

# GOVERNMENT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

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February 12, 2013



# Government Hill Neighborhood Plan

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Municipality of Anchorage  
Community Development Department  
Planning Division



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **What is the GHNP?**

The Government Hill Neighborhood Plan (GHNP) will be the first neighborhood plan to be officially adopted by the Anchorage Assembly. As such, it will serve as an element of Anchorage 2020 - Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, guided by the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, as defined in section 21.05.030 of the Anchorage Municipal Code. The plan will give specificity to the goals, objectives, policies, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. The overarching goal of this neighborhood plan is to promote the orderly growth, improvement, and future development of the Government Hill neighborhood.

## **What is the purpose of the GHNP?**

The GHNP is a policy document and does not modify Title 21, as it relates to land use and development and therefore does not affect how private property owners may use their land. The Design Guidelines in the GHNP reflect neighborhood goals such as complete streets, building placement, and winter city design. As such, they suggest community preferred design within the neighborhood but are not regulatory. The GHNP provides guidance for future improvements made by public entities and private developers. This includes development that may be initiated by the MOA, as well as other public entities such as the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA). The information and guidance in the GHNP can be used to influence and inform the planning and design of future development projects—including public infrastructure projects such as transportation, trails, and parks. This is to ensure the protection of cultural and historic neighborhood character and resident quality of life. The plan will also serve as a guide for attracting private-sector investment. The plan is specific to its

defined planning area of the Government Hill neighborhood. It is to be used in conjunction with the vision, goals, and objectives of other planning documents, including the Historic Preservation Plan for Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods.

The plan serves as a framework to address the impacts of the design, construction, and operation of the Knik Arm Crossing project (KAC) on the Government Hill neighborhood. The KAC project will introduce visual, environmental, and audio (noise) impacts with significantly increased traffic volumes. These impacts will degrade the quality of life, safety, and the day-to-day historic character and function of these neighborhoods. Initial estimated impacts of the KAC project and resulting mitigation for the Government Hill area by the design, construction, and operation of the KAC were identified in the Knik Arm Crossing Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. However, through the development of the Historic Preservation Plan for Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods (HPP) and the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan, additional mitigation requirements have been identified.

The Federal Highway Administration and the State of Alaska through KABATA are required to comply with several federal, state, and local regulations to complete the KAC project. These include:

- At the federal level: the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act-Section 106, and Declaration of Purpose and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (as amended);

- At the state level: AS 35.30.20 Compliance with Municipal Ordinances;
- At the municipal level: AM 641-2008 (MOA Policy on Context Sensitive Design Solutions, and Project Cooperation Agreement )(MOA/DOT Procedures for Cooperation on ADOT&PF Transportation Projects).

**How will the GHNP be used?**

The Plan will be used in several ways: to support historic preservation, assist in identifying Municipality-required mitigation elements for the KAC and large infrastructure projects, outreach and educational tools, and identify funding and partnerships to assist in future historic preservation projects and neighborhood improvement programs. There are certain things that the approval and adoption of the Plan will and will not do. Those are described as follows:

**Adoption of the Plan will not:**

1. Amend the regulatory portions of Title 21.
2. Establish or nominate historic or overlay districts within the planning areas.
3. Create design guidelines for existing or future private or public development.
4. Create additional municipal departments or agencies.

5. Create additional design and project reviews in the Community Development Department or other municipal departments, or by other partner agencies that typically provide project review and comment.

**Adoption of the Plan will:**

1. Provide proposed implementation items and conceptual planning elements to be pursued subsequent to Assembly approval, once advocates are identified for each implementation item.
2. Define the relationship between the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and what it means to be a part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.
3. Define the relationship to Title 21, specifically ANY conflict between the Plan and Title 21. Title 21 will have precedence until such time as the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Assembly amends Title 21 to adopt certain implementation actions outlined in the Plan.
4. Only apply when the authority is approved in the municipal code for historic or overlay districts, architectural design standards associated with those districts.
5. Guide discretionary land use decisions such as rezones, conditional uses, and subdivisions.
6. Support the efforts of the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission and Alaska State Historic Preservation Office to preserve and protect

important historic resources found on Government Hill. This includes properties, buildings, and stories that the Municipality, community, and private property owners may choose to preserve and protect.

7. Address design, construction, and operation impacts from the Knik Arm Crossing project.
8. Provide design concepts and scenarios that, in the event that the KAC project moves forward, will mitigate impacts of that project, and in the event that it does not move forward, will include priorities for the future development and enhancement of the neighborhood in the context of JBER, the Railroad, and the Port of Anchorage.
9. May be the foundation for a new agreement between the Municipality of Anchorage, Federal Highway Administration, and KABATA as defined in the current KAC Programmatic Agreement (12/2008) and KAC Memorandum of Understanding (1/2010).

#### **How will the Scenarios in the GHNP be used?**

The three (3) scenarios depicting how redesign of the commercial core in Government Hill could occur (Chapter 5) are meant to provide options for the Government Hill neighborhood as they move forward with development in the neighborhood. These scenarios provide a visionary baseline from which to plan and attract private investment. In the event that the KAC project moves forward, these scenarios will help guide the Context Sensitive Design process by illustrating the community's vision for development on top of and adjacent to the proposed cut-and-cover. The scenarios will also help to ad-

dress where additional street reconfigurations would need to be designed and implemented to ensure improved circulation in the neighborhood. While these scenarios provide visual options for redevelopment of the commercial core, they are not specific development site plans slated for construction.

Following adoption, it is anticipated that a preferred scenario will be identified by the neighborhood; this scenario would be formally adopted through an amendment to the GHNP. This preferred scenario will consider changes that will require significant public and private investment; the scenario selected should include phasing options that allow advancement as funding is identified.

Finally, the plan will also include a scenario that reflects the KAC project not moving forward. This scenario will be more modest and will include limited parcel and street reconfigurations, though it still also represents the desired future vision of the neighborhood.

#### **How will the Design Principles in the GHNP be used?**

The design principles and guidelines provided in chapter 4. Planning Systems – Key Recommendations provide basic design guidelines for public and private sector investment in the neighborhood, with a focus on the Neighborhood Center. Many of the images in this section were identified by the workshop participants as representing preferred design for the area. As such, these guidelines are not regulatory but may be used by the Planning Division to make recommendations on development projects proposed in the Government Hill neighborhood. For example, in a platting case that is combining two lots into one lot, the Planning Division may reference the Pedestrian Systems guidelines (p. 82) to

recommend that the applicant connect an internal trail to public walkways at the perimeter of the property with any new proposed development. Some of these guidelines may be used in the creation of the overlay district, which will be the main guiding regulatory document for Government Hill's Neighborhood Center. The guidelines are categorized as "Priority" and "Advisory." "Priority" is considered essential while "Advisory" is optional in nature, though desired by the community. In all cases, the appropriateness of the specific design recommendation must be considered against a specific site or development proposal.

# INTRODUCTION

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

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

## A. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

### 1. Government Hill Boundaries

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

### 2. Range of Topics Addressed

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



May 2012 workshop participants



May 2012 workshop participants



Workshop visioning activity



Kids corner



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

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

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

### 3. Purpose of the Plan

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

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

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

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

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

## B. THE PLANNING PROCESS

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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# 1. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

## A. EXISTING CONDITIONS

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Government Hill is the oldest neighborhood in Anchorage. In its earliest days, Government Hill was a home base for people moving to Alaska to work for the Alaska Railroad. Many of these newcomers lived in Quonset huts, which are unique half moon shaped structures, some of which still exist in the neighborhood today. The name “Government Hill” is derived from the fact that a number of Panama Canal workers moved up to Alaska to work on the railroad. The plateau above the railroad yards is said to have reminded these workers of a similar site called Government Hill in the Canal Zone. They nicknamed the plateau “Government Hill” and it stuck.

As Anchorage has grown and development has encroached upon the neighborhood, Government Hill has remained true to its origins and retained its unique heritage as Anchorage’s oldest neighborhood. Now flanked by the Port of Anchorage and Joint Base Elmendorf -Richardson (JBER), it stands as a key link to the heritage of Anchorage’s earliest beginnings. Government Hill has a spirit of tenacity, yet also is a place of change. In just under 100 years, it has accommodated changing populations, major environmental events, and numerous war efforts; and it has experienced different mixes of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The neighborhood is framed with dramatic views, open space, trails, easy access to downtown, neighborhood commercial, and waterways. These resources are important to the quality of life for local residents and are key to the economic vitality of the community.

### Residential Areas

The existing residential areas are located on the top of

Government Hill, above the industrial properties of the port and railroad. Housing consists of single-family and low-rise multifamily buildings. The majority of the single-family buildings are set within a traditional street grid. Several multifamily enclaves differ from this development pattern. They are accessed off of primary streets via a loop road.

### Commercial Center

The commercial center, historically significant as the first strip mall in Anchorage, is located between two residential areas at the entrance to JBER. The center contains a handful of one-story buildings that face the street separated by parking that fronts the buildings. This area is laid out in a typical 1950s era strip mall style.

### Industrial Areas

Three distinct areas make up the majority of the industrial context in the neighborhood. These are the Alaska Railroad, Port of Anchorage, and a corridor of industrial uses along upper Ship Creek. The railroad yards form the southern edge of the district while the port forms the western edge.

### Historic Resources

Many properties in Government Hill are historically significant. These include three (3) potential historic districts in the residential areas, several individual properties, and some structures in the rail yard area. These properties were all found to be eligible to be nominated to the National Historic Register in addition to three properties already on the Register.

# HISTORIC CONTEXT

Anchorage, Alaska has a unique history. It is a dynamic place, shifting to accommodate growth and change while hosting a collection of buildings, sites, and structures that convey its past. These survive amongst more recent development. This coexistence of historical vernacular with more modern influences is a unique feature of the Government Hill neighborhood.

Historic resources tell a story of the community, the city and the history and development of Alaska. They are important to the quality of life for local residents where buildings and places convey past associations and family histories. A more detailed description of the history of Government Hill can be found in the Historic Preservation Plan for Anchorage's Four Original Neighborhoods.

## A Government Hill Timeline

<p><b>1915</b> AEC cottages built in far western Government Hill</p>	<p><b>1935</b> Surveys established a grid pattern of blocks, lots, and streets that followed the location of existing buildings and structures, and the topography of Government Hill</p>	<p><b>1940s</b> ARR and ARC duplexes and the Brown's Point cottages built in the far west portion of Government Hill</p>	<p><b>WWII</b> ARR duplexes and houses built to house wartime employees</p>	<p><b>Post WWII</b> ARR employee owner-built housing and temporary Quonset and Loxtave buildings constructed in the east and west central portions of Government Hill</p>	<p><b>1948-1952</b> Post-war construction boom and Railroad Rehabilitation program, 150 prefabricated houses and a dozen houses built</p>
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First residence on Government Hill, 1915



AEC cottages, 1916



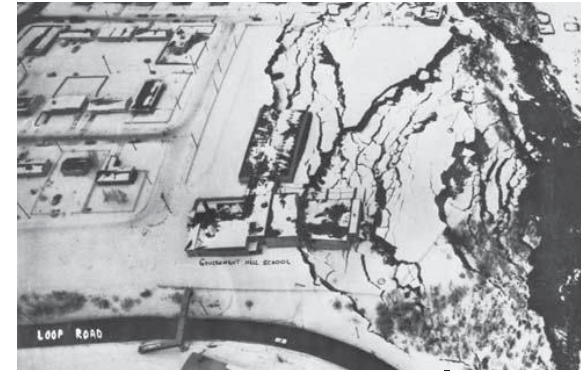
AEC railroad terminal yards, Government Hill in background, 1920



Aerial view, 1950



Quonset huts, 1950s



Earthquake damage, 1964

1951  
Hollywood Shopping Center, Anchorage's first "strip mall" built

1953  
U.S. Air Force began construction of the ACS building for telephone switching and a 200-foot high antenna tower

1956  
Government Hill Elementary School built

1958-1963  
Urban Renewal housing built in the eastern portion of Government Hill, approximately 65 single-story, ranch-style homes and duplexes were built on lots cleared of Quonset huts

1962, 1965  
Sourdough Motel built

1964  
Earthquake destroyed Government Hill Elementary School



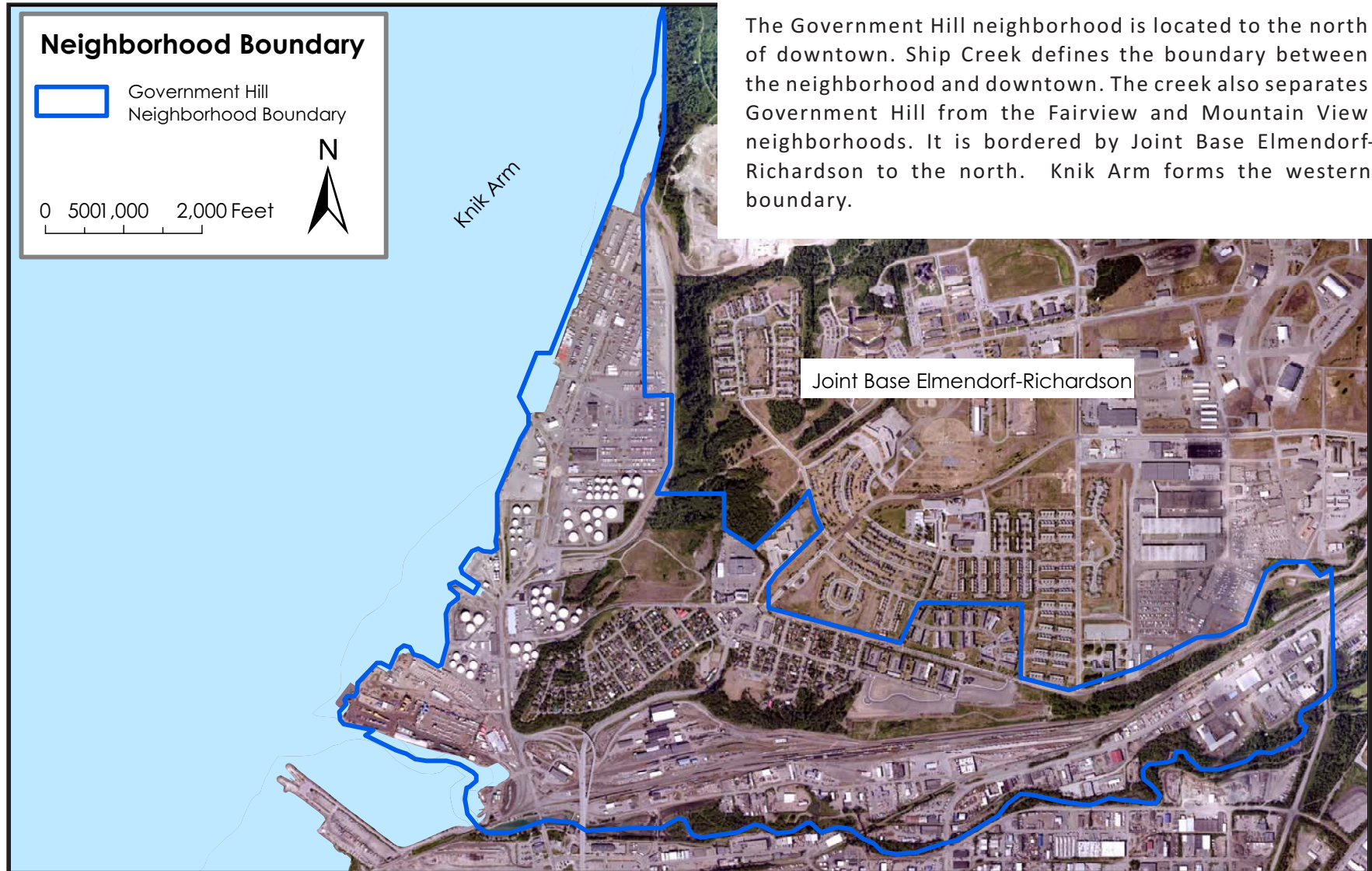
Hollywood Shopping Center, 1950s



Aerial view, 1960



# LOCATION & STUDY AREA



# DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMICS

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The following is an overview of the demographic and economic characteristics of the Government Hill neighborhood (in 2012). This section discusses regional and local trends and projections in demographics, employment, and retail sales and spending.

To begin, we will review goals from the Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020) adopted in 2001, which establishes the overarching framework for this plan.

Anchorage 2020 - Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan:

- Fewer young adults and young family households but more empty-nesters and seniors signal a shift in new housing demand from single-family homes toward multi-family dwellings.
- Accessory housing units are allowed in certain residential zones.
- New residential development provides a variety of lot sizes and housing types for a range of households and age groups.
- Mixed-density residential should maintain and improve functional and aesthetic characteristics of surrounding development.

- Medium- and high-density residential development, as well as commercial mixed use, is encouraged in aging and underutilized areas within and adjacent to Major Employment Centers.
- Encourage the maintenance and upkeep of existing housing in order to extend its useful life and neighborhood stability.
- Design attractive affordable housing that is suited to its environs.
- Encourage more affordable housing, including home ownership opportunities for low-income residents.

## Area Demographic Change and Housing

Basic change in population and housing in Census tract 5 is shown in the table below:

Population and Housing	2000	2010	Change
Population	1,948	1,988	40
Households	937	948	11
Family Households	452	418	(34)
Non-Family Households	485	530	45
Average Household Size	2.07	2.08	0.01
Housing Units	981	999	18
Owner Occupied Units	159	150	(9)
Renter Occupied Units	778	798	20
Vacant Units	44	51	7
Median Age	33.3	32.3	(1)

Area population grew by 40 persons and households grew by 11. An important aspect of the growth that has taken place is the change by age group. This is illustrated in the table below.

Population by Age	2000	2010	Change
Age 0 - 4	150	169	19
Age 5 - 9	150	111	(39)
Age 10 - 14	111	98	(13)
Age 15 - 19	87	120	33
Age 20 - 24	163	196	33
Age 25 - 34	370	378	8
Age 35 - 44	330	222	(108)
Age 45 - 54	240	293	53
Age 55 - 64	151	218	67
Age 65 - 74	122	99	(23)
Age 75 - 84	67	61	(6)
Age 85+	7	23	16

The largest changes by age group are in the loss of persons between 35 and 44 years of age and the increase in persons between 45 and 64. To understand what this might mean, it is useful to look at households by age and housing type.

<b>2000 Housing Tenure by Age</b>	<b>Owned</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Rented</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 35	10	6.3%	312	40.1%	322	34.4%
35 to 44	32	20.1%	183	23.5%	215	22.9%
45 to 64	71	44.7%	187	24.0%	258	27.5%
Over 65	46	28.9%	96	12.3%	142	15.2%
Totals	159		778		937	

<b>2010 Housing Tenure by Age</b>	<b>Owned</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Rented</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 35	12	8.0%	315	39.5%	327	34.5%
35 to 44	17	11.3%	116	14.5%	133	14.0%
45 to 64	69	46.0%	284	35.6%	353	37.2%
Over 65	52	34.7%	83	10.4%	135	14.2%
Totals	150		798		948	

<b>Change in Housing Tenure by Age</b>	<b>Owned</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Rented</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 35	2	1.7%	3	-0.6%	5	0.1%
35 to 44	(15)	-8.8%	(67)	-9.0%	(82)	-8.9%
45 to 64	(2)	1.3%	97	11.6%	95	9.7%
Over 65	6	5.7%	(13)	-1.9%	(7)	-0.9%
Totals	(9)		20		11	

When change over time is examined, the loss in 35-to-44-year-old households has been offset by the gain in 45-to-64-year-old households, indicating that the cohort that was between 35 and 44 in year 2000 may be aging in place, while that cohort is not being replaced by the younger cohort under 35. The percentage of under-35 households and over-65 households has remained relatively unchanged. Ownership has declined slightly while rentals have increased.

Another factor that meshes with this is the high rental rate versus ownership rate, which is the inverse of national averages. Household age and household size are together determinants of ownership. Where many households are small and also young, the trend is toward rental.

The presence of the air force base may contribute to these demographic trends, as there are a number of personnel who live off the base and are more likely to be young and single. The demographics of housing by household size are shown in the following tables. The major finding from these tables is that single person households are increasing, while all other household sizes other than four-person and seven-person or more are decreasing.

<b>2000 Units by Household Size</b>	<b>Owned</b>	<b>Rented</b>	<b>Totals</b>
1-person household	43	354	397
2-person household	63	234	297
3-person household	26	93	119
4-person household	15	55	70
5-person household	3	25	28
6-person household	6	11	17
7-or-more-persons	3	6	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>937</b>

<b>2010 Units by Household Size</b>	<b>Owned</b>	<b>Rented</b>	<b>Totals</b>
1-person household	39	379	418
2-person household	60	228	288
3-person household	28	85	113
4-person household	11	59	70
5-person household	4	22	26
6-person household	5	12	17
7-or-more-persons	3	13	16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>948</b>

During the same time period, ESRI Business Information Services reports that area median household income rose from \$30,875 to \$51,458 an annual increase of approximately 7.6 percent annually. Taken together with the foregoing, this

may indicate that there is a population of younger cohorts that rises in income and moves as they age to be replaced by a new group of younger cohorts, while the older population is aging in place. If true, there will be a future market for better senior housing options and housing that appeals to the millennial cohort, and that there may be demand for more services such as restaurants and entertainment venues that appeal to younger people.

## The Coming Wave

While the senior population will continue to grow as the current group in the 45 to 64 year old ages in place, the next wave of change in the future is the cohort born since the 1980s, often called the Millennial generation and also recognized as Generation Y. Currently, household size is declining, but as the Millennials age it is reasonable to expect household size to increase somewhat as they form families. According to recent research quoted in the Wall Street Journal regarding their preferences:

Kiplinger issued a report regarding living preferences of the Millennials:

The homes they buy will often be smaller, and on smaller lots, than typical. And no long commutes for them. Look for Millennials to seek close-in suburbs with a walkable urban center offering restaurants, shops and other gathering places. Some are even passing up car ownership altogether.

### Housing Need for Seniors

All households over retirement age may have a need for smaller units. If the units are not available, the choice is to age in place

with increasing difficulty or move to assisted living. Seniors will have needs for accessible units, safety, and grocery shopping in proximity to their homes. Currently, Government Hill does not offer a wide range of units that would allow seniors to age in place without needing to drive a car.

Creating housing for this group, almost all of who have accumulated equity that could allow such a transition, requires smaller, quality units in a neighborhood matrix of services that are walkable. In 2010, the population over 65 was 18.6 percent of the total population but almost 33 percent of households. Creating choices for these senior households which are attractive, safe, and walkable would free up their existing units and lessen the need for the creation of more large-lot standard housing, thus improving the quality of life for the seniors and alleviating development pressure on land in the Urban Growth Boundary.

The census data makes a demographic case for smaller lot and unit housing at higher density than the existing housing stock would seem to indicate. Building complete neighborhoods with a variety of housing types makes a minimum net density of 8 dwelling units an acre for single-family detached units very achievable. Townhouse units can be created at 11 units per acre to over 20 units per acre and still be self-parking. Multifamily buildings can range in density up to 35 units an acre without parking decks. By using land efficiently, with a variety of product types for the differing incomes and preferences of households, it may be possible to meet the need for workforce housing without subsidy at a quality that maintains neighborhood standards.

## Future Projections

Prior to the release of the new 2010 Census redistricting population data, providers of estimates and projections for Anchorage had to make assumptions based upon past trends. Despite the uncertainty, the projections presented in the most recent comprehensive plan for the city yielded estimates that were fairly close to the 2010 Census.

Based upon these projections, between 2010 and 2019 there should be an increase of approximately 11,200 households. The importance of this is that it confirms there will be a market for housing in the city. How many of these households the city wishes to accommodate within the Government Hill neighborhood is a policy question regarding capacity, density, and seismic concerns, but it is useful to understand the market will support future development if desired.

Future housing development needs to respond to the following needs:

- Rentals for new households and workforce households;
- Small lot, small-square-footage housing of high quality for first-time buyers and downsizing seniors;
- Multifamily units for seniors no longer able to take care of a house;
- Move-up housing at medium density for growing families to recapture 45-to-64-year-old households;
- Higher-density townhouses for empty-nester couples, double-income/no-children couples, and single women who have achieved financial stability; and
- Housing that is accessible to those with disabilities

It is possible to fulfill some of these goals in the study area. For a compact neighborhood design, this mix could include retail and service space, employment space, and institutional space such as a small post office, a church, a small healthcare clinic or medical offices, etc. In programming all of these uses together, the amount of retail should be governed by the local capacity to support it with some amount of drive-by business—the goal would be to offer enough services to make everyday life simpler but not to create a destination that is financially unrealistic. A jobs housing balance would suggest creating space so that those who live in the area could walk to work.

Aging in place is a trend driven by cost in part and by the desire of seniors, particularly baby boomers, to remain independent. Retiring boomers are looking for places with recreational opportunities and with a low cost of living and services within walking distance so that the inability to drive does not necessitate moving to some sort of assisted living.

Taken together with the Millennials' desire to walk and bike rather than drive, this offers a market opportunity for creating housing and amenities that appeal to the two largest demographic market segments in the country, and an opportunity to capture both segments. The current demographics indicate a housing market that was built at a time when the majority of households had children and were three persons or more. Now it is the opposite; over 70 percent of households are two persons or fewer, and the local housing market lacks the choices that would address this change.

## Employment Overview

Employment in Anchorage has suffered from the national downturn as have most cities. The trends in employment for the city are shown in the table below.

<b>Employment in the Government Hill Area</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change 03 to 09</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0	1	1
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	9	9
Utilities	22	0	71	49
Construction	1	1	9	8
Manufacturing	21	38	7	-14
Wholesale Trade	39	59	111	72
Retail Trade	18	23	354	336
Transportation and Warehousing	1466	1557	941	-525
Information	237	235	48	-189
Finance and Insurance	14	11	31	17
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0	1	13	13
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	35	32	77	42
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	7	7
Administration, Waste Management, Remediation	79	114	48	-31
Educational Services	18	20	10	-8
Health Care and Social Assistance	44	41	157	113
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0	0	11	11
Accommodation and Food Services	5	10	54	49
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	28	31	26	-2
Public Administration	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2173</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>-42</b>

Source: Local Employment Dynamics, US Census

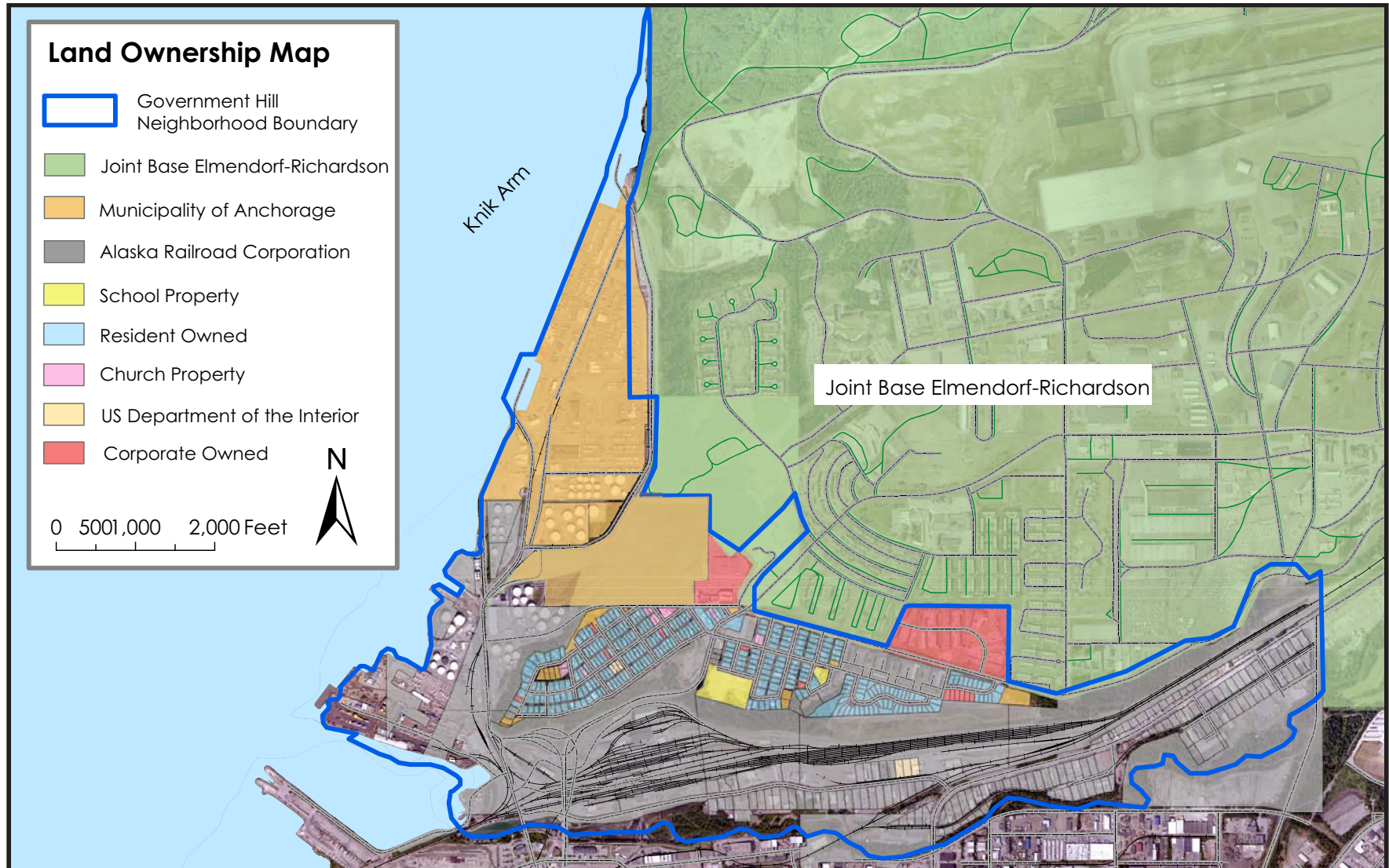
While this area has not entirely recovered from the downturn, it is on the way back up. The loss in employment is in four sectors: Transportation and Warehousing, Information, Manufacturing, and Administration.

In planning new nodes for residential, employment and retail service uses, an examination of where people live in relation to where they are employed can reveal wider area trends in employment and enable an evaluation of whether new employment space within the area is likely to attract employees and businesses. To understand this, consider data from the US Census Local Employment Dynamics on the inflow and outflow of the labor force locally. This is shown in the following table:

Labor Force and Work Location	2009
Employed in the Selection Area	1,985
Employed Persons Living in the Selection Area	1,529
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	58
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	1,471

This analysis shows that of the jobs in the area, only 58 people who live in the area are employed within the area. As the planning proceeds, this issue will be explored more thoroughly by looking at the sectors of the economy and discovering whether some of the uses that do employ neighborhood residents could find an advantage in locating where their employees live.

# LAND OWNERSHIP



The majority of land on Government Hill is owned by the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the Port of Anchorage. Home ownership is high among the residents of Government Hill, with the majority of Government Hill residents owning their homes outright. Alascom and Richardson Vista LTD Partnership are the major corporate property owners. Other property owners in the neighborhood include various church groups, school groups, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

# LAND USE

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Existing land use within the Government Hill neighborhood is defined by three primary uses: Industrial, Transportation, and Residential. Several pockets of commercial are also located within this area.

Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, also identifies these areas as having potential for infill or redevelopment opportunities. It sets forth a goal of increasing density in established areas.

Where Anchorage 2020 policies are highlighted in this document, the GHNP reinforces these policies through specific plan goals, visioning documents, and implementation strategies.

## *Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan*

### *Future Land Use:*

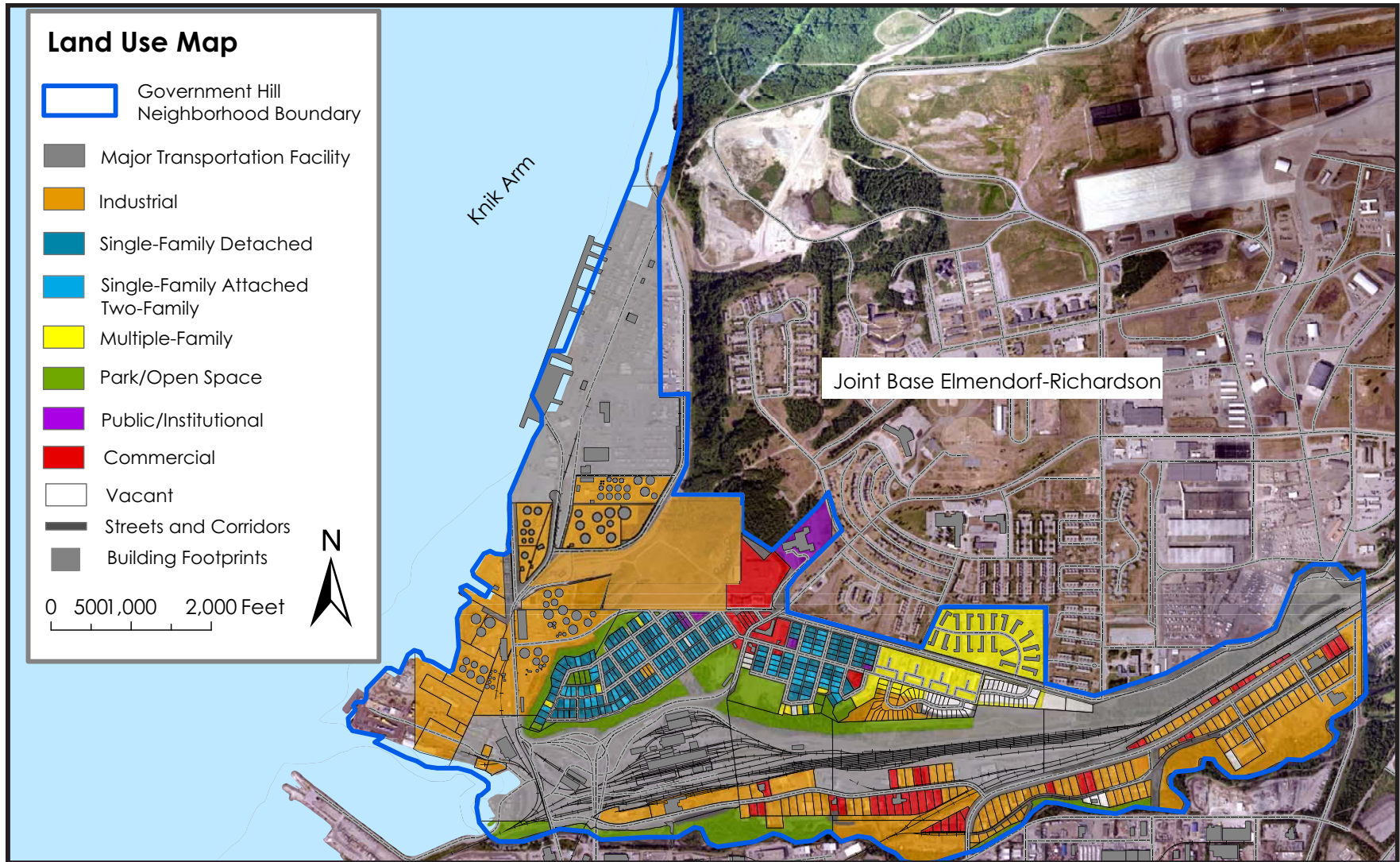
*Mixed - Use development is encouraged within Neighborhood Centers.*

*Neighborhood Commercial Centers: This land use concept comprises neighborhood-level commercial/retail facilities that serve smaller clusters of residential neighborhoods. They include:*

- *Housing and compatible non-residential use*
- *Public and open space*
- *Multimodal access*
- *Small-scale attractive, non-obtrusive, and convenient shopping and service for residents*
- *Building scale and appearance should be compatible with adjacent residential development and highly responsive to and integrated with nearby residential areas and traffic patterns*
- *Northern city design concepts shall guide the design of all public projects, including parks and roads*

*Additional Senior Centers are desired.*

# EXISTING LAND USE MAP



The most significant change in the Government Hill neighborhood will be the introduction of a Commercial/Mixed-Use Center land use designation in the heart of Government Hill. This land use designation will facilitate zoning changes to allow such things as more compact development, mixed-use buildings, and reduced parking requirements.

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## B. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### Zoning - Title 21 Land Use Regulations

Development in the Government Hill neighborhood is governed by the Title 21 Land Use Regulations. The following section outlines the intent for the zoning districts that are located within the Government Hill neighborhood.

#### R-2D Two-Family Residential

The R-2A and R-2D use districts are intended as low-density urban and suburban two-family residential areas. Structures and uses required to serve governmental, educational, religious, noncommercial, recreational, and other needs of such areas are permitted in districts or are permissible as conditional uses subject to restrictions intended to preserve and protect their residential character.

#### R-3 SL Multiple-Family Residential

The R-3 district is intended to include urban and suburban single-family, two-family and multiple-family residential uses with medium population densities, and uses and structures required to serve governmental, educational, religious, noncommercial recreational and other needs of such areas. The regulations and restrictions in the R-3 district are intended to protect, preserve, and enhance the primarily residential character of the district.

#### R-4 Multiple-Family Residential

The R-4 district is intended to include urban multiple-family dwelling uses with medium to high residential densities, and uses and structures required to serve governmental,

educational, religious, noncommercial recreational, and other needs of such areas. The regulations and restrictions in the R-4 district are intended to protect, preserve, and enhance the primarily residential character of the district.

#### T Transition District

While the T district is carried forward through the Title 21 Rewrite, it is intended to be phased out and replaced with other districts. For the military lands that are currently zoned T in this area, the rewrite intends that the DR Development Reserve District be applied to military lands, while clarifying that such lands are not subject to municipal land use regulations. A rezoning action will need to occur to effect this change.

#### B-1A Community Business District

The B-1A district is intended for convenience business uses, which serve the daily needs of nearby neighborhoods. The district is intended for small, compact areas.

#### PC Planned Community

The Planned Community district is intended to provide a system of land use regulation for large tracts of land which are under unified ownership or development control. The purpose of this district classification is to provide for and allow flexibility in the selection of land use controls for the specific site proposed for PC district classification while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring that the development will be consistent with the comprehensive plan and the holding capacity of the land.

### PLI Public Lands and Institutions

The PLI district is intended to include areas of significant public open space, major public and quasi-public institutional uses and activities, and land reserves for which a specific use or activity is not yet identified.

### MI Marine Industrial

The MI district is intended primarily for a mix of marine commercial and light industrial manufacturing, processing, storage, wholesale, and distribution operations that are water-dependent and water related.

### MC Marine Commercial

The MC district is intended primarily for water-dependent and water-related use as permitted principal uses, with water-related uses being considered as conditional uses. Emphasis is on development flexibility of water-dependent and water-related commercial uses and on public access to the waterfront and Ship Creek.

### L-1 Light Industrial

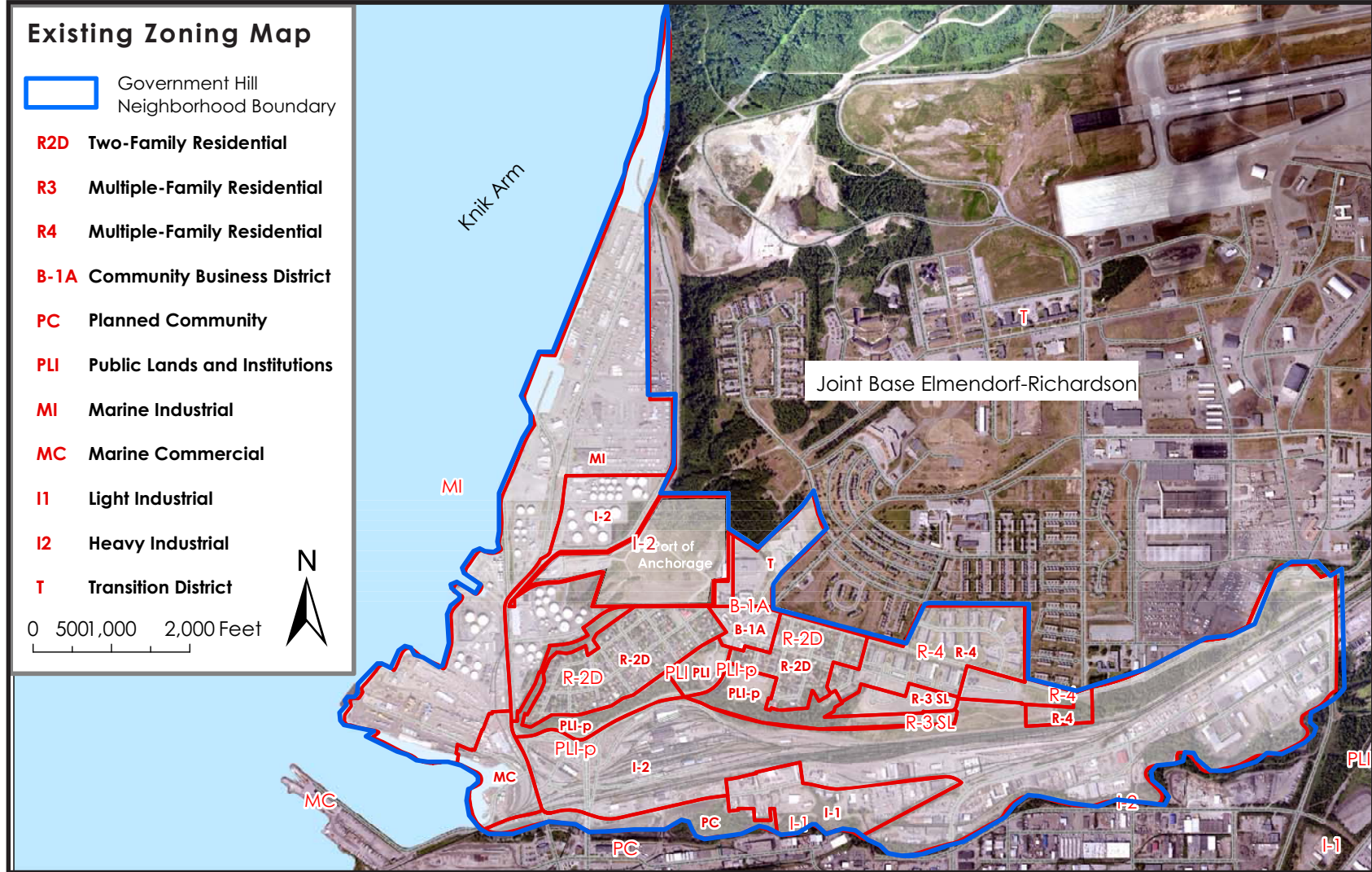
The L-1 district is intended primarily for urban and suburban light manufacturing, processing, storage, wholesale, and distribution operations, but also permits limited commercial uses. Regulations are intended to allow efficient use of the land while at the same time making the district attractive and compatible for a variety of uses.

### L-2 Heavy Industrial

The L-2 district is intended primarily for heavy manufacturing, storage, major shipping terminals, and other related uses. Also permitted in the district are uses generally permitted in commercial districts.



# ZONING MAP



This zoning map depicts the existing designations for the Government Hill neighborhood. The T district (Transition district) may be discontinued after the formal adoption of Title 21 Land Use Regulation rewrite.

# PORT OF ANCHORAGE

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The Port of Anchorage first began operations in September 1961. In that year, more than 38,000 tons of marine cargo moved across its single berth.

Alaska's greatest natural disaster made the Port of Anchorage the dominant marine facility in the state. The 1964 Alaska earthquake, and the tsunami which it generated, destroyed the two ports which served Southcentral Alaska at that time. The Port of Anchorage, on the other hand, suffered only minor damage and was operational again within days. Consequently, all the materials shipped to Alaska to rebuild the state came through the Anchorage facility.

Now, 50 years since the port began operations, its importance to the State of Alaska has increased substantially providing vital consumer goods, fuel, and other essential supplies to over 85% of the state. Unfortunately, many of the docks pilings are the very same pilings that were installed in 1961.

They are corroded and in a deteriorated condition, casting significant doubt that they could survive another high-magnitude earthquake.

In 2002, the Port of Anchorage and the Federal Maritime Administration (MARAD) began an effort to replace and expand the current dock facilities. This became known as the Port of Anchorage Intermodal Expansion Project. The goal of this project is to replace the existing docks while creating a world-class port facility that will accommodate current and future shipping trends. It will include two new berth spaces and barge docks.

In 2010, the Port of Anchorage acquired from the U.S. Army the 48-acre parcel, formerly known as the Anchorage-Whittier Pipeline Terminus, which is adjacent to the Crowley Fuel Terminal.



# PARKS, TRAILS, AND GREENBELTS

*Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan*

*“Anchorage’s trails and parks are major community assets. The extensive trail system attracts both residents and visitors and is currently ranked second in the nation. The addition of trail segments to connect major trails is also planned to ensure that nearly all Anchorage Bowl residents are within ten minutes of the trail system.*

*Connect local activity centers, such as neighborhood schools and community centers with parks, sports fields, greenbelts and trails, where feasible.*

*Public and/or Private Ice Rinks and sports fields are desired.”*

Parks, trails, and greenbelts have been identified as primary assets within the community. Several municipal parks surround the residential neighborhood. Most of these parks are located along the hillsides where they form a natural buffer to the adjacent industrial areas. This natural buffer is enhanced with a forested greenbelt, which also provides erosion control along the hillside.

Harvard Park was leased from the Alaska Railroad (Department of Interior) in 1961 with a 40-year lease. The park includes two buildings. The first is the old Alaska Railroad Club building located on Mystic Way. This building is operated by the Anchorage Curling Club. The other building is operated by the Square Dance Club.

## Existing & Proposed Park Improvements in Government Hill

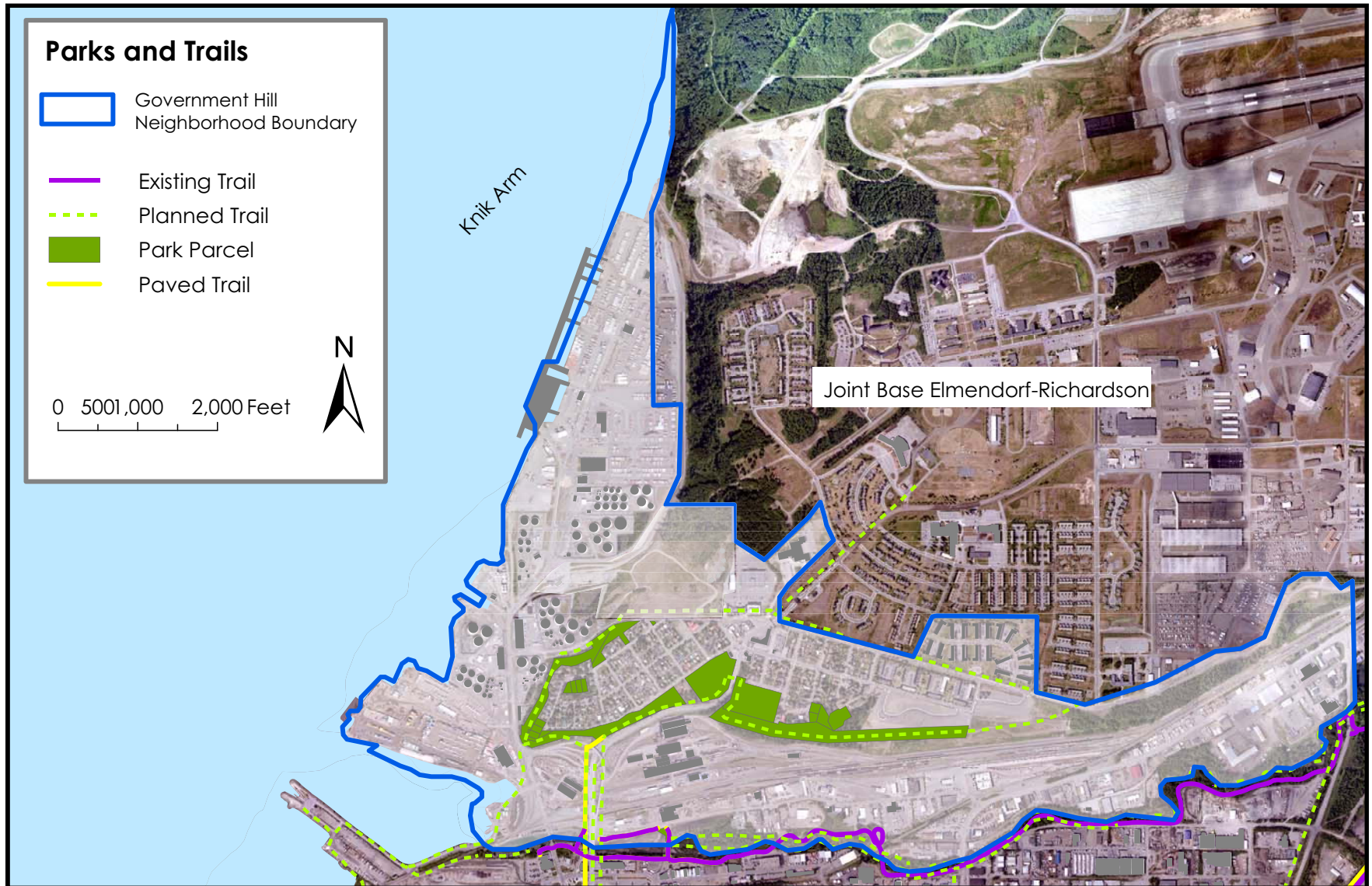
	<i>Existing Improvements</i>	<i>Proposed Improvements</i>
<i>Al Miller Park</i>	<i>Tables, Footpath</i>	
<i>Alderwood Park</i>		<i>Trail Segment</i>
<i>Brown’s Point Park</i>	<i>Tables, Flagpole, Foot path</i>	<i>Trail Segment</i>
<i>Cunningham Park</i>		
<i>Harvard Park</i>	<i>Basketball, Tennis, Community Facility, Furnishings</i>	<i>Trail Segment</i>
<i>Sunset Park</i>	<i>Shelter</i>	<i>Trail Segment</i>
<i>Suzan Nightingale McKay Memorial Park</i>	<i>Tables, Memorial</i>	<i>Trail Segment</i>

Government Hill residents and visitors to Government Hill enjoy a unique park system that acts as a buffer between the community and its industrial neighbors. Several parks create a ring that frames the hill and creates space for recreation and social gathering. These include Sunset Park, Alderwood Park, Harvard Park, Brown's Point Park, and Suzan Nightingale McKay Memorial Park.

Although the parks are generally well maintained, there are several opportunities for improvement that community residents have identified. These include several viewshed corridors that require yearly maintenance to trim overgrowth of trees and shrubs, connecting various trail segments to create a continuous walking trail around the hill that connects to Ship Creek, and enhancing sidewalks to ensure comfortable pedestrian use in all seasons.

The Areawide Trails Plan adopted in April 1997 shows a multi-use paved trail planned for Government Hill that loops around the neighborhood and also connects to Ship Creek. It also shows a planned grade-separated crossing at the intersection of Loop Road and East Bluff Drive.

# PARKS AND TRAILS MAP



# TRANSPORTATION

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## *Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan*

*Transit -supported development corridors, pedestrian- accessible development and multimodal roadways and trail networks are promoted.*

*Freight movement is facilitated throughout the community, especially among the port, international airport, railroad and industrial reserves.*

*Streetscape standards revitalize road corridors for all users.*

*New transportation projects and significant project upgrades shall accommodate new trail sections and easements identified in Areawide Trails Plan.*

*Accommodate pedestrian, bicyclists, transit users, the disabled, automobiles, and trucks where appropriate.*

*Design and construct and maintain roadways or rights-of-way to promote and enhance physical connectivity within and between neighborhoods.*

*Diminish the prominence of garages and paved parking areas.*

Residents and businesses in the Government Hill neighborhood depend upon the transportation infrastructure and public transportation services in the area to make their daily trips safely and efficiently. Residents must travel outside the neighborhood for the majority of their shopping, work, service, and recreational needs. Good connections to the rest of Anchorage are essential to meet the residents' travel needs. There currently are no collector street, sidewalk, or bicycle/pathway improvements identified in the adopted AMATS 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2012), Anchorage Bicycle Plan (2010), or Anchorage Pedestrian Plan (2007).

Over 80% of Alaska's goods arrive at the Port of Anchorage and then must be transported via the existing roadway system to ultimately reach the marketplace throughout the state. There are plans for two major roadway projects identified in the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan that would provide long-term access for industrial and military users in the area. These would have a substantial impact on the neighborhood. These projects are the Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) and the Seward Highway to Glen-Highway Connection projects. The proposed KAC project alignment would bisect the Government Hill neighborhood and its design will influence how roadway, sidewalk, and multi-use trail connections to and within the neighborhood need to be accommodated to maximize community livability. A traffic study of the Government Hill Neighborhood should be considered as a recommendation before implementation of the Plan begins.

## Non-motorized Travel

The neighborhood has very limited non-motorized connections to the rest of the Anchorage area with only one pedestrian/bicycle connection via E. Loop Road. Once pedestrians/bicyclists reach the A-C Streets couplet viaduct, it can be challenging to find the route to downtown. Due to fencing and gates that exist between the residential neighborhood and its three primary neighbors – JBER, the Port of Anchorage, and the Alaska Railroad Corporation - there are no direct pedestrian, bicycle, or trail connections other than E. Loop Road.

There are two controlled pedestrian locations to allow non-motorized crossings of E. Loop Road in the neighborhood. A pedestrian overcrossing is located at E. Bluff Road to provide grade-separated crossings primarily for school children. Additionally, a signalized intersection at E. Loop Road/Erickson Street/Hollywood Drive has pedestrian actuated controls to activate the traffic signals for pedestrians/bicyclists walking their bikes across the street.

Within the neighborhood, there is a good network of sidewalks along the public streets east of E. Loop Road. However, to the west of E. Loop Road there are virtually no sidewalks along the public streets with the exception of sidewalks to the Government Hill Elementary School and along the AT&T property frontage on E. Bluff Road. There are a few informal trails down the slope from W. Harvard Street to E. Loop Road that greatly reduce the walking time to and from downtown Anchorage.

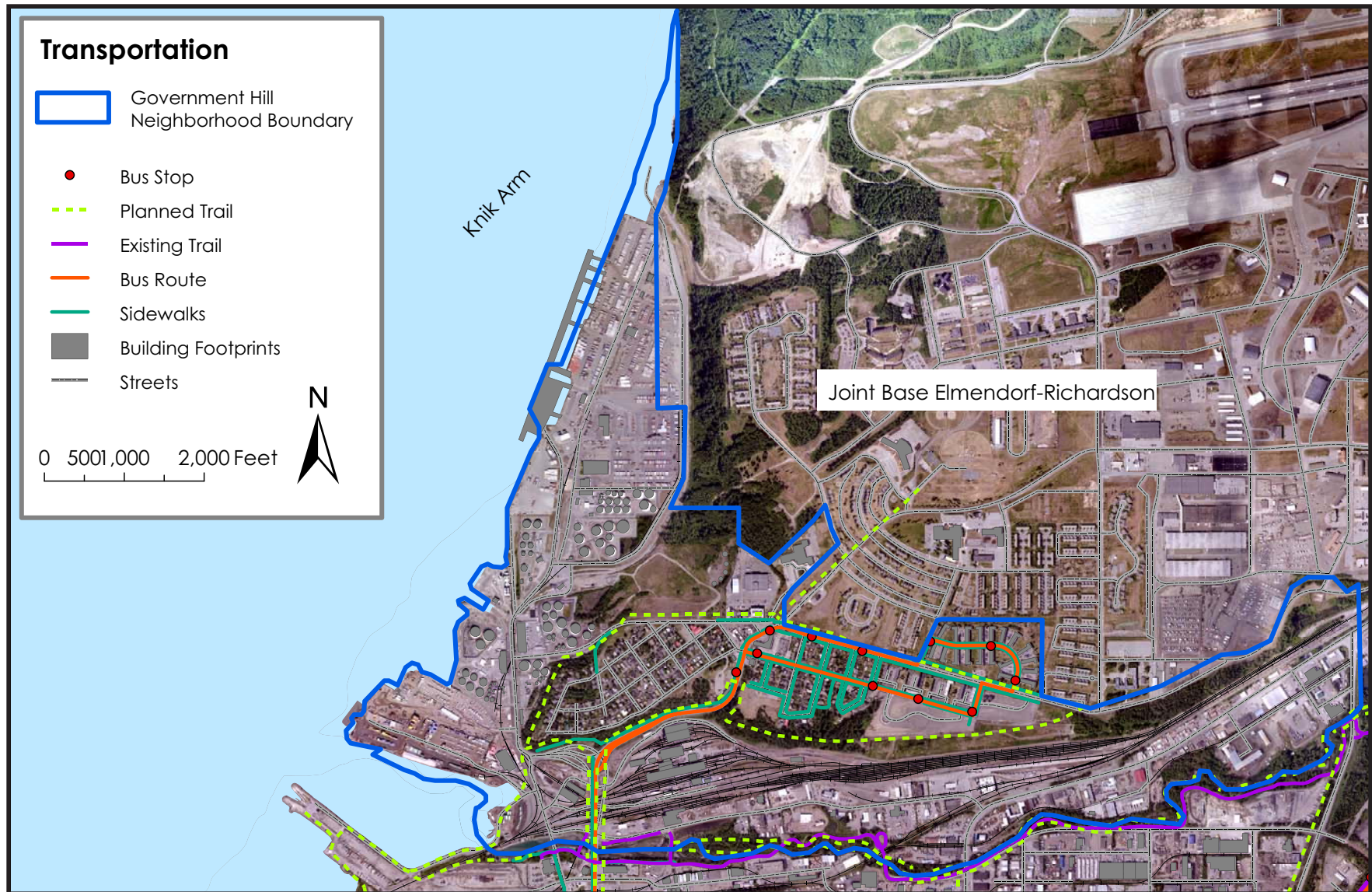
### Key Transportation Related Issues:

- Highway/Street system functional classification and street typology
- Long-term impacts from potential KAC and H2H projects
- Short-term impacts to the Government Hill neighborhood from potential roadway construction activities

- Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson access and congestion issues
- Port of Anchorage access
- Alaska Railroad passenger and freight operations
- Emergency service access to the neighborhood
- Public transportation service
- Government Hill Elementary School access
- Sidewalk/trail connections to Ship Creek Trail
- Pedestrian connectivity

Government Hill faces a number of transportation challenges. Currently, traffic from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson creates a backlog of vehicles at Arctic Warrior Drive during busy times of the day. Traffic conflicts with students, parents, and teachers trying to access Government Hill Elementary School create unsafe pedestrian crossings and congestion near the stoplight at East Loop Road and Erickson Street. There are many areas in the neighborhood that do not have sidewalks or where the existing sidewalk is inadequate to accommodate both snow and pedestrians in winter. The pedestrian walkway on the west side of E. Loop Road is unsafe due to its narrow width, proximity to fast moving traffic, and low guardrail that fails to provide protection to pedestrians from vehicles also using the bridge. This problem is exacerbated in winter months when snow severely narrows the width of the pedestrian walkway, and ice on the bridge increases the risk of vehicles sliding into the pedestrian path. Finally, the proposed Knik Arm Crossing project imposes a cut-and-cover tunnel through the heart of the Government Hill Neighborhood, removing key commercial uses and rerouting traffic during various construction phases. The extent of the effects that this project will have on traffic circulation and pedestrian/bicycle access to Government Hill's commercial mixed-use center is yet to be determined.

# TRANSPORTATION MAP



# GROWTH AND INFILL REDEVELOPMENT

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Government Hill will face a number of challenges in the coming years as population growth and proposed development projects such as the KAC impose changes upon the neighborhood. Anchorage 2020 poses a number of policies that address redevelopment, growth, and infill and the following utility maps show existing utility locations that will need to be considered in the case of redevelopment projects.

## *Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan*

*Redevelopment of unused and partially developed parcels and obsolete buildings becomes more economically feasible as Anchorage's vacant land base shrinks. Infill, rehabilitation, and redevelopment will reshape and modernize older areas so they can better meet future needs for housing and other uses and activities.*

*Neighborhoods and subareas in and around Downtown/Midtown...are targeted for public/private reinvestment.*

*Design standards mitigate impacts of higher densities and address architectural compatibility.*

*Provide incentives for lot consolidation in infill/redevelopment to improve design and compatibility of housing.*

*Avoid incompatible uses adjoining one another.*

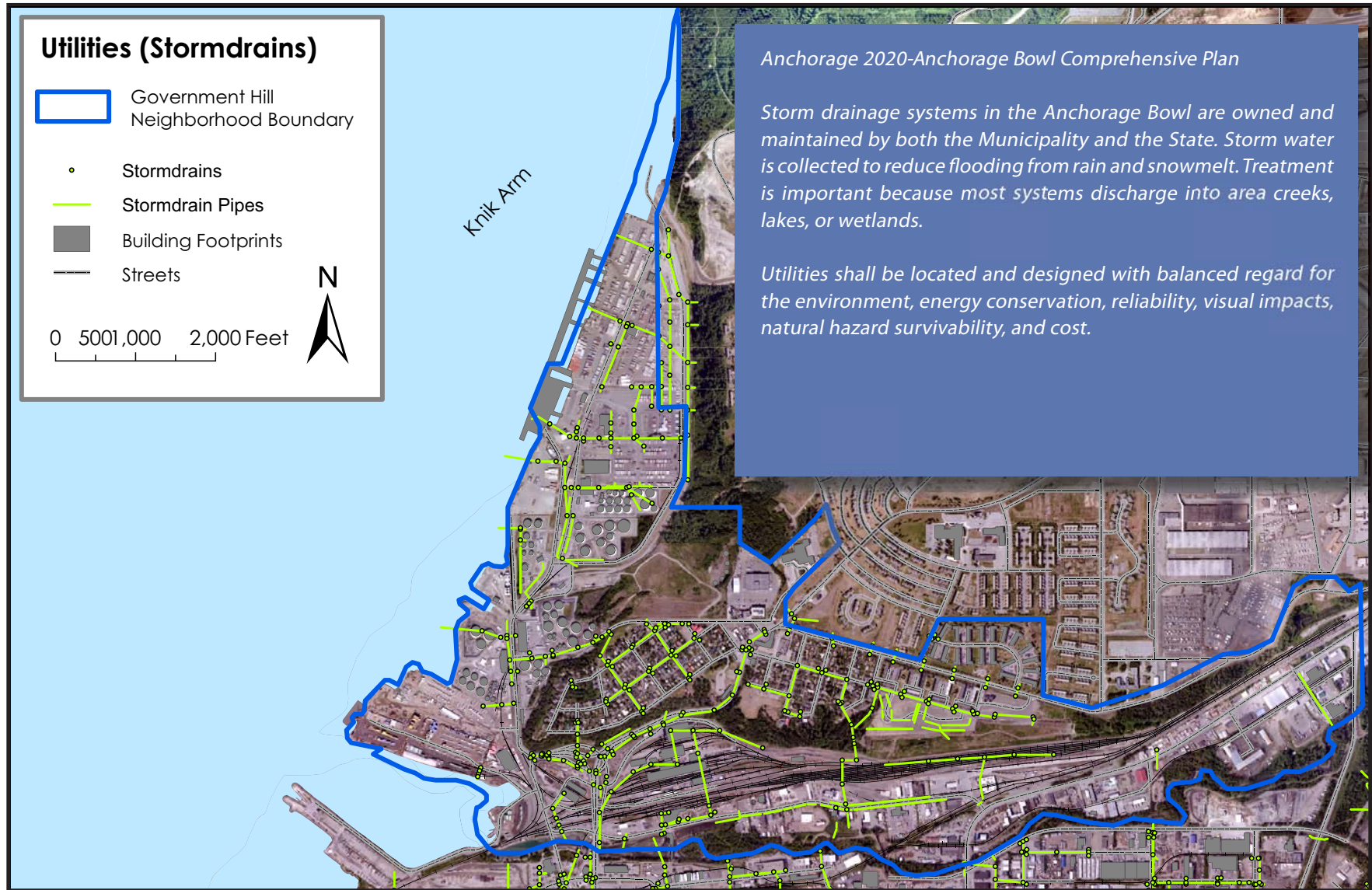
## *Northwest Subareas*

*This area had the greatest growth potential for renewal and redevelopment. This area has the most multifamily housing, with high occupancy rates by seniors, non-family households and single people. There are also some thriving older single-family neighborhoods...In general, vacant and older or under-used residential and commercial properties are targeted for redevelopment.*

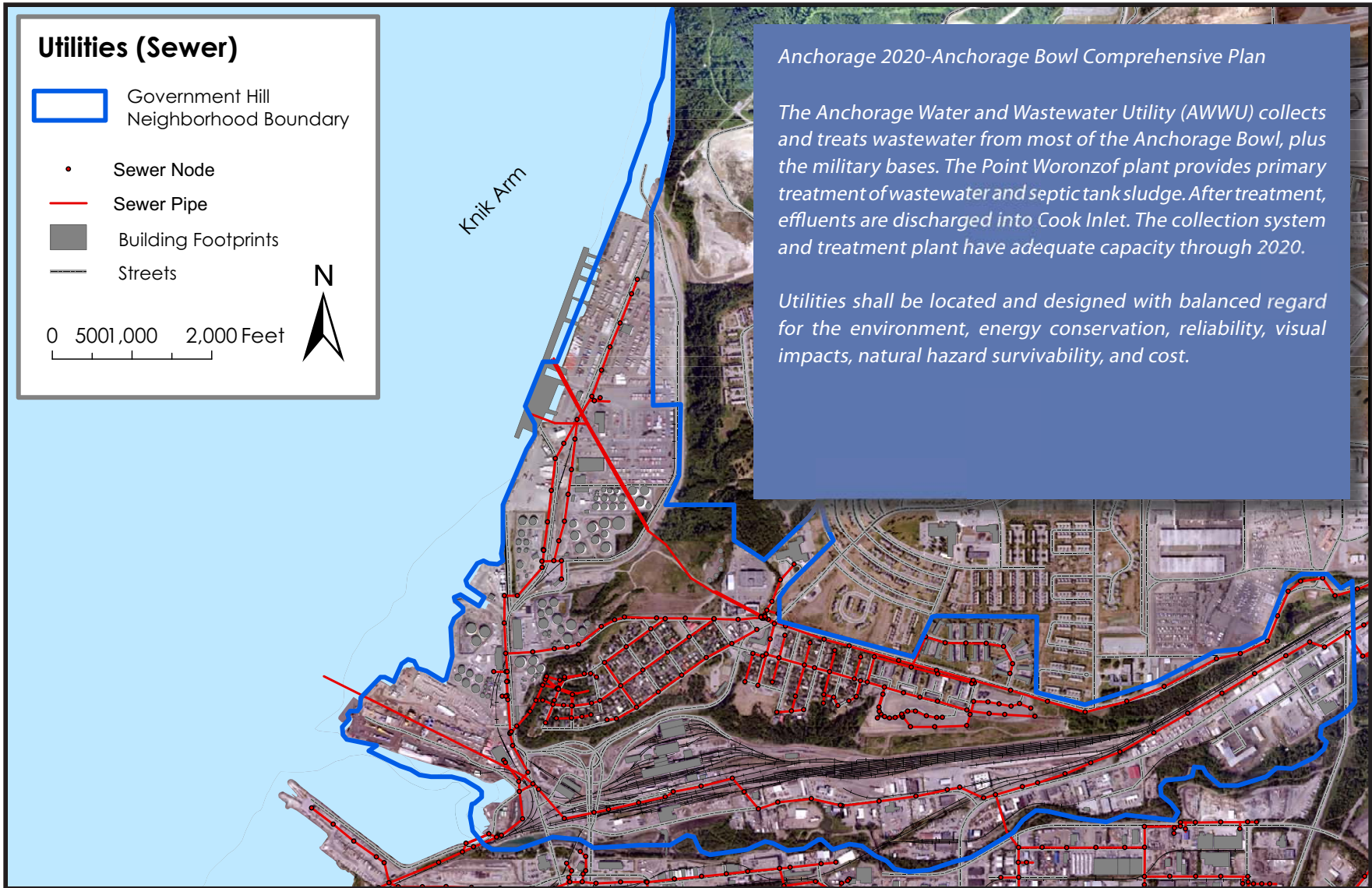
*The unique appeal of individual residential neighborhoods shall be protected and enhanced in accordance with applicable goals, policies and strategies.*

*Utilities shall be located and designed with balanced regard for the environment, energy conservation, reliability, visual impacts, natural hazard survivability, and cost.*

# UTILITIES







# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

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Government Hill contains a variety of natural features that are assets to the neighborhood. This includes wetlands, small pockets of forested areas, and riparian edges along Ship Creek. There is also a stretch of shoreline area; however, it is the home to the Port of Anchorage and not suited to public/neighborhood active or passive recreational use.

## *Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan*

*Healthy, mature trees and forested areas shall be retained as much as possible.*

*The Municipality shall provide orderly development within Anchorage's coastal zone, protect and enhance its unique natural features and resources, and sustain and enhance coastal access.*

*Fish, wildlife, and habitat protection methods shall be addressed in land use planning, design and development process.*

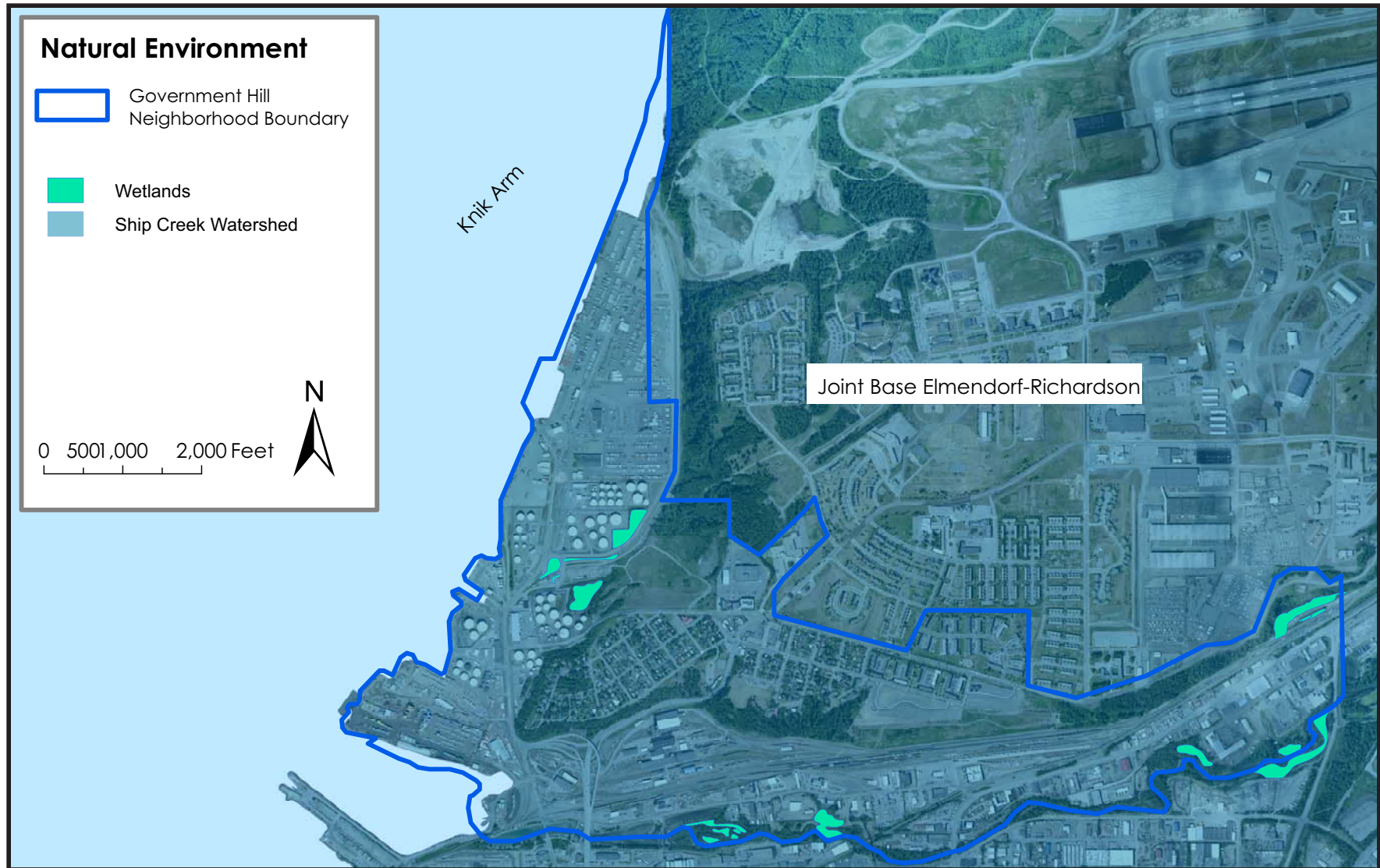
*The Municipality shall preserve the functions and values of important wetlands.*

*Utilize wetlands to manage drainage and improve water quality, where appropriate.*

*...Anchorage's future is a vision that balances growth with the retention of the city's natural features and quality of life.*

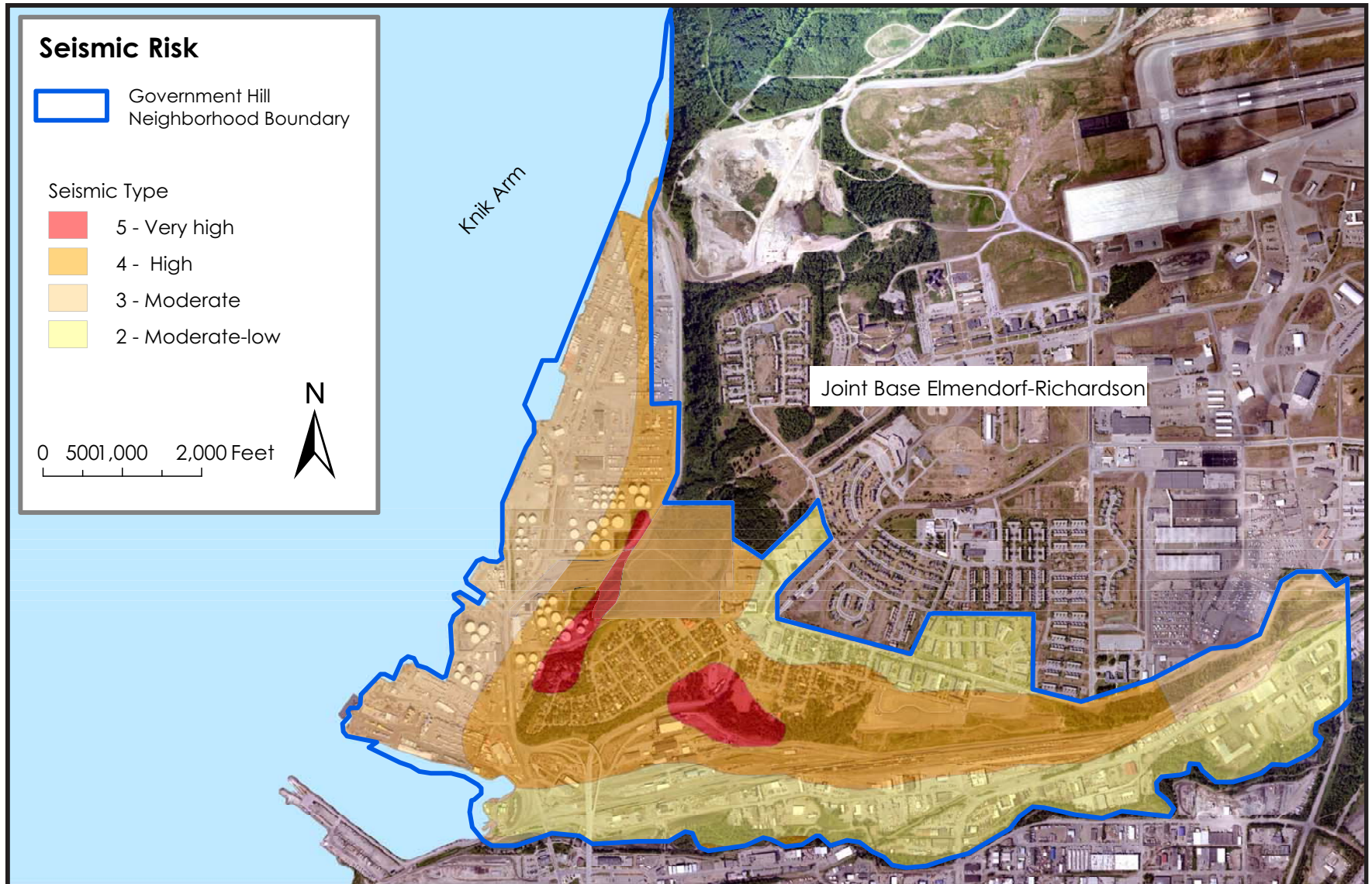
*Planning for and retention of natural open space are top priorities.*

# WATERSHEDS/WETLANDS



Wetlands contribute to our ecosystem health by providing natural stormwater collection, and treatment ponds. They can also supply neighborhood amenities such as spaces for parks and recreation, wildlife viewing opportunities, and wildlife habitat. The Municipality of Anchorage has begun a system of watershed planning, which provides an orderly approach to stormwater collection, treatment, and floodplain management.

# SEISMIC RISK



# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (TOPOGRAPHY)



This topography map illustrates the frame of steep palisades that separate the Government Hill bluff area from the lower-lying areas of the neighborhood. These steep slopes restrain development while preserving a green space buffer between the community and its industrial neighbors.

## 2. VISION FOR GOVERNMENT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD



### A. THE NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK PLAN

Residents, property owners, and key community stakeholders in Government Hill envision the neighborhood as a “community of choice” in Anchorage, which is noted for its livability and as being a place of opportunity. In response, this plan looks to the future, seeking to establish a framework for good stewardship and strategic improvements that enhance the neighborhood. It presents those improvements in a coordinated set of planning systems including land use, transportation, parks and open space, and historic resources.

This plan is proactive in that it acknowledges the potential impacts of major “external” forces, including the proposed Knik Arm Crossing project and expansion/improvement plans at the Port and Railroad properties. A distinction of this plan,

however, is that it does not simply react to those possible events in an attempt to mitigate them. While it considers those factors, it sets a larger, more affirmative picture for the future. These are some key elements of the neighborhood’s vision:

### B. A VISION FOR GOVERNMENT HILL

The Framework Plan, depicted in the Plan Framework Map in this chapter, reflects the goals of the community as they appear in this vision statement. In meetings, interviews and community workshops, residents, property owners, and other stakeholders described features of the area they see as being important in securing continued vitality for the neighborhood. As key elements of an overarching vision for the Government Hill neighborhood, these features are summarized here as a description of the future, when the plan recommendations have been achieved.



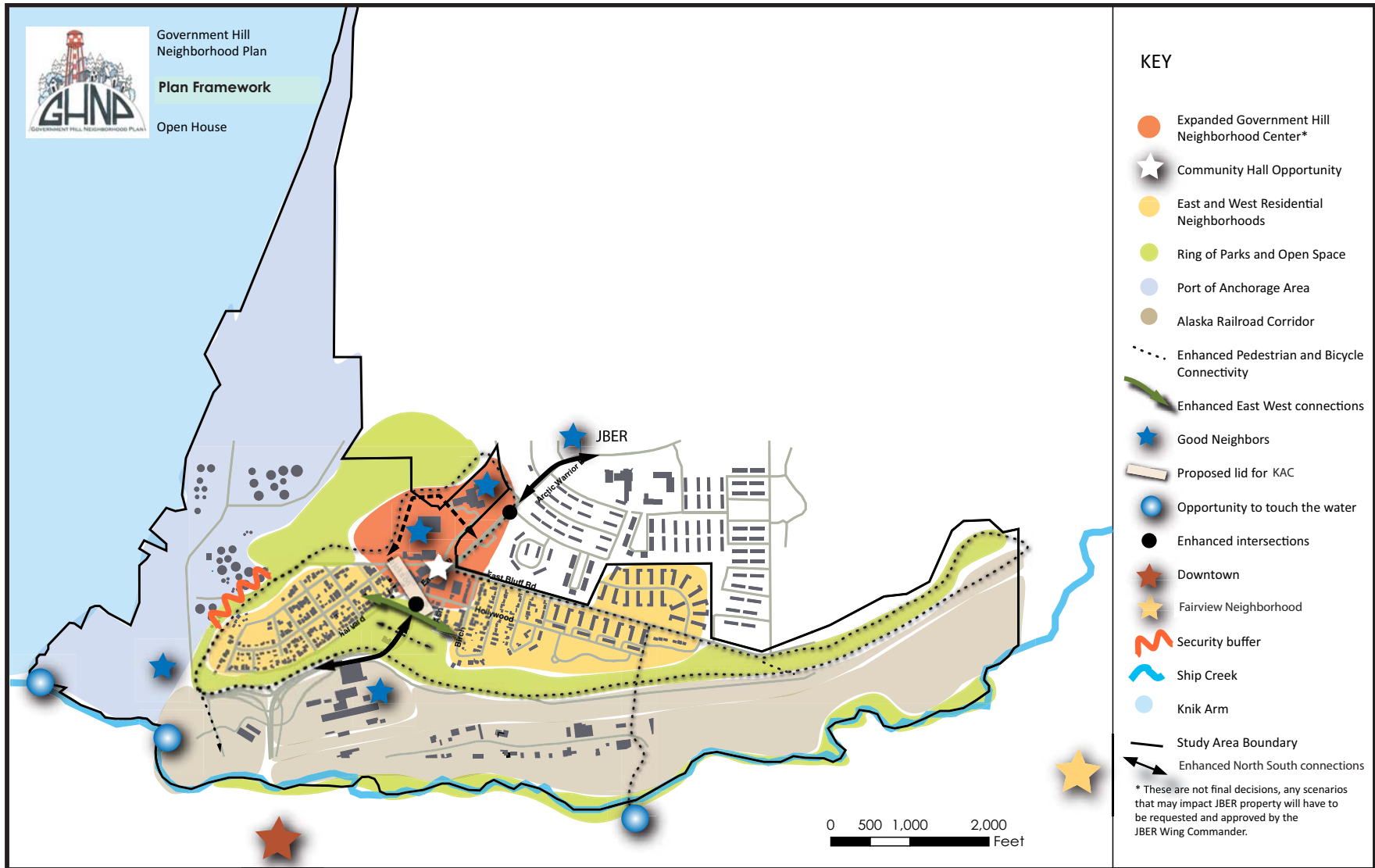
*Government Hill residence in winter*



*Historic Brown’s Point Cottage*



*Residence of Mel and Mary Barry*



Plan Framework Map

## 1. A Vibrant, Livable, and Sustainable Place

Government Hill is active with a strong sense of community. People enjoy the unique identity of the neighborhood. It is known for its walkable scale, historic character, and as being a distinct “village” in the heart of the city.

## 2. A Central Focal Point of Mixed Uses

In the future, Government Hill has a neighborhood center that is active with a mix of uses including professional services, retail, dining, and entertainment facilities. It also contains residential units in apartments, condominiums, and townhouses, that help extend hours of activity and provide a variety of housing choices for neighborhood residents. These residential uses also help to support the commercial uses.

More importantly, the center includes civic and institutional facilities that are shared by neighborhood residents, local employees, and those who visit the area. These include a community meeting hall, outdoor courtyards, and plazas for winter activities, as well as churches and social program facilities.



*Existing Tesoro Station*



*Historic Water Tower*



*Government Hill Commercial District*

## 3. Stable Residential Areas

In the future, Government Hill is known as a place where long-term residents share a sense of community with newcomers. Residential buildings are well maintained, and streets are active. There is a strong sense of stability, which historic buildings convey, as do well-established churches and recreational clubs that continue to be a traditional part of the neighborhood.

Government Hill’s unique identity as being one of Anchorage’s few walkable neighborhoods remains a distinctive feature as well. This identity is enhanced with new sidewalks and trails that make access to the neighborhood center convenient and also by providing access to parks, open space and recreational facilities.

## 4. Seamless and Connected Places

While Government Hill contains sub-areas that feature distinct identities, there is an overall sense of cohesiveness, with each individual area connected to others through safe and convenient streets, sidewalks, and trails. This sense of

connectedness includes access to schools, cultural facilities, and employment centers. Streetscape improvements, including wide sidewalks, planting strips, and street furniture invite walking throughout the community.

## 5. A Green Neighborhood

Government Hill maintains its “greenness,” which begins with the “skirt” of trees and shrubs that grow along its palisades, extending along its trails and into its parks and open spaces.

Government Hill is known as being sustainable, in that it conserves built resources that already exist, encourages use of alternative modes of transportation, and even supports local gardens and food production. It provides live-work opportunities located within the employment centers present in the neighborhood, as well as housing and access to goods and services, all within a compact setting.

## 6. A Diverse Neighborhood

Government Hill continues to foster a diverse range of citizens with varying social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. It also remains diverse in its cultural offerings and community activities.

## 7. Easy Access

While Government Hill maintains a sense of distinct identity, which is in part shaped by its topography, it has improved access to downtown Anchorage and other key activity centers in the city.

## 8. A Climate for Investment

In the future, Government Hill offers opportunities for investment in commercial and residential properties. Public infrastructure improvements have established a framework that provides a degree of certainty for investors. Homeowners continue to maintain their properties, and businesses seek out locations in the revitalized neighborhood center.



*Renovated properties on Government Hill*



*View of the wireless tower in Government Hill*



*New townhouses on the bluff*

# 3. STRATEGY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD SUSTAINABILITY



This neighborhood plan focuses on assuring that Government Hill retains a high degree of sustainability, in that it conserves built resources that are part of the city’s cultural heritage, makes efficient use of land, provides jobs for those who live nearby, and reduces dependence upon automobiles. This chapter presents overarching concepts that will help to assure a sustainable neighborhood with an emphasis on the neighborhood center.

## A. PLANNING WITH FLEXIBILITY

The neighborhood’s future will be shaped by a complex set of variables, some of which are difficult to predict. The plan, therefore, must remain flexible, while providing clear direction.

These key principles help define planning with flexibility:

### 1. Plan Constructively with the Uncertainties that Exist

Encouraging investment in the neighborhood center is directly tied to expectations about the KAC project, its timing, the geographic extent of construction disturbance, and the logistics of construction phasing. These factors place a cloud of uncertainty around some parcels in the neighborhood center.

In a different frame, there may also be opportunities to expand the neighborhood center into the current edge of JBER properties that lie adjacent to the northern and eastern edges of the neighborhood center. Securing agreements to expand the neighborhood center along these edges could take several years. Thus, some uncertainty exists here as well.



*A pedestrian bridge that provides marginal access to Government Hill Elementary School*



*Sourdough Lodge*

## 2. Provide for Phased Redevelopment

Because there are substantial areas in the neighborhood center where the final disposition of the land is presently unknown, opportunities for investment must be planned so that redevelopment can be phased. More specifically, some parcels must be established that would attract development in the near future, where the long-term future is not complicated with uncertainty or by the possible disruption that construction of the KAC project would cause.

That means looking for an initial redevelopment phase on land that is farther east, out of the immediate path of the potential KAC project, and yet west of the JBER edge.

## 3. Design the Potential Cut-and-Cover Lid as an Asset

In an early planning workshop, participants were asked to envision a neighborhood center in two alternatives: First, one without the bridge project and, second, with the bridge project. What resulted were concepts that were the same for both conditions. Both alternatives expressed a single vision for a revitalized neighborhood center, with a western edge that supports more intensive uses extended farther to the east, regardless of whether or not the cut-and-cover project occurs. They found that in both scenarios the area considered for the lid should be an amenity for the community, and it should serve as a compatible transition from eastern to western areas of the residential neighborhood. The lid should help reduce noise, exhaust fumes, and visual impacts resulting from KAC traffic.

The lid should also not divide the park. The lid design should be extended under Sunset Park to maintain the viability and use of this valued park element.

Ultimately, the surface (lid) should be a visual asset, helping to connect the neighborhoods and providing civic uses. If the KAC tunnel is constructed, it should be designed to allow light-weight construction to be feasible on its surface after completion.

Potential improvements should include:

- Open space or park land (such as an ice rink or skate park)
- Landscaped parking “pods” (designed to serve a mix of uses that would be constructed on properties abutting the lid)
- Community facilities, such as a light structure for a community meeting room, a warming hut, etc.
- Community gardens



*An overview image of a model that depicts how the proposed KAC project would bisect the Government Hill neighborhood along Erikson Street.*

#### 4. Mitigate Constraints of Existing Parcel Configurations

While a modest market for redevelopment exists today and is likely to improve in the future, the arrangement of the parcels in the neighborhood center significantly constrains the opportunity for investment. Several blocks are irregularly shaped, limiting the amount of land area that would be required to accommodate the scale of development that would be needed to justify proposed redevelopment.

#### 5. Mitigate the Potential Loss of Developable Land

If the KAC project does proceed, the land area with potential for commercial and mixed use will be reduced, placing additional limits on the already constrained commercial space in the neighborhood center. In response, the plan shifts the focus on the neighborhood center to the east and proposes seeking additional lands along the edge of JBER.

### B. CREATING A CLIMATE FOR INVESTMENT

A vital element of Government Hill’s continued and future success as a desirable neighborhood in which to live and work is the ability to draw investment for commercial and residential development. This section discusses the factors that currently limit investment within the community and suggests approaches to facilitate investment.

#### 1. Investing in Lands Slated for the Tunnel “Lid”

The plan seeks to establish a climate for investment by identifying areas where redevelopment can occur with relative stability. One factor is the uncertainty that the potential “cut-and-cover” project associated with KAC causes. While construction of the cut-and-cover tunnel may still be a few years out (assuming the project moves ahead), it leaves the lands in its path in limbo.

It will be difficult, if not impossible, for a private developer to invest in improvements in that zone. First, KABATA is already negotiating to acquire lands for its project in that area, which ties up those parcels for the near term. And, second, if the KAC project is delayed, those properties could be tied up for an unknown period.

In light of this factor, the best approach is to craft a development scenario that uses this uncertainty to its advantage. This means focusing potential redevelopment on land that is not on the lid, farther to the east, and then applying development concepts for the lid that can occur at a later date.

To facilitate this strategy, the neighborhood center scenarios that are presented in subsequent sections of this plan show uses on the lid that could occur after other improvements have been established in the area to the east of it. It focuses on creating a critical mass of redevelopment farther east of the lid area.

## 2. Development in the Cut-and-Cover Area

A portion of land along the western edge of the neighborhood center may be impacted directly by construction of a cut-and-cover tunnel. The neighborhood center plan concepts are conceived to function with or without the Knik Arm Crossing project. Uses assigned to this area are consistent with those that could be supported by the cover.

These include:

- Parking
- Streets and walkways
- Landscaping, parks, and open space
- Low-impact civic facilities and activities



*One of the original Quonset hut structures*

## 3. Planning for Mutual Benefits

The plan includes concepts that can benefit neighborhood residents, as well as the businesses and institutional members of the community. JBER, the Port, Alascom, and the Railroad are among the key partners, whose own needs are, to some extent, addressed in the plan.

## 4. Investment Opportunities

Preliminary market evaluations indicate that there will be opportunities for additional housing and commercial space in the Government Hill neighborhood. This is based on general growth projected for the city at large and also growth related to JBER, the Port, and the Alaska Railroad yards.

Buildings of two and three stories will be feasible. A mix of uses, often in joint development projects with “horizontal” mixes, are likely. In response to this opportunity, the neighborhood center parcels are proposed to be re-configured to yield sites that will be more attractive to investment. These are shaped to accommodate higher-density buildings and to provide sufficient parking as well.

## 5. Security

Some areas of the Government Hill neighborhood have operations that require special security. An example is the edge of the Port land at the base of the hill. Others exist as well. Along some of these edges, the plan proposes introducing pedestrian trails, and, in some cases, service roads. These actions would be designed to respect the security requirements of these neighbors. These needs are accommodated with landscaped buffers and other devices that limit access where appropriate.

## C. BUILDING IN PHASES

Phasing the implementation of the plan is essential because of the range of “moving parts” that exist in the planning environment. This includes the coordination of infrastructure improvement with private development. Infrastructure such as water, sewers, and streets, will be influenced by capital improvement schedules and public funding mechanisms. Private development will be influenced by market opportunities and property lease and purchase agreements.

Each phase needs to ‘stand alone in that it should function well and be viable economically. At the same time, each phase must be conceived to set the stage for subsequent ones and not preclude flexibility for later projects.

More specific recommendations for phasing are presented in the implementation strategies section of the plan, but the basic concept of phasing shapes the plan concepts, which are described in the next section of this chapter.

## D. KEY CONCEPTS OF THE FRAMEWORK PLAN

A set of key principles establishes a framework for the specific plan recommendations. Many of these elements are identified on the map “Neighborhood Plan Framework” and are described here:

### 1. A Neighborhood Center with a Mix of Uses

The heart of the neighborhood is reconfigured to accommodate more efficient circulation and redevelopment opportunities. Parcels are assembled in new ways that offer more opportunity for compact, mixed-use development. This also allows streets to be realigned for safe and convenient access and facilitates intersection improvements that enhance pedestrian safety.

\*\*Note that the term “neighborhood center” as it is used in this plan denotes an area of several blocks with a concentration of activities that serve the community. This is not to be confused with the concept of a building that includes a neighborhood meeting space, which is referred to separately as a “community hall” in this plan.



Government Hill residence in winter

The neighborhood center combines a mix of these uses:

- Civic uses, perhaps a community meeting room, an outdoor skating rink, community gardens and plaza, as well as a place for a farmers' market and similar outdoor functions that are shared by community residents
- Commercial uses, including retail, dining, grocery, perhaps a hotel, and professional offices
- Residential, including apartments and condominiums above commercial uses, as well as townhouses
- Institutional facilities, including clubs, daycare centers, youth activity centers, churches and other places of worship

## 2. A Pedestrian-oriented Neighborhood Center

As properties redevelop in the center, they should be designed to enhance streets as places for pedestrians. As such, new buildings should have store fronts built close to the sidewalk edge, with goods and services visible to the passerby. Other buildings may be designed to provide visual interest to pedestrians at the street level by using display cases, decorative architectural treatments, and artwork.



*Wintertime view of an alley in Government Hill*



*Newly renovated Alaska Railroad buildings*



*Street light on Erikson Street*

## 3. Inviting Streetscapes in the Neighborhood Center

As streets are improved, new sidewalks should be constructed. These should be buffered from street edges with a generous planting strip, which is planted with grasses and trees that are green in warm months. In snowy months, these planting strips would serve as snow storage areas. The sidewalks themselves should be wide enough to encourage walking.

A distinctive palette of streetscape elements should be established to yield a distinctive character for the neighborhood center. This includes uniform street lights, benches, waste receptacles, and directional signage.

## 4. Commercial Uses

A mix of retail, dining, and professional services should be concentrated in the neighborhood center. Many of these will be located at the street level, but professional offices and some service businesses may also be located on upper floors.

Some specific commercial uses:

- A small grocery store, bringing back a historical use
- Restaurants, including those that exist there today
- Professional offices, especially those that can serve the neighborhood, and for those who live in the neighborhood and wish to work nearby
- Service-type businesses

## 5. Employment Centers

Key employers should continue to thrive in the neighborhood, offering job opportunities for residents. Employees at these centers will patronize neighborhood businesses and contribute to the diversity of the area.

Key employment centers are:

- JBER
- Port of Anchorage
- Alascom
- Alaska Railroad
- Businesses in the neighborhood center
- Industrial uses along Ship Creek Road



*Entrance to Government Hill Elementary School*



*Tank farm at the Port of Anchorage*



*Trailhead at Al Miller Park in Government Hill*

## 6. Public Facilities

In addition to preserving existing facilities and parks, new civic facilities should add to the variety of amenities in the neighborhood and provide needed services.

These new public facilities are proposed:

- A central plaza in the neighborhood center
- An ice rink with warming hut in the neighborhood center
- The curling club in Harvard Park
- A community meeting hall, either in the neighborhood center or in Harvard Park
- A sports field, located west of the Government Hill Elementary school
- Community gardens, located in the area of the potential KAC lid

## 7. Residential Areas

The heart of the Government Hill neighborhood should continue to be its traditional neighborhood residential blocks, which are characterized by alleys that provide improved access to houses, encourage garage placement in the rear of the house while allowing for more aesthetically pleasing streetscapes,

increase the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists from vehicles, and act as service lanes for the community. Single-family residences as well as multi-family apartment buildings and townhouses should offer a range of options and price levels. Existing housing stock should be well maintained, and those properties of historic significance should be preserved. Where the few vacant lots exist, compatible infill should occur.

In the Neighborhood Center, new housing is introduced to moderately increase density in support of regional planning goals that make the best use of land throughout Anchorage. In Government Hill, this occurs as living units above commercial uses as well as townhouses and apartment buildings.

\*\* Note that in each of the alternative development scenarios that are presented in Chapter 5, land at the southwest fringe of JBER is proposed to be redeveloped as housing. This would increase the resident population of Government Hill, as well as support the commercial uses and services in the center, and perhaps offer housing opportunities for personnel or visiting parties at JBER.



*Apartment complexes in East Government Hill*



*Bus stop in East Government Hill*



*Government Hill residence in winter*

## 8. Historic Resources

Historic resources should be preserved throughout the neighborhood. Among these are blocks identified as being eligible for listing as historic districts, as well as several individual properties of historic significance.

Some of the noteworthy historic resources are:

- Row of houses on the bluff
- Wireless cabin
- Water tower
- Remaining Quonset hut residences
- Brown's Point cottages

## 9. A Ring of Parks and Open Space

The hill itself is to be ringed with parks and open space that are connected by a continuous trail loop. This provides hiking and biking opportunities for residents, employees and visitors. Along the way, view overlooks should be improved to provide vistas of downtown, the harbor, and mountains. These viewpoints should be regularly maintained to assure they continue as a signature feature of the neighborhood. The existing parks are preserved and enhanced for the continued enjoyment and use by the community.

Several neighborhood parks should contain play equipment and other amenities for active use, while other parks and open space are designed for passive enjoyment.

Some specific improvements:

- Playing fields are included in newly designated parkland along the northern edge of the hill.
- A pedestrian connector links the two (east and west) portions of Harvard Park.
- A plaza, located in the heart of the neighborhood center plaza, is a focal point of the community for festivals and events.
- An improved bluff trail (designed to respect security requirements for the Port) leads along the western edge of the hill.
- Open space along the railroad is enhanced with plantings to enhance the trail there and to provide a buffer.

## 10. Improved Pedestrian and Bicycle Systems

Government Hill has a strong heritage as a walkable place, one of the few neighborhoods in Anchorage with that distinction. This tradition of accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists should be further enhanced by adding new sidewalks and trails that provide connections to key destinations, including those within the neighborhood and to others nearby.

Pedestrian and bicycle improvements should include:

- New sidewalks in the neighborhood center that are buffered from traffic with landscaping strips that offer 5-7 feet of separation from roads.
- A new trail along the bluff's shoulder and base providing a continuous neighborhood loop
- A new trail connecting to the school from the residential areas
- Improved intersections with crosswalks in the neighborhood center
- A new trail connecting the neighborhood with Ship Creek and the Port



*Government Hill residence in winter*



*Government Hill residence in winter*



*A deserted AEC transmitter site*

## 11. Access to Water

Along the southern edge of the neighborhood, pedestrian systems should link the hill area to key waterfront amenities, including Ship Creek and Knik Arm. Overlooks should be provided that allow one to “touch the water,” sometimes symbolically in some cases and literally in others.

Specific water access points include:

- Connection to potential improvements at the mouth of Ship Creek
- Connection to the Ship Creek Trail

## 12. Automobile Connections

While Government Hill retains its sense of being a quiet enclave with relatively low traffic volumes, automobile circulation should be enhanced. New road improvements in the neighborhood center would ease traffic flow to and from other Anchorage destinations and within the neighborhood. The extent of these improvements varies with the different redevelopment scenarios that are presented in Chapter 5 and also by the timing of phased improvements.

Some specific automobile circulation improvements:

- An east-west connector between the two sides of the hilltop neighborhoods
- An improved and celebrated intersection that serves as an attractive gateway from downtown into the neighborhood center
- An improved and celebrated entrance into JBER
- An improved primary access to the Government Hill Elementary school
- A new secondary access to the Government Hill Elementary School

## 13. Parking in the Neighborhood Center

Parking should be reorganized to make more efficient use of buildings and to better support the range of activities found in the neighborhood center. A set of surface lots should be shared by groups of buildings in the neighborhood center.

These lots should be located to support redevelopment of reconfigured parcels, usually to the side or rear of the buildings, so that storefronts, porch stoops, and other desirable features immediately abut the street. Also, on-street parking should be provided along new street configurations.



*Government Hill residence in winter*

# 4. PLANNING SYSTEMS - KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



This chapter summarizes the range of improvements proposed for the Government Hill neighborhood in a series of planning “systems.” These include land use, circulation, and parks and open space. Maps illustrate general improvements recommended within these system categories.

## A. CHARACTER AREAS

The Government Hill neighborhood should be considered as a set of character areas, each of which has a set of goals and objectives for the future. Some of these are ones in which the established character is valued and should be respected in future development. The traditional residential neighborhoods, located on the top of Government Hill, are examples. Others are places where improvements should occur and the character should be enhanced. The neighborhood center is a case in point. Each of these character areas is described in this section and illustrated on the Character Map. The vision for the character of each of these areas draws upon comments from residents who participated in community workshops during production of this plan.

### THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER CHARACTER AREA

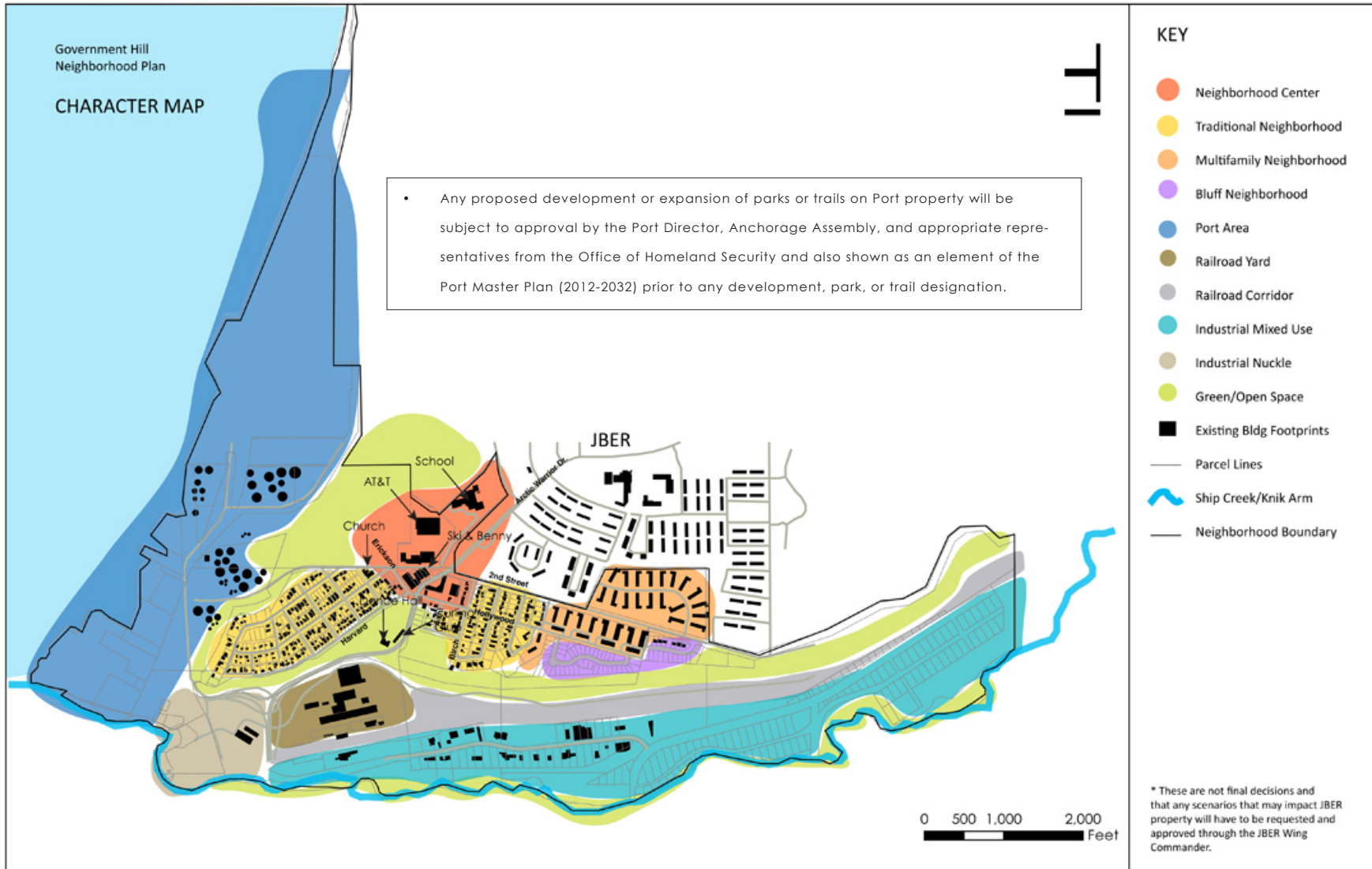
In the heart of the neighborhood the Government Hill planning area is the neighborhood center. This area is envisioned to be reconfigured, to accommodate more efficient circulation and

land use. Parcels are to be assembled in new ways that will offer more opportunity for compact, mixed-use development. This reconfiguration allows streets to be realigned to facilitate safe and convenient access and facilitates intersection improvements that enhance pedestrian safety. Streetscape enhancements would give special identity to the area and encourage pedestrian activity.

\*\* Note that the term “neighborhood center” denotes an area of several blocks with a concentration of activities. This is not to be confused with the concept of a building that includes a neighborhood meeting space, which is referred to separately.



*Stunning views of the Chugach Mountain Range from Government Hill*



The Neighborhood Center combines a mix of:

- Civic uses, perhaps a community meeting room, an outdoor skating rink and plaza, a farmers' market, or similar functions that are shared by community residents.
- Commercial uses, including retail, dining, and professional offices.
- Residential units, including apartments or condominiums above commercial uses, as well as town houses.
- Institutional facilities, including clubs, churches, and other places of worship.

In the development scenarios that are presented in Chapter 5, land at the fringe of JBER is shown redeveloped as housing. This would increase the resident population that could support the commercial uses and services in the center, and perhaps offer a housing alternative for personnel at JBER.

**Goals & Objectives:**

- Revitalized commercial center.
- Mix of neighborhood-serving commercial and residential uses.
- Enhanced pedestrian streetscape with public art, seating, etc.
- Enhanced as gateway for neighborhood.
- Clear Government Hill identity.
- Small grocery store.
- Coffee shop/bakery.
- Food business with a rooftop terrace.
- Additional parking.
- Enhanced signage and wayfinding tools.

## TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS CHARACTER AREA

These are the core of Government Hill and include many properties of historic significance. They are characterized by narrow, walkable streets, intensive landscaping lots with single-family houses, and functioning alleys.

**Goals & Objectives:**

- Calm and slow traffic through residential streets.
- Maintain pedestrian scale.
- Maintain use of alleys for residential access, utilities, and services.
- Maintain a diversity of housing.
- Create a potential for artist live/work studios at empty wireless building.
- Maintain water tower as a community asset .
- Enhance east/west connectivity.
- Provide a dog park .
- Promote heritage tourism to attract more business (historical walking tour).

## MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA

These are located along the eastern edge of Government Hill and are relatively low in scale.

**Goals & Objectives:**

- Refurbish multi-family buildings.
- Potential for community gardens in underutilized park
- Install speed control.
- Enhance intersections at E. Bluff Drive and Arctic Warrior Drive.
- Enhance travel way along E. Bluff Drive for school bus.

## THE BLUFF NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA

The bluff neighborhood is centered along Northpointe Bluff Drive and contains a series of lots that have redeveloped in recent years. These properties provide some of the most stunning views of downtown Anchorage and the Chugach Mountains.

### Goals & Objectives:

- Build a pedestrian/bicycle connection to 3rd Avenue.
- Provide a dog park.
- Resolve parking issues due to housing density.

## ALASKA RAILROAD RAILYARD CORRIDOR

The Alaska Railroad yards lie at the foot of Government Hill, framing the southern edge of the neighborhood. The corridor consists of a mix of rail facilities along with some commercial and visitor-oriented services.

### Goals & Objectives:

- Minimize light spill into the residential portions of the Government Hill neighborhood.
- Minimize noise impacts.
- Coordinate access improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists into the upper portion of the Government Hill neighborhood and to Ship Creek Trail.
- Encourage preservation of historic buildings in the railyard corridor.

## PORT OF ANCHORAGE CHARACTER AREA

The Port lies along the shoreline of Knik Arm, framing the western edge of the Government Hill neighborhood. It consists of a mix of industrial facilities, including office buildings, storage tanks, and docks.

### Goals & Objectives:

- Develop Brown's Point Park (100th anniversary in 2012).
- Reopen portions of W. Bluff Drive as a trail while respecting security requirements.
- Provide better wayfinding signage.
- Minimize light spill into the residential portions of the Government Hill neighborhood.
- Coordinate access improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists into the upper portion of the Government Hill neighborhood and to Ship Creek Trail.

## INDUSTRIAL MIXED-USE CHARACTER AREA

The Industrial Mixed-Use Character Area lies along Ship Creek Road. This is an industrial corridor in which buildings flank the road.

### Goals & Objectives:

- Improve access to downtown, especially for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Redevelop abandoned buildings.
- Rehabilitate the historic power plant.
- Plant material along the railroad edge as a buffer.

## THE INDUSTRIAL KNUCKLE

The Industrial Knuckle is a point at which the Port of Anchorage yards and the Alaska Railroad yards merge with a mix of office buildings, services, and some visitor-oriented facilities. This also includes the bridge leading from downtown to Government Hill.

### Goals & Objectives:

- Improve pedestrian walkways along the bridge and associated access roads.

- Install public art and winter lights on the bridge.
- Enhance pedestrian safety and connections.
- Promote development of additional amenities to serve residents and visitors.

## COMPLETE THE GREEN SPACE RING

A ring of green space frames the western and southern portions of the bluffs of Government Hill. This is a highly valued resource that should be maintained for Government Hill residents, citizens of Anchorage at large, and visitors to the neighborhood. Adding other land to the open space system should be considered so that a “greenbelt” wraps completely around the upper portions of Government Hill.

### Goals & Objectives:

- Maintain the bluff as a greenbelt buffer with replanted trees.
- Expand on community garden opportunities.
- Maintain trails and pedestrian connections, providing a “ring” around the neighborhood.
- Create additional parkland designed to serve a variety of user groups.
- Convert the Old Defense Fuel Site to park space.
- Explore the potential for a community hall near the Curling Club.
- Maintain views to and from Government Hill, especially views to Denali and Mt. Foraker from Suzan Nightingale McKay Memorial Park.

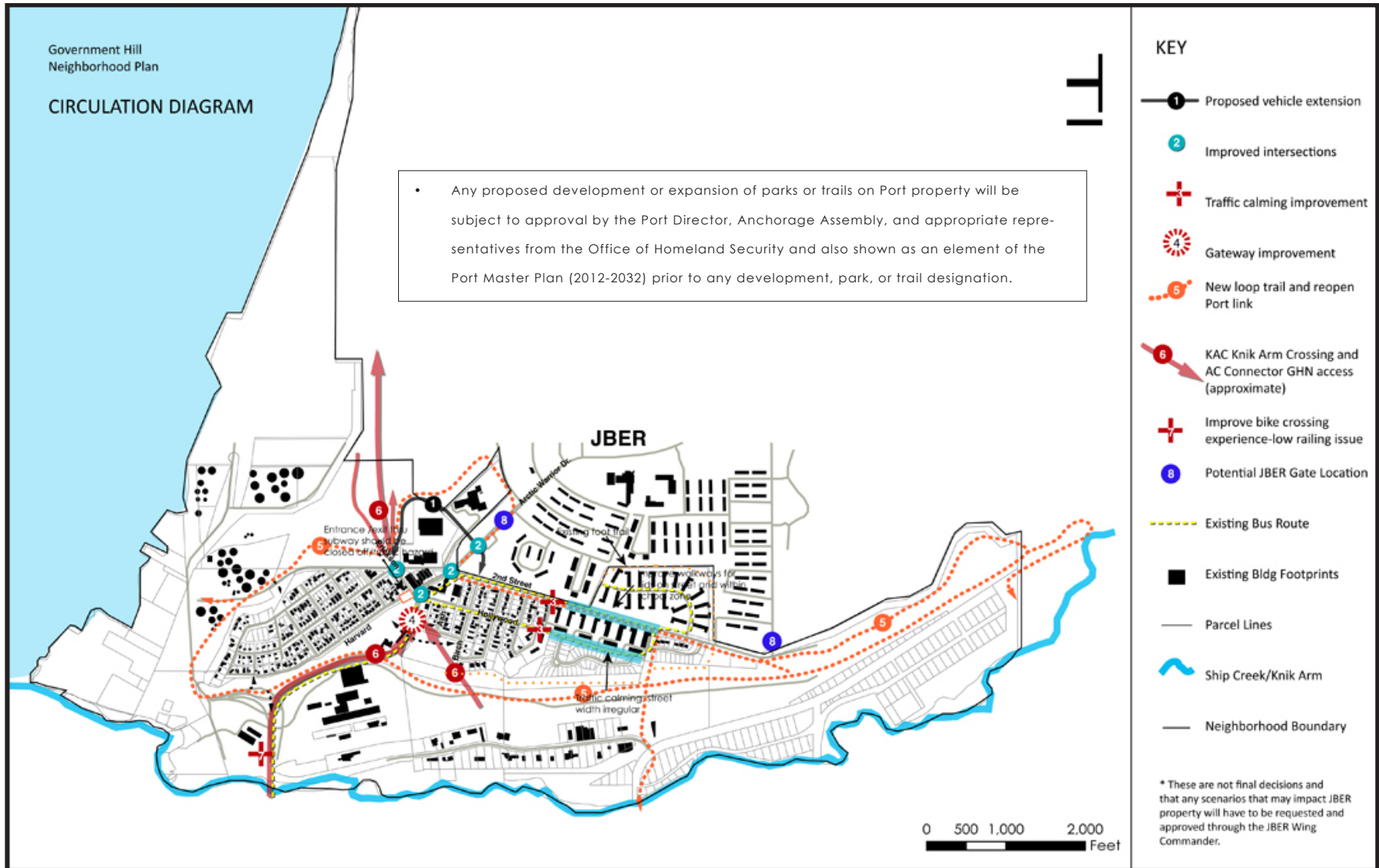
## B. LAND USE IMPROVEMENTS

With the specific goals and recommendations for the individual character areas in mind, there are some general land use recommendations that can be made. These are the key land use concepts for Government Hill:

1. Maintain the land use categories of the traditional residential neighborhoods.
2. Maintain use of alleys for residential access, utilities, and services.
3. Increase the mix of uses in the neighborhood center.
4. Moderately increase density in the neighborhood center.
5. Establish the core as a mixed-use district tailored to fit the range of building types and sizes as set forth in this plan.
6. Facilitate reconfiguration of more efficient parcels.
7. Ensure that major public projects are designed and built to reinforce and enhance the Government Hill neighborhood’s vision for its community.



*Government Hill neighborhood in summer*



## C. CIRCULATION SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS

This section describes what the future circulation system for Government Hill will look like and how pedestrians, vehicles, cyclists, and public transportation will be served. The Circulation Map is a visual illustration of key circulation items identified by the community and in this planning effort.

### AUTOMOBILE CONNECTIONS

#### 1. Strengthen Intra-Neighborhood Connections

Part of the unique character of the Government Hill neighborhood is its street system, which reflects the early development pattern in the city. This street network should be preserved, but at the same time, connectivity should be enhanced. This means maintaining, and even enhancing, east-west movement through the neighborhood and neighborhood center for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles.

While Government Hill retains its sense of a quiet enclave, circulation should be enhanced. New road improvements should ease traffic flow into, through, and within the neighborhood. The extent of these improvements varies with the different redevelopment scenarios that are presented, and also by the timing of phased improvements.

Some specific actions:

- Improved east-west connector between the hilltop neighborhoods.
- Improved intersection from downtown into the neighborhood center.
- Improved entrance into JBER.



*Undesirable driving, walking, and biking conditions from Government Hill to Downtown Anchorage in winter*

- Improved primary access and secondary access to the Government Hill Elementary School.

#### 2. Realign Some Streets to Create More Efficient Parcels

This includes improving key intersections to accommodate improved traffic flow while enhancing pedestrian safety at crosswalks.

#### 3. Improve Parking in the Neighborhood Center

While alternative modes are to be emphasized, parking supply and access needs improvement in the neighborhood center to serve existing commercial and institutional users, and to help stimulate reinvestment.

**Some specific actions:**

- Develop parking lots to be shared by adjacent property owners.
- Locate parking lots to the side and rear of buildings, so they will be visually subordinate to the street scene.

## PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SYSTEMS

### 1. Improve Access to the Government Hill Elementary School

Better access is needed to the school for pedestrians and motorists. Ideally, a second, alternative route would be available, linking east and west sides of the neighborhood.

### 2. Improve the Neighborhood Trail System

A continuing theme is the desire to “complete the loop of trails,” connecting pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes so that users may circle the neighborhood, and conveniently gain access to other regional trails.

**Some key actions to improve the trail system are:**

- Provide a trail along the western embankment with adequate security provisions along the port edge.
- Provide a trail connection that leads north of the AT&T facility, creating an alternative mode of access to the school.
- Provide a multimodal neighborhood loop trail.



*Port of Anchorage*

### 3. Improve Trail Access to Water Amenities

Along the southern edge of the neighborhood, improve trail links to key waterfront amenities.

Specific connections are:

- Connection to pedestrian improvements at the mouth of Ship Creek.
- Connection to the Ship Creek trail.

### 4. Improve Sidewalks in the Neighborhood Center

Design new sidewalks to encourage walking. Include walkways that are of sufficient width and also enhanced with landscaping.

Specific improvements include:

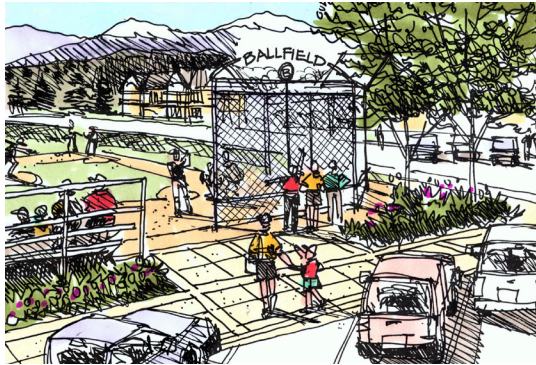
- Provide a pedestrian connector to link Harvard and Sunset Parks.
- Develop a community plaza as a focal point of the Neighborhood Center.
- Provide more active use areas along northern edge.
- Provide a pedestrian connection to Ship Creek trail.
- Plan for view opportunities.
- Maintain connections within existing park areas.
- Provide places for community gardens.
- Develop a historic interpretive trail.
- Consider the needs of handicapped or physically challenged people and senior citizens who reside in the neighborhood.



*Corner of Government Hill commercial center and pedestrian bridge*

## D. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

The hill area should be ringed with parks that are connected by a continuous loop of trails. This will provide hiking and biking opportunities for residents, employees, and visitors. Along the way, view overlooks should open to vistas of downtown,



the Knik Arm, and mountains in the distance. Several parks should contain play equipment or other amenities for active use, while others would be for passive enjoyment.

Some specific parks systems improvements:

- Maintain all existing parks and open space resources.
- Seek additional open space along the northern edge of the hill, and study the potential to include playing fields there.



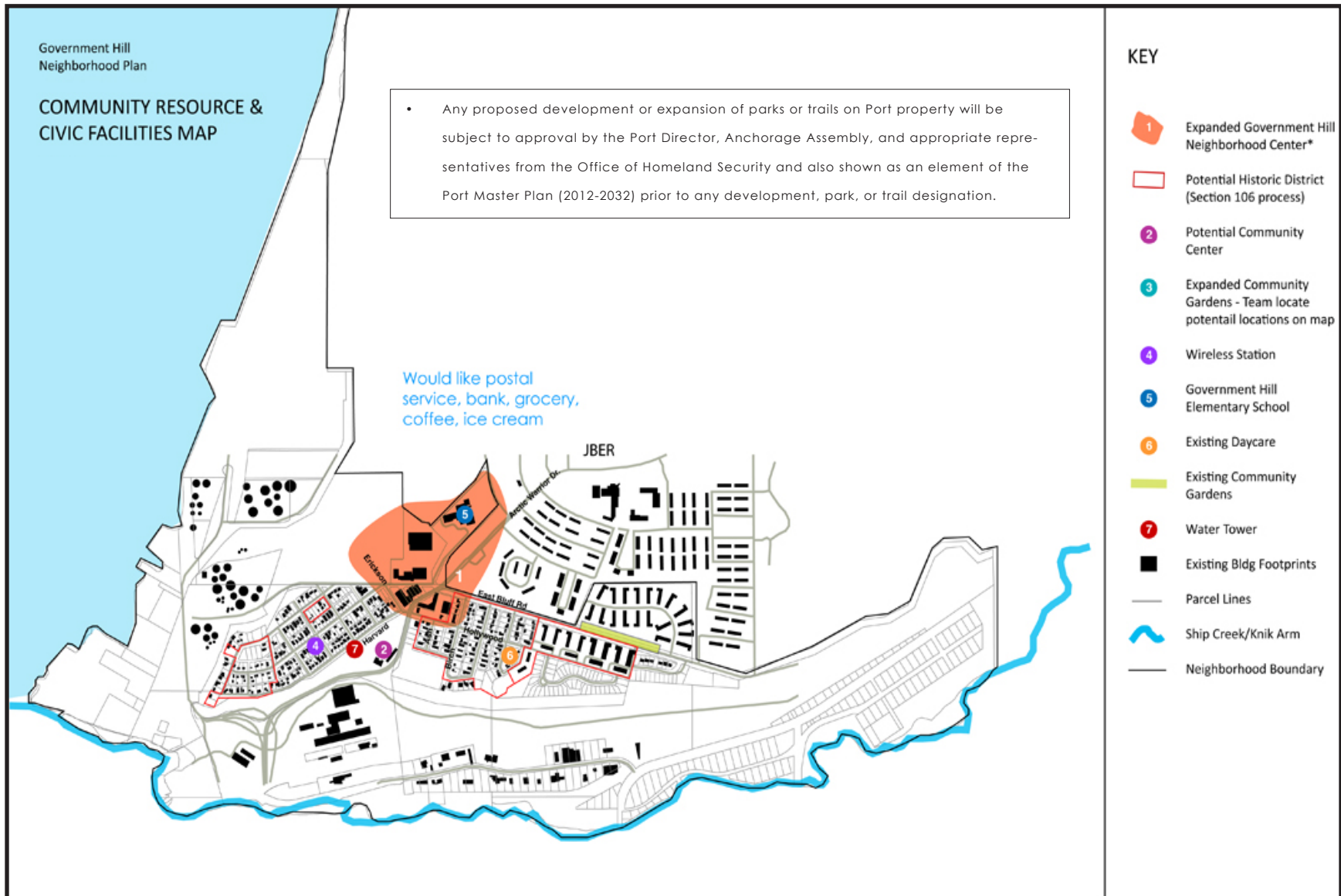
*Cargo containers located on Port of Anchorage property*



*Community gathering space in Sunset Park*



*Views from Government Hill*



## E. COMMUNITY RESOURCES & CIVIC FACILITIES



This section discusses the future vision for amenities provided to the residents of Government Hill including services lanes, spaces for civic functions, outdoor recreation, and local community gathering. Implementation of community amenities

will depend on available funding for both capital and long-term operational costs.

### 1. Maintain existing community facilities.

This includes the Curling Club and Square Dance Club buildings. It also includes preservation and maintenance of alleys for their traditional uses.

### 2. Provide a community meeting hall.

This building should be an assembly space that can be used for meetings and events. A preferred location is in the revitalized neighborhood center, but an alternative site in Harvard Park also merits further study. The community hall should be located where it can share parking with other complementary uses, and where traffic generated by activities there can help stimulate business development in the area.

### 3. Provide an outdoor use and gathering space in the Neighborhood Center.

This space should be designed to accommodate outdoor uses during appropriate weather conditions. It should be positioned to help energize the commercial core.

### 4. Provide space for a potential farmers' market.

The central plaza could be designed to serve this function, or a new parking lot could be designed for this purpose.

### 5. Promote preservation and adaptive reuse of historic resources.

These historic resources include some distinctive properties that are of noteworthy significance, such as the wireless building, but also many civic and residential structures throughout the neighborhood.

The Community Resources and Civic Facilities Map represents some of the key features present today and those the community would like to have in the future.



*Calvary Baptist Church*



*Anchorage Curling Club*



*Historic Water Tower*

# Land Use Summary

The Government Hill Neighborhood Plan is a policy document designed to guide future decisions affecting land use and development in the Government Hill neighborhood planning area. As such, it includes strategies for the future land use pattern. The land use pattern in the Government Hill planning area is well established with areas of residential, neighborhood commercial, open space, and public facilities on Government Hill, Port, Alaska Railroad, and industrial uses in Ship Creek. The Government Hill Neighborhood Plan (GHNP) land use plan map responds to this structure and builds upon it.

The land use plan is generalized to respond to the potential for a Knik Arm Crossing, through the three scenarios recommended in this plan. In each scenario the Knik Arm Crossing would use the “cut-and-cover” concept to minimize impacts to the location of the neighborhood center, and would be primarily within existing park, transportation, and industrial areas where it is located above surface. However, several properties designated as residential in the land use plan would be removed as part of KABATA’s proposed alignment.

In addition to considering existing uses, the GHNP is also influenced by policy direction from Anchorage 2020. The Anchorage 2020 Land Use Policy Map highlights several key land use considerations within the GHNP study area, including a neighborhood center on Government Hill and an industrial reserve in the Ship Creek basin. Other policies reinforced during public outreach relate to the importance of preserving neighborhoods and open spaces and encouraging neighborhood redevelopment in eastern Government Hill. The GHNP land use map has taken these into consideration and presents a plan that accommodates them in a cohesive and balanced fashion.

The GHNP land use plan map captures the land use pattern for Government Hill’s long-term preservation and continued development. It provides a visual representation of the GHNP’s land use policies and is used in conjunction with the character, transportation, and framework maps in the GNHP. The GHNP is not a zoning map which establishes specific land use regulations on a lot-by-lot basis. Rather, it is, in conjunction with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, a policy guide and legal basis for consideration of future zoning decisions and other development decisions.

The location and amount of each land use designation, shown on the GHNP land use map, is compatible with the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map conceptually approved by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission in 2006, with some refinements, clarifications, and updates.

## Major Land Use Components

The GHNP land use plan map identifies different land use designations to illustrate the location and extent of categories of land use throughout Government Hill. The classifications help define the building intensity and density for each area.

### Land Use Designations

The following pages define each land use designation shown on the Land Use Map. Each designation includes a statement of intent and a description of essential characteristics, such as predominant uses, intensity of use, and the general nature of new development/redevelopment. Where a land use designation has more than one corresponding zoning district, proposed zone changes should be demonstrated as the most appropriate, taking into consideration the purpose of each zone, the proposed rezoning site, and the zoning and/or development pattern of surrounding land.

## **Residential Uses**

Residential uses are predominant on the east and west ends of Government Hill. Excluding major transportation facilities, residential areas are the most widespread land use in Government Hill.

The GHNP Residential designations reflect existing zoning and built land use patterns, offer a broad range of low-medium housing densities and types to meet the demand of current and future residents. In addition to the residential uses described below, other uses such as schools, places of worship, parks, and child care facilities are often allowed in residential areas.

## **Residential (Low-Intensity Attached and Detached)**

### **Intent:**

The low-intensity attached and detached residential designation provides for a variety of single-family, single-family attached, and two-family residential neighborhoods.

### **Description:**

- Conventional single-family detached houses, more compact attached and detached housing types such as small-lot, cluster, townhome, accessory units, and duplex (two-family) units. Building scale, setbacks with landscaping or natural vegetation, and low traffic volumes on local streets contribute to a low-intensity living environment.
- Greater than 5 and up to 8 housing units per acre.
- Designation is applied to areas with an established single-family or two-family detached development pattern and on vacant parcels where higher density is desirable in areas adjacent to parks or schools.
- The corresponding zone is R-2A, R-2D.

## **Residential (Low-Medium Intensity)**

### **Intent:**

The “low-medium intensity” residential designation provides for a range of single- and multi-family housing in neighborhoods that offer a compatible diversity of housing choices.

### **Description:**

- Standard detached houses and small-lot, single-family homes, attached single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, and low-density multi-family. When located in a neighborhood environment, which includes any nearby single-family homes, the physical scale, appearance, and street orientation of multi-family/attached housing development should be compatible.
- Greater than 8 and up to 15 housing units per gross acre.
- Designation is applied to areas that have developed with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing units or are near a major street where public transportation is available.
- The corresponding zones are R-2F and R-2M.

## **Residential (Medium-Intensity)**

### **Intent:**

The medium-intensity residential designation provides for a compatible mix of multi-family and attached housing choices in an attractive, living environment with a range of amenities for residents, including easy access to parks and open space, retail services, employment centers, and public transportation.

### **Description:**

- Multi-family complexes and townhouses characterized by low-rise, multi-story buildings, with design amenities such as private open space and recreation areas.
- Designation is applied to areas with an established multi-family housing development pattern. It is also applied to areas once designated for lower density residential and non-residential use that are either underutilized or are adjacent to commercial areas or major streets where transition to more intensive residential use is appropriate.
- The corresponding zone is R-3; R-2M can be used in areas in transition between multi-family and single-family housing.

## **Commercial/Mixed-use Center Uses**

Anchorage 2020 states that there exists a “neighborhood commercial center” within Government Hill. The GHNP refines this concepts by:

- Renaming neighborhood commercial center as “neighborhood center.”
- Assigning the neighborhood center designation to a more specific area than shown in the Anchorage 2020 Land Use Policy Map.
- Expanding the neighborhood center from the extent of existing commercial zoning to reflect the concept of a mixed-use center with a variety of commercial, residential,

and public/institutional uses.

The “neighborhood center” designations on the GHNP Land Use Plan Map is intended to provide a focal point of commercial, cultural, and community activity at the neighborhood scale, in walking distance from most of the residential areas of the neighborhood. It is envisioned to serve the surrounding area with shopping and services, at a scale in keeping with the area it serves, and evolve as a compact, mixed-use activity center with redevelopment potential and the opportunity to integrate various activities (including residential) within a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The following commercial, mixed-use, and public/institutional designations allow for a range of shopping, retail services, public/institutional uses, and low-intensity employment in the focal center of Government Hill neighborhood. This area is located in the center of the neighborhood along the linear corridor between Downtown Anchorage and JBER.

## **Neighborhood Center**

### **Intent:**

The “neighborhood center” designation provides for small-to medium-size commercial convenience centers that serve the surrounding neighborhood or cluster of neighborhoods.

### **Description:**

- Small-scale, non-obtrusive convenience retail and personal services, such as food markets, drug stores, restaurants, and professional services oriented to the needs of the surrounding residential population. The largest centers may be anchored by a full-sized grocery store.
- The scale, appearance, and function of new development

should be compatible with adjacent residential uses, and designed with the goals of reducing vehicle trips and driving distances, and minimizing traffic impacts.

- The corresponding zones are B-1A and NMU.

### **Schools and Community Institutions**

#### **Intent:**

The “school and community institutions” designation provides for the Government Hill Elementary School, that can readily integrate at the local neighborhood center scale and provides a community service or focus for the surrounding area.

#### **Description:**

- This use consists of the public school campus and facilities, which is located on a long-term lease agreement on JBER property.
- The corresponding zone is PLI or DR.

### **Public Utility/Facility**

#### **Intent:**

The “public utility/facility” designation provides for public facilities and infrastructure that is primarily employment/industrial in character, and refers to the AT&T facility.

#### **Description:**

- Predominant land uses consist of public utilities (sewer and water treatment plants, power generation plants, industrial yards, water tank reservoirs, pump stations, and facilities for maintenance or fleet services) and public facilities (such as fire stations) not oriented to on-site customer service.
- The corresponding zones are the PLI, I-1 and I-2 zones.

### **Industrial Uses and Transportation Facilities**

The Port and Railroad operations areas account for roughly two thirds of the total GNHP planning area and exerts a significant influence on land use in the Planning Area. Railroad and Port lands include a mix of transportation and industrial activities accommodating passenger as well as air cargo service. These activities generate truck and automobile traffic that uses local roads. The Port is situated in the westernmost portion of the study area adjacent to Knik Arm.

Anchorage 2020 identified an “industrial reserve” in the Alaska Railroad Terminal Reserve, where the predominant use is industrial establishments on Alaska Railroad lease lots. The GNHP implements this concept by assigning industrial land uses clustered along Post Road and Whitney Drive in a corridor north of Ship Creek. This area is characterized by existing industrial uses proximate to major rail, sea, and regional highway transportation facilities.

### **Industrial/Industrial Reserve**

#### **Intent:**

The “industrial/industrial reserve” designation preserves key industrial lands for existing and future industrial economic development in areas served by major transportation corridors, and allows the most intensive industrial uses.

#### **Description:**

- This designation is a reserve for a wide range of existing and future industrial uses. Non-industrial uses are limited to prevent land use and traffic conflicts and to preserve land for industrial economic development. Uses may include manufacturing, major transportation operations, research and development, industrial/business parks, warehousing

and distribution, equipment and materials storage, vehicle and equipment repair, and waste management and similar uses. Certain areas may allow for processing and distribution of natural resources and hazardous materials.

- Designation is applied to areas with access to major truck routes and rail lines, with established industrial uses and/or with proximity to a Major Transportation Facility;
- The corresponding zone is I-2.

### **Major Transportation Facility**

#### **Intent:**

The “major transportation facility” designation provides for large multi-use transportation facilities of regional, state, and national importance, including airports, ports, and railroads.

#### **Description:**

- This designation is applied to facilities with regional and global transportation importance that are land intensive and considered essential to the local and state economy and transportation infrastructure.
- This designation in Government Hill comprises the TSAIA, subject to FAA grant assurances and other regulations, and the ARRC terminal railroad utility corridors subject, in some instances, to exclusive United States Surface Transportation Board regulation.
- The corresponding zones are the AD, MI, MC, I-1, I-2, IC, and PLI zones.

### **Parks and Natural Resource Uses**

Recreation lands and facilities are an integral part of the quality of life in Government Hill and help buffer the residential neighborhoods and Ship Creek from neighboring industrial and transportation uses. Park, recreation, and natural open

space areas that are designated on the Land Use Plan Map generally either exist or are identified on existing plans. They include dedicated parks with and without active recreational facilities, as well as hillside and riparian areas that provide natural open space value. Portions of Alaska Railroad land allowed for public recreation is also identified. The Port of Anchorage has just embarked on a master planning/business planning effort for 2012-2032. The Master Plan will be designed to ensure full opportunity for adjacent neighborhoods to be informed and provide comments during this planning process. To address reconsidering the secure boundaries of the Port or modifying access rules for trails will require consultation with the Department of Homeland Security.

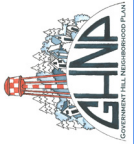
### **Parks and Natural Resources**

#### **Intent:**

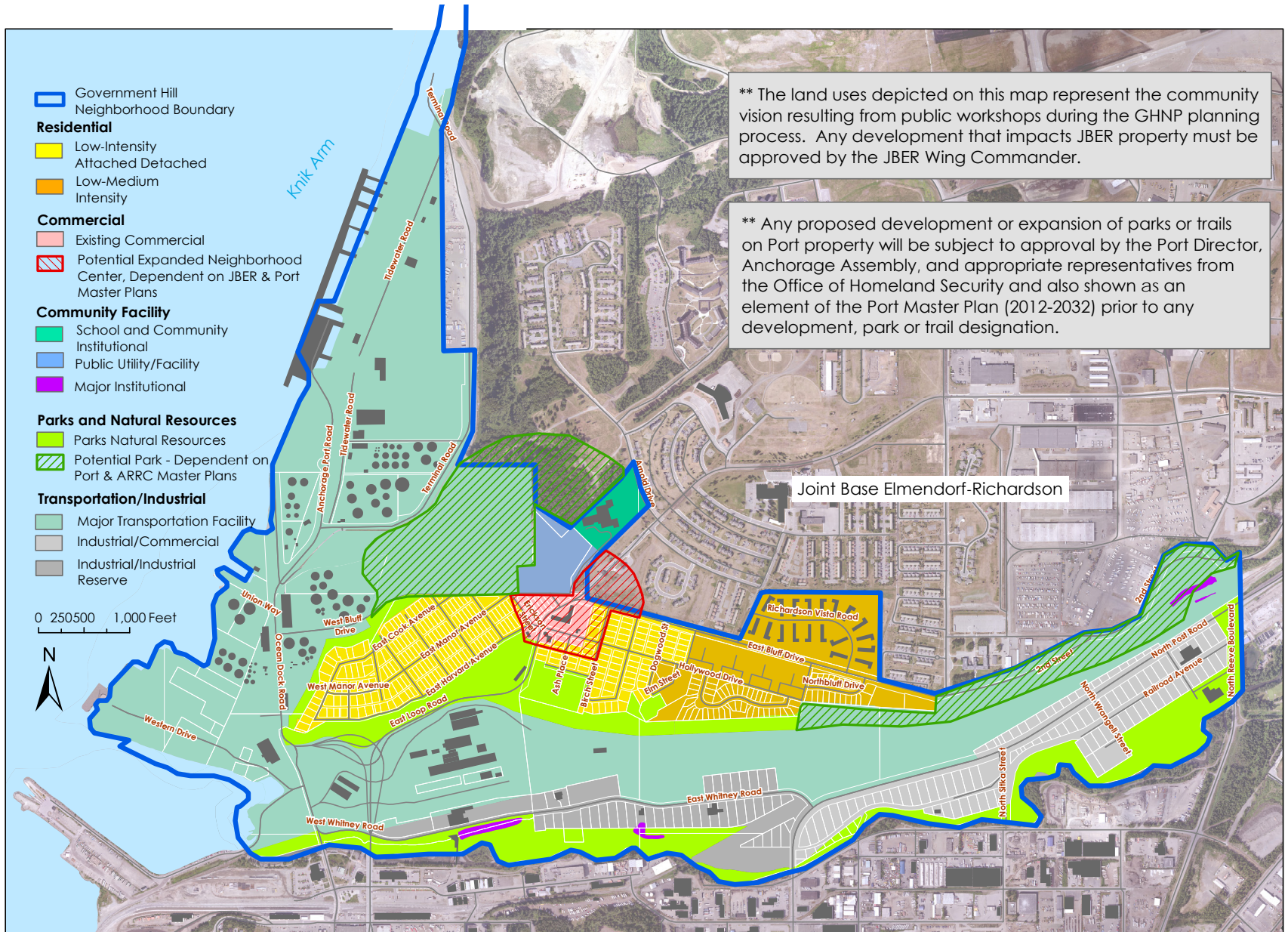
The “parks and natural resources” designation provides for active and passive outdoor recreation, conservation of natural areas, trail corridors, and connections between neighborhoods.

#### **Description:**

- Includes neighborhood, community, and natural resource use areas. The character and design of parks and natural open space areas differ depending on their individual function and context.
- Designation is applied to existing municipal parks and greenbelts.
- The corresponding zones are PR and PLI.
- Any proposed development or expansion of parks or trails on Port property will be subject to approval by the Port Director, Anchorage Assembly, and appropriate representatives from the Office of Homeland Security and also shown as an element of the Port Master Plan (2012-2032) prior to any development, park, or trail designation.



# GHNP Land Use Plan Map



## **Other Areas that Function as Park or Natural Resource**

### **Intent:**

This designation applies to non-municipal lands, or other municipal non-park parcels that, by adopted plan, formal agreement, subdivision or easement, function as part of the community system of parks, outdoor recreational facilities, or natural preservation areas (e.g., HLB mitigation parcels).

### **Description:**

- Includes a small number of dispersed sites serving as private park, outdoor recreation, wetland mitigation, or natural resource areas, some of which may not allow public recreation access.
- The corresponding zones are PLI or other zones depending on the location.

## **F. Urban Design Principles for Government Hill**

Revitalizing the Government Hill neighborhood center offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate proven best practices in urban design and winter city design. These include well-designed streetscapes and new buildings that respect the heritage of the community, while setting a progressive tone for a new and exciting neighborhood center. A well-thought-out and designed neighborhood center in Government Hill has the potential to become an exciting active space for all seasons and one that stands out as a model for other neighborhoods in the Municipality as well as internationally.

This section provides basic design guidelines for public- and private-sector investment in the neighborhood, with a focus on the neighborhood center. Many of the images displayed in this section were identified by workshop participants as representing preferred design for the area.

### **Winter city design principles:**

- Contact with nature
- Year-round usability
- User participation
- Cultural continuity
- Creation of comfortable micro-climatic conditions

# Complete Streets

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Streets in Government Hill should be designed as "complete streets," which serve all modes of transportation equally and promote an active pedestrian-oriented environment. This is especially important in the neighborhood center.



## Plan for year-round pedestrian activity.

- Provide sidewalks with sufficient width to encourage walking year-round.
- Provide covered walkways to shelter pedestrians from snow and rain.
- Install arcades on building frontages that can be rolled up during warmer weather and rolled down in winter, creating year-round walkable space.

## Plan for year-round bicycle activity.

- Streets in the neighborhood center will have shared travel lanes.
- Design for bike use along trails and secondary streets.

## Design for a balance of circulation modes.

- Include bus and auto circulation.
- Include parking lanes where right-of-way width permits.
- Provide sidewalks along all primary streets in the neighborhood center.
- Accommodate freight access where appropriate.
- Promote and encourage multi-modal opportunities through development choices, land use, and street typology and designation.
- Encourage preservation of traditional neighborhood streets and alleys for residential access, utilities, and services.

# Government Hill Neighborhood Center Street Sections

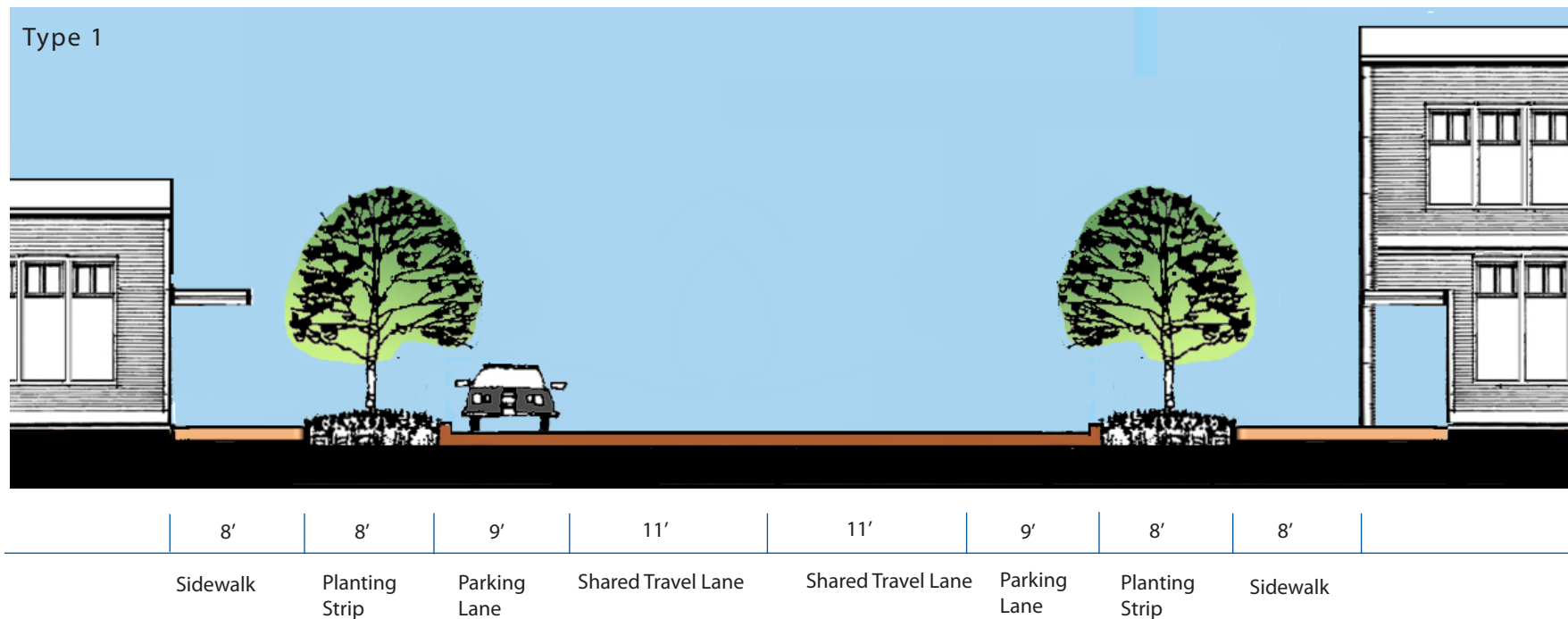
In the revitalized neighborhood center, three classifications of street sections should be applied. These are designed to accommodate a mix of users – pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, along with transit vehicles. The intent is to provide sufficient space for all functional requirements while limiting the overall right-of-way width so that the streets will be in proportion to buildings that frame them, and to create a sense of a “village” center. Each is designed to provide adequate space for pedestrians to walk comfortably. They also are designed with planting strips, which separate sidewalks from parking

or travel lanes, and can accommodate snow storage in winter, while serving as a landscaped amenity in summer.

The three cross-sections of those classifications are described here:

## Type 1 – Main Street

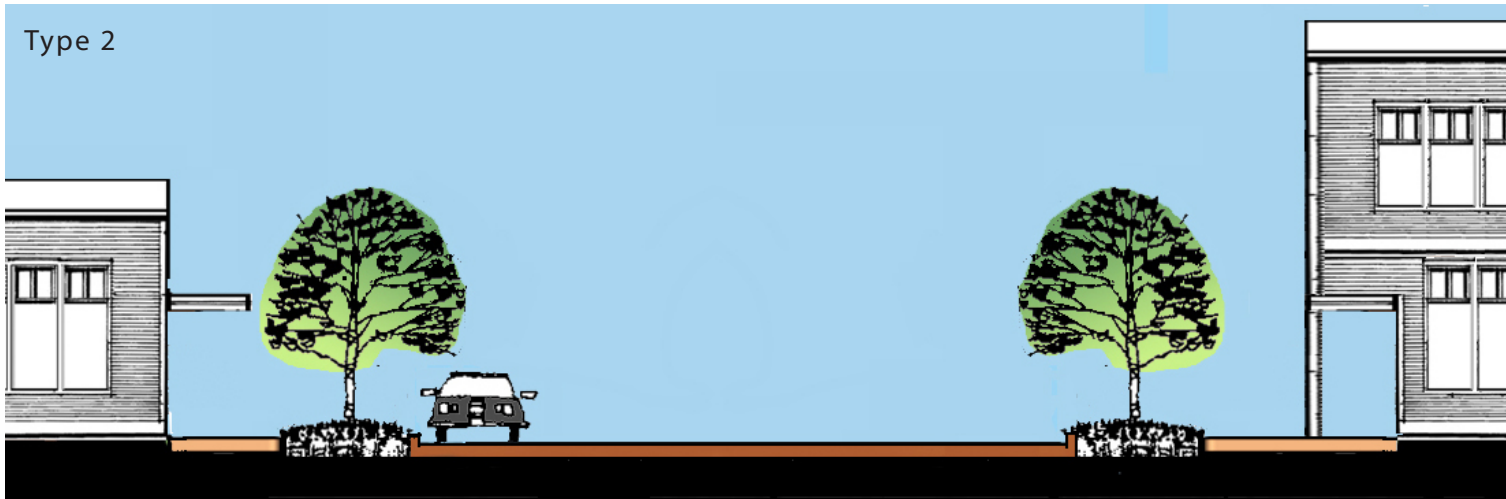
This street applies to the heart of the neighborhood center, the “main street” in its core, where the highest levels of



use are anticipated. The street section is for a 72-foot cross section. It has two travel lanes of 11 feet in width, one in each direction. These are flanked by parallel parking lanes of 9 feet in width, which provide additional parking and also serve as a buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians. A planting strip of 8 feet wide separates the sidewalk from the parking lane. In winter, the planting strip serves for interim snow storage. The planting strip contains grasses and shrubs that can withstand compacted snow during winter months. The sidewalk is also 8 feet in width, to accommodate pedestrians passing in both directions.

**Type 2 - Secondary Street**

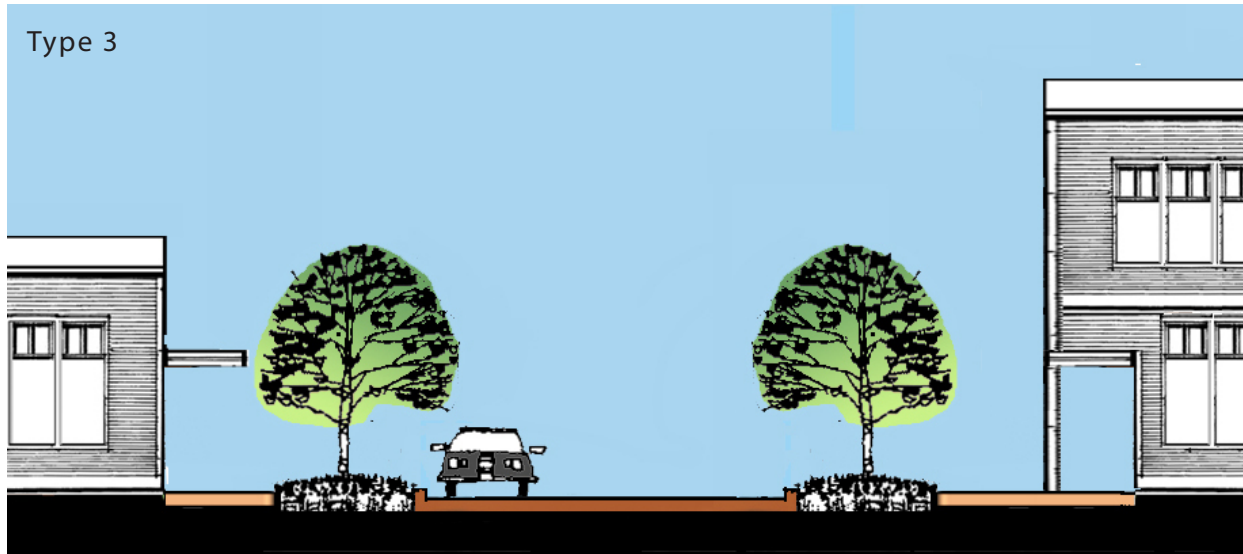
This applies to the secondary streets in the neighborhood center, where traffic volumes are less, but the right-of-way still provides room for on-street parking. They typically connect directly to the “main street.” This is designed for a 62-1/2 foot right-of-way. It also contains two travel lanes, one in each direction, of 11 feet in width. These are flanked with parking lanes, which are reduced to 8-1/2 feet. A 6-foot wide planting strip separates the parking lane from a sidewalk, which is 6 feet in width.



6'	6'	8.5'	11'	11'	8.5'	6'	6'
Sidewalk	Planting Strip	Parking Lane	Shared Travel Lane	Shared Travel Lane	Parking Lane	Planting Strip	Sidewalk

### Type 3 – Neighborhood Lane

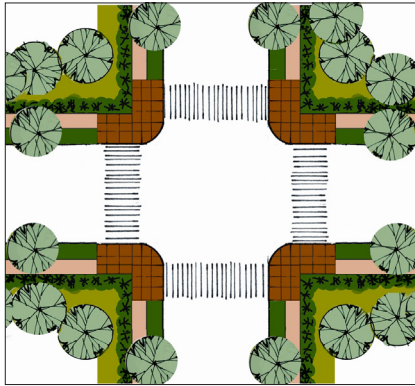
This applies to internal circulation lanes, which connect parking lots or short streets that will carry a limited amount of traffic. These may lead to other primary and secondary streets. It has a 50-foot wide right-of-way. This accommodates two travel lanes, each of 11 feet in width, one in each direction. This is framed by an 8-foot planting strip, and beyond is a 6-foot wide sidewalk. This street section does not include on-street parking.



6'	8'	11'	11'	8'	6'
Sidewalk	Planting Strip	Shared Travel Lane	Shared Travel Lane	Planting Strip	Sidewalk

# Streetscape Design

Design the streetscape in the neighborhood center to encourage pedestrian activity and to establish a distinct identity for Government Hill.



## Clearly identify major cross-walks.

- Design crosswalks to be slightly raised for positive drainage away from the walking surface.
- Use distinctive striping or paving patterns.

## Use snow-tolerant vegetation.

- Plant deciduous trees on the south-facing sides of buildings and outdoor areas.
- Use berms and vegetation to direct snow drifts away from building entrances.
- Plan snow storage areas to be planted spaces during warmer months.
- Use plant materials (especially decorative grasses) that can withstand the snow pack.

## Separate sidewalks and pedestrian walkways from roadways.

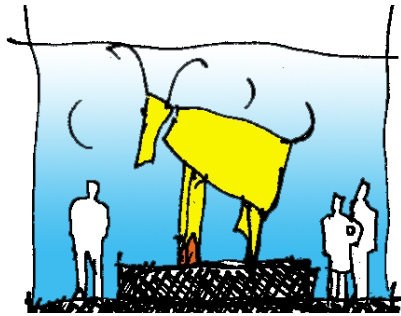
- This separation protects pedestrians from the spray of slush and water from passing cars.
- It also provides space for snow storage.
- Cover ramps or stairs to protect them from snow and ice.
- Provide handrails for walkways on slopes.

## Design for snow storage.

- Street cross-sections should be designed to provide for snow storage adjacent to the road.
- By creating this additional space between the road and the sidewalk, snow from plowing is not placed on pedestrian walkways.

# Public Art & Heritage Interpretation

Incorporate public art in outdoor use areas at building entrances and in parks. Include art in heritage interpretation schemes as well, and provide a series of historical markers to convey the history of Government Hill.



## Provide a focal point.

- Use public art, a water feature, or distinctive plant arrangements to create a distinct identity for public spaces.

## Consider interpretive themes in art installations.

- These may be representational forms or more abstract.

## Include historical artifacts in heritage interpretation.

- Combine these with markers to explain their historical associations.

## Provide a coordinated set of interpretive markers.

- These should be installed along public trails, in parks, and in streetscape designs.

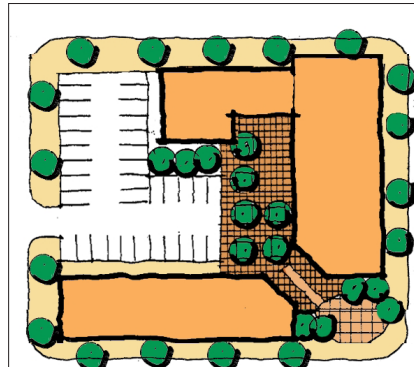
# Site Design

Locate buildings to define the street wall along a block and to frame outdoor use areas. Locate parking to the side and the rear and link them internally to minimize the number of curb cuts required along the street. Clearly define pedestrian ways through the site.



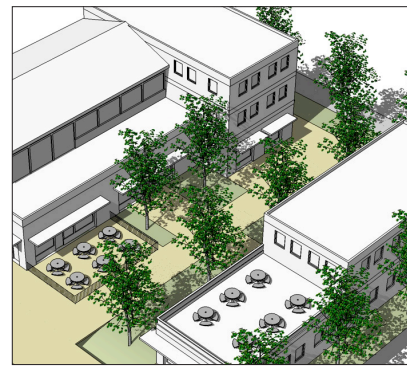
### Design a building to anchor a corner site.

- Use landscaping and outdoor use areas to define the street edge where a building is not located.



### Use an entry plaza to lead pedestrians from parking to the street.

- Clearly define walkways with lighting, textured paving and landscape materials.



### Design open space to be shared by abutting buildings.

- Also plan for roof-top use opportunities.



### Divide parking areas into smaller “pods.”

- This reduces the perceived scale of parking and provides more opportunity for landscaping and snow storage.
- Link individual lots internally to minimize turning movements onto the street.

# Pedestrian Systems

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Plan sidewalks, trails, and pathways as an integrated circulation system for pedestrians. Include connections through mixed-use developments as well as along public realm routes. Design them for year-round use.



**Provide a pedestrian link through mixed-use developments.**

- Connect this internal trail to public walkways at the perimeter of the property.



**Provide sheltered connections between buildings.**

- This also provides opportunity for outdoor services.
- Consider providing heated sidewalks where appropriate.

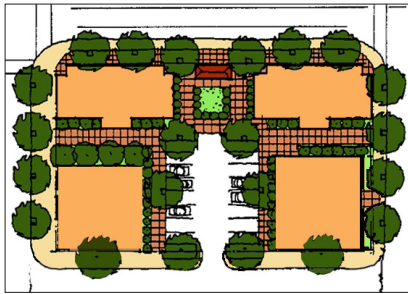


**Provide an arcade along a primary facade.**

- This also serves as a transition space from the public sidewalk.
- Provide amenities, benches, trash receptacles, and lighting.

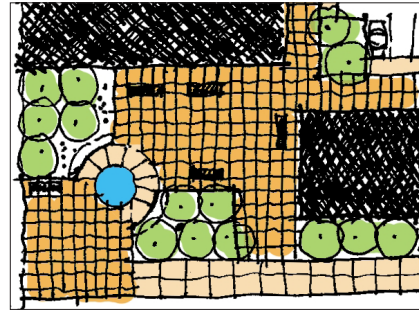
# Design of Public Spaces

Any outdoor space in the Neighborhood Center should be designed to be attractive year-round and to invite a diverse range of users. It should be planned in conjunction with indoor uses that abut it in order to enhance the vitality of the area.



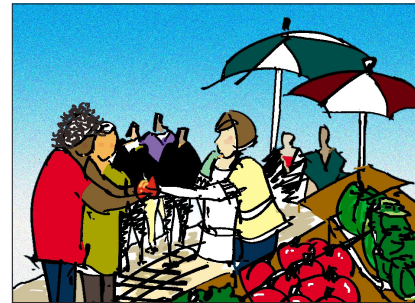
### Interconnect public spaces.

- Link plazas to adjoining uses with walkways.
- Link streetscapes and public spaces with low-impact public signage.



### Provide a focal point.

- Use public art, a water feature, or distinctive plant arrangements to create a distinct identity.



### Design for a mix of users.

- Different types of activities and events should be combined so they can build off each other. For example, combining a skating rink, outdoor café, children’s play area, and food or holiday market can create a synergistic effect, even when it’s cold and dark outside.
- Plan for a diversity of ages and interests.



### Design for year-round use.

- Plan for seasonal changes in uses.
- Design these spaces so that wintertime activities are also assets.



# Design of Outdoor Spaces

Incorporate design devices that will animate an outdoor space and facilitate its use year-round. Plan for a range of activities and keep it flexible to adapt to changing needs.



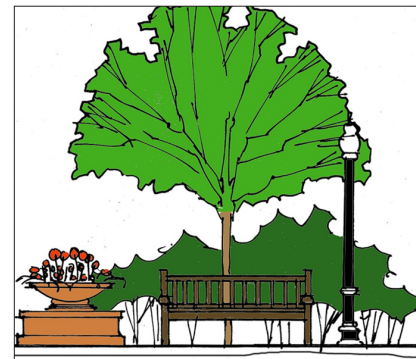
## Provide wind shelters.

- Use pergolas and other structures to act as screens.
- Install hedges and shrubs as “living snow fences” to protect gateways and walkways from wind.
- Plan areas of dense evergreens to act as a wind break, protecting pedestrians from windchill.
- Choose tree species that offer attractive twig color or fruit and that are salt tolerant.



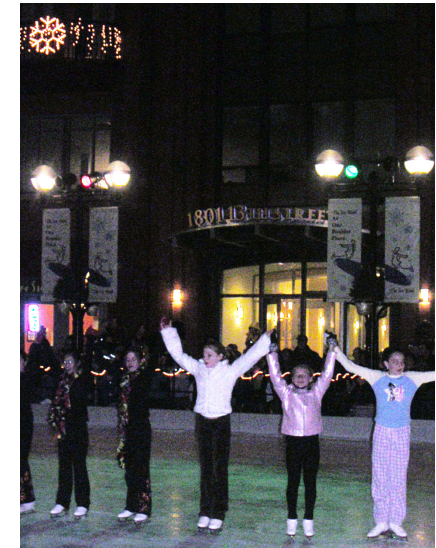
## Locate an outdoor use area to maximize solar access opportunities.

- Avoid locating outdoor use areas on north-facing slopes.
- Avoid creating public spaces for winter use in areas shaded from the sun.
- Provide wind screens in areas that serve as outdoor gathering spaces.
- Use buildings to protect outdoor spaces from prevailing winds.



## Design street furniture for year-round use.

- Use benches with slats, so they will drain and not collect snow and ice.
- Wood or composite synthetics are preferred for seating, rather than metal or concrete.



## Design for year-round use.

- Plan for seasonal changes in uses.
- Design spaces so that wintertime activities are also assets.



# Building Orientation

Design buildings to orient to the street and define the public realm. Also position buildings to frame outdoor spaces and to orient to the sun for maximum solar benefit. Establish a pedestrian-friendly street edge by providing sheltering canopies and arcades.



## Orient a building to the street.

- Provide a storefront or other design element that attracts pedestrian activity.
- Align storefronts along the street edge.
- Provide a primary entrance that faces the street.

## Provide a canopy to shelter the sidewalk.

- This will enhance winter-time use of the street.
- It also provides a sense of scale to the building front.

## Provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge.

- Each building form should be designed to enhance the street and invite pedestrian activity.
- Recommended treatments include:
  - Display windows
  - Display cases
  - Wall art
  - Architectural detailing
  - Landscaping.

## Orient to the sun.

- Orient buildings to maximize solar access opportunities.

# Building Form, Mass, and Scale

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New buildings should provide a sense of human scale. This can be accomplished by varying wall planes, roof forms, and setbacks. Changes in materials can also help. In addition, variations in wall planes can mitigate winter micro-climatic conditions on the street.



## Provide variation in wall planes.

- This will help to provide a village character scale.
- Also design exterior walls to reduce wind speed by incorporating balconies, stepped façades, or wall offsets into the building's exterior.

## Use horizontal moldings and changes in wall planes to express a sense of scale.

- Changes in material colors and patterns also help to provide visual interest to pedestrians.

## Divide a larger building into modules.

- This helps to express traditional village building scale and reduce the overall mass.

# Building Form

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Use building forms that convey a traditional village center character, while also mitigating winter weather conditions. Plan for snow shedding so that primary pedestrian ways are protected.



**Use variations in roof forms to reduce perceived scale.**

- Design roofs for snow and ice accumulation and to prevent shedding onto parking areas or pedestrian walkways.



**Orient roofs for optimum snow shedding.**

- Direct snowfall away from primary pedestrian entrances.



**Provide variations in wall planes.**

- Use wall offsets, notches, and changes in materials to express a change in scale.

# Building Entry Transitions

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Orient an entrance to the street and other pedestrian way. Provide a sheltered transitional space at a building entrance. A transition area at a building entrance provides patrons with an area to shed snow prior to entering the building.



### Use an arcade as an entry.

- This provides transitional space for removing snow before entering a building.



### Provide an air-lock entry.

- This reduces heat loss during winter.



### Use a canopy as a transition.

- This can control snow shedding and help to identify the primary entrance.



### Use an atrium as an entry.

- This can help extend year-round use and orient to open spaces.



*Consider an atrium as a year-round gathering space in a development.*

# Building Materials

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Use building materials that have a proven durability in the Anchorage climate and that also convey a sense of human scale. Preferred materials are concrete, brick, architectural block, stucco, wood, and fiber-cementitious composite siding.



**Brick is appropriate.**

- Use traditional brick modules to convey a sense of scale.



**Use concrete that is detailed to provide visual interest.**

- Combine it with wood and other materials to provide a sense of scale.



**Use warm colors for year-round appeal.**

- Variations in color also reduce the perceived mass of larger buildings.



**Fiber-cementitious lap siding is appropriate.**

- Use it in designs that appear similar to traditional lap or board-and-batten siding.

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# 5. NEIGHBORHOOD CORE IMPROVEMENTS



## A. INTRODUCTION

A series of alternative development scenarios illustrates opportunities for redevelopment that could occur in the center of the Government Hill neighborhood. These scenarios assume that an organization would be established that could negotiate with property owners to assemble lands in ways that would improve efficiency for redevelopment.

Each scenario illustrates the interaction of some key variables. These include the ways in which streets and intersections are constructed, the mix of uses that could result, and the character of the spaces created through redevelopment.

The scenarios in this chapter are developed as preliminary planning concepts. It is not anticipated that any specific redevelopment would actually follow any one of these scenarios

exactly. Instead, they illustrate how some general principles could be combined to yield an enhanced neighborhood center. In many cases, ideas from several of these scenarios could be combined and slightly reconfigured.

The intent is to demonstrate a degree of flexibility in implementation. In order to be successful, the plan must retain a sufficient degree of flexibility in order to respond to varying conditions over time.

While these are “big ideas,” they each have the ability to be phased to varying degrees. Some require a more substantial investment in infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, parks) than others. Some have a strong first-phase opportunity, in which a “sense of place” can be established in an initial phase. Others have a stronger final phase when more substantial buildout occurs.



*Government Hill residences*



*Government Hill neighborhood street in winter*



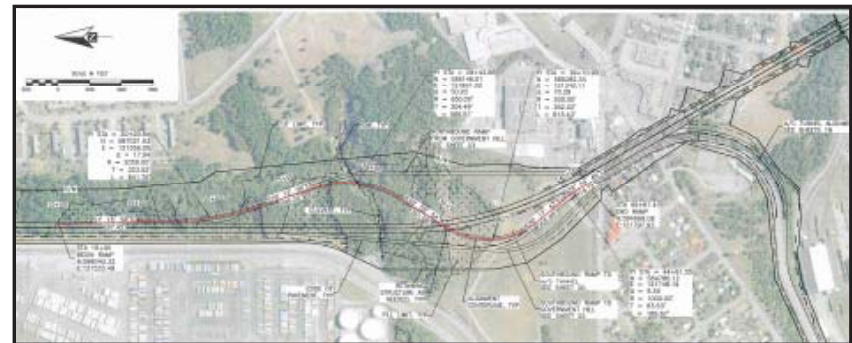
*Apartment complex on Government Hill*

This text summarizes the key features of each scenario, with the commentary organized into a series of important variables related to the character of development, specific systems improvements that are conceived and the phasing implications.

In each of the scenarios, building footprints and parking layouts are suggested that illustrate the general intent of the scenario. It is understood, however, that specific building shapes, sizes and uses would change as the plan is implemented. In the illustrative plans, buildings are assigned numbers, which is to facilitate market testing and general discussions.

Phasing concepts are shown in simple bubble diagrams overlaid on the alternative scenarios. These reflect preliminary ideas about how parcels may be assembled and streets improved.

### KAC Project Considerations



*KAC 35% Design Schematic*

The proposed Knik Arm Crossing project would cause demolition of some existing commercial buildings along the western edge of the neighborhood center. This will result in a reduction in the amount of land that is available for redevelopment for civic, commercial, and higher density residential uses in the

neighborhood center. And, while the proposed cut-and-cover would, when completed, provide space for parking that could support commercial uses, the abutting parcels will be of sizes and shapes that will be difficult to generate enough square footage to justify development.

Redevelopment of land along these edges also would be dependent upon the phasing of the cut-and-cover project, for timing of their redevelopment. This could discourage short- and mid-term investment in these areas. For example, businesses that may be dislocated because of the cut-and-cover project may not find suitable places in the remaining portions of the neighborhood center and may be more inclined to move elsewhere in the region.

The reduction in parcels with appropriate redevelopment characteristics also could result in an overall net loss of businesses in the area, particularly those that serve the neighborhood itself. This could affect the viability of the historically significant residential portions of the neighborhood, in terms of sustaining them as attractive areas for homeowners to invest and maintain their properties.

For these reasons, the redevelopment scenarios that are presented in this neighborhood plan seek to create new parcel configurations that can provide more efficient use of land. They also propose expanding the mixed-use area to the east, in order to establish some areas that can redevelop soon and not be directly impacted by, or delayed by, the potential cut-and-cover project. This would help to mitigate the potential impacts on investment and redevelopment opportunities that may result from the bridge project.

A key factor in planning for the revitalization of the neighborhood center is the future of the land identified as the “cut-and-cover” area in the proposed KAC project. The KAC 35% design schematic provides a general location for this feature, with details to be developed later. Each of the alternative scenarios includes diagrammatic indications of a range of improvements that could occur in that location. These features are conceived such that they could be supported on a tunnel cover, or as elements that could be constructed at grade if no tunnel occurs. The concepts focus on amenities that would serve the public in general, and that would also support more intensive uses on abutting lands. As such, this area would serve as a central gathering spot for the community and connect the east and west sides of the neighborhood. These amenities are projected to occur at any time during the implementation of an enhanced neighborhood center. That is, early development in other parts of the neighborhood center is not directly dependent upon construction scheduling in this area.



*Example street view*



*Example birds eye view of proposed neighborhood center*



*Example scenario sketch*

# B. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

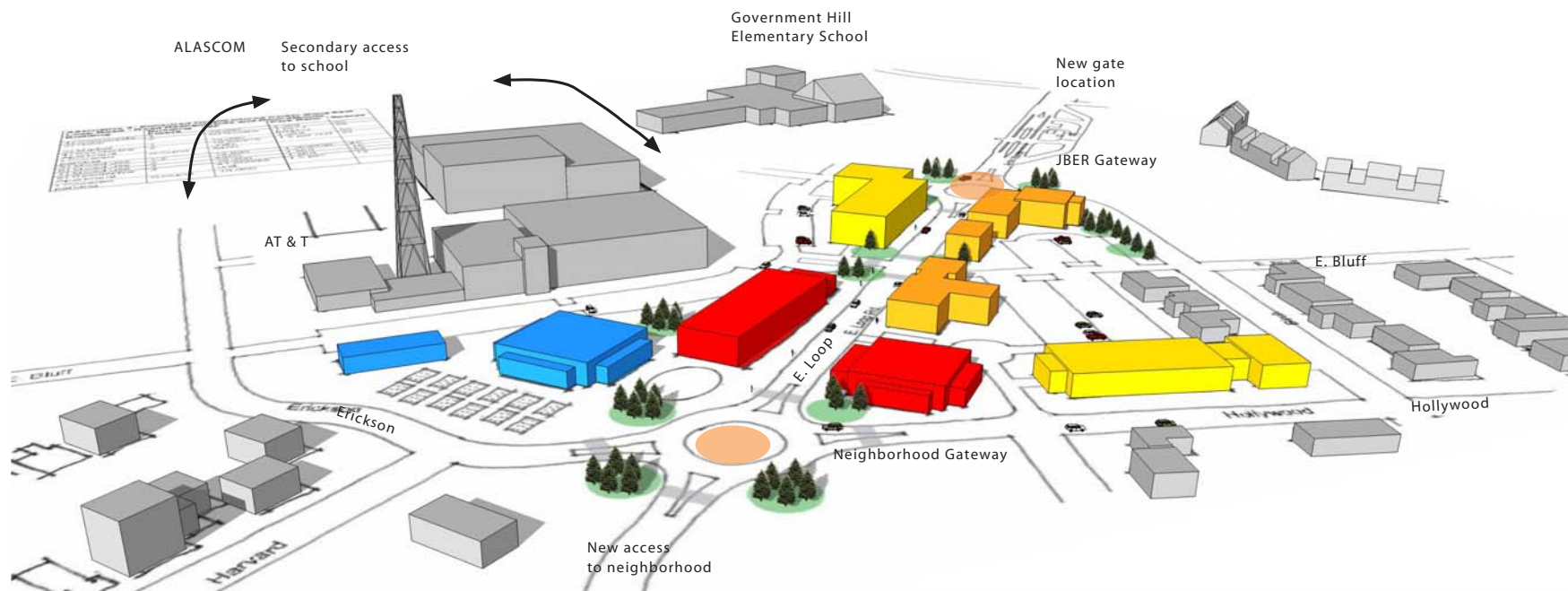
## CREATING TWO BLOCKS OF MAIN STREET

The Scenarios in the plan are meant to present options for redevelopment of the commercial core. They reflect the vision set forth by the community during a series of public workshops. They are a visual representation of the type of development the community will actively be engaged in promoting. Until a specific scenario is endorsed by the Government Hill community, the scenarios will not have a regulatory effect per se, but they can serve to give interested developers an idea of the type of development the community would like. After a scenario is chosen by the community, the next step would be to create an overlay district that would become the regulatory tool to guide development applications presented to the MOA and PZC.

### SCENARIO 1

This scenario yields a very strong two-block “main street” when completed. It requires cooperation from KAC, ADOT&PF, with agreements from JBER from the outset. One advantage is that the community hall could be a part of the lid construction.





## A. CONCEPT

- A solid, two-block-long “Main Street” along E. Loop Road
- Secondary mixed-use street along Hollywood Drive
- “Prime intersection address” at E. Loop Road and Hollywood Drive/Erickson Street
- Additional “key intersection” mid-block along E. Loop Road at Bluff Drive
- Landscaped gateway entry experience along Erickson Street at E. Loop Road and Harvard Avenue with roundabout

## B. KEY FEATURES

### Parcels

- Two large parcels facing E. Loop Road
- Two medium-size parcels, facing E. Loop Road at entry to JBER

### Intersections

- Redesign intersection at E. Loop Road and Erickson Street/Hollywood Drive (in conjunction with street realignment), possibly with a roundabout
- Redesign intersection of Arctic Warrior and E. Bluff Drives
- Extension of Birch Street connects to Arctic Warrior Drive and continues to the school (with a second roundabout)

### Streets

- Realignment of E. Loop Road in the commercial core
- Realign Harvard Avenue to connect with E. Bluff Drive
- Parallel flow from commercial center to JBER entry on two-way streets
- Improved access to the school (with direct road off of Harvard Avenue/E. Bluff Drive)
- Easy east-west flow along Harvard to Hollywood Drive
- Also relatively easy east-west flow along E. Bluff Drive

### Parking

- Major parking reservoirs along E. Bluff Drive (less dependent upon KAC outcome)
- Between E. Loop Road and Birch Street; potential festival lot (also less dependent upon KAC outcome)
- On street

### Pedestrian systems

- Improved sidewalks in neighborhood center
- Major crossing at E. Bluff Drive and E. Loop Road.
- Crossings set back from roundabout along E. Loop Road.
- Improved sidewalk/trail access to school

### C. PHASING CONSIDERATIONS

This concept requires major street revisions, and later portions of the redevelopment are dependent upon certainty of KAC.

#### General Development Phasing

**Phase 1:** Development of Buildings 2, 3, 4, and 5

**Phase 2:** Buildings 1, 6, 7, and 8

#### Relationship to KAC

- Concept probably requires KAC to merit intersection improvements
- Uncertainty about KAC could delay development of Buildings 1, 2, and 3

#### Relationship to JBER

**Phase 1a:** Agreement for intersection improvements at Arctic Warrior Drive and E. Bluff Drive

**Phase 2:** Agreement for additional land for Buildings 6, 7, and 8, with related parking



Scenario 1 Plan with Phasing Detail

# Scenario 1 Viewpoints "Two Blocks of Main Street"





View of community gardens along Erickson Street

2



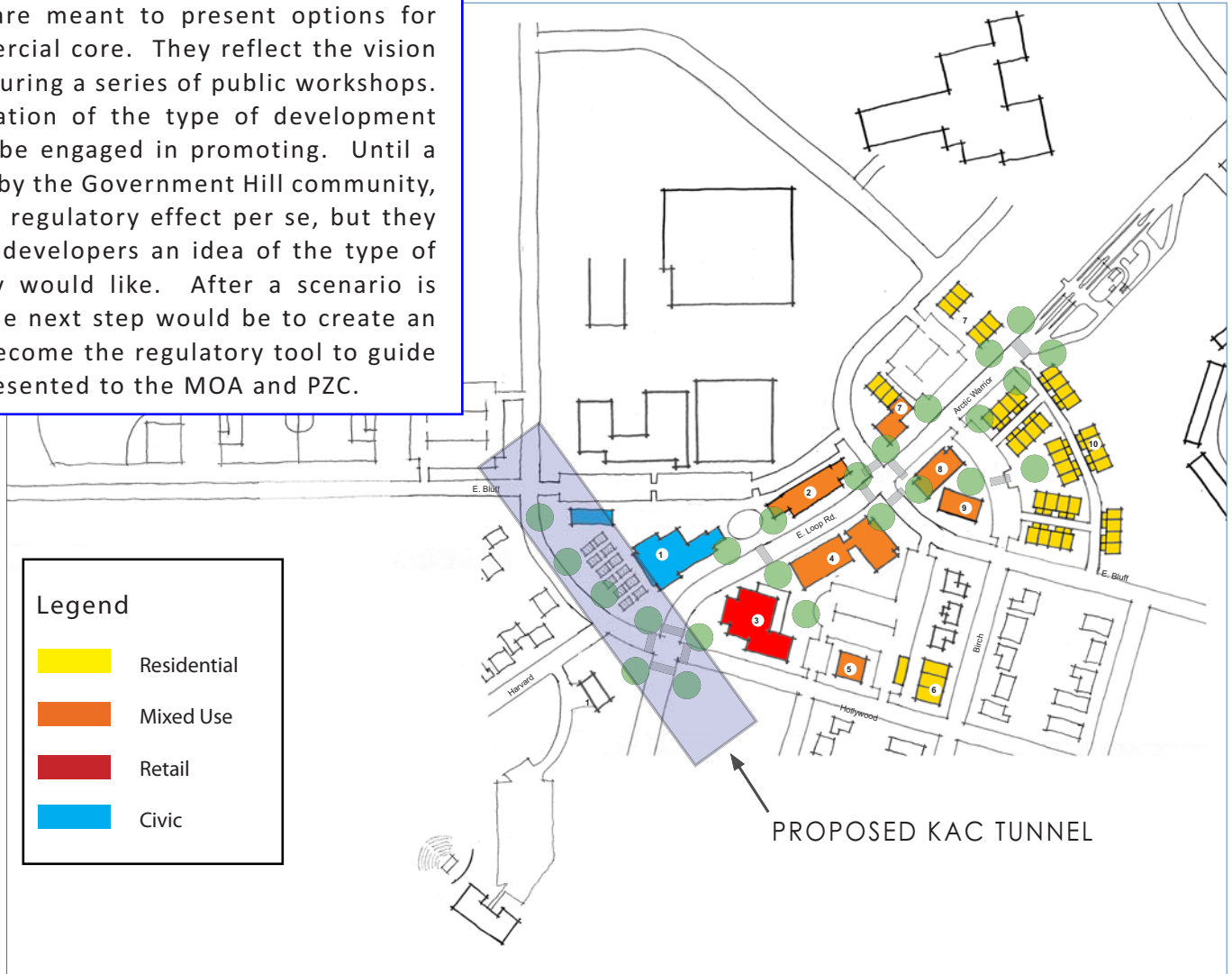
View looking north along Loop Road

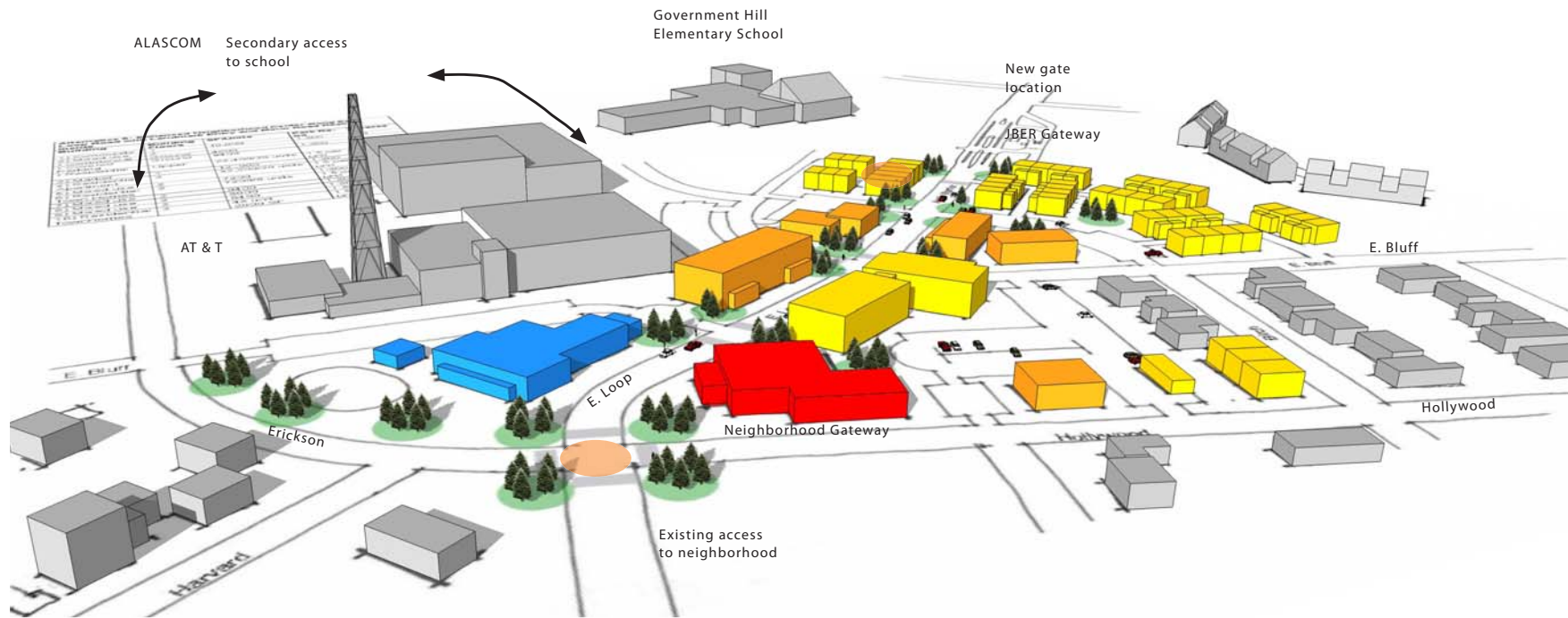
# TWO BLOCKS OF MAIN STREET WITH MINIMAL STREET REALIGNMENT

The Scenarios in the plan are meant to present options for redevelopment of the commercial core. They reflect the vision set forth by the community during a series of public workshops. They are a visual representation of the type of development the community will actively be engaged in promoting. Until a specific scenario is endorsed by the Government Hill community, the scenarios will not have a regulatory effect per se, but they can serve to give interested developers an idea of the type of development the community would like. After a scenario is chosen by the community, the next step would be to create an overlay district that would become the regulatory tool to guide development applications presented to the MOA and PZC.

## SCENARIO 2

This scenario yields a very strong two-block “Main Street” and a secondary commercial street (Hollywood) when completed. It can be phased while waiting for KAC outcome. As such, the initial phase would be modest but could be strengthened if an agreement with JBER is timely. One advantage is that the community hall could be a part of the KAC lid construction.





## A. CONCEPT

- A solid, two-block long “Main Street” along E. Loop Road
- Secondary mixed-use street along Hollywood Drive
- “Prime intersection address” at E. Loop Road and E. Bluff Drive
- Additional “key intersection” mid-block along E. Loop Road
- Landscaped gateway entry experience along Erickson Street at E. Loop Road and Hollywood Drive

## B. KEY FEATURES

### Parcels

- Two large parcels, facing E. Loop Road
- Two medium-sized parcels, facing E. Loop Road at entry to JBER, plus additional parcels with residential development

### Intersections

- Redesign intersection at E. Loop Road and Erickson Street/ Hollywood Drive
- Redesign intersection of Arctic Warrior and E. Bluff Drives

### Streets

- Realignment of E. Loop Road in the commercial core
- Extension of Birch Street connects to Arctic Warrior Drive and continues to the school
- A later new residential street parallels the curve of the extended Birch Street
- Improved access to the school
- Easy east-west flow along Harvard Avenue to Hollywood Drive
- Also relatively easy east-west flow along E. Bluff Drive

### Parking

- Major parking reservoirs along E. Bluff Drive (less dependent upon KAC outcome)
- Between E. Loop Road and Birch Street (also less dependent upon KAC outcome)
- On street

### Pedestrian systems

- Improved sidewalks in neighborhood center
- Major crossing at E. Bluff Drive and E. Loop Road
- Improved sidewalk/trail access to school

## C. PHASING CONSIDERATIONS

### General Development Phasing

Phase 1: Development of Buildings 2, 3, 4, and 5

Phase 2: Buildings 7, 8, and 9

Phase 3: Building 1

Phase 4: Residential edge next to JBER

### Relationship to KAC

- Uncertainty about KAC could delay development of Building 1

### Relationship to JBER

Phase 1: Agreement for minor intersection improvement at E. Bluff Drive and E. Loop Road

Phase 2: Agreement for additional land for buildings 7, 8, and 9 with related parking and related street

Phase 3: None

Phase 4: Agreement for additional land for housing



Scenario 2 with Phasing Detail

# Scenario 2 Viewpoints “Two Blocks of Main Street with Minimal Street Realignments”





View looking north from intersection of Erickson Street and Loop Road



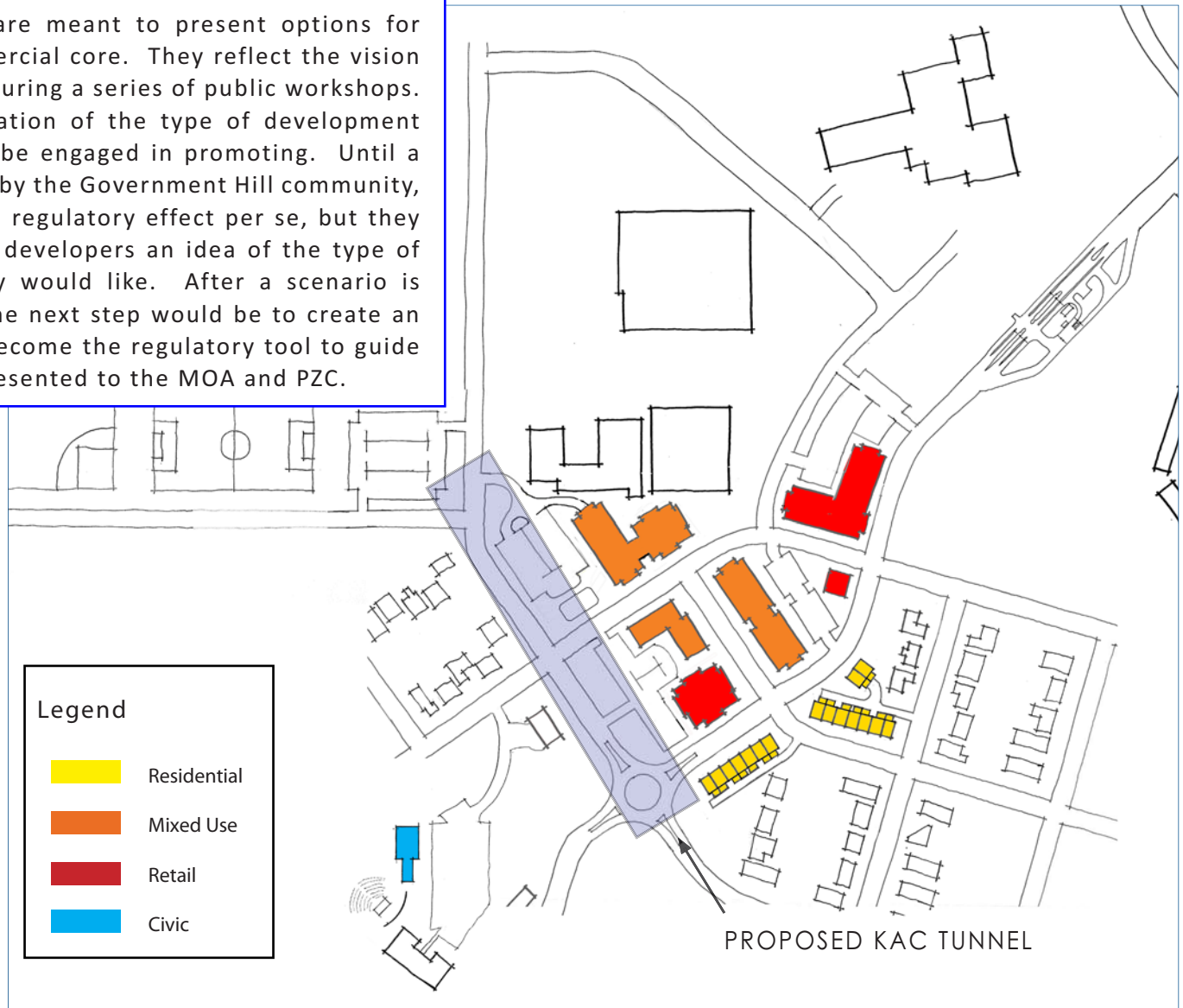
View looking south along Loop Road

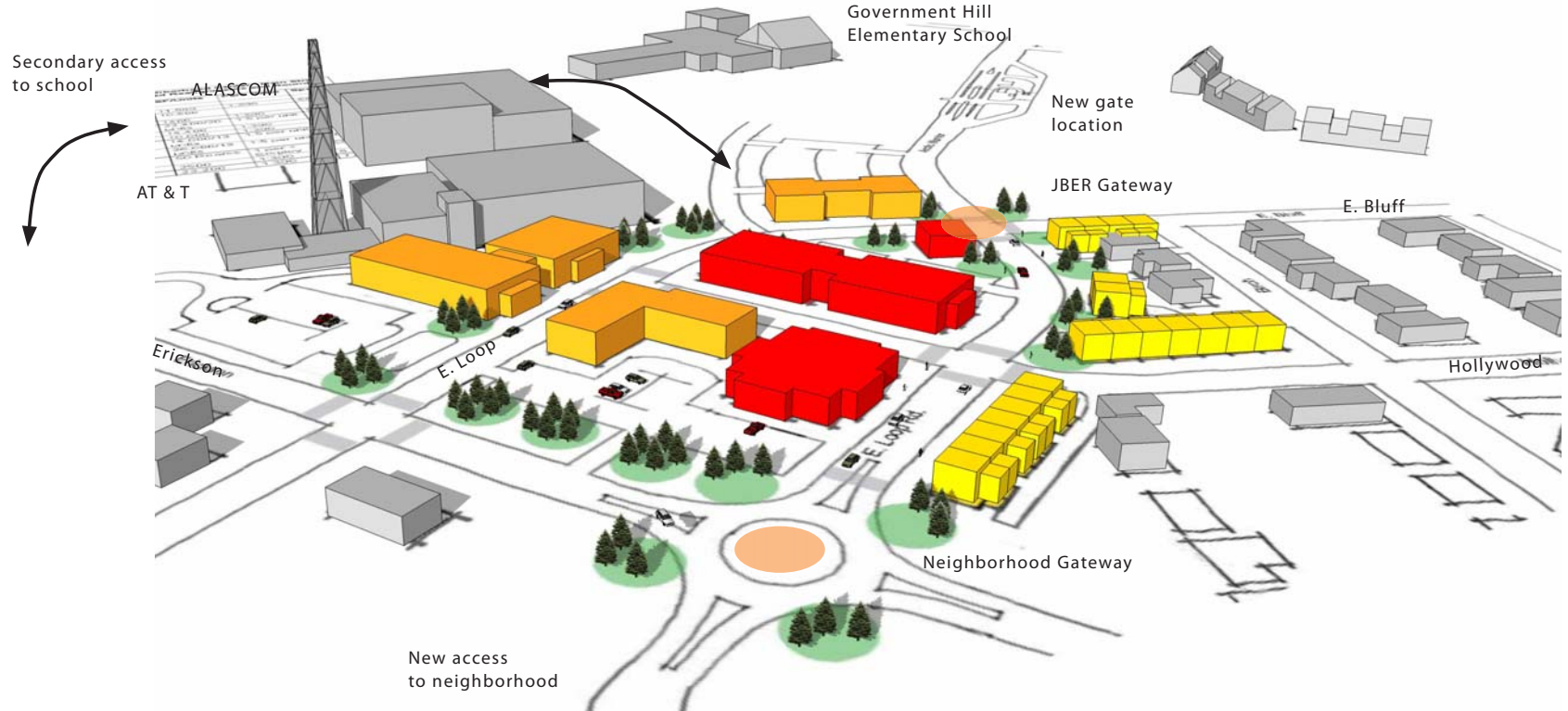
# CREATING A VILLAGE CENTER

The Scenarios in the plan are meant to present options for redevelopment of the commercial core. They reflect the vision set forth by the community during a series of public workshops. They are a visual representation of the type of development the community will actively be engaged in promoting. Until a specific scenario is endorsed by the Government Hill community, the scenarios will not have a regulatory effect per se, but they can serve to give interested developers an idea of the type of development the community would like. After a scenario is chosen by the community, the next step would be to create an overlay district that would become the regulatory tool to guide development applications presented to the MOA and PZC.

## SCENARIO 3

This scenario is dependent upon certainty of outcome for KAC and coordination with ADOT&PF and also requires an initial agreement from JBER for at least the road realignment. An initial phase could yield a modest commercial center, but the strength of the concept does not appear until later phases are in place.





**A. CONCEPT**

- Two key (parallel) neighborhood center streets
- Pedestrian-oriented, “Main Street” feel along Hollywood Drive between Harvard and E. Loop Road
- Secondary mixed-use streets along Harvard Avenue and E. Loop Road
- “Prime intersection address” at E. Loop Road and Hollywood-Drive /Erickson Street
- Additional “key intersection” mid-block along E. Loop Road (at Bluff)
- Landscaped gateway entry experience along Erickson at E. Loop Road and Harvard Avenue

**B. KEY FEATURES**

**Parcels**

- Two large parcels, facing E. Loop Road in initial phases
- Additional large (residential) parcel at JBER interface
- Smaller parcels along eastern edge

**Intersections**

- Redesign intersection at E. Loop Road and Erickson Street (in conjunction with street realignment), possibly with a roundabout
- Redesign intersection of Arctic Warrior Drive and E. Bluff Drive

### Streets

- Realignment of E. Loop Road in the commercial core
- Realign Harvard Avenue to connect with E. Bluff Drive
- Parallel flow from commercial center to JBER entry on two-way streets
- Improved access to the school (with direct road off of Harvard Avenue/E. Bluff Drive)
- Easy east-west flow along Harvard Avenue and Hollywood Drive

### Parking

- Major parking reservoirs along Erickson Street; potential festival lots (in the potential lid area)
- Along E. Bluff Drive and Arctic Warrior Drive
- On street

### Pedestrian systems

- Improved sidewalks in neighborhood center
- Improved crossing at E. Bluff Drive and Arctic Warrior Drive
- Major pedestrian crossing at E. Loop Road and Harvard Avenue, at Hollywood Drive
- Improved sidewalk/trail access to school

## C. PHASING CONSIDERATIONS

This concept requires major street revisions, and later portions of redevelopment are dependent upon certainty of KAC.

### General Development Phasing

Phase 1: Development of Buildings 6, 7 and 8

Phase 2: Major mixed use development of Buildings 1, 2 and 3 (abutting lid area)

Phase 3: Residential development along the eastern edge of the neighborhood center



Scenario 3 with Phasing Detail

### Relationship to KAC

- Concept works with, or without, the tunnel
- Uncertainty about KAC could delay development of Buildings 1, 2 and 3

### Relationship to JBER

Phase 1a: Agreement for intersection improvements at Arctic Warrior Drive and E. Bluff Road

Phase 1b: Agreement for additional land for Building 8 and related parking

Phase 2: None (focus is on western edge of neighborhood center)

Phase 3: None (focus is on eastern edge of the center)

## Scenario 3 Viewpoints “Village Center”





View looking west along the new Main Street



View looking north on new north - south street



View looking north from intersection of Erickson Street and Loop Road

# URBAN DESIGN POLICIES

The illustrations in this chapter reflect urban design policies present in Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020), as well as design policies specific to the Government Hill neighborhood. The overarching design policies from Anchorage 2020 were used to guide the development of the more specific neighborhood design policies presented in

this plan.

The intent is to demonstrate that the policies specific to the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan are a reflection of not only recent public planning efforts related to the GHNP, but also encompass a much broader planning base spanning over a decade of citywide planning efforts.

## C. ANCHORAGE 2020 URBAN DESIGN POLICIES

POLICY #	ANCHORAGE 2020 DESIGN POLICIES
41	Land use regulations shall include new design requirements that are responsive to Anchorage’s climate and natural setting.
42	Northern city design concepts shall guide the design of all public facility projects, including parks and roads.
43	Plans for major commercial, institutional, and industrial developments, including large retail establishments, are subject to site plan review.
44	Design and build public improvements for long-term use.
45	Connect local activity centers, such as neighborhood schools and community centers with parks, sports fields, greenbelts, and trails, where feasible.
46	The unique appeal of individual residential neighborhoods shall be protected and enhanced in accordance with applicable goals, policies, and strategies.
47	Provide distinctive public landmarks and other public places in neighborhoods.

# ANCHORAGE 2020 URBAN DESIGN POLICIES, CONTINUED

POLICY #	ANCHORAGE 2020 DESIGN POLICIES
48	Subdivision plats and site development plans shall be designed to enhance or preserve scenic views and other significant natural features in accordance with applicable goals, policies, and strategies.
49	Site plan layout and building design for new development shall consider the character of adjacent development. The Municipality may require layouts and designs to incorporate the functional and aesthetic character of adjacent development.
50	Healthy, mature trees and forested areas shall be retained as much as possible.
51	The Municipality shall define Anchorage’s historic buildings and sites and develop a conservation strategy.
52	Site and design residential development to enhance the residential streetscape and diminish the prominence of garages and paved parking areas.
53	Design, construct, and maintain roads to retain or enhance scenic views and improve the general appearance of the road character.
54	Design and construct neighborhood roads and walkways to ensure safe pedestrian movement and neighborhood connectivity, and to discourage high-speed, cut-through traffic.
55	Provide pedestrian and trail connections within and between residential subdivisions in new plats, including replats.

## D. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

DESIGN ELEMENT	POLICY #	GHNP POLICY	OPTIONAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRIORITY & ADVISORY)
<p>* Priority design recommendations would be consistently recommended by the Planning Division on projects that come to the CDD for review, while advisory design recommendations, although highly desired by the community, would be optional for the project. Project reviews will take into consideration the uniqueness of each development when making design recommendations.</p>			
WINTER CITY DESIGN	UD-1	Promote design specific to accommodating all seasonal activities to promote contact with nature, year-round usability, user participation, cultural continuity, and creation of comfortable micro-climate conditions.	<p><b>Priority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide sidewalks to include snow storage and accommodate year-round walking/biking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Advisory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered walkways</li> <li>• Arcades on building frontages</li> <li>• Heated sidewalks in neighborhood square</li> </ul>
COMPLETE STREETS	UD-2	Streets in Government Hill should be designed as “complete streets” to serve all modes of transportation equally and promote an active pedestrian-oriented environment.	<p><b>Priority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared travel lanes</li> <li>• Bike access along main streets, secondary streets, and trails</li> </ul>
STREETSCAPE DESIGN	UD-3	Design the streetscape in Government Hill’s Neighborhood Center to encourage pedestrian activity and establish a distinct identity for Government Hill.	<p><b>Priority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crosswalks are slightly raised for drainage away from walking surface</li> <li>• Distinctive striping or paving patterns</li> <li>• Use of snow-tolerant vegetation</li> <li>• Berms and vegetation to direct snow drifts away from building entrances.</li> <li>• Sidewalks and pedestrian walkways that are separated from roadways</li> <li>• Provide snow storage areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Advisory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow storage areas that double as planter spaces during summer months</li> </ul>

## URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES, CONTINUED

DESIGN ELEMENT	POLICY #	GHNP POLICY	OPTIONAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRIORITY & ADVISORY)  Priority = Recommended    Advisory = Not mandatory
STREETSCAPE DESIGN	UD-4	Reduce negative impacts on the neighborhood's livability and redevelopment potential from proposed transportation projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phasing transportation projects and/or improvements</li> <li>• Use appropriate design and streetscape amenities</li> <li>• Regularly maintain roads</li> <li>• Involve the community in pre-design meetings including the context sensitive design phase</li> </ul>
PUBLIC ART & HERITAGE CELEBRATION	UD-5	Incorporate public art in outdoor use areas, at building entrances, and in parks. Include art in heritage interpretation schemes as well, and provide a series of historical markers to convey the history of Government Hill.	<p><b>Advisory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a focal point in public spaces (Examples include public art, water feature or distinctive plant arrangement)</li> <li>• Include historic interpretive themes in art installations</li> <li>• Include historical artifacts in heritage interpretation.</li> <li>• Link interpretive markers among public trails, in parks and streetscapes</li> </ul>
SITE DESIGN	UD-6	Locate buildings to define the street wall along a block and to frame outdoor use areas. Locate parking to the side and the rear and link them internally. Clearly define pedestrian ways through the site.	<p><b>Priority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings are designed to anchor a corner site</li> <li>• Landscaping used to define the street edge where there is no building</li> <li>• Define walkways with lighting, textured paving and landscaped material.</li> </ul> <p><b>Advisory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an entry plaza to lead pedestrians from parking to the street</li> <li>• Open space is shared by abutting buildings</li> <li>• Plan for rooftop use</li> <li>• Divide parking areas into smaller pods</li> <li>• Link parking lots internally</li> </ul>

# URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES, CONTINUED

DESIGN ELEMENT	POLICY #	GHNP POLICY	<b>OPTIONAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRIORITY &amp; ADVISORY)</b> Priority = Recommended    Advisory = Not mandatory
PEDESTRIAN SYSTEMS	UD-7	Plan sidewalks, trails and pathways as an integrated circulation system for pedestrians. Include connections through mixed-use developments as well as along public realm routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a pedestrian link through mixed-use developments</li> <li>• Provide sheltered connections between buildings</li> <li>• Provide an arcade along a primary facade</li> </ul>
PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN	UD-8	Any outdoorspace in the Neighborhood Center should be designed to be attractive year-round and to invite a diverse range of users.	<b>Priority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interconnect public spaces</li> <li>• Provide a focal point</li> <li>• Design for a mix of users (diverse ages and interests)</li> <li>• Design for year-round use</li> </ul>
OUTDOOR SPACE DESIGN	UD-9	Incorporate design devices that will animate an outdoor space and facilitate its use year-round. Plan for a range of activities and keep it flexible to adapt to changing needs.	<b>Priority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design for year-round activities</li> </ul> <b>Advisory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize solar access with building orientation</li> <li>• Incorporate year round street furniture</li> <li>• Design for year-round activities</li> <li>• Provide wind shelters (pergolas, screens, hedges &amp; shrubs, dense salt tolerant tree plantings)</li> </ul>
BUILDING ORIENTATION	UD-10	Design buildings to orient to the street and define public spaces. Position buildings to frame outdoor spaces and orient to the sun. Establish a pedestrian-friendly street edge by providing sheltering canopies and arcades.	<b>Priority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient buildings to the street</li> <li>• Provide a pedestrian friendly street edge</li> </ul> <b>Advisory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient buildings to maximize solar access</li> <li>• Provide canopies to shelter sidewalks</li> </ul>

## URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES, CONTINUED

DESIGN ELEMENT	POLICY #	GHNP POLICY	OPTIONAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRIORITY & ADVISORY)  Priority = Recommended    Advisory = Not mandatory
BUILDING ENTRY TRANSITIONS	UD-11	Orient an entrance to the street and other pedestrian way. Provide a sheltered transitional space at a building entrance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an arcade as an entry</li> <li>• Provide an air lock entry</li> <li>• Use a canopy as a transition</li> <li>• Use an atrium as an entry</li> </ul>
BUILDING MATERIALS	UD-12	Use building materials that have a proven durability for the Anchorage climate and that also convey a sense of human scale. Preferred materials are concrete, brick, architectural block, stucco, wood, and fiber-cementous composite siding.	<p><b>Advisory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use brick to convey a traditional sense of scale</li> <li>• Use concrete that is detailed to provide visual interest</li> <li>• Use warm colors for year-round appeal</li> <li>• Use fiber-cementous lap siding</li> </ul>
CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN	UD-13	The Government Hill neighborhood will work with the Port of Anchorage to establish ways that the neighborhood center design and plans for redevelopment in the area can be designed to help strengthen Port boundaries and provide greater homeland security.	<p><b>Advisory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in consideration of development projects for Government Hill</li> </ul>

## E. KAC SPECIFIC DESIGN POLICIES

The design of the proposed KAC cut-and-cover, access roads, and associate project issues such as access into and out of the neighborhood, frontage streets, disruptions to the neighborhood during construction, noise, visual impacts, pollution, and land use impacts shall meet all applicable requirements and standards associated with municipal, federal, and state regulations outlined in the following documents:

### **Municipal Policies**

- 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 2012
- Official Streets & Highways Plan (OSHP), 2005
- Anchorage 2020 -- Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, 2001
- Anchorage Bicycle Plan, 2010
- Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreational Facility Plan, 2006
- Design Criteria Manual (DCM), 2008
- Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, 2007

### **State and Federal Policies**

- A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 6th Edition (AASHTO) 2011
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) FHWA 2009
- Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO) 2011
- Alaska DOT&PF Preconstruction Manual (PCM) 2005
- Alaska Traffic Manual (ATM) ADOT&PF 2005
- Roadside Design Guide (AASHTO) 2006

In addition, the specific KAC Design Policies on the following page shall be included in the plan as elements to help mitigate KAC impacts on the neighborhood.

## F. KAC SPECIFIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES

ISSUE	PRINCIPLE #	DESIGN PRINCIPLE
CIRCULATION	KACDP-1	Create and maintain a safe, convenient continuity of circulation between east and west sides of the neighborhood.
WINTER CITY DESIGN	KACDP-2	Create landscaping that serves as a signature element (using Winter City design principles.)
PUBLIC SPACE	KACDP-3	Create public park space.
PARKING LOTS	KACDP-4	Create landscaped parking lots that will serve adjoining uses.
COMMUNITY SPACE	KACDP-5	Include space for a recreational facility, such as an ice rink, and a community facility. Include a space for a community garden.
KAC INFRASTRUCTURE	KACDP-6	Ensure that site work (such as retaining walls, noise walls and planters) is compatible in design and materials with the historic character of the neighborhood.
KAC CUT-AND-COVER	KACDP-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Maximizing the length of the lid should be considered in the design of the cut-and-cover in order to minimize impact of bridge traffic through the neighborhood.</li> <li>b) The lid of the tunnel should be an amenity for the community and should serve as a compatible transition from eastern to western areas of residential neighborhood.</li> <li>c) The lid should help reduce noise, exhaust fumes, and visual impacts resulting from KAC traffic.</li> <li>d) The lid should not divide the park.</li> <li>e) The lid design should include consideration of extending under Sunset Park to maintain the viability and use of this valued park community.</li> <li>f) The lid should be a visual asset, helping to connect the neighborhoods and providing civic uses.</li> <li>g) If the KAC tunnel is constructed, it should be designed to allow construction of amenities and community spaces to be feasible on its surface after completion.</li> </ul>

# 6. ECONOMICS

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This chapter addresses the economics related to redevelopment in the Government Hill neighborhood, from the standpoint of benefits to the community as well as feasibility with respect to private-sector investment.

## **The Economic Benefits of Enhancing Government Hill**

From an economic standpoint, enhancing the Government Hill neighborhood will yield benefits to the Municipality at large. It will enhance the value of major employment centers located within the neighborhood boundaries, protect public investment in existing infrastructure, and enhance the attractiveness of parks, trails, and other amenities found in the neighborhood that residents throughout the region enjoy.

## **Recreation and Culture**

The parks, trails, and civic facilities in Government Hill are unique and they serve the community at large. These enhance the quality of life for all Anchorage residents and contribute to its business development strategies in a global economy.

## **Heritage Tourism**

As a place with a unique identity, Government Hill's preserved heritage will improve the appeal of Anchorage as a place to live, work, and visit. A key element contributing to Anchorage's economic future is the rise in heritage-related tourism in the region. Historic sites in Government Hill expand the menu of heritage resource offerings, an important factor in expanding the tourism market.

## **Business Incubator**

Government Hill can play an important role as a supportive place for start-up businesses, particularly in professional services and technology.

## **Housing Supply**

The increased residential density proposed for the Neighborhood Center will strengthen the market for local businesses. Those who wish to live and work in the neighborhood will support and benefit from services provided in the Neighborhood Center.

# A. THE ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The economic development strategy for the Government Hill neighborhood relies upon policies and trends in other Municipal planning documents. These are the key principles:

## **1. Build on Regional Growth Trends.**

The economic development strategy for the neighborhood plan builds on policies related to growth, infill, and housing that are set forth in Anchorage 2020-Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2001. Several of those policies are included in Chapter 1 of the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan as a part of the discussion of existing conditions.

## **2. Make Better Use of Developed Lands.**

In general, comprehensive plan policies note that reusing existing urbanized lands is preferred, and that densities should increase to the extent that is reasonable and feasible. They also encourage making best use of existing infrastructure and improving it as necessary. The conceptual plans for a revitalized Neighborhood Center, which appear in Chapter 4, reflect those policies.

## **3. Respond to the Housing Market Needs.**

The strategy also draws upon findings in the Anchorage Housing Market Analysis, which was published in March 2012. The study notes that demand for housing will continue to grow with the projected increase in population of the area, but that a serious problem exists in meeting future housing needs with typical, low-density development patterns. Higher densities are needed. While the proposed densities for the Government Hill Neighborhood Center are not “high” by most standards, they will increase above existing level and would make better use of an existing infrastructure.

## **4. Enhance the Quality of Life for Existing Businesses in the Neighborhood.**

Major employers in the neighborhood include JBER, Alascom, the Port of Anchorage, and the Alaska Railroad. An improved neighborhood center will offer goods and services that enhance the working environment for employees of these important institutions.

## **5. Strengthen the Established Residential Areas.**

Promoting rehabilitation and compatible infill in the residential parts of the neighborhood is a core principle for economic development. It will encourage more home ownership, and it

will enhance property values. The quality of life for residents will be enhanced with an improved neighborhood center, and attract more residents to the area as well.

## **6. Leverage public investment to stimulate private investment.**

The Government Hill neighborhood, as with many others in Anchorage, faces a contradiction in conditions, in that the current market conditions are not strong enough to attract substantial private investment at the scale that can substantially transform the neighborhood center. At the same time, the future market potential can be quite strong if infrastructure improvements can be made that will support it. This will require using creative financing tools.

# **B. EXISTING FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS**

This section summarizes findings of economic feasibility for redevelopment in the Neighborhood Center, under current conditions in early 2012. This analysis uses data from local and national sources to project the feasibility of redeveloping the neighborhood center as a whole within the categories of commercial and residential markets.

### **Feasibility analysis**

This analysis was performed for the specific scenarios that are presented in the preceding chapter. Note that this is a more general test of feasibility than that which might typically be developed for a specific development site. It is intended to provide a general understanding of feasibility.

Many variables can influence feasibility, including current

development costs and potential sales or rental income projections. The cost of financing, the degree of risk a developer is willing to undertake, and the rate of return are other variables. Values for these factors are included in the feasibility analysis, which is based on information provided by local professionals in related fields of development, construction, and finance.

It is also important to note that this feasibility analysis is based on current market conditions, while the timeline that projects when redevelopment will actually occur (presented in the next chapter) envisions the first development projects occurring in 2018. At that time, the market conditions may well be stronger as the national economy recovers.

Because immediate rate of return projections are lower than most developers might seek, these pro forma analyses focus on value created in the development projects.

## C. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In the initial pro forma analyses for redevelopment opportunities in Government Hill, these are the preliminary observations:

### **1. Overall, feasibility is marginal with the assumptions stated in the pro forma.**

Even if public facilities and infrastructure are removed from the equation, and some land costs are as well, the mix of uses in aggregate result in a negative bottom line. However, at a finer grain of consideration, some pockets of opportunity exist.

### **2. Construction costs are high.**

This remains true throughout the region and makes any redevelopment challenging. For this reason, the projects envisioned are ones that keep construction methods simple. Mixed-use developments are generally assumed to be “horizontal” rather than “vertical.” This means most commercial and residential uses would occur in separate buildings in order to hold construction costs down.

### **3. Rental and sales prices are low in comparison with construction costs.**

This is particularly true for projects targeted at low and moderate income segments. As Government Hill attracts a broader mix, including some higher-income residents, this may change the formula.

### **4. Residential development is less feasible than commercial.**

Rental housing appears to be more feasible than “for sale” products. Overall, it suggests that growth should occur incrementally, with a core of commercial development happening first and with residential projects following later when the market conditions improve. (This may also coincide with additional land becoming available from JBER.)

### **5. A hotel is marginally feasible.**

A hotel could serve the community at large, and particularly visitors to JBER. Feasibility could be increased if a solid occupancy rate could be assured, perhaps in agreement with JBER for people attending training, etc. Again, perhaps this should be deferred to a later phase.

## **6. Commercial development may be feasible.**

This is the most promising use. Even so, construction costs need to be held down to the extent feasible. Minimizing the level of tenant finish is an example. A grocery, for example, appears to be feasible, given the relatively limited level of finish typically required.

## **7. Vertical mixed use should be programmed with caution.**

The fire separation requirements between commercial and residential will increase construction costs. Placing offices above retail will be less costly. On the other hand, some vertical mixed use should continue to be included because of the positive benefits of the interactions of the uses.

## **8. Use private funds strategically to stimulate private investment.**

Off-setting site improvement and infrastructure costs will be important. The analyses assume that street improvements, landscaping, and even some parking will be public-sector projects. (These may be privately financed, however, through improvement district mechanisms, which are described in the next chapter.)

# **D. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GOVERNMENT HILL**

The redevelopment scenarios presented for the Neighborhood Center are ambitious. Given the constraints of the economic conditions, why is that approach recommended? Because this is a special neighborhood, with unique opportunities for its

residents as for the Municipality at large, but its potential will only be realized with an affirmative action. In the event that the KAC project moves forward, the plan advocates for the “creating value” approach. This includes reconfiguration of the neighborhood center parcels and streets. However, in the event that the KAC does not move forward, the “conservative investment” should be elected, with some more modest “creating value” improvements, targeted redevelopment, and continued partnership with JBER, the Railroad, and the Port to encourage mutually enhancing development.

In reaching this conclusion, three alternative approaches were considered:

### **Approach 1: Do Nothing**

In this approach, properties will continue to be constrained, which will limit reinvestment opportunities. Irregular street intersections will continue to complicate traffic movements and discourage pedestrian activity, and access to community services, including parks and schools, will remain awkward. There would be no significant public investment in the Neighborhood Center.

With current economic conditions and the constraints of the existing parcels, little redevelopment would occur. There could be some façade improvements, but the overall supply of commercial space and residential units would not increase substantially. And, it is possible that the net commercial space would actually decline, especially if the KAC project proceeds ahead and removes some buildings in the path of construction.

In the long term, utility upgrades will still be necessary in Government Hill, particularly sewer lines. When those

replacements did occur, they would, however, happen in the existing street configurations. Once those investments are made, it will be less cost-effective to change street layouts later.

### **Approach 2: Conservative Investment**

In this scenario, there would be no attempt to reconfigure streets or property layouts. The focus would be on renovating existing properties. Public sector work would concentrate on installing some streetscape enhancements within existing curb lines and on improving intersections within the constraints of the existing street network.

This scenario may encourage some property upgrades, but no substantial redevelopment would be likely. Densities would remain similar to that of today. And, again, if KAC moves forward, there would be little opportunity to take advantage of the disruption that would occur, in terms of combining parcels and changing circulation patterns.

### **Approach 3: Creating Value**

This approach, which is the one recommended in this plan, takes an ambitious stand. It seeks to create a sense of place with streetscape enhancements and new utilities, but it also creates new opportunities for investment. It does so by reconfiguring parcels and streets and expanding the Neighborhood Center to the northeast. While it requires substantial investment, it promises greater benefits in terms of creating a center that contributes meaningfully to property values, job creation and retention, and housing supply.

Potential mechanisms to make best use of available lands include leasing or buying JBER lands for the future residential development, adopting the final scenario and

its recommendations for development within the commercial core, incorporating certain elements of the overlay district, and incorporating the GHNP land use map. The map includes JBER properties in its potential expanded commercial core, which advocates for mixed use and could allow for higher density residential.

See Appendix for the Summary of Pro Formas.

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# 7. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

## A. GENERAL APPROACH FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the plan will engage many players, including the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), the Government Hill Community Council, the major landowners in the neighborhood (the Port, JBER, and the Alaska Railroad), as well as private property owners and developers.

The investments will be substantial and will require creative use of financing tools, incentives, and assistance programs. Because market conditions are especially constraining at this time, it will be essential for the MOA to find ways to “prime the pump,” in terms of creating a climate for private-sector investment.

## B. IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS FOR THE GHNP

Implementation will also require careful coordination of a variety of planning systems, capital improvement programs, and regulations. A clear phasing program is therefore an essential part of an implementation strategy.

These are some of the tools that may be used; further analysis should occur to determine the appropriateness of each tool:

### 1. Capital Improvement Program

The MOA’S Capital Improvement Program (CIP) could be an important source of funds for infrastructure replacement.

This should be an annual source of funds for several years of phased improvements. The MOA’S CIP should be coordinated with the Anchorage School District, Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS), and Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility.

The CIP is appropriate for:

- Street and sidewalk construction
- Intersection improvements
- Parks construction and improvements
- Playgrounds and sports fields
- Trails
- Heritage interpretation materials

### 2. Transfer of Development Rights

In a conventional Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, rights are exchanged among private property owners, usually as a purchase. A “sending site” must have more development rights than are needed, and a “receiving site” must be limited to an amount of development that is less than what the market supports. These specific conditions do not exist in Government Hill. However, there may be the possibility of transferring surplus property from a governmental entity to a redevelopment agency. For example, the Railroad or JBER may transfer property for redevelopment, or provide a long-term lease at terms that will make private investment feasible.

TDR is appropriate for:

- Providing new developable parcels at reduced costs to potential developers in the Neighborhood Center.

- Providing land for new parks, public open space, and recreation facilities.
- Providing land for housing that would benefit the community and JBER.

### 3. Impact Fees

In a case in which sufficient value will result from development and impacts of the development could affect the neighborhood, an impact fee may be charged to help mitigate the condition. In the case of Government Hill, impact fees may not be feasible because market conditions are tight. However, the inverse, in which fees are waived as an incentive for development, may be appropriate to consider.

Waiver of Impact Fees would be appropriate for:

- Private-sector development projects that meet the objectives of the plan.

### 4. Inclusionary Zoning

Where market conditions are sufficient to support doing so, the MOA may provide incentives for construction of housing and in conjunction require that a minimum percentage of such a project be reserved for low-moderate income homes.

### 5. Infill, Redevelopment, and Reinvestment Incentives

The MOA may offer a package of incentives to attract the types of investment that are desired in the area. Specific incentives to employ are:

#### a. Tax Increment Financing

In this program, any increased property tax revenues that may occur for a designated period of time are targeted to repay the costs of infrastructure improvements that are made up front,

to enhance the development climate. Based on the projected revenues, the MOA may issue bonds to finance the initial construction costs. This could be used to finance construction of new streets, sidewalks, and streetscape improvements.

#### b. Multi-unit Property Tax Exemption (MPTE)

Alaska Statutes permit cities to adopt property tax exemptions for multi-unit residential development. This offers a 10-year property tax exemption.

#### c. Zoning Flexibility

The MOA may modify certain zoning limits that would improve the financial appeal of certain designated projects. Reducing parking requirements, waiving development fees, permitting certain conditional uses, or increasing in density are examples.

### 6. Public–Private Partnership

This is a mechanism to include a variety of agencies as well as private landowners in a joint agreement to achieve specific projects. In this way, the MOA could collaborate with Cook Inlet Housing Authority, federal agencies (such as HUD), a Government Hill Neighborhood Project Team, and others to buy parcels or secure development rights for commercial and residential redevelopment.

### 7. Federal Grants & Other Programs

The MOA may partner with the GHCC or a Government Hill Neighborhood Project Team to apply for federal grants. The Sustainable Urban Renewal Projects program is an example. The Community Development Block Grant program, new market tax credits, and the historic rehabilitation tax credits are other examples.

## 8. Redevelopment Authority

A Redevelopment Authority may be established, which could be focused on the Government Hill neighborhood, or it may cover many neighborhoods. A key role of a RDA is that it can assemble individual properties and reconfigure them to fit objectives of the neighborhood plan. (One option is to re-focus the Anchorage Community Development Authority to play this role.)

## 9. Long-term Lease

Major property owners could provide long-term leases for redevelopment with conditions that would make investment in the area more attractive.

## 10. Business Improvement District

Property owners could petition to establish a Business Improvement District, which would take on services to enhance the function, maintenance, and promotion of the neighborhood center. In the initial years, the amount of revenue to be generated could be relatively small but could increase as business activity expands.

## 11. State of Alaska

- a. The Planning and Zoning Commission requests that ADOT&PF make a presentation on the H2H project.
- b. Encourage the State of Alaska to restore full funding to the H2H project to help alleviate the north/south traffic that is anticipated by the KAC project and identified in the KAC FEIS to help mitigate the increase in traffic.

## C. IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

These are key groups and organizations that should collaborate as partners in implementing the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan:

- Municipality of Anchorage
- Government Hill Community Council
- Port of Anchorage
- Anchorage Community Development Authority
- Cook Inlet Housing Authority
- State Historic Preservation Officer
- JBER
- KABATA
- Alascom
- Anchorage School District
- Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS)
- Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility
- \* ADOT&PF

## D. PHASING

### Government Hill Neighborhood Center

Early phasing considerations to apply when evaluating the five alternative development scenarios:

#### 1. Focus on the Most “Stable” Area.

The first phase should be “in the middle” of the town center, away from the “edges of uncertainty.” That is, avoid any development that requires that parking be provided on the “lid,” since that may not happen for a few years, and avoid major land transfer agreements from JBER. It needs to be an area in which a developer would feel confident that their investment would perform well in the early years of implementation.

# PHASING TABLE

ACTION	POST ADOPTION	NEAR TERM	MID TERM	LONG TERM
Step 1: Adopt the Neighborhood Plan	X			
Step 2: Initiate Funding Systems and Land Transfers	X			
Step 3: Preliminary Infrastructure Design		X		
Step 4: Develop final block configuration concept for the neighborhood center area		X		
Step 5: Refine the redevelopment phasing plan for the neighborhood center		X		
Step 6: Assemble parcels and blocks		X		
Step 7: Develop final infrastructure design		X		
Step 8: First phase of infrastructure construction			X	
Step 9: First phase of redevelopment				X
Additional development phasing continues for subsequent years				X

## **2. Create a Noticeable Impact**

The first phase of development should yield enough critical mass to make a noticeable impact. (While a single building could go up first, building two or more, which face each other and create a new “image” of a pedestrian-oriented realm, is preferred.

## **3. Emphasize Viable Uses**

It should focus on commercial uses, primarily retail but offices to some extent, which are more economically feasible.

## **4. Make Room for Directly Affected Existing Uses**

It should, at a minimum, replace all displaced square footage that would be directly affected and provide opportunities for existing users to relocate with it.

## **5. Keep Property Acquisition Simple**

Include acquiring complete parcels of existing ownership. A first phase that only requires working with a couple of property owners may be preferred.

## **6. Coordinate Private Development with Public-Sector Infrastructure**

To the extent feasible, it should involve a minimum amount of street restructuring for the first phase, while yielding parcels that can be reconfigured to fit the long-term vision for the specific scenario.

## **PRELIMINARY PHASING RECOMMENDATIONS**

After the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan is adopted, the Municipality will need to engage in more detailed planning and analysis of the plan concepts to move them to a level

of precision that will permit implementation. This also involves establishing an organizational structure that enables coordinated actions by various entities and that facilitates enacting certain funding mechanisms.

This section outlines some of those key actions in a critical path. Note that some of the specific steps may vary in sequence, depending upon actions that others may take, and the steps may vary in the length of time that may be required to accomplish them. For example, the outcome of the proposed KABATA project, and the specific timing of it, could influence some of the steps, as could the timing of decisions by JBER about the potential transfer of land.

These are the recommended steps:

### **Step 1: Adopt the Neighborhood Plan.**

#### **Objective:**

To establish the policy base for implementing the plan.

#### **Actions:**

- 1.1 Neighborhood council endorsement.
- 1.2 Planning and Zoning Commission adoption/resolution to support the plan.
- 1.3 Assembly adoption.
- 1.4 Forward the plan to KABATA to include in their potential RFP to contractors.
- 1.5 Forward the plan to other agencies (e.g., JBER, the Railroad and the Port) to include in their planning efforts.
- 1.6 Forward plan to SHPO and FHWA.
- 1.7 Amend the neighborhood planning boundary, to reflect the land recently acquired by the Port, and potentially the area under discussion with JBER.

**Step 2: Amend plan with two preferred scenarios: KAC “Creating Value” scenario and without KAC “Conservative/Moderate Investment” scenario.**

This formal amendment through PZC and the Assembly will provide the MOA with two paths forward in the Government Hill neighborhood. Through the planning process, the Government Hill community indicated that they would like a dedicated community/civic use building or space within a building to be located within the revitalized commercial center. The Planning Division looks forward to working with KABATA and the Government Hill community to decide on an appropriate location for this civic space.

**Step 3: Initiate funding systems and land transfers.**

**Objective:**

To establish the organizational, regulatory, and funding mechanisms that will be needed to implement the plan.

**Actions:**

- 3.1 Set up a Community Development Corporation (or coordinate with the Redevelopment Agency).
- 3.2 Get a line item in CIP budget for streets and intersections improvements.
- 3.3 Establish line item in CIP budget for non-motorized transportation improvements.
- 3.4 Set a line item in CIP budget for parks and trails improvements.
- 3.5 Set up a Tax Increment Financing district.
- 3.6 Pursue housing programs.
- 3.7 Submit a formal request for land transfer to JBER.

- 3.8 Finalize mitigation actions with KABATA.
- 3.9 Establish a Neighborhood Committee to champion plan implementation.
- 3.10 Secure funding for preliminary infrastructure design.
- 3.11 Encourage the State of Alaska to restore full funding to the H2H project to help alleviate the north/south traffic that is anticipated by the KAC project and identified in the KAC FEIS to help mitigate the increase in traffic.
- 3.12 This plan recommends that the current businesses and residents on Government Hill are relocated in compliance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. This could mean relocation to other comparable properties on Government Hill, which could also assist in the redevelopment of the Government Hill Neighborhood Center.

**Step 4: Create preliminary infrastructure design.**

**Objective:**

To develop preliminary design concepts to a level of detail that will enable determining more clearly the feasibility of road realignments and the relationship to other infrastructure work. This would include traffic counts and projections, parking capacity studies, and potential costs associated with various design options. This will help to determine the final parcel configuration concept.

**Actions:**

- 4.1 Develop an infrastructure impacts mitigation plan.
- 4.2 Develop preliminary engineering for:
  - Neighborhood entry design (at Hollywood and E. Loop Road).
  - New school road.
  - JBER entry intersection.

- Note that the design of the entry into the neighborhood center may need to be phased, depending upon the timing of decisions about the proposed KABATA project. It could be designed with an interim improvement, and then refined if the tunnel and lid project occurs at a later date.

4.3 Coordinate street improvements with water and sewer replacement projects.

4.4 Refine design and phasing concepts for parks and trails.

### **Step 5: Develop final block configuration concept for the neighborhood center area.**

**Objective:**

To refine the new block layouts to facilitate acquisition and re-drawing of parcels. Based on results of establishing funding mechanisms and preliminary streets, finalize the block configuration plan. This would become the “preferred alternative” for implementation.

**Actions:**

- 5.1 Develop the preliminary re-plat plan.
- 5.2 Outline the new parcel boundaries.
- 5.3 Prepare design guidelines for landscapes and buildings.

### **Step 6: Refine the redevelopment phasing plan for the neighborhood center.**

**Objective:**

To establish a phasing plan that is realistic and that reflects the new information that will be generated in the preceding implementation steps.

**Actions:**

6.1 Develop a more specific phasing plan. This should be based on the refined block layout, updated market analyses, community input, and negotiations with partners. This may include some parcels that can redevelop without reconfiguration, and some rehabilitation and addition projects as well.

6.2 Determine “mini steps” within a first phase of development. This may be one building or a small block first. This relates to street improvement phasing as well.

6.3 Seek a “master developer” to coordinate smaller development projects and individual phases.

### **Step 7: Assemble parcels and blocks.**

**Objective:**

To enable re-configuring properties to allow for more efficient building footprints, and planning of public realm improvements that meet the urban design objectives for the neighborhood center.

**Actions:**

- 7.1 Initiate assembly of parcels.

Assembly of parcels will be a “willing seller/willing buyer” condition. Fair market prices would be negotiated by the acquiring entity, presumably a neighborhood development corporation. In some cases, land may be leased for development. If they wish to, this process could also enable an existing owner to remain in the development as a partner rather than selling.

## **Step 8: Develop the final infrastructure design.**

### **Objective:**

To complete a “preliminary design” stage for infrastructure components and to facilitate re-drawing parcel boundaries.

### **Actions:**

- 8.1 Establish specific street alignments.
- 8.2 Establish formal parcel boundaries.
- 8.3 Rezone parcels to fit redevelopment plan.
- 8.4 Revisit market potential at this stage as well, which may influence anticipated land uses.

## **Step 9: Begin first phase of infrastructure construction.**

### **Objective:**

To execute infrastructure work that will facilitate the first phase of redevelopment.

### **Actions:**

- 9.1 Construct key intersections and road segments.
- 9.2 Initiate first phase of parks and trails improvements.

## **Step 10: Begin first phase of redevelopment.**

### **Objective:**

To secure developers for the initial stages of redevelopment and begin construction that meets the urban design objectives for the neighborhood center.

### **Actions:**

- 10.1 Issue an RFP for developers if a master developer has not been identified in an earlier stage.
- 10.2 Negotiate contracts.
- 10.3 Facilitate design development and expedited permitting.
- 10.4 Begin initial redevelopment construction.

# APPENDIX A

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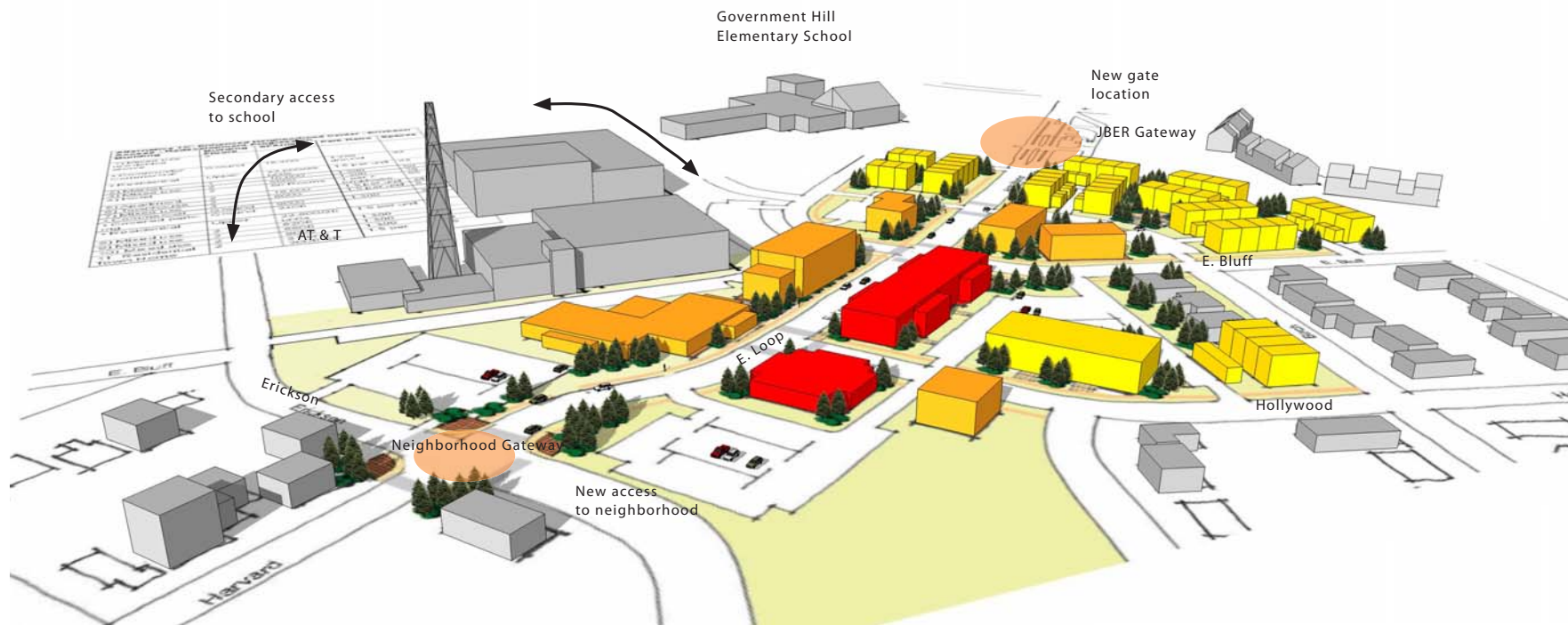
## OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

This appendix records two alternative scenarios for the redevelopment of the neighborhood center. These contain valuable ideas from the community that may be considered as circumstances change over time. In some cases, portions of these scenarios could be included in those that are presented in Chapter 5.

## SCENARIO 4

In this scenario the roadwork is relatively easy to phase. The first phase would yield a modest “main street” experience. It defers development along the eastern edge until the outcome of KAC is clear. Until that time, the entry experience would be modest, but it could have a reasonable gateway design that can be upgraded if KAC happens. The later phases would occur with JBER agreements, which could coincide with improvement in the market for residential development.





### A. CONCEPT

- “Main Street” feel along E. Loop Road, between Erickson Street and E. Bluff Drive
- Secondary mixed-use street along Hollywood Drive
- “Prime intersection address” at E. Loop Road and Hollywood
- Landscaped gateway entry experience at Hollywood, Erickson, and E. Loop Road

### B. KEY FEATURES

#### Parcels

- Three large parcels, facing E. Loop Road

#### Intersections

- Improve existing intersection at E. Loop Road and Erickson

#### Streets

- Moderate realignment of E. Loop Road in the commercial core

- Direct flow from commercial center to JBER entry
- Improved access to the school
- East-west flow, along E. Bluff Drive, with a job in the center

#### Parking

- Along Erickson Street
- Between E. Loop Road and Birch Street
- Along eastern edge of Alascom
- On street

#### Pedestrian systems

- Improved sidewalks in neighborhood center
- Improved crossing at E. Bluff and Arctic Warrior Drives
- Improved sidewalk/trail access to school



**C. PHASING CONSIDERATIONS**

**General Development Phasing**

Phase 1a: Create commercial core along E. Loop Road between E. Bluff and Hollywood Drives

Phase 1b: Develop parcels on and abutting potential KAC lid area

Phase 2: Mixed-use development at JBER edge

Phase 3: Residential development at JBER edge

**Relationship to KAC**

- Concept works with or without the tunnel
- Uncertainty about KAC could delay development of buildings 1 and 2

**Relationship to JBER**

Phase 1: Agreement for minor

intersection improvements at Arctic Warrior and E. Bluff Drives

Phase 2: Agreement for additional street connection and mixed-use development

Phase 3: Agreement for additional residential as complementary interface with base



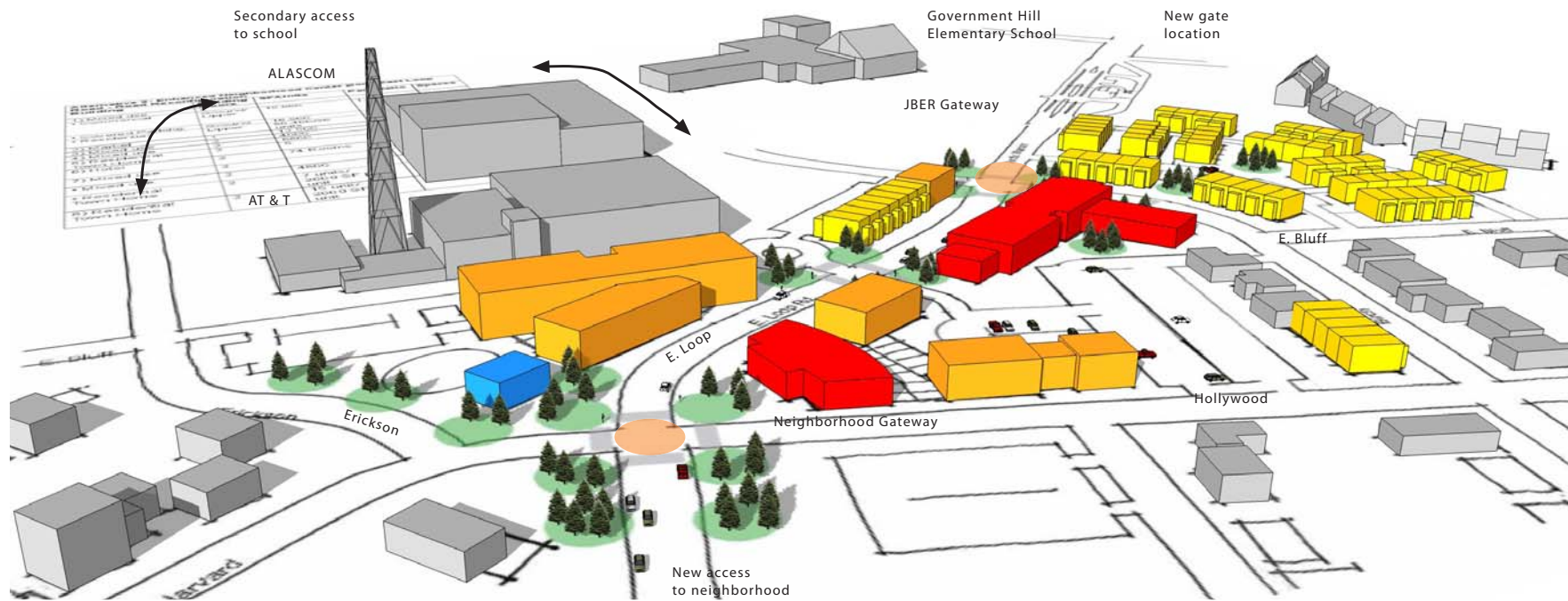
## SCENARIO 5

This scenario would result in a strong entry experience with signature buildings. However, it is difficult to phase if KAC outcome is uncertain. An initial mid-center development would be relatively modest.

### A. CONCEPT

- “Main Street” feel along E. Loop Road, between Hollywood and E. Bluff Drives
- Secondary mixed-use street along Hollywood Drive
- “Prime intersection address” at E. Loop Road and Hollywood Drive/Ericksen Street
- Additional “key intersection” mid-block along E. Loop Road (at Bluff)
- Landscaped gateway entry experience at Hollywood Drive, Erickson Street and E. Loop Road





**B. KEY FEATURES**

**Parcels**

- Two large parcels, facing E. Loop Road in initial phases
- Additional large (residential) parcel at JBER interface

**Intersections**

- Improve existing intersection at E. Loop Road and Erickson Street (in conjunction with street realignment)

**Streets**

- Moderate realignment of E. Loop Road in the commercial core
- Direct flow from commercial center to JBER entry
- Improved access to the school
- East-west flow along Harvard Avenue and Hollywood Drive

**Parking**

- Along Erickson Street (poten-

tial lid area)

- Between E. Bluff and Hollywood and E. Loop Road and Birch Street (festival lot)
- Along southern and eastern edges of Alascom
- On street
- In new development area at JBER interface (later phase)

**Pedestrian systems**

- Improved sidewalks in

neighborhood center

- Improved crossing at E. Bluff and Arctic Warrior Drives
- Major pedestrian crossing at E. Loop Road and Hollywood
- Improved sidewalk/trail access to school

**C. PHASING CONSIDERATIONS**

**General Development Phasing**

Phase 1: Development at E. Loop Road and E. Bluff Drive

Phase 2: Major mixed-use development at Hollywood and E. Loop Road (abutting lid area)

Phase 3: Residential development at JBER edge

**Relationship to KAC**

- Concept works with, or without, the tunnel
- Uncertainty about KAC could delay development of buildings 1 – 4

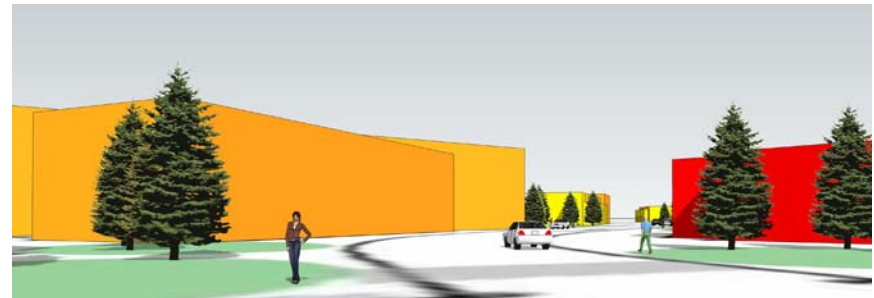
**Relationship to JBER**

Phase 1: Agreement for intersection improvements at Arctic Warrior and E. Bluff Drives

Phase 2: Agreement for additional street connection and mixed-use development.

Phase 3: None (focus is on western edge of neighborhood center)

Phase 4: Agreement for additional residential as complementary interface with base



View along East Loop



Scenario 5 Phasing Detail



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