

3.2. Essential Strategies

The *2040 LUP* presents several strategies as a means for accomplishing Anchorage's desired land use goals.

Strategies are key mechanisms to carry out the *2040 Land Use Plan*. They provide details for how to meet the Goals and Policies of Section 1, and achieve the land uses in Section 2. Strategies are long-term engagements, implemented through **Actions**, which involve forming lasting partnerships among multiple organizations and the community.

Actions are the specific measures to carry out the Policies and Strategies. An individual Action is often part of a longer-term Strategy. Actions are short-term steps: Most have an identifiable end state after which the Action is considered complete. The Actions are presented in Section 3.3 Action Checklist. The following Strategies drive many of the Actions.

Strategy 1: Phasing of Growth and Investment

Phasing of new development and public infrastructure is integral to how the Plan Map is implemented. While this Plan guides growth to 2040, not all of that growth will occur everywhere all at once. Phasing and prioritization of limited public investments within key locations will help achieve community goals for housing and job growth.

The Municipality will balance its priorities to phase growth and infrastructure investments

over time. Phasing allows flexibility in how growth or public service upgrades occur.

Phasing applies specifically to growth supporting features on this Plan, such that only one or two Transit Supportive Development and Greenway-Supported Development corridors receive attention at any given time. The General order of phasing priority appears on the Action Map.

If growth is slower than expected, phasing allows the city to see substantial progress in at least some mixed-use Centers, transit supportive development corridors, or new greenway corridors. The number of areas seeing improvement will be in synch with the rate of economic and population growth.

The strategy is to develop and implement phasing mechanisms and apply them across the various infrastructure entities.

Strategy 2: Reinvestment Focus Areas

One important phasing mechanism is the identification of Reinvestment Focus Areas (RFAs). RFAs direct infrastructure investments, incentives, and other Actions to catalyze infill and redevelopment in strategic areas. This will spur new compact housing and business investment within targeted urban centers, mixed-use corridors, industrial employment areas, and older neighborhoods. Investment in infrastructure may include a combination of streetscapes, sidewalks, drainage systems, utilities, parks, schools, and civic amenities, etc. These can be coordinated with incentives, such as tax

abatement, land assemblage incentives, or permit review assistance. Investment in a targeted manner in older neighborhoods and commercial areas will enhance quality of life and improve a neighborhood's ability to attract and retain residents and businesses.

This strategy focuses public redevelopment efforts on a few neighborhoods or districts each year. It maintains these priorities until infrastructure or services are in place that support private investment. The focus then moves to another area in a phased manner.

Selection of RFAs should follow criteria that begin with the factors 1-10 at the end of Section 1.3, *Areas of Growth and Change*. In particular, RFAs exhibit the following characteristics from the Section 1.3 criteria to a high degree:

- Close proximity to major employment centers.
- Walkable to area shopping and attractions.
- Development-ready sites.
- Potential for additional housing.
- Interested land owners.
- Sufficient infrastructure capacity with cost effective public investment.
- Avoids natural hazards or big constraints.

In conformance with these criteria, RFAs should be areas of anticipated growth on the Growth and Change Map, and of compact housing or mixed-use on the *2040 Land Use Plan Map*.

In addition, an RFA demonstrates need, opportunity, and local support. It is in need of public-sector assistance to catalyze private-sector reinvestment. It is also an area of opportunity expected to give the greatest return on the public investment and incentives; producing more new housing, yielding greater economic development, and creating great places where people wish to live, work, and play.

This Plan identifies RFAs for a near-term focus of implementation and candidate RFAs for future prioritization. During the 2040 LUP planning process, three RFAs rose to the top as initial priorities for implementation. The priority RFAs are depicted in dark purple on the *Actions Map* at the end of Section 3.

1. South Downtown Residential Mixed-use
2. Middle Spenard
3. West Fairview / Third Addition

Additional RFAs were identified which could become top priorities as phasing progresses. These candidate RFAs are depicted in a light purple on the *Actions Map*:

- Boniface / Riviera
- Denali Street Area / Fish Creek
- East Creekside Town Center
- Fireweed /Northern Lights
- Lower Ship Creek Mixed Use
- South Bragaw / Northern Lights
- South of Dowling / Seward Industrial
- South UMED Residential/Mixed-use
- Spenard Town Center

This Plan retains flexibility for the Municipality to add, remove, shift, or re-

prioritize the RFAs. The 2040 LUP is intended to be a "living document," and its Strategies and Actions updated regularly as new opportunities and information arise. Therefore, the list of RFAs above and their locations and boundaries depicted on the *Actions Map* will be flexible.

RFAs can be implemented through small area plans that will include an infrastructure inventory, Return on Investment (ROI) analysis, and incentive identification. It may also include a development agreement, targeted area rezoning and other strategies of this section.

Strategy 3: Infrastructure Financing and Provision

This strategy identifies ways to finance and provide infrastructure improvements. It seeks to coordinate infrastructure planning and prioritize infrastructure investments that yield the greatest return on investment.

Infrastructure improvements retain or expand the capacity of streets, public parking, pedestrian facilities, public transit, schools, water and wastewater facilities, and other public infrastructure. These improvements are necessary to provide more housing and jobs in areas designated for infill and redevelopment.

Assisting in the financing or provision of new infrastructure needs to be balanced with the current infrastructure maintenance and safety obligations. As the Municipality and its partner agencies move forward it is important that an ROI analysis on

infrastructure investment options be performed to prioritize proposed projects.

Preparing an asset inventory of existing infrastructure conditions and capacity in areas intended for growth or revitalization will inform long term capital improvement programming.

The following funding methods are viable considerations for the Municipality:

Infrastructure Financing: Available in different forms including bonds, area-specific taxes, EPA Super funds, HUD, or privatization of some public services.

Local Improvement District: Allows public utilities to participate with willing property owners in the delivery and funding of infrastructure to targeted development areas.

Business Improvement District: Are designated areas in which property and business owners tax themselves to collectively fund maintenance or improvements in a district.

Federal Grants: Are available to help restore natural features, transit corridors, and make public health-related pedestrian improvements.

Off-site Improvements Requirements: Provide a more flexible and predictable formula for determining basic off-site improvements required of development projects. Reforms could create or enhance fee-in-lieu programs versus the current requirement to build off-site improvements.

Development Agreements: Development Agreements commit the Municipality to provide infrastructure and lock in the

development standards, providing certainty for both parties and enabling larger projects to be financially feasible.

Strategy 4: Targeted Area Rezonings

The 2040 LUP does not recommend a Bowl-wide rezoning to bring the municipal zoning map into compliance with the Plan. Instead, where existing zoning does not line up with the Land Use Plan designation, individual rezonings can occur over time, as property owners determine they are ready to develop, and, as the need arises.

However, the Municipality can expedite implementation of the Plan in priority areas, by initiating and carrying out "targeted area" rezonings with the support of the property owners. For example, a targeted area rezoning to residential mixed-use enables desired types of development in the Reinvestment Focus Areas where there are multiple property owners. Some RFAs may need platting assistance. This strategy can extend to targeted area re-plats as facilitated subdivision platting assistance for housing development in RFAs.

In other cases, the Municipality may support rezonings of industrial land to non-industrial because industrial is not consistent with how the area has developed.

The following are the justifications for a Targeted Area Rezone:

1. An area specified in Title 21 for additional analysis and potential rezoning.

2. 2040 LUP land use designation and existing zoning are inconsistent, especially within RFAs and Centers.
3. Rezone can further catalyze reinvestment and redevelopment in an area that has received recent public investments.

Strategy 5: New Zoning Districts/Overlay Zones

Recent *Comprehensive Plan* elements recommended making Title 21 more versatile and responsive to contemporary land use trends. They recommended innovative zoning districts designed to grow the city through compact development in the city's centers, compatible development in existing neighborhoods, and promoted key economic sectors.

Examples include the *West Anchorage District Plan's* recommended airport zoning, and the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan's* recommendation for new zoning districts to address Downtown Central Business District (CBD) revitalization and mixed-use housing. Other neighborhood and district plans call for new overlay zones to encourage pedestrian-oriented mixed-use and neighborhood infill.

Strategy 6: Infill Housing Development Regulations

This strategy provides the means to amend Title 21, and other regulations to allow infill housing of many types, include design standards and address neighborhood compatibility.

It includes expanding provisions for innovative housing types, such as small-lot housing, accessory dwellings, and townhouses. It also includes increasing flexibility in some site development standards that can be obstacles to compact, walkable housing in policy priority areas. Specific examples include allowing parking reductions by-right, reduced traffic mitigation requirements, and reduced internal site drive aisle requirements near Downtown, in traditional urban neighborhood contexts, such as in Fairview or on transit supportive development corridors. Another forms of flexibility for development standards engineering design criteria for on-site utilities.

It also includes exploring compatible ways to allow additional units on small- to medium-sized lots near Town and City Centers, such as allowing an additional dwelling on a lot or an additional story, subject to building massing and step-back requirements.

The Actions Checklist includes a series of amendments to foster innovative infill housing projects that can fit into the neighborhood context. This Plan intends that this series of reforms include a public planning process.

Strategy 7: Traded Sectors Industrial Site Availability and Readiness

This strategy retains and attracts targeted industrial "traded sector" businesses, which provide well-documented economic benefits in Anchorage. It helps these uses find suitable sites and overcome obstacles to industrial development feasibility on these lands.

The strategy begins with identification of geographic clusters of key industrial uses and traded sectors, along with their supporting supply chain sectors. Outreach to these businesses then helps to identify their characteristic site needs. This informs an enhanced industrial land inventory and property database, to enable quick, informed response for municipal land use and business site decision-making needs for traded sectors.

The resulting information and public-private relationships can leverage more targeted, effective land use policies and decisions regarding key industrial areas. It also forms the basis for evolving an industrial development readiness program the second stage of this strategy. This program comprises fiscal tools and a "development-ready" site program to facilitate industrial development and redevelopment. These tools help overcome expensive obstacles to industrial development feasibility, as the available inventory of easily buildable industrial sites decreases over time.

Fiscal tools may include tax increment financing, property tax abatements, industrial bonds, property acquisition and sale. It can also include enhanced programs by which utilities may pay for up-front costs of extension and be repaid over time.

The "development-ready" site program will provide advance due diligence that verifies and "certifies" an industrial site is fully served with infrastructure, utilities, and has all potential development issues documented, enabling a user to begin construction within a

defined timeframe. As more of the development inventory consists of redevelopment sites, most vacated industrial sites will have uncertainty about contamination issues, and will qualify as "Brownfield" sites for federal programs and funding for due diligence through remediation if necessary.

Strategy 8: Special Study Areas/Small Area Plan

Special Study Areas are locations where additional study and analysis are needed to refine the land use designation boundaries, and local planning implementation actions. Some areas have been identified through adopted neighborhood and district plans. Others will help implement RFAs.

Examples include North Muldoon corridor, Fairview's Gambell Street corridor, and the 3500 Tudor Road Master Plan redevelopment area.

Until such time as new land use designations are adopted, existing policies and regulations apply to these areas.

Small Area Plan is a planning tool to evaluate and propose land uses or residential density changes to priority areas of the Bowl. These plans can resolve conflicts related to development and growth and direct private and public investment. The plans cover several geographic scales—large parcels, a small neighborhood, or part of a street corridor. Small Area Plans encompass a specific boundary that has a cohesive set of existing or desired future characteristics.

This type of planning works as a partnership between the Municipality, its residents, businesses, builders, and developers and includes a public process.

Strategy 9: Development Permitting Assistance

This Plan recommends several improvements to the municipal development permit review process.

One strategy is to create a "Project Review Management Service" to help applicants navigate the permit review process if their proposals meet certain criteria. This service would be available to development proposals that achieve certain objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*, such as workforce housing, compact housing types, adaptive reuse of older structures, or industrial "traded sector" businesses. It could serve projects with challenging site conditions (e.g., floodplain, slope, or wetlands), complex reviews, or phased permits.

Under the Project Review Management Service, a project manager would be assigned to a project's review process. The service would assist the applicant in understanding municipal requirements and identifying issues up front, enabling them to submit complete applications and avoid delays. It also facilitates interagency reviews.

This program could also prioritize development application processing in designated Centers, such as Downtown, and in the Revitalization Focus areas.

This Strategy will require the Municipality to determine and provide the necessary resources, and to weigh the costs for delivery, as well as impacts to existing permit processes.

Strategy 10: Systematic Monitoring and Amendment of this Plan

Planning is a process that continues beyond the production of a document. It includes monitoring urban conditions, collecting data on changes over time, and making adjustments to a plan as the need arises.

Like the rest of the *Comprehensive Plan*, the 2040 LUP is "living document." It should be updated based on performance indicators and new information as the city evolves and responds to new circumstances.

Monitoring and periodic assessment of the *Comprehensive Plan* is how the Municipality and public can best measure progress, successes, and challenges in achieving its goals. Performance measures monitor progress toward achieving community goals and provide a basis for periodic plan updates or improvements.

This Strategy requires the creation of new performance measures. Development of a key indicators list will provide measurable insight about progress on key land use issues—e.g., housing production and affordability—that are addressed by this Plan. Regular reports on these indicators can help the public and elected officials judge the effectiveness of the Plan and the Municipality's Strategies and Actions to implement it. The Planning Department is the agency responsible for periodic assessment of

the progress being made toward achieving the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The Municipality may also consider *Land Use Plan Map* amendments concurrently with associated development proposals. A rezoning that deviates from the 2040 LUP may be appropriate if it demonstrates community-wide benefits or responds to new issues, needs, or opportunities not addressed in the *Comprehensive Plan*. Such a rezoning should demonstrate consistency with the Goals and Policies of 2040 LUP, and should not set precedents or pose long-term effects that run contrary to the Plan.

Land use decisions, such as rezonings, facility site selections, and area-specific plans, that deviate from the *Land Use Plan Map* should be accompanied by a concurrent amendment to the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*. This is essential for the *Comprehensive Plan* to remain current and useful as a policy guide. It maintains alignment between land use decisions and *Comprehensive Plan* elements and addresses potential impacts on other parts the community.