

# 4 land use and economic development

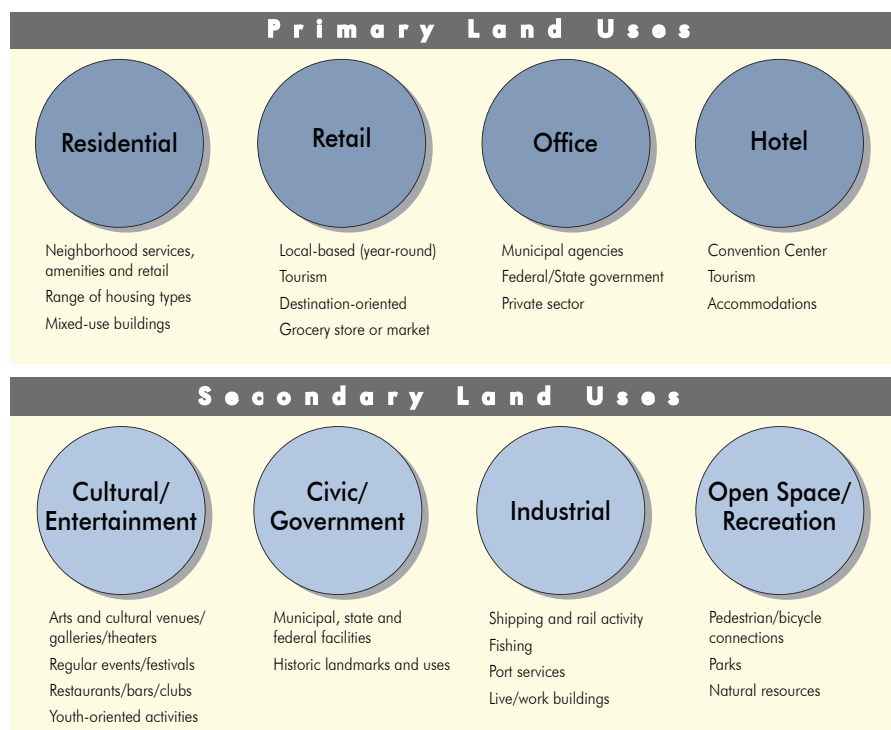
## OVERVIEW

Downtown Anchorage's future as a vibrant and successful center is dependent on its overall economic health and growth potential.

A people-oriented, vibrant, 24/7 experience is the desired future for Downtown Anchorage. To attain that energy and vibrancy, Downtown needs to include a mix of land uses that caters to a variety of people and income levels. The range and types of retail amenities are also critical. These amenities should provide Downtown residents with much-needed facilities, such as schools, fresh food and convenient services. They should be designed with the highest regard to aesthetics, seismic safety and the northern climate.

This chapter first provides **an understanding of the existing Downtown land uses**, as well as **projected future demand** for these uses. It then recommends **strategies necessary to capture economic investment and locate development** appropriately. Finally, the chapter identifies the special development and land use character that should be achieved within each Downtown district.

Four primary land use categories are identified below for Downtown Anchorage. These vital drivers for growth should be retained and enhanced in the coming years. Four existing secondary land uses are also identified. They augment the primary land uses to serve Anchorage's residents and employees and create a truly diverse, integrated place.



### PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

A statewide distribution center and regional hub, Anchorage is the centerpiece of Alaska's commerce and economic activity. Downtown Anchorage plays an important role for both the city and state, providing civic facilities, public activity, shopping and employment options. There is opportunity to leverage Downtown's existing land uses and supplement its underused areas with new development that

- a) meets the performance targets that Downtown can achieve and
- b) provides workers, residents and visitors with a balanced mix of land uses that serve them.

The following key considerations are made for the **four primary land uses: residential, retail, office and hotel**. Then several land use goals and strategies are outlined on the following pages to enhance these primary land uses.

#### Residential

- Housing development is a key opportunity for revitalizing Downtown.
- There is a slow but steady population growth.
- National trends show an increasing desire for "urban" lifestyles.
- Downtown home values are increasing.
- Downtown needs additional amenities to support housing.

#### Retail

- Downtown is one of Alaska's primary retail, culture and entertainment destination.
- Downtown faces retail competition with other areas.

#### Office

- Downtown is competing with other areas for office development.
- Downtown should build upon its strength as a hub of government offices, amenities and density.

#### Hotel

- Though many tourists arrive in Anchorage, few spend more than one or two nights in Downtown.
- The new convention center will support additional hotel rooms.

Primary residential, retail, office, and hotel land uses will be bolstered through further development of **secondary cultural/entertainment and civic/government land uses**. More destinations with special goods, services or activities will attract people to the city center. Although Downtown Anchorage evolved from the initial construction of the Alaska Railroad, the Port and associated industrial uses, their roles have diminished in importance to Downtown vitality compared with other economic sectors. These uses should continue to be supported where appropriate. Maintaining and enhancing **open space and recreation** areas will also be necessary to attract and retain residents.

## LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The land use and economic development goals outline the physical framework for enhancing Downtown Anchorage.

Seven primary goals (right) guide Downtown's land use and development patterns.

### Leverage new public and private investment

Encourage land use patterns and development that connect new public and private investments. Commercial and civic activity associated with new development should complement existing assets and jumpstart new investment.

### Increase housing options and accommodate diverse income levels

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

### Attract government and private offices to Downtown

In the face of competition from outlying areas such as Midtown, create a dynamic urban environment with adequate facilities to retain and attract office uses.

### Maintain, supplement and enhance open space

As Downtown densifies and develops, it is critical that the hierarchy of parks and open space is maintained and supplemented to accommodate new residents and workers.

### Ensure that all new Downtown development enhances the pedestrian experience

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

### Increase the intensity of Anchorage's Downtown Core

Fill the heart of Anchorage with greater density of employment, residences, retail stores and cultural and entertainment venues, to create a cohesive central city district. Identify each sub-district of Downtown so each can further develop its own unique character, identity and function, and so they complement, rather than compete with, one another.

### Ensure seismically safe development

Minimize the life safety risks to building occupants and economic vulnerability of property owners and the community as a whole for any future development proposed in areas with potentially high or very high ground failure susceptibility.

# Recommendations

A series of recommendations are outlined in the following pages in order to meet the land use and economic development goals.

## 1. Meet Growth Performance Targets

The existing conditions analysis included an assessment of supply and demand for the primary land uses vital for Downtown's evolution into a more active urban center with core office, business, arts and cultural facilities, as

well as higher residential densities. The table below reflects medium to high demand projections for these land uses in the Downtown Study Area for the short-, mid- and long-term development forecast for 2010, 2015 and 2025.

These targets are based on aggressive employment forecasts from the Municipality's Long Range Transportation Plan. These forecasts have been converted to housing units and commercial square footage based on assumptions regarding household size and commercial space per employee. Taken together, these projections represent aggressive, yet plausible assumptions for future growth potential in Downtown. The actual amount of development will depend in part upon the interconnections of these land uses, and public and private investment.

The goal of this plan is to accommodate and encourage up to 4,000 housing units, which is more than the housing demand projection. This is because a demand projection is based in part on current and historical trends. Rather than reflect passive acceptance of current forecasts, this plan prioritizes growth in Downtown, recommending development incentives and land use regulations that will make housing easier to build Downtown. The plan also recognizes that Anchorage's demographic and economic indicators continue to shift in favor of Downtown living. Therefore, if the market opportunity arises, Downtown can and should have the capacity to accommodate up to 4,000 housing units by the year 2025.

2010 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2010*
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	350 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	110,500 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	300,000 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	75 rooms

\*Numbers reflect total new development to 2010.

2015 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2015**
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	1,200 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	185,000 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	1,257,500 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	375 rooms

\*\*Numbers reflect total new development to 2015.

2025 Targets

Land Use	In 2002	Projected for 2025***
RESIDENTIAL	500 units	2,500 units
RETAIL	590,000 sq. ft.	270,000 sq. ft.
OFFICE	4,700,000 sq. ft.	2,425,000 sq. ft.
HOTEL	3,400 rooms	1,000 rooms

\*\*\*Numbers reflect total new development to 2025.

## 2. Establish Economic Development Strategies

Making Downtown accessible and attractive for residents and visitors throughout the year will require progressive land use planning, design guidelines, development and financial incentives and accompanying land use regulations. The following set of strategies work together with Downtown's land use regulations to intensify land use by developing vacant and underused parcels; strengthen Downtown's markets for residential, retail, commercial and hotel activities; and catalyze new market niches.

### **Develop incentives for a diverse mix of housing types Downtown, including affordable and market rate for-sale and rental units.**

- Ensure that the zoning in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods facilitates multifamily residential development, and that live/work space is also allowed.
- Offer incentives, through AHFC, Fannie Mae, Anchorage Housing Authority and others, to build public/private partnerships with developers to provide affordable housing, senior housing, housing for people with special needs and market rate rental housing.
- Encourage mixed-income housing developments with units for lower-, middle- and upper-income households in the same development.



Downtown Vancouver is a good example of a city that balances high-rise development with low-rise townhomes and offices. A portion of new units are affordable.

- Consider the use of tax increment financing and/or tax abatement as revenue sources to reduce development costs (such as for structured parking) or increase unit values to enhance residential feasibility.
- Develop land assembly and site control strategies.
- Identify a specific publicly owned property to serve as a model for public/private housing development, solicitation of development proposals and provision of creative financing techniques to enable the development.
- Identify other publicly owned properties that may be appropriate for housing development.



Medium density family and senior housing should be encouraged in Downtown's mixed-use residential sub-districts.





The location of City Hall on 6th Avenue (above top) and the Federal Building on 4th Avenue (above) establish a base of government offices and civic facilities Downtown.

### **Develop a targeted retail recruitment and retention strategy.**

- Identify and pursue opportunities for neighborhood retail such as a small grocery store, drug store and/or other services for current and future Downtown residents.
- Identify and pursue additional anchor retail tenants such as another department store and/or cineplex, that can strengthen Downtown's drawing power.
- Identify and pursue retailers that appeal to vacation and convention visitors, including restaurants and "one-of-a-kind" shops in addition to more typical souvenir stores.
- Encourage streetscape and storefront façade improvements, in addition to active ground floor retail uses, to enhance Downtown's comparative advantage as a unique shopping environment.
- Develop coordination, joint marketing and physical linkages between the Weekend Market and Downtown retailers.
- Expand retail services to serve residents and tourists year-round.
- Require ground-floor retail in new buildings in some locations (e.g., 4th and 5th avenues), while allowing it in others (e.g., 9th Avenue).
- Co-locate retail space with new parking garage development.

### **Strengthen the hub of civic facilities, offices and employment Downtown.**

- Make Downtown a priority location for federal, state and local government administrative employment and services.
- Concentrate on attracting and retaining Municipality of Anchorage offices and services, specifically.
- Develop a targeted office recruitment program aimed at identifying and attracting corporate employers, such as native corporations.
- Leverage public and private partnerships with assistance from the Anchorage development authority.
- Seek to reduce development costs (e.g. for structured parking) through tax incentives or other means to enhance office feasibility.
- Encourage office developers to utilize the Downtown parking exemption to enhance the feasibility of development, and ensure that other public parking (publicly or privately owned) is adequate to serve a growing employment base.
- Co-locate office development with new parking garage development.
- Consider parking provisions that offer parking providers with incentives to share parking resources.
- Support a new Downtown location for the transit center.
- Provide capital improvements to the surrounding streetscape environment along with marketing Downtown amenities to employers.
- Establish incentives to make rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of older properties, underused parcels and surface parking lots cost effective.

### Increase Downtown's hotel supply and occupancy rates.

- Increase hotel supply to accommodate large conventions.
- Increase the year-round visitor occupancy by marketing Downtown as a winter destination.
- Identify specific publicly and privately owned properties that may be appropriate for hotel development, and solicit hotel developers/operators for those sites.
- Work with cruise operators to identify services and amenities that could enhance visitors' experiences in Downtown and encourage longer stays in local hotels.
- Encourage hotel developers to utilize the Downtown parking exemption to enhance the feasibility of development, and ensure that other public parking (publicly or privately owned) is adequate to serve a growing hotel base.



### Enhance Downtown's arts, cultural and entertainment focus.

- Develop an outreach/recruitment program for gallery owners.
- Encourage the development of studio and gallery space in the arts districts (identified on the Downtown Districts Diagram), recognizing that Downtown arts can complement arts districts elsewhere in the community.
- Enhance arts districts' identities through streetscape design.
- Preserve the 4th Avenue Theater by making it a viable operation as a Downtown destination venue.

- Examine the feasibility of an arts and cultural center celebrating Anchorage's diversity through educational, recreational and entertainment programming in arts, languages, cuisine and other unique cultural traditions.
- Provide fun attractions and events to draw visitors Downtown.



Incentives to rehabilitate older properties, such as the JCPenney parking garage currently undergoing facade renovations (above top) and consolidation of small lots for catalytic development opportunities (above), should be encouraged.



The 4th Avenue Theater is one of Anchorage's great historic landmarks.



Signs outside parking garages or in strategic Downtown locations can notify drivers of the number of parking spaces available.

### **Develop a coordinated parking program.**

- Create a distributed parking pattern that allows visitors to park in one garage Downtown and easily traverse the Core area without needing to park again.
- Develop a system-wide wayfinding signage program that directs users to parking and informs them of vacancies.
- Reduce parking demand through transit services, programs, incentives and amenities recommended in this plan.
- Encourage alternatives such as shared parking and automated parking structures.
- Provide gap financing for structured parking.

### **Develop an expedited permitting strategy.**

- Develop a program of expedited, fast-track land use and site plan permitting for development proposals that achieve the Plan's land use strategies, district development specifications and urban design guidelines.
- Explore a program of expedited building permits for specific desired land uses such as affordable housing.



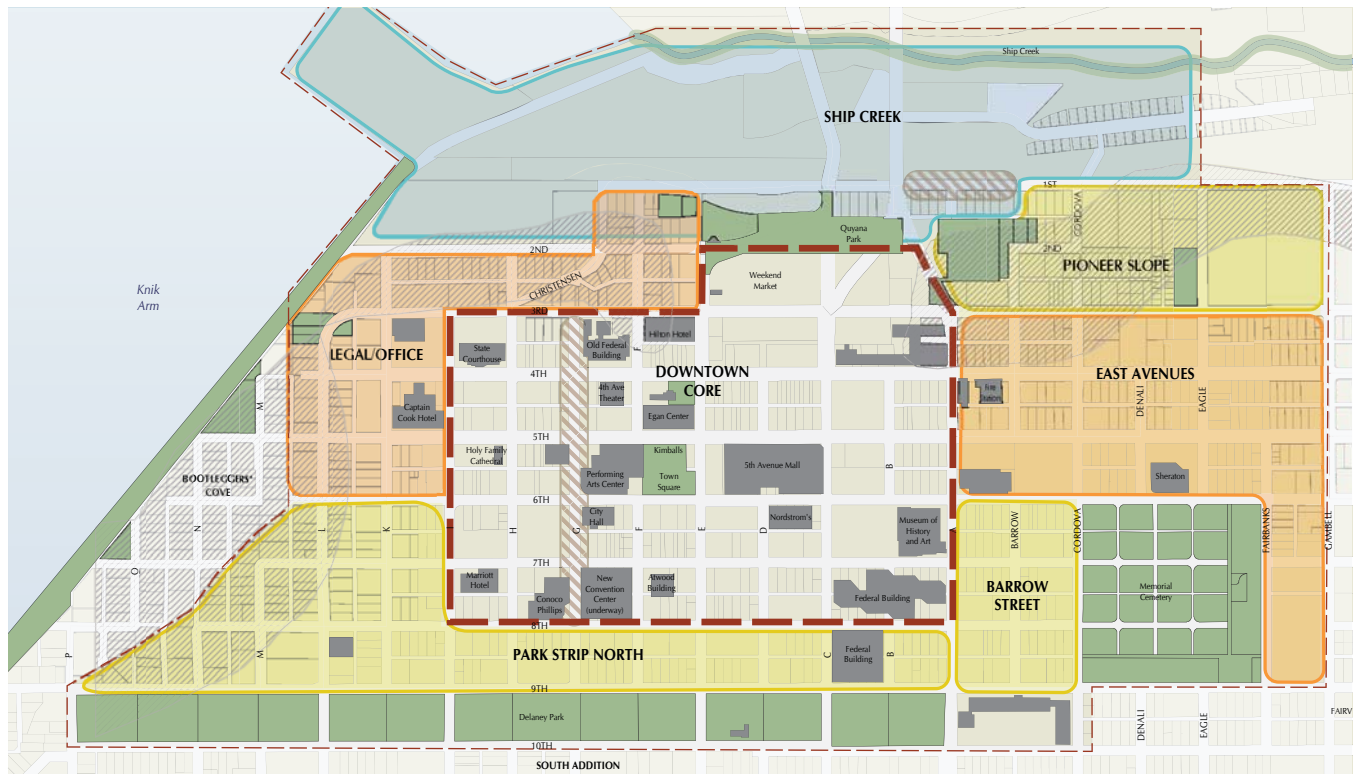
### 3. Establish Downtown Districts

The Downtown is comprised of sub-districts, each with its own character, activities and levels of intensity. The delineation of these districts has not been articulated in previous planning efforts. Designating and reinforcing the districts offers the opportunity to create neighborhoods of distinct character, functionality and sense of place. The Downtown Districts Diagram (below) identifies four districts within the Study Area: Downtown Core,

Downtown Mixed-use, Downtown Mixed-use Residential and Ship Creek. The following pages define each district with a set of development specifications and design prototypes to guide future development. These include suggested ranges of density and general guidance for land use and the physical character of development.

#### Seismic Ground Failure Zones

Certain proposed uses or intensities may be limited or restricted within Seismically Induced Ground Failure Zones #4 and/or #5, subject to current building code, and other potential municipal requirements that may result from a Seismic Risk Assessment (discussed in the seismic hazards section at the end of Chapter 4).



Downtown Districts Diagram

#### Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Park/Open Space
- Downtown Mixed-Use
- Downtown Mixed-Use; Residential
- Downtown Core
- "Notable" Building Footprint
- Ship Creek
- Arts District/Corridor
- Seismic Ground Failure Zone #5



Downtown grocery store with housing, Vancouver, BC



Downtown mixed-use development, Denver, CO



Varying development densities, Oakland, CA

### Downtown Core (DT-1)

As the most active and intense part of the city center, the Downtown Core is the priority area for high-density, mixed-use development. This district has the greatest development intensity and building heights in the Municipality, creating a concentration of office, civic, cultural, entertainment, housing and retail uses, all within close proximity to each other. The Core will build on its rich heritage and collection of historic buildings to create an environment of distinctive character and quality. Attractive public and semi-private open spaces for celebration and relaxation should be provided for Anchorage residents, workers and visitors. The arts district on G Street should be enhanced with additional gallery space and streetscape improvements promoting its identity.

#### *Development Specifications:*

- 3 to 20-plus stories; 30 to 80-plus units/acre per Merrill Field flight path
- Ground floor retail, housing, civic/government, cultural/entertainment, office, open space and hotels/visitor services.
- High concentrations of employment, with densities reaching 50 or more employees per acre.
- Tall building massing set back from street; ground floor design to accommodate sun-lit plazas and public interior spaces (see top image)

- Highly active streetscape with pedestrian amenities, ground floor uses oriented to the sidewalk, multiple building entries and no blank walls—especially on primary pedestrian oriented streets.
- Certain proposed uses, intensities and building heights may be more restricted within seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5. Seismic constraints in 3rd and 4th Avenues are anticipated to limit the height and size of structures.

### Downtown Mixed-use: East Avenues (DT-2)

Two areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by commercial and mixed-use development. These areas consist of a compact mix of office, retail, lodging and entertainment uses, but also accommodate civic uses and encourage residential development.

The East Avenues sub-district comprises the eastern end of the city center. It is already home to a variety of uses and building heights. The district is bordered by some light industrial use along Gambell Street and contains dispersed high rise development. New development should cater to populations interested in a live/work environment.

#### *Development Specifications:*

- 2 to 10 stories; 20 to 60-plus units/acre per Merrill Field flight path, and depending on seismic restrictions within seismic ground failure zones #4 and #5.

- Medium to high-density residential, live/work, office, hotel, local-serving retail development (see bottom image).
- Tall building massing is set back from street; steps down to the pedestrian scale at street level and is sensitive to climatic effects.

### **Downtown Mixed-use: Legal/Office (DT-2)**

The Legal/Office sub-district is the second district characterized by broader mixed-use development. It is already a hub for law and professional offices and is home to a number of historic buildings. While some housing is encouraged, the district should be primarily developed with new medium to high-density office space that will complement office uses in the Downtown Core. Strong connection to the Coastal Trail, respectful relationships to historic structures, and careful transition to Bootlegger's Cove will be important.

#### *Development Specifications:*

- 2 to 10 stories; 20 to 60-plus units/acre depending on seismic restrictions—a seismic overlay zone to address seismic hazards is discussed at the end of this chapter.
- Housing, offices, small hotels, ground-floor retail (see top image), restaurants/cafes, offices and small-scale public spaces for workers and residents (see middle image)
- Preserve view corridors west and north across the Cook Inlet.

### **Downtown Mixed-use Residential (DT-3)**

Three areas adjacent to the Downtown Core are characterized by low- to mid-rise residential development. These areas are intended to provide housing opportunities and a great living environment. They include a range of housing types to ensure affordability and accommodate compatible commercial uses such as neighborhood-serving retail, and access to open space. The Mixed Use Residential District accommodates existing office uses and will allow office/mixed-use development at a scale and intensity that is compatible with a residential-oriented district. The three mixed-use residential sub-districts should include the following amenities and incentives:

- Services such as grocery stores, day care and drugstores aimed at local residents should be available in select locations (see bottom image).
- Neighborhood parks, gardens, pleasant streetscapes and pedestrian linkages through blocks should be provided as residential development occurs.
- Tax abatement and other incentives should be applied to encourage residential development; utilize design review to ensure quality.
- A mix of market-rate housing and affordable housing is encouraged; avoid large concentrations of high-income and/or low-income units.
- Residential design should include features such as front stoops, bay windows, facade articulation, balconies or sun rooms and upper level step-backs.



Mixed-use development, Denver, CO



Downtown plaza, San Diego, CA



Downtown mixed-use development, San Francisco, CA





Medium density residential development, Burbank, CA



Live-work housing, Emeryville, CA



Warehouse redevelopment, Vancouver, BC

### **Park Strip North (DT-3):**

The Park Strip North sub-district is a prime opportunity for developing a mixed-use district comprised primarily of medium density housing. The Park Strip provides a great resource for active or passive recreation and creates a buffer between the Downtown Core and the neighborhoods to the south.

#### *Development Specifications:*

- 3 to 4 stories along park strip and 5 to 7 stories on north half of block between 8th and 9th avenues; 20 to 50 units/acre
- “Stepping up” of density and building height toward the Downtown core.
- Housing and neighborhood serving ground floor retail at key corners and intersections.
- Multiple entries on ground floor; individual entrances raised several feet for privacy or screened with landscaping or stoop design.
- Residential density and building height may be more restricted within high seismic ground failure zones, especially near the bluff over Bootleggers Cove.

### **Downtown Mixed-use Residential: Barrow Street (DT-3)**

The second area characterized by low- to mid-rise residential development is Barrow Street. A small sub-district situated between the Downtown Core and the Anchorage Memorial

Cemetery, Barrow Street has its own identity separate from the Park Strip North residences to the west and the East Avenues to the north. Housing in this small, mixed-use neighborhood will be comprised of medium density residential.

#### *Development Specifications:*

- 2 to 4 stories; 15 to 50 units/acre
- Primarily residential uses; some small home office and corner retail
- Townhouses and condo units with front door entries to street and garage entry from rear (see top image)

### **Downtown Mixed-use Residential: Pioneer Slope (DT-3)**

The Pioneer Slope residential mixed-use development sub-district is located in seismically induced ground failure zone #5, with very high ground failure susceptibility and is considered for a diverse mix of low to medium density uses, including open space, commercial, residential and industrial uses.

#### *Development Specifications:*

- 2 to 4 stories; 15 to 30 units/acre
- Primarily residential and live/work uses; some open space, small home office, artist studios, galleries, corner retail and light industrial (see middle image)
- Development takes advantage of existing open spaces and views to the north.



### Ship Creek (PC District)

Ship Creek district is distinguished from adjacent Downtown districts by its historic and industrial uses. The area is well-positioned for medium density, residential development, supplemented with commercial uses such as restaurants, small scale hotels, arts production spaces and railroad-related uses. New development should reflect the industrial history of the area, incorporate live-work units and maximize Ship Creek as a recreational resource, while adhering to seismic constraints. The Ship Creek Master Plan and recently adopted Planned Community zoning district design standards further articulate planning and design parameters for the area.

The following recommendations should be considered as development occurs:

- Support Ship Creek’s development strategy to preserve the historic character, promote an arts corridor along 1st Avenue and integrate new development.
- 1st Avenue east of the overpass should be a “slow” traffic street that fosters an arts corridor, providing easy access to shops and galleries and creating a comfortable pedestrian environment.

#### Catalytic Development Sites

- 1 4th Avenue Development Site (Possibly Public Market, Cultural Center and Transit Center)
- 2 E Street Infill Development Site
- 3 6th Avenue Infill Development Site
- 4 Park Strip Housing Prototype

### 4. Move Forward on Catalytic Development Sites

Four highly visible projects that will attract additional investment are identified as Downtown’s Catalytic Development Sites. They are catalytic due to their prime location in the core, proximity to recent investment, or ability to provide much needed services or activities currently lacking in Downtown. They are also likely to encourage other new investment. These sites, highlighted on the diagram below, have particular importance to Downtown and should be considered top priority for development. The following pages describe the desirable land uses, development program and design character for each of the sites.

A financial feasibility analysis based on the conceptual development programs has been performed for three of the four sites. The *residual land value* of the development projects indicates how much a developer could afford to pay for the existing property and still generate an adequate financial return to pursue development. In order to determine these values, the development revenue estimates (based on lease rates and sales prices), development costs (based on hard and soft costs for buildings and parking) and property operating costs (based on maintenance and leasing estimates) were estimated and then reviewed by local real estate experts, developers and architects.



Catalytic Development Sites Diagram

1

### Fourth Avenue Development Site

Situated in a strategic position between central Downtown and Ship Creek, this site should be a low- to mid-rise development with a one-of-a-kind mix of uses, including a Public Market, Arts and Cultural Center and possibly a new Transit Center. The activity of this development can complement the tourist-oriented Weekend Market, located immediately to the north, and create a connection between the Market and 4th Avenue commerce.



The public market in Portland, Maine draws residents and visitors year-round. It offers fresh produce, specialty goods and places to sit and eat.

### *Public Market*

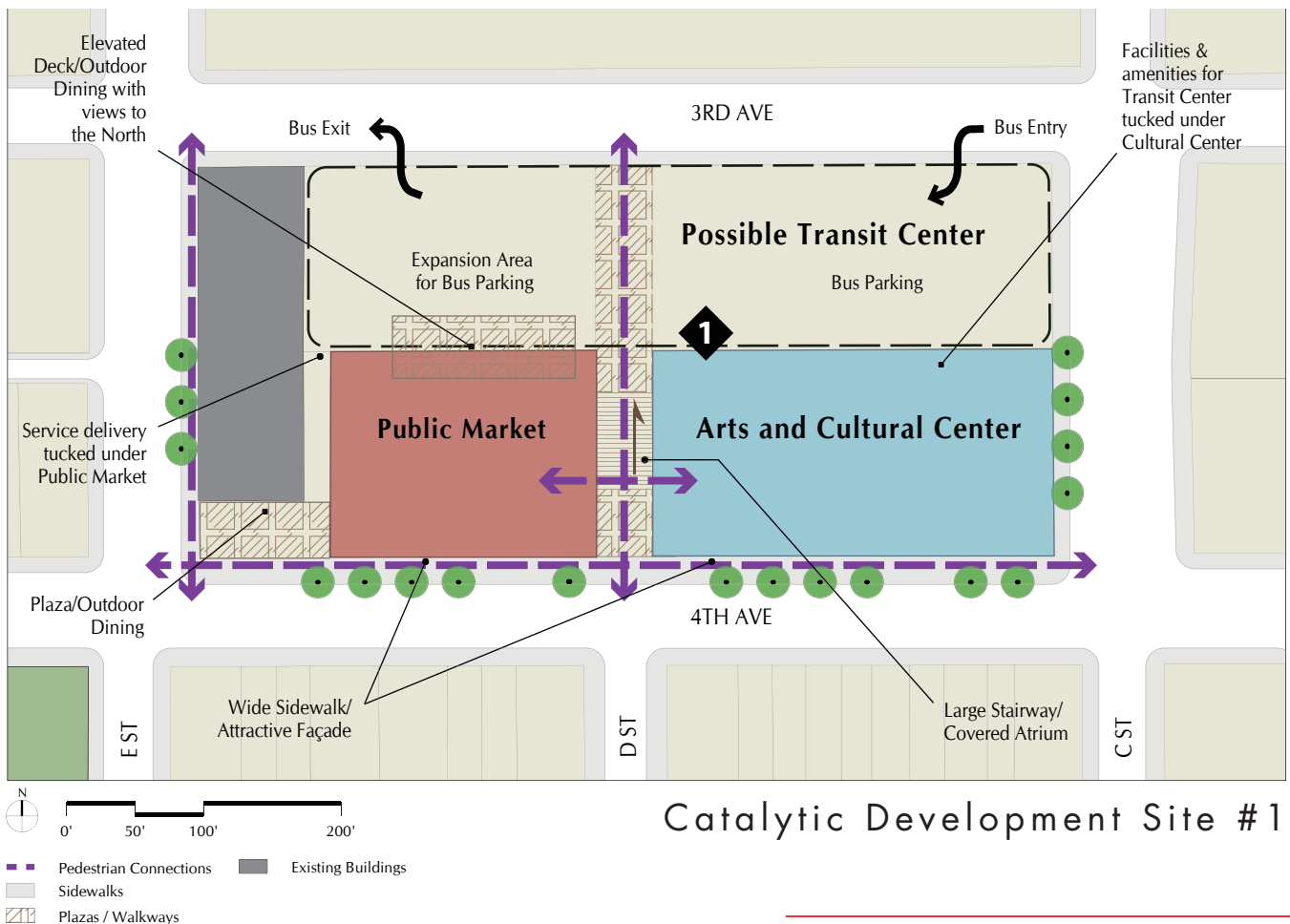
As Downtown housing grows and evolves, the increased number of residents will require amenities that can provide for their daily needs. A Public Market—with food, dry goods and other household items—can meet these needs while being a unique focal point for the Downtown community. The market can also be an attraction for visitors.

- Create a quality Public Market project that has authenticity as a local-serving commercial enterprise.
- Include retail outlets and services focused mostly on the daily needs of residents, such as fresh food and beverages (including a bakery, butcher and wine seller) and dry goods.
- Include places for eating and relaxing, such as indoor cafe space and counter dining, as well as social gathering spaces.

### *Arts and Cultural Center*

Anchorage is home to an incredible array of cultural diversity, including Alaska Native, European, Asian and Pacific Islander, African and other influences. Downtown should reflect and celebrate that heritage, serving as a “home” where all people are welcome and all cultures and traditions are respected. An arts and cultural center in the heart of Anchorage would help link together the city and state’s diverse peoples and be a place for education, celebration, discussion and reflection.

- Create an Arts and Cultural Center that celebrates the area's multi-cultural heritage and truly reflects the diversity of Anchorage and Alaska.
- Complement other arts and cultural facilities, such as the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage Museum of History and Art and local art galleries.
- Encourage Alaska Native and ethnic communities and local artists to be involved in the center's development.
- Position the Arts and Cultural Center as a draw for economic activity, attracting local residents, tourists and in-state visitors and benefiting both the center and the surrounding Downtown businesses.
- Showcase local artists' work to strengthen Downtown's role as an arts and culture hub and improve visibility of Downtown's arts districts/corridors.
- The center should provide space for artists to gain visibility and share their histories and techniques.





Waiting areas for transit, both indoor and outside, should be comfortable and well-lit. The transparent awning above provides protection from the elements, while allowing sunshine to access the sidewalk. The proposed Transit Center and Public Market should provide spaces like the one pictured below for passengers to wait for their bus, pick up produce, buy a magazine or relax after the workday.



### *Transit Center*

The Downtown Plan recommends that the existing Transit Center be relocated or expanded (see page 84).

A potential location for the Transit Center is on the northern half of the site, adjacent to 3rd Avenue. The activity generated by the Public Market and Cultural Center would make a new Transit Center a popular destination for workers and residents. Amenities for riders should be oriented toward pedestrians and provide an interesting and varied north-facing facade. The possible relocation should occur when 3rd Avenue has been reconfigured into a one-way westbound avenue. The Transit Center should, to the extent its location and service capacity enable, serve not only local People Mover buses but also any regional bus transit services that may come into operation and other bus lines servicing Southcentral Alaska residents such as the Homer, Seward, and Denali bus services.

Alternatively, the existing Transit Center can remain in its current centralized location, serving attractions and destinations in all directions. Refurbishing the Center and making modest curb space adjustments can improve its capacity to stage up to 18 buses. Optional capacity for three additional spaces exists west of H Street on 6th Avenue, allowing for a total of 21 bus staging spaces. The Municipality should use the following Transit Center Site Criteria to guide its decision to refurbish or relocate the center.

### *Travel Center Site Criteria*

- Identify a central location with good access to the facility. Assess ridership data to determine the destinations of daily users.
- Provide adequate space for vehicle storage and passenger transfers.
- Where possible encourage adequate space to also accommodate other bus lines providing service to other communities in Southcentral Alaska.
- Prioritize the safety of passengers, bus drivers, motorists and pedestrians.
- Ensure the facility program accommodates:
  - Room for loading and queuing of up to 20 buses
  - Office/customer service space: 4,000 sq.ft.
  - Waiting and common space: 5,000 sq.ft.
- Give transit vehicles prioritization with traffic signalization and dedicated bus lanes.
- Allow on-street stops in the Downtown Core.
- Create a multi-use facility that provides amenities for Downtown residents, tourists and commuters.
- Promote transit-oriented development around transit center.
- Provide pedestrian connections to the Alaska Railroad Intermodal Facility and other key destinations.
- Ensure that the location is consistent with a potential Downtown Circulator loop route.
- Phase improvements so the existing facility remains in use while a new Transit Center develops.



### *Building Design*

- Create a landmark building that has visual appeal and recognition and benefits from a visible, accessible location in Downtown.
- Ensure the south-facing facade along Fourth Avenue is transparent, inviting and has pedestrian-oriented uses such as displays and outdoor seating on the sidewalk.
- Plazas and outdoor dining areas should be located at the corner of 4th Avenue and E Street and overlooking the Transit Center to the north.

### *Streetscape, Parking & Circulation*

- A prominent open air staircase and arcade will provide north-south mid-block pedestrian connections.
- Parking should be accommodated in the lot to the north.
- Bus queuing for People Mover and tour operators would occur within the existing parking lot. Buses would enter from the northeast corner of the site and exit on the northwest corner.
- Buses would be stored off-site in a lot determined appropriate by People Mover and the Municipality.



Source: Project for Public Spaces

A well-designed open air staircase can provide linkages for shoppers between the 5th Avenue Mall and 4th Avenue shopping areas, the Transit Center, and the Weekend Market (above). Examples of attractive transit center designs are shown below.





New development should open onto the sidewalk and engage Town Square.

2

### E Street Infill Development Site

The area just east of Town Square is a prime opportunity site for mixed-use development that would provide connections to Town Square, integrate with the E Street Corridor Improvements and connect to JCPenny and the 5th Avenue Mall to the east. This site should have a high quality mixed-use development with one to two levels of retail and housing above that. A key characteristic of the site should be a publicly accessible atrium that provides a sun-lit space year-round, taking advantage of its position.

3

### Sixth Avenue Infill Development Site

The area across 6th Avenue from Town Square offers prime opportunities for redevelopment. The parcels could be consolidated into a mixed-use development with ground floor retail and housing or hotel above. The building design would have to pay particularly close attention to height restrictions and shadow impacts due to its proximity to Town Square. The ground floor of the site requires a strong retail presence. The Municipality should work with property owners and developers to redevelop the parcels.

This site is of particular importance because of its ability to:

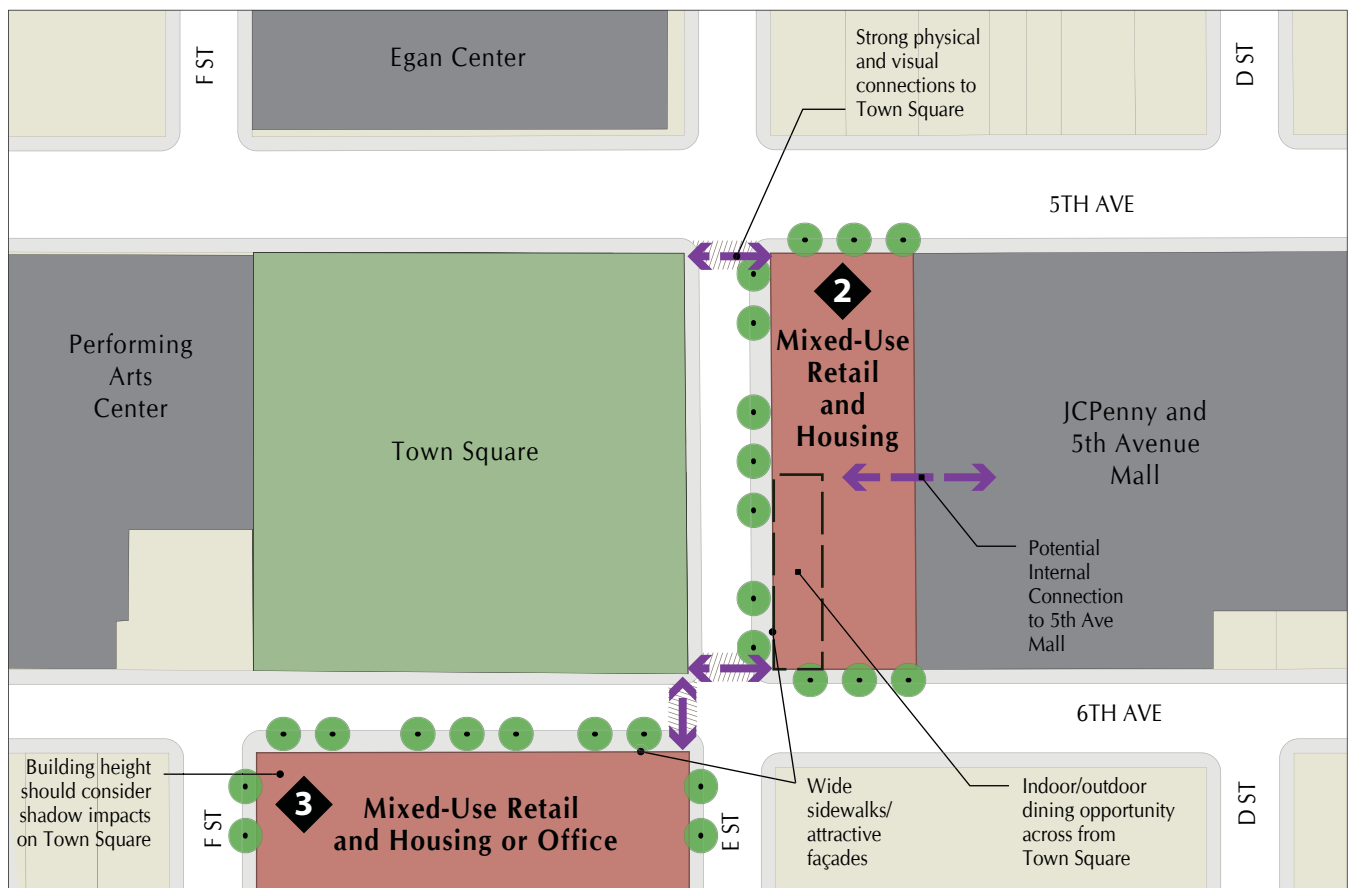
- Define and activate the south edge of Town Square
- Provide a critical mass of shopping and activity
- Link 5th Avenue Mall retail with the new Dena'ina Convention Center, City Hall and the Performing Arts Center.



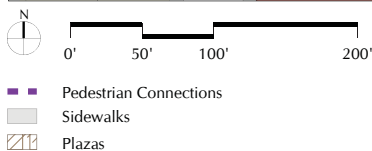
This glass-enclosed cafe extends out of the building's facade with outdoor seating to activate the street environment. Both the E Street and Sixth Avenue Infill Development Sites should incorporate such elements into their design.



This mixed-use development provides active ground floor retail, variation in its facade treatment and rooftop balconies and courtyards overlooking the public realm. Similar treatment on 6th Avenue would provide direct connections between development and Town Square, activating it day and night.



Catalytic Development Sites #2 and #3







The repetition of window bays, entrances and lit interior spaces along with storefront displays and creative use of building lighting, should enliven the ground floor environment year-round.

### *Building Design*

- Ensure that the building façade and streetscape treatment are as inviting, transparent and pedestrian friendly as possible.
- Special attention must be paid to create a pedestrian-scale rhythm to openings and visual features along E Street and 5th and 6th Avenues.
- The design and articulation of upper stories should consider wind and shadow impacts on Town Square and the streetscape. Wind and shadow studies should be performed to measure these impacts.
- Ensure the ground floor uses actively engage the pedestrian; the ground floor should include retail, outdoor dining and public amenities.
- Encourage structured parking to be underground, to help avoid unnecessary building heights and reserve more above-ground space for activity-generating uses near Town Square Park.
- Preserve sunlight access to Town Square Park through building heights and massing. Ensure that Catalytic Development Site #3 adheres to height limitations which are already established by municipal ordinance (AO 85-173).



*Streetscape, Parking and Circulation*

- Ensure that the loading/unloading zone accommodates pedestrian flow. No loading/unloading should occur on 5th or 6th Avenues or E Street. The sidewalk materials and treatment of loading zone should be selected with the pedestrian environment in mind.
- Coordinate circulation, drop-off and parking requirements with the Downtown circulation and parking strategies of this Plan.
- Ensure that F Street provides a safe, comfortable pedestrian connection between 6th and 7th Avenues.
- Sidewalk conditions/widths should be coordinated with rest of Downtown (particularly E Street Corridor Improvements).



A pedestrian-friendly streetscape can be enhanced by integrating the driveway to the parking garage into the building design, such as the example above, which tucks the garage into the middle of the building, just under the address "1370" (above). The rhythm of bays and building materials should be consistent along the entire facade, incorporating the garage entrance (left).

## LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Catalytic Development Site 2: Residual Land Value Estimate

Steel frame Residential	
Units	60
Total Sale Value of Units	\$28,800,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$25,021,550)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Residential Units</b>	<b>\$3,778,450</b>
Mixed-Use Retail	
Square Footage	60,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$18,318,268
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$16,001,593)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage</b>	<b>\$2,316,675</b>
Parking	
Square Footage	60,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space	180
Non-Revenue Spaces for Residential Units***	108
Revenue-Generating Spaces	72
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$1,443,604
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$4,900,000)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Parking</b>	<b>(\$3,456,396)</b>
<b>COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE</b>	<b>\$2,638,728</b>
Site Area Square Footage	28,595
<b>RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT</b>	<b>\$92</b>

\* Excluding parking

\*\* Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc. As such, these parking assumptions are within the range displayed in actual projects, and generate a full integer number of parking spaces when divided by the square footage of the parking area.

\*\*\*Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 108 spaces for 60 residential units on Site 2. The remaining parking spaces could therefore be used for hourly, daily, or monthly parking for other Downtown patrons and could generate revenues that can help to offset the construction and operations costs.

A development program of 60 condominium units above 60,000 square feet of retail and 180 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$2.5 million for Catalytic Development Site 2. This site, just over one-half acre in size, presents a strong market opportunity for mixed-use development.

A development program of 40 condominium units above 42,000 square feet of retail and 252 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$2 million for Catalytic Development Site 3. The overall feasibility of this site, nearly one acre in size, will depend on whether the existing uses on this site could be incorporated into the redevelopment or be purchased or relocated for less than the estimated residual land value.

### Catalytic Development Site 3: Residual Land Value Estimate

<b>Steel frame Residential</b>	
Units	40
Total Sale Value of Units	\$19,200,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$16,681,034)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Residential Units</b>	<b>\$2,518,966</b>
<b>Mixed-Use Retail</b>	
Square Footage	42,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$12,282,881
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$11,101,587)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage</b>	<b>\$1,181,294</b>
<b>Parking</b>	
Square Footage	84,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space	252
Non-Revenue Spaces for Residential Units***	72
Revenue-Generating Spaces	180
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$3,605,045
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$6,860,000)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Parking</b>	<b>(\$3,254,955)</b>
<b>COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE</b>	<b>\$2,066,978</b>
Site Area Square Footage	42,118
<b>RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT</b>	<b>\$49</b>

\* Excluding parking

\*\* Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc. As such, these parking assumptions are within the range displayed in actual projects, and generate a full integer number of parking spaces when divided by the square footage of the parking area.

\*\*\*Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 72 spaces for 40 residential units on Site 3. The remaining parking spaces could therefore be used for hourly, daily, or monthly parking for other Downtown patrons and could generate revenues that can help to offset the construction and operations costs.

4

**Park Strip Housing  
Prototype**

The development of this site on E Street between 8th and 9th Avenues can act as a prototypical project for future construction in the Park Strip North district. This site will consist of mid-rise residential units overlooking Delaney Park. The ground floor will accommodate some neighborhood-serving retail.

The site is currently a State-owned surface parking lot. Parking should be relocated to nearby parking structures or lots.

This example of mixed-use housing in San Francisco, CA illustrates how buildings within the Park Strip North District will step up northward from Delaney Park. The Park Strip Housing Prototype will be a total of four floors along 9th Avenue, and step up to six floors along 8th Avenue. Upper units in the northern half of the development will afford views of the open space resource.



*Building Design*

- The building massing should step back from 9th Avenue.
- Building massing should be broken into distinguishable bays with variations in materials, stepbacks, roof form, heights and balconies.
- Ground floor residential units along 9th Avenue should be designed to face the Park; each unit should have its own stoop with a landscaped buffer between the building and the sidewalk.
- Ground floor units along 8th Avenue should have shared or individual stoops.
- Buildings should be set back to accommodate generous space for private landscaping and stoops that ensures privacy for residents.
- Upper floor units should have shared use of outdoor courtyards or rooftop gardens, designed for both winter and summer use.
- Retail space should be located at the corner of 8th Avenue and E Street and should accommodate outdoor amenities, such as seating, public art and special landscaping.
- Special attention to the facade treatment along E Street will be critical as this intersection serves as one of Downtown's southern gateways. The facade of the retail space should be transparent and inviting.

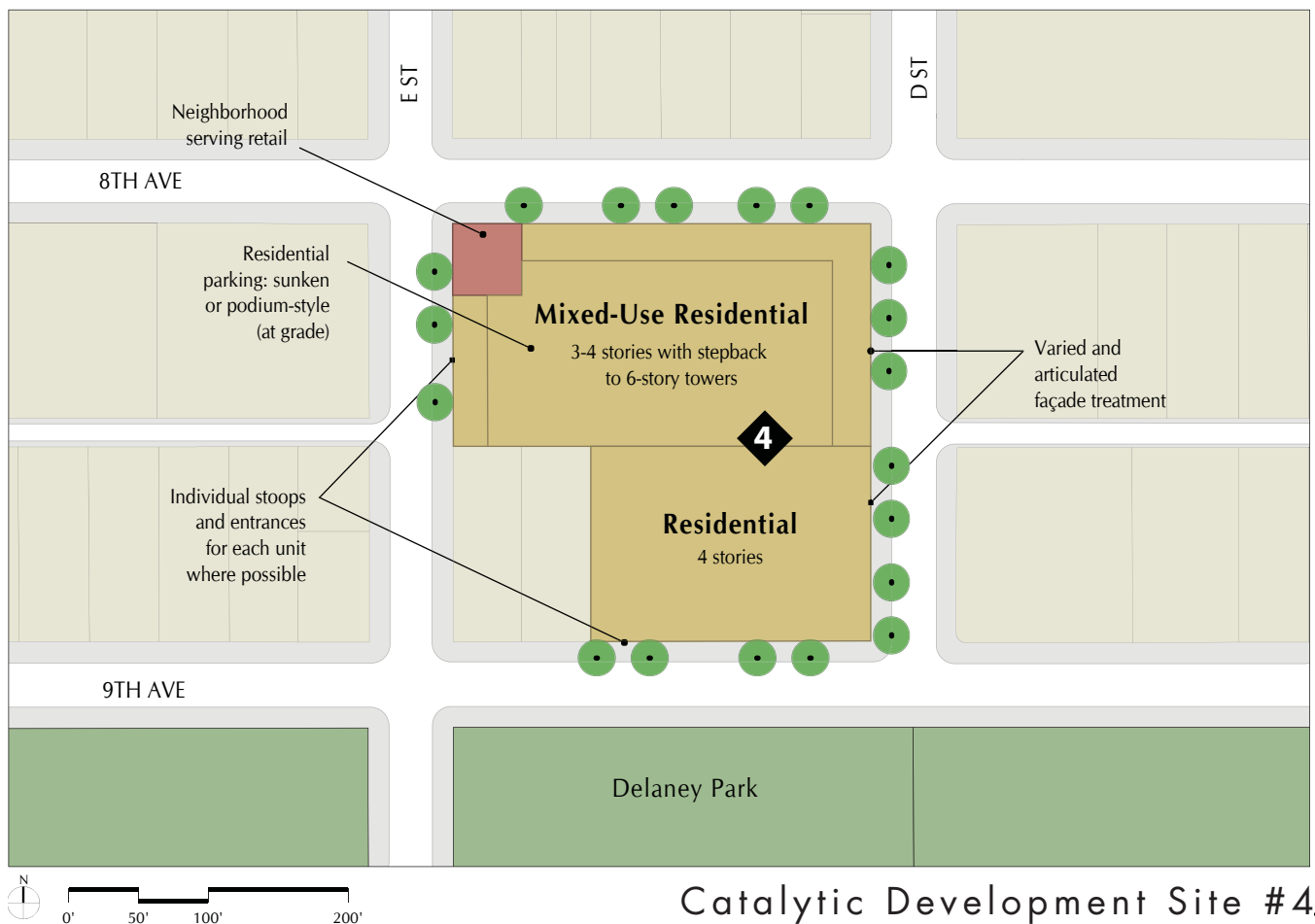


*Streetscape, Parking and Circulation*

- The parking garage should be underground or wrapped with ground floor residential units or the corner retail space.
- Ingress and egress from the parking garage will:
  - Be located along 8th Avenue or D Street.
  - Be no wider than 22 feet at any particular driveway.
  - Be accommodated in no more than two driveways.
- Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate street trees, light fixtures, amenities and a pedestrian movement zone of at least six feet and eight to twelve feet on primary pedestrian streets.



The design should create a varied building facade with the use of color, materials, setbacks and building heights. Ground floor units should be raised several feet above sidewalk level for privacy.



## LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Catalytic Development Site 4: Residual Land Value Estimate

Wood frame Residential	
Units	70
Total Sale Value of Units	\$26,950,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$19,361,038)
Total Residual Land Value for Wood frame Residential	\$7,588,962
Steel frame Residential	
Units	170
Total Sale Value of Units	\$81,600,000
Total Construction Costs of Units*	(\$70,894,393)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Steel frame Residential</b>	<b>\$10,705,607</b>
Mixed-Use Retail	
Square Footage	14,000
Total Capitalized Value of Square Footage	\$4,274,263
Total Construction Costs of Square Footage*	(\$3,733,705)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Retail Square Footage</b>	<b>\$540,558</b>
Parking	
Square Footage	137,000
Total Spaces at 333** square feet per space***	411
Revenue-Generating Spaces	0
Capitalized Value of Revenue-Generating Spaces	\$0
Construction Costs for Total Spaces	(\$11,188,333)
<b>Total Residual Land Value for Parking</b>	<b>(\$11,188,333)</b>
<b>COMBINED RESIDUAL LAND VALUE</b>	<b>\$7,646,793</b>
Site Area Square Footage	69,312
<b>RESIDUAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT</b>	<b>\$110</b>

\* Excluding parking

\*\* Based on an assumption that an average parking garage can accommodate 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of garage area, including drive lanes, ramps, etc., or 333 total square feet per parking space. In practice, structured parking garages typically require anywhere from 300 to 350 square feet per space, depending on site layout, sizes of cars, etc.

\*\*\*Based on an assumption that the residential development would require 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, resulting in 411 spaces for 240 residential units on Site 4.

A development program of 240 wood frame and steel frame condominium units above 14,000 square feet of retail and 411 parking spaces appears to support a residual land value in excess of \$7.5 million for Catalytic Development Site 4. Owned by the public sector and currently used for surface parking, this one and one-half acre site represents a promising opportunity for development that could demonstrate the market acceptance and financial feasibility of desired urban housing.

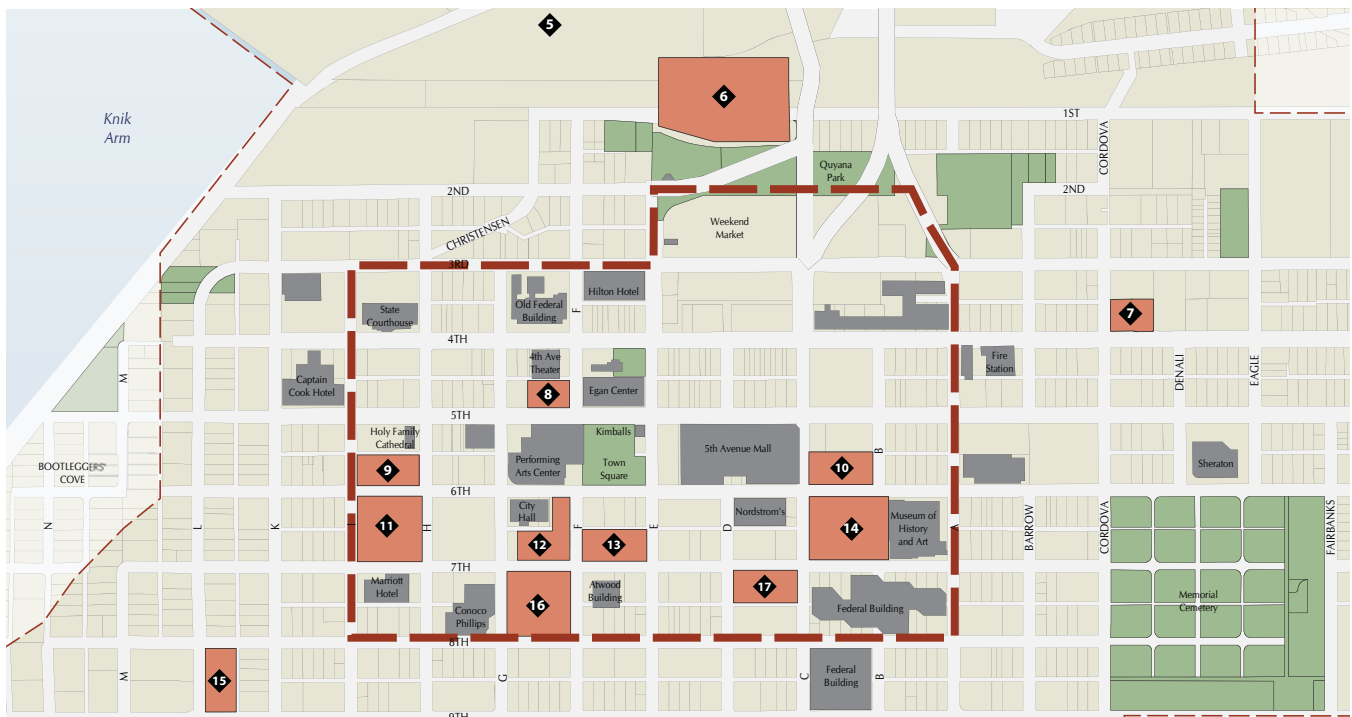
## 5. Develop Other Opportunity Sites

In addition to the Catalytic Opportunity Sites, there are many other development projects and opportunities that are poised to transform Downtown Anchorage. They range from big ideas that have yet to reach the drawing board to projects under development, including the Anchorage Museum of Art and History Expansion, Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, large scale redevelopment in Ship Creek and a number of other redevelopment opportunities in Downtown. These sites should be especially responsive to upholding the Plan's vision, goals and design guidelines as they will lay the groundwork for Downtown development.

### General Criteria

- All new development should include attractive building facades and ground level treatment that creates an active and engaging pedestrian experience.
- Buildings should incorporate pedestrian scale design with multiple entrances, windows, articulated facades and outdoor dining opportunities where feasible. Avoid creating blank walls on any building frontage.
- New projects should be designed to preserve views outward to the natural environments, as well views inward to usable outdoor public space within the city center.

Primary Opportunity Sites	
5	Ship Creek Redevelopment
6	Inter-Modal Transportation Center
7	McKinley Building
8	Peach Tower
9	Cathedral Site
10	Koniag Infill Opportunity Site
11	North of Marriott Infill Opportunity Site
12	Mixed-Use Hotel Opportunity Site
13	Mixed-Use Parking Opportunity Site
14	Museum Expansion
15	Additional Park Strip Housing Prototype
16	Civic/Convention Center
17	Mixed-Use Parking Opportunity Site



Opportunity Sites Diagram



## 6. Establish Strategies for Parks and Open Space

Downtown Anchorage has incredible access to the surrounding natural environment, as well as a number of significant parks and open spaces within the Study Area. The following strategies are necessary to create a fully integrated parks and open space network for Downtown and its surroundings.

### Maintain and enhance strong pedestrian and bike connections.

- Provide safe, visible connections between civic plazas, parks and open space corridors as an essential part of the parks and open space network.

### Provide space for outdoor recreation within the Downtown Area.

- As Downtown becomes more densely developed, it is important to preserve, maintain and supplement its open spaces. These spaces provide respite from the urban environment and should be designed for use year-round.
- Complete the Delaney Park Master Plan and a plan for improvements to Town Square Park.



#### Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core Area

- Dedicated Park
- "Notable" Building Footprint

- ← On-Street Bicycle Connection
- ← Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail

## Downtown Dedicated Parks

**Provide indoor publicly accessible spaces for year-round use.**

- Public and private developments should integrate publicly accessible spaces with sunlight access and comfortable temperatures into new buildings. These spaces should be linked to the network of pedestrian oriented streets.

**Determine appropriate type of activities within the parks and open space network.**

- Establish an open space advisory committee to determine what additional types of open spaces and/or recreational opportunities are desirable in the study area.
- Develop a Downtown parks and open space plan identifying future open space needs, acquisition strategies and park design guidelines.



Town Square Park and the Performing Arts Center (PAC).



The parks and open space strategy should ensure that Downtown has a range of open spaces that provide space for public gatherings, like Town Square (below), and recreational opportunities for all ages year-round (right). Though Downtown's parks are plentiful, they should be bolstered to serve the growing community with more programmed space and activities.

**Town Square Park**

The Downtown Plan strategy for Town Square Park builds on Town Square's current role and function as a community gathering area with programmed events on weekends and holidays and more informal community use during the week. This strategy is consistent with the 2006 Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource and Recreational Facility Plan, which designates Town Square Park as a "Community Use: Town Center Park" (Appendix B, Page 7).

The management intent is to have Town Square remain as a desirable place for the community to gather and to participate in special events and also as a place for active and/or passive use the majority of the time. The programs and use areas in the park should continue to serve all members of the community.

The Downtown Plan recommends consideration of improvements to Town Square Park that can support and enhance these functions. The Downtown Plan also recommends that an overall parks and open space plan be developed for Downtown. That process will identify long-term future open space needs and enhancements in Downtown.

Any proposed improvements or changes to the design of Town Square Park beyond the repair or replacement of existing elements will undergo a separate site-specific park master plan process that includes the public's involvement as well as approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## 7. Establish Strategies for Downtown Historic Preservation

Downtown Anchorage features a rich and diverse collection of significant historic and cultural sites that has increasingly become a major focal point of attraction for both Alaskan residents and out-of-state visitors.

This section recommends the development of an overarching historic preservation strategy specifically for Downtown, to be undertaken by the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission (AHPC), to identify historic resources, issues and opportunities, and create a

framework of historic preservation policies, guidelines and strategies for Downtown. The general policy objectives for this effort would be to:

- Promote public awareness of Downtown's historic resources and their value for the future of Downtown and the overall community;
- Promote consideration of historic resources in planning and development decisions by the public and private sectors;
- Promote strategic partnerships to further the interests of historic preservation; and

National Register Sites	
n.1	Alaska Railroad Depot
n.2	Leopold David House
n.3	Alaska Engineering Commission Cottages
n.4	Pioneer School House
n.5	Old Federal Building
n.6	The Anchorage Hotel
n.7	Oscar Anderson House
n.8	4th Avenue Theatre
n.9	Old City Hall
n.10	Wendler Building
n.11	Loussac-Sogn Building
n.12	Kimball Building
n.13	Anchorage Cemetery
n.14	Gill Oscar House
Historic Sites	
h.1	Historic Anchorage Homes
h.2	Resolution Park/Captain Cook Monument
h.3	Log Cabin Visitor Information Center
h.4	Holy Family Cathedral
h.5	Delaney Park Strip



### Legend

- Downtown Study Area
- Downtown Core Area
- Park/Open Space
- "Notable" Building Footprint

Historic and Cultural Resources Diagram



- Leverage historic resources as cultural and economic development assets for the future growth and vitality of Downtown.

One of the outcomes of this public process could be consideration of a historic overlay zone in Downtown. An historic overlay zone could help to define key areas and to serve as a cultural anchor to preserve and celebrate downtown's heritage and unique sense of place. It could provide a focus area for incentives, programs and development guidelines related to historic preservation.

Other potential outcomes could include actions or programs such as:

- Maintaining an inventory of historic resources;
- Recommend procedures for the identification and designation of historic resources;
- Providing financial incentives such as grants, tax relief, loans and/or loan guarantees;
- Providing information to historic property owners on methods of maintaining and rehabilitating, etc.

- Developing guidelines for historic preservation and identifying appropriate zoning and development provisions applicable to historic properties; and/or
- Expanding public information and interpretive programs and activities.

These strategies are derived from the powers and duties of the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission, and should be refined and developed through a public process involving property owners, businesses and other community stakeholders.



Downtown's historic sites range from important cultural venues, such as the Fourth Avenue Theatre (top right); the tribute to Alaska's statehood overlooking the original Tent City (upper right); the historic Anchorage Hotel (middle right); the Wendler Building on Fourth Avenue (above); and the original cottages constructed for the railroad during early years of operation (bottom right).

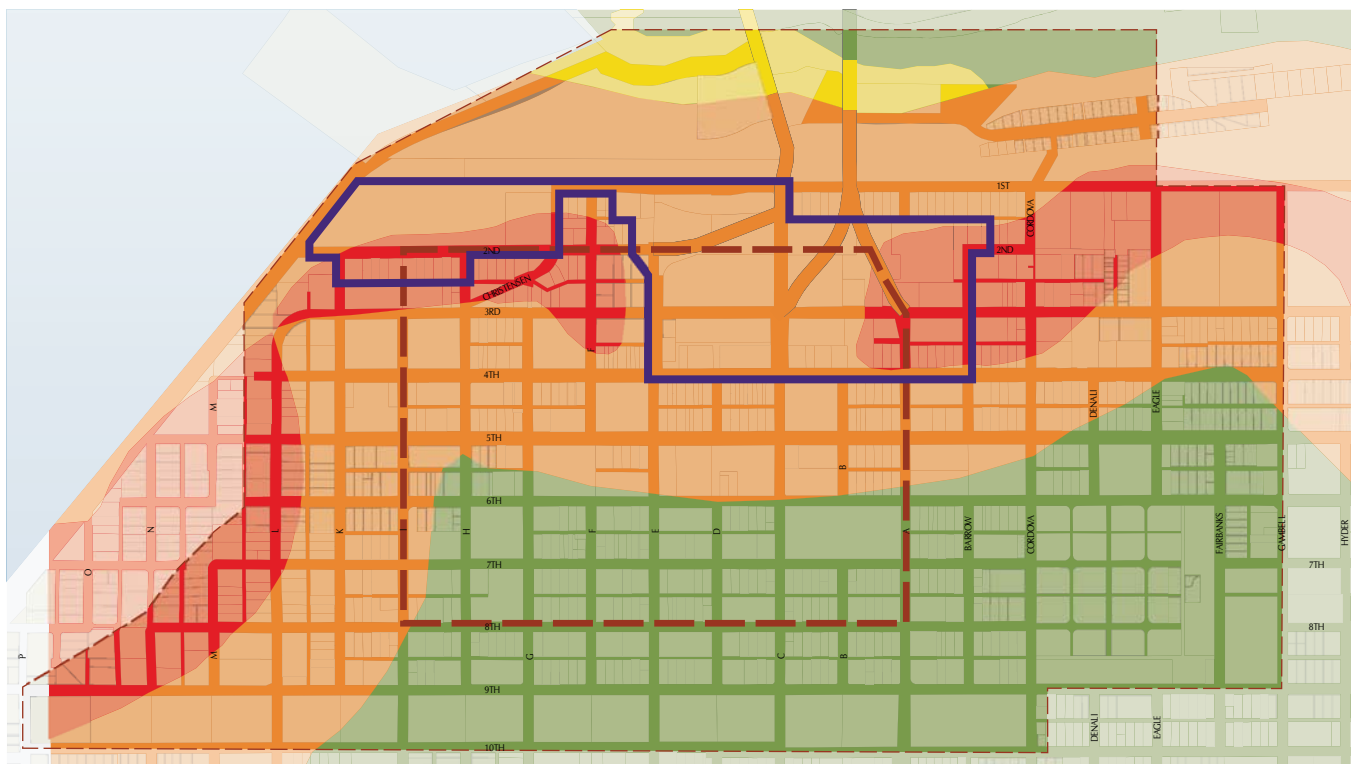


## 8. Address Seismic Hazards

One goal of this Plan is to address the seismic hazards which affect some areas of Downtown. This section provides strategies to help minimize the life/safety risks to the public and economic vulnerability of property owners and the overall community for future development in areas with high ground failure susceptibility.

The Seismically Induced Ground Failure Zones (hereafter called seismic ground failure zones) depicted on the Seismic Hazards Diagram are based

on the areas of destructive land sliding and ground spreading that occurred during the 1964 M 9.2 earthquake, and based on many studies performed in the area since that event. Of these hazard areas, seismic ground failure zones 4 and 5 are the most susceptible to land sliding and ground spreading should another major earthquake occur. The International Building Code and its local amendments, reference the mapped seismic ground failure zones and require various levels of site-specific geotechnical analysis to be completed as part of the building permit process.



Source: Municipality of Anchorage 1980 Anchorage Coastal Resource Atlas, Volume 1: The Anchorage Bowl

### Legend

- Downtown Core Area
- Zone 5: Very High Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Downtown Study Area
- Zone 4: High Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Buttriss Area

## Seismic Hazards Diagram

- Zone 3: Moderate Ground Failure Susceptibility
  - Zone 2: Moderately Low Ground Failure Susceptibility
- Note: Areas within Zone 1: Low Ground Failure Susceptibility are off the map.

In addition to the seismic ground failure zones, a downtown buttress area was established by the Alaska State Housing Authority as part of an Urban Renewal Study which was completed following the 1964 earthquake. The buttress area was established to stabilize adjacent downtown lands from sliding when the next major earthquake occurs. Development restrictions were established for the buttress area, including restrictions on building height and weight, and limits regarding excavation and fill. These conditions were included in restrictive covenants which were in place until sunsetting in 2005. Additional background regarding seismic ground failure zones, the buttress area and current building permit requirements is provided in Appendix A of this Plan.

The following strategies are recommended to address future development in seismic ground failure zones 4 and 5 in the Downtown area:

- Conduct a seismic risk assessment to assist the community in determining an acceptable level of risk associated with locating various types of development in seismic hazard areas.
- Consider in the seismic risk assessment the life/safety of building occupants, the potential loss or damage to critical facilities such as hospitals, which would be needed after a major earthquake, and economic loss of buildings and infrastructure.
- Include in the seismic risk assessment recommendations for changing municipal requirements regarding appropriate land uses, building design criteria and other regulatory changes within seismic ground failure zone 4 or 5.
- Until a full seismic risk assessment is completed, consider an interim descriptive ground failure overlay zone for the downtown area to provide information about current building code requirements and geotechnical review procedures for seismic ground failure zones 4 and 5.
- Consider the possible re-establishment of development restrictions affecting the buttress area when land use regulations are being developed to implement the Downtown Plan.



