

## 2.3 Growth-Supporting Features

Four Growth-Supporting Features overlay the base Land Use Designations:

- Transit-Supportive Development,
- Greenway-Supported Development,
- Residential Mixed-Use Development, and
- Traditional Neighborhood Design

These features support resilient, long-lasting growth. They catalyze and enhance development by: reducing traffic congestion; lowering household travel costs, reducing road infrastructure and maintenance costs; and using less land for parking. They include enhancements to neighborhood design and natural resources. Such development meets the demand for walkable neighborhoods and connections to businesses. Each of these features is gaining interest and public support because they enhance property values.

The Growth-Supporting feature modifies an area's underlying land use designation by offering development concepts that otherwise might not exist at the site.

### Transit-Supportive Development

Transit-Supportive Development (TSD) identifies road corridors where expanded public transit service will support a compact, walkable pattern of commercial, residential, and/or mixed-use development. Over time, compact development can create ridership demand to support more frequent bus service. It will give Anchorage's households more

choices in how to get to work and other destinations. It also provides more opportunities to live in a more walkable, accessible, and affordable neighborhood environment.

TSD could affect the design of streets, pedestrian facilities, and property developments for up to a quarter mile, or 5- to 15-minute walk, from the transit corridor. Exact boundaries will be determined through corridor studies and coordination with residents, businesses, and property owners.

Future development is encouraged to be generally in the range of 8 to 20 housing units per acre on average over the entire corridor. However, individual parts of the corridor, such as in existing single-family and two-family neighborhoods, may have less density. TSD is consistent with the density ranges of the underlying Land Use Designations shown on the Land Use Plan Map. It does not raise density ranges above the Designations.

Successful transit corridors can enhance property values. Increased bus service reduces dependence on personal vehicles and curbs their attendant effect on urban spaces devoted primarily to parking rather than people, households, and businesses. They can expand housing opportunities, as well as commercial land uses to provide job opportunities and other daily needs closer to where employees live.

To achieve these benefits, more residences (including workforce and affordable housing) and commercial building space are needed in the corridor to support more frequent, all-day transit service. Buses should run consistently every 10 to 15 minutes and connect to local and regional destinations: Town Centers, City Centers, and other service/employment centers such as the UMED.



Photo 28: Transit-supportive Development

Additionally, the shared urban design principles in Section 2.1 for enhancing connections and pedestrian access apply.



Photo 29: Transit-supportive Development

Road improvements on the TSD corridor should incorporate expanded sidewalks, strategically placed crosswalks, enhanced street furniture, highly visible transit facilities, and other pedestrian amenities. TSDs continue to accommodate through-traffic, and some roadway improvements may be needed to address congestion. Such improvements should minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment and transit service.

The 2040 LUP envisions Transit-supportive Development on the following corridors:

- Spenard Road
- 15th Avenue/DeBarr Road
- Arctic Boulevard
- Mountain View Drive/Bragaw Street
- Abbott Road/Lake Otis Parkway
- Northern Lights / Benson Boulevard

Public transit routes will continue to operate on many other roads. Public and private improvements on other roads should continue to accommodate and facilitate multi-modal access to transit.

### Greenway-Supported Development

Anchorage's greenbelts run from the Chugach State Park to Cook Inlet. Without its greenbelts, Anchorage would be a dramatically different community. Greenway-Supported Development (GSD) identifies places where new development will incorporate natural open spaces, creek corridors, wildlife habitat, wetlands and trail routes. This overlay includes linear features focused on creeks, or large sections of undeveloped land, on

institution and facility campuses. Future infill and redevelopment projects have the potential to interface with revitalized creeks, wetlands, wildlife habitats, or multi-use trails.

GSDs are depicted with a green line hatch. The underlying base color indicates the land use designation.

GSDs would support and enhance new construction, future revenue potential, and property values, by attracting more uses, housing, businesses, and employment.

#### *GSD-Linear Features*

Commuter trails within greenways improve travel alternatives between centers and surrounding neighborhoods. Trail access has the ability to support and enhance development. Benefits might include decreased parking requirements and lower traffic volumes.

The linear component of a GSD is based on restoring creek sections or other natural functions in redeveloping areas of the Bowl. Restored channels, drainage features, and mini-greenbelts, become neighborhood assets, sustainable storm water systems, and non-motorized trail routes and connections. Restored or daylighted creeks reduce pollution and flooding.

A typical GSD development pattern would extend for up to half a mile or a 5- to 15-minute walk from the creek corridor or trail greenway.



Photo 30: Greenway-supported Development

The shared urban design principles in Section 2.1 for enhancing connections and pedestrian access apply to development patterns in the linear GSDs.

The location of future trail or linear greenbelts would be determined through studies and coordination between agencies, neighborhoods, property owners, and developers. GSD features are proposed in the following locations listed in general order of priority:

- Fish Creek drainage across Midtown, potentially from east of New Seward Highway to Minnesota Drive, bringing Fish Creek to the surface with a parallel trail system.
- Chester Creek, the North Branch of the South Fork in Muldoon and at Creekside Town Center.
- Lower Ship Creek to Coastal Trail connection.

- Chester Creek northwest of Bragaw and Northern Lights Boulevard.
- Furrow Creek drainage crossing the Huffman Town Center.

Urban greenways may be incorporated into developments in various ways: as a newly constructed stream channel threaded between existing or future buildings, streets, or parking lots; or, as recreated natural water features and green spaces at intervals along a designated redevelopment corridor. This type of development will usually involve some restoration of natural features and functions. Many western US cities incorporate creek restorations and/or linear greenbelts into redevelopment projects.

A combination of development incentives, public parking, and street, trail, and infrastructure improvement projects supportive of the greenway would implement this growth supportive feature



Photo 31: Local Creek Restoration – Greenway-supported Development

### Trail, Urban Space and Natural Features

Urban amenities such as pocket parks, promenades, and mini-greenbelts create spaces for people in higher density residential areas and employment centers. They become destinations attracting residents, visitors, shoppers, and employers.

Urbanized areas like Midtown and Creekside Town Center area in Muldoon experience periodic flooding. Reclaiming natural channels and drainages raises land valuations and reduces flooding, icing, runoff, and improves habitat and aesthetics.

### *GSD-Facilities and Institutions*

The GSD overlay feature also addresses lands on public facility and institutional campuses. These areas include important wildlife habitat, buffers, greenbelt and trail connections, scenic values, or other recreation uses.

These lands are development reserves subject to owner institution jurisdictions. They are imperative to growth in order for the institution to carry out its mission serving the community. Future site-specific planning decisions will clarify the extent of facility development in these areas.

The GSD designation on institution and facility lands reflects natural open space as an alternative use should some of these areas be preserved or placed in public ownership.

The *Anchorage 2020* conceptual natural open space map<sup>2</sup> designated these areas for future open space planning actions. It is the intent of this plan to promote strategies that balance conservation with the owner institution's requisite objectives to grow.

Much of the GSD comprises certain tracts in Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. It also consists of tracts in Merrill Field Airport, Port of Anchorage, and greenbelts in the Alaska Railroad Ship Creek Terminal Reserve. Federal regulations apply to these transportation lands. Many of these areas are important wildlife habitats, development buffers, trail greenbelts, and other public assets.

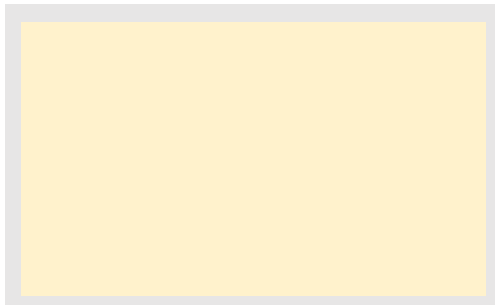
GSD overlay also characterizes the interconnected undeveloped lands in the northern UMED District. These development reserves contribute to ecological, scenic, wildlife, and recreational values for the Chester Creek watershed and for residents, employees, and students who use these lands. These reserves are addressed for long-term growth in the UMED District Plan and individual master plans of the institutions.

The land owner facilities and institutions have allowed public recreational use on many GSD

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<sup>2</sup> Updated by Map CI-7, Community Natural Assets, in Map Folio.

parcels, by formal agreement, land patents, subdivision, easement or permit. In many areas these formal mechanisms have expired although recreational access continues to be allowed. In all cases the primary use remains focused on the owner institution’s needs and jurisdiction. Public access is subject to the owner facility’s discretion. Open space recreational uses must be compatible with the owner facility operations and federal regulatory conditions.



GSD Photo Placeholder

Specific tracts of the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport are opportunity parcels for a possible land exchange or other mechanism that would resolve land use and ownership conflicts. These conflicts are outlined in *Anchorage 2020* and the *West Anchorage District Plan*. Some of the long term conflict resolution possibilities require public participation and ballot measures.

Within GSD areas, the boundaries between open space and public facility expansion will be established through area planning. Alternative means of preserving lands may include land exchanges, wetland banking, purchase, or easements.

Future growth within GSD areas will include careful assessment of the value of open space components relative to further developments. Open spaces may be reduced or re-shaped to accommodate program needs and facilities; however, losses should be minimized to those necessary to provide for development, and to be mitigated. Design elements for recreation, trail connections, and ecological benefits will be consistent with adopted plans, such as the *UMED District Plan* and *West Anchorage District Plan*.

### Traditional Neighborhood Design

This growth-supporting feature enhances existing urban patterns of development. These older urban neighborhoods and districts have a more highly interconnected street system, smaller block sizes, greater connectivity, and sidewalks. The Neighborhood Development Patterns map (see Map CC-1) in Appendix A identifies these parts of town as well as other neighborhoods with a more suburban or semi-rural character.

For an evolving market, traditional urban neighborhoods and the characteristics associated with them are desirable and expected to be sought in the future.

Neighborhoods such as South Addition, Fairview, Mountain View and share the same block grid of streets and alleys with Downtown. Other neighborhoods have a more relaxed and irregular street grid/alley pattern such as Government Hill, Airport

Heights, Rogers Park, and parts of Spenard and western Midtown.



Photo 32: South Addition Street Pattern

Some neighborhood plans have recognized these character areas and recommended that future infill and redevelopment occur in a compatible pattern. Downtown, Fairview, and Government Hill have recommended new overlay zones or zoning districts with urban guidelines that enhance the character of such areas.

Traditional Neighborhood Design facilitates compact development that reinforces these characteristics. It promotes policies, guidelines, and incentives that allow for and encourage new development and infrastructure (streets, sidewalks) to capitalize on this urban form. The shared infill design principles in Section 2.1 apply.

Changes may include alternative parking and driveway standards, and new overlay districts or form-based codes. Certain undeveloped tracts or redevelopment sites adjacent to existing urban neighborhoods area also included in this designation (See Section 3).



Photo 33: Spenard Street Pattern

### Residential Mixed-Use Development

This growth-supporting feature promotes medium to high density housing opportunities combined with commercial mixed-use retail, office, lodging, other services, and coordinated public infrastructure investments, to create a viable mixed-use neighborhood.

This feature is appropriate where it can facilitate revitalization in or near City Centers, University or Medical Centers, Town Centers, and Main Street Corridors served by transit and trails.

The goal of this feature is to retain and grow local housing capacity, not erode the residentially zoned land supply.

This growth-supporting feature allows an increase in density and scale of development over the base designation when coupled with transition features in building height and bulk to lower density neighborhoods.



Photo 34: Residential Mixed-use

Where it overlays Neighborhood Land Use Designations, this feature provides flexibility to integrate mixed-use into residential developments, while recommending minimum residential densities consistent with the underlying residential Designation.

Some Residential Mixed-use Development areas reflect adopted neighborhood or district plans, including the Downtown, Fairview, and East Anchorage plans.

Some of these designations are in existing residential zones. Here, residential units are required to be included at a minimum housing density (20 du/a in R-4 and R-4A; and 12 du/a in the R-3) to avoid loss of residential land base.

This includes, for example, multi-family zoned blocks of Fairview in the Gambell Street mixed-use corridor, multi-family zoned parcels along Piper Street south of UMED, and part of the Rangeview mobile home park near Creekside Town Center on Muldoon. Underutilized sites in non-residential zones include the DT-3 District

and sections of the Spenard B-3 corridor. These areas will continue to allow non-residential projects such as office/retail mixed-use, at a scale and intensity compatible with an urban living environment, while encouraging residential development through new incentives, partnerships, and infrastructure investments.

Where they overlay Centers or Main Street Corridors, these areas are encouraged to become mixed-use urban villages that include housing.

In all areas, buildings are street oriented with windows, entries, and balconies, and have strong pedestrian and bicycle connections with nearby neighborhoods, business districts, and amenities. Neighborhood parks, pedestrian streetscapes, and linkages should be provided as residential/mixed-use occurs. This urban design fosters efficient use of land with less traffic congestion or need for parking.

Zoning Districts: R-4A, RO; new DT-3 in Downtown;; new variation of R-3 zone; or potential overlay zoning. (See Section 3.)



Photo 35: Residential Mixed-use Higher Intensity