

2 VISION AND OVERARCHING GOALS

This chapter documents the community's vision for the future of the Spenard Corridor. It is aspirational and focuses on fundamental physical, economic and cultural qualities that are desired. A vision statement describes the Plan Area as it would be in the year 2048. This is followed by a series of overarching goals and policies that set the foundation for more specific policies and actions that appear in the subsequent chapters that address land use, urban design, circulation and utility infrastructure. Municipal departments and agencies should use these when developing more detailed programs and initiatives that serve to implement the plan. They also are recommended for use by the private sector.





Spenard will be a model for the region.



Spenard's brand will be expanded.

A. A Vision for the Spenard Corridor

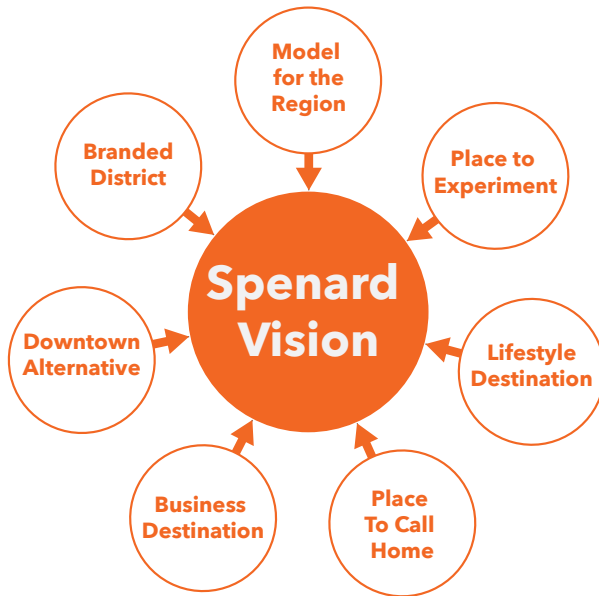
In the future, the Spenard Corridor will maintain its identity as a unique and eclectic destination district within Anchorage. It will be attractive to those visiting Anchorage, starting a business, looking for a place to live or seeking entertainment and recreation. A high quality bicycle and pedestrian circulation network that accommodates everyone from families to experienced bicyclists will connect outdoor community amenities, schools, entertainment destinations, shopping districts, hotels and neighborhoods.

Spenard will be seamlessly connected to neighboring districts such as Midtown and Turnagain, contributing to the livability of the city as a whole. New multi-story buildings that provide retail, employment and housing opportunities for existing and new residents will blend with existing buildings in a manner that maintains the eclectic character of the neighborhood while expanding the vibrancy of Spenard. Growing vitality will contribute to a feeling of safety by providing “eyes on the street” and this, in turn, will support high frequency transit service and potential commuter rail transit.

The Spenard Corridor will be recognized as a destination, but the subtleties of individual neighborhoods will be evident to the visitor and attractive to investors. Neighbors living in the residential areas will easily access the Corridor by bike, on foot, in their car or via mass-transit as they take care of daily needs, socialize with friends and family, and attend community events. New plazas, festival streets and outdoor market spaces will provide opportunities to showcase the work of local artisans, celebrate Spenard’s diverse culture and provide venues for creating new history.

Investors will develop and renovate buildings to provide spaces for a variety of uses that support the greater objectives for the Corridor, including artists spaces, live-work units, community kitchens, indoor markets, breweries and other exciting activities. Fish Creek will serve as a prideful community amenity for Spenard and the region, providing a water resource and trail system that gets one from point A to point B and also is a place to stop, play and recreate.

VISION COMPONENTS



In the future, Spenard will be:

A Model for the Region

Spenard will be a model for the region for its contribution to the citywide and regional transportation system and its network of urban active transportation facilities. Spenard will serve as an example of how to truly integrate transit-supportive development principles in an already developed, auto-oriented urban setting.

A Branded District

Spenard is already informally branded as one of the most unique destination districts in Anchorage. Moving forward, the Corridor's brand will be expanded. It will be marketed as a district that is walkable, safe, economically vibrant and culturally diverse.

A Downtown Alternative

Spenard will serve as an alternative to Downtown for visitors and locals looking for entertainment, culture and social activity, but with an edge, eclecticism and localism that contrasts with and complements the tourist experience.

A Business Destination

Spenard will welcome new businesses looking for affordable space in Anchorage. Start-up companies, incubator space, co-working space and other properties that support creative industries will be accommodated alongside corporate and local businesses housed in more traditional formats.



Spenard will serve as an alternative for visitors and locals looking for entertainment.



Spenard will be a place to experiment with cutting edge ideas and facilities.

A Place to Call Home

From single-family infill to medium scale housing and mixed-use buildings, Spenard will provide a wide variety of housing opportunities that cater to everyone, including young professionals, families and retirees.

An Entertainment/Lifestyle Destination

Spenard will be a desirable place to be. Visitors, neighbors and locals from around the region will frequent Spenard to “hang out” at its theaters, bars, diverse restaurants, specialty markets, music venues, breweries and art galleries.

A Grounds for Experimentation

Spenard will be a place for developers, builders, businesses, artists, architects and planners to experiment with and test cutting edge ideas and facilities. This will range from buildings created from shipping containers to tiny houses, displays of temporary art installations and tactical urbanism projects, such as the installation of temporary bicycle facilities on municipal streets in order to study their impacts.

B. Overarching Goals

This section provides broad goals and policies to guide future redevelopment and public improvements.

Goal 1: Support Transit and Increase Ridership

As a transit-supportive development plan, the SCP strongly emphasizes investments that support and increase transit ridership. Ridership tends to be higher in areas that are denser, walkable and contain a mix of uses.

Policy 2.1: Buildings, spaces and facilities whose users benefit from and support transit service should be promoted.

Goal 2: Recognize Spenard as a Destination

Spenard is already a unique destination within Anchorage. It is known for its historic significance, neighborhood characteristics and cultural opportunities.

Policy 2.2: Expand Spenard's roll as a citywide destination and market it as a destination district. Spenard's unique character and its importance to the overall Anchorage community should be celebrated and reinforced by new development and public improvements.

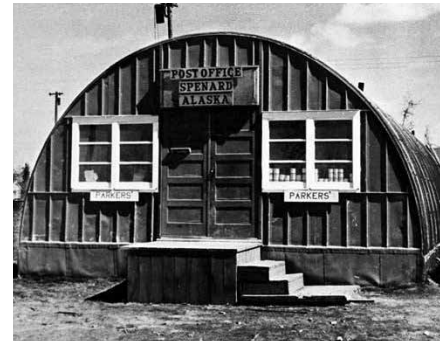
Policy 2.3: Promote preservation of historic resources in the area as landmarks that contribute to its distinct identity.

Goal 3: Celebrate the Culture of Spenard and Anchorage

Spenard is one of the most culturally diverse districts in Anchorage and Alaska. The area's rich history and the people that live here have a strong impact on its identity. Its eclectic character is reinforced through the urban landscape, by the variety of architecture, the presence of art and the activities found there.



Celebrate history and the creation of new cultural experiences.



The area's rich history has a strong impact on its identity.



Support and increase transit ridership.



The design process for streets will consider all transportation modes: pedestrians, bicycles, transit, freight and private motor vehicles.



Opportunities for neighborhood amenities should be pursued.

Policy 2.4: The cultural significance of the area should be celebrated by creating spaces that educate, inform and provide experiences that reinforce Spenard as a cultural destination.

Policy 2.5: Private development projects and public facilities should accommodate activities that foster cultural awareness, celebrate history and facilitate creating new cultural experiences.

Goal 4: Enhance and Protect Neighborhoods Surrounding Spenard Road

The revitalization and redevelopment of the Spenard Corridor itself, is of utmost importance. However, the established residential neighborhoods to the east and west of the Corridor also are important to improve and support. This includes providing support for new and existing housing for all income levels.

Policy 2.6: Access to abutting residential neighborhoods should be enhanced with improved pedestrian and bicycle systems. These should safely connect residents to open spaces, community facilities, employment centers, retail opportunities and other destinations within Spenard and the greater region.

Policy 2.7: Mixed-use buildings and other non-residential development along the corridors should be sited and designed to sensitively transition to adjacent single-family properties. Corridor development must strategically arrange site features, integrate architectural elements and include site design elements that reduce impacts on abutting single-family properties. Reducing operational impacts of noise and odor, minimizing the presence of looming walls that impact privacy and ensuring adequate solar access to sensitive properties are all key factors to consider.

Goal 5: Create Great Public Streets

Streets are important public spaces and integral components of the open space network that enhance quality of life.

Policy 2.8: To the extent feasible, walkability should be maximized along all public streets by minimizing the amount of right-of-way dedicated to vehicular travel.

Policy 2.9: Traffic calming measures should be employed where appropriate to slow traffic and make walking more comfortable.

Policy 2.10: Private development should be designed to engage and activate adjoining public sidewalks, thereby ensuring Spenard is walkable, memorable and inviting.

Goal 6: Pursue the Development of Activity Nodes

The Spenard Corridor is not expected to be homogenous, but will be accentuated with concentrations of activities in nodes. Opportunities are likely to be presented based on property owner choices, the ability to assemble land, and the availability of infrastructure and other factors.

Policy 2.11: The Municipality should actively encourage development that can, or has an opportunity to, create nodes of activity along the Corridor. Development nodes have the potential to further catalyze growth along the Corridor.



Encourage private and public investment to create great public streets.



Pursue the development of Activity Nodes.



Pursue the development of Activity Nodes.

2 Vision/Overarching Goals



Connect Spenard to other parts of the city including Downtown, Midtown, the airport and the Coastal Trail.

Goal 7: Connect Spenard to Greater Anchorage

Spenard is not an island within Anchorage. It must be well connected to its counterpart districts around the City and particularly to those located directly adjacent to Spenard, including Downtown, Midtown, Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport and the Coastal Trail.

Policy 2.12: Efficient multi-modal transportation systems in the Spenard Corridor (bicycle, pedestrian, transit, freight and motor vehicles) should enhance Anchorage's regional circulation network.

Goal 8: Create a Safe Pedestrian and Bike Network

Biking and walking in Spenard are more common than in many other areas of Anchorage. However, bicycle and pedestrian trips in Spenard are not fully supported by safe and adequate facilities. The bicycle and pedestrian facilities that do exist often fall short of modern accessibility standards and need maintenance or improvement. They also are not well connected to one another and are not linked to neighboring districts.

Policy 2.13: Providing a safe, clear and interconnected pedestrian and bicycle circulation system that is integrated with public transit should be a high priority for all investment in the area.

Policy 2.14: Wherever possible, a separated sidewalk should be provided with a landscaping buffer.

Policy 2.15: Pedestrian and bicyclist safety should also be supported with adequate lighting, and uses that contribute to “eyes on the street” and that follow other principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Goal 9: Integrate Fish Creek (Ch’atanaltsegh Liq’aka Betnu) as a Centerpiece for Spenard

Fish Creek offers an opportunity to enhance regional connectivity throughout Spenard and greater Anchorage. An integrated regional trail system along the creek could greatly improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility throughout the corridor.

Policy 2.16: The parks and green areas along Fish Creek should be enhanced and activated with pedestrian facilities whenever possible; new open spaces should be created when opportunities arise.

Policy 2.17: While there are significant constraints to region-wide improvement and daylighting of Fish Creek, it should be vigorously pursued, consistent with the 2040 LUP and Assembly Resolution 2018-277. Daylighting Fish Creek would enhance resiliency for Spenard by helping to mitigate flood issues. Other ecological benefits include enhancing wildlife habitat.

Goal 10: Accommodate Safe and Balanced Roadway Access

While automobile and freight trips are expected to continue to account for the majority of trips that occur, pedestrian, bicycle and transit safety improvements should be the primary focus for public and private investments.

Policy 2.18: While regional auto travel must be accommodated, the circulation system should be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles.

Policy 2.19: Vehicular infrastructure should be designed to slow traffic speeds, and accommodate transportation network company (TNC) pickup and freight delivery where appropriate.



Create a safe pedestrian and bike network.

2 Vision/Overarching Goals



Property owners, business operators and the City should seek to create shared “pools” of parking to meet demand, but that minimize the overall number of parking spaces that are needed.



Snow storage and snow removal should be considered when planning and designing public and private spaces.

Goal 11: Accommodate and Manage Parking

Parking is needed for many of Spenard’s businesses, organizations and community destinations to operate successfully, and it is expected that this will continue to be the case. On-site parking associated with specific activities and on-street public parking will continue to be important. However, better management and strategic supply may reduce the total spaces needed.

Policy 2.20: Property owners, business operators and the City should seek to create shared “pools” of parking to meet demand.

Policy 2.21: To further redevelopment and investment goals, parking management solutions should be considered to create efficiencies for property owners, business owners, residents and visitors.

Goal 12: Design for Anchorage

A public realm that invites use year-round and that responds to environmental conditions is important to the vitality of Spenard.

Policy 2.22: Private development and public improvements should be tailored to respond to Anchorage’s climate and sun exposure patterns.

Policy 2.23: Public spaces and facilities, as well as private development and circulation systems should function well during periods of the year when sunlight is scarce and snow is present.

Policy 2.24: Snow storage and snow removal should be considered for all Plan Area investments.



Private development and the circulation system should accommodate periods of time when heavy snow is a reality.

Goal 13: Prioritize Sustainability and Resilience

Sustainability and resilience are critical to the success of Spenard. Stormwater runoff, green infrastructure, energy efficiency and alternative transportation modes are all relevant to design and development in the area. This will assure that Spenard will be well positioned to adapt to future changes, both environmental and economic.

Policy 2.25: All projects should consider opportunities to reduce energy consumption, conserve resources and minimize negative environmental impacts.

Policy 2.26: Promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings to help restore and revitalize historic resources, and further contribute to Spenard as an iconic place.

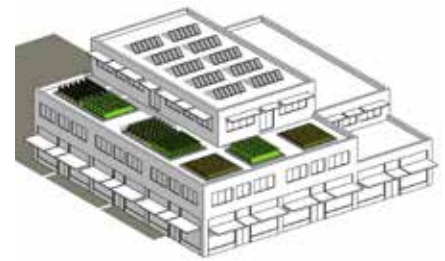
Goal 14: Create a Climate for Investment

The success of the Plan and the realization of its goals will depend on developers, businesses and others looking to invest in Anchorage. While the community treasures Spenard, parts of the Plan Area are vacant and aging, and in some cases, properties are deteriorated. Both private and public reinvestment is required to create a true transit-supportive, mixed-use corridor. It is important to create a vibrant mix of land uses along Spenard Road, which are supported by buildings designed to contribute positively to the public realm.

Since Spenard is a fully developed area, real estate investments will face unique challenges from those encountered in a greenfield context where projects are built on undeveloped land. Challenges include fragmented land ownership, small parcel sizes that necessitate land assembly and low capacity roadways that are inadequate for serving higher-density development. As such, the Plan's policies should be applied flexibly, but with a firm commitment to the overarching goals.

Policy 2.27: Public investment should be used strategically to catalyze private investments that meet the plan's goals. When providing public financial assistance to development, prioritize those that positively impact areas beyond their property lines and/or constitute joint ventures by multiple property owners.

Policy 2.28: Partnerships between the private sector and the Municipality should be explored to ensure that investments are in sync with one another and will further the community goals set forth in the Plan. Public incentives may be utilized to guide private development and encourage projects to contribute to revitalization in the Corridor.



All projects should consider opportunities to reduce energy consumption, conserve resources and minimize negative environmental impacts.

2 Vision/Overarching Goals

Policy 2.29: Partnerships among property owners in Spenard also should be explored to share resources and pool common facilities. For example, adjoining properties may share parking and service areas. This may lead to more efficient site layouts.

Goal 15: Focus on Strategic Economic Development Efforts

Economic development is a key factor in promoting the Spenard Corridor as a vital destination and community-serving resource.

Policy 2.30: A focus is on economic development to bring dollars, businesses and buildings consistent with the community vision to Spenard. Develop strategies to capture unmet demand and market to visitors seeking an alternative experience in Anchorage.

Policy 2.31: Public infrastructure improvements that encourage private sector investment should be prioritized.



Creating public space between buildings can generate economic growth by encouraging visitors to stay.



Public infrastructure improvements that encourage private sector investment should be prioritized.