



DESTINATION UMED

More Travel Choices. More Opportunity.

Site Visit Summary

May 23-25, 2022

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Site Visit Overview



What is Destination UMED?

- Our charge is to develop a **phased and actionable plan and toolkit** for district stakeholders to **improve travel** to, from, and within the UMED district.
- We will look at **projects, policies, and programs** to reduce traffic congestion, improve mobility choices, and enhance equitable access to UMED destinations.

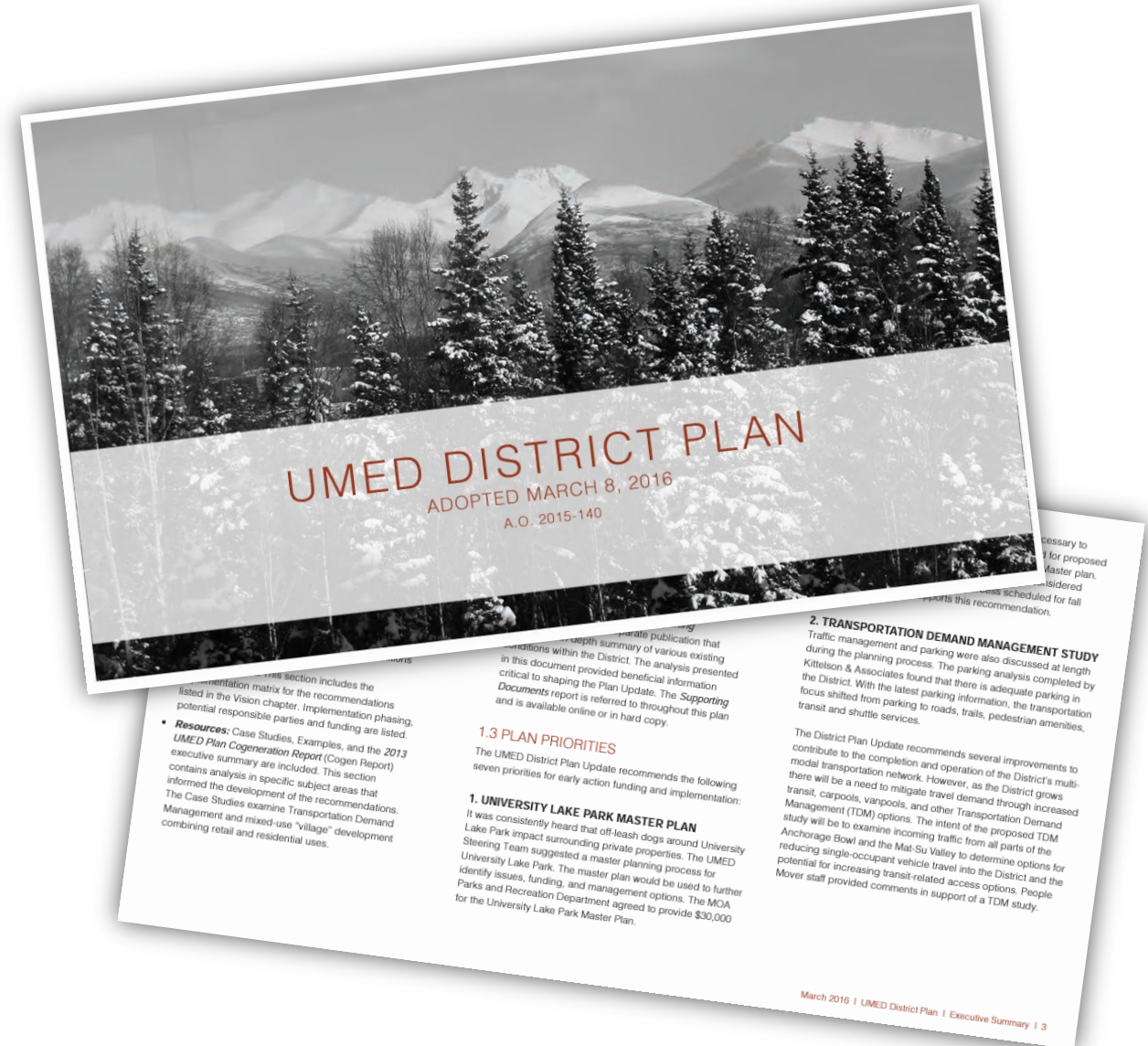


DESTINATION UMED

More Travel Choices. More Opportunity.

Why Destination UMED?

The **2016 UMED District Plan** included a priority recommendation to fund a transportation demand management (TDM) study to **“...determine options for reducing single-occupant vehicle travel into the District,”** and **“...continue the established UMED District coordination process...to leverage resources and implement the UMED District Plan.”**



Destination UMED Timeline



WE ARE HERE

Site Visit Purpose

The **Destination UMED consultant team** traveled to Anchorage on May 23-25 to meet with the Project Management Team (PMT), host the first UMED Advisory Committee Meeting (UAC), and take a tour of the UMED district.

We also met with several stakeholders one-on-one or in small groups to learn more about their transportation issues, needs, and opportunities.



The consultant team touring the district by bicycle

UAC Meeting #1



UMED Advisory Committee

The UMED Advisory Committee (UAC) includes 19 representatives from UMED institutions, social services, and public agencies.



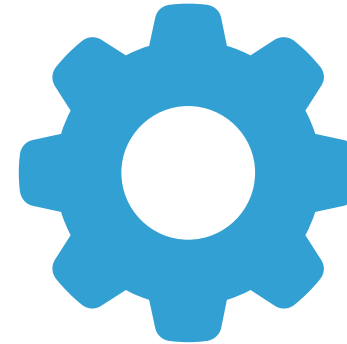
Medical



Education



Neighborhoods



Social
Services



Municipal

UAC Meeting #1

MEETING PURPOSE

- We met with the UAC on May 24th to...
 - Introduce the project team and project scope
 - Introduce TDM and its core components
 - Understand organizational missions
 - Identify transportation issues, challenges, and opportunities



UAC Meeting #1 at Southcentral Foundation

UAC Meeting #1

WHAT IS TDM?

- TDM is about providing **transportation options and flexibility**.
 - It uses a mix of infrastructure, policies, programs, and pricing strategies to make it easier to **walk, bike, take transit, share rides, or work from home** to optimize transportation networks.

The building blocks include...



PHYSICAL

- Bike lanes, sidewalks, & crossings
- Bike parking
- Transit stop amenities
- Mobility hubs
- Showers and lockers
- Less parking + shared parking



POLICIES & PROGRAMS

- Zoning & regulation
- Transit & shuttle services
- Passes & subsidies
- Carpool & shared vehicle programs
- Scooter and bike share
- Remote and flex-work policies



MARKETING & MANAGEMENT

- District management organization
- Transportation coordinators
- Web- and mobile-based platforms
- Real-time information
- Events, activities, & challenges



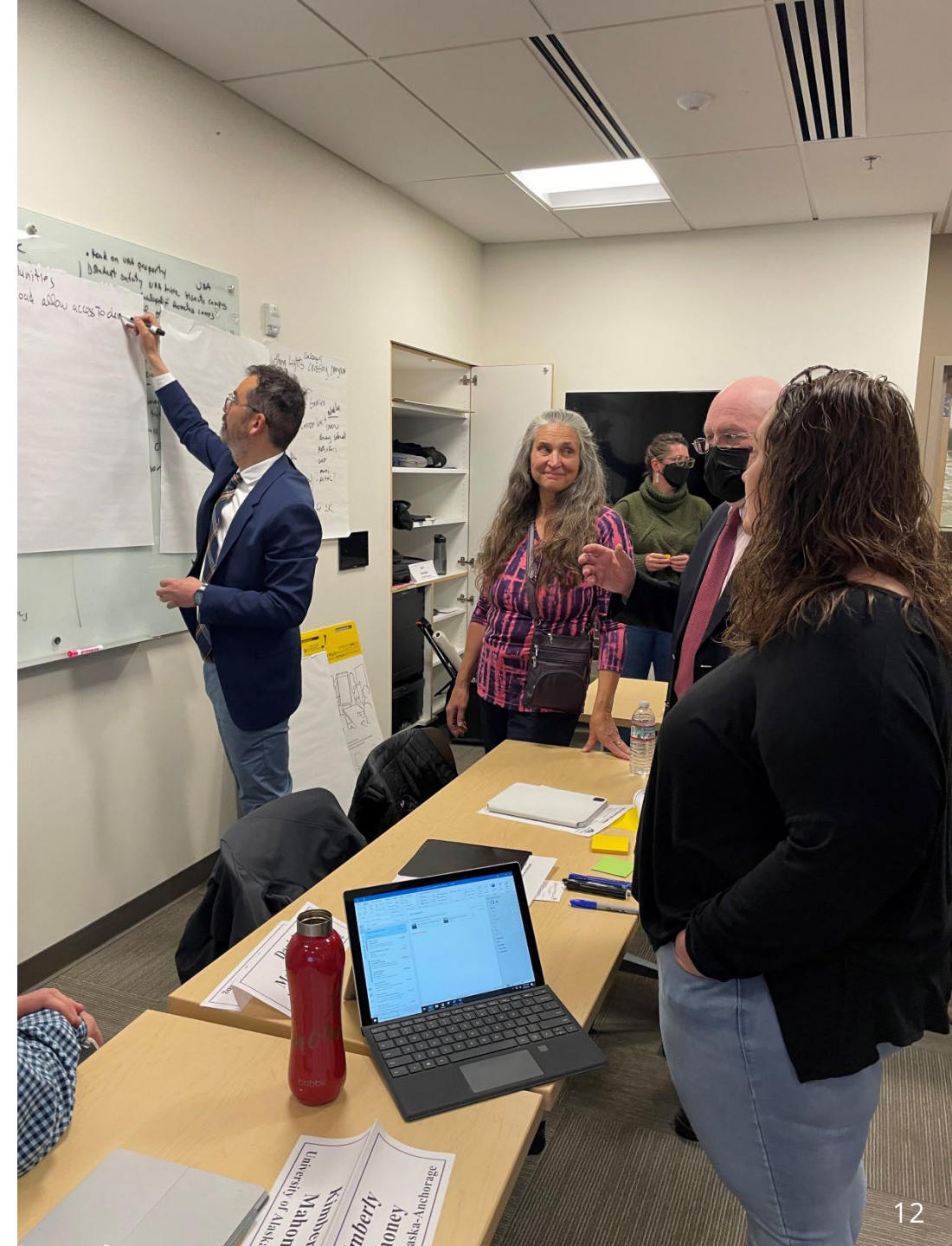
PRICING

- Flex or daily parking
- Charging for parking
- Unbundled parking
- Pay-not-to-drive or parking cash-out programs
- Discounted fees for high-occupancy trips or EVs

Station 1

CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

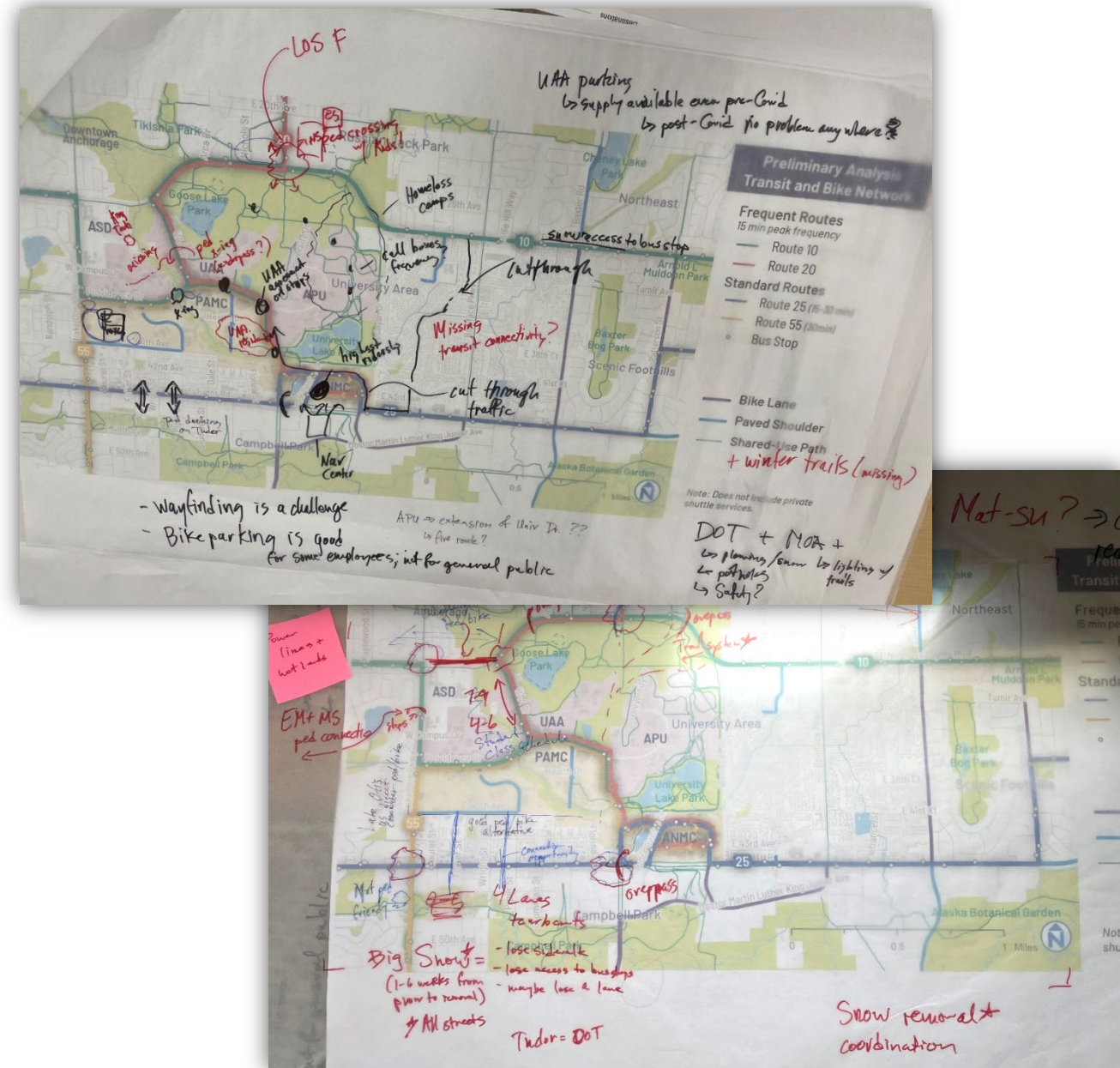
- We asked UAC members about their and/or UMED's biggest transportation **challenges**?
- What do they see as this project's **opportunities** to solve those challenges?



Station 2

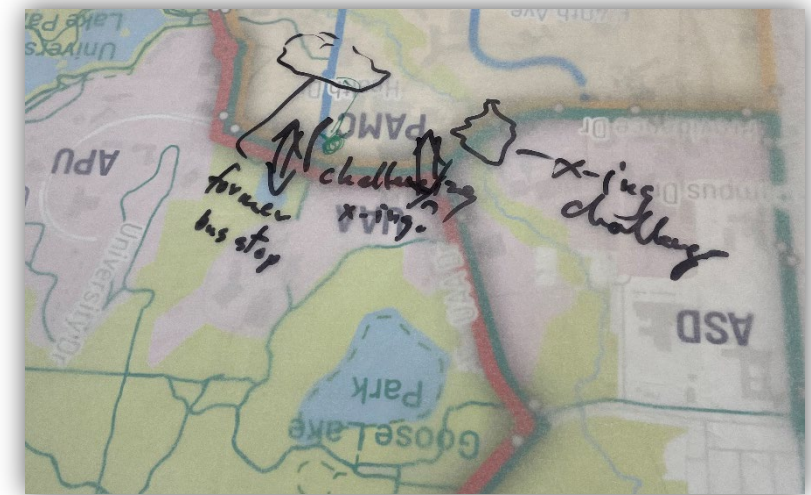
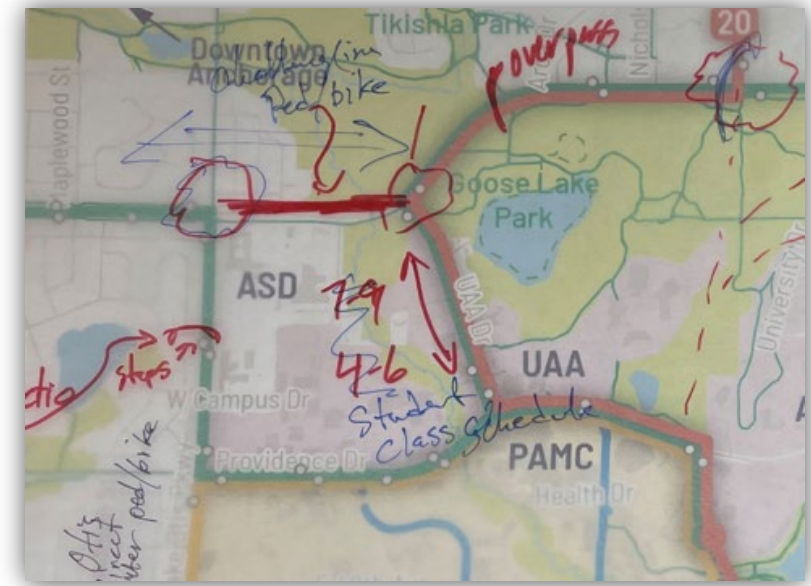
MAPPING EXERCISE

- We asked UAC members to use a map to identify:
 - Safety hot spots
 - Barriers or edges
 - Missing or deficit connections
 - Parking challenges
 - Transit service or infrastructure need
 - Other?



Key Challenges

- Due to safety concerns, King Tech students are forbidden by school staff from walking to Rasmussen Bldg. despite a short distance. Many do so anyways.
- Snow removal responsibilities are divided between MOA and DOT, even on the same roadway. Institutions contract with different vendors for snow removal on internal streets or sidewalks.
- It can take 1-6 weeks for snow to be fully plowed. Piles narrow travel lanes and impede pedestrian crossings/access to sidewalks and bus stops.
- Parking is largely underutilized and takes up land.



UMED challenges mapping exercise

Key Challenges

- Most people drive to UMED. For example, UAA is primarily a commuter campus—most affiliates live off campus and arrive by car.
- Transit stop relocations along Providence Dr. often causes riders to cross mid-block versus at intersections.
- Bike parking facilities are nice for employees, but often less safe and secure for the public/UMED visitors.
- Public gathering places within UMED are located indoors (e.g., unions, library). Public places are turned “inward” from the street.



UAC members report out discussions

Key Opportunities

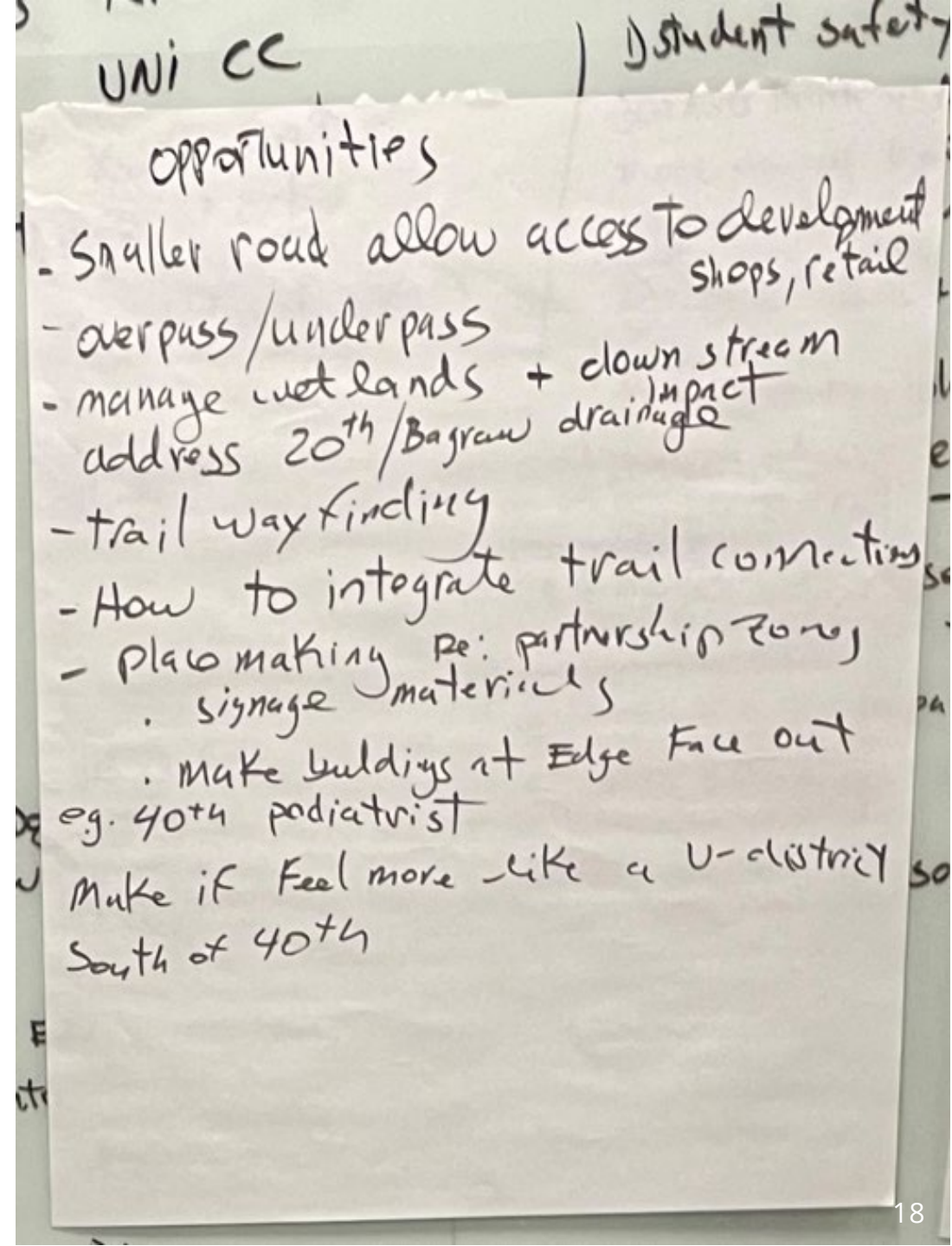
- Snow removal could be better coordinated among MOA, DOT, and UMED stakeholders.
- Trail safety could be enhanced with lighting, more active use, emergency call posts, and wayfinding.
- Enhanced east-west connections could better integrate residential neighborhoods with the UMED core.
- Parking supply is underutilized, presenting opportunities to reduce future build and share parking assets further. Shared parking agreements already exist in the district.



UAC members brainstorm opportunities

Key Opportunities

- Buildings at the district's edges could be more welcoming and accessible by facing outwards and reducing set-backs on smaller streets.
- Marketing and communications are crucial – many UMED affiliates do not know what non-driving options exist.
- Consistent wayfinding is also essential.



Key Opportunities

- The Chester Creek Trail could continue between ASD, UAA, and PAMC campuses.
- Balance the use of grade separation with at-grade improvements to facilitate safe crossings. Make underpasses more attractive and usable spaces.
- Leverage new technology and micro-mobility services
 - Install reservable bike lockers people can use via an app-based system.
 - Create a UMED bikeshare or e-scooter share with kiosks/stations at trailheads.

opportunities group 1

Underpasses/overpass UAA to ped path
20mph 2 lane

- Underpass as usable spaces e.g. Montreal
- get people from sidewalk to trail
- Chester creek continuation
- wayfinding for UAA trail portions
- reservable bike lockers via app
esp. for e-bikes
- bike/scooter shared micro mobility
- ~~to~~ Real time bus info
- bike share @ trails 12/mo/year
- move around UMED one here
Eagle River etc how to get here w/out car?
- Internal monorail ADA, access to doctor's
appt

What we heard...



UAC KEY THEMES

▪ **District growth**

- UMED has grown in the last decade and the District Plan calls for a greater mix of uses over time. As more growth occurs, access to existing destinations needs to be maintained.
- A mix of uses can allow UMED to capture trips “internally” and shift to non-driving modes.

▪ **Employment density**

- Based upon the growing number of jobs located in UMED, transportation access is critical
 - both locally and across the region.

▪ **Uncertainty about the future**

- The Covid-19 pandemic impacted many institutions, and the long-term changes remain uncertain.
- Resources have been focused on “core” operations at each institution, leaving limited organizational capacity to address district-wide challenges, such as transportation.

What we heard...



UAC KEY THEMES

- **UMED as a community asset**

- The dog park, trails, lakes, and community services makes UMED a place that should be integrated with and accessible to its neighbors and surrounding community.

- **Preservation of trails and natural lands**

- The trail network, greenbelt, and wetlands are precious to the community. These facilities are frequented by local and regional users.
- Flooding of Chester Creek Trail is a growing concern.

- **Safety concerns**

- Major intersections or roadways can be a substantial barrier for those on foot or bike.
- Anchorage is grappling with the issue of homelessness, and there is growing concern about impacts on the UMED district. A well-utilized trail, path, and transportation system is essential to safety and security.

What we heard...



UAC KEY THEMES

▪ **Transit access**

- People Mover provides multiple routes to UMED, with some of its busiest stops in the district. Transit does not always offer direct connections for UMED users.
- Private shuttles provide additional transit service to the district, offering key connections for students, patients, and native populations.

▪ **Travel in winter**

- Conditions in winter make travel very difficult for all modes. Snow storage can reduce vehicle capacity and create additional barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists.

▪ **Coordination and partnerships**

- UAC member organizations convened and had more frequent communication during the 2016 planning process and pre-pandemic; members are open and interested to explore more collaboration and coordination with their peers/neighboring institutions.

What we heard...



UAC KEY THEMES

▪ **Traffic congestion**

- Vehicle congestion on major arterials, key intersections, and internal streets is a frequently voiced concern. Congestion at peak periods can impact access to key UMED destinations and/or generate cut-through traffic in surrounding neighborhoods.
- UMED traffic is not just “local,” as it is generated by regional jobs, housing, and travel patterns. Addressing regional trips is crucial to a successful outcome.
- A comprehensive, district-based trip-reduction strategy has never been tried to address congestion. The historic approach has been to expand or build new roadways.

▪ **Northern Access Rd.**

- A proposed Bragaw Rd. extension through the northern half of UMED is top of mind.
- This roadway has been described as beneficial to reducing traffic at key intersections, improving access, and supporting future development plans in the district.
- Strong opposition to this project exists, with Community Councils and other advocates concerned about its impacts to natural areas, limited congestion reduction benefit, and high project costs.

Stakeholder Interviews



Stakeholder Interviews

The project team met with several representatives from the UAC independently to learn more about their transportation needs, planning underway, and TDM strategies they currently manage.

On-site interviews with:

- Providence Alaska Medical Center (PAMC)
- University of Alaska – Anchorage (UAA)
- Southcentral Foundation (SCF)
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)
- Alaska Pacific University (APU)
- Rogers Park, Russian Jack, Airport Heights, University Area, and Campbell Park Community Councils

Additional interviews to come:

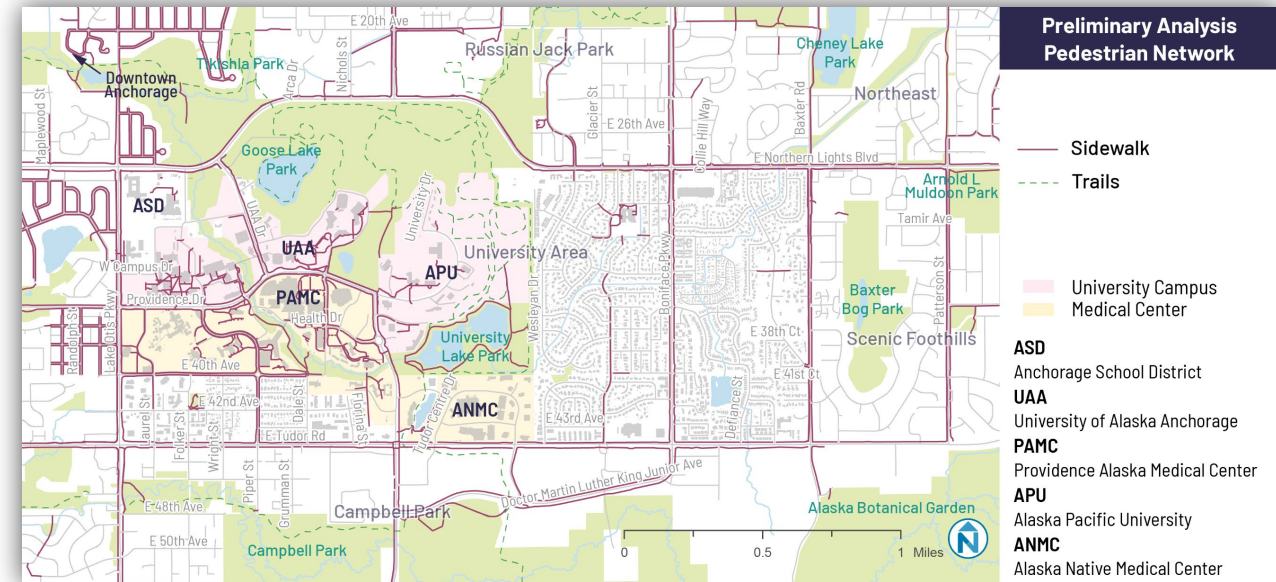
- People Mover
- Anchorage School District (ASD)
- AK DOT&PF
- Follow-ups with PAMC and UAA

What we heard about **UMED access...**

- Institutions and community members alike recognize a need for improved access to UMED—especially from the northeast and south—but have different ideas about how to achieve it.
 - Most community residents prefer to maintain existing trail systems and for UMED institutions to coordinate investments in strategies to reduce single-occupancy trips to/from the district and encourage non-driving options. TDM strategies could be voluntary or required per new AMATS or MOA policy.
 - There is some support for new roadway connections to accommodate growing driving demand, traffic congestion, and allow for new development opportunities.
 - Several UMED institutions described independent efforts to engage in TDM with variable success and acknowledged there has never been a comprehensive effort to address and manage travel demand as a district.

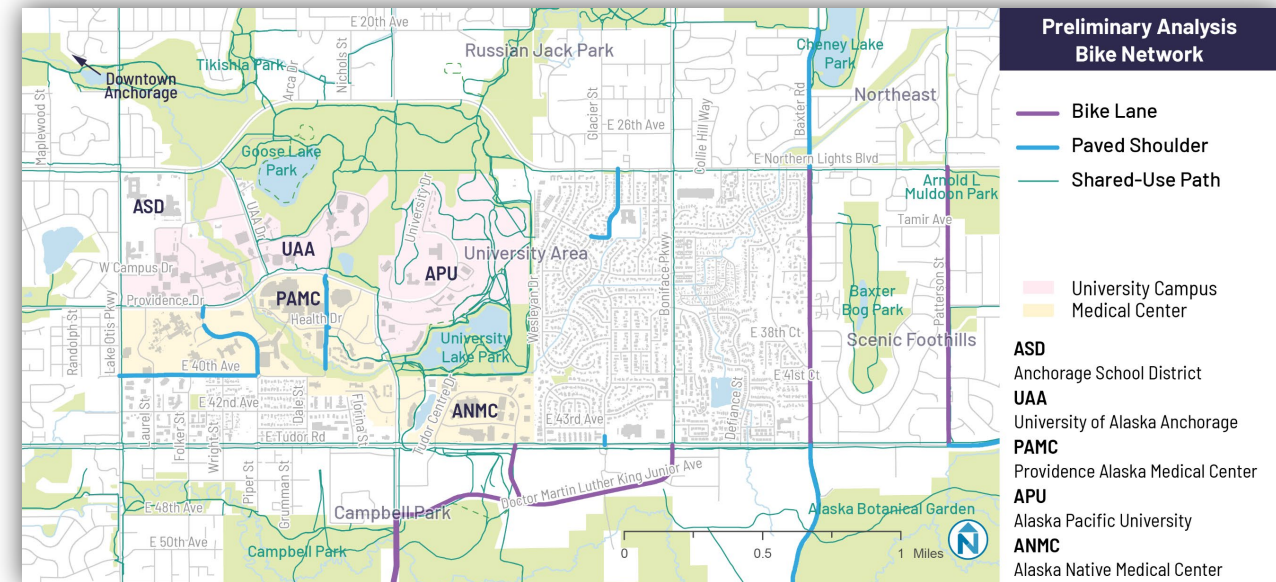
What we heard about walking...

- Many pedestrians cross “edge” arterials midblock; there are limited safe crossings.
- UMED has invested in pedestrian infrastructure and sidewalks more than surrounding areas.
- Winter weather dictates the need for covered access and connections.
- Many students and employees in the district drive walkable distances between destinations.
- People love to use the trails for walking and recreation.



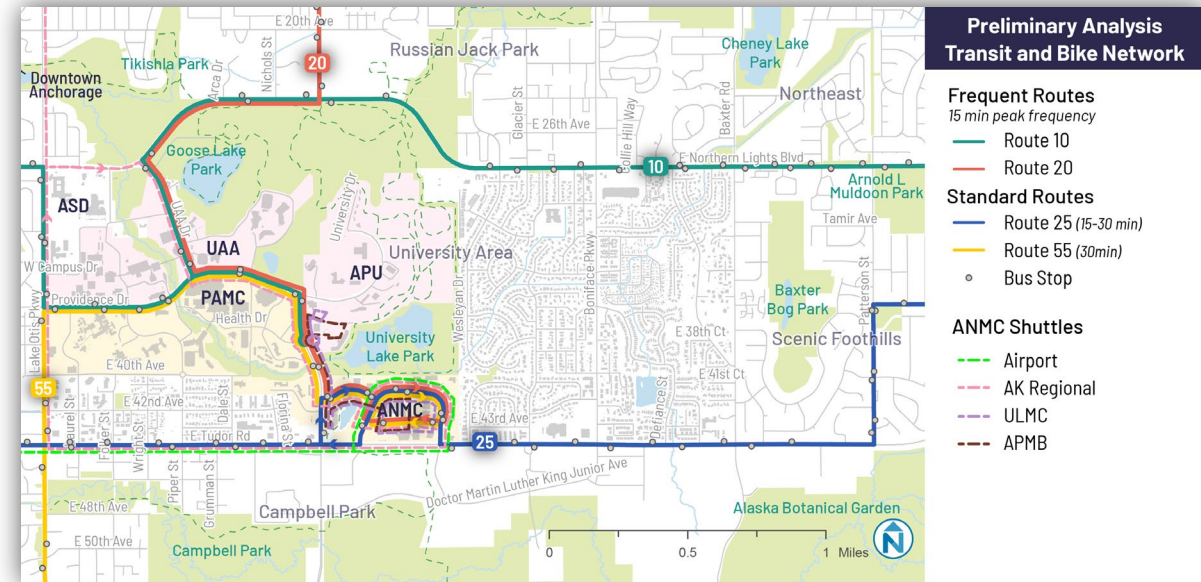
What we heard about **bicycling**...

- UMED's trails and greenways are used year-round for commuting and/or recreational bike riding.
- Wayfinding and navigating connections between paths and trails can be challenging.
- Some institutions have taken steps to make biking to work easier and attractive (e.g., secure parking, showers, repair stands).
- A small bike sharing program was piloted but was suspended due to limited ridership.



What we heard about transit...

- Transit ridership was growing just before the pandemic.
- Transit is less attractive for many users given regional commutes, travel time differences, and abundant free parking.
- Public/private transit service is concentrated in the ANTHC campus.
- Subsidized transit pass programs are not deployed at most institutions.
- The quality of stop amenities varies. Access to transit and transit stops can be very difficult in snowy weather.



What we heard about TDM...

- Several institutions are actively engaged in TDM (or have been in the past). Some have coordinated their efforts with other UMED entities.
- SCF & ANTHC have shared parking agreements, as well as PAMC & UAA for Alaska Airlines Center events.
- Some organizations also market transportation options, provide mobility services, and survey their affiliates to understand travel patterns, needs, and service preferences.

ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH CAMPUS PARKING STUDY

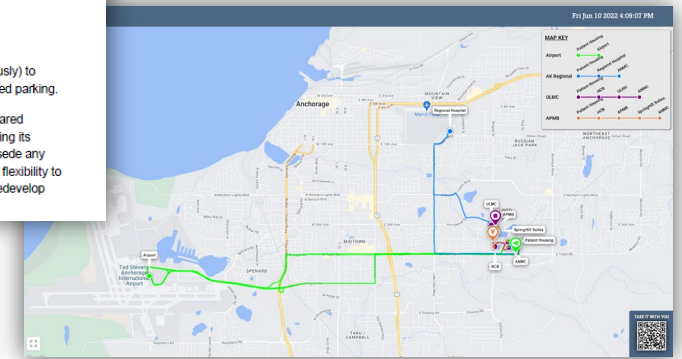
5.2 Shared Parking Agreements

One shared parking agreement is currently in effect on campus between the following parcels:

- Block 5 Tract J
- Block 5 Tract I
- Block 4 Tract G-2
- Block 4 Tract G-1

This agreement allows parking on Block 5 Tract I (overflow parking described previously) to contribute parking spaces that help the other parcels meet their total minimum required parking.

One purpose of this parking study is to facilitate the development of a full-campus shared parking agreement that would allow the campus to function as a single entity in meeting its parking requirements. The new, full-campus shared parking agreement would supersede any existing shared parking agreements and allow SCF and ANTHC to provide improved flexibility to manage overall campus parking needs, which will be particularly beneficial as they redevelop areas of campus.



ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION USER'S GUIDE

17,000 Students, Faculty and Staff
4,000 Parking Spaces
6 Alternatives to Driving

UAA Encourages Walking, Bikes, Busses, Carpools, Shuttles and Vanpools

Use Alternative Transportation!
Commuter traffic to and from the UAA campus represents over 35% of UAA's carbon footprint. By taking advantage of alternative transportation, UAA community members can save their time and money and reduce carbon emissions and traffic congestion, and improve air quality. UAA alternative transportation users will also reap the benefits by having additional time to read, work, or nap to and from the campus if they use mass transit or carpool. Other commuters can improve their health by biking or walking to work.

This Alternative Transportation User's Guide will help make this easier for you!

People Mover
Do you have your Wolf Card? Every student, faculty and staff member can ride People Mover buses for free simply by showing their Wolf Card. Riders can find schedules and route information at www.peoplemover.org. The following routes serve the UAA community. For an updated list, visit People Mover's website.
UAA Main Campus: 1, 2, 3, 13, 36, 45, 102. UAA Uiv Center: 2, 36, 40, 102
UAA Eagle River: 77, 78, 102

Sharing Bikes, Van Pools and Ride Matching
Carpooling is also a great option for Anchorage campus commuters. The Municipality's People Mover makes it easy through its Share-A-Ride program. Share-A-

An illustration of a person holding a Wolf Card, which is a student ID card. The card features the University of Alaska Anchorage logo and the text 'Wolf Card' and 'STUDENT'.

Examples of TDM policies, programs, and marketing information among UMED stakeholders

What we heard about **snow**...

- Several UMED institutions contract out snow removal services, in addition to the removal services provided by MOA and AKDOT&PF.
- Snow storage makes sidewalks and roadways narrower and, in some cases, impassable or unsafe.



Leftover snow pile in a parking lot



*Transit stops are less visible in snow
Photo courtesy of MOA Long Range Planning*

What we heard about **snow**...



Sidewalks are narrowed and closer to traffic



Walkways are icy and flanked by snow walls



Non-motorized facilities are often completely covered

Photos courtesy of MOA Long Range Planning

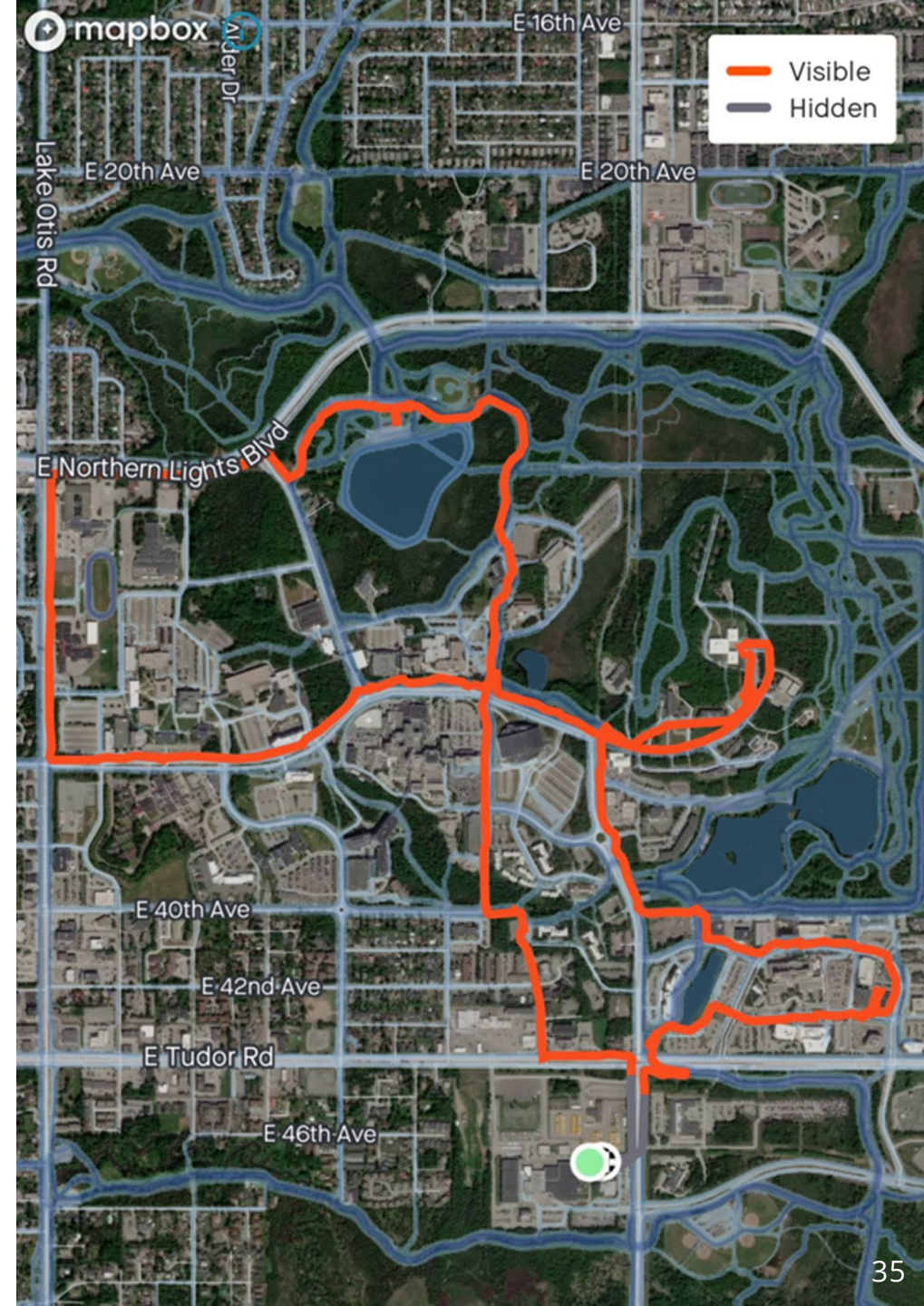
Site Tour



Tour Route

- The project team did a site tour by bike on Monday, May 23rd.
- Some of the project team also toured the area on foot and by car on Wednesday, May 25th.
- Observations describe the walking experience, bicycling facilities, wayfinding, transit service and amenities, parking, and traffic conditions.

Route of May 23rd site tour



Walking Experience

ALONG ROADWAYS

- Many paths or sidewalks within UMED have a comfortable buffer from traffic.
- Roadways on the district perimeter are less comfortable with closer travel lanes and higher vehicle volumes and speeds.



Along Tudor Center Dr.



Along Lake Otis Pkwy.

Walking Experience

ACROSS ROADWAYS

- Crosswalks in UMED have variable types of treatments.
- Crossing distances can cause pedestrians to hurry for approaching vehicles.



Variations in crossing treatments throughout the district



People run across a crosswalk on Tudor Center Dr. at Ambassador Dr.

Walking Experience

ACROSS ROADWAYS

- There are limited high-visibility, mid-block crossings or refuge islands. Pedestrians were observed crossing mid-block to avoid long walks to intersections.
- In ANTHC's campus, pedestrians are encouraged to use flags for more visibility.



A high-visibility, mid-block crossing at MYC



Empty flag holder at a crosswalk

Walking Experience

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

- Grade-separated crossings are at major intersections and midblock along UMED perimeter roadways. These facilities minimize pedestrian and vehicle conflicts but may force out of direction travel for people walking or bicycling, and present ADA accessibility issues where ramps do not exist.



Tudor Rd. pedestrian and bicycle overpass



Lake Otis Pkwy. pedestrian overpass

Walking Experience

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

- Multiple UAA and ANTHC campus buildings use grade-separated walkways between buildings for year-round, weather-proof access.



ANTHC pedestrian bridge over Tudor Center Dr.



UAA pedestrian bridge over Providence Dr.

Walking Experience

BUILDING ACCESS

- UAA students and staff are prohibited from exiting at UAA Dr. and the crosswalk has been removed due to concerns with pedestrian safety. Pedestrians may still cross at-grade to save time accessing the nearby transit stop.



UAA Dr. with crosswalk removed

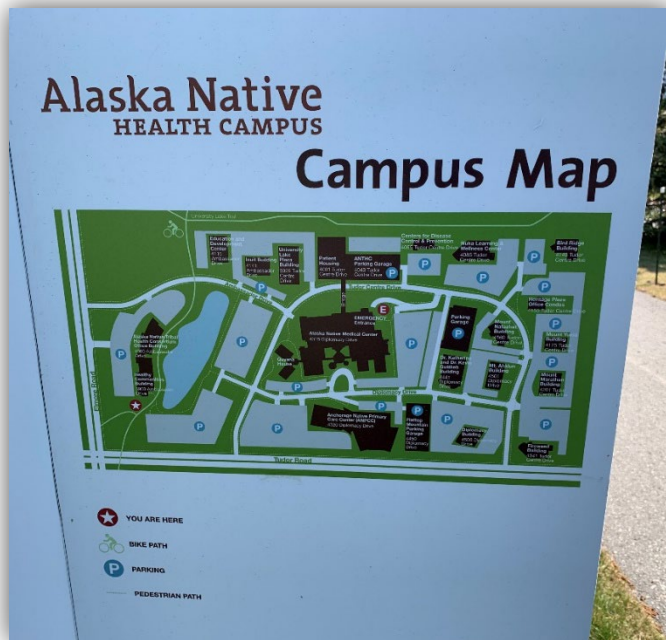


Alarm will sound at door accessing UAA Dr.

Wayfinding

MAPS, SIGNAGE, AND APPS

- Different areas in UMED have distinct maps and directional signage. ANTHC also has a mobile app for transportation, dining, and health services.



ANTHC campus map



ANTHC navigation app



Trail signage and mileage

Wayfinding

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE AND BRANDING

- Signage is specific to the most proximate institution.
- There is limited signage to brand UMED as a distinct and cohesive district.



Directional signage at ANTHC



Bus stop signage along Providence Dr.



UMED Gateway brand signage

Accessibility

ADA STANDARDS AND SAFETY

- There are areas within UMED with ADA crossings and truncated domes, but many crosswalks and driveways along UMED's perimeter do not meet ADA standards and are not supportive of people with visual impairments or mobility devices.



Missing crosswalks and truncated domes along Tudor Rd. limit ADA access and pedestrian visibility

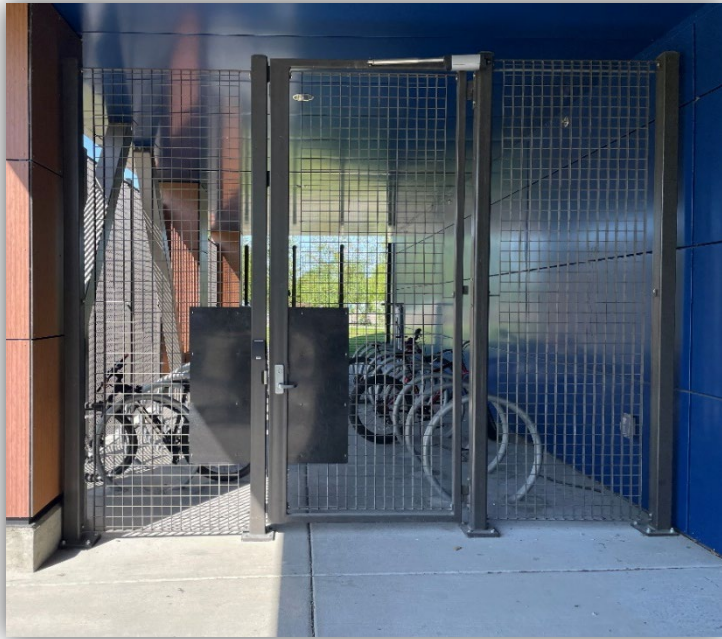


Truncated domes and high visibility crosswalks at UAA Dr. and Providence Dr.

Bicycling Facilities

PARKING

- There are several locations throughout SCF and ANTHC's campuses with secure bicycle parking, though public or visitor bicycle parking is more limited.



Secure bike parking and a repair stand at ANTHC's Child Development Center



Secure bicycle parking at the base of a parking garage

Bicycling Facilities

PARKING

- There are numerous bicycle racks located outside of building entrances. However, rack designs are less secure and efficient than staple racks.



Bicycle racks at building entrances and near windows have greater visibility and sense of security

Transit Facilities

SERVICES AND STOPS

- People Mover and ANTHC shuttles both provide service to UMED destinations.
- The UAA Seawolf was a popular service but was suspended during the pandemic.



People alight from the People Mover on Providence Dr.



ANTHC shuttle stops along Tudor Center Dr.

Transit Facilities

SERVICES AND STOPS

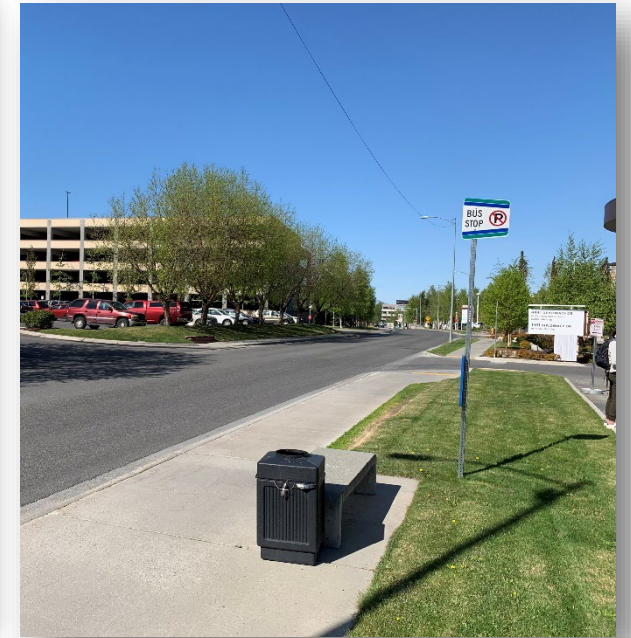
- There are many high-quality stops throughout UMED with seating, waste receptacles, and/or shelters. However, amenities are inconsistent across the district.



Transit stop along Elmore Rd.



Transit stops on UAA and ANTHC campuses



Parking

SURFACE LOTS

- There are many surface lots throughout UMED, each with varying posted regulations and restrictions. Security staff monitor any unauthorized vehicles.



Parking lot at Southcentral Foundation



Passport Parking payment kiosk at UAA



Signage to discourage parking violations

Parking

GARAGES

- Most of the parking garages in the district are free but designated for staff or visitors of specific buildings.



A new garage on ANTHC's campus



A UAA garage with permitting signage

Edge Roadways

MAJOR INTERSECTIONS

- Major intersections present challenging conditions for people walking due to multiple lanes, high speeds and traffic volumes, limited refuge islands, and wide turning radii.



People exercising cross Lake Otis Pkwy. at Northern Lights Blvd.



Vehicles turn right from Lake Otis Pkwy. to Northern Lights Blvd.

Edge Roadways

MAJOR INTERSECTIONS

- There are several major intersections on the edge of UMED. Along Tudor Rd, multiple intersections have double-left turn lanes from each approach.



A bicyclist waits on a "porkchop" island at Tudor Rd. and Lake Otis Pkwy.



Double left turn pockets provide additional vehicle throughput into UMED, but increase crossing distances

Access to Nature

TRAILS AND AMENITIES

- The northern part of UMED is surrounded by parks, trails, and lakes utilized by residents, students, district employees, visitors, and athletes.



Goose Lake Park Trails



Kids run along University Lake Trail



Goose Lake

Next Steps



Areas for further assessment

STATE OF THE SYSTEM REPORT

Based on what we learned, the project team will be assessing identified issues and topics through data gathering, a travel survey, and further discussions.

We will summarize in a concise **State of the System Report.**

Key topics include:

- Local and regional travel patterns to and from UMED
- Mode choice by user/stakeholder group
- Traffic volumes at key intersections and roadways
- Transit routes and ridership
- Safety hot-spots
- Parking supply/demand, regulations, and policy
- Existing TDM programs and level of participation
- Municipal zoning and policy
- Areas of existing cost-sharing and/or coordination



DESTINATION UMED

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www.destinationumedstudy.com