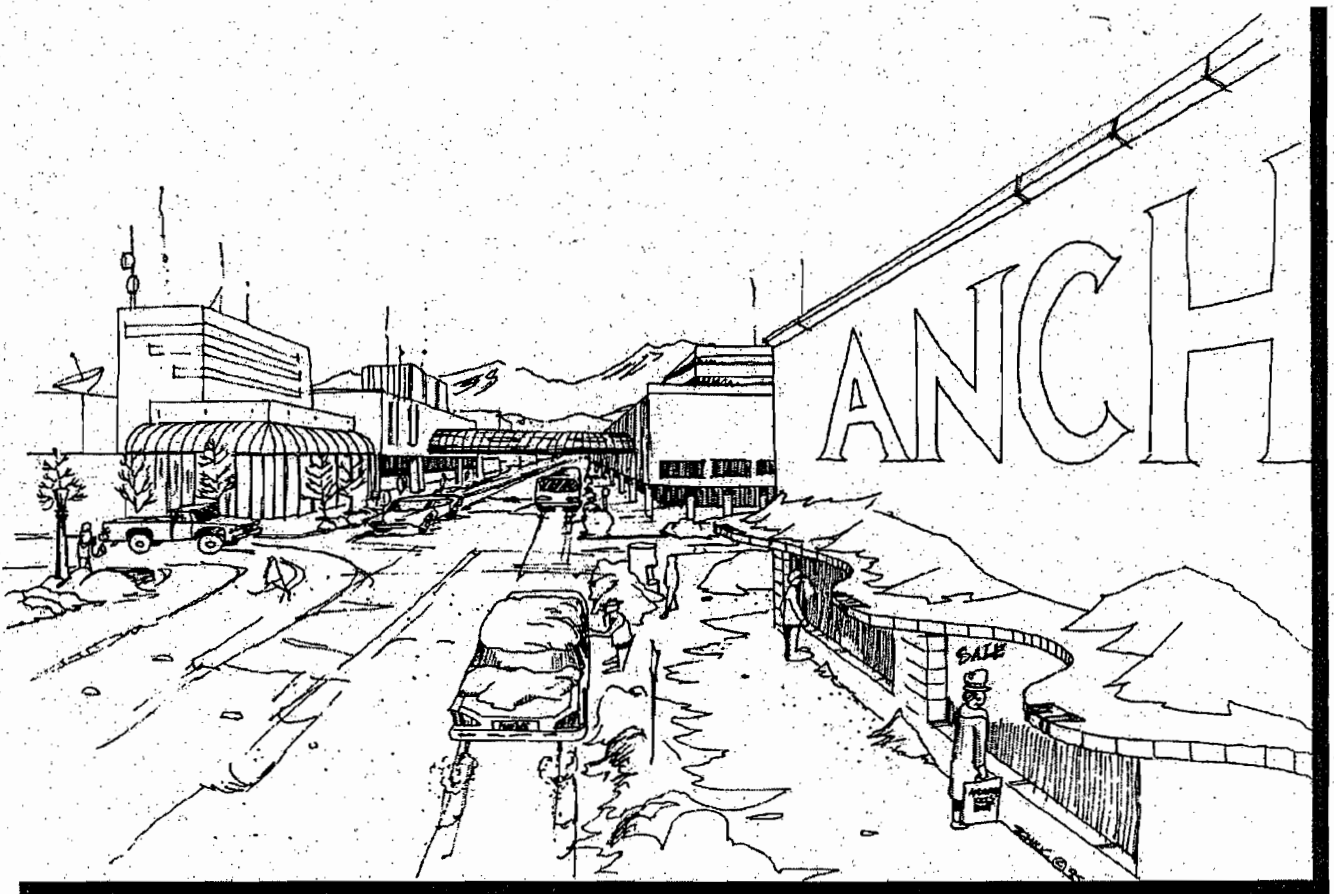


***Creating a Winter City Vision
From the Grass-roots of Our Community***

Winter City District Charrette
Urban Core Coalition
October 21 & 22, 1995.



November 1995

The Neighborhoods

These four communities are the logical neighborhoods in terms of demographics and physical characteristics that would be ideal for implementing winter design concepts. The information shown in the appendix of recent population statistic supports that the neighborhoods of Government Hill, South Addition, Downtown and Fairview all have some very important similarities compared other neighborhoods and the Anchorage Bowl as a whole. These neighborhoods have the following characteristics:

1. The most concentration of multi-family housing units
2. A large concentration of one person households
3. The largest percentage of persons in group quarters
4. The largest percentage of households without vehicles
5. The largest percentage of homes built before 1970
6. The least percentage of home owners. (Except for South Addition)
7. The largest percentage of seniors
8. A culturally diverse population

Action Items

The following is a summary of the action items, discussed during the Charrette, that suggests some ideas to help understand exactly what is needed to create a Winter City District. Many of these items fall into several of the categories listed below. Each action item is followed by a category code to identify how it affects and what it takes to implement this idea. Creating a Winter City District requires all levels of the community to work together and think about what it takes to improve and enhance the quality of life throughout the year.

1. Recreation - R
2. Transportation - T
3. Design/ Code change - D
4. Pedestrian - P
5. Planning/Zoning - Z
6. Housing - H
7. Public Education - E
8. Incentive - I
9. Short term/Priority issue - S
10. Future Development - F
11. Community Aesthetics - C
12. Historic Recognition - HR



Fig. 2 Many components of a Winter City District

Pedestrian Protection

A basic winter city concept is pedestrian accessibility during the winter months. Every effort should be made to make it easier for pedestrians to move about in this area. Because this area has an established infrastructure of a dense grid work of lots, streets and alleys, it minimizes the distance for residents of these neighborhoods to walk to work, go to the store or access the resources of the central business district. However, it is not easy to get around if the sidewalks are not cleared of snow or dangerously covered with ice. There are many ways to address the protection of pedestrians.

1. Provide covered sidewalks and pedestrian routes along buildings and public stairways. This would protect and provide shelter from the rain and snow and keep the walkways safe from build-up of snow and ice. D,Z,T,I
2. Require commercial buildings to have overhangs, or create colonnades over public sidewalks as protection. This would encourage street level traffic and pedestrian level commercial stores instead of drawing pedestrians away from the streets. D,Z,I,F
3. Provide heated sidewalks where the benefits are greatest. This can be accomplished from waste heat from waste water systems or recycled heat from waste combustion. D,Z,I,F
4. Design wider sidewalks or designate a vehicular free zone. D,Z,I,F
5. Require a degree of slip-resistant texture on the sidewalks - such as ADA requirements on ramps. D,Z,I,F
6. Create curbcuts that are consistent in design and enforce ADA requirements. Examine Swedish approach to ramping roadway up at intersections rather than sidewalks down. More drainage openings in the middle of the blocks. D,Z,T
7. Enforce the current city ordinance of clearing sidewalks every time it snows. Pull together different resources such as the Youth Corp, etc. to help out. Z,S,T



Fig. 3 Colonades provide shelter.

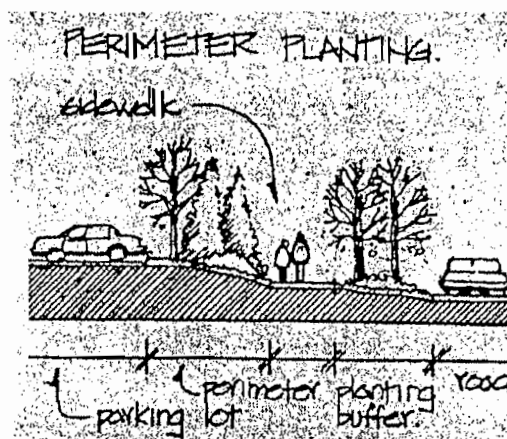


Fig. 4 Buffer strips protect pedestrians.

8. Modify existing streets to have a buffer strip with trees and landscaping between the sidewalk and travel lane. D,Z,F,I
9. Encourage the use of current technology to deal with snow removal. An example is the Japanese system snow melting in the storm sewers below the sidewalks and grates to dump the snow into. F,D,Z,I
10. Create more pedestrian scale lighting to illuminate major paths from neighborhoods to the downtown area making it safer to walk about at night. The lighting should not contribute to light pollution and glare but create a festive atmosphere. D,Z,F

Recreation

Celebrating the winter weather with festival and events is one of the best ways to encourage people to get out and appreciate the environment in which they live in. Anchorage does have a few unique events to celebrate wintertime but there are many more ways to make the winters more eventful.

1. Encourage a design so that skating on the Ship Creek is possible and convenient. Z, S
2. Create venues of winter recreation, such as public ice-skating on the park strip or a mini skating area at the 4th & E park or Town Square. Create public snow sculptures, snow mazes, and snow and ice slides. S
3. Create more festivity throughout the season with winter landscaping, color and texture. Encourage residents to create winter gardens or art with examples of landscaping, color and texture and recognize for their efforts through television or newspaper spots. E,D,C,Z
4. Encourage sponsorship of a light display garden with local artists and volunteer efforts. E,C



Fig. 5 Public skating in Ottawa Canada.

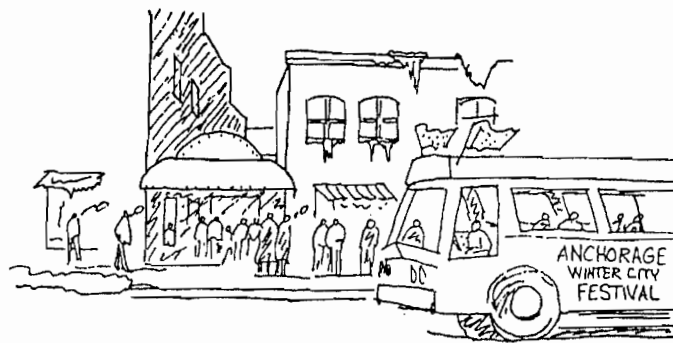


Fig. 6 Encourage district or festival shuttles

5. With new and existing winter festivals:

- Arrange public shared rides and shuttles or encourage walking to events by having events closer together or exhibits in between.
- Coordinate and work with the neighborhoods in which the festivals are to be held so that they can contribute and take part in the organization of some events or services. T,P

Transportation

The main means of movement within a Winter City District is pedestrians. Every effort should be taken to encourage and make it easier for people to walk about the district. Vehicles, whether public or private, could be the means to arrive, but once inside the District, all areas should be accessible enough to walk or use mass transit. Making the public transportation system more usable and convenient within the Winter City District through neighborhood shuttles and other "para-transit" approaches can improve the movement of people and goods while enhancing public safety.

1. Encourage major business offices to provide a sheltered bus stop adjacent to their office. I, D
2. Encourage concessionaires at major bus stops to serve as a convenience store so one could pick up common items on the way home while riding the bus instead of driving or just get something warm to drink while waiting for the bus. I, D
3. Design better protective and vandal proof bus stops. - Public design competition. D
4. Strive for cleaner air in the winter so it is not so unhealthy to be outside.
5. Use ISTEA funds for projects such as trail connections, redirect AMATS priorities to encourage and improve pedestrian traffic instead of more vehicular traffic. S
6. Address and review the National Highway System plans to see if they contribute to the goals of this Winter City District. S
7. Address public safety by creating and redesigning the neighborhoods for "defensible space" and turn the streets back over to the families and children. This can be done by controlling traffic and lighting. S, D, Z
8. Create a Winter City District shuttle bus and route to create a more used and effective bus route that will transport those within the district.
9. Create a more efficient and convenient public transit system from South Anchorage and the Valley - i.e. light rail service.

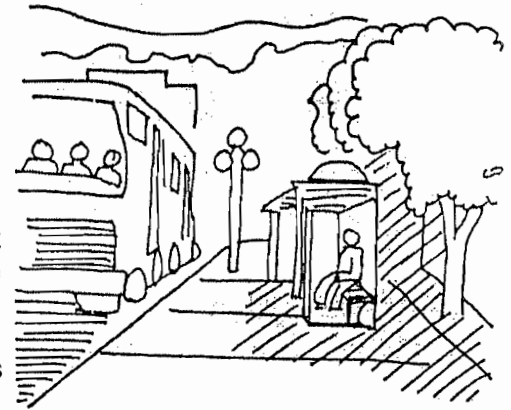


Fig. 7 More sheltered bus stops encourage ridership.

Housing

Housing in a Winter City District is moderate to high density and mixed developments are encouraged in commercial area. The types of units range from owner occupied single family houses to multi-unit apartments, to institutional homes. The key to the diversity is *balance*. Too much of one type of housing can be a problem. There are many suggestions to maintain a balance and keep the problems that are associated with condensed housing to a minimum.



Fig. 8 Encourage mixed use buildings.

1. Bring more residential units into downtown through mixed-use buildings. With more people living within walking distance of their downtown work-place, the downtown area will be more utilized throughout the year and not just the summertime. This will also create more business for the commercial shops and restaurants in the area and create longer hours of activity in the winter. Mixed use buildings are a more efficient use of the buildings and the downtown area. D, Z, F

2. Support neighborhood housing proposal to bring moderate and middle income people into low income neighborhoods as owner occupants. F,I,E
3. Create incentives for more owner occupied housing to foster a sense of neighborhood and reduce a large transient population. Also owner occupied housing creates an ownership of the area which in turn will encourage citizen involvement with the maintenance and appearance of the neighborhood and their own units. F,C,I,E
4. Enact affordable financing programs through AHFC.
5. Create "defensible space" housing and encourage better designed multi-unit housing - use other successful housing projects that have been built in other part of the country as examples. Z,D,F
6. Limit lot coverage of the residential buildings in R3 AND R4 zones. There is a lack of space for kids to play, snow storage and more landscaping is needed. Z,F,D
7. Provide gap financing for construction of housing. Include the refurbishing and improving of multi-family housing. F
8. Create incentives for the up-keep of rental properties either with renter incentives or owner incentives. I
9. Limit amount of institutional housing within the area to achieve a balance throughout Anchorage. Encourage more creative economic development in older vacant buildings of this area - example, what is to become of the old Native Medical Center? F,I
10. Support a design competition to create new models for quality multi-unit housing. Encourage development of multi-unit homes for the extended family home owner. Z,D,F,I
11. Create covenants for neighborhoods through HUD or private sector to encourage maintenance and colorful uplifting appearances. IE - good designs. Z,I,D,F

Zoning:

Through the enforcement of concepts that support winter planning, future development will be assured to enhance the urban environment and create this special area of Anchorage. It will also create a thriving central business district that will improve the standard of living for residents and make Anchorage more attractive to winter tourists.

1. Zone smaller scaled commercial lots so that neighborhoods are within walking distances to reach a bank or grocery store. I,F,D,P
2. Require a minimum of solar access at winter solstice to assure that office places and residents are not deprived of sunlight during the shortest day of the year. D,I,F
3. Provide incentives for investments in winter city designs. Easier credit for lower interest loans in this area. I,S,D,F

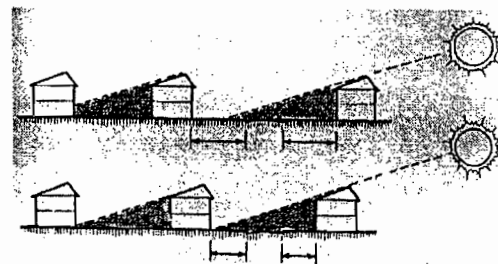


Fig. 9 Solar access is important in the winter.

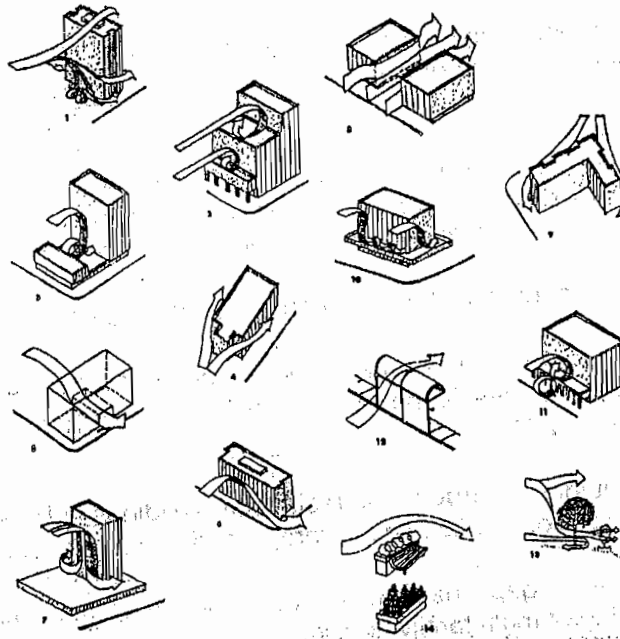


Fig. 10 Building design affect wind conditions

4. Require new development to show that they do not create wind tunnels. D,I,Z

5. Let developers and private entrepreneurs know of the incentives that are available that are conducive to Winter City District goals. E

6. Require a percentage of lot space for multi-family housing to be planned for snow storage in the winter. Convert this area to a landscaped open area surrounded by bushes in the summer. D

7. Create outdoor micro-climate or garden areas in southern exposure areas that have south facing seating. E

8. Support a planning director with an interest in implementing these ideas and work for a clear goal of enhancing the central business district for winter living. S

9. Have coordination with the city and building owners to make it legal to put the snow in the streets only on the days it will be plowed, instead of making sidewalk snow berms that constrict the walkways and create dangerous icy spots. T

10. Place value on natural vegetation and landscaping in new developments. Indigenous mature trees and plants survive better than transplanted ones. F,C

11. Create inclusionary ordinances to overlay Title 21 and evaluate it to enforce northern design features on new and renovation type projects. This would direct the vision for a long term commitment - a "Winter City District Design Standard." D,I

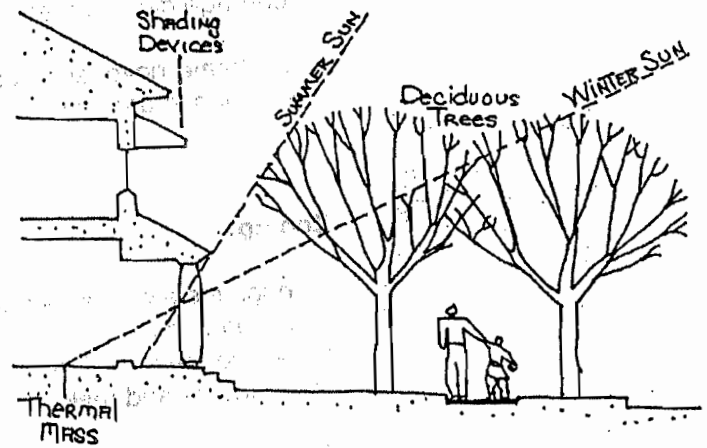


Fig. 11 Landscaping can create favorable conditions.

12. Request the Mayor to direct the Department of Community Development to develop the necessary ordinance changes needed to implement the goals of the Winter City District. S

Historic Recognition:

Because this area of the city is the original townsite of Anchorage it is rich with historical buildings and areas significant in the city's history. It is important to recognize these projects and maintain them for future citizens of Anchorage as well as for visitors.

1. Develop the importance of the history of these neighborhoods by creating historical areas and renovating buildings and sites with historical value. Z, F
2. Have a map tour tell the historic significance of the historic areas or buildings. E
3. Encourage the Anchorage Historical Society to redirect some of their efforts into working with the Winter Cities District's historic significance.

Some Additional Actions

Professor Norman Pressman, author of *Nothern Cityscape, Linking Design to Climate*, states that the "highest priority" of developing a Winter City is to:

1. Think Winter
2. Do more with what we have
3. Attitudes and lifestyles
4. Improve the Urban Infrastructure
5. Exterior and Public space should be Winter Friendly
6. Architecture and Design
7. Visual Environment
8. Inject the City with a lively center
9. Stimulate neighborhood action/civic activity
10. More research is imperative.

The neighborhoods should review the ideas and actions developed during this grass-roots design endeavor. A resolution from each community council, and other interested organization, supporting the efforts to date would be the next logical step forward. A presentation to the city administration would then be made proposing that the municipality develop the necessary ordinances and design standards to implement the Winter City District.

Conclusion

"It is not so important that all small nations make immediate and astonishing contributions to the great culture.. it is, on the contrary, of major importance that they develop independently and logically from their own roots, working with subjects which especially suit them - in order little by little, and in an original way, to grow part of the larger organism, and address its variety from an original and vital perspective."

Richard Bergh 1902

Anchorage is at a point in its growth where important decisions are needed to direct it onto a northern path. Implementing a Winter City District with northern design concepts is a step in the right direction. A more livable winter city is full of life throughout the year that will enlighten the spirit of the city as a whole. This energy attracts productive individuals who come together and generate economic vitality. They share ideas, concepts, business contacts and innovative ways of doing things and contribute in the making of a unique community. It will take everyone to share in the responsibility of making a more economically and socially competitive service-orientated environment for Anchorage. Planners, designers and policy makers must be encouraged to promote the application of

climate and land-use sensitive urban development in making our city an enlightened and more winter livable city.

Developers should be educated on the advantages of climate adapted projects and encouraged, by incentives, to create developments that contribute to a northern way of living rather than discourage. This is especially needed in housing and the concept of mixed-use buildings.

Our local government should embrace climate-sensitive development as part of their policies through the adoption of new design guidelines, revision of master plans and zoning by-laws, and inclusion of climate-oriented performance standards.

Approvals for building and site planning projects should be subjected to review of how well designs are adapted to local winter conditions.

Finally, there is a need to encourage and promote year-round outdoor activity of both an active and passive nature to offset the lure of prolonged indoor confinement.

The development of a Winter City District in old Anchorage is the necessary step in bringing about a uniquely Alaskan place for the world to experience. The District would provide a visitor oriented urban environment pleasant enough for tourists to get around by foot even in the middle of winter.

Anchorage is located on the same latitude as Oslo, Norway and our city is the only major sub-arctic metropolitan area in the United States of America. Our neighborhoods feel that developing an Alaskan sense of winter city living represents a logical next step in the evolution of a regional economy heavily influenced by the tourism industry. Our urban core needs to engage in user friendly development strategies in order to attract residential development, increase commercial development, attract local clients and shoppers as well as tourists.

We must co-exist with our winter environment. This means a concerted effort to establish and encourage social events, businesses and an urban vitality which celebrates the uniqueness of winter living. It is suggested that one specific change in our city's urban fabric could move the community closer to our goal of a quality winter living environment. This change would be the creation of a Winter City District within the heart of Anchorage.

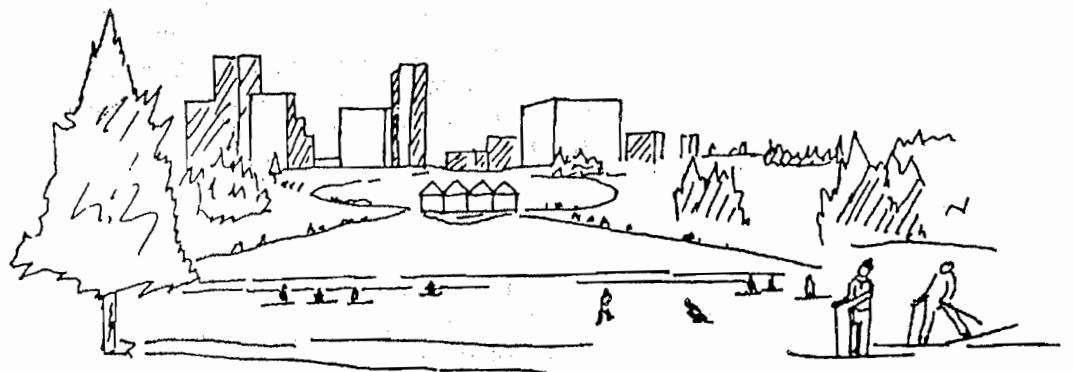
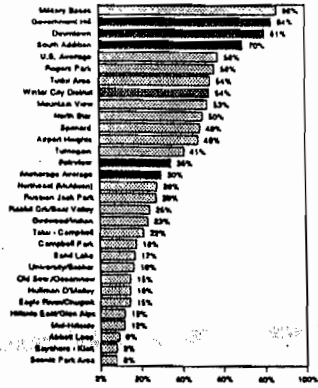


Fig. 12 Create a trail loop around the Winter City District and connect it to the city wide trail system.

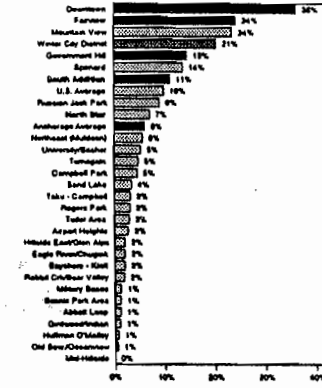
Appendix

% Housing Built Before 1970
Anchorage Community Councils - 1990



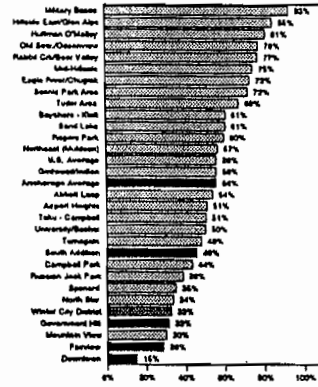
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Note: Community councils in proposed Winter City District are shown in red.

% Households With No Vehicle
Anchorage Community Councils - 1990



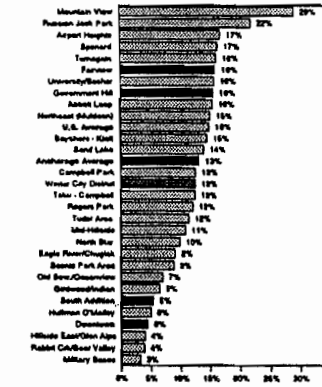
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Note: Community councils in proposed Winter City District are shown in red.

% Married Couples
Anchorage Community Councils - 1990



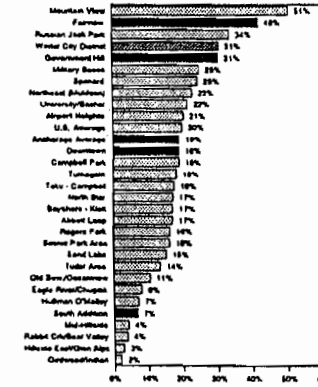
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Note: Community councils in proposed Winter City District are shown in red.

% Single Parents
Anchorage Community Councils - 1990



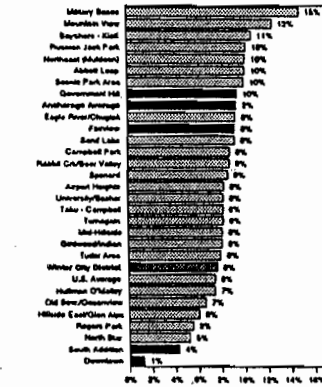
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Note: Community councils in proposed Winter City District are shown in red.

% Minorities
Anchorage Community Councils - 1990



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Note: Community councils in proposed Winter City District are shown in red.

% Pre-Schoolers (Under 5 Yrs.)
Anchorage Community Councils - 1990



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Note: Community councils in proposed Winter City District are shown in red.

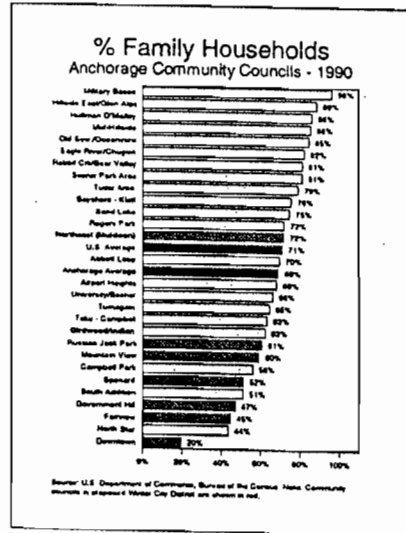
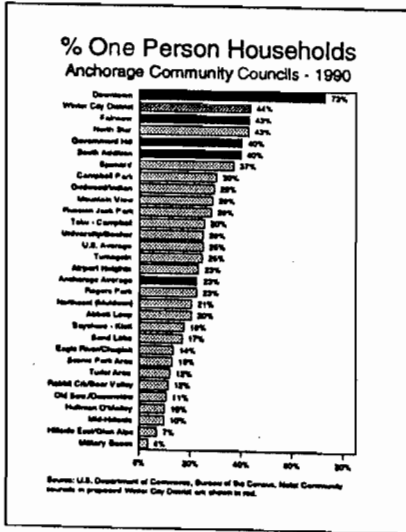
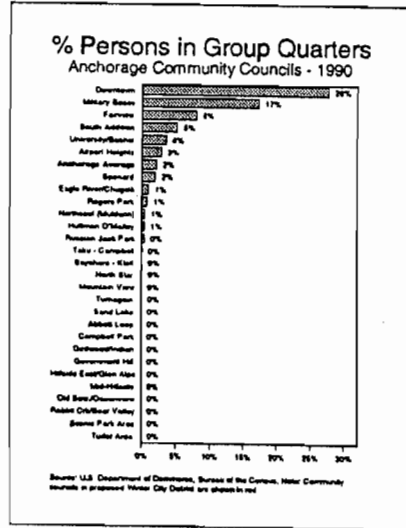
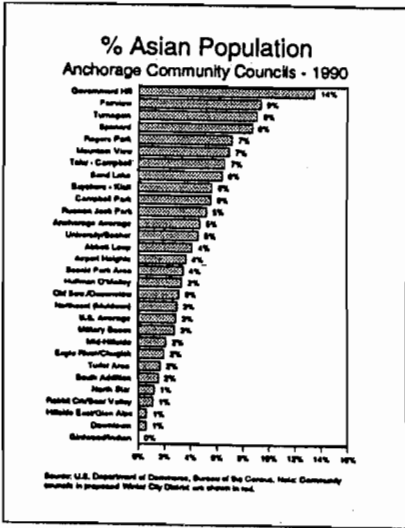
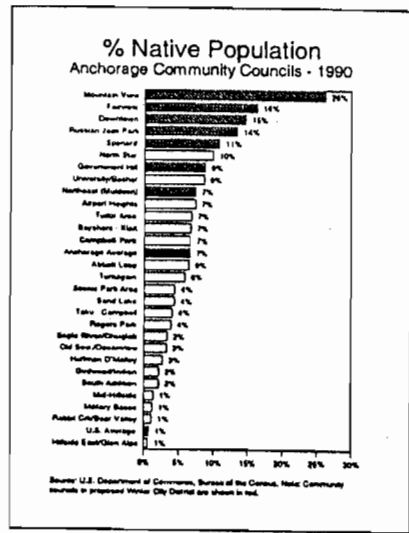
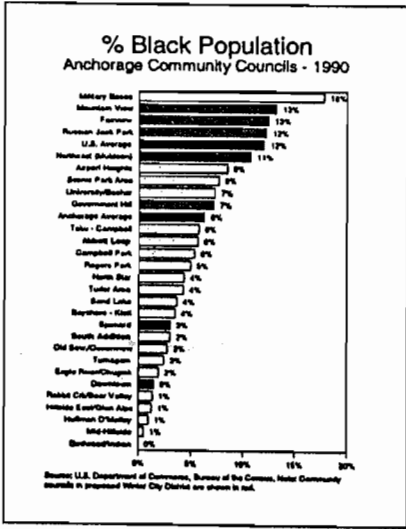


Figure References

Cover	Anchorage Winter Cities Association
Figure 2	Northern Design Round Table Workshop, April 1995
Figures 3,4,5	Pressman, N. <i>Nothern Cityscape: Linking Design to Climate</i> , Yellowknife, NT Canada: Winter Cities Association, 1995
Figure 6,7	Anchorage Winter Cities Association
Figure 8	Northern Design Round Table Workshop, April 1995
Figure 9,10	Pressman, N. <i>Nothern Cityscape: Linking Design to Climate</i> , Yellowknife, NT Canada: Winter Cities Association, 1995
Figure 11,12	Anchorage Winter Cities Association

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- South Central Chapter of AIA
- Fairview Business and Neighborhood Improvement Association
- Mitzi Barker
- The Urban Core Coalition:
 - Fairview Community Council
 - Government Hill Community Council
 - South Addition Community Council
 - Downtown Community Council

"Winter is the true season of the North. Spring is only a promise that something great is about to happen; Summer is only an illusion of what people, during some hot days or weeks, at the most, believe to be true; Autumn means death, it is the dark grave of the promises of the Spring and of the illusions of the Summer. But Winter, is something that really exists. It always comes back."

1962 Toivo Pekkanen

Anchorage has developed with distinct physical characteristics such as the grid system with alleys in the older parts of town. This traditional form of urban development lends itself to pedestrian movement and winter city concepts. Since the basic winter city infrastructure is in place, then the possibility exists that a Winter City District could be developed. Our neighborhoods recognize that our city has a special area conducive to winter living and wish to make strategic changes in the design, promotion and development of this area to enhance our comparative advantages.

The new Winter City District would consist of an overlay zone to create a specifically delineated area within which regulations and requirements will supplement existing zoning.

The Urban Core Coalition proposes to make "old Anchorage", the neighborhoods of Government Hill, South Addition, Downtown and Fairview, a Winter City district in which the emphasis will be to create a unique area by implementing winter design concepts and planning.

Mission Statement

Anchorage is a winter city in terms of its seasonal climate, environment and variable daylight hours throughout the year. A winter city presents challenges for the delivery of services such as snow removal for transportation and pedestrian access, lighting, and outdoor recreation. Winter cities also present great opportunities for tourism and economic development that can build on unique events such as Fur Rendezvous and enhance public facilities like the Performing Arts Center. The proposed area of the Winter City District has design characteristics such as compact lots, a grid street system, sidewalks and alleys, public facilities, historic structures, shopping areas, population volume and cultural mixes which constitute a unique character of human scale in our city.

Purpose

The purpose of the Winter City District is to:

1. Encourage the celebration of winter in Anchorage for residents as well as visitors.
2. Develop a partnership between the citizens, businesses and government.
3. Utilize public services and resources more efficiently.

4. Improve the quality of life, especially during the six months of winter.
5. Recognize and create a unique northern sense of place and community.

The Boundaries

The original Anchorage townsite which includes the communities of Government Hill, South Addition, Downtown and Fairview are proposed to be the areas of the Winter City District. This area is bounded by Chester Creek to the south, Merrill Field and industrial areas to the east, Elmendorf AFB to the north and the inlet to the west.

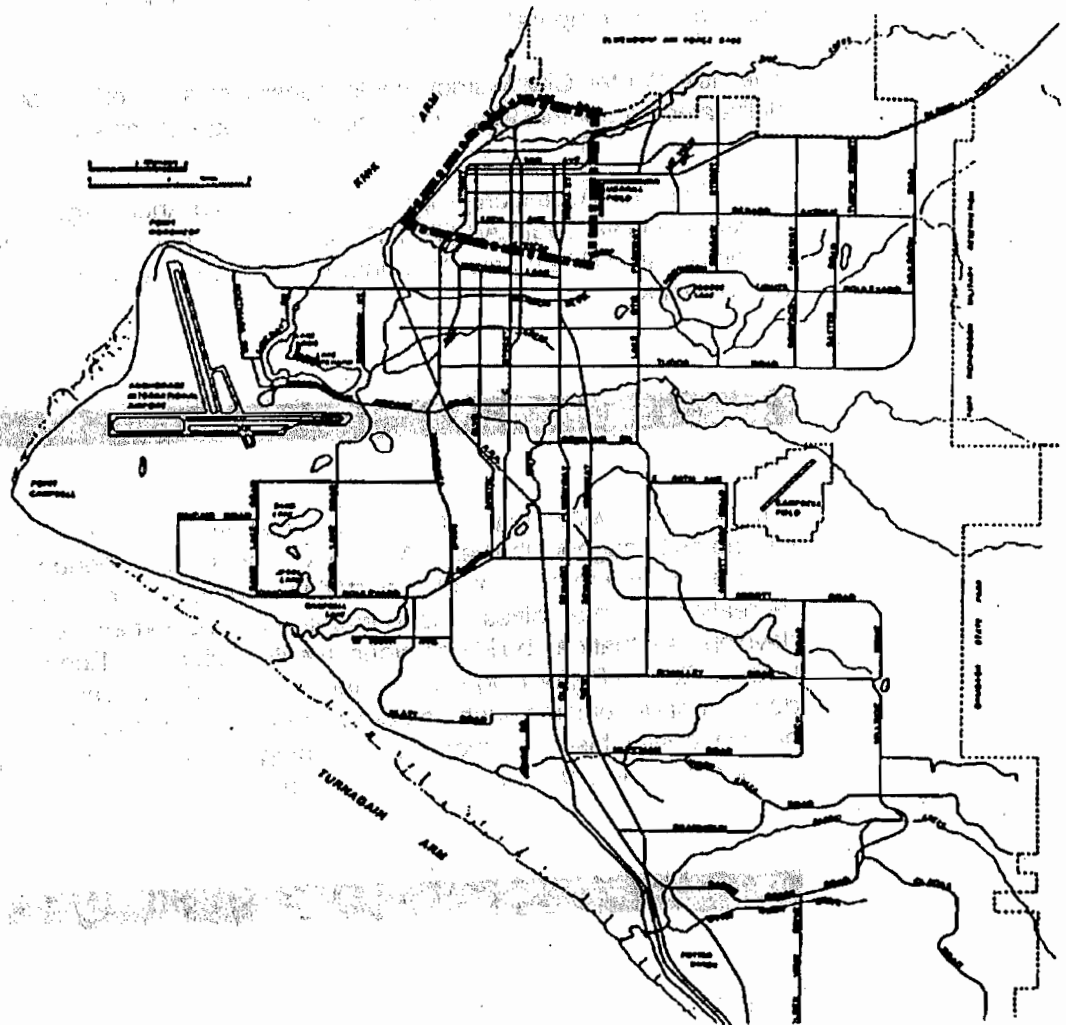


Fig. 1 Winter City District Boundaries