owned by ACDA.
- 13 6th and 7th Avenues between H and I Streets**
Arco Parking Lot for the Conoco Phillips Building.
- 14 8th Avenue**
East side at L Street - 3 HLB lots.
- 15 7th and Coastal Place**
Between 7th and 8th and L Street and Coastal Place - 3 Trust Land Office lots.
- 16 Coho Lot**
3rd Avenue on the south side between C and D - ACDA lot.
- 17 Block 102**
9th Avenue between C and D Streets - 4 lots owned by AHFC.
- 18 Fairview: Former Alaska Native Service Hospital Site**
HLB manages these properties for the MOA.
- 19 Fairview: 9th Avenue Sourdough Complex**
Privately owned large parcel.
- 20 Fairview: 10th to 11th Avenues between Gambell and Hyder**
Morrison Complex with several parcels.



Peach Project site, Museum Design District, Nordstrom site Photos—by Planning Department 2021

Step 2 - Downtown District Plan Revitalization Map - Draft



Revitalization Strategy Policies and Action Items

3-1: The MOA will direct limited resources to the Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts, and Opportunity Sites proposed in this 2021 Downtown District Plan to leverage investments and incentives to revitalize Downtown with housing and businesses to accelerate economic recovery in Anchorage.

RVS-1: Conduct annual prioritization of the MOA, AWWU and other utility providers, DOT&PF, PM&E Capital Improvement Program processes that aligns projects with the development recommendations in the Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts, and Opportunity Sites proposed Chapter 3 to leverage capital investments in areas where development is occurring. A review of this plan and input from private property developers will be important to this annual CIP process.

RVS-2: Use the new policies adopted by this plan when the update to the *2020 Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan* is undertaken.

RVS-3: Create the Downtown New Investments Program that may include a Point of Contact to interact with the financial and lending community to assist potential developers and investors in getting them the information, contacts, resources and relationships, and local business endorsements the project may need to obtain funding and support for new housing and business proposals.

3-2: The MOA should seek, court, and incentivize key development within Downtown that promotes both economic development and quality of life.

RVS-4: Establish a GAP funding housing trust fund to fill the gap between incentives and costs for new or redeveloped housing. **Works with RVS-3.**

Funders and program interaction may include AHFC, AIDEA, AEA, and the Bond Bank, Angel Investors, non-profits, and the banking community to lead the creation and management of the GAP Housing Trust Fund. Look to other cities that are successful in this effort (Carmel, Indiana, Cincinnati, Ohio, etc.). Establish a steering committee including AEDC, ACDA, MOA RED, Community Development, and Planning to conduct research and make recommendations on the scope, strategies, and guiding principles for this program.



Photo - Planning Department

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LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview

This chapter provides chapter-specific strategies, goals, policies and actions to implement Strategy #1 - Focus the Effort, Strategy #2 – Build Great Housing, and Strategy #3 – Lead by Example.

Chapter 4 defines land use planning and its benefits to our community and provides specific land use goals and recommendations to direct land use development into the future. This chapter includes a new land use plan map. An explanation of the land use categories and implementing zoning districts are included with the map.

A people-oriented and vibrant Downtown was envisioned in 2007. Vibrancy was associated with development projections of several different housing choices, a busy commercial and retail sector, thriving restaurants, a welcoming place, and the recognition of our culture and history. Our community still desires this development for Our Downtown heard clearly from the online survey and public and agency comments received during the planning process. People also stated they want safer streets, slower traffic, good pedestrian and bicycle facilities, connections to trails, and events and activation in our public spaces to foster the great and welcoming community we have.

Land Use Planning Defined

Land use planning is a [planning technique](#) used to improve the quality of life in urban areas. Land use planning allocates various socio-economic activities into a specific space to help increase the overall efficiency of the urban area. The major categories of land use are usually assigned based on activities found in an area. This may include residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, public, and semi-public use, government offices, parks, etc. This categorization is considered essential to keep a balance of different activities taking place in an area.

Land Use and Economic Development Goals, Policies, and Action Items

Land use and economic goals, policies, and action items describe how we want Downtown to continue to develop and prosper. Action items based on the goals and strategies can bring about new housing, commercial, retail, and industrial business; can renovate and restore historic buildings; and can recognize and save important viewsheds by incentivizing great design.

Land Use Plan Map

The Downtown District Land Use Plan Map will replace the “Strategy Diagram” on page 33 in the 2007 Downtown Plan. The new land use plan map is accompanied by detailed descriptions of the designated land uses and underlying zoning recommended to implement the land use plan map. Land use designations tell us what development can be built, how tall a building can be, and at what capacity per acre the development is encouraged. Land Use designations may also speak to the streets, sidewalks, parks, viewsheds, and other desired neighborhood or area amenities.

2040 LUP and 2020 Comprehensive Plan Policies

2040 LUP Policies LUP 1.1 and LUP 1.4 support the adoption of a land use plan map for this plan update. LUP 1.1—Use the 2040 LUP in concert with area-specific plans as framework to guide decisions on future development patterns, land uses, and allocation of growth. LUP 1.4—Use the 2040 LUP and area-specific plans in conjunction with other elements of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan to determine appropriate zoning in the Bowl, evaluate proposed changes to land use regulations (supersedes Anchorage 2020: Policy 4. It is recommended this plan update be adopted as the 2021 Downtown District Plan in conformance to the 2040 LUP and 2020 Comprehensive Plan policies.

Chapter Goals

As noted above, there are several land use and economic development goals, policies, and action items presented in this plan update. Some of the goals are from the 2007 Downtown Plan accompanied by new goals, strategies and action items based on what the Planning team heard during the public outreach process.

The following goals, policies and actions are intended to implement the overarching goals presented in Chapter 3 by providing more detailed direction in this chapter to how land use and economic development should occur over the next 20-25 years in Downtown. The following also “focuses the effort,” provides for a variety of housing options to “build great housing,” and encourages the MOA and other agencies to “lead by example “ by leveraging limited public resources.

Land use and Economic Development Goals

1. 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 jump-start new investment.

2. Increase housing options and accommodate diverse income levels:

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

3. Attract government and private offices to Downtown:

Create a dynamic urban environment with urban amenities that retain and attract office users.

4. Encourage Downtown development to enhance the pedestrian experience:

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

5. Increase the intensity of the Downtown Core:

Fill Our Downtown - the Heart of Anchorage - with higher densities in employment, retail offerings, restaurant experiences, housing, and cultural and entertainment venues.

6. Ensure seismically safe development:

Minimize risks, economic vulnerability, and economic and social impacts through development reviews to ensure construction standards are met for projects proposed in areas of high or very high ground failure susceptibility. Ensure projects meet requirements for construction developed specifically for



seismic zones found in areas such as Downtown Anchorage. Life safety risks will be reduced for building occupants; the economic vulnerability of property owners and the economic impact to the community will be reduced or minimized through appropriate reviews and recommendations.

7. Identify distinct subdistricts of Downtown:

Identify each subdistrict of Downtown so each can further develop its own unique function, development patterns, and intensities of use, and so the subdistricts complement one another with their distinct and contributing placemaking and development opportunities.

Land Use and Economic Development Policies and Action Items

4-1. The Downtown Plan is intended to be a bridge for communication to foster a revitalized economy in Downtown Anchorage.

LU-1: Fund and Establish the Downtown Redevelopment Program within the Community Development Department to oversee and champion the ongoing implementation of this plan. The program will be responsible for coordination of projects and may coordinate with the Downtown New Investments Program POC, to facilitate implementation of this plan.

4-2. The Downtown Plan advocates for the following land use action items to facilitate new development in Downtown:

LU-2: Fund and complete the 2040 LUP Housing Needs Update (LUP Action 4-16) to determine the percentage of affordable and market-rate housing options possible for Downtown.

LU-3: Amend Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 12.35 to incorporate a longer time frame for new commercial development and to create a streamlined application process.

LU-4: Create land assembly and site control strategies through Municipal Code to support redevelopment in Downtown.

LU-5: Create guidelines for short-term vacation rentals in Downtown.

4-3. The Downtown Plan encourages the funding and implementation of the following efforts to incentivize and encourage housing and commercial development in Downtown.

LU-6: Establish a Municipal Downtown Capital Improvements Tax Zone with Downtown business and property owner approval to fund specific infrastructure improvements in support of new housing in Downtown. Seek a percentage of the Alcohol Tax proceeds to reinvest in a proposed tax zone area.

LU-7: Incentivize the reuse and renovation of existing buildings to reduce land-fill impacts and costs to help retain the historic fabric of Downtown. (Works with LU-11)

LU-8: Provide funding assistance and support to help maintain the AEDC [Business Resources](#) Program developed to encourage new and growing businesses in Anchorage.

LU-9: Encourage and incentivize civic and office employment in Downtown to retain all large employment sectors.

LU-10: Adopt the Idle Property Tax Abatement Program in support of redevelopment. Consider using the Ohio Idle Property Tax Abatement Program as a model to spur the overturn of excess parking lots.

4-4. The Downtown Plan will direct code updates to encourage great design and expand the types of allowed uses in housing and commercial development.

LU-11: Consider the following to be included in the Downtown code update:

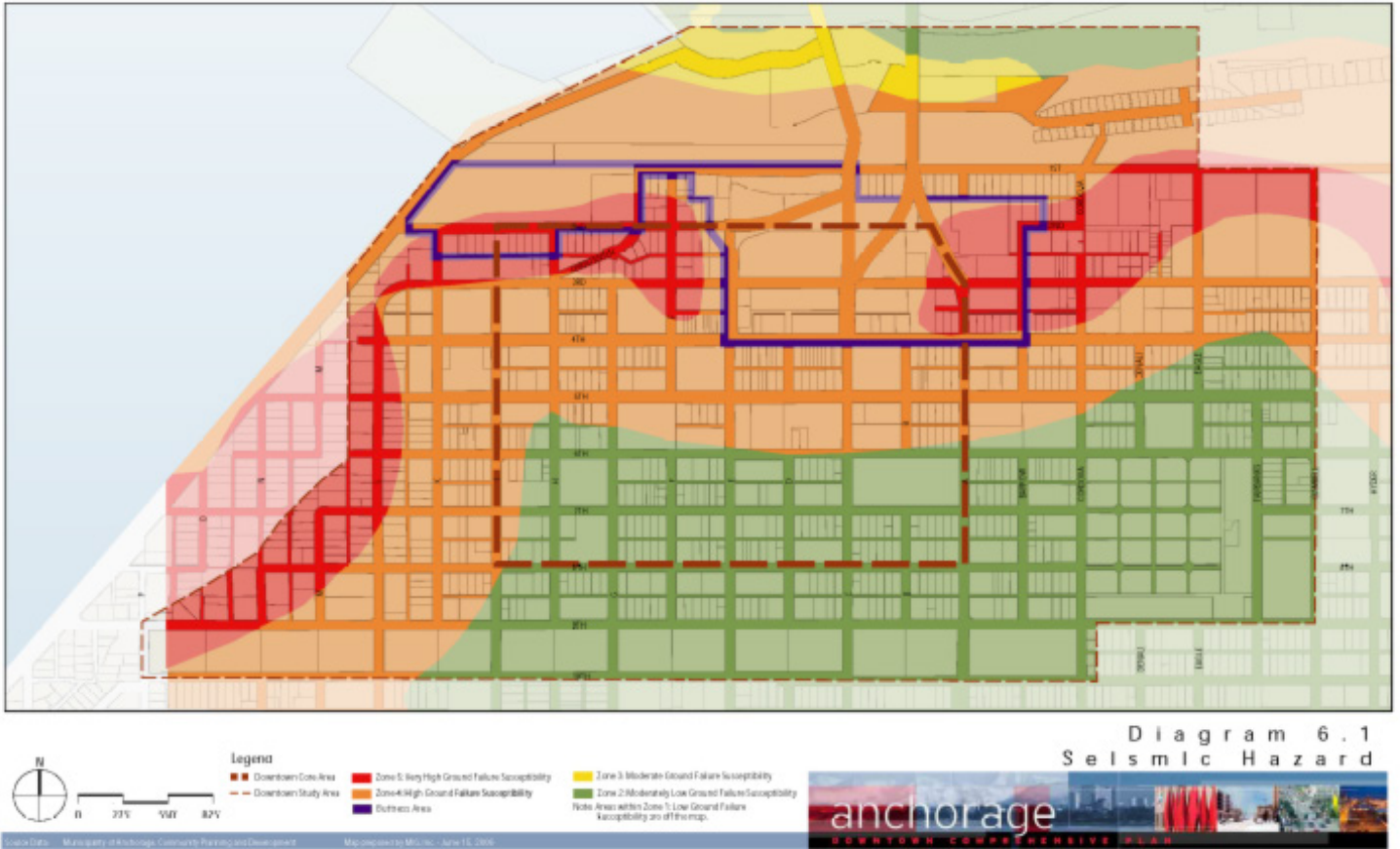
- To allow multifamily residential, and live/work spaces in all zoning districts.
- Allow the placement of active interior spaces to face the public realm on lower floors of buildings, conversely using the interior side for storage areas.
- Allow for smaller-scale, light industrial production uses such as cottage crafts, “maker” spaces, studio spaces, work-live spaces, that can fit into and contribute to activities and attractions in the Downtown urban mixed-use context where compatible in distinct subdistricts.
- To incentivize developments with active ground floors.

4-5. The Downtown Plan informs the public and developers about seismic zones and hazards in the Downtown area.

LU-12: Inform the public of the seismic zones in Downtown through the Seismic Hazards Diagram 6.1.

LU-13: Use recommendations from the 2013 Seismic Risk Assessment for development requirements in seismic ground failure hazard zone #5 when the Downtown Zoning Districts are updated. (Works with LU-11)

Seismic Risk Downtown



Seismic Diagram—2007 Downtown Plan

Seismic Hazards

The 1964 Magnitude 9.2 Great Alaska Earthquake ('64 Earthquake) has had a profound impact on development in Downtown Anchorage. Many new high rise buildings have been constructed since 1964. However, there is always consideration of the seismic risks and input is usually sought from the GAC staffed by the Planning Department.

This Plan addresses the seismic hazards which affect some areas of Downtown and provides strategies included on page 4 (LU-17 through LU-24) 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 '64 Earthquake. The diagram also contains information from studies performed in the area subsequent to the event.

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 (IBC) 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.

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 completed following the '64 earthquake. The buttress area, also depicted on the Seismic Hazards Diagram, was created 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 sunseting in 2005.

Downtown Anchorage Seismic Risk Assessment (2013)

The MOA completed a Seismic Risk Assessment in 2013 to assist the community in determining an acceptable level of risk associated with locating various types of development in seismic ground failure hazard zones. This Assessment considered 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. It also called for the risk assessment report to include recommendations for updating municipal requirements regarding appropriate land uses, building design criteria and other regulatory changes within seismic ground failure zone 4 or 5.

The Risk Assessment was authored by geotechnical and structural engineering experts retained by the Municipality. The assessment estimated the risk of a range of building structure types and occupancies (uses) exposed to the seismic ground failure hazard zones in Downtown. Its analysis modelled the potential effects of combined horizontal-vertical ground displacement under seismic shaking intensities similar in magnitude to those incorporated into the IBC.

Risk Assessment strategies were recommended to supplement Anchorage's existing IBC regulations in seismic ground-failure zones #4 and #5. Anchorage's local amendments to the IBC currently require site-specific geotechnical investigations and building engineering reports to be completed as part of the building permit process for proposed building structures in zones #4 and #5. The building permit review department may request review and comment on these proposals by the GAC, which is comprised of geotechnical and geoenvironmental experts.

The Risk Assessment recommended limits on certain critical facilities, vulnerable use types, and building structural designs in seismic ground failure zone #5, including: Buildings with high-intensity occupancies greater than 500 persons, such as large hotels, apartment buildings, and offices. Large concrete moment frame or shear wall structures with offices, hotels, or multi-family residences, and all medium-rise concrete shear wall buildings on shallow foundations. Critical community facilities such as public safety facilities, utility plants, and medical facilities. Vulnerable use types that generate high demand for emergency response resources, such as assisted living, childcare, school or long-term care facilities.

Land Use Plan Map Overview

4-7 The Downtown Plan will adopt and update a Downtown Land Use Plan Map consistent with AMC 21.03.070.

The 2007 Downtown Plan included a Strategy Diagram establishing primary and secondary land uses and specific subdistricts throughout Downtown. The Strategy Diagram was not adopted as a land use plan map. This plan update recommends a land use plan map based on the 2007 primary and secondary land uses and subdistricts. This plan also acknowledges the 2040 Land Use Plan Map and the Fairview Neighborhood Plan land use plan map in its recommendations for the land use plan map.

Primary Land Uses

Four primary land use categories were adopted with the 2007 Downtown Plan. These growth drivers are carried forward with this plan update. A full explanation of these eight land uses is provided below.

Residential - Is a key opportunity for revitalizing Downtown. National trends indicate the increasing desire for the urban lifestyle. Home values throughout Anchorage are increasing. New amenities in Downtown will support new housing.

Retail - Downtown is one of Alaska’s primary retail and entertainment destinations. Downtown must remain competitive with other areas in Anchorage to encourage new retail investment.

Office - Downtown offers a walkable space for office workers with access to convenient lunch and dinner spots and trails for commuting. Downtown is also the hub for government agencies and many large corporations.

Hotel - Cruise ship visitors typically stay one night. Amenities and access to recreation, historic, and cultural offerings could encourage longer stays and more spending in Downtown. Two convention centers and events at each could catalyze more Downtown hotel development.

Secondary Land Uses

Four secondary land uses were also adopted to augment the primary land uses with the intent to create a truly diverse integrated landscape of development.

Cultural/Entertainment - Downtown is the heart of Anchorage with several tour and event offerings. Historic buildings and Ship Creek relay our history and culture and provide a window into Anchorage’s prehistory and history.

Civic/Government - Federal, State and MOA agencies and departments are a mainstay for the Downtown economy with employees who frequent local restaurants, typically using government parking garages or lots or local trails for commuting.

Industrial - Industrial zoned lands are located at the foot of Downtown in Ship Creek. Most of this land is owned by the ARRC. ARRC redevelopment plans are contributing housing and commercial development in Downtown. Utilities in Industrial areas may be improved to boost business development.

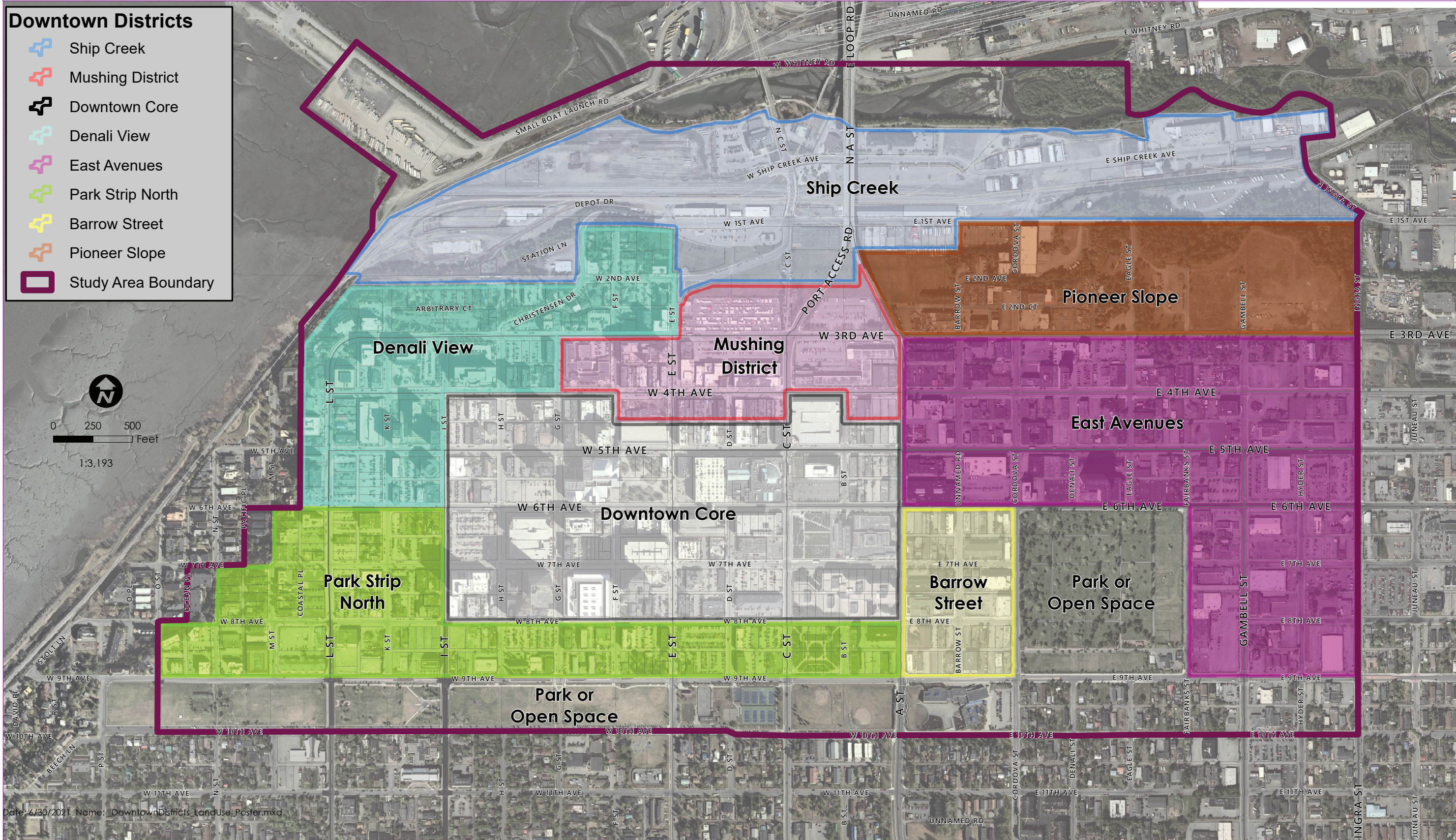
Open Space/Recreation - The MOA Parks Department maintains several parks in Downtown partnering with the ADP to provide event and recreational programming on a year-round basis. The ADP also manages the Downtown BID to provide a Clean, Safe and Vital Downtown streets and open space areas. 4th Avenue with Peratrovich Park provides a walk-through-time for visitors and residents with Old City Hall.

PRIMARY LAND USES			
Residential	Retail	Office	Hotel
SECONDARY LAND USES			
Cultural/Entertainment	Civic/Government	Industrial	Open Space/Recreation

Step 2 - Downtown Districts Land Use - Draft

Downtown Districts

- Ship Creek
- Mushing District
- Downtown Core
- Denali View
- East Avenues
- Park Strip North
- Barrow Street
- Pioneer Slope
- Study Area Boundary



Downtown Land Use Districts

Downtown Land Use Districts Defined

The following defines each Downtown land use district and subdistrict and provides a set of development specifications to guide future use and development patterns. Development specifications include suggested ranges of density and general guidance for land use and the physical character of development.

Corresponding implementation zoning districts are also identified. Zoning Districts are established in Anchorage’s Title 21 land use regulations and Zoning Map. A public process to update the Downtown Zoning Districts will be initiated once this plan update is adopted, as intended by the 2007 Downtown Plan – Implementation Action LU-1, and the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan – Action 3-9. **Table #4** cross-references the Downtown District Plan districts, subdistricts, and implementation zoning. Zoning districts were included from the Fairview Neighborhood land use plan map

Each district is described with its own character, activities, and levels of development intensity. This plan updates the districts offering a greater opportunity to create neighborhoods of

distinct functionality and sense of place. Identifying as distinct districts can also contribute to the vitality and revitalization of Downtown as a whole and bring recognition to the Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts and Opportunity Sites proposed in Chapter 3.

The Downtown Land Use Plan map included in this chapter is intended to be consistent with other District and Neighborhood plans adopted by the MOA since 2007, and to better reflect existing and emerging subdistricts identified during the public process of this targeted plan update. Several subdistricts are renamed, and their boundaries adjusted from the 2007 diagram to better articulate where the area is located. A distinct subdistrict centered on 4th Avenue, has been identified to reflect its unique characteristics, function, and planning considerations.

The following chapter action recommends adoption of the land use plan map and its associated implementing zoning and land use descriptions.

LU-26: Adopt the proposed Land Use Plan Map provided in this plan update.

Downtown District Plan Land Use Districts	Downtown District Plan Land Use Subdistricts	Corresponding Implementing Zoning Districts (Title 21)
Downtown Core	--	B-2A, B-2B, B-2C
Downtown Mixed-use	Denali View	B-2A, B-2B
	Mushing District	B-2A, B-2B, PLI
	East Avenues	B-2C, B-3, R-4
Downtown Mixed-use Residential	Park Strip North	B-2B, B-2C
	Barrow Street	B-2B, B-2C
	Pioneer Slope	B-2B, I-2, PLI
Ship Creek	--	PCD, I-2

Table #4 Downtown Land Use District with accompanying Zoning Districts

DOWNTOWN CORE

The Downtown Core is considered the most active and intense part of the city center and a high priority area for high-density mixed-use development, active sidewalks with pedestrian amenities, great access to store fronts, accessible parking, and the center of outdoor events using flagship open spaces and buildings. The Downtown Core is expected to have the greatest development intensity and tallest building heights, creating a concentration of office, civic, government, cultural, entertainment, housing, and retail uses. The Downtown Core may retain historic buildings of different era and architecture.

Development Specifications and Uses

- 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 step-backs conforming to recommendations in Chapter 6: Urban Design.
- Highly active streetscape with pedestrian amenities, ground floor uses oriented to the sidewalk, multiple building entries and limits on blank walls to enhance the pedestrian-oriented street experience.
- Certain proposed uses, intensities and building heights may be more restricted when located in seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5. Seismic constraints in 3rd and 4th Avenues are anticipated to limit the height and size of structures. Appropriate heights will vary by use, site, and methods of construction within the seismic zones.
- Traffic speed should be reduced in the Downtown Core to 20—25 MPH, as recommended by the [National Association of City Transportation Officials \(NACTO\)](#) to allow for safe street crossings and bicycle use on minor and [major streets](#) respectively.

MUSHING DISTRICT

The Mushing District is a subdistrict of the Downtown Core and is an economic engine of its own. Similar to Main Streets in other towns, the Mushing District is vibrant, show cases a unique Alaska experience, while generating jobs and retail sales in the millions. The Mushing District is intended as the primary place to host world-famous public events including the annual Fur Rendezvous, Iditarod – the Last Great Race, Iron Dog Race, Mayor’s Marathon, and Tour of Anchorage, to name a few.

The Mushing District and its iconic 4th Avenue Historic District located between A and G streets, are intended to remain an open sun-filled section of Downtown. Visitor amenities include artist studios, regional foods and craft beers, and local ice cream. Local tour operators, fur retailers, and the Federal Intergovernmental Visitor Center are located here. Peratrovich Park is home to music and family-friendly entertainment. A historic walking tour is also located in this area. The intermittent closure of Downtown streets is anticipated here. Development intensity supports the existing historic buildings that can be mixed-use with housing on upper floors and commercial at the street level. The Mushing District overlays Seismic Zones #4 and #5 and includes the Downtown Buttress area.

Development Specifications and Uses

- 2-3 stories along 4th Avenue consistent with most buildings currently in this area.
- 2-4 stories, 15-30 units per acre along 3rd Avenue.
- Sun or solar access along 4th Avenue will be maintained.
- Viewshed from 3rd Avenue to be maintained.
- Highly active streetscape with pedestrian amenities, ground floor uses oriented to the sidewalk, multiple building entries and limits on blank walls to enhance the pedestrian-oriented street experience.
- Maintain a traffic speed at 15 MPH within this heavily trafficked pedestrian area.
- Certain proposed uses, intensities, and building heights may be more restricted when located in seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5. Seismic constraints in 3rd and 4th avenues are anticipated to limit the height and size of structures. Appropriate heights will vary by use, site, and methods of construction within the seismic zones.

DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE - EAST AVENUES (EAST DOWNTOWN AND FAIRVIEW AREA) AND DENALI VIEW (NORTH AND WEST OF THE DOWNTOWN CORE) SUBDISTRICTS:

Two areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by commercial and mixed-use development: *Denali View* in the west overlooking the Cook Inlet and the *East Avenues* in the east with views to the Chugach Range. These two Downtown mixed-use subareas consist of a compact mix of office, retail, lodging, and entertainment uses. Civic uses and residential development are also encouraged.

East Avenues

The East Avenues subdistrict encompasses the eastern end of the city center. East Avenues holds commercial and mixed-use with a compact mix of office, retail, lodging, some civic and government offices. East Avenues is located adjacent to the Anchorage Memorial Cemetery. The boundary for East Avenues was extended to Ingra Street from 9th Avenue for this plan update. This area is ripe for redevelopment and encompasses the Fairview/East Downtown Economic Development Tax Abatement Zone and a Federally designated Opportunity Zones. Several notable midcentury modern buildings, original repurposed log cabins and World War II kit buildings house small businesses. Several buildings in this district could be nominated to the Anchorage Local Landmark Register.

The Fairview Neighborhood Plan envisions catalytic redevelopment along Gambell and Ingra streets once the Seward to Glenn Highways project is completed. The East Avenues area between 3rd and 7th Avenues to Gambell Street is designated Major City Center on the Fairview Land Use Plan Map. Between 7th and 9th to Fairbanks Streets the area is designated Fairview Mixed Use Corridor. Development heights would be limited by the Merrill Field height restrictions.

Denali View

The Denali View subdistrict is the second district characterized by broader mixed-use development. Law and professional offices and the Alaska Court System complex are centered here. Medium to high-density office uses are encouraged. The north and west bluffs of Denali View are impacted by seismic hazard zones #4 and #5. The Denali View subdistrict is part of the Original Townsite platted in 1915. It contains some of Anchorage's oldest remaining homes along 2nd and 3rd Avenues. Several buildings and viewsheds in this area could be eligible for nomination to the Anchorage Local Landmark Register. Single-family homes converted to offices provide affordable option for small businesses. This plan supports the continued use of historic buildings to ensure small businesses are not priced out of the Downtown area, Maker Spaces and Live / Workspaces consistent with the zoning for this land use district. L Street to 3rd Avenue is a prime bicycle and pedestrian connection from the Coastal Trail and is mentioned as the location for a bike boulevard.

Development Specifications and Uses

- Medium to high-density residential, live/work, office, hotel, ground-floor retail development in the East Avenues subdistrict.
- Tall building massing is step-backed from the street; steps down to the pedestrian scale at street level and is sensitive to climatic effects.
- 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.
- Housing, offices, small-medium hotels, ground-floor retail (see top image), restaurants/cafes, offices and small-scale public spaces for workers and residents in the Denali View subdistrict (see middle image).
- Preserve view corridors west and north across the Cook Inlet and east toward the Chugach Range.
- Traffic should be slowed in these districts to 20 MPH to allow for safe street crossings and bicycle use. (See Downtown Core recommendations and references).
- The bicycle boulevard is recommended through this area to connect the Ship Creek, Tony Knowles Coastal, and Chester Creek Trails.

DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL - PARK STRIP NORTH, BARROW STREET, AND PIONEER SLOPE SUBDISTRICTS:

Three highly distinct areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by low- to mid-rise residential development. These include the Park Strip North, Barrow Street, and Pioneer Slope subdistricts. These subareas 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 subdistricts accommodate office uses at a scale and intensity that is compatible with a residential-oriented mixed-use district.

Park Strip North

The Park Strip North subdistrict is a prime opportunity for developing a mixed-use district comprised primarily of medium density housing. This area is an opportunity to substantially increase the number of people living downtown to activate the urban center and provide more customers for retail and commercial activity. The Delaney Park Strip provides active or passive recreation and creates a buffer between the Downtown Core and the neighborhoods to the south.

Development Specifications and Uses

- 3 to 4 stories along the park strip and 5 to 7 stories on the north half of block between 8th and 9th avenues; 20 to 50 units/acre.
- Increased density and building height closer to the Downtown core.
- Housing and neighborhood serving ground floor retail at key corners and intersections.



Photos 2021 - Planning Department

- 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 along M, N, and O Streets.

Barrow Street

Barrow Street is a small district located between the Downtown Core and the Anchorage Memorial Cemetery. Barrow Street has its own identity and development specifications due to the smaller single-family and multi-family housing found here. Housing in this small, mixed-use neighborhood will be comprised of medium density residential. Barrow Street was part of the Original Townsite and retains a few kit house buildings and midcentury modern residential and commercial that could be nominated to the Anchorage Local Landmark Register. The area reflects pride of ownership, clean streets, look and feel of a small desirable walkable neighborhood. Small lot assembly could occur along 6th Avenue to accommodate commercial multi-family and mixed-use development.

Development Specifications and Uses

- 2-4 stories, 15-50 units per acre.
- Primarily residential and live/work uses, some small home office, art galleries, corner retail, education, medical, and cottage production uses.
- Townhouses and condo units with front door entries to street and garage entry from rear alleys.
- Development takes advantage of nearby open spaces and views to the east.
- Traffic should be slowed in this district to 20 MPH to allow for safe street crossings and bicycle use. (See Downtown Core recommendations and references). There is high pedestrian use here due to its proximity to the Anchorage Museum, small and larger medical and legal office buildings, resident pedestrian travel to restaurants and shopping in the Downtown Core.

Pioneer Slope

The Pioneer Slope residential mixed-use subdistrict is a transitioning neighborhood bordered on the south by east 3rd Avenue and to the north 1st Avenue. Most of this subdistrict is located in seismically induced ground failure zoned #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. The boundary for this district is expanded with this plan update to include the MOA-owned parcel between what would be Gamble and Ingra Streets, the former Alaska Native Service Hospital site. Pioneer Slope is overlaid on a large section of the north bluff containing a large wooded-zone, fantastic views of the Knik Arm, Talkeetna and Chugach Ranges. Pioneer Slope contains several lodging options, has seen some reuse of historic buildings including the Pioneer Schoolhouse at Ben Campbell Park. The area has a mix of single family, multi-family, medium-sized commercial businesses, and large portion of the ARRC Buttress Park.

Development Specifications and Uses

- 2-4 stories, 15-30 units per acre.
- Primarily residential and live/work uses, some open space, small home office, artist studios, galleries, hotels, motels, hostels, corner retail and light industrial.
- Higher development intensities and some use types will be limited by seismic zone #4 and zone #5.

SHIP CREEK DISTRICT

The Ship Creek district borders the Knik Arm on the west and Ship Creek on the north. Several historic buildings constructed by the Alaska Railroad Engineering Commission at Anchorage's founding are located here. This area is adjacent to the Port of Alaska and contains the street system accessed by Port users. The Ship Creek Trail is located here with a connection to the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. The ARRC property continues to support Alaska Railroad operations established during the 1915-1920s as the heart of Alaska's rail service. The southwest portion of Ship Creek contains [The Rail at Ship Creek](#) a 13-acre master planned site designed and developed by ARRC. The Rail is mentioned in previous chapters and included as an opportunity site recommendation in Chapter 3.

The [Ship Creek Framework Plan](#), when funded and implemented could help guide development in this area for the next 25-30 years. The Ship Creek Framework Plan was

adopted as a long-term investment to foster new development and transition a portion of ARRC's PCD-zoned properties. The Ship Creek Framework Plan needs the full support of the state, federal agencies and the Anchorage community to be funded and implemented.

Development Specifications - A.O. 2006-46(S)

- Maximum Height of Structures: L. West of the centerline of H Street right-of-way extended and east of the centerline of Cordova Street right-of-way extended, the maximum structure height from mean sea level shall be eighty-five (85) feet, with a maximum height up to one hundred twenty (120) feet through the conditional use permit process; and
- Between the centerline of H Street right-of-way extended and the centerline of Cordova Street right-of-way extended, the maximum height structure height from mean sea level shall be one hundred twenty (120) feet, with a maximum height up to one hundred fifty (150) feet through the conditional use process.
- Bulk regulations and maximum lot coverage: Buildings may be constructed within the full limits of the lot, up to three (3) stories in height. Building construction above three stories in height shall conform to the bulk requirements formerly under 21.40.160H – reformatted to 21.11.060.C.
- Minimum Lot Requirements: None
- Minimum Yard Requirements: None

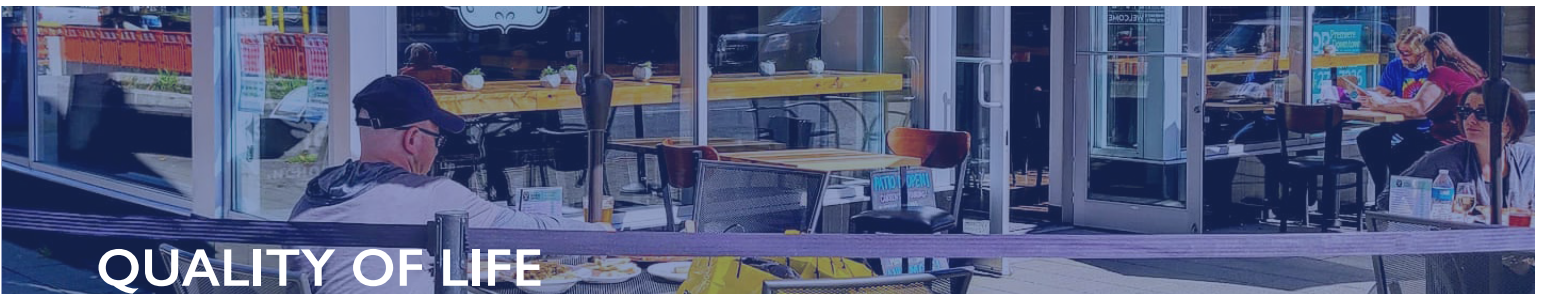


Photos 2021 - Planning Department

Development Uses

- The Ship Creek district is distinguished from adjacent Downtown districts by its historic and industrial uses. The Ship Creek area is intended as a mixed-use pedestrian-oriented development and visitor destination. The District's build-out capacity should be enhanced by the uses below. However, the ordinance A.O. 2006-46(S) as approved stated that it "does not apply to permanent or temporary railroad operations within the Districts."
- Commercial Mixed Use: The area should predominantly feature commercial uses (retail, office, entertainment, hotel, tourism) of an intensity producing a concentration of jobs, shops, meeting facilities, entertainment and restaurants within close proximity to each other.
- Residential: Appropriate urban residential development should be encouraged, including upper story units above street level businesses.
- Government/Informational Uses: The District should accommodate governmental and informational services, especially those with walk-in service-orientation and major civic and public facilities.
- Warehouse/Light Industrial Use: The District should continue to accommodate a mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential uses, with an emphasis on workplaces, galleries, and dwellings for artists, craftspeople, and artisans.
- Kiosks and Vendors: The District should allow kiosks, outdoor restaurants, mobile vendors, drive-in businesses or coffee shops, or similar uses in order to facilitate incremental growth in the area, where such uses do not negatively impact circulation, safety, or neighboring uses.
- Permitted Accessory Uses: Uses and structures customarily accessory and clearly incidental to permitted uses and structures should be allowed, including outdoor storage of trolleys, small-tour vehicles, and staging of horses and carriages overnight.
- Railroad Uses. This ordinance is not intended to apply to permanent or temporary railroad operations within the District.
- New development should reflect this area as an Alaska Native cultural area where the First Salmon Ceremony was celebrated and the traditional fishing site of Tak'at is found just north of the Port.
- The industrial history of the area in addition to Alaska Native history and culture will also offer great stories for interpretation and wayfinding. The incorporation of live-work units and the ability to maximize Ship Creek as a recreational resource, while adhering to seismic constraints, will help carry forward our industrial town history and culture.
- The Ship Creek district should still be considered one of our community's important industrial centers. The District supports industrial businesses that provide traded-sector opportunities and good paying jobs to local workers. Upgrades to utilities and infrastructure would be welcomed by companies doing business in Ship Creek.
- Support the Ship Creek Framework Plan's strategy to preserve historic character by renovating and repurposing historic buildings, including redevelopment and reuse of the Ship Creek Power Plant.
- Fund and improve Whitney Road to provide a second travel route from the Port of Alaska to the Glenn and Seward highways as proposed in the 2014 Ship Creek Framework Plan.
- Promote an arts corridor along 1st Avenue.
- 1st Avenue overpass should be a slow traffic street to allow for safe street crossings and bicycle use. There is high pedestrian use here due to its proximity to Ship Creek, truck traffic, ARRC Historic Depot, visitor pedestrian travel to restaurants and shopping in the Downtown Core.

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QUALITY OF LIFE

THE HEART OF ANCHORAGE

Overview

This Chapter provides the chapter-specific goals, policies and action items to implement Strategy # 3 – Get Important Input from Women in the Community and Strategy #6 – Make Downtown Safe.

The OUR DOWNTOWN Project was initiated in 2019 with the intent to bring Downtown Anchorage back to the forefront of our town’s economic and housing development. This planning process recognizes the importance Downtown holds for community, tourism, employment, shopping, restaurants, parks and trails, historic, cultural, historic and scenic experiences and that Downtown contributes to our quality of life in several concrete and intrinsic ways.

Our Downtown is the center of our unique Alaskan history and culture, receives the most tourist visitations, and has the largest concentration of shopping, eating, and special-event experiences. The 2007 Downtown Plan included four quality of life goals and related actions intended to support ongoing and future efforts to bring people Downtown to a clean, safe, and vibrant area teeming with things to do, places to eat, and events to participate in and enjoy.

This plan carries forward and adds to those quality of life goals and policies necessary to enhance the Downtown experience for Alaskans and tourists. From Downtown’s image and reputation to people’s ease in getting around and their sense of comfort and security, policies related to Image, Branding and Marketing, Signage and Wayfinding, Safety and Security, Activities and Events, Cultural and Historic Preservation, and Parks and Open Space will give direction to funding supporting the actions proposed with this plan.

The online survey completed for the plan update included three questions related to quality of life elements, Creative Placemaking and Downtown Promotion.

Online Survey Results

Creative Placemaking

The creative placemaking section of the survey was composed of two questions relating to the Indigenous Place Names interpretive project and using creative placemaking as a strategy to revitalize Downtown. Both questions were supported by a significant number of survey respondents with 75% supporting implementing an Indigenous Place Name interpretive project for Downtown and 72% supporting the Downtown Plan establishing “Creative Placemaking” as a strategy to revitalize Downtown.

The comments were very supportive of recognizing Indigenous place names and lands. Commenters also noted that creative placemaking can create wonderful experiences but needs to be thoughtful and coordinated with other efforts for Downtown to become a more vibrant place.

Promoting Downtown

This section of the survey was comprised of only one question: Should Anchorage complete a comprehensive wayfinding and interpretive signage plan for Downtown? The results were: 75% said yes, 12% said no, and 13% said leave it to the Planning Team. Below the wayfinding and interpretive signage plan is proposed that goes beyond just telling our stories but also to provide an emergency response system to inform visitors and residents where to go in case of another earthquake or other disaster or emergency. From this public input the following goals, policies and action items were developed.

Goals

1. Use the existing Image, Marketing and Branding programs developed by Visit Anchorage, ADP, and AEDC to market Anchorage as the number #1 place to Live, Work, and Play:

Image and branding programs are an important strategy in evolving the character and quality of Downtown's social, cultural, and natural environments. Anchorage's immediate and future recovery is dependent on the efforts of these important agencies.

2. Create awareness for our community and visitors by establishing continuity in a Downtown signage and wayfinding project:

Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods 2015 Interpretive Plan was completed during the Anchorage Centennial to assist in implementing the Signage and Wayfinding Program proposed in the 2007 Downtown Plan. Project funding will be imperative to complete this project.

3. Support the ADP Safety and Security program by advocating for funding and support of Downtown businesses and agencies:

The real and perceived feelings of safety impact how visitors and residents experience Downtown. More "eyes on the street," improved lighting, and increased police and ADP patrols will achieve the goal of a safe and secure Downtown.

4. Continue to support Downtown's art, culture and entertainment programming:

ADP, MOA Parks and many of their partners have provided coordinated approach to activity and event planning for years in Downtown. Community support for the efforts put forth by these agencies will help Downtown build upon existing events, such as First Fridays, and Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, and create a range of spectator and participatory events for all user groups year round.

5. Support the goals and actions from the Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan (4NHPP):

Downtown is once of Anchorage's four original neighborhoods. The Assembly adopted the 4NHPP in 2012, to support historic and cultural preservation in Downtown with specific projects.

6. Fund and maintain parks and open space:

Anchorage has several MOA-owned and maintained parks located throughout Downtown. Additionally, the ARRC maintains the greenspace in north bluff area off 3rd Avenue. Parks and greenspaces connected by treed pedestrian and trail routes add to the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Quality of Life Policies and Action Items

5-1. The Downtown Plan may be used by the marketing agencies for funding and action item implementation.

QOL-1: Continue to promote Downtown by funding marketing and branding efforts to correspond with the current demographic and economic elements influencing visitor and resident desires seeking a Downtown experience. Consider Design marketing and branding programming consistent with the Downtown vernacular to create world-wide recognizable logos, publications, websites, and other print and online media. Include marketing outreach to increase Downtown's hotel supply and occupancy rates by marketing Downtown as a winter destination to tour and cruise operators. Provide parking and other incentives to hotel operators.

QOL-2: Include honorary naming of parks that may include Alaska Native Tribal places or leaders like Peratrovich Park.

QOL-3: Market Downtown's exceptional arts and cultural facilities including the Anchorage Museum, Anchorage SEED Lab, Performing Arts Center, and Alaska Public Lands Information Center in addition to the local art galleries and boutiques.

QOL-4: Develop signage distinct from the rest of Anchorage, to identify and promote the Downtown cultural districts including the Mushing District on 4th Avenue, Anchorage Museum Design District, and the proposed 2nd to 4th Avenues historic district identified in the Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan and in this plan, may be like what is present in the G Street Arts District.

QOL-5: Determine buildings, sites, or other locations to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to in case of an emergency. Determine the locations where signage and audible warning systems can be installed to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to these locations. This action may be a part of the wayfinding project. Distribute online and through social media the information developed by the Wayfinding Program.

5-2. 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—essential to attracting more locals and visitors Downtown.

QOL-6: Fund, design and install a new signage and wayfinding system throughout Downtown consistent with the Downtown vernacular to replace existing certain interpretive panels and signs. Include information and directions on where to shelter in place should an earthquake or other type of emergency occur. This may include an update to the historic walking tour map with information from the 2010 historic property survey and indigenous place name information from Shem Pete's Alaska. The Walk may also be included in the Alaska App.

QOL-7: Continue to support ADP efforts for a Clean, Safe, Vibrant Downtown including funding of the ADP Business Improvement District.

QOL-8: Fund and maintain MOA Community Service Patrols in Downtown.

QOL-9: Maintain a safe and clean environment by installing regularly-spaced trash and recycling bins.

5-3. Visitors and residents will have an understanding of the safety and security programs found in Downtown.

QOL-10: Fund year-round street cleaning.

QOL-11: Fund, determine locations, install and maintain self-cleaning public restrooms.

QOL-12: Continue implementation of a comprehensive street lighting upgrade program to increase visibility and safety on all streets.

QOL-13: Employ certain Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals in public spaces related to landscaping placement, access and maintaining line of sight to ensure places are used as they were intended.

QOL-14: Fund and provide support to planning and promoting Winter City themed events, shoulder season events, summer concerts, and parades.

QOL-15: Plan and fund cultural and recreational activities for and by youth.

QOL-16: Fund and implement the Town Square Park Master Plan.

5-4. Activity and event programming are important elements used to attract visitors, residents, and employers to Downtown and will be supported with this plan.

QOL-17: Promote a weekend market Downtown.

QOL-18: Adopt in the permitting processes the long-term use of low-traffic volume streets to provide spaces for activities, dining and other special events as a normal event planning function supported by this plan (Works with LU-12).



Photo by Page & Turnbull 2012

5-5. Historic and cultural preservation is one of the cultural pillars of this plan and will be used to promote Alaska as Dena'ina homeland and the place where Anchorage was founded.

QOL-19: Promote the 13 National Register of Historic Places listed buildings through social media, tours, and the interpretive project proposed in QOL-6.

QOL-20: Promote the use of the Anchorage Local Landmark Register in websites, interpretive programs, social media and other outreach to encourage nominations of historic and cultural resources to the Anchorage Local Landmark Register maintained by the MOA.

QOL-21: Review the action items in the 4NHPP to prioritize grant applications and project completions in Downtown.



Photos courtesy 4NHPP - Page & Turnbull



Concept Art for the 4th Avenue Saturday Market - Planning Department

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URBAN DESIGN

Overview

This chapter provides the chapter-specific goals, policies, and action items to implement Strategy #1 – Focus the Effort, Strategy #2 – Build Great Housing, Strategy #3 – Get important input from Women in the Community, and Strategy #5 – Make Connections to Surrounding Neighborhoods.

This chapter advocates for great design in Downtown buildings, Downtown signage, expresses how parking lots and landscaping can be improved, gives a host of recommendations that could streamline development, supports a walkable and bikeable Downtown, and provides design incentives intended to promote a beautiful skyline for our city.

Northern climate design recommendations are also included in this chapter, in addition to recognition of the unique role cultural and historic assets provide in the architectural fabric of Downtown. This chapter identifies four urban design goals to direct improvements in the urban environment, articulated through the urban design guidelines previously adopted in the 2007 Downtown Plan.

This chapter also focuses on how the connection between the buildings and the streets of Downtown work together and what could be done to provide improvements to those connections. This is accomplished by inclusion of the Street Typologies Section from the 2007 Downtown Plan and design guidelines from the 2007 Core Streets Master Plan.

Status Update, Online Survey and Subcommittee Engagement

This chapter also gives a brief update on the 2007 Downtown Plan Implementation Actions and what has been accomplished since 2007.

Two subcommittees were formed to help inform this chapter, the Utilities Subcommittee, and the Urban Design Subcommittee. These two groups of experts provided succinct knowledge and best practices that will reduce some of the costs of developing in Downtown Anchorage when adopted. Practical and thoughtful solutions are what we need to have the clean, safe, vibrant Downtown this community is asking for. The subcommittees provided several recommendations on a variety of topics related to urban design and development affordability. The recommendations from the subcommittees were translated into action items presented at the end of this chapter and in Chapter 8.



Photo – Museum Design District Concept 2018

2007 Downtown Plan Action Item Implementation

The following updates two Urban Design Actions from 2007:

Heated Sidewalks (UD-2 through UD-4)

Four implementation actions from the Urban Design section of the plan were adopted in the 2007 Downtown Plan. Three of those action items were specific to the study and design and construction of “ice free” heated sidewalks. Several sections were completed and remain in place. However, over time heated sidewalks were found expensive to operate and maintain. The goal to provide ice-free sidewalks is still important to this plan and is included as an action item with management by a Downtown agency.

Priority Scenic Viewsheds or Corridors (UD-1)

The implementation action to complete a plan to prioritize scenic view corridors and develop measures and incentives for their preservation received action by the Parks and Recreation Department through the Town Square Park master planning process. The goal to preserve important view sheds is also still important to this plan and is recommended as an incentive in building design.

Downtown Plan Update Online Survey Results

The online survey for this planning effort included several questions focused on Urban Design and Creative Placemaking. Most of the survey questions were specific to the 2007 Downtown Plan implementation actions.

Urban Design Questions and Responses

Urban design-related issues were the focus of questions 14-19 in the online survey. The questions covered the topics of heated sidewalks, identifying historic buildings for rehabilitation, and developing a seismic overlay zone.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents were supportive of constructing heated sidewalks Downtown, with 23% opposed, and 18% said leave it to the Planning Team to decide. Comments supported making it easier for people to walk Downtown. There was concern about the overall cost and long-term maintenance of a heated sidewalk system, and that it may be helpful to identify priority areas or corridors instead of installing them throughout Downtown.

As for identifying and protecting viewshed corridors, 52% said yes, 33% said leave it to the Planning Team, and 15% said no. Question 16 was an open-ended question that asked survey takers to identify important Downtown viewshed corridors. Several comments identified the inlet/water and mountain

views (in all directions) as priorities, and those who were not supportive of viewshed corridors commented that they preferred business and building development to spur economic activity.

When asked if saving and renovating historic buildings in Downtown should remain a policy, 72% said yes, with answers “no” and “leave it to the Planning Team” receiving 14% each. Sixty-four percent of respondents said that an action item to nominate Downtown historic districts should be included in the plan, with 17% choosing no, and 20% saying leave it to the Planning Team. The 4th Avenue Theater was one of the only buildings specifically mentioned by name in the comments. Overall, people were supportive but also expressed that there is some discretion and nuance that needs to be added when deciding what and how to preserve historic buildings.

There was considerable support for mapping and adopting a seismic overlay zone with development guidelines for Downtown, with 70% of people saying yes, 22% selecting to leave it to the Planning Team, and 8% saying no.

Creative Placemaking Questions and Responses

The creative placemaking section of the survey was composed of two questions relating to an Indigenous Place Names interpretive project and using creative placemaking as a strategy to revitalize Downtown. Both questions received a high number of positive responses by survey respondents with 75% of people supporting implementing an Indigenous Place Name interpretive project for Downtown and 72% supporting Creative Placemaking as a strategy to revitalize Downtown. Creative Placemaking will be added as a recommendation to this chapter as a result of the public’s comments.

Comments received were also very supportive of recognizing Indigenous place names and lands. Commenters also noted that creative placemaking can create wonderful experiences but needs to be thoughtful and coordinated with other efforts for Downtown to become a more vibrant place. The comments and survey responses are supportive of goals and recommendations from the *2015 Centennial Interpretive Plan* and the *Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan*.



Photo – Planning Department 2020 – View to Mount Susitna

Plan Update Subcommittee

Two subcommittees were formed for the plan update, a Utilities Subcommittee and an Urban Design Subcommittee. The subcommittees gave the planning team guidance on issues their respective agencies or businesses may have experienced in the development process. The planning team was also looking for ideas and recommendations from the subcommittee members regarding ways to improve the development process and how to get great design in Downtown.

Each subcommittee received a succession of white papers describing issues and posing questions regarding their experiences. Insights into all aspects of the development process was shared with the planning team. The white papers evolved into a presentation of several issues, discussion on the issues and then recommendations from the subcommittee members. What was most profound from the subcommittee meetings was the dedication and caring the subcommittee members have for Downtown. For a full report on the subcommittee work, please see the ourdowntownanchorage.com website. A substantial list of recommendations from the subcommittees is included with this chapter.

Utilities Subcommittee

The Utilities Subcommittee had representation from every utility company working in Anchorage and the MOA Public Works Department. The Utilities Subcommittee met two times with the initial meeting focused on how they interact and support the development community, and what recommendations they could make to help streamline the design and development process. The primary recommendation suggests the establishment of a MOA Utilities Coordinator position to coordinate the initial project meeting between the utility providers and the developers. This coordinator would ensure all utilities, project designer, and developer are informed on what utilities were needed, where utilities are located, are the utilities at the capacity the project needs, and the timing of construction.

Urban Design Subcommittee

The Urban Design subcommittee met three times and reviewed a set of questions referring to setback requirements, sign code, landscaping in parking lots, housing incentives, and building bulk design requirements. The subcommittee also commented on the draft Strategy Map from Chapter 3 and the draft Land Use Plan Map from Chapter 4. This subcommittee provided several recommendations with many focused on achieving great building design using incentives and the Title 21 bonus point system. The subcommittee also advocated for a Downtown-focused sign code with safety, local aesthetics, and context influencing how signs look and where they are placed. Recommendations for landscaping to ensure healthy trees

and shrubs survive with input from an arborist on technical specifications was also recommended.

Urban Design Goals

1. Design for people:

By building attractive, well-designed buildings and streetscapes that foster a walkable city center. Provide walkable, safe, easily accessed connections throughout Downtown. Activate the ground floor environment by orienting buildings toward the street and incentivizing façade articulation, building step backs and other pedestrian scale design elements.

2. Design streets:

To reduce and minimize motor vehicle traffic impacts on adjoining outdoor and indoor spaces.

3. Design for density:

Through context sensitive design. Assemble concentrations of commercial, civic, cultural, and residential uses to leverage limited resources and create synergistic development. Design to be compatible with surrounding neighbors, while fostering a mix of co-existing uses around shared public streets and spaces. Ensure buildings are open and inviting to the street. Context sensitive building and infrastructure design will minimize shadow and wind effects, noise, traffic on nearby mixed-use residences. Orient building windows and entrances to the sidewalk for interaction with shared public spaces. Encourage open space in a variety of settings.

4. Design for the northern climate:

With northern city climate policies and guidelines. Focus limited resources to make Downtown a comfortable and attractive place to be throughout the year. Provide a welcoming street environment and public space uses to provide year-round access and enjoyment. Building design will be optimal for a northern climate. Streetscapes will be updated to maximize year-round pedestrian, bicycle, transit access and winter maintenance needs.

5. Design Downtown development:

That is true to Anchorage, Alaska by capturing the physical, natural, and economic context that clearly references the time in which the city was built, and clearly reflects the aspirations, activities, and needs of the people who live and work there.

Development Factors

Development or Planning Factors are included in this chapter to address and provide guidance. The factors include Climate and Setting, Pedestrian Environment, Street Typology (moved from Chapter 5), Creative Placemaking, New Technology, and Demographic Shift. The Pedestrian Environment and the Climate and Setting factors are carried over from the 2007 Downtown Plan. The remaining factors were added in response to public input, developer interviews, and online survey comments. The Factors guide the content and recommendations in this chapter working together with the chapter-specific Urban Design Goals presented in this chapter.

Climate and Setting

Downtown would have more sun access if the grid pattern had been angled somewhat differently on the land in 1915. However, the current orientation of Downtown streets does contribute to phenomenal views in all directions and is recognized as a major asset to living, working, or recreating in Downtown.

The 2007 Downtown Plan advocated for updates in development code to encourage design that embraces our northern climate. This plan makes recommendations for design that can help mitigate issues included in the 2007 Downtown Plan:

- Maximum sun penetration and wind protection can be inhibited by the design and location of some buildings.
- Building design incorporating canopies, step backs, or other architectural elements can help create more a comfortable ground-level pedestrian environment.
- Pedestrian shelters are desired in new or renovated buildings.
- Viewshed corridors are important to maintain.

Pedestrian Environment

The Downtown grid system promotes efficiency and walkability. Cities built on the grid are intended to have slower vehicle speeds, provide short walks between the different land uses, and can be more cost-effective to maintain. The street typology discussion and recommendations formerly in Chapter 5, and in the 2007 Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan are a better fit in this chapter where urban design guidelines and recommendations are made.

Most sidewalks in Downtown are constructed at 6 feet. However, along portions of 4th Avenue an 18-ft wide sidewalk is constructed. 8.5-foot-wide sidewalks are considered inadequate for areas where high pedestrian use occurs, such as places in Downtown like 4th Avenue.¹ Wider sidewalks allow room for on-street amenities like trees, benches, waste bins, or parking meters. Sidewalks wider than 8.5 feet are recommended in the 2007 Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Plan in the Downtown Core area.

The following issues were previously identified in the 2007 Downtown Plan. Several sidewalk improvements were completed since 2007, however, some issues remain. This plan recommends action items to improve pedestrian facilities where needed in Downtown.

- 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



Photo – Planning Department 2021 – 4th Avenue Ground Floor Uses encourage visitation, shopping, a place where people want to be.

¹: Sidewalk Width | SF Better Streets

onto the sidewalk or provide visual access between the sidewalk and interior spaces. Long blank walls, mirrored glass, and a lack of entryways oriented to the sidewalk affect the pedestrian environment.

- Pedestrian lighting is often poor and inconsistent from one street to the next.
- Parking garages often lack active uses on the first several stories facing the street, creating dead spaces.
- Underground garages are encouraged with wrapped mixed-use space to create an activated sidewalk.
- Activated sidewalks increase property values and contribute to the overall economy.

Street Typology / Downtown Streets Design and Function

The 2007 Downtown Plan attempted to rectify the disparity between Downtown streets functioning as highway routes and their actual use in the walkable Central Business District of Our Downtown. Highways are usually controlled access routes with high speeds. Pedestrians, bicycles, strollers, wheelchair users are not supposed be equal users in the pure context of a highway. According to the Federal Highway Act of 1956, “Highways on the Interstate System in Alaska and Puerto Rico shall be designed in accordance with such geometric and construction standards as are adequate for current and probable future traffic demands and the needs of the [locality](#) of the highway.”

The MOA Design Criteria Manual or DCM and Title 21 Land Use Code directs how the rights-of-way throughout Anchorage including streets, bicycle lanes, sidewalks and ADA access are to be constructed. Alaska Department of Transportation has several design manuals directing development of DOT&PF rights-of-way. This plan does not change those adopted standards. However, this plan does advocate for updates be considered to street standards in the DCM and/or Title 21, if identified during the completion of the Downtown Streets Engineering Study.

An inclusive public outreach effort usually accompanies all MOA and DOT&PF street projects giving the public the opportunity to weigh in on how they wish to see a street improvement function. The public process is intended to ensure that transportation projects are in harmony with communities and preserve environmental, scenic, aesthetic, and historic resources while maintaining safety and mobility. It involves taking into consideration the land use and environment adjacent to the roadway when planning and designing a project to make the improvement blend in with the surrounding community.

This plan update also advocates for an in-depth review of the street classifications in Downtown to determine the appropriateness of each classification considering how the streets function. Traffic volumes, the community’s desire to add bicycle lanes and a bike boulevard, sidewalk use and upgrades, and signal timing should all be factored into the Downtown Streets Engineering Study.

Downtown Streets Typologies

Street Typology, (or street classification) is based on how a street is used. Typologies provide a more balanced street classification system that recognizes adjacent land uses, mixed-use urban settings, and active transportation modes including walking, bicycling, and transit usage. This section recommends a set of Downtown Street typologies, describes their general design characteristics, and maps the street typologies adopted for Downtown streets in the 2007 Core Streets Streetscape Plan. These Downtown-specific typologies also derive from the Official Streets and Highways Plan (OS&HP) and other AMATS plans that establish area-wide street typologies for the Anchorage Bowl.

These general street design concepts are intended as a starting place for further development and application as part of public processes to update municipal street engineering standards and the Title 21 Downtown development regulations. Because the interface between street designs and adjacent land uses is important, these street typologies can provide useful guidance. For example, there could be additional extra incentives for buildings located on a designated “pedestrian-oriented mixed-use” street to have more frequent entrances, windows, and active ground-floor uses. The 2007 streets typologies are recommended to carry forward with this plan and are explained in Map #11 on the following page. Chapter 7 also includes diagrams for major and minor street adopted by NACTO.org.

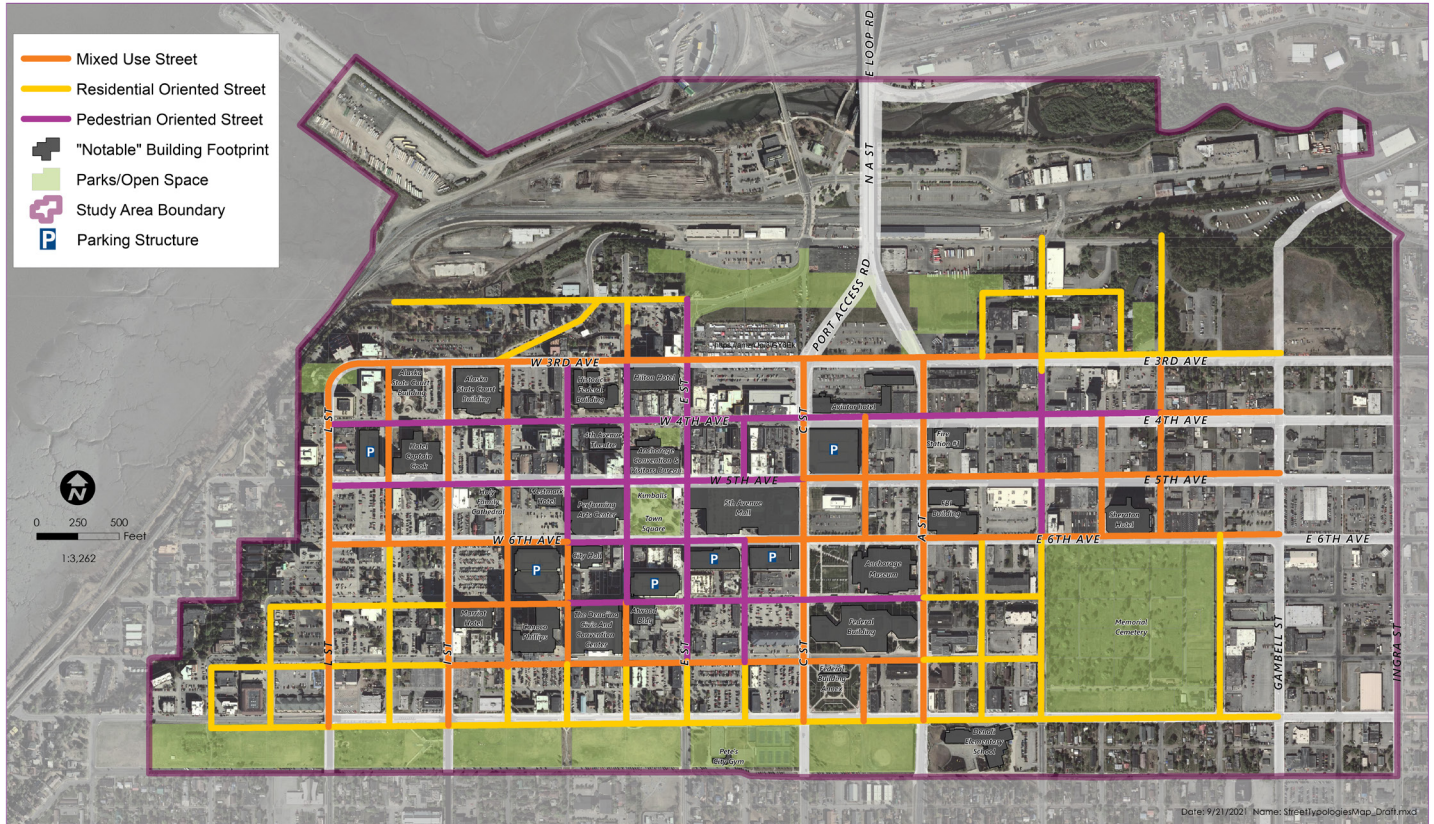
Street Typologies are Developed using three primary topics of information:

1. Roadway Characteristics

- Volume
- Width and number of lanes
- Intersection density/signalization
- Speed limits
- One-way vs. two-way

2. Surrounding Land Use

3. Context – Central Business District



Mixed-use Street: Downtown streets are primarily defined as “Mixed-use Streets.” This street type is usually in areas encompassing a mix of commercial, retail, and residential development with substantial pedestrian activities. The general concepts for Mixed-use Streets adopted in 2007 include:

Mixed-use Streets provide alternative modes of travel and typically function with increased use of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit design amenities. Improvements such as trees, landscaping, and street furniture are desirable to make mixed-use streets more attractive for pedestrians.

- Mixed-use streets frequently provide on-street parking and wide sidewalks, depending on the street’s adjacent land uses.
- Mixed-use streets were recommended with speed limits of 20-25mph through Downtown as adopted in 2007.
- The on-street bicycle network should include portions of 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Avenues and A, C, D, E and H streets.

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 defined in the following residential-oriented sub-districts and urban design guidelines. These streets may 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.

Sub-Typologies

The mixed-use typology reflects the unique character of Downtown Anchorage and its historic development.

Signature Streets: Located in key pedestrian traffic areas and will receive additional treatments to create defining urban spaces. These streets include 4th Avenue, E Street, and F Street between 7th Avenue and the Performing Arts Center from 2007.

3rd Avenue between D and Christensen Street, 5th and 6th Avenues between A and L Streets should also be added to the Signature Streets designation in support of the Few Good Blocks Focused Development Area.

District Streets: Downtown has several unique districts with a distinct character based on their retail mix and types of services provided. Two districts were adopted in 2007. The G Street Art Central District and the SoNo District. G Street between 3rd and 5th Avenues contains several art galleries will continue to be advertised to tourists and locals as the place to visit for the art scene. SoNo is still relevant south of Nordstrom's despite the closing of this anchor retail site the 5th Avenue Mall still contributes to this district along with the local bars and other retailers located here.

Two additional districts are proposed with this plan to include the Anchorage Museum Design District between 5th and 7th Avenues and A and C streets, and the 4th Avenue Mushing District between A and G Streets.

Pocket Streets: Support extremely low traffic volumes and vehicle speeds making the streets quiet and peaceful for pedestrians. D Street north of 5th Avenue Mall and F Street north of the Performing Arts Center are two pocket streets within the Downtown Core that should be maintained. The design character of these streets should reflect the intimate atmosphere by creating a sanctuary for Downtown walkers and bicyclists.

Additional streets proposed as pocket streets with this plan to include G Street from 3rd to 5th Avenues, B Street north of the Anchorage Museum, and F Street north of 3rd Avenue.

Alleys: A variety of uses occur in Downtown alleys. This includes trash containment, parking, back of house access. Downtown's alleys are probably an underutilized asset that could be promote and used for a variety of events including art walks, pop-ups, food trucks, etc. To facilitate a transition to more community events, attractions, and creative placemaking, new lighting and maintenance of alleys are recommended by this plan.

Creative Placemaking

Successful creative placemaking highlights unique community characteristics. Placemaking projects focus on connecting local history with the present, bringing cultural influences into the spotlight and creating new traditions. Placemaking can build connections between people and places by encouraging collaboration and visualization. The length of a project will often shape what is implemented.

Oftentimes, creative placemaking will activate public spaces or create a short-term opportunity to connect residents around arts and culture. Places like alleys or low traffic volume streets in the historic core of Downtown are prime locations for creative placemaking projects.

Creative placemaking can also contribute to commercial district revitalization. Increasing value, including buildings and businesses within a Downtown. It's also about increasing the value of the Downtown to customers, residents, local government, and the community at large. The Anchorage Downtown Partnership Ltd., MOA Parks Department, and the Anchorage Museum are experts at creating short-term creative opportunities for residents and visitors in Downtown.



The Blue Piano Project at the Anchorage Museum established a place where anyone could visit and play the piano. Temporary Placemaking installations are effective in bringing the community together for short timeframes to provide entertainment and enjoyment.

Photo – Planning Department 2020.

New Technology

Undergrounding Utilities – Anchorage 2020 Strategy

Anchorage 2020 adopted a strategy to underground utilities throughout the MOA. While the 2007 Downtown Plan didn't specifically include an implementation action to complete this strategy, undergrounding projects have been occurring Downtown for several years. Most recently the alley between 3rd and 4th Avenues was undergrounded in 2019. Title 21 includes the undergrounding of existing overhead facilities located in "target areas" as defined in the section "Designation of Target Areas of Title 21.90.060C," which includes the CBD. The [2021-2025 Chugach Electric Overhead to Underground project list](#) shows several CBD projects listed in the following table 4:



Photo – Planning Department 2020 – Removal of utility lines through the undergrounding projects in alleys will reduce clutter and give opportunities for reimagining these spaces.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO.	YEAR
CBD: 4th Avenue Alley – Gambell to Karluk Street	A-10	2021
Gambell St. - 3rd Ave. to 15th Ave.	A-13	2021-2022
CBD: 7th/8th Alley - Gambell St. to Ingra St.	A-13	2021-2022
CBD: Frontierland Park - 10th & E St.	A-22	2023
CBD: W. 9th & P St.	A-27	2023-2025

Table 4 - Chugach Electric project List.

These projects are great news for redevelopment in Downtown. These CEA undergrounding projects are also an opportunity for the utilities to upgrade their current services to meet growing demand. The five CEA projects are located with the two proposed Focused Development Areas identified on the Chapter 3 Strategy Map.

Maker Spaces

This plan update advocates for technology discoveries, manufacturing, and creating with recommendations for updating Chapter 21.11 – Downtown to allow maker- and live/workspaces in all Downtown Zoning Districts. Fostering creativity, inventions, [digital nomad](#) workers and state-of-the-art upgrades to fiber and telecommunication systems in Downtown will provide for a growing sector of residents and visiting workers.

Demographic Shift

Population Decline and Future Recovery

The Anchorage-area population started [declining](#) in 2014. This was due to job cuts and the slowing economy caused by the Great Recession that appeared later in Alaska. Conversely more people are moving Downtown with new housing developments built and planned. More housing in Downtown will eventually bring in the supporting businesses such as a locals-serving grocery store and other retail type shops.

According to recent census data information the Anchorage area lost over 18,000 people (2013 at 301,142 to 2021 at 282,958), or a little over 6% of our population.

New Development Potential

Downtown Anchorage may never see the oil boom construction that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Post 1964 Earthquake, midcentury modern buildings like the Hotel Captain Cook (1965, 1972, and 1978), Holy Family Cathedral (1966) and Nordstrom's (1975) are iconic to Downtown representing Anchorage's recovery from the earthquake. The Conoco Phillips Building (Arco Building 1983), 5th Avenue Mall (1987) and Performing Arts Center (1988) followed in the 1980s with oil money investment.



Photo – Planning Department 2019 – Elizabeth Place in Downtown. Dr. Shannon Donovan's Environmental Planning Class (photo used with permission).

However, new opportunities for development are all over Downtown on vacant parking lots and through renovations of historic buildings. This plan advocates for the assembling of public and private-owned lots to provide opportunities for new development and supports renovations like the Key Bank Building on 5th Avenue. Redevelopment incentives through tax abatement or other options are encouraged with this plan to support our changing demographics and provide live/work and other housing options people are looking for.

This plan and its goals, policies and actions is also intended to prepare our Downtown for the development occurring now and well into the future. Increasing tourism, climate changes, a recovering economy, and new jobs, coupled with the large variety of recreation opportunities Anchorage holds will be ready for population growth and a new future.

Urban Design Goals

The following chapter-specific urban design goals are carried forward from the 2007 Downtown Plan. Design Guidelines from the 2007 Downtown Plan follow associated with the goals and are also carried forward from the 2007 Downtown Plan.

1. Provide and improve public places and amenities:

Preserve and improve the characteristics of publicly-owned and managed places especially its walkability, open space, historic street grid, and area identity.

2. Improve the quality of building design:

Support a land use code and design guidelines that reinforces the unique northern city context of Downtown Anchorage.

3. Activate streets and alleys:

Use streets and alleys to support economic opportunity, safe multi-modal travel for bicycles and pedestrians, and quality of life experiences.

These goals are intended to be respectful of the natural environment and views and support creation of an exciting and vibrant northern climate city environment. Associated with the goals are several design guidelines recommended for public and private development. The design guidelines are carried forward from the 2007 Downtown Plan. These guidelines will provide general guidance for the planned update to AMC 21.11 – Downtown land use development code. A short intent statement is included with each design topic to advise the Title 21 land use code.

Urban Design Guidelines

Provide and Improve Public Places and Amenities

Public View Protection

Specific vantage points and priority viewsheds were identified in the 2007 Downtown Plan. Viewshed protection may be encouraged through a bonus point system or other design incentives.

- Preserve visual connections to surrounding natural scenery from street corridors and public places including views of Denali, Knik Arm, Chugach Range, Talkeetnas, and Alaska Range.
- 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.

Sidewalk Widths

Sidewalk widths vary throughout Downtown creating challenges for future improvements. Widening of sidewalks is encouraged with any future street improvement where adequate right-of-way is attained on either public or private property.

- Provide sidewalk widths to create a safe and comfortable walking environment.
- Implement the guidance from the 2007 Street Typologies Map when there is adequate right-of-way to do so.
- Provide buffer elements between traffic and pedestrians in high-pedestrian usage areas.
- Consider parking lanes on all streets. Where sidewalk width is less than 6-feet convert one on-street space into a bulb-out at the intersection 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.
- Give priority to extending sidewalk widths wherever street conversions or reconstructions occur.

Public Streetscape Amenities

Public streetscape amenities provide for gathering, lighting, shelter, and street maintenance. These guidelines encourage amenities that will allow enjoyment of the outdoors in all seasons and contribute to our ability to have clean, maintained sidewalks and streets.

- Provide public seating clustered with other amenities including lighting, shelter, trash receptacles, art, and landscaping.
- Allow outdoor dining areas on sidewalks and streets that do not interfere with required clear zone movement.
- Provide self-cleaning restrooms or an alternative movable restroom option in several locations during times of high-tourist visitation.
- Allow street-level spaces for vendors to sell food and drinks.

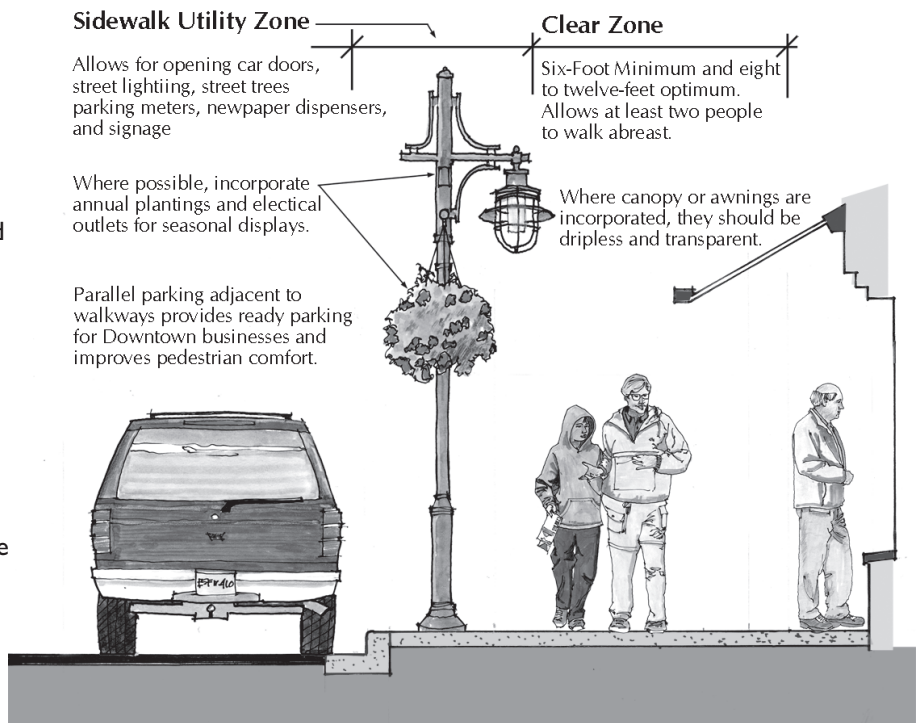


Diagram and photo from the 2007 Downtown Plan – Maintaining sidewalk clear zones allows all types of users – keeping Downtown universally accessible.



Landscaping and Art Palette

Landscaping and art are combined to represent the positive synergy that can come from combining plantings, art, and other hardscape features designed in context with the Downtown environment.

- Plant and maintain street trees on sidewalks wide enough to accommodate the planter infrastructure.
- Light poles will be consistent to the cultural district or focused development area they are located in.
- Public art may be integrated into locations with recommended clear zone.
- Encourage integration of public art in parks, and other public spaces appropriate and planned for through park or other planning efforts.
- Provide optimal settings for seasonal art.
- Allow art in sidewalks or other hardscapes including decorative brick or metal plaques as approved by MOA PM&E.

Pedestrian Crossings

Pedestrian crossings are encouraged with clearly visible amenities including street lighting, striping, raised intersections or curb bulb-outs, with all levels of pedestrian uses considered in intersection design.

- All intersections with high levels of pedestrian use will be raised or receive special treatments in materials or signage.
- Incorporate curb bulb-outs at intersections to reduce crossing distances and increase space for walking amenities.
- Minimize driveways across sidewalks by requiring access from alleys.
- Catch basins should be built mid-block to prevent impacts to crosswalks.

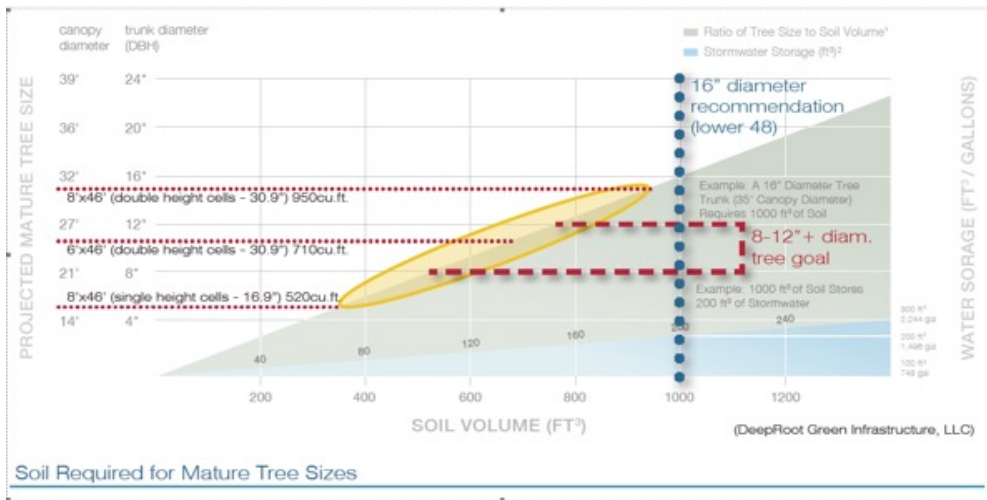


Diagram courtesy Peter Briggs, Corvus Design, Anchorage, AK – Urban Design Subcommittee - 2021

Photo – 2007 Downtown Plan – Raised intersection pedestrian crossing.

Heated Sidewalks

Heated sidewalks can provide ice-free travel between pedestrian-oriented districts in Downtown. Ice-free sidewalks are not required of any new development with this plan but may be encouraged through an updated bonus point system.

- Heated sidewalks are encouraged when found feasible to build, operate and maintain.



Lighting

Light installations are an opportunity to not only create a safe walkable environment, but also affords the community a cost-effective method to convey a city's historic culture and heritage. Lighting upgrades are planned and occurring in Downtown and are encouraged into the future to provide a safe, multi-modal transportation network.

- Standardize public lighting within the historic context of Downtown to create a unified urban design, while providing base-level and area lighting for safe travel by all street and sidewalk users.
- Illuminate both the front at-street and sidewalk areas, and back-door alley accesses for safety and security on both public and private buildings especially as utility undergrounding projects occur.
- Ensure public lighting accommodates baskets and seasonal lighting.
- Interior lighting in public and private buildings that reflects out from front-facing windows and doors onto the sidewalk creates a welcoming and safe place for pedestrians and should be encouraged with new and redevelopment projects.

Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage

Wayfinding and interpretive signs give the community different methods to convey historic and cultural information, information about trail locations, local amenities like parks and museums, emergency response providers, and emergency evacuation routes.

- Implement a wayfinding and interpretive signage palette for use in all projects for the next 10-20 years. Consider using the interpretive themes and installation examples found in the 2015 [Centennial Interpretive Plan for Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods](#).
- Gateway street design elements will be consistent with the historic or cultural district being celebrated or interpreted. See the updated Strategy Map in Chapter 3 identifying the proposed Downtown cultural districts.
- Dena'ina and Anchorage's culture and history will be celebrated through permanent and temporary installations for the enjoyment of residents and visitors to Downtown.



Photos from Planning Department 2020 L to R: lighting; Fairview/East Downtown Historic Street Signage Project; Grandma Olga Interpretive installation at the Port of Alaska boat launch.

Pedestrian Shelter

Northern city design encourages a wide array of pedestrian shelters to provide year-round comfort and ease of movement on Downtown streets. Pedestrian shelters may be constructed in interiors and exteriors of buildings.

- Provide overhead protection that promotes year-round comfort.
- 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, openness and be illuminated.
- Design awnings and canopies to avoid shedding snow and icy drip hazards on the sidewalk.
- Canopies should have transparent roofs that allow sunlight to reach the sidewalk.
- 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 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.

Improve the Quality of Building Design

Building Setbacks

A building setback may be used to provide street connections, sunlight, views, wider sidewalks, provide wind resistance, noise reduction, and variations in building design. Building setbacks may also be used to encourage outdoor activities, greenspace, and landscaping. Note: The requirement for building setbacks in Downtown was proposed for removal from Chapter 11: Downtown in A.O. 2021-0126 – at the time of this public hearing draft plan the Assembly Ordinance was still under consideration.

- Buildings should have a strong relationship to the street, with setbacks no wider than necessary to accommodate sidewalk widths recommended in the design guidelines of this chapter, to be consistent with Title 21 requirements.
- Provide minor building setbacks from the property line if they permit additional public sidewalk width on streets with insufficient right-of-way.
- Incentivize 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 through an updated bonus point system.
- 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

Massing is the three-dimensional form of buildings dictating its size, scale, character, and balance within the space the building is constructed. Stepping of taller buildings helps add dimension, balance, and character. Buildings that enhance the image of Downtown will use the following contextual design considerations.

- 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.

Sunlight Access

The lifeblood of 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.

urban design improving building design

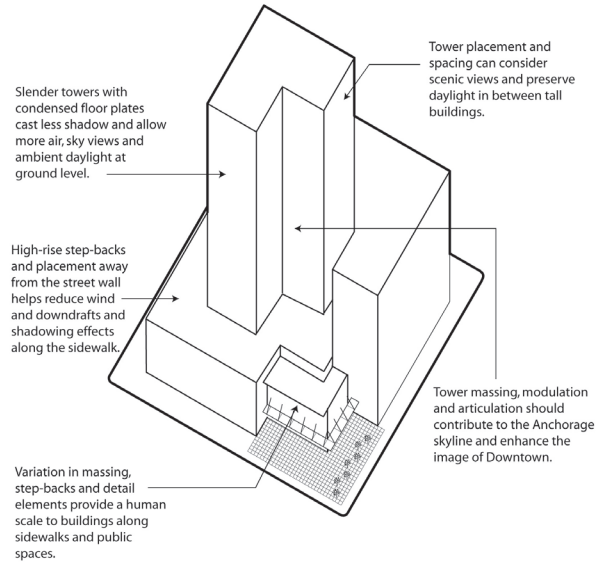


Diagram – 2007 Downtown Plan.

- 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 (A.O. 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

Wind protection advocates for building design and construction that factors wind loads or pressure that may come from any direction. Modeled building design is encouraged to help create a more-pedestrian friendly environment.

- 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 regarding 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.
- For important buildings, it is [advisable](#) to base design wind pressures on the results of wind tunnel tests of a model of a building, neighboring buildings, and nearby terrain.



Photo: 5th Avenue Key Bank Building Redevelopment Concept - Sunlight access and wind protection are achieved with this redevelopment concept.



Photo – Planning Department 2020 – Ground level access to storefronts and the 5th Avenue Mall provide options for shoppers and activate this building frontage along two busy Anchorage streets.

Ground Level Treatment

Ground level building treatments are encouraged to contribute to a welcoming and safe Downtown by providing contextual and interesting design. Privacy for ground floor residential is encouraged with an appropriate yet balanced interface between buildings and the sidewalk.

- 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.

Materials and Texture

Materials and textures are successful in Alaska when the arctic environment, cultural, and aesthetic conditions are factored into this design element. Climate being one of the most important factors in material assembly and selection. A variety of textures and colors are encouraged for Downtown.

- 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 a 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 (not necessarily beige or yellow) that can bring warm light to the sidewalk environment by refracting ambient light or low-intensity façade illumination.

Building Lighting

Beautiful and sustainable lighting design can be achieved at any scale or in any context. Creative illumination of buildings contributes to a positive community experience and interaction. Integration of both daylight and architectural lighting in harmony with the Downtown context is encouraged.

- Design building lighting to help wayfinding 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 or only on to the building façade.



Skywalks

Skywalks have found a utilitarian use in Downtown by providing connections to the 5th Avenue Mall and between the Egan Center and the Performing Arts Center. Future skywalks will be guided by demonstrated need and benefit to the overall function of buildings, streets, and pedestrian facilities.

- 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 may 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.



Photos – Planning Department 2020 – Outside building lighting in Ship Creek at the ARRC Freight Shed and Dena'ina Convention Center on 7th Avenue.

- 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 the street level.



Photo – Theparkcatalog.com – Example bicycle storage option that could be used inside buildings or parking garages.

Parking Treatment

Parking treatment guidelines include both structured and at-grade parking lot recommendations and are intended to provide adequate, safe, and visually appealing parking options that meet Title 21 code requirements.

- Promote the use of structured parking to accommodate the parking spaces needed for development projects.
- Encourage underground parking to 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 too, 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 the grade, if 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, or ornamental fencing. Improvements can include:
 - Planters, shrubs, other landscaping or fencing at least 3-feet tall.
 - Benches for seating.
 - Bicycle parking.
 - Trash receptacles.
 - Light fixtures, or
 - Public art.



Photo – Planning Department 2020 – 5th Avenue at C Street.

Residential Treatment

Residential building design in context with the Downtown urban environment is encouraged with interior and exterior elements intended to provide a variety of residential options to singles, couples, families, and seniors. Amenities that contribute to inviting and safe building entrances along with interesting building articulation with step backs, windows, and arctic-compatible building materials are also encouraged.

- Design residential development to be varied in building form and include features such as front stoops, bay windows, façade articulation, balconies or sunrooms 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 and Semi-Public Spaces

The following are intended to address design options for our arctic environment in public and private buildings.

- Interior publicly assessable spaces such as atria or winter gardens are encouraged to allow sunlight, views, and wind protection.
- Connection of interior open spaces with Downtown's network of public sidewalks is encouraged.
- Design to provide northern climate development features to create welcoming entrances is encouraged.



Photo – anchoragelibrary.org – New atrium and entrance of the Z. J. Loussac Library in Anchorage.

Activate Streets and Alleys

Activating streets and alleys to provide economic recovery is encouraged. Residents and visitors will benefit from a variety of offerings that can only occur outside. Sustaining businesses and their employees during the recovery period should include several tools such as street and alley activation as a long-term option for Downtown.

Streets

- Continue to allow outside dining, open air markets, music and dance in cordoned off streets with low traffic volumes year-round especially streets adjacent to MOA parks or greenspaces.
- Create a community program with ADP and the Parks Department that incorporates limited closing of streets to provide economic opportunities for small Alaska-made and Alaska-owned businesses.

Alleys

- Activate alleys as a creative placemaking tool with art, music, and dining experiences.
- Encourage mural projects in alleys.
- Provide adequate lighting in alleys by using string lighting, LED lighting, or other comparable light options.
- Consider offering unique looks and experiences in different sections of the alley system.
- Consider alley makeovers as community events to create new sustainable areas to contribute to business retention.
- Use alleys for secured bicycle storage with appropriate signage and app user system to keep bicycles safe.

Urban Design and Utilities Subcommittees Recommendations

The two the subcommittees formed for this planning process had several in-detail recommendations for this plan. Those detailed recommendations area included in the public outreach report and will factor into updates to the Title 21, Chapter 11 for Downtown. One of the challenges for Downtown development is the 1970s code. This plan update and associated recommendations received through the public and subcommittee process are integral to the success of the Downtown code update. The Urban Design Subcommittee put thoughtful emphasis in their recommendations, especially for the bonus point system, several design considerations, and landscaping, and the current sign requirements. To that end, the code update will be able to give our community a bonus point system and code requirements that reflect the values of today's community. The Utility Subcommittee brought up issues and recommendations for how utility locations and capacity could be determined early in the design process. The utility providers recommended a communication process to allow a better alignment between their capital improvements with proposed new development. The ideas presented below are intended to help streamline development and bring cost-effective measures to the development process.

The combined subcommittee's recommendations generally included ideas regarding the following:

- Additional incentives.
- Parking management.
- Parking lot landscaping.
- Design consideration for an updated bonus point system
- A stand-alone sign code relevant to the Downtown context and urban fabric.
- A study to determine existing infrastructure and capacity and what upgrades may be needed in collaboration with a land capacity study.
- New landscaping requirements to achieve healthy viable trees and shrubs in the urban Downtown environment.
- Setback recommendations.
- Land assembly incentives.

Action Items

Chapter 6 action items are intended to provide economic development through design, streamlined communication processes, a context sensitive sign code, and studies to determine any gaps in services in collaboration with what land capacity there is for development. The actions also address the connection between the street and buildings and how that important connection supports all users on Downtown streets and sidewalks.

UD-1: Update the bonus point system for the Downtown Zoning Districts using the recommendations from this planning process brought forward by the Urban Design and Utilities Subcommittees formed for the Downtown Plan update (Works with LU-12).

UD-2: Consider a Downtown-specific sign code or sign code section in Chapter 11: DOWNTOWN using the recommendations and best practices from other cities as recommended by the Urban Design Subcommittee (Works with LU-12).

UD-3: Fund and complete a utility capacity study for Downtown as recommended by the Utilities Subcommittee, or GAP analysis. Include all utility providers and the MOA in this capacity study. Determine upgrades to facilities to support new technologies, growing demand for higher speed internet, and new housing and businesses. Publish the results of the utility capacity study and any upgrade plans or recommendations.

UD-4: Fund and complete a land capacity study collaboratively with the utilities study. Determine in the study the carrying capacity of available vacant or under-developed lands. Consider A Few Good Blocks 2021 as the pilot project area.

UD-5: Fund, construct and maintain ice-free sidewalks in areas of high pedestrian use. Determine the best agency or group to maintain the ice-free sidewalk system and provide the resources to that agency or group through a BID or other funding method.

UD-6: Incorporate the recommended street typologies from this chapter into any updates to the Anchorage Bowl Street Typologies study and map (Works with AMATS Street Typology Study to kick-off in 2023).

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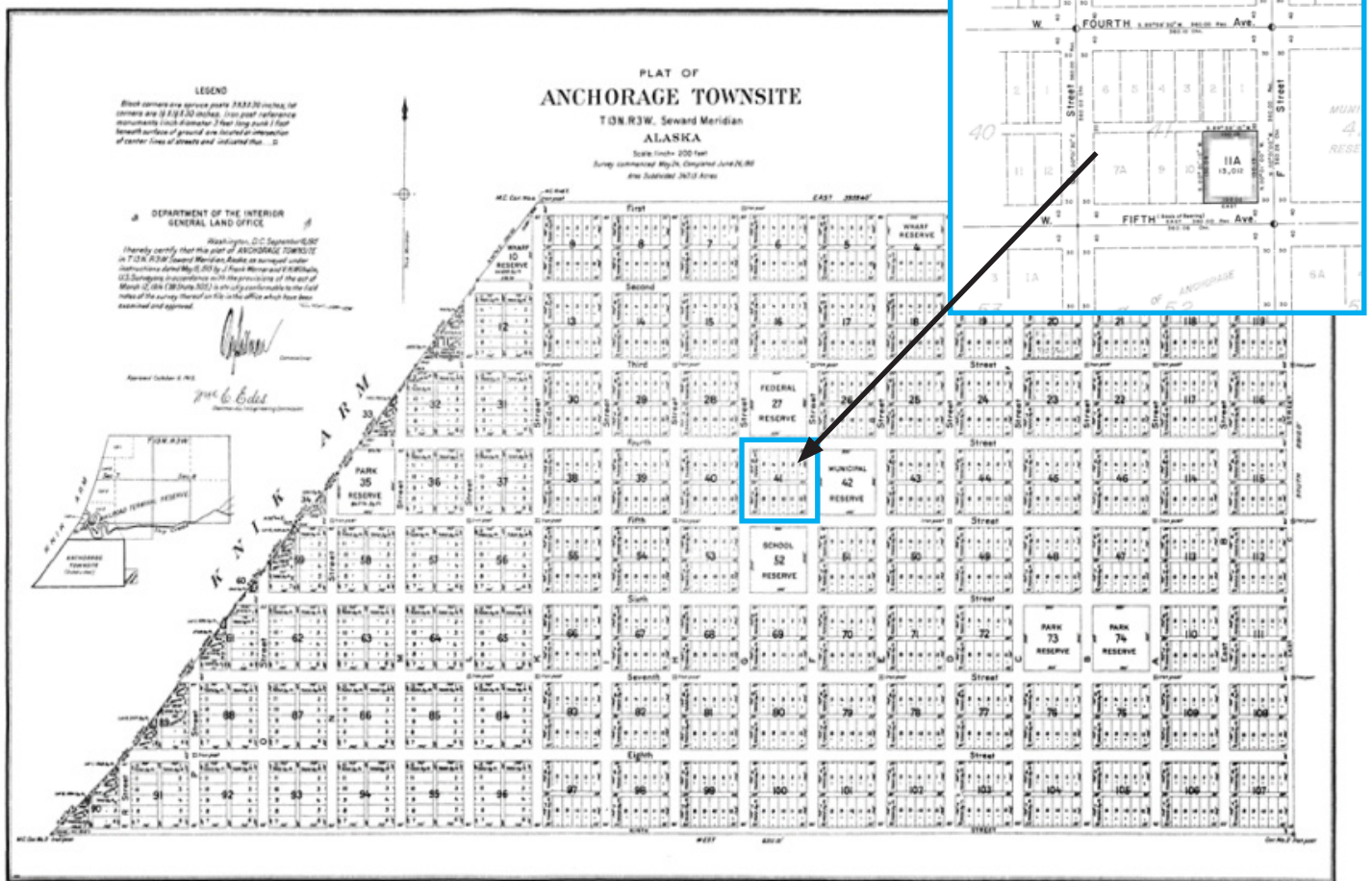


TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Overview

This chapter provides chapter-specific goals, policies and action items to implement **Strategy #4 – Focus the Effort** and **Strategy #5 – Make Connections to Surrounding Neighborhoods**

This chapter addresses the complexity of Downtown’s transportation and circulation system and the types of improvements that are needed to strengthen and support Downtown as a vital and welcoming place. This chapter also identifies specific planning considerations, outlines transportation goals to support the plan’s vision, and recommends solutions based on public and agency input and the Our Downtown online survey results.



Figures 1 & 2: Original Townsite Plat 1915 – Approved by William C. Edes, Chairman – Alaska Engineering Commission
 Figure 1 shows the original plat. Figure 2 is an inset to give more detail on street widths.

Our Forefathers Built the Road Grid to Meet the Needs of the Early 1900s

The city core of Anchorage, or Original Townsite, was platted and built for travel by foot, bicycle, horseback, horse-drawn wagon, and sled-dog team (Figure 1). The core Downtown infrastructure, as a result, should continue to lend itself to walking and bicycling as primary transportation modes.

Downtown streets were platted at 80 feet wide (numbered streets) and 60 feet wide (lettered streets) (Figure 2). Factoring in today's need for sidewalks, curb and gutter, parking, lighting, and travel lanes, there is not much space to work with when competing motorized and non-motorized uses attempt to travel safely in a timely manner in modern-day Anchorage. Travel times, delays, and the average number of vehicles using a street are major factors when determining street functions and speed limit. In modern times these elements were used to classify the types of streets and uses in Downtown Anchorage. Time means money for business and every minute of delay impacts someone or a bottom line. Additionally, narrower streets create an urban experience at the pedestrian scale; the narrower streets in Downtown are an asset to redevelopment as an urban destination.

Adding Downtown streets to the National Highway System during the Eisenhower Administration has turned Downtown from a functioning Central Business District into a highway system pass-through with high-volume streets and speed limits too fast for the surrounding development and desired pedestrian environment.

The 1915 platted streets were just enough to support the development of that time. The Alaska Engineering Commission did not anticipate a future with 18-wheeled trucks and large bus coaches that journey the streets today. Moving forward from 1915, the automobile became the primary form of transportation and the quality of the pedestrian environment has steadily declined. This lament has been heard in every public meeting and in every survey offered for input.

Walking is more challenged as sidewalk conditions deteriorate or were not built to accommodate pedestrians safely in areas west of the Downtown Core, like 8th Avenue between H and L streets. Striped bicycle lanes do not exist in Downtown, despite 5th and 6th avenues shown as "bike friendly" on the local [bike route map](#) published each year. Vehicles speeding by on one-way streets impacts all modes. Pedestrian and ever-increasing bicycle travel remain important elements to the Downtown transportation system. Connecting Anchorage's world-class trail system to Downtown is more than recreation, it also means commuters can ride bicycles year-round from all parts of our city to come to Downtown.

Interest and demand continue to grow with the public asking for agency and administrative support and funding to revitalize Downtown into a safe, interconnected, and welcoming place that supports walking and bicycles. Pedestrian users include walkers, people with strollers, and people in wheelchairs.

Times Change and It's Time for New Solutions

This chapter started with a look back to gain a better understanding of why we have the public infrastructure and facilities that exist today and how we might make them better in a cost-effective way. Community comments and suggestions, and input from the Our Downtown online survey are factored into this chapter's recommendations. Funding and completion of several Early Action Items to jump-start improvements in support of Anchorage's economic recovery are encouraged.

Downtown Streets Engineering Study

This chapter also advocates for the funding of a study and proposed street improvement program similar to what Austin, Texas and Oklahoma City adopted. In 2001, the city of Austin embarked on a rigorous public effort to better coordinate the various agencies and funding constraints to meet the travel demands of the community. The [Austin Great Streets Program](#) has helped them achieve greater efficiencies in project prioritization, programming, and in building infrastructure that meets current and forecasted travel needs. Oklahoma City adopted the [MAPs program](#) to fix their downtown streets and initiate revitalization in the core.

This Plan advocates for an engineering study to better understand the vehicle, bicycle, and transit demands on the street system. The Engineering Study would provide information on how the system may need to be changed, managed, and upgraded and the timing and cost that it will entail. The Engineering Study could also identify what agencies are going to be responsible for overseeing an proposed projects. Funding from AMATS is proposed to complete the Engineering Study.

2007 Plan Street Project Implementation

Transportation-related Recommendations and Implementation Actions in the 2007 Downtown Plan were developed with the intent to create a more pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-friendly and safe connected Downtown. 31% of the 57 Implementation actions were completed, 22% received little or no action, 47% received some action or are ongoing. Several Implementation Actions were not funded or completed. The unfunded actions include proposed street conversions, street reconstructions, speed limit reduction, and a Downtown Circulator. The following recaps the 2007 proposed transportation and circulation projects.

Pedestrian Improvements Completed

Several pedestrian-friendly street improvements were completed since 2007. This includes along 6th and 7th avenues, and E, F and D streets. These improvements included pedestrian crossings with bulb-outs and landscaping at several intersections. Heated sidewalks were completed around City Hall and the Dena'ina Center. However, the sidewalk heating system has since been turned off due to high maintenance and operation costs.

[Currently 4th Avenue](#) is undergoing reconstruction to replace traffic lights, pedestrian lighting, upgrading the tree wells, widening the sidewalk between C and A streets, provide curb ramps at B Street, and the installation of a 1% for Art project. This project is consistent with the scope of implementation action T-11 in the 2007 Downtown Plan.

Street Improvements Completed

The 9th Avenue reconstruction and core streets pedestrian improvements on 4th, 6th, and 7th avenues and E Street were completed.

Transit Improvements and Parking Completed

[A direct transit route to the UMED District is in operation with good ridership numbers, according to People Mover.](#)

In 2008, a new parking garage opened and was dedicated to Lenny Pacillo. Parking wayfinding, kiosk payment for parking, and new safety lighting in ACDA-owned garages are all operational. Tour bus operations are supported by Visit Anchorage and the Anchorage Trolley Tour company continues to operate their family owned business.

Proposed Projects Carried Forward with the Plan

Street conversions on portions of D and F streets and 5th and 6th avenues received positive feedback in the online survey to move forward in addition to the G Street improvements between 3rd and 5th avenues. Phase 2 of E Street and new ideas for 3rd Avenue are included in project recommendations in Chapter 8.

Upgrades to landscaping along some streets didn't work out due to sanding and other maintenance issues. The lack of once pretty and green landscape within street rights-of-way resonates with the public, and they have asked to bring trees back. Action items related to growing healthy trees Downtown are included.

The implementation action to reduce traffic speeds is recommended for an engineering study and desired by the public. We heard a lot and received many comments about slowing traffic down. The relocation of the transit center is still being considered as ACDA markets this 6th Avenue property as prime for redevelopment. The circulator bus route was popular in the survey. The circulator may be feasible operated by a smaller trolley.

Transportation Solutions and Improvements Support Our Economy

This plan also advocates for the right mix of transportation projects to support a system the public would expect in a metropolitan city.



Photo 2021 - Planning Department

System Considerations

System Priorities

The first priority is to optimize multi-modal access to and within Downtown. The second priority is to create a place that is enjoyable and safe for walking, biking, and using public transit. These two priorities can be realized as development density increases in Downtown. These priorities, when implemented, will enhance the retail experience, support employers, create social equity for the lower-income demographic employees that work and live in the area, and make Downtown even more of a destination for cultural and social gatherings. Multi-modal system improvements are known contributors to downtown revitalization.⁶

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 cut-through traffic and freight movement. Several factors should be considered in the proposed engineering study. Who lives Downtown, how do they travel, who travels to Downtown and when, who travels through Downtown and why, what modes are being used, and is the system meeting the traveler's needs?

Plan for Vehicles and for Physically-Active Transportation

A study of census data for this plan found roughly half of the households in Census Tract 11 (Downtown Core) have one vehicle. Another 20-30% of the Downtown households have two vehicles. Less than 7% of Census Tract 11 households have three or more vehicles. The share of households without a vehicle was at 22% in this central Downtown core. This 22% rate for Census Tract 11 is substantially higher than statistics municipal-wide at 6% of households without a vehicle.

This means two things. First, multi-modal transportation options are critical in Downtown. Second, it is important for new housing projects to offer some parking to meet the parking needs of those residents owning at least one car.

The provision of some parking in new projects will contribute to the project's competitiveness in the Downtown housing market. This premise meets what we heard from developers with recent or ongoing Downtown housing projects in the A Few Good Blocks area.

These numbers also indicate there are many Downtown households that use active transportation such as transit, walking, or biking as their primary means of travel. New developments can meet those needs too by providing indoor locked secured bicycle storage. The street network should have clearly marked bicycle paths and routes. Sidewalks should be maintained and free of utility boxes and poles. Good wayfinding and directional signage for those that might be walking or bicycling Downtown as visitors are also important.

Until transportation technology changes substantially, it is unlikely that housing without opportunities for parking will be desirable. Shared parking, off site but close by, or use of parking garages are viable solutions to ensure people opting to live in Downtown have access to parking.

The Agnew::Beck study selected four other downtowns to compare Anchorage to. These "benchmark communities" were like Downtown Anchorage in size, climate, or policies. The benchmark communities⁷ invested in "active transportation," which resulted in more "urban" housing residents who relied less on automobiles and more on public transit. It is possible that as Anchorage's Downtown grows with additional housing, automobile use can decline.

6: *The necessary foundations for rural resilience: A flexible, accessible, and healthy built environment* (brookings.edu)

7: *In other comparison downtowns (Boise, Oklahoma City, Minneapolis, and Salt Lake City) between 53 and 61% of households have at least one car. Residents in downtowns appreciate multi-modal options but often still have a car to travel throughout their community and outside of downtowns.*

Opportunities for Improvement

Circulation

- Circulation constraints and high-volume streets within the Downtown Core may limit higher-density redevelopment opportunities.
- Through traffic and truck traffic adversely impact 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.
- Parade, race, and festival routes, as well as 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.
- Lack of good pedestrian wayfinding in low-light conditions impedes pedestrian movement, especially between Downtown destinations.
- 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 should provide pedestrian and traffic circulation.
- Downtown lacks direct local transit connections to the airport and rail links.
- The Seward/Glenn Connection will provide significant benefits to Downtown, increasing redevelopment potential here and in Fairview by alleviating the regional through traffic in these areas.
- Ownership of Downtown's streets is split between the Municipality and State, which impacts the form, function, and overall integration of the street system. National Highway System requirements prevent certain retail signage and building design.

Parking

- Downtown currently has an abundance of under-used surface parking lots according to the 2007 parking study by ACDA.
- Idle properties, including parking lots, sit for years without any visible improvements. This is a drain on tax revenue and shows a lack of investment in the community.
- Parking facilities lack adequate wayfinding directional signage, good pedestrian connections to destinations, and affordable prices.
- A coordinated parking strategy that may include a smart phone app or other technology could be needed to solve some development issues as downtown grows.
- A parking management coordinator would be helpful if public and private parking lot/garage owners can work together to solve the issues identified that impact new development to help incentivize new development.

Transportation and Circulation Goals

1. Promote and support walking and transit as the primary circulation modes within the Downtown Core:

Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, comfort, and mobility. Minimize barriers to walking. Route buses such that transit can be used as a natural extension of the Downtown walking experience.

2. 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 from outside the Downtown core to maximize efficiency and the number of destinations served.

3. 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.

4. 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 the priority for local access and circulation. Maintain sufficient capacity on appropriate corridors.

5. 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.

Community Comments/Online Survey Results Overview

Community Comments

The Our Downtown planning process was initiated with an Anchorage Museum First Friday event in November 2019. Three community workshops quickly followed. Comments regarding transportation and circulation were received during the museum event and the workshops. 39 comments concerned with parking lots, snow storage, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, Coastal Trail connectivity, the enjoyment of being able to walk "everywhere," and completion of the Seward to Glenn highways connection were received.

One-on-one interviews were also held with Downtown project developers. Comments on convenient parking, the ability to provide parking for projects that are "for sale" vs. rental projects, pedestrian and bicycle network, and wayfinding were received. These comments are factored into the policies and action items along with the online survey comments.

Online Survey Results and Comments

13 targeted questions in the online survey were devoted to street improvements, the look and function of streets, transit, and parking. Hundreds of comments received were devoted to streets, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Respondents felt strongly about fixing Our Downtown and have some great ideas on future improvements, including fixing the street network to make it more multi-modal, pedestrian, and bicycle friendly as this plan advocates for.

Street projects to make Our Downtown more pedestrian and bicycle friendly are expensive. Utility upgrades to support new development are expensive. Building materials are getting more expensive. However, revitalized streets will contribute to helping make the Heart of Anchorage "[Clean, Safe and Vital.](#)"

Many of the transportation and circulation implementation actions from the 2007 Downtown Plan will be carried forward in addition to new recommendations more focused on bicycle use, trail connectivity, lighting, and other safety issues also included.

Online Survey Responses to Street Conversions

The 2007 Downtown Plan identified multiple street upgrades by converting some of the one-way and two-way streets. The first six questions asked respondents' thoughts on those conversions and if traffic should be slowed down to 20 mph when moving through the Downtown core.

Reducing Speed Limits - Response: Definite Yes

Seventy percent (70%) of respondents stated that traffic signal timing should be adjusted to slow traffic down, and another 12% answered, "Leave it to the Planning Team to recommend." The 2007 Downtown plan recommended 20 mph for streets with lower traffic volume, and 25 mph for streets carrying larger volumes.

D, F, and E Street 2-way Conversions - Response: Maybe

Respondents seemed moderately in favor of converting D Street between 4th and 5th avenues to a two-way street, F Street to a two-way street, and E Street to a two-way street north of 4th Avenue, with 44%, 45%, and 54% of people saying yes, respectively.

3rd Avenue Conversion - Response: Definite No

Fifty-five percent (55%) of people responded no to converting 3rd Avenue to a one-way west-bound street and another 25% said leave it to the Planning Team to recommend. The 2007 Downtown Plan only recommended converting 3rd Avenue to a one-way street between A and C if the Highway-2-Highway project was completed. The 2007 Plan also advocated for removing 3rd Avenue and L Street as a truck route.

5th Avenue Conversion - Response: Maybe

The conversion of 5th Avenue to two-way traffic was closer in results: 36% said yes, 47% said no, and 17% said the Planning Team should recommend. Several comments for this question mentioned adding more non-motorized infrastructure, such as bike lanes, or, in general, prioritizing the comfort and travel of pedestrians, such as closing roads to motorized traffic. There were some comments overall about ensuring the functionality of the traffic system.



Photo 2021 - Planning Department

Online Survey Responses to Core Streets Master Planned Improvements

Questions 7 through 11 concerned implementation items in the Downtown core that were identified in the Core Streets Streetscape Master Plan (Appendix C to the 2007 Downtown Plan). Respondents' answers to these questions were very supportive of implementing the identified projects.

Fix G Street between 3rd and 5th Avenues - Response: Definite Yes

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of survey takers said yes to reconstructing G Street between 3rd and 5th avenues; 77% said yes to reconstructing 7th Avenue between the Dena'ina Convention Center and C Street; and 64% said yes to reconstructing 6th Avenue between E Street and D Street, as recommended in the Downtown Core Streetscape Streetscape Plan.

Phase 2 - E Street Improvements - Response: Definite Yes

Funding and reconstruction of Phase 2 of the E Street Corridor Enhancement Project with pedestrian connections to Delaney Park and the Alaska Railroad Intermodal Transportation Facility was supported by 76% of survey takers; 15% chose to leave it to the Planning Team, and 9% were not supportive of moving forward with Phase 2.

Bicycle Racks, Seating, Lighting, Trash Receptacles - Response: Definite Yes

Ninety percent (90%) of survey respondents support amenities such as bicycle racks, seating, lighting, and trash receptacles being funded and maintained in Downtown.

Many of the comments for this set of questions again emphasized the desire for safe pedestrian infrastructure, and there was strong desire for bicycling infrastructure to be included in these core street designs. A few people also said they would be interested in learning more or seeing more detailed designs.

Bicycle Routes / Connections to MOA Trails - Response: Definite Yes

Several comments came in on trail connectivity and adding bicycle routes and a bike boulevard.

Online Survey Responses to Transit and Parking

Questions 12 and 13 asked about establishing a Downtown Circulator Route through the Downtown Core and if a coordinated parking strategy should be developed.

Bus Circulator Route – Yes

Most respondents (56%) said a Downtown Circulator Route should be established and another 29% responded to allow the Planning Team to recommend.

Coordinated Parking Strategy – Definite Yes

Eighty-four percent (84%) of survey takers were supportive of developing a coordinated parking strategy to help support new residential and commercial development. Only 8% said no and another 9% responded to leave it to the Planning Team.

Core Streets Master Plan Questions:

The Core Streets Streetscape Master Plan, adopted in 2007 as Appendix C to the Downtown Comprehensive Plan, gives recommendations for street upgrades in the Downtown Core (C to G streets and 7th to 3rd avenues).

Should 6th Avenue be reconstructed between E and D Streets as recommended in the Downtown Core Streets Streetscape Master Plan? Response: Yes

Figure 41 below is the concept drawing for the 6th Avenue improvements.

Should 7th Avenue be Improved as designed from the Core Streets Streetscape Master Plan? Response: Yes

Figure 43 below is the concept drawing for the 7th Avenue improvements.

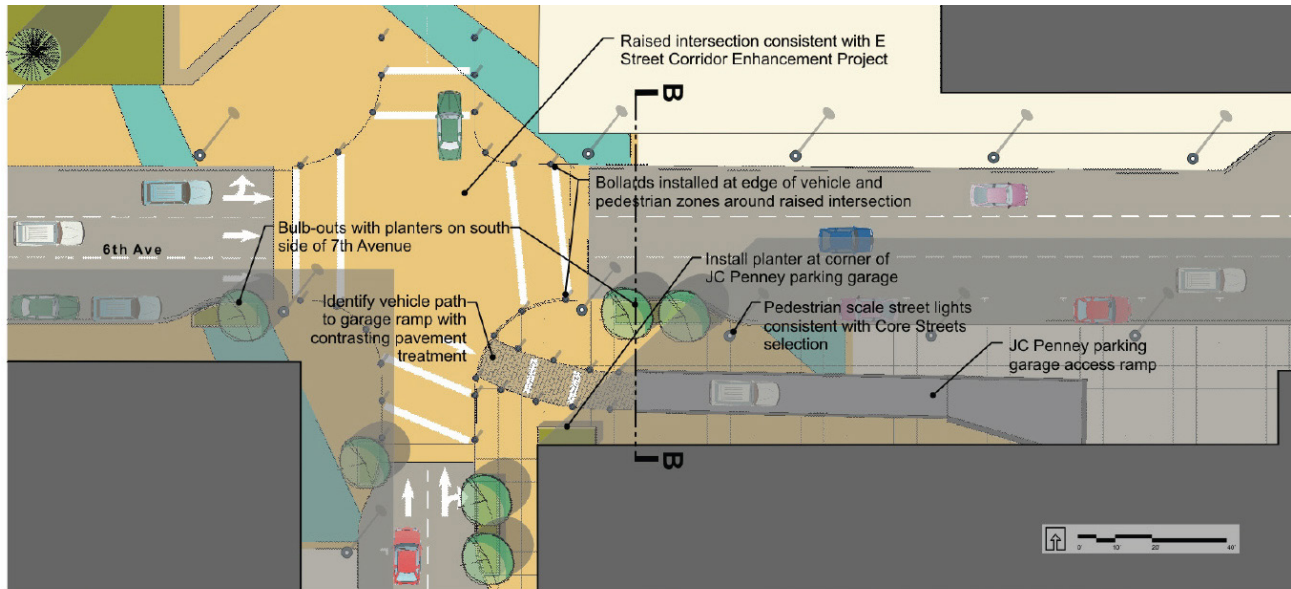


Figure 41. Proposed 6th Avenue Layout

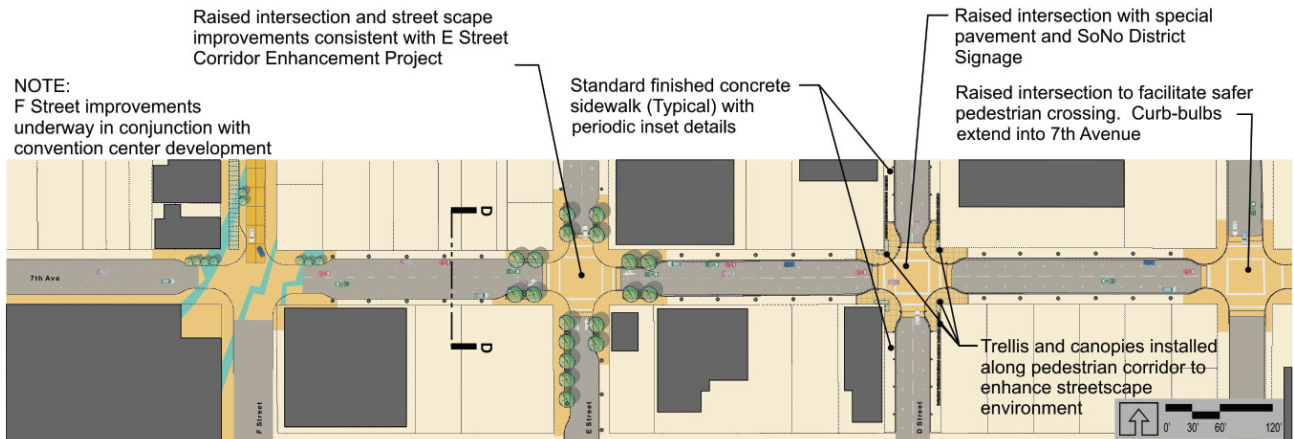


Figure 43. Proposed 7th Avenue Layout

Should G Street Be Improved as Designed from the Core Streets Streetscape Master Plan? Response: Yes

G Street from 3rd – 5th Avenue Project (Implementation Action T-4): (Figure 36) depicts G Street from 3rd to 5th Avenues improvement concept. G Street and 3rd to 5th Avenues are busy pedestrian-oriented streets. Restaurants, galleries, 4th Avenue Historic District, Tourist Boutiques, Federal agencies Visitor Center and offices, and stunning views draw residents and visitors alike to this area. Historic buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places include Cottage 23, Cottage 25, Alaska’s Public Lands Information Center, and 4th Avenue Theatre. 327 people in the online survey answered G Street should be reconstructed.

Should 3rd Avenue Be Converted to a One-way Street? Response: Definite No

Issues with truck traffic on 3rd Avenue came up several times during this planning process. The 2007 Downtown Plan did not support truck traffic on 3rd Avenue and advocated for the removal of truck traffic between C and L Streets.

The upgrade to G Street including the pedestrian improvements at 3rd would make 3rd and G Street more pedestrian and bicycle friendly with safer access to the restaurants, commercial businesses, and housing from adjacent parking lots or on-street parking. The public agreed with this recommendation.

Of the 366 survey respondents who answered this question, over 55% said NO, over 25% said Leave it to the Planners. Additional comments during one-on-one meetings have expressed the same sentiment.

Recommendation: (#1) Do not convert 3rd Avenue to a One-way Street. (#2) Discuss the elimination of 3rd Avenue as a truck freight route from C to L streets, consistent with the 2007 Downtown Plan.

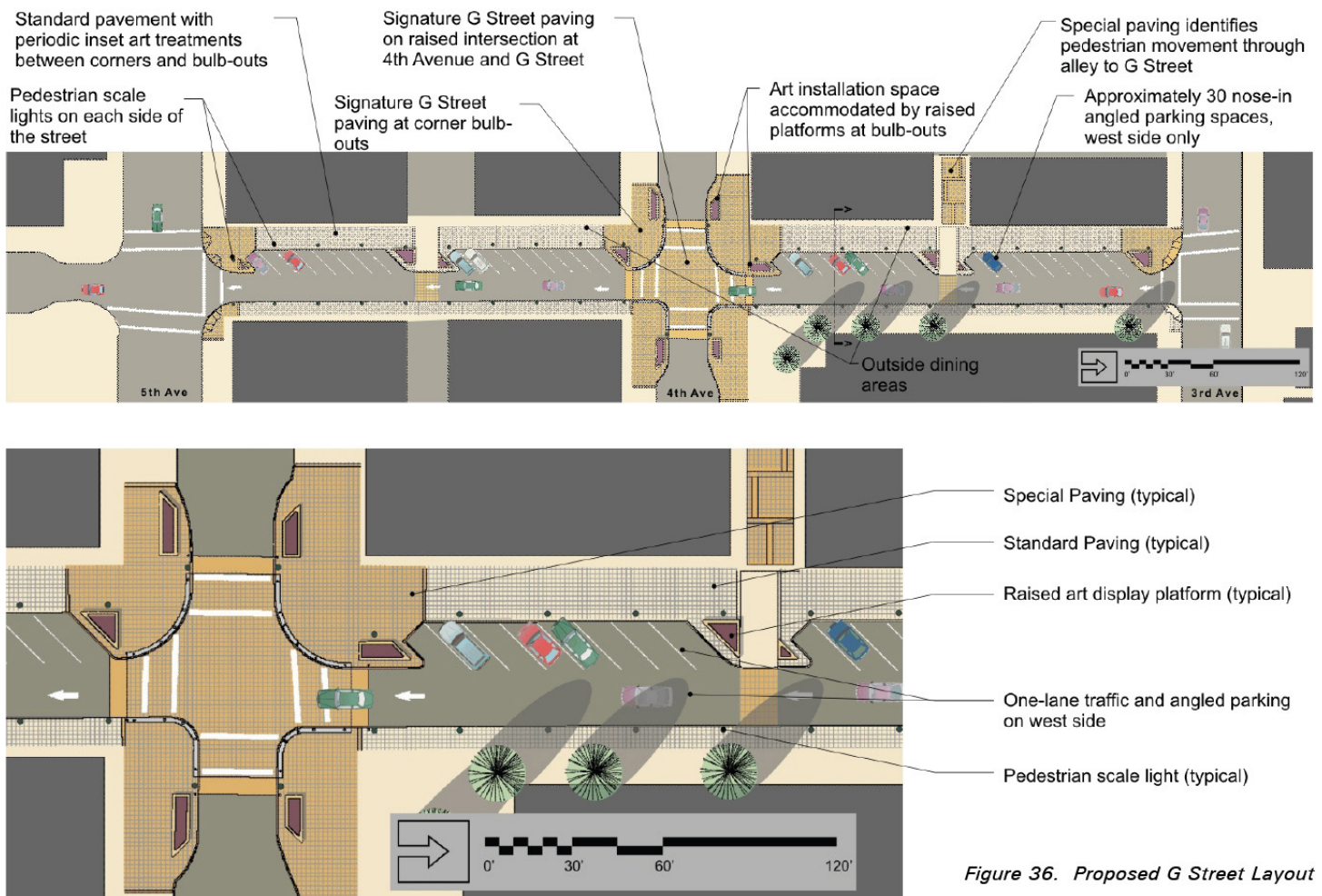


Figure 36. Proposed G Street Layout

Should Traffic Signal Timing Be Adjusted to Slow Traffic Down? Response: Definite Yes

Of the 362 who answered the question about adjusting the traffic signal timing to slow traffic down in the Downtown Core area almost 70% answered Yes, with 18.23% answering No, and 12% saying “Leave it to the Planning Team to recommend.” Only 8 people skipped answering this question.

Nacto.org Guidance

Staff research into NACTO minor and major downtown streets guidance found the following recommendations for downtown street speed limits based on street classifications and whether a street is 2 or 4 lanes.

Minor Streets⁸

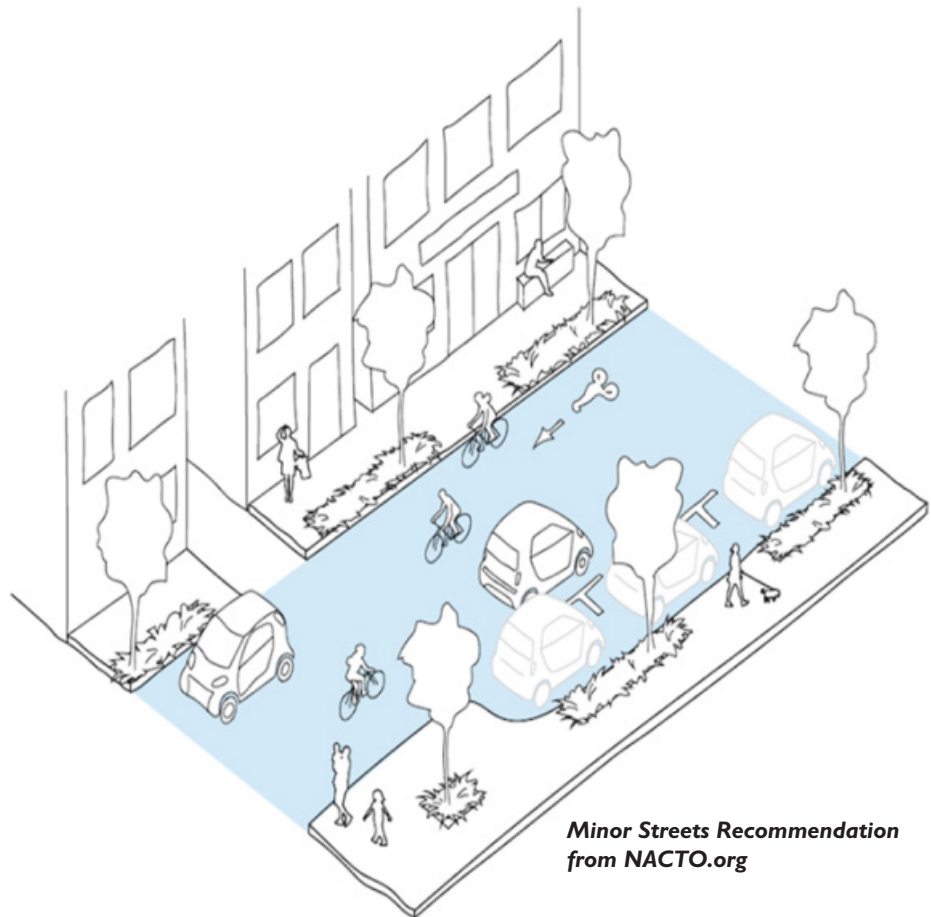
A 20 mph speed limit on minor streets supports safe movement and contextually appropriate design on most city streets. Since minor streets tend to have either very low volumes or operate at the speed of the most cautious driver, cities can apply a category speed limit to minor streets without detailed review of street characteristics. Minor streets include physically small

streets where low speeds are often already present, as well as low-vehicle-volume streets with few or no transit stops.

Minor streets are often characterized by:

- A single moving vehicle lane (one- or two-way),
- Two moving vehicle lanes but fewer than 6,000 vehicles per day,
- A “minor” or “local” definition in a citywide street typology or street plan,
- Stop controls, all-way stop controls, or yield-controls at multiple intersections,

Yield streets, neighborhood streets, some residential boulevards, one-lane downtown one-way and two-lane downtown two-way streets as described in the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide, Lateral, service, or access roadways along multiway boulevards, and NACTO and public comment Recommended speed limit for Minor Streets: 20 mph.



**Minor Streets Recommendation
from NACTO.org**

8: [MINOR STREETS](#) | National Association of City Transportation Officials ([nacto.org](#))

Major Streets⁹

A 25 mph speed limit on urban multilane streets has demonstrated safety benefits for all users. Major streets feature a combination of high motor vehicle traffic volume, signalization of major intersections, and an inherently multimodal street environment.

If unable to set a category speed limit for all major streets, cities should conduct a Safe Speed Study for high-priority major streets on an individual basis.

Major streets are often characterized by:

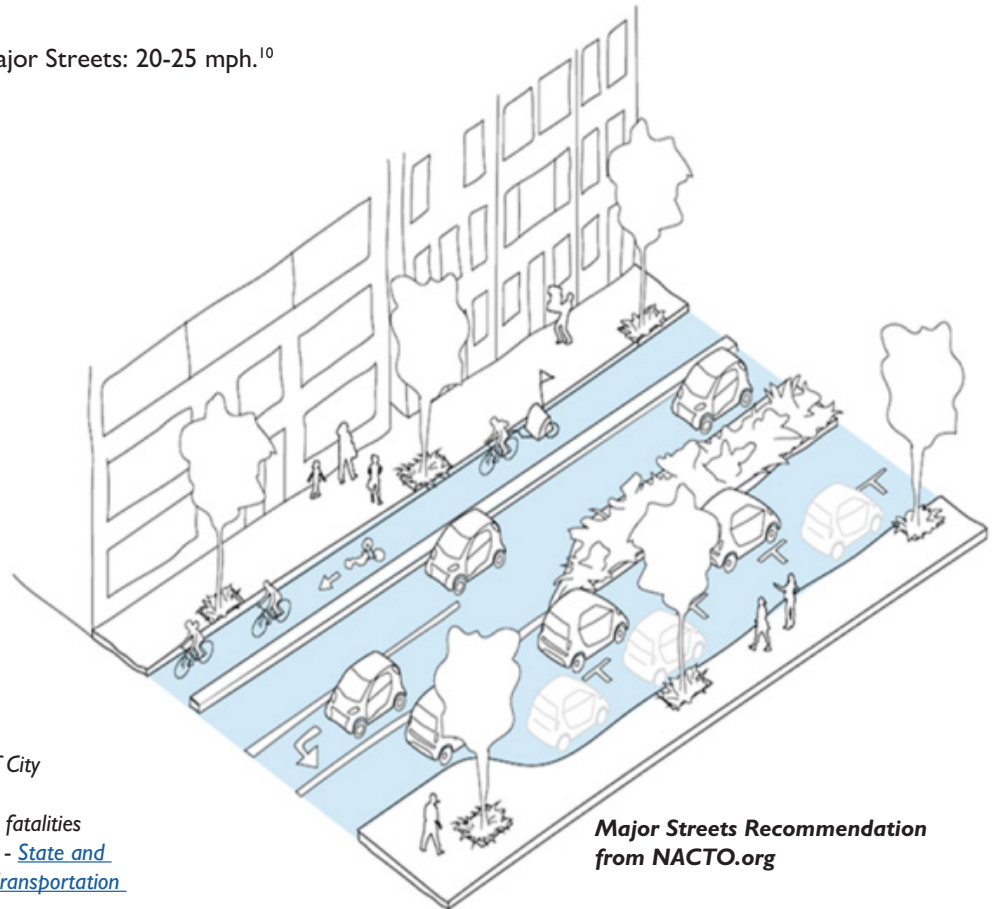
- Signalized intersections,
- Few, if any, all-way stop intersections,
- At least two formal (marked) motor vehicle traffic lanes, and usually more,
- Frequent transit stops,
- Moderate to high motor vehicle volumes,
- Multi-lane downtown one-way and downtown two-way streets, as well as many neighborhood main streets, multi-way boulevards, and transit boulevards as described in the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide, and
- Recommended speed limit for Major Streets: 20-25 mph.¹⁰

Should a Downtown Circulator Route be Established?**Response: Yes**

Questions 12 and 13 asked about establishing a Downtown Circulator Route through the Downtown Core and if a coordinated parking strategy should be developed. The majority of respondents (56%) said a Downtown Circulator Route should be established and another 29% responded to allow the Planning Team to recommend.

Downtown Circulator Route

The 2007 proposal for a circulator route was intended to connect the transit center to parking lots and destinations with a headway of “no more than 5 minutes.” Over half of the survey respondents thought this was still a good idea. Additionally, several comments related to increased transit capacity especially for tourists. The Downtown Engineering Study could consider this circulator bus or trolley service that would be cost-effective for year-round use.



9: [MAJOR STREETS](#) | National Association of City Transportation Officials ([nacto.org](#))

10: NATCO 2021 Policy #1: Eliminate traffic fatalities by making safety transportation's top priority - [State and Federal Policy](#) | National Association of City Transportation Officials ([nacto.org](#))

**Major Streets Recommendation
from NACTO.org**

Should a Coordinated Parking Strategy be Developed?**Response: Definite Yes**

Survey takers were 84% supportive of developing a coordinated parking strategy to help support new residential and commercial development. Only 8% said no and another 9% responded to leave it to the Planning Team.

Parking management is one of the most important facets of an effective transportation and circulation system. Several of the parking-related Implementation Actions were completed by Anchorage Community Development Corporation from the 2007 Downtown Plan. In the one-on-one interviews with developers for this plan update, the Planning Team was advised that available parking for leasing off site from their developments is important to providing adequate parking. Developers would like to provide parking but may not be able to on site due to cost.

Survey respondents and other public input came out in support of secure bike parking in all ACDA parking garages. Putting a freeze on any additional parking lots was mentioned. Many comments referred to too much parking in Downtown.

A Downtown Circulator Route and a Coordinated Parking Strategy are elements that should also be included in the Downtown Streets Development Master Plan to provide a wholistic program of solutions for meeting the transportation and circulation needs of Our Downtown.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Survey Comments

The online survey didn't specifically ask about bicycle facilities or use. However, several comments came in support of more bicycle facilities, 4th Avenue as a pedestrian-only street, a bicycle boulevard, maintaining trails for winter bike, pedestrian and other winter activities, street closures for outdoor dining. Secure, locked bike storage is an important way to support and increase bicycle usage. Connections to Ship Creek, Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, and the Gambell Street Greenway (proposed in the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan) are desired.

Covered pleasant walkways were mentioned. Elimination of the de facto freeway running through Downtown was included. Steps should be taken to slow down traffic in the Downtown core.

Some people love going downtown but "traffic is way too fast." Downtown is recommended to be more pedestrian friendly for visitors, residents and the businesses who serve them.

This Anchorage Bicycle Map, which is updated each year, depicts Downtown Streets including 3rd, 5th and 6th Avenues as "bicycle-friendly." None of these streets have striped bicycle lanes, nor are they signed to "share the road."

Planning, design, and funding need to be allocated before Downtown will be a bicycle-friendly place for commuters, visitors, and trail users.



Map from: [Anchorage Bike Map - Bike Anchorage](#)



Transportation and Circulation Policies and Action Items

Action Items from the 2007 Downtown Plan covered the gamut of improvements, from street conversions, to pedestrian and bicycle improvements, increasing transit service, providing adequate parking, and expanding tourism related capacity to provide a wholistic system to promote safety and economic development.

The Core Streets Streetscape Plan, one appendix to the 2007 Downtown Plan also provided recommendations for street design. However, without a MOA Design Criteria Manual update to reflect the recommendations from the 2007 Downtown Core Street Master Plan, streets will continue to be developed to the DCM requirements despite the guidance from the 2007 plans.

7-1. Safe, convenient, and reliable transportation is the bedrock of a functioning city, therefore this plan supports upgrades to the transportation system to achieve multi-modal projects and efficiencies integral to the revitalization of Downtown Anchorage.

T&C-1: Fund and complete the Downtown Streets Engineering Study Fund, complete, and implement the recommendations of the engineering study prioritizing projects that can occur quickly without too much funding. Include the following action items in the scope of the engineering study. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)

T&C-2: Pedestrian-Friendly Streets Project - 2007 (T-12): Adjust the traffic signal timing to reduce average speeds to between 20 and 25 MPH within Downtown A to L streets and 9th to 3rd avenues. Adjust speed limit on 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th, and 9th avenues to 20 MPH, 5th and 6th, to 25 MPH. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)

T&C-3: Historic 3rd Avenue Bikeway Pilot Project - Relocate large truck traffic to alternate routes and remove parking on the south side of 3rd Avenue between D Street and Christensen Drive, and create additional bicycle parking space for restaurants on 3rd Avenue. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)

T&C-4: Coastal Trail Connector to Historic 3rd Avenue Pilot Project - Stripe and sign bike lanes along 3rd Avenue from L Street to D Street and up G Street to 9th Avenue. Take parking off the south and west sides of the streets for the bike-only lanes. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)

7-2. Parking is an asset to be managed for the economic benefit of Downtown property owners, workers, residents, and visitors.

T&C-5: Maintain Low-Income Worker Relief Program - Issue reduced-rate parking garage passes and/or reduced-rate or free transit passes to anyone working in Downtown who earns \$15 per hour or less.

T&C-6: Fund a coordinated parking program within ACDA to provide real-time parking information in coordination with an updated parking study included as T&C-7.

T&C-7: Fund and publish a parking study.

7-3. Reducing single-occupant vehicles traveling to and from Downtown will provide environmental and economic benefits.

T&C-8: Fund and maintain striped bicycle lanes, install Share the Road signage on all proposed bicycle routes to encourage all-season bicycle commuting to and throughout Downtown from the trail system and on connected streets including A, C and L Streets, 5th, 6th, and 3rd Avenues. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)

T&C-9: Create a public outreach program for commuters from the MatSu Valley, Girdwood, South Anchorage, and Eagle River to encourage use of ride or van share to reduce single occupant vehicles in Downtown.

T&C-10: Prioritize and fund secured bicycle parking throughout Downtown. Secured bicycle parking sites should be considered as an element of the Downtown Streets Engineering Study and should be included in several parking garages or with at-grade parking lots around town. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, and T&C-18)

T&C-11: Prioritize and fund snow plowing of all bicycle lanes and trails leading into and out of Downtown Priority snow plowing of bicycle lanes increases bicycle commuting year-round and supports all income sectors.

T&C-12: Consider and fund 15-minute transit headways to encourage transit ridership.

T&C-13: Plan and fund summertime trolley services from specific locations in and around Downtown, including hotels and motels, hostels, and Airbnbs; 4th Avenue Mushing District; Ship Creek area; Anchorage Museum; G Street Arts District; and Delaney Park Strip. Consider offsetting the costs with a small ride fee.

T&C-14: Fund and update the PM&E DCM consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Core Streets Master Plan to provide clear direction on the design of streets as they are improved or rights-of-ways are redeveloped. Use context sensitive design for all streets in Downtown when adequate right-of-way exists to accommodate the 2007 Downtown Core Streets Master Plan design guidelines.

7-4. The MOA should prioritize project selection and development of Downtown street and transit projects that provide environmental and economic benefits to all demographic communities within Anchorage
(NATCO Policy #6 - [State and Federal Policy | National Association of City Transportation Officials \(nacto.org\)](#))

T&C-15: Fund, Design, and Complete Historic 3rd Avenue Reconstruction lighting upgrade, wider sidewalks, remove parking both sides from D to L streets, complete Core Streets pedestrian upgrades at F and G streets. Replace staircases with long-term solutions at H and K streets, stripe and sign bike route along 3rd Avenue, G Street and Christensen Street to make continuous trail connection to Ship Creek Trail and ARRC Rail redevelopment area. (Works with T&C-17)

T&C-16: Fund, Design, and Complete G Street improvements proposed in the 2007 Downtown Core Streets Master Plan. (Works with T&C 16)

T&C-17: Consider the conversion of 5th and 6th Avenues as proposed in the 2007 Downtown Plan as a study element of the Downtown Streets Engineering Study. (Works with T&C-1)

T&C-18: Prioritize infrastructure funding and improvements in the Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts and in support of Opportunity Sites to achieve the goals of this plan as identified on the Revitalization Map included in Chapter 3.



Photo 2021 - Planning Department

Why Bicycling is in Demand

- 9 out of 10 people in Denmark own a bike!
- Danes cycle 1.6 km per day!
- Cycling accounts for 25% of all personal transport within 5 km (approx. 3 miles)!
- During the 1920s and 1930s, the bicycle became a widespread symbol of equality and freedom in Denmark!
- Even in the snow, sleet, or freezing cold, you'll see more people biking to their destinations than you will see taking public transportation!
- [Healthy Tips you can Learn from Scandinavians \(theculturetrip.com\)](https://theculturetrip.com)

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Overview

This chapter compiles all the action items into one place for ease of review and implementation. This chapter should be referred to when agencies and partners are preparing a list of projects for their annual capital improvement programs.

Early Action Items

Several Early Action Items were proposed in the Introduction or Chapter I of this plan. The action items recommended for Early Action came from public input and proposals by the Utility Subcommittee and the Urban Design Subcommittee.

Tracking Plan Success

The 2007 Downtown Plan recommended a coordination process and regular review of the status of the plan. This plan update also recommends a coordination process to be led by a project manager hired into the Mayor's office, or the Planning Department to oversee timely and ongoing funding and completion of the action items. The coordination process would involve several agencies and partners committed to this plan's success.

Implementation Timeframe

Time frames are approximate and dependent on prioritization, funding and the leadership role assumed by either agencies or partners to bring an action item to completion.

Goals, Strategies, Policies and Action Items

The goals, strategies, policies and action items are intended to work together to create new economic development opportunities in Our Downtown. A primary strategy of this plan is to "Focus the Effort." This strategy was a primary recommendation from both the OKCity delegation and SGA as discussed in detail in Chapters 3-7.



Elizabeth Place, Qanchi Place, and Block 96 Flats are all within A Few Good Blocks "focused development area." Photo credit—Planning Department.

Focus the Effort

This plan recommends focusing the effort into Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts and Opportunity Sites (See the Revitalization Map in Chapter 3). The MOA has already achieved some redevelopment success in the A Few Good Blocks Area of 5th-9th Avenues and I to K Streets. This plan advocates that focus continues forward.

Action Item Numbering

- EA** - Early Action Item (Chapter 1)
- RVS** - Revitalization Strategy (Chapter 3)
- LU** - Land Use and Economic Development (Chapter 4)
- QOL** - Quality of Life (Chapter 5)
- UD** - Urban Design (Chapter 6)
- T&C** - Transportation and Circulation (Chapter 7)

Action Item Timeframe

Actions are assigned a timeframe intended to guide funding, agency or department priorities, Assembly and Mayor priorities. This is a 20-year plan with a large focus on completing the Early Action Items first to enable the community to realize some big gains in Downtown.

Action Item Cost

Action Items are only estimated in this plan. An in-depth estimate of projects would need to be completed for each to be funded and completed.

- \$ = <\$100,000
- \$\$ = \$100,000—\$500,000
- \$\$\$ = > \$500,000

Action Item Proposed Implementers

The following proposed implementers will provide a wide range of experience and expertise. Some implementers may just be cheerleaders and advocates for the projects, while others may be the responsible party to provide funding and direct completion of the project.

MOA Agencies or Departments

- ACDA:** Anchorage Community Development Authority
- AHPC:** Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission
- AMATS:** Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions
- APD:** Anchorage Police Department
- GAC:** Geotechnical Advisory Commission
- 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



Photos 2021 - Planning Department

Community Partners

- Visit Anchorage:** Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau
- CHAMBER:** Anchorage Chamber of Commerce
- ADOT&PF:** Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
- AEDC:** Anchorage Economic Development Corporation
- AIDEA:** Alaskan Industrial Development and Export Authority
- AHFC:** Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- Museum:** Anchorage Museum
- ARRC:** Alaska Railroad Corporation
- ADP:** Anchorage Downtown Partnership, Inc.
- DTCC:** Downtown Community Council
- FVCC:** Fairview Community Council
- NVE:** Native Village of Eklutna

Recommended Early Action Items

EA-1: Continue to Invest in the Few Good Blocks Area

Concentrate on an expansion of the pilot project area of the 2016 Smart Growth Few Good Blocks to include (9th to 2nd avenues and G to M Streets). Elizabeth Place, Block 96 Lofts, 7th & L, 6th Avenue Hotel Project, 8th and I MOA properties, proposed 2nd Avenue project all within this area. Use the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan land capacity determination to calculate the existing and up-front utility needs and upgrades. Seek funding to advance a utility survey and upgrade project in the Few Good Blocks through FEMA/HUD/CDBG or other agency funding. This project would further catalyze mixed-use and residential housing projects to help address housing and economic recovery. (Works with RVS-3 and LU-1)

EA-2: Develop a Downtown focused Capital Improvement Program

Work with each utility provider and in the MOA CIB/CIP to prioritize the Few Good Blocks Area for funding and upgrades by establishing a Utility Coordination Subcommittee that meets quarterly or as needed. The MOA would provide coordination of the committee either through the Planning or Project Management & Engineering Departments. (Works with RVS-1)

EA-3: Create the Utility Coordination Subcommittee Liaison within Planning and/or PM&E

Establish the process to engage utility providers and developers at pre-application meetings for proposed projects in the Downtown area early in the exploratory phase of projects to identify missing or needed off-site improvements. (Works with RVS-1)

EA-4: Fund and Complete the Downtown Zoning Districts Update

Seek funding to complete the update to the Downtown Zoning Districts. Use LU-12, LU-18, and LU-20, UD-1, UD-2, UD-6 and QOL-14, along with specific recommendations from the Urban Design Subcommittee process. (See Appendix for the subcommittee's reports and recommendations)

EA-5: Identify and Establish New Sources of Funding

Work to identify and establish new sources of revenue to assist in filling the financial gap (Works with RVS-3 and LU-1). Possible sources of funding could include:

- State financing agencies, such as AIDEA and AHFC.
- Local funding, such as MESA payments by ACDA.
- Local, state, federal, and foundation funding to capitalize a Housing Trust Fund.
- Infrastructure funding, such as MAPS from Oklahoma City.

EA-6: Fairview/East Downtown Residential Property Tax Abatement

Renew both the Fairview/East Downtown tax abatement area for at least another 10 years; it is set to sunset in 2024 (A.O. 2014-71(S)) and the Downtown Housing Tax Incentive and Exemption (A.O. 2019-12 Amended) set to sunset in 2024. Consider extending the length of time for the abatement to 15 years and add mixed-use housing and commercial projects as eligible. When amending these timeframes, reduce the complicated and expensive submittal process incorporated in Chapter 12.35, by modeling the application process outlined in Downtown Housing Tax Incentive and Exemption ordinance. (Works with LU-3)

EA-7: Fund and Complete the Downtown Anchorage Streets Engineering Study

Seek funding for and complete the study with AMATS funding. To be completed by PM&E or the Planning Department with technical support from Public Works, MOA Traffic, AMATS and DOT&PF. The study would include street conversions, street closures, the Bike Boulevard concept, and Coastal Trail connectors. (Overlaps with T&C-1, T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11, and T&C-18)

EA-8: Historic and Cultural District Information Update

Complete the study to determine a recommendation on historic or cultural districts and contributing and non-contributing resources to complete Local Landmark Register historic or cultural district nominations for approval by the Anchorage Assembly. (Works with QOL-20)

Action Item Table

#	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME	COST	PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS
RVS-1	Conduct annual prioritization of the MOA, AWWU and other utility providers, DOT&PF, PM&E Capital Improvement Program processes that aligns projects with the development recommendations in the Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts, and Opportunity Sites proposed Chapter 3 to leverage capital investments in areas where development is occurring. A review of this plan and input from private property developers will be important to this annual CIP process.	Annually		Community Development partnering with PM&E, DTCC, ADP, DOT&PF, and Utility providers
RVS-2	Use the new policies adopted by this plan when the update to the 2020 Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan is undertaken.	Within 3 years		Planning
RVS-3	Create the Downtown New Investments Program that may include a Point of Contact to interact with the financial and lending community to assist potential developers and investors in getting them the information, contacts, resources and relationships, and local business endorsements the project may need to obtain funding and support for new housing and business proposals.	Within 1 year - 2022		Community Development, Planning, MOA Finance, MOA RED
RVS-4	Establish a GAP funding housing trust fund to fill the gap between incentives and costs for new or redeveloped housing. (Works with RVS-3)	2022-2023	\$\$\$	Community Development, Planning, MOA Finance, MOA RED
LU-1	Fund and Establish the Downtown Redevelopment Program within the Community Development Department to oversee and champion the ongoing implementation of this plan. The program will be responsible for coordination of projects and may coordinate with the Downtown New Investments Program POC, to facilitate implementation of this plan.	Ongoing – Start at plan adoption	\$\$	Community Development
LU-2	Fund and complete the 2040 LUP Housing Needs Update (LUP Action 4-16) to determine the percentage of affordable and market-rate housing options possible for Downtown.	2022	\$	Planning
LU-3	Amend Anchorage Municipal Code Chapter 12.35 to incorporate a longer time frame for new commercial development and to create a streamlined application process.	2022		Assessor, Assembly
LU-4	Create land assembly and site control strategies through Municipal Code to support redevelopment in Downtown.	2024	\$	Planning, Community Development, RED
LU-5	Create guidelines for short-term vacation rentals in Downtown.	2024		Assessor, Assembly
LU-6	Establish a Municipal Downtown Capital Improvements Tax Zone with Downtown business and property owner approval to fund specific infrastructure improvements in support of new housing in Downtown. Seek a percentage of the Alcohol Tax proceeds to reinvest in a proposed tax zone area.	Ongoing	\$	DTCC, Assessor, ADP

#	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME	COST	PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS
LU-7	Incentivize the reuse and renovation of existing buildings to reduce land-fill impacts and costs to help retain the historic fabric of Downtown. (Works with LU-11)	2023		HPC, Planning
LU-8	Provide funding assistance and support to help maintain the AEDC Business Resources Program developed to encourage new and growing businesses in Anchorage.	Ongoing	\$	Assembly
LU-9	Encourage and incentivize civic and office employment in Downtown to retain all large employment sectors.	Ongoing		Assessor, Assembly
LU-10	Adopt the Idle Property Tax Abatement Program in support of redevelopment. Consider using the Ohio Idle Property Tax Abatement Program as a model to spur the overturn of excess parking lots.	2024		Assessor, Assembly
LU-11	Consider the following to be included in the Downtown code update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow multifamily residential, and live/workspaces in all zoning districts. Allow the placement of active interior spaces to face the public realm on lower floors of buildings, conversely using the interior side for storage areas. Allow for smaller-scale, light industrial production uses such as cottage crafts, “maker” spaces, studio spaces, work-live spaces, that can fit into and contribute to activities and attractions in the Downtown urban mixed- use context where compatible in distinct subdistricts. To incentivize developments with active ground floor uses. 	2023-2024	\$	Planning
LU-12	Inform the public of the seismic zones in Downtown through the Seismic Hazards Diagram 6.1.	Ongoing		GAC, Community Development
LU-13	Use recommendations from the 2013 Seismic Risk Assessment for development requirements in seismic ground failure hazard zone #5 when land use regulations are being updated. (Works with LU-11)	2022-2023		GAC, Planning, Community Development
QOL-1	Continue to promote Downtown by funding marketing and branding efforts to correspond with the current demographic and economic elements influencing visitor and resident desires seeking a Downtown experience. Consider Design marketing and branding programming consistent with the Downtown vernacular to create world-wide recognizable logos, publications, websites, and other print and online media. Include marketing outreach to increase Downtown’s hotel supply and occupancy rates by marketing Downtown as a winter destination to tour and cruise operators. Provide parking and other incentives to hotel operators.	Ongoing	\$	Visit Anchorage, Chamber, ADP, Parks, Anchorage Museum

#	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME	COST	PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS
Q0L-2	Include honorary naming of parks that may include Alaska Native Tribal places or leaders like Peratrovich Park.	Ongoing	\$	Parks, Anchorage Museum
Q0L-3	Market Downtown's exceptional arts and cultural facilities including the Anchorage Museum, Anchorage SEED Lab, Performing Arts Center, and Alaska Public Lands Information Center in addition to the local art galleries and boutiques.	Ongoing	\$	Visit Anchorage, Chamber, ADP, Parks, Anchorage Museum, Federal Agencies, and the PAC
Q0L-4	Develop signage distinct from the rest of Anchorage, to identify and promote the Downtown cultural districts including the Mushing District on 4 th Avenue, Anchorage Museum Design District, and the proposed 2 nd to 4 th Avenues historic district identified in the <i>Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan</i> and in this plan, may be like what is present in the G Street Arts District.	Ongoing	\$	HPC, Museum, ADP, Visit Anchorage, Fur Rony, DTCC
Q0L-5	Determine buildings, sites, or other locations to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to in case of an emergency. Determine the locations where signage and audible warning systems can be installed to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to these locations. This action may be a part of the wayfinding project. Distribute online and through social media the information developed by the Wayfinding Program.	2023	\$	MOA EOC, Community Development, Planning
Q0L-6	Fund, design and install a new signage and wayfinding system throughout Downtown consistent with the Downtown vernacular to replace existing certain interpretive panels and signs. Include information and directions on where to shelter in place should an earthquake or other type of emergency occur. This may include an update to the historic walking tour map with information from the 2010 historic property survey and indigenous place name information from Shem Pete's Alaska. The Walk may also be included in the Alaska App.	2023-2024	\$\$	DTCC, ADP, AEDC, Parks, Visit Anchorage
Q0L-7	Continue to support ADP efforts for a Clean, Safe, Vibrant Downtown including funding of the ADP Business Improvement District.	Ongoing		ADP
Q0L-8	Fund and maintain MOA Community Service Patrols in Downtown.	Ongoing		APD
Q0L-9	Maintain a safe and clean environment by installing regularly-spaced trash and recycling bins.	Ongoing		ADP
Q0L-10	Fund year-round street cleaning.	Ongoing		MOA M&O
Q0L-11	Fund, determine locations, install and maintain self-cleaning public restrooms.	2023	\$	ADP, Parks
Q0L-12	Continue implementation of a comprehensive street lighting upgrade program to increase visibility and safety on all streets.	Ongoing		PM&E

#	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME	COST	PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS
QOL-13	Employ certain Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals in public spaces related to landscaping placement, access and maintaining line of sight to ensure places are used as they were intended.	Ongoing		Planning, APD
QOL-14	Fund and provide support to planning and promoting Winter City themed events, shoulder season events, summer concerts, and parades.	Ongoing		ADP, Parks
QOL-15	Plan and fund cultural and recreational activities for and by youth.	Ongoing		ADP, Parks
QOL-16	Fund and implement the Town Square Park Master Plan.	Ongoing	\$\$	Assembly, Parks
QOL-17	Promote a weekend market Downtown.	Ongoing		ADP, Parks
QOL-18	Adopt in the permitting processes the long-term use of low-traffic volume streets to provide spaces for activities, dining and other special events as a normal event planning function supported by this plan. (Works with LU-12)	2022-2023		Community Development, Traffic, ADP
QOL-19	Promote the 13 National Register of Historic Places listed buildings through social media, tours, and the interpretive project proposed in QOL-6.	Ongoing	\$	HPC
QOL-20	Promote the use of the Anchorage Local Landmark Register in websites, interpretive programs, social media and other outreach to encourage nominations of historic and cultural resources to the Anchorage Local Landmark Register maintained by the MOA.	Ongoing	\$	HPC
QOL-21	Review the action items in the 4NHPP to prioritize grant applications and project completions in Downtown.	Ongoing		HPC
UD-1	Update the bonus point system for the Downtown Zoning Districts using the recommendations from this planning process brought forward by the Urban Design and Utilities Subcommittees formed for the Downtown Plan update. (Works with LU-12)	2022-2023		Planning
UD-2	Consider a Downtown-specific sign code or sign code section in Chapter 11: DOWNTOWN using the recommendations and best practices from other cities as recommended by the Urban Design Subcommittee. (Works with LU-12)	2022-2023		Planning
UD-3	Fund and complete a utility capacity study for Downtown as recommended by the Utilities Subcommittee, or GAP analysis. Include all utility providers and the MOA in this capacity study. Determine upgrades to facilities to support new technologies, growing demand for higher speed internet, and new housing and businesses. Publish the results of the utility capacity study and any upgrade plans or recommendations.	2023-2024	\$	Utility Providers, Planning, Community Development
UD-4	Fund and complete a land capacity study collaboratively with the utilities study. Determine in the study the carrying capacity of available vacant or under-developed lands. Consider A Few Good Blocks 2021 as the pilot project area.	2022-2023	\$	Planning, Community Development

#	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME	COST	PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS
UD-5	Fund, construct and maintain ice-free sidewalks in areas of high pedestrian use. Determine the best agency or group to maintain the ice-free sidewalk system and provide the resources to that agency or group through a BID or other funding method.	Ongoing	\$\$	DT property owners, ADP
UD-6	Incorporate the recommended street typologies from this chapter into any updates to the Anchorage Bowl Street Typologies study and map. (Works with AMATS Street Typology Study to kick-off in 2023)	2023-2024		AMATS, Planning
T&C-1	Fund and complete the Downtown Streets Engineering Study Fund, complete, and implement the recommendations of the engineering study prioritizing projects that can occur quickly without too much funding. Include the following action items in the scope of the engineering study: (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18).	2022-2025	\$\$	AMATS, Planning, Traffic, DOT&PF
T&C-2	Pedestrian-Friendly Streets Project - 2007 (T-12): Adjust the traffic signal timing to reduce average speeds to between 20 and 25 MPH within Downtown A to L streets and 9th to 3rd avenues. Adjust speed limit on 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th, and 9th avenues to 20 MPH, 5th and 6th, to 25 MPH. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)	2022-2023	\$	AMATS, Planning, Traffic, DOT&PF
T&C-3	Historic 3rd Avenue Bikeway Pilot Project - Relocate large truck traffic to alternate routes and remove parking on the south side of 3rd Avenue between D Street and Christensen Drive, and create additional bicycle parking space for restaurants on 3rd Avenue. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)	2022-2023	\$	AMATS, Planning, Traffic, DOT&PF
T&C-4	Coastal Trail Connector to Historic 3rd Avenue Pilot Project - Stripe and sign bike lanes along 3rd Avenue from L Street to D Street and up G Street to 9th Avenue. Take parking off the south and west sides of the streets for the bike-only lanes. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)	2022-2023	\$	AMATS, Planning, Traffic
T&C-5	Maintain Low-Income Worker Relief Program - Issue reduced-rate parking garage passes and/or reduced-rate or free transit passes to anyone working in Downtown who earns \$20 or \$25 per hour or less.	Ongoing	\$	TRANSIT, ACDA
T&C-6	Fund a coordinated parking program within ACDA to provide real-time parking information in coordination with an updated parking study included as T&C-7.	2023 and Ongoing	\$	ACDA
T&C-7	Fund and publish a parking study.	2024	\$	ACDA
T&C-8	Fund and maintain striped bicycle lanes, install Share the Road signage on all proposed bicycle routes to encourage all-season bicycle commuting to and throughout Downtown from the trail system and on connected streets including A, C and L Streets, 5th, 6th, and 3rd Avenues. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, T&C-11 and T&C-18)	2024 and Ongoing	\$\$	PM&E, MOA M&O, DOT&PF, Traffic

#	ACTION ITEM	TIME FRAME	COST	PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS
T&C-9	Create a public outreach program for commuters from the MatSu Valley, Girdwood, South Anchorage, and Eagle River to encourage use of ride or van share to reduce single occupant vehicles in Downtown.	Ongoing	\$	TRANSIT
T&C-10	Prioritize and fund secured bicycle parking throughout Downtown Secured bicycle parking sites should be considered as an element of the Downtown Streets Engineering Study and should be included in several parking garages or with at-grade parking lots around town. (Works with T&C-2, T&C-3, T&C-4, T&C-7, T&C-9, and T&C-18)	Ongoing	\$	ACDA, Private parking lots owners and managers
T&C-11	Prioritize and fund snow plowing of all bicycle lanes and trails leading into and out of Downtown Priority snow plowing of bicycle lanes increases bicycle commuting year-round and supports all income sectors.	Ongoing	\$	MOA M&O
T&C-12	Consider and fund 15-minute transit headways to encourage transit ridership.	Ongoing	\$\$	TRANSIT
T&C-13	Plan and fund summertime trolley services from specific locations in and around Downtown, including hotels and motels, hostels, and Airbnbs; 4th Avenue Mushing District; Ship Creek area; Anchorage Museum; G Street Arts District; and Delaney Park Strip. Consider off setting the costs with a small ride fee.	Ongoing Seasonal	\$	TRANSIT, Visit Anchorage, Private Operator, ACDA
T&C-14	Fund and Update the PM&E Design Criteria Manual (DCM) consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Core Streets Master Plan to provide clear direction on the design of streets as they are improved or rights-of-ways are redeveloped.	2025	\$	Assembly, PM&E
T&C-15	Fund, Design, and Complete Historic 3rd Avenue Reconstruction Lighting upgrade, wider sidewalks, remove parking both sides from D to L streets, complete Core Streets pedestrian upgrades at F and G streets. Replace staircases with long-term solutions at H and K streets, stripe and sign bike route along 3rd Avenue, G Street and Christensen Street to make continuous trail connection to Ship Creek Trail and ARRC Rail redevelopment area. (Works with T&C-17)	2023-2025	\$\$	AMATS, PM&E
T&C-16	Fund, Design, and Complete G Street improvements proposed in the 2007 Downtown Core Streets Master Plan. (Works with T&C 16)	2023-2025	\$\$	AMATS, PM&E
T&C-17	Consider the conversion of 5th and 6th Avenues as proposed in the 2007 Downtown Plan as a study element of the Downtown Streets Engineering Study. (Works with T&C-1)	2022-2023	\$	AMATS, Planning, Traffic, DOT&PF
T&C-18	Prioritize infrastructure funding and improvements in the Focused Development Areas, Cultural Districts and in support of Opportunity Sites to achieve the goals of this plan as identified on the Revitalization Map included in Chapter 3.	Ongoing	\$	AMATS, Planning, Traffic, DOT&PF

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The following references include information on a wide range of topics discussed in the plan. All were provided in a hyperlink in the body of the plan but are also included here for ease of information.

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OUR DOWNTOWN
The Heart of Anchorage

A Project to Implement the Downtown Comprehensive Plan