



ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA

September 09, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

Assembly Committee of the Whole Worksession - No Public Testimony will be taken.

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/95424544691> or 1-253-215-8782 Webinar ID: 954 2454 4691

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. *Gunalchéesh!*

C. ROLL CALL

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- [1.](#) September 18, 2023 Assembly COW DRAFT Minutes
- [2.](#) December 18, 2023 Assembly COW DRAFT Minutes

F. AGENDA TOPICS

3. Flood Mitigation Update

(This will be a red folder item at the meeting since the agency meeting will be held Friday, Sept. 6)

4. Adding an Emergency Management position to the budget

5. Blueprint Downtown

Staff memo re: AME18-07 A Text Amendment to adopt the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan as part of the CBJ Comprehensive Plan

Attachment A: Blueprint Downtown Draft Plan - *Hardcopies already provided to Assemblymembers* [\(link only\)](#)

Attachment B: Plan Appendices [\(link only\)](#)

Attachment C: Answer to Planning Commissioner questions

Attachment D: Proposed Revisions

Attachment E: Agency Comments to Lands, Housing & Economic Development Committee (LHEDC)

Attachment F: PowerPoint Slides to LHEDC

G. STAFF REPORTS

H. NEXT MEETING DATE - November 4, 2024, 6:00p.m.

I. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

6. RED FOLDER - Memo re Flood Mitigation Meeting

J. ADJOURNMENT

ADA accommodations available upon request: Please contact the Clerk's office 36 hours prior to any meeting so arrangements can be made for closed captioning or sign language interpreter services depending on the meeting format. The Clerk's office telephone number is 586-5278, TDD 586-5351, e-mail: city.clerk@juneau.gov.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

DRAFT MINUTES

September 18, 2023 at 6:30 PM



Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

A. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Gladziszewski called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Assembly Chambers.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mr. Bryson provided the following land acknowledgement: We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land, and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!

C. ROLL CALL

Assemblymembers present: Mayor Beth Weldon, Deputy Mayor Maria Gladziszewski, Greg Smith, Michelle Hale, 'Wáahlaal Gídaag, Christine Woll, Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Loren Jones, Wade Bryson

Assemblymembers absent: None

Staff Present: City Manager Rorie Watt, Acting City Attorney Sherri Layne, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Deputy Clerk Diane Cathcart, Tourism Manager Alix Pierce, Port Director Carl Uchtyl, Harbormaster Matt Creswell, JPD Acting Chief Krag Campbell, CDD Planner Teri Camery

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

F. AGENDA TOPICS

1. Whale Watching Operator Committee Update

Ms. Pierce introduced the speakers at tonight's meeting Bob Janes, owner of Gatineau Guiding, and Dr. Suzie Teerlink of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Alaska Region Protected Resources Division. Mr. Janes presented on the work of the Whale Watching Focus Group, which was formed to address complaints regarding whale watching management. Dr. Teerlink talked about NOAA's regulatory capacity, what it can do, and what Whale SENSE is.

Bob Janes reported that the focus group met for 8 weeks and were set out to develop a revised and updated Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) recommendations. He advised that the recommendations have not gone to TBMP yet, so they are not "solid in stone" yet. He began the presentation titled, "Juneau Commercial Whale Watching Fleet, TBMP Guidelines and Recommendations to Date". He and Kirby Day started developing the guidelines 27 years ago. Regarding impacts to coastal zones, he said they strive to minimize impacts of wakes and plan to do a wake study next summer. He pointed to a map of Auke Bay on slide 3 and explained that operators have agreed to voluntarily navigate along the centerline of the bay, but not all have complied with staying in the centerline. He outlined that operators follow all NOAA regulations regarding marine mammal viewing, do not observe the whales for over 30 minutes, and minimize engine idling wherever possible. He moved to slide 6 and said that a current issue is public perception of commercial

fleet whale watching behavior. He pointed to the photo and said, from the shore, the group of boats looked disorganized. He moved to slide 7 to show a satellite image view of the same photo and highlighted that there are two boats fully powering up, something that is against Whale SENSE guidelines. He suggested that the boats in question are not whale watching boats since he does not see his fleet behaving this way. On June 26 there was an All Operators meeting where 18 operators and captains decided to form a group and develop recommendations for future whale watching guidelines. The group then proceeded to meet on July 17, July 27, August 10, August 17, and August 31. Of the proposed TBMP Guidelines recommendations, one that operators agreed to is to eliminate “whale sightings guaranteed” marketing from April 1 to May 15, as well as from September 15 to October 31. Another recommendation is that operators of inspected vessels agree to navigate Coghlin Cut at 5-7 knots when other vessels or people are present, 10-knot maximum speed when no vessels or people are present or go around Coghlin Island at full speed.

Ms. Hale asked what the importance is of “inspected vessels.” Mr. Janes answered that inspected vessels are larger than 6 passengers and are inspected annually.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs inquired if Mr. Janes is using the term “inspected vessels” interchangeably with members of the commercial whale watching fleet, or if it pertains to a subset of the fleet. Mr. Janes answered that it pertains to a subset, because there are operators with small boats that hold 6 people maximum and do not have to be inspected.

‘Wáahlaal Gídaag asked if the 5-7 knots guideline could be reduced in instances where there are traditional Tlingit canoes in the water, as there was an instance where a whale watching vessel swamped a canoe in its wake. Mr. Janes said this was a tough subject for the group because some boats create wakes at 5 knots. There was some talk of not even using the Coghlin Cut and just having boats go around the island, but the group ultimately came to the consensus that they would try the guideline this year; if it doesn’t work and there are still issues with canoes and kayaks, then they will switch to vessels only going around the island. Going around Coghlin island adds about a gallon of fuel to a trip. He said that cost is not the consideration, time is. The group is considering a wake study, which would be completed during the 2024 season.

Mr. Janes pointed to a photo of Auke Bay on slide 13. He explained that one of the proposed guidelines asks that operators of inspected vessels agree to come off step at the line between the two Derby orange markers in Auke Bay and to reduce speed to 5 knots prior to reaching the white buoy. Regarding proposed open water guidelines, operators agreed to 100-200 yards of distance when there are 8 vessels, and 200+ yards when there are 8 more vessels. Vessels would move in and out of the inner circle in 15-minute cycles with a total of 30 minutes for any one vessel.

Ms. Woll asked what the difference is between the proposed open water guideline and current practice. Mr. Janes answered that it’s a reduction in the number of vessels that are within the 100–200 yard limit, so there wont be vessels that try to squeeze in to the 100 yard limit as they would need to wait their turn to go in. Also, this makes it so boats can better maneuver when a whale comes close to them.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked if there is currently a limit on the number of boats that can be around a whale. Mr. Janes responded that there isn’t a boat limit, but there is a 30-minute time limit.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked if it is normal to have more than 8 boats around a whale. Mr. Janes answered yes.

Ms. Hale inquired about the wake study, and if they will be looking at cumulative and cross wakes. Mr. Janes said the study will examine what wake size each boat puts out as there are some boats that put out a bigger wake than other boats.

Mr. Janes explained that operators agree that, when a whale is along the shoreline, 4 vessels can keep a distance of 100-200 yards and 12 vessels keep a distance of over 200 yards; Vessels would move in and out of the inner circle in 15-minute cycles with a total of 30 minutes for any one vessel.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked about boat spacing. Mr. Janes said it is typically a line of boats.

Ms. Hale asked that, since there are 72 boats permitted to do this, how many boats are giving tours. Mr. Janes responded that his guess is 16. He invited an operator to answer the question.

Jayleen Goodland, a whale watch operator, relayed that there are 75 boats in the Juneau whale watching fleet and that currently all 75 boats could go out and watch one whale. She said the goal is to minimize that, and that this guideline starts encouraging captains to spread out.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Ms. Goodland if there are ever 20-25 boats around one whale. Ms. Goodland confirmed that there have been. She said that operators have paid captains to go to meetings and discuss how to give more space to whales and how to keep boats moving if there are too many boats.

‘Wáahlaal Gídaag asked if all operators are in agreement with the proposed guidelines. Mr. Janes answered all operators part of Whale SENSE. He explained that the guidelines are currently just recommendations to TBMP, which needs to be approved by the entire TBMP group before they go into action. He advised that they will be presenting the guidelines to as many of the 75 operators that are part of TBMP that are willing to come to a meeting.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked how many operators are part of TBMP. Mr. Janes said all of them.

Mr. Janes explained that operators in the group agree that limited entry is an important next step. He said they don’t know whether it would go through NOAA, Docks & Harbors, or the Assembly. With the number of passengers coming to Juneau, they still believe that limited entry in the whale watching corridor is important to start considering because it can’t be managed any more than they are trying to now.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked where operators launch from. Mr. Janes answered Auke Bay at Statter Harbor; Allen Marine has their own dock. Mr. Watt added that some vessels use Fisherman’s Bend, which is also privately owned.

Mr. Janes commented that managing limited entry through the docks is the most difficult way to go because they have different docks. He moved to slide 16 and relayed their promises: ***With a strong commitment to responsible practices, tour operators will continue to adhere to NOAA regulations; operators will continue to agree to voluntarily follow Whale SENSE and TBMP guidelines; and operators will continue to take every precaution to value and protect the well-being of whales.*** He finished on slide 17 with a slide showing the TBMP whale watching fleet members.

Dr. Suzie Teerlink began the NOAA Whale SENSE presentation titled, ***“Watching Whales in Juneau, AK: Are existing practices sustainable?”*** She shared that she has been studying humpback whale populations throughout Alaska for over 15 years and that the focus of her PhD research was a multidisciplinary approach to evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of whale watching, with the Juneau whale watching industry as a case study. She leads NOAA’s humpback whale programs including the Whale SENSE program. She said she’ll be providing some context on the federal management side of whale watching. She moved to slide 2 of the presentation to explain that Humpback whales in Southeast Alaska primarily breed in Hawaii. NOAA considers this breeding area to be a distinct population segment (DPS). The Hawaii DPS is not listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) because they have been recovered. However, they are still protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), which offers protections to all marine mammals, regardless of their population status. She moved to slide 3 and pointed out that there are more DPSs that feed in Alaska. In Southeast, there is a portion from the Mexico DPS, which ESA listed as threatened. Because there is no way to readily distinguish the DPS’s, they generally assume that both the ESA and MMPA apply to humpback whales in southeast Alaska, as they do in other mixing zones. The MMPA and the ESA both explicitly prohibit “take”, which is to harass, hunt, capture or kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal. Under the MMPA, humpback whales are provided with an additional regulatory rule, the Alaska 100-yard approach regulation, to help people avoid incidental take of humpback whales and to give them a physical buffer from boats. The 100-yard rule is one precaution to avoid take but may not prevent take in all circumstances. She addressed the question, how could take occur: vessel strike is an obvious way, but the

physical presence of boats could disturb whales feeding or migrating or the noise from the boats could impact the whales by causing physical injury or impacting the ability to hear each other or find their prey. She shared general fleet sizes from other popular whale watching destinations in the U.S. Stellwagen Bank, a series of ports and communities, has a total of 14 whale watching boats. Monterey has a fleet of 12 vessels. Maui had 45 last winter. However, these were distributed between two harbors and thus the effort was distributed across more area. Most of the Lahaina fleet was demolished in the recent fires. Friday Harbor, where killer whales are a focus of whale watching, has about 10 whale watching boats. Juneau has 72 whale watching boats and counting.

Ms. Hale asked if the whale watching boats in other communities are regulated. Dr. Teerlink answered that there are no permit systems in place for whale watching in Juneau, statewide, or nationwide. Washington state attempted to pass a permit system, but it failed to get passed. At a city level in Maui, there are limits for the number of whale watching boats, but that is not codified in law.

Mr. Bryson highlighted Dr. Teerlink's comment that Alaska has a smaller whale population, and offered his understanding that the Alexander Archipelago had the largest concentration of humpback whales. Dr. Teerlink said it depends on how one is quantifying abundance. Juneau is a final destination for humpback whales to feed. Juneau sees between 100 to 120 individual animals that might pass through during the season, whereas Maui has closer to 10,000 to 15,000. She said that, once the animals are here, they have a high site fidelity and tend to stay in certain areas longer, and so the seasons worth of vessel presence is concentrated on a fewer number of whales.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijis sought confirmation that Juneau has more boats but less whales, while other whale watching destinations have less boats and more whales. Dr. Teerlink responded yes, there are less whales that are part of the Juneau tour area over the course of a season than any of the other destinations.

Dr. Teerlink returned to the presentation and relayed that Hervey Bay, Australia is the self-proclaimed whale watching capital of the world. They once had 18 whale watching boats, but reduced this down to 12 boats after concerns of vessel disturbing and crowding around whales. For reference, Hervey Bay gets approximately 1,200 whales migrating through per season. Juneau waters see approximately 1/10th of that. She explained that, while Juneau tours see whales during 2–3-hour tours out of Auke Bay, sometimes there aren't always lots of whales to be found. Juneau traditionally has a lull in whales every June where there are just 1 or 2 whales for the entire fleet to satisfy their whale guarantees; the industry is propped up by these two female whales, Flame and Sasha, who appear for now to have a very high tolerance for vessel activity. She advised that shoulder seasons can be less predictable, and climate-driven shifts in prey result in whales exploring new areas and changing their habits. For example, this May, for the first time in her 15 years studying Juneau area humpback whales, they had days with no whales in the tour area. When one whale would poke her head into the Juneau area, there were dozens of boats vying for a look.

Ms. Gladziszewski offered that this is like a crowded restaurant, where, if it is really crowded but the food is good, a person will tolerate it. If it's really crowded and loud and the food is not good, the person is not going to tolerate it. She asked if Dr. Teerlink has data on whether the food is so great in the area that the whales are willing to tolerate the boats. Dr. Teerlink said she believes the concept applies in that, when the food is good, the whales are going to spend the time looking for food. There are some whales that are far more tolerant to vessel activity than others. If prey shifts, the whales will shift too. She is concerned about a growing industry that relies so much on whales being present when it is known that they migrate thousands of miles and are accustomed to searching for food.

Dr. Teerlink stated that, as a humpback whale biologist, she would recommend that companies anticipate fluctuations in whale numbers in the future and would urge businesses to foster resilient business models that aren't overly reliant on a highly migratory and mobile resource. NOAA Fisheries has rolled out voluntary measures to help mitigate potential impacts of whale watching and define best practices. She commended the Juneau whale watching industry, as company owners in Juneau were the first in Alaska to adopt these

guidelines and set an example of how competitors can work together to reduce impacts and promote marine conservation. Many of these same industry members have worked together to suggest new recommendations under TBMP. She said that, while she is proud of the fleet for their intention and commitment to the Whale SENSE values and cooperations under TBMP, the Whale SENSE program nor TBMP can address the volume of whale watching vessels. She said they acknowledge that it is not just commercial whale watching, as recreational boaters also enjoy watching the whales.

NOAA has developed guidelines for the general public to adopt best practices and acknowledges that NOAA needs to also factor non whale watching boats into their equations. She explained that some days there are lots of whales to go around, but other days, there are only 1-2 whales or groups of whales and the fleet must share the viewing opportunities with dozens of other boats; It is not uncommon to have upwards of 30 boats around one whale or group of whales. She posed the question: "Is 'take' occurring?" She said NOAA doesn't know, but it is possible that it is, and maybe even intuitive to interpret that at some point, it must be. She explained that every boat in the fleet can operate with consideration and respect for the wildlife they are viewing, but at what point it is simply the number of boats around a whale that tips those scales. NOAA Fisheries implements the MMPA and ESA to prevent and reduce take of their Trust species. She commented that, while they are concerned about the potential impacts from vessel disturbance in Juneau's humpback whales, they follow the science and, in this case, they don't have all the information they need to confidently draw conclusions. She said there have been studies on Juneau whale watching. From land-based studies using Theodites, Juneau-area humpback whales behavior changes as the number of boats around them increase. She shared that they have studied and continue to study steroid stress responses in humpback whales near Juneau but know that hormones are complicated and they don't have clear ways of connecting hormone concentrations to potential take.

She acknowledged that there are concerns in the community and even within the whale watching industry about the number of boats around whales in Juneau. Passengers are coming to Juneau in ever-increasing numbers and, when they book a whale watching trip, the chance to get close to whales is important to them. She said they are often asked if NOAA Fisheries can implement caps, permits, or limits. However, NOAA's jurisdiction is relative to the resource itself (whales). They can't control how many people operate businesses in Juneau or how many boats utilize State waters. If NOAA were to explore regulatory solutions to reduce and prevent incidental take of humpback whales and other marine mammals from wildlife viewing, this would need to be directed to parameters specific to the whales themselves. These include distance to whales, vessel speed restrictions near whales, and underwater sound limitations.

She stressed that her concern is that, should NOAA ever tighten the regulations around humpback whales in Juneau, the industry may be devastated by it simply because it has been so built up that it cannot adapt to tighter viewing regulations. For this reason, NOAA recommends that CBJ investigate ways to help Juneau's whale watching industry secure a more sustainable model and help ensure that the industry avoids and reduces take of marine mammal residents; it is time to limit the boats that engage in this industry. There are options to CBJ to limit and regulate the number of whale watching boats that are outside NOAA's authority to implement, but NOAA remains available during this process to discuss and consult on ways to effectively and equitably limit the number of whale watching boats. She stated that NOAA is committed to assisting CBJ's efforts to explore solutions for a sustainable whale watching industry.

Ms. Woll asked about whale strikes. Dr. Teerlink said they collect data on vessel strikes through self-reports, observations, and necropsies of dead animals on beaches. They also collect data on new scars from non-lethal vessel strikes. The most effective mitigation against ship strikes is vessel speeds.

Mr. Smith inquired if anything happens when a vessel, either commercial or recreational, gets closer than a hundred yards. Dr. Teerlink answered that the 100 yard rule is hard and fast; if a boat approaches a whale knowingly within a hundred yards, that is a legal violation. NOAA's office of Law Enforcement can investigate that and press charges if necessary. She noted that TBMP and the Whale SENSE program are both voluntary, and NOAA has a set of wildlife viewing guidelines that applies to all marine mammals.

Ms. Gladziszewski opined that 100 yards seems small. Dr. Teerlink responded that the 100 yard rule was implemented 20 years ago, and that there is an argument that the regulations may need updating.

Ms. Hale asked about what options CBJ has along the lines of limited entry, and inquired of Ms. Pierce about what ideas she has about this topic. Ms. Pierce responded that she would like to return to the assembly with recommendations regarding what the city can and cannot do.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked about the city's relationship with TBMP, and how much the city is involved with the guidelines. Ms. Pierce answered CBJ is very involved, as the city requires their permittees in loading zones to be TBMP members. Ms. Hughes-Skandijs sought confirmation on whether the city could work with TBMP to shape a limited entry program to be embedded into TBMP. Ms. Gladziszewski suggested that the Assembly could just make it's own regulations. Ms. Hughes-Skandijs offered to follow up about the question at a later time.

Mayor Weldon thanked the presenters and asked them what they think would be limited entry. (Mr. Janes gave an inaudible answer off-mic.)

The Assembly Committee of the Whole took a break at 7:51p.m and resumed at 8:02p.m.

2. Hazard Map Discussion

Mr. Watt explained that staff is looking to the Assembly for policy direction on this topic.

Mr. Watt said that a memorandum from the August Committee of the Whole meeting is in the meeting packet regarding hazard maps. Public testimony was received and the matter is now back to the assembly for direction.

Ms. Gladziszewski reminded members that the city has current maps that have hazards designated, and that the maps restrict development in the hazard zones. The Assembly agrees that the current maps aren't good, and so are working on getting new maps. Questions include: What responsibility does CBJ have to notify people of potential hazards and what responsibility does CBJ have to regulate development in places that have hazards. Public testimony suggested making it clear that the hazard maps are just general maps, and are not site specific. There was also interest in putting a notice on the maps that states, ***"These maps identify zones of general potential hazard and are to be used solely for informational purposes. The maps are not predictive of precise hazards for individual properties, and site-specific engineering would be necessary to determine actual risks to individual properties."***

Mr. Bryson asked if lenders or insurance agents have been contacted and questioned as to what the consequences of motion 1 or motion 2 would be. Ms. Gladziszewski answered no, other than the information provided by the RAND corporation.

MOTION by Mr. Bryson to adopt the language of the proposed Motion #1 as provided in Ms. Gladziszewski's handout.

Direct the attorney to draft an ordinance that accomplishes the following:

Repeals the ~~existing~~ adopted 1987 landslide and avalanche maps.

Does not adopt the Tetra Tech maps.

Requires CBJ to conduct an annual public informational outreach regarding potential landslide and avalanche hazards.

Requires CBJ to notify anyone wishing to develop inside the mapped area that the maps exist.

Requires CBJ to include a prominent notice on the front of the maps that contains the following language:

These maps identify zones of general potential hazard and are to be used solely for informational purposes. The maps are not predictive of precise hazards for individual properties and site-specific engineering would be necessary to determine actual risk to individual properties.

Ms. Woll stated that she is more supportive of the proposed motion #2. She asked about the public outreach that was done. She asked if the Assembly is not providing any direction and staff would work from there. Ms. Gladziszewski said the intent was to be vague for staff. Mr. Watt explained that the city could be overly broad in providing information. If the Assembly was interested in providing information, it'd be distributed to all of the downtown area rather than to provide information to somebody in the map. Ms. Woll said she wants people who are in the zones to have this information and asked if Mr. Watt needs direction from the Assembly to do that. Mr. Watt responded that he doesn't think so, the city would just factually provide information as concisely and efficiently as able.

Ms. Hale stated that she objects to everything being proposed, as well as what the Assembly proposed on August 28. If the existing adopted maps and ordinance are repealed, there is still the Behrends Avenue neighborhood that is in a direct path of an avalanche. CBJ policy directs that no new houses be built in the path. She said her focus is to do no harm, and it seems like the city is flailing around trying to do something to help people. She stressed that the Assembly needs a consultant to review the public testimony they have received and make some proposals.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs relayed a suggestion from the public that disclosure happens when transferring property. She said this seems outside the city's purview. Mr. Watt explained that disclosure is an issue that arises between property owners and banks in a real estate function, and the city is not setting rules on how and when to disclose information.

Mr. Smith commented that, just because the city isn't part of that function, doesn't mean the city couldn't require disclosure when there's new leases or a transfer of property. Mr. Watt explained that it would be easy for the city to encourage disclosure and could pass an ordinance requiring it, but when things like enforcement goes wrong, he is unsure what happens.

Mayor Weldon objected to the motion. She stressed that the Tetra Tech maps will probably not be adopted, but there is hazard. She concurred with Ms. Hale's comments, except about needing a consultant.

'Wáahlaal Gídaag asked that, if the motion fails, would the Assembly not vote on the existing components of the motion, or would a member need to make an amendment to include avalanche hazards. Ms. Gladziszewski said that someone can make such a motion now. She asked Mr. Bryson if he still supports his motion or if he will remove it.

Mr. Bryson commented that the city has had the same hazard maps since 1987, and that if any component of the map is kept, the city is going to get the same results; they cannot get people to build downtown. The ramifications of keeping the maps have already happened, with stifled development and higher cost of living. He stressed that the city is not in real estate, so they should not have the city in the real estate transaction dictating terms, and that the best thing they could do to increase housing is to remove the maps and allow lenders and incurrence companies to help develop more. **He removed his motion for proposed Motion #1.**

MOTION by 'Wáahlaal Gídaag to adopt the language of Motion #2 as provided in Ms. Gladziszewski's handout.

Direct the attorney to draft an ordinance that accomplishes the following:

Repeals the ~~existing~~ adopted 1987 landslide maps.

Does not adopt the Tetra Tech landslide maps.

Adopts the Tetra Tech avalanche maps.

Requires CBJ to conduct an annual public informational outreach regarding potential landslide and avalanche hazards.

Requires CBJ to notify anyone wishing to develop inside the mapped area that the maps exist.

Requires CBJ to include a prominent notice on the front of the maps that contains the following language:

These maps identify zones of general potential hazard and are to be used solely for informational purposes. The maps are not predictive of precise hazards for individual properties and site-specific engineering would be necessary to determine actual risk to individual properties.

Ms. Woll asked, if the motion was adopted at the full Assembly, whether the regulations would stay in place for avalanches. Staff and the Planning Commission suggested updates to the regulations on avalanches. Mr. Watt said the city would need to clarify its regulatory stance on avalanches if the motion passed. The Tetra Tech maps does have some useful information like predicted impact pressures, which could inform building standards. Ms. Woll inquired if staff is going to bring additional information after the committee passes it out, or if the motion should be kept in committee for further discussion. Mr. Watt said the most prudent action would be to bring the motion back to committee and draft an ordinance that enacts the specified changes.

Mr. Bryson objected to the motion. If the city kept the avalanche maps and adopted the Tetra Tech maps, then the city would do what it is trying to avoid doing. The Assembly wants the community to be able to develop downtown.

Mayor Weldon requested the difference between the 1987 avalanche maps and the Tetra Tech maps. Mr. Watt responded that that information can be brought to a future meeting but advised that the avalanche mapping is similar between the maps.

Ms. Hale commented that she is attuned to the Behrends Avenue houses that had a bad avalanche happen in 1962. She stated that there may not be avalanches there anymore, but it would be shameful if the city allowed more houses to be built. She suggested that the 1987 ordinance could be revisited and the Assembly could focus on just what it wants to limit. Many buildings have been built downtown since the 1987 maps were adopted, including on Gastineau Avenue. The Glory Hall was held up a year due to interpretations by the city's staff, so maybe the interpretations could be clarified by changing the 1987 ordinance. She stressed that she and the Assembly are woefully inadequate to make a decision, given the information that she has been able to digest up to this point.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs relayed concerns raised by folks who did their own site specific analysis to show that their property is not in the hazard zone and also asked whether the new maps would just put them back into a hazard zone. Mr. Watt answered that he is mostly sure that when people do a site specific analysis, it isn't on the avalanche side of the mapping.

Ms. Woll objected to Mr. Bryson's comment. The Assembly does want housing developed downtown, but one concern she learned is that the public does not yet know how serious the risk of landslides is in Juneau, which is getting worse with climate change. She said they need to educate each other about that risk.

Mr. Smith suggested that staff work with financing professionals to come up with a disclaimer. Ms. Gladziszewski said she worked with the Attorney on the motion. Mr. Watt offered that a draft ordinance would be a good vehicle to attract public testimony. Mr. Smith, regarding the annual public informational outreach, sought clarity on who is notified and whether it would just be people in the study area or all of Juneau. Ms. Gladziszewski said she left the language vague so staff can work on it. Mr. Watt confirmed that the public information piece would be worked out.

Mr. Bryson said the Assembly is tip-toeing around the responsibility of the landowner. Regarding Behrends Avenue, if a person wanted to buy property on that street and a bank was willing to finance them and

insurance was willing to insure them, why would the city stop them. He asked that the ordinance have the appropriate level of responsibility on the property owner.

Ms. Gladziszewski commented that she is in favor of the motion. She said it comes back to what responsibility does the government have to inform people of hazards, and that she believes CBJ does have the responsibility to inform people.

Ms. Hale agreed that people own property and they should be allowed to do what they want with it, but said she also believes that some of the people that died in mudslide years ago were living in an apartment building. She said its been seen over and over again that places with risk are often populated by people on the lower end of the economic scale. She is voting in favor of the motion.

Ms. Hughes-Skandjjs said she is in favor of the motion.

Roll Call Vote on 'Wáahlaal Gídaag's motion to approve proposed Motion #2

Yeas: 'Wáahlaal Gídaag, Ms. Woll, Ms. Hughes-Skandjjs, Ms. Gladziszewski, Mayor Weldon

Nays: Mr. Jones, Mr. Smith, Ms. Hale, Mr. Bryson

Motion passed 5 Yeas, 4 Nays.

3. Executive Session - Law Department Litigation Update

MOTION by Mr. Bryson to go executive session at 8:41pm to receive a litigation update from the City Attorney, the matters of which are confidential in nature, and asked for unanimous consent.

Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent

M. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING THE JOINT ASSEMBLY/D&H BOARD
MEETING **DRAFT** MINUTES**



December 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

Assembly Committee of the Whole Worksession - No Public Testimony will be taken.

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/95424544691> or 1-253-215-8782 Webinar ID: 954 2454 4691

A. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Michelle Hale called the meeting to order at 7:29p.m. following the adjournment of the Special Joint Assembly meeting with the Docks and Harbors Board.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Assemblymember Paul Kelly shared the following Land Acknowledgment: *We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!*

C. ROLL CALL

Assemblymembers present: Deputy Mayor Michelle Hale, Greg Smith, 'Wáahlaal Gídaag, Wade Bryson, Alicia Hughes-Skandijis, Paul Kelly, Ella Adkison, and Mayor Beth Weldon

Assembly absent: None.

Staff present: City Manager Katie Koester, Deputy Manager Robert Barr, Municipal Attorney Robert Barr, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Deputy Clerk Diane Cathcart, Eaglecrest Manager Dave Scanlan

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – the agenda was approved as presented.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None.

F. AGENDA TOPICS

1. CBJ Office Space Request for Information

Manager Koester explained that the purpose of this agenda item is really just to get some direction and update the body on next steps for downtown CBJ. Currently City Hall only houses 40% of employee space needed. Other downtown employees are at the Seadrome Building, Marine View Building, Municipal Way Building which was recently purchase by Sealaska for some of their programs. The lease on the Marine View building is expiring on June 30, 2024. They are looking at the all the leases and could do RFI as soon as tomorrow. They have pulled together four possible scenarios that would entail moving some city employees to a different office space, starting with those in the Marine View. She explained that the responses to the RFI would be brought back to this body and the body would decide what to do next. Manager Koester said that knowing what the universe is for leased property will dictate what they may want to do for this City Hall facility. There will be costs associated with any moves such as IT, furnishings, etc... She is looking for direction so staff could give the Assembly info on what to expect for next steps. She said they hope to control costs as much as possible.

Ms. Hale instructed the members to limit their questions to what's in the memo and wait until RFI comes back before they discuss Assemblymembers' opinions.

Mayor Weldon said that scenario 1 talks about moving everybody and they would be looking for Assembly Chamber space. She asked about the need to also consider conference room availability in addition to Chambers space. Manager Koester said there are three conference rooms currently used with regularity amongst the current buildings.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs expressed concern about the lease terms as found on page four of the packet. Manager Koester replied that she struggled with that term as well. She said that realistically, they may be able to recoup costs if they go with a 10-year term. She said that if the Assembly were to look at what a city-owned facility would look like, it would take a number of years to put that together.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs said that it seems realistic to her and to possibly look at somewhere in 25 years or even 15 year terms.

‘Wáahlaal Gídaag asked if the intent was to put out three different scenarios or narrow it down to one? Manager Koester replied that the intent was to put out all three scenarios unless otherwise directed by the Assembly.

MOTION by Mayor Weldon to approve the RFI for available office space within the community. *Hearing no objections, the motion passed by unanimous consent.*

2. Ordinance 2023-05 An Ordinance Authorizing an Alternative Procurement Method Related to the Eaglecrest Pulse Gondola Construction Project.

Manager Koester explained that the only action item coming before the COW tonight was the alternative procurement method for the Eaglecrest Gondola project. She said that they also have the opportunity to get a project update from the project engineer and director. In speaking about the alternative procurement method, the ordinance in the packet was introduced at the last Assembly meeting and is now before the body to help answer any questions related to the project or the alternative procurement method. She spoke to the reasons for using an alternative procurement method and examples of other CBJ projects that used that method. Some of the key reasons for using it for this project include the complexity and specialty nature of the project involved, and the need for specialty contractors with expertise in this type of engineering and project management as well as the phasing it will need and the dynamic nature of the natural elements involved. Manager Koester shared that using an alternative procurement method also provides cost certainty since the contract amount is negotiated early on in the project with a guaranteed maximum price.

Manager Koester and Eaglecrest Manager Dave Scanlan then proceeded to answer questions from the Assemblymembers about the project, the alternative procurement method and the status of the collaborative agreement with Goldbelt on the gondola project.

MOTION by Mayor Weldon to forward to the Assembly the recommendation from the Eaglecrest Board of Directors to use the GC/CM alternative procurement method as proposed in Ordinance 2023-05 and asked for unanimous consent.

Objection by Ms. Hughes-Skandijs for purposes of a comment. She said that at this moment they are speaking just to the use of the alternative procurement method and that does seem like the best route to her but she is having a hard time in untangling that from the project update and she does have real concerns about some of the aspects of the project moving forward. With that comment, she removed her objection to the motion.

Hearing no other objections, the motion passed by unanimous consent.

Eaglecrest Update

Eaglecrest Manager introduced the Eaglecrest Board members in attendance at the meeting: Hannah Shively and Norton Gregory. Mr. Scanlan also introduced Alan Steffert from CBJ PW/Engineering who has been working with him on this project.

Mr. Scanlan provided an update about the status of the Goldbelt agreement. There had been a pause but as of August, they have had the Goldbelt funds available for use. He then went into detail about the various aspects of the gondola project and the status of the towers planned. Mayor Weldon asked what the timeframe associated with the project was. Mr. Scanlan said that the plan is for the gondola to be ready for full operations in May 2026. They hope to have some capability in the winter of 2025-2026. Mayor Weldon asked if they predict having year-round staff in 2025-2026 and Mr. Scanlan answered yes.

Mr. Bryson asked when they were looking at purchasing the gondola, was it made aware to them that they were going to have to buy almost \$2M worth of parts, and if so, was that amount included in the \$10M in funds from Goldbelt or is Eaglecrest going to come to the Assembly and say that they need more money for more parts.

Mr. Scanlan explained that they were aware that they were going to need additional towers; they thought they would only be needing five towers and didn't know that they would need seven towers. He said that the prices of towers and gondolas have skyrocketed and they weren't sure where they might source them from. They didn't have an exact source. The sales company they worked with said they would try to find those. He was confident they can do the rest for the remaining \$6.5M. He said there will be a lot of additional components that need to also be included with this purchase, such as access roads. And if they were looking at purchasing a brand new gondola in 2024, it would cost approximately \$30-40M.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs said she was coming from some of the same direction as Mr. Bryson and her concerns were that we bought a used gondola and we are buying used parts for a used gondola and she was starting to feel that this had somewhat of a sunk cost fallacy. She asked with respect to the main \$6.5M, and considering the escalation of all costs, she asked him to explain what the process was like on the initial engineer inspection when they originally went over to inspect the gondola vs. what they found when it was unpacked in Juneau and what that now looks like in terms of costs.

Mr. Scanlan explained that when they did the initial site visit to look at the gondola, they were looking at the quality of the machinery in its installed location where it was. Everyone was impressed with the quality of the machinery, the quality of the maintenance that had been done on the machinery. At that point in time, they didn't have the capital to pay the engineer to do the full profile/alignment which is a very long and expensive process. When they do that, they look at all the line profile designs, the tower location calculations. They didn't do that when they went for the initial site visit. They did share with them that they wanted to design a midway loading station and an engineer did sign off and confirm that this lift would allow them to do that. That then gave them the green light to say, yes, this is possible; the machinery looks good, well cared for and met the intent, while knowing that they would need to come back and use the capital they did have to do more in depth preliminary design work and it was at that point that they received info on what those specifics would be.

Mr. Bryson said that no one likes to hear that they have bought something that needs a lot more money paid into it but he said that what they heard tonight was that we bought an asset that has now doubled in value (due to inflation).

Mayor Weldon said that even with what Mr. Bryson just mentioned, she is always looking for more funding. She asked Mr. Scanlan that with their large base of supporters if they were looking at raising any additional monies towards this project from their supporters. Mr. Scanlan said they are still somewhat early in that

regard and they are hoping to get this alternative procurement contractor in place and see where they land with all those efficiencies.

Ms. Woll said the Assembly has been having discussions about possibly limiting the size and number of cruise ships and asked about the Eaglecrest Board discussions re: impacts of changes from possible cruise ship limits and what impacts that may have on the gondola. Mr. Scanlan noted that Goldbelt is incentivized to bring visitors to the mountain. He said they have scaled the percentage of gross tickets that Goldbelt will be getting. He said they would reach their peak at 75,000 visitors. He said that 75,000 breaks down to approximately 450 visitors/day. This past summer, Eaglecrest was doing walking tours with Viking cruises and they had 450 visitors in one day in four hours just at the base of the mountain. He said that was a good experiment for them to see how they might manage that many visitors. He said once they spread that number of visitors across the mountain, they will be able to do a lot more. He said he would be bringing back more info on those numbers as he starts working on the 2025-2026 budget.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs said she is having a hard time understanding how on earth they can build anything for \$6.5M in today's building climate. She asked if they were to build it right now for \$6.5M what that might look like vs. what they had hoped to build. Mr. Scanlan said that they could set it up for \$6.5M but that it would greatly degrade what they could do and it would not enable them to mid-mountain activities that they initially planned on including. He said there are a large number of opportunities, both summer and winter, if they have the mid-way mountain activities that wouldn't be there if they were to have to stay within the \$6.5M remaining funds.

Eaglecrest Board members Norton Gregory and Hannah Shively invited the Assemblymembers to attend the Eaglecrest Planning Committee meetings at which they are constantly discussing this project. They explained that the gondola project will give Eaglecrest an opportunity to become more self-sufficient and the possibilities open up more activities in the summer as well as the winter seasons.

Deputy Mayor Hale said that only 65% of the people who want shore excursions in Juneau get to go on them. She sees this project as helping to provide stable funding for Eaglecrest in the future and also providing additional shore excursions as well as dispersing people throughout town from the cruise ships.

Mr. Bryson asked if the Gondola been in operation this year, would that have enabled Eaglecrest's opening day to open when it was originally scheduled. Mr. Scanlan said that yes, it absolutely would have been able to open on schedule if the gondola had been up and running.

Chair Hale thanked the Eaglecrest Board members and staff for coming and providing this update.

3. Ordinance 2023-14(b)(R) An Ordinance Appropriating \$1,600,000 to the Manager for the Affordable Housing Fund; Funding Provided by General Funds.

Manager Koester reported that this ordinance was introduced at the last regular Assembly meeting and this is to fully award the first and second recommended projects from the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF). Both of these projects are loans and she was happy to answer any questions from the committee. Ms. Hale asked if the committee needed to take action to forward the ordinance back to the Assembly for adoption. Ms. Koester responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Woll asked if they will be discussing the merits of those two projects in more depth at the next Assembly meeting or if they will just be putting money into the fund at the next meeting and discussing the projects themselves at a later date.

Manager Koester said that this ordinance would allow the top two loan agreements to be issued. She said there would still be Assembly action required to award and negotiate those loans.

Ms. Woll asked what the timeline would be for that action. Manager Koester replied that the intention is to move relatively quickly so that these projects can both begin in the next construction season, so soon.

Additional discussion took place about this being seen at the Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (LHEDC) which referred it to the Assembly Finance Committee (AFC). They also discussed the process by which these have been done.

Ms. Woll asked if the Assembly decides to use this funding as a loan, will the money still stay on the books, will the AHF still show that there is \$1.6M on the books.

R. Palmer said that this ordinance would put money into the AHF. It would then be for use and available for these projects, whenever the Assembly sees fit to issue the loans. He gave info about how the Ridgeview project was approved by the Assembly through an appropriating ordinance with the terms and conditions included in the appropriating ordinance. That could be the model the Assembly uses once it puts it into the AHF.

Ms. Woll said she will follow up with staff off line to make sure she understands it fully. Ms. Hale said that she wanted to comment off of the terms and conditions in that since this money is coming from the Affordable Housing Fund, she wants to be sure that there is affordable housing included in the terms and conditions of those loans.

‘Wáahlaal Gídaag asked a question she has asked during the housing meeting. She said they have been through this process of giving out loan funds and then having the project come back to the Assembly and say they can’t create any affordable housing. She asked how they ensure we actually have projects that maintain affordable housing within their scope. The caveat that this is a requirement for giving the loan, because they are constructing affordable housing. If they come back and say that it is not feasible, they should go to a bank instead of trying to use AHF money.

Mr. Bryson asked at what point they will see repayment of loan funds coming back in so they can know a timeline for when those funds would be available to be used again for future loans; give us an idea of how sustainable their actions have been. Manager Koester she said would be happy to bring that information back to them with timelines.

MOTION by Mr. Smith to forward Ord. 2023-14(b)(R) to the Assembly for public hearing and Assembly action and he asked for unanimous consent. *Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.*

G. STAFF REPORTS

None.

H. NEXT MEETING DATE: January 29, 2024

Mayor Weldon expressed the Assembly’s sympathy over the loss of George Reifenstein this past weekend. She noted that Mr. Reifenstein and his wife were instrumental in bringing the dialysis machine to Juneau. Assemblymembers wished everyone happy holidays.

I. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

J. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:27p.m.



TO: Deputy Mayor Hale and CBJ Assembly
DATE: September 9, 2024
FROM: Katie Koester, City Manager
RE: Re-purposing JSD Finance Position for Emergency Management

Does CBJ still need a Position to Monitor JSD Finances?

The FY25 CBJ operating budget included a full-time position in the Finance Department to monitor JSD finances to ensure compliance with audit and accounting standards. This was a condition of the \$4.1M loan CBJ approved for JSD to help keep them fiscally solvent in the face of structural deficits in FY23-FY25. Since passage of the FY25 budget, JSD has made budget reductions and received a one-time increase in BSA funding from the State that renders the loan unnecessary. Furthermore, JSD has increased its administrative capacity with the hiring of a Finance Director and Administrative Services Director (previously one position), increasing their capacity to properly administer their budget. The CBJ position would not have been able to do day to day financial work for JSD without charging them for that time, its focus is limited to reporting, research, monitoring, and compliance work.

Does CBJ need more capacity in Emergency Management?

Emergency response is consuming a significant amount of CBJ attention and resources. We have stood up the Emergency Operations Center five times over the last four years:

- 2020 COVID-19
- 2020 December Flooding and Storm Damage
- 2022 Gastineau Ave Tree slide
- 2023 Jokulhlaup/ Mendenhall River Flood/Bank Erosion
- 2024 Jokulhlaup/ Mendenhall River Flood

There is a need for additional capacity in our Emergency Management Division (currently two staff, an administrative position and program manager housed in the Manager's Office). Current duties of Emergency Management include avalanche monitoring and forecasting; federal and state grant coordination and management, staffing the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), emergency operations planning, all hazards planning and Incident Command System (ICS) training. The paperwork burden of the grant management is huge – but also pays for important items like equipment for police, fire, and emergency response and 50% of the staffing for the division. We have moved the administrative position to the Finance Department to align with the grant management and oversight duties. However, there is a real need to increase our emergency planning and preparedness capacity. This includes updating our All Hazards Plan, our Emergency Operations Plan and making sure CBJ staff are adequately trained in the ICS system. Volunteer coordination is another acute need we have seen from the Mendenhall Flood event. We will apply for grant funds to cover 50% of this position in FY26; however, the federal source of this grant has declined in the most recent federal fiscal year. Our best guess is that this position would begin being 50% covered by grant funds in FY27.

Recommendation:

Direction requested on the Assembly's comfort level with not filling the JSD finance monitoring position and instead adding a position in Emergency Management. No official Assembly action is required; the authority for the FTEs exists in the Finance Department and Manager's Office budget for FY25.



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DATE: August 29, 2024

TO: Michelle Hale, Chair, Committee of the Whole

BY: Scott Ciambor, Planning Manager
Community Development Department

THROUGH: Jill Lawhorne, AICP, Director
Community Development Department

FILE NO.: AME2018 0007

PROPOSAL: A Text Amendment to adopt the *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* as part of the CBJ Comprehensive Plan

This staff report provides details on the draft *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* planning process and includes attachments that provide a copy of the plan and appendices, responses to questions from the Planning Commission (Commission), proposed revisions, and department and public comment. Physical copies of the Plan have been provided for the Assembly.

This information was provided to the June 3, 2024 Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee and was moved to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion.

These materials and more can be found on the CDD website at: <https://juneau.org/community-development/blueprint-downtown>.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Assembly Committee of the Whole (COW) discuss the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan as a potential addendum to the CBJ Comprehensive Plan --- taking into consideration the Planning Commission Notice of Recommendation (NOR) to encourage a stronger focus on housing with preference language for projects involving housing downtown.

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CBJ ASSEMBLY ROLE

Section 49.05.200 (b) notes, "The comprehensive plan adopted by the assembly by ordinance contains the policies that guide and direct public and private land use activities in the City and Borough." (emphasis added)

The *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* (Plan) is an area plan for downtown Juneau to establish the community’s 20-year vision, goals, priorities, and action strategies to guide downtown development. The Assembly is being asked to consider the Plan as an addition to the Comprehensive Plan. Additions to the Comprehensive Plan are adopted by ordinance and are listed in Section 49.05.200 (b). Previous additions (A-K) include the Lemon Creek Area Plan, the Juneau Economic Development Plan, and Chapter 5 of the Willoughby District Land Use Plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION ROLE

Three sections of Title 49 cover the purpose of the *Comprehensive Plan* and the duties of the Planning Commission in the *Comprehensive Plan* review process.

- Section 49.05.200 (b) notes, "The comprehensive plan adopted by the assembly by ordinance contains the policies that guide and direct public and private land use activities in the City and Borough."
- Section 49.10.170 (a) notes, "The commission shall undertake a general review of the comprehensive plan two years after the adoption of the most recent update and shall recommend appropriate amendments to the assembly. Proposed map changes shall be reviewed on a neighborhood or community basis as directed by the planning commission."
- CBJ 49.10.170(d) states that the Commission shall make recommendations to the Assembly on all proposed amendments to this title, zonings and re-zonings, indicating compliance with the provisions of this title and the Comprehensive Plan.

PURPOSE OF THE BLUEPRINT DOWNTOWN PLAN

A major goal of the Plan is to provide strategic direction for development and growth, while embracing livability and a sense of place, as well as maintaining quality of life for residents. The Plan provides a framework to guide the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Assembly, city departments, the Planning Commission, and other CBJ boards and commissions that will refer to this document to:

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- Make informed decisions concerning future growth and development while maintaining a positive quality of life for residents;
- Plan for projects more efficiently;
- Assign appropriate resources to community needs;
- Identify needs for new or revised zoning and/or development regulations; and
- Identify infrastructure priorities.

The Plan also provides a framework to guide individuals, private companies, and other stakeholders when making investment and development decisions, and when questions affecting community development arise.

STEERING COMMITTEE, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND PUBLIC INPUT

Most of this information is available [on the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan website](#).

- In 2017 the Assembly approved the budget for a downtown Juneau area plan.
- In October 2018 the Commission reviewed applications and appointed 13 members to the steering committee. ([agendas/minutes](#))
- 2018-2020: CDD staff put out an RFP for public outreach, consultation. (MRV Architects, Sheinberg Associates, Lucid Reverie Creative Design) This team, CDD, and the Steering Committee [completed a 1-year visioning report](#) that summarizes process, participation, and public feedback on components to add to the Plan.
- 2020-2022: COVID delays, Steering Committee meetings.
- 2022-2023: Draft Plan made available for public comment by CDD. Public comments received were collected and made part of the [draft Plan in Appendix A](#).
- 2023-2024: Steering Committee considers public input, finalizes the draft Plan. CDD works with technical writer to finalize graphics and layout.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION AND NOTICE OF RECOMMENDATION

With the draft *Blueprint Downtown Juneau Area Plan* available, the Commission held the following public meetings on the topic:

- 3.12.2024: [Introduction to draft Blueprint Downtown Juneau Area Plan and](#) Commission role in the process; and
- 4.23.2024: Special Commission Meeting held for a public [draft Plan](#). Important items to highlight from meeting:
 - Answers to Commissioners questions (Attachment C in this packet)
 - [Agency Comments received for the meeting in supplemental](#) materials.

Staff encourages the Assembly to read the Answers to Commissioners and Agency Comments as background material on the public conversation to date.

Planning Commission Notice of Recommendation

At the 4.23.2024 Special Meeting, the Commission provided the following recommendation to the Assembly:

The Planning Commission, at its Special Public meeting, adopted the analysis and findings listed in the attached memorandum dated April 16, 2024, and recommended that the City and Borough Assembly adopt staff’s recommendation for a text amendment to adopt the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan as an addendum to the CBJ Comprehensive Plan with revisions noted in the staff report. The Commission added a recommendation to encourage a stronger focus on housing with preference language for projects involving housing downtown.

Proposed revisions mentioned in the Notice of Recommendation (NOR) can be found in Attachment D: Proposed Revisions.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (COMP PLAN)

The *Comprehensive Plan* identifies the importance of downtown Juneau as the traditional economic, civic, historical, and cultural center of the community. The Comp Plan addresses this in multiple areas:

Chapter 5 Economic Development

- Policy 5.2 Through a cooperative effort with the State of Alaska, to plan for and support development of an attractive setting, facilities, and other services to enhance the state capital and to strive to provide an atmosphere conducive to good leadership in the state, accessible to and supportive of all people of the state of Alaska.
- Policy 5.5 To maintain and strengthen downtown Juneau as a safe, dynamic and pleasant center for government and legislative activities, public gatherings, cultural and entertainment events, and residential and commercial activities in a manner that complements its rich historic character and building forms.

Chapter 10 Land Use

- Policy 10.13. To provide for and encourage mixed use development that integrates residential, retail, and office use in *Downtown areas*, shopping centers, along transit corridors, and other suitable areas.
- Policy 10.15 To reserve sufficient lands and facilities to support the State Capital functions in Downtown Juneau, including the provision of adequate transportation, housing, commerce communications services, cultural and entertainment activities and other support services.

Guidelines and Considerations for Subarea 6 (Maps K, M, N)

- Preserve the scale and densities of the older single family neighborhoods in the downtown area, including the Casey-Shattuck “flats” and Starr Hill historic districts,

Chicken Ridge, Basin Road, Mt Maria, the Highlands, and the higher density apartments and homes in the vicinity of the Federal Building.

- Encourage the retention of existing dwelling units in or near the older residential neighborhoods to avoid exacerbating traffic and parking congestion and to preserve the privacy and quiet of those neighborhoods.
- Strengthen and enhance the Capitol Complex in the downtown Juneau area. Provide for orderly expansion of state government facilities in the vicinity of the State Capitol and the State Office Building.

The Plan supports and implements these policies while providing more specific and responsive information. If adopted, the Plan will be an addition to the Comp Plan. The Plan provides a 20-year vision to guide growth, protect natural resources, and enhance and maintain amenities for livability. Where *Blueprint Downtown* and the Comp Plan conflict, or where *Blueprint Downtown* is more specific, the *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* supersedes the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Findings

Based upon the information presented, the draft *Blueprint Downtown Juneau Area Plan* conforms to the *Comprehensive Plan*.

COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER RELEVANT CBJ PLANS AND STUDIES

The draft *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* reviews relevant CBJ plans, studies, and other agencies' plans and projects.

Blueprint Downtown “incorporates past planning efforts by combining them with how downtown should continue to grow, develop, and harness opportunities...”, (*Blueprint Downtown*, p. 17) and includes a complete list of other plans reviewed during the process. (*Blueprint Downtown*, Appendix B)

A diagram showing how the draft *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* fits among other planning efforts and how the plan's components could be implemented is included. (*Blueprint Downtown*, Figure 1, p. 28)

Specific recommendations in Action Tables at the end of each chapter include a column referencing the existing plan(s) that aligns with or suggests a similar idea included in *Blueprint Downtown*.

Findings

Based on the information presented, the draft *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* conforms to other relevant CBJ Plans and Studies.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Assembly Committee of the Whole (COW) discuss the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan as a potential addendum to the CBJ Comprehensive Plan --- taking into consideration the Planning Commission Notice of Recommendation (NOR) to encourage a stronger focus on housing with preference language for projects involving housing downtown.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Blueprint Downtown Area Plan
Attachment B: Draft Blueprint Downtown Appendices
Attachment C: Responses to Questions from the March 12, 2024, Planning Commission Committee of the Whole Meeting
Attachment D: Proposed Revisions
Attachment E: Additional Comments
Attachment F: Powerpoint Slides



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Responses to March 12, 2024, Planning Commissioner Questions

At the March 12, 2024, Planning Commission Committee of the Whole on the draft *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan*, commissioners asked questions for follow-up response. These inquiries can be categorized as questions about the planning process, the Planning Commission role, and the contents of the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan. Below are the questions and responses.

Planning Process

1. **What prompts CDD to start an area plan process?** Direction from the Assembly.
2. **What if the area plan recommendations are not the same as the Comprehensive Plan?** The Assembly has two ways to adopt an area plan into the Comprehensive Plan, by Resolution or Ordinance.
 - If the plan is adopted by Resolution, it is not adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. It is advisory for CBJ but not a requirement for private property owners. (i.e., Housing Action Plan)
 - If the plan is adopted by Ordinance into the Comprehensive Plan, it could trump the land use code. It is whichever is more specific. See CBJ 49.05.200(b)
3. **The Plan speaks to a number of current construction and sewer projects. Are you coordinating with the Steering Committee on current projects?** CDD coordinates with other CBJ departments on projects involving zoning or other planning activities. Project updates that were provided by CBJ departments are included with the AME18-07 staff report.
4. **What kind of public outreach is taking place?** Public outreach conducted prior to Steering Committee member selection and throughout the Steering Committee process is well documented in the plan.

Public Outreach for the April 23, 2024, Planning Commission Special Hearing

 - Public Service Announcement – 20 Days Prior
 - Newspaper Ad – 10 Days Prior
 - Public Posting of Meeting Packet – 7 Days Prior
 - Newspaper Ad – 1 Day Prior
 - Staff Report that will include Agency/CBJ Department comment and Public Comment

- 5. **Blueprint Downtown Area Plan is a large document. What can the Planning Commission expect from the public?** In addition to the public outreach outline above, CDD has actively reached out to stakeholders requesting they provide comments to the Planning Commission. Appendix A in the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan provides a summary of public comments.

Planning Commission Role/Use of the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan

- 1. **There are a number of goals that seem tangentially related to the Planning Commission role. How can the Planning Commission as a body facilitate goals of the plan?** The role of the Planning Commission in review of the Comprehensive Plan comes from language in Title 49 and has been summarized in AME18-07 staff report. As an area plan is being developed, the role of the Commission is to provide recommendations and highlight important components of the plan as it moves toward adoption by the CBJ Assembly. If adopted by the Assembly and becomes a part of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission will refer to the document to make informed decisions on cases, use of land use code, and other matters that typically come before the Planning Commission.
- 2. **This plan is based on 35 different plans.**
 - a. **How does it work when older plans sunset?**
 - b. **What if new plans have contradicting info?**
 - c. **Is there guidance on how this plan overlays on older plans?**
 - d. **What happens to the older plans?**

In general, newer plans should consider older plans and when there are changes – the newer superseded the older. A stated goal for Blueprint Downtown was to utilize past plans as a starting point to update the goals and prioritize needs for downtown for the next 20 years – creating a new vision. Appendix B provides a complete list of all plans reviewed.

Plans are guiding documents used by a wide range of stakeholders. It is recognized that communities are always changing so there will be action items that are actively pursued and implemented and others that fall out of favor. Blueprint Downtown aims to be an updated vision with fresh ideas for the next 20 years. Older plans still exist and the relevant components have been reviewed and incorporated into the Downtown Blueprint Area Plan.

- 3. **Past Planning Commissioners played a role in this Plan. Can you highlight their involvement in the input/involvement?** On October 23, 2018, the Planning Commission selected 13 members for the Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee. Commissioner Dye was named as the Planning Commission Liaison and participated in that role up until the final few steering committee meetings. Planning Commission members also participated in the Blueprint Downtown visioning process event in February 2019 at Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall and received periodic updates on the plan.

4. **This plan doesn't change any Title 49 code. Would you think this plan going forward will be something the Planning Commission needs to consult/look at before changing code?** If adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission should consider the plan for business that comes before the Commission. If adopted, CDD staff will refer to the Plan and incorporate it into staff reports, case review, code rewrite suggestions –relevant activities within the department.
5. **In Conditional Use Permits (CUP), does CDD look at plans that are in force and make recommendations accordingly?** Yes, in each conditional use permit staff report there is a section titled "Conformity With Adopted Plans" that summarizes and cites pertinent policy items in those plans for the requested permit. If adopted, the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan will be part of the standard review process.
6. **In Planning Commission discussions of development proposals, can the Planning Commission point at the plan and tell the developer the PC prefers the developer to do x because x is on the plan? Or, to recommend changes to code?** Once the *Blueprint Downtown Area Plan* is adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission can utilize its contents to deliberate, make decisions, and/or provide conditions for development proposals that come to the Commission. These discussions might lead to potential changes needed to the land use code and the Planning Commission could through its standard tools (Title 49 Committee, recommendation to staff, Assembly).

Contents of the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan

1. **Chapter 1, p. 40 includes an action item to encourage year-round businesses so the area remains active. Was there discussion on how to go about that, what's the plan?** The 2019 community Visioning Process identified nine focus areas, including Business Vitality. Additional information can be found in Chapter 3's "Main Street" section, as well as Appendix D of the Blueprint Downtown Appendices document.
2. **The Plan mentions a downtown point person – where would that be headquartered? Non-profit?** To the best of CDD's understanding, the Steering Committee decided to allow decision-makers to determine the best path forward on this recommendation. Several examples of "Job Descriptions for a Downtown Coordinator" are included in Appendix I of the Blueprint Downtown Appendices document.
3. **The measuring/metrics the plan centers on quality of life. There is a disconnect between the measurements and most goals. How can the Planning Commission provide meaningful data to Assembly?** The plan identifies sources of data that are readily available as measuring metrics. Additionally, CBJ departments can provide project updates to the PC and the Assembly related to Blueprint Goals and Actions. The Planning Commission may include recommendations for additional data sources in their final report to the Assembly.

- 4. Are there parts of the Plan that the Planning Commission should expect lots of public comment or were controversial for the Steering Committee?** The plan was created from an extensive public engagement process and includes Visions, Goals, and Actions identified in that process. Additional reports on public comments, focus groups, and the visioning process can be found in the Blueprint Appendices document.

Chapter	Comments	Page	Agency
Blueprint Downtown			
Recommendation	CDD recommends that the entire document be reviewed for spelling errors, typos, and incorrect names, as several were identified during agency review of the draft document.	1-248	Community Development
Reader's Guide to Blueprint Downtown			
Update	To date, with the support of our members and CBJ, the DBA has successfully secured and maintained Main Street America (MSA) accreditation.	12	Downtown Business Association
Chapter 3 Economic Vitality			
Recommendation	A Business Improvement District (BID) is likely not a great fit for Juneau. BIDs typically result in increased taxation of the member businesses. Businesses in downtown Juneau are already disproportionately larger contributors to both Sales Tax and Property Tax than most similar businesses in other parts of Juneau. If a BID were structured in such a way that it did not result in an increased financial burden on businesses (such as through a credit for certain portion of taxes paid) these funds were matched by contributions from CBJ, it could be attractive.	74	Juneau Economic Development Council
Recommendation	Fund and Staff a dedicated agency.	103	Juneau Economic Development Council
Chapter 4 Land Use, Neighborhoods & Housing			

Recommendation	<p>"Avalanches and Landslides" subsection contains inaccurate information. The following changes are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete the third paragraph that begins with "Avalanches, or snowslides, and landslides have many similarities" (This explanation is not factually accurate) . • Delete the fifth and sixth paragraphs that begin with "The need for..." and "In recent years..." and replace with the following: The need for a detailed avalanche/landslide hazard analysis is documented in the 2013 Juneau Comprehensive Plan and in a 2018 CBJ Assembly resolution. In July 2018, CBJ received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to update the hazard maps. The updated maps provide a more accurate identification of hazards and will help to promote appropriate land use regulations and ensure public safety. In December 2023, the CBJ Assembly voted to repeal the 1987 hazard maps and to adopt the 2022 avalanche maps with regulations. The 2022 landslide maps were not adopted. • Delete the last paragraph in this section that begins with "In recent years..." as it is not factually accurate. 	153-154	Community Development
Recommendation	<p>"Floods" subsection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete the last sentence of the first paragraph which states "In the 2020 maps some properties had minor reductions in the flood zone boundary; no properties were added" (not accurate). 	155	Community Development
Chapter 5 Downtown Activities and Tourism			
Recommendation	Rather than designating Marine Park as the "heart of downtown," a point centrally located within the commerce center would be ideal (e.g., clock, SHI).	175	Downtown Business Association
Recommendation	Add "continue to Fund the Downtown Ambassador program" as a support mechanism for "Downtown Clean and Safe."	182	Juneau Economic Development Council
Recommendation	Promote and Fund Winter Tourism Development. Juneau's economy has become more seasonal over time. We need more year-round jobs in the winter (and more year-round housing, or more seasonal housing).	183-185	Juneau Economic Development Council

Recommendation	Fund the promotion of activities downtown during the period of October through April, when fewer cruise ships are in Juneau.	183	Juneau Economic Development Council
Recommendation	Support a downtown circulator. The current "free Capital Transit" option is very limited and seemingly unknown to most visitors (and locals). While promoting this would be helpful, it would serve Juneau better to have a more robust service in clearly marked vehicles that distributed visitors to Juneau's downtown throughout the downtown area, including the Aak'w Kwan Village area and Federal Building.	185	Juneau Economic Development Council
Recommendation	JDEC recommends that funds be allocated to a non-CBJ employee/entity, such as DBA (or the DBA/JEDC partnership). For downtown Juneau to be responsive to needs and opportunities as they arise, we believe that this is a better fit for a non-profit organization rather than a city employee or function. A CDD or other City Department liaison would be welcome.	187	Juneau Economic Development Council
Recommendation	Fund data collection about downtown Juneau. We will benefit from identifying indicators specifically tied to downtown to measure how successful we are in transforming it into a place where locals visit, families feel comfortable, workers live, Legislators and their staff enjoy, and visitors find attractive.	187	Juneau Economic Development Council
Recommendation	In pursuit of achieving Blueprint Downtown's desired outcomes, it is vital to secure approval for using marine passenger fees to fund the DBA's long-standing Downtown Ambassador program to sustain and perpetuate downtown vibrancy and sustainability.	187	Downtown Business Association
Recommendation	We cannot support creating a new Local Improvement District (LID) or Business Improvement District (BID) if it places an additional financial burden on downtown businesses already paying a relatively high amount of sales and property tax to CBJ.	187	Downtown Business Association
Recommendation	Keep City Hall downtown. It is crucial to the civic character of our community to keep the government located downtown. And within downtown, it should strive to be as near to the downtown core as reasonable, as the presence of city workers downtown on a daily basis provides an important base clientele to downtown businesses.	191	Juneau Economic Development Council
Recommendation	DBA advocates for City Hall to remain in the downtown corridor.	191	Downtown Business Association

Chapter 6 Parks, Open Space & Recreation			
Update	Chicken Yard Park has been renovated.	198	Parks and Recreation
Update	Capital School Park has been renovated and is undergoing a name change.	199	Parks and Recreation
Update	Marine Park is currently at 65% design, with construction planned for 2025.	200	Parks and Recreation
Update	Gunakadeit Park has been sold, transitioning it into private property.	200	Parks and Recreation
Chapter 7 Transportation, Streetscape & Parking			
Recommendation	"Gastineau Avenue By-Pass" subsection: does not recommend this option due to landslide and avalanche areas along the route.	• CDD 227-228	Community Development
Recommendation	"Safe Routes to Schools" needs to be updated to reflect the realignment of the JSD (i.e. Marie Drake won't be a school next year and JDHS will be more crowded).	225	Engineering and Public Works
Update	Efforts are concentrated on implementing a new parking management system across our two parking garages and three hourly lots, alongside the management of on-street parking. Patrons utilizing the hourly lots can now conveniently pay via app or meter, accepting debit/credit cards and coins. Parking garage system upgrades aim to mitigate overselling parking permits optimizing capacity management.	231-233	Parks and Recreation
Update	"Electric Vehicle Charging subsection: are now EV charging at the Rock Dump, in the City Lot at the Basin Road/8th Street intersection, and at Harris Harbor, funded through a CIP for "Areawide EV Charging Stations." Intend to apply for a federal Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant that will include developing an area-wide charging plan (we were not awarded this grant last year).	• There 234-236	Engineering and Public Works
Update	Transit subsection: Downtown Transit Center has been leased and should open this summer.	• The 236	Engineering and Public Works
Update	Park and Ride (P&R) subsection: Transit Center is now in operation with a parking lot for "Park and Ride" (although the parking lot is seldom used).	• Valley 238	Engineering and Public Works

Update	<p>Transit Circulator subsection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBJ paid for a Juneau Circulator Study Plan that was discussed at a Special Assembly COW on Feb 12. The Assembly chose not to implement a downtown circulator, but did support a "Tripper" service. Transit will increase summer service to the Valley (using Marine Passenger Fees) as part of a "Tripper" service that seeks to alleviate the crowding caused by cruise ship passengers trying to get to the Glacier. We're also taking actions to better advertise the free downtown loop. 	239	Engineering and Public Works
Update	<p>Electric Transit Buses subsection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We currently have one Proterra electric bus. Despite Transit's best efforts, it hasn't run in over a year (and Proterra is in Chapter 11). Transit has ordered 7 new electric Gillig buses that we expect to receive in Fall 2024. 	240	Engineering and Public Works
Recommendation	<p>Evaluate options for a by-pass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDD does not recommend this option due to landslide and avalanche areas along the route. 	247	Community Development
Recommendation	<p>Implement an EV charging permit program and provide EV charging facilities at CBJ facilities. Encourage or require EV charging facilities in commercial and multi-family developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be listed as "long term" rather than "near." At this point, the systems required to charge for the electricity would cost CBJ more than the revenue that we would gain. 	248	Engineering and Public Works



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT - REQUEST FOR AGENCY COMMENT

ORGANIZATION: Sealaska Heritage Institute
STAFF PERSON/TITLE: Chuck Smythe, Senior Ethnologist
DATE: May 29, 2024
APPLICANT:
TYPE OF APPLICATION: AME 18-07 Blueprint Downtown Area Plan

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The draft Blueprint Downtown Area Plan was forwarded to the Assembly by the Planning Commission on Tuesday, April 23, with a recommendation to adopt by ordinance, with amendments. If adopted, this plan will be used by decision-making bodies to make informed decisions about development projects and priorities.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

PARCEL NUMBER(S):

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FROM PLANNER:

The Assembly Lands, Housing, and Economic Development (LHED) committee will provide a recommendation to the full Assembly on the adoption of the Blueprint Downtown area plan. As a stakeholder, your input on the plan's goals and action items will aid the PC in making an informed decision.

Sealaska Heritage Institute is integral to the plan's Visions for a vibrant downtown. Please provide comments or updates you would like to share on your current priorities and/or projects related to action items outlined in the Blueprint.

AGENCY COMMENTS:

p. 29 title: suggest reversing the order of the section title "Juneau's History and Natural Context" as the section starts with the environment. It could read, "Juneau's Natural and Historic Context"

P. 31 Historic Context: Suggested revisions:

Sentence 1: replace this sentence with the following:

Southeast Alaska has been inhabited by Indigenous populations for more than 10,000 years. Tlingit culture emerged about 6,000-6,500 years ago. The Tlingit have owned and occupied this region since that time.

Sentence 3, starting with the words Dzantik'i Héeni to the end: Revise the final clause so it reads, "...a seasonal village with two smoke houses was located there in 1880 when Áak'w Tlingits led prospectors to gold deposits in Silver Bow basin, starting the gold stampede the following year.'

Sentence 4: revise end of sentence with this text: '... to encourage residents to relocate and seek employment in the mines.'

Sentence 5, end: replace '...on the tidelands adjacent to Dzantik'i Héeni' with: 'along the shore above the tidelands between the creek and the bluff overlooking the growing town of Juneau.'

Bottom of page (31), replace the sentence starting: 'As the adjacent land grew in value... with this:

"First with the construction of a plank road that eventually became Willoughby Avenue, and later as the tidelands

AGENCY COMMENTS (CONTINUED):

were filled in with tailings from the gold mines, the Áak'w village was cut off from the open water. During this time the tidelands remained under the control of the federal government for the use and benefit of the Áak'w people. In the 1960s, when the City of Juneau sought to "redevelop" the area, the tidelands were opened to development by an Act of Congress and the village was subdivided, allowing for the expropriation of land owned by Áak'w people. The removal of Áak'w people from the village continued in subsequent years as "urban development" projects brought further changes to the village area."

Additional comments:

There are a number of goals/actions calling for plans to revitalize downtown. SHI recommends there needs to be a study of the vacant buildings/storefronts to determine why they have remained vacant for a long time (more than a year) and to present actions that could be taken to re-open them to re-vitalize the business district, such an ordinance penalizing no vacancy:

- Galligaskins building

- Triangle Bldg

- Gross Alaska theater/apartments

Comments on ACTIONS:

P. 45: SHI supports efforts to expand and promote the Juneau arts community including a new vision for the JACC and replacement of the existing building

P. 45: SHI recommends that the designation of the the Áak'w Kwáan Village District as an 'arts and cultural campus" is not well thought out, and is ahistorical. There is another campus of arts and culture in the downtown and Heritage Square was designated to celebrate the multi-ethnicity of Juneau's cultural groups.

P. 49: SHI supports the the idea to "Soften the visual character of Gold Creek" but we are left with the question, what does this actually mean? There should be some examples given here. SHI supports the idea of creating another configuration of the mouth of the creek that would promote public access, but recognizes the need for some sort of flood control.

P. 49: Redevelop Marine Park: this is already underway?

P. 50: SHI supports the action plan to "Preserve and Provide public access to the shoreline," but the question is how to do this?

P. 54: Relocate City Hall and develop the area as a connector to Marine Park: we are not sure what is meant here (connector?).



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT - REQUEST FOR AGENCY COMMENT

DEPARTMENT: Historic Resources Advisory Committee

STAFF PERSON/TITLE: Shannon Crossley, Acting Chair

DATE: May 17, 2024

APPLICANT:

TYPE OF APPLICATION: AME 18-07 Blueprint Downtown Area Plan

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The draft Blueprint Downtown Area Plan was forwarded to the Assembly by the Planning Commission on Tuesday, April 23, with a recommendation to adopt by ordinance, with amendments. If adopted, this plan will be used by decision-making bodies to make informed decisions about development projects and priorities.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

PARCEL NUMBER(S):

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FROM PLANNER:

The Assembly Lands, Housing, and Economic Development (LHED) committee will provide a recommendation to the full Assembly on the adoption of the Blueprint Downtown area plan. As an advisory committee, your input on priorities, project updates, and other feedback will aide the LHED committee in making an informed decision.

Sections most relevant to HRAC are the "Historic Resource Preservation" section of Chapter 3, starting at p. 93, and the "Downtown" subdistrict section in Chapter 4, p. 121. Note the Action Charts at the end of each chapter outline anticipated implementing partners for the plan Goals and Actions. Please provide updates on HRAC's current priorities and/or projects that are relevant to action items outlined in the Blueprint plan.

AGENCY COMMENTS:

The following comments were discussed at a 5/22/24 regular meeting of HRAC:

- p. 11 - Under Vision, add "collection of historic resources" in bold paragraph about Downtown Juneau.
- p. 12 - Under 4th priority for Action, add "preservation of historic buildings."
- p. 28 - Under Functional Plans, add Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan, adopted by Ordinance in 2020
- p. 31 - In Historic Context, paragraph 2, add "The oldest remaining houses occur on what was known as Courthouse Hill and in time, Telephone Hill."
- p. 31 - First sentence suggestion, "Southeast Alaska has been inhabited by Indigenous populations for more than 10,000 years. Tlingit culture emerged about 6,000-6,500 years ago. The Tlingit have owned and occupied this region since that time."
- p. 31 - Remove "still" from "two smoke houses were still there in 1880, add "when Aak'w Tlingits led prospectors to gold deposits in Silver Bow basin." (Wording sounds like gold was discovered by prospectors alone.)
- p. 44 - Under anticipated partners, add HRAC
- p. 44 - Under actions, bullet 5, add "Promote and provide incentives to rehabilitate and preserve historic houses and buildings to provide additional housing."

AGENCY COMMENTS (CONTINUED):

p. 47 - We support the Main Street program, it's important as a means of preserving historic downtowns. Currently our downtown core is in danger due to significant number of vacant properties.

p. 85 - Another bullet under tasks "Promote downtown core as a vital economic generator throughout history and maintaining the historic character as a heritage tourism attraction."

p. 167 - In "related plans," add Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan, adopted in 2020



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT - REQUEST FOR AGENCY COMMENT

DEPARTMENT: Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce

STAFF PERSON/TITLE: Maggie McMillan, Executive Director

DATE: May 17, 2024

APPLICANT:

TYPE OF APPLICATION: AME 18-07 Blueprint Downtown Area Plan

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The draft Blueprint Downtown Area Plan was forwarded to the Assembly by the Planning Commission on Tuesday, April 23, with a recommendation to adopt by ordinance, with amendments. If adopted, this plan will be used by decision-making bodies to make informed decisions about development projects and priorities.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

PARCEL NUMBER(S):

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FROM PLANNER:

The Assembly Lands, Housing, and Economic Development (LHED) committee will provide a recommendation to the full Assembly on the adoption of the Blueprint Downtown area plan. As an advisory committee, your input on priorities, project updates, and other feedback will aid the LHED committee in making an informed decision.

The Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce is integral to the plan's Visions for a strong and stable economy, as outlined in Chapter 1. Because the plan is so large, we are asking you to focus your comments on Chapter 3 Economic Vitality and Chapter 5 Tourism. Note the Action Charts at the end of each chapter outline anticipated implementing partners for the plan Goals and Actions. Please provide updates on the Chamber's current policies and projects that are relevant to action items outlined in the Blueprint plan.

AGENCY COMMENTS:

The chamber is a member advocacy organization that focuses on any issue that has a direct impact on the economic health of Juneau's overall economy. We work directly with the CBJ officials, participate in regularly scheduled meetings and facilitate solutions to issues that support the business community.

Specific to the comments and action items in chapter 3 of the plan, the Juneau Chamber has housing as one of our top priorities, and to that end formed a Housing and Development Committee two years ago to bring developers and construction companies together to identify barriers to development. This group established regular meetings with CBJ officials (CDD, Engineering, City Manager) to discuss issues which led to recommending that there be a series of changes to Title 49 (and related regulation) that were viewed as unnecessary, outdated or overly restrictive to encourage development. (Interestingly JCC is not listed as one of the partners on this key initiative). Whether the needed modifications come from line-item changes, or a wholesale rewrite of Title 49, the chamber strongly believes that there needs to be more flexibility in zoning and building code regulations to meet the unique nature of the downtown area. One-size-fits-all doesn't work with such unique challenges to create mixed use housing, address parking issues and encourage the rehabilitation of underutilized buildings in downtown Juneau.

AGENCY COMMENTS (CONTINUED):

Inherent in this same subject is ensuring that the approval process for development projects is consistent and timely. The limitations of developing any project with the seasonality of our climate demands a predictable process responsive to the needs of the construction industry. Tax incentives, tax abatement, qualifying low interest rate loans can all play a key role in incentivizing development, but it is still private money at risk to develop and operate any project profitably.

Public safety is also a top priority for the chamber, which has focused primarily on addressing the homeless population and it's impact on retail businesses – both in downtown Juneau and throughout the community. The chamber has had a second crossing as a priority for decades, recognizing that any meaningful economic development of North Douglas will require a second crossing.

The chamber was directly responsible for bringing the North Crossing back to life, working directly with the CBJ mayor and CIP budget, as well as Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Tourism

The chamber is directly involved in the many facets of both cruise and destination visitors to Juneau. Specific to the chamber's role as and advocate for a healthy business climate we created an organization called "Protect Juneau's Future," which brought together the various businesses and organizations who rely directly on the visitor industry to in turn educate the entire community on how reliant we all are on the dollars brought in from this industry. Protect Juneau's Future is now a separate organization with the same mission.

From: [Alexandra Pierce](#)
To: [Minta Montalbo](#); [Forrest Courtney](#)
Cc: [Scott Ciambor](#)
Subject: Comments for LHED Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 29, 2024 9:45:46 AM

Hello Minta,

Please forward my below comments to the LHED committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Blueprint Downtown Area Plan. I was involved in Blueprint during my time in CDD. Over three years (and through the pandemic) the Blueprint Steering Committee put in many hours of hard work evaluating downtown Juneau from every possible angle and the result is ambitious and comprehensive. It is unfortunate that due to staffing issues, the plan was not brought before the Planning Commission and Assembly for adoption when it was completed. I enjoyed re-reading the tourism-related sections and reflecting on what was happening in the community when those sections were drafted. I do not believe that we should revisit this plan and update the document to reflect what has transpired since it was completed. The plan is far too valuable to languish any longer and I urge the LHED Committee to move the plan to the Assembly for adoption.

For sake of context, I want to clarify one persistent component on the tourism front. The Planning Commission received public feedback about Blueprint's recommendation of a fifth cruise ship dock. At the time the plan was completed, the Visitor Industry Task Force had just wrapped up its work and submitted its final report. The steering committee elected to defer to the VITF as a concurrent process that looked more deeply into tourism management strategies. As you may recall, the VITF supported a dock if certain criteria are met. I believe the steering committee made the right decision in deferring to the more comprehensive process. This plan was never intended to be a vehicle for conducting public process on a fifth cruise ship dock. The VITF, and future public process around the tidelands lease are the appropriate forums for that discussion.

I am proud of CDD staff and the steering committee's hard work and again, I urge you to move this plan forward so we can hit the ground running on implementation and create a more vibrant and successful downtown.

Thanks,
Alix

Alexandra Pierce | Visitor Industry Director

City & Borough of Juneau
155 Heritage Way, Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907.586.5240 ext. 4172



Blueprint Downtown Memo

- Draft Plan & Appendices
- Assembly and Planning Commission Role
- Steering committee, visioning, and community engagement and input;
- Planning Commission Review and Notice of Recommendation;
- Proposed Revisions
- Compliance with Comprehensive Plan & Other Plans
- Staff Recommendation

Blueprint Downtown Area Plan



Draft Blueprint Downtown Area Plan

The mission of Blueprint Downtown is to create a long-term area plan for the Downtown Juneau area that reflects current public desires and incorporates past work from relevant existing plans.

You may find a copy of the current Draft Blueprint Downtown Area Plan at any CBJ Public Library, the Community Development Department, the City Clerk's Office, as well as the link above.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS ON THE PLAN TO: blueprintdowntown@juneau.org

[Steering Committee Members & Minutes](#)

[Visioning Process Report](#)

[How You Can Participate](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

Steering Committee

<https://juneau.org/community-development/blueprint-downtown>

At its public hearing on October 23, 2018, the CBJ Planning Commission approved 13 people for the Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee. The Blueprint team would like to thank all those that applied to be on the Steering Committee – it was a difficult task to select those chosen out of the many excellent applications. Committee Members are:

Betsy Brenneman, Kirby Day, Daniel Glidmann, Michael Heumann, Laura Martinson, Iris Matthews, Karena Perry, Jill Ramiel, Patty Ware, Ricardo Worl, Tahlia Gerger, Student Representative, Nathaniel Dye, Planning Commission Liaison, Former Member Wayne Jensen, Former Member Meilani Schijvens, Former Student Representative Lily Otsea, Former Chair Christine Woll

Planning Commission

- COW and Special Meeting to review Plan
- Responses to Planning Commissioner Questions in packet
- **PC Recommendation:** Adopt the Plan by ordinance as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan with revisions noted in staff report. The Commission added a recommendation to encourage a stronger focus on housing with preference language for projects involving housing downtown.



BLUEPRINT DOWNTOWN

DOWNTOWN JUNEAU'S AREA PLAN



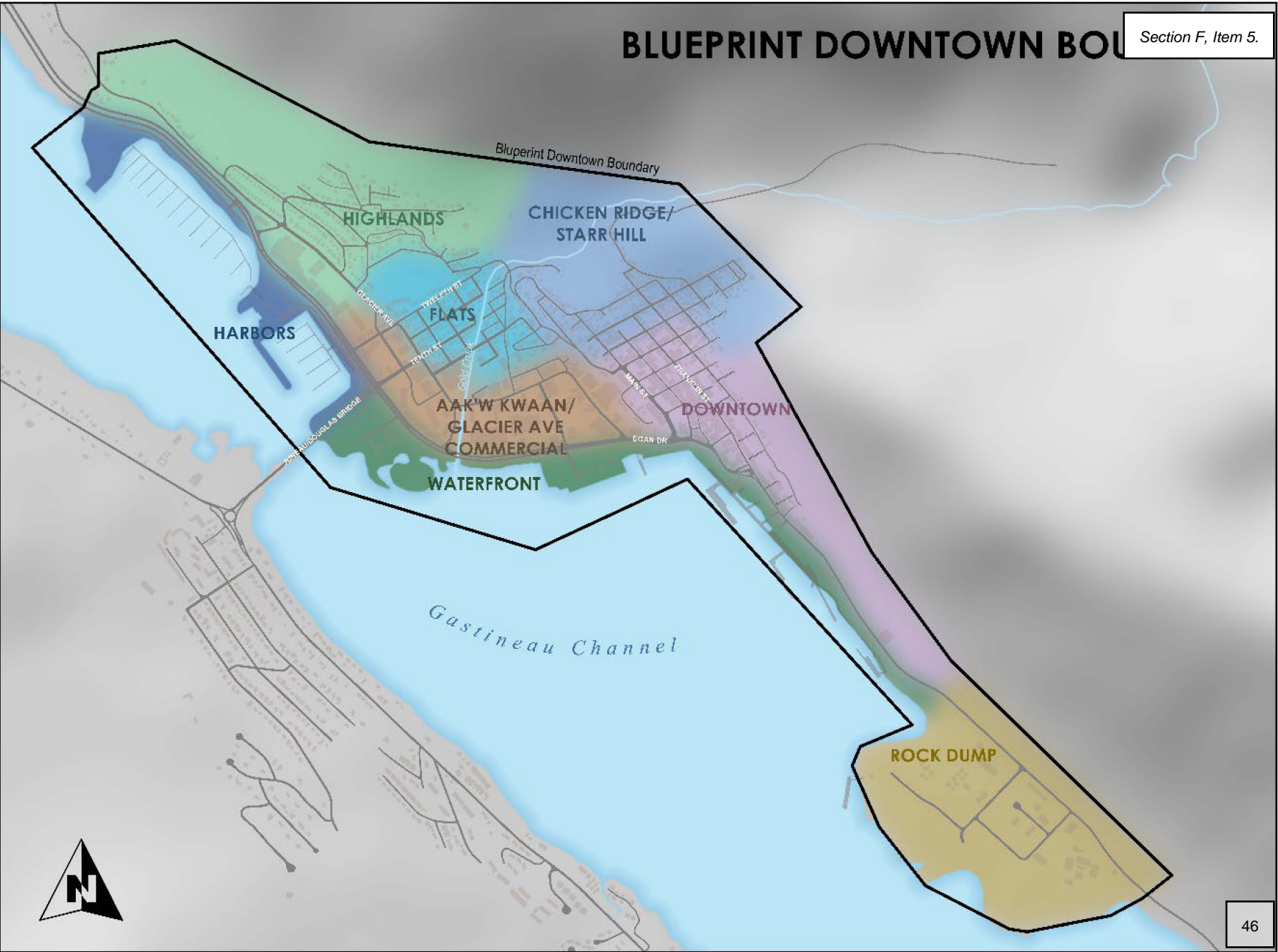
Blueprint Downtown

Blueprint Downtown aims to create a **long-term area plan** for the Downtown Juneau Area that reflects current public desires and incorporates past work from relevant existing plans.

A major goal is to provide **strategic direction for development and growth**, while embracing livability and a sense of place, as well as maintaining quality of life for residents.

BLUEPRINT DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY

Section F, Item 5.



Community Outreach & Engagement

Section F, Item 5.

41 Steering Committee Meetings & Visioning Process

- Nine focus areas
- 300+ public participants at three public meetings
- 900 Unique interactions:
 - Street interviews
 - Gallery Walk/Street Pop-Ups
 - Theme-based walking tours
- 2019 Most Innovative Award – AK Chapter of the American Planning Association

M R V **lucid reverie**
ARCHITECTS Sheinberg Associates



35 plans & studies reviewed and incorporated into Blueprint

- 1997 Capital City Vision Project
- 2004 Long Range Waterfront Development Plan
- 2009 Juneau Non-motorized Transportation Plan
- 2010 Downtown Parking Management Plan
- 2012 Willoughby District Area Plan
- 2013 Comprehensive Plan
- 2015 Economic Development Plan
- 2016 Main Street Technical Report
- 2018 Juneau Energy Strategy
- 2020 Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan

Goals & Iconography



MORE HOUSING OF ALL TYPES

Downtown is a great place to live with diverse housing options, services, and amenities that will stimulate commerce and community and create an 18/365 downtown.



DIVERSE, WELL-MANAGED TOURISM

Tourism is managed in a way that addresses concerns of downtown residents and industry. Focused efforts to bring independent and business travelers to Juneau will diversify the sector and expand the season.



A DOWNTOWN FOR EVERYONE

Juneau's diversity is celebrated by offering services, a range of mobility options, activities, goods, and amenities that appeal to all ages, backgrounds, and incomes.



STRONG AND STABLE ECONOMY

Year-round economic vitality is stimulated by more residents, diverse businesses downtown, increased activity and programming, improved access, greater safety, and enhanced aesthetics. Private and public sector investment is coordinated and leveraged to catalyze desired development.



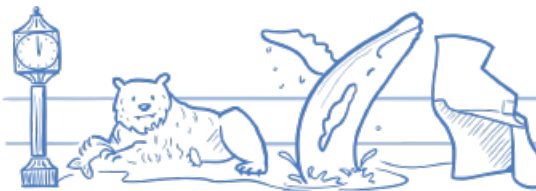
SAFE AND WELCOMING

The safety of downtown is improved by incentivizing housing of all types, including vulnerable populations, reducing crime through environmental design, programming that draws people downtown.



A DESTINATION WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

Downtown is a vibrant, appealing place that generates excitement and interest with seating, lighting, activities, clear and logical connections, where amenities destinations, housing, retail, offices, parks and natural resources are linked. Walking and bicycling are prioritized.

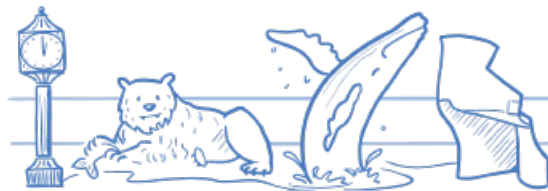


Top Five Priorities for Action




Section F, Item 5.

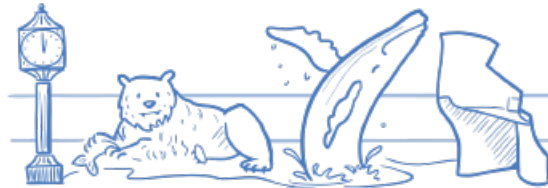


- Housing
- Tourism Management
- Year-round vitality
- Downtown point person
- Complete the Seawalk and Harborwalk.



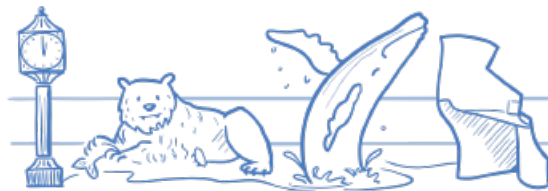
Blueprint for Action

GOALS	ACTIONS	ANTICIPATED IMPLEMENTING PARTNER(S)	WHEN (ON-GOING, NEAR, MID, LONG)	CHAPTER(S)	RELEVANT PLAN(S)
	<p>Expand investment downtown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop stronger partnerships between government, non-profit and for profit developers; • Examine road blocks to public/private partnerships and joint developments of housing, mixed use, parking structures, and/or land leases and take steps to eliminate them; • Develop opportunities to use outside funding to support downtown investment. 	<p>Housing Office, CDD, EPW, JEDC, DBA, JCC</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>3 & 4</p>	<p>HAP, JCP</p>
	<p>Create a “Downtown Clean and Safe” program that focuses on the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular sidewalk cleaning; • Additional trash pickup; • Graffiti removal; • Block watches; • Coordinate and communicate with local police officers and safety ambassadors ; • CPTED practices. 	<p>JPD, JEDC, DBA, JCC</p>	<p>Near</p>	<p>3 & 5</p>	



Measuring Success

- Number of housing units added, by type, per year
- Number of independent visitors per year (hotel bed tax and convention/conference attendance rates)
- Tourism Best Management Practices Community Hotline Annual Data and Trends
- Applications per year for the 12-year housing tax abatement program, number of new units created, and tax dollars abated
- Parking Use & Community Tourism surveys
- Crime rates





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TO: Deputy Mayor Hale and Committee of the Whole
 DATE: September 9, 2024
 FROM: Katie Koester, City Manager
 Robert Barr, Deputy City Manager
 RE: Review of proposed mitigation strategies

The purpose of this memo is to report on Friday's interagency meeting on mitigation measures for the Mendenhall Glacier Lake Outburst Flood. The meeting had an impressive list of attendees including engineers, hydrologists, and representatives from National Weather Service, Alaska Department of Transportation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Army Corps of Engineers, United States Geological Survey, United States Forest Service, Tlingit & Haida, and the offices of Senators Murkowski and Sullivan.

The group reviewed the list of mitigation options presented at the 8/19/24 Assembly meeting plus proposals that have since been suggested by the public. These include but are not limited to:

- Mt. Bullard tunneling / lake tap
- Creating new river channels / trenching
- Utilizing Mendenhall Lake as a reservoir
- Creating levees and flood control devices around Mendenhall / Dredge Lake
- Displacing water in the basin with rock
- Speeding melting of the overflow drainage channel on Mendenhall Glacier
- Siphoning water in the basin
- Flood fighting

Each option was vetted through the criteria below:

- Timeline. Can the project be accomplished in 10-20 months or is it a multiyear project?
- Permitting. What are the permitting hurdles for the project? Can they be waived by any entity?
- Constructability. Is the project feasible to construct? Are there technology or access issues that make it impractical?
- Funding. Is there an identified funding source for the project? Does the project require funding in the \$10-\$20M range or over \$100M?
- Community Acceptance. What will be community feedback be to the potential negative impacts of the project?
- Risk and Unintended Consequences. What is the risk of doing additional harm, down/up stream damage, or impacting other areas. What is the legal risk?

It quickly became clear that there is no option that we can pursue without additional study of the river, how it behaves, and expanded inundation maps. United State Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has a program to do this work and believes there could be funding available with a federal continuing resolution, however we cannot afford to wait to initiate this work or depend on the unreliability of the federal funding cycle; this studying and mapping effort needs to be done ASAP.

Long-term Solutions

A number of the solutions, like tunneling a lake tap and trenching got traction with the group. However, an effective solution is likely to require multiple different approaches (e.g. a levee, a controlled release, trenching, and spillways). Any permanent solution will require time; multiple years of study and design and

construction. The USACE makes sense to be the lead on any solution; they have the expertise and experience to take on a project of this size and properly evaluate and mitigate for unintended consequences (of which there are many). The good news is USACE has the authority for planning and design to protect against coastal erosion and glacial damage through a General Investigation Study. To initiate the study, we need to send a letter of intent to USACE.

When USACE secures federal funding for the study, the local jurisdiction is asked to match it (\$3M).

A federal disaster assistance appropriation could come together before the end of the year to help fund multiple national disaster response efforts. Senator Murkowski's office has been clear about making sure Alaska is included in that legislation and has asked us to work on a scope of work. Staff is preparing a scope of work that includes funding for flood fighting for the near term and federal match in order to initiate the USACE General Investigation Study. Once a General Investigation Study is complete, match for the construction is 65/35 (35% non-federal) unless tribal lands are involved. USACE's definition of tribal lands is not clear; however, we know many tribal households were affected by the flood and Tlingit and Haida was very active in the response. CBJ will be working closely with Tlingit and Haida to make sure wherever practical both governments are making parallel and coordinated requests.

Flood Fighting

It is clear that the only solution we will be able to implement before next summer is flood fighting. However, the technology and expertise that has developed to respond to flood events is encouraging. There are a variety of flood fighting strategies that exist – 6' sandbags were a topic of discussion at our meeting – and the USACE has an entire Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Division dedicated to emergency and technical assistance in response to flooding. The assistance must be requested by the State – which makes approaching Governor Dunleavy about a request from the State of Alaska the next key step, along with a corresponding Tribal request. Based on the tremendous support his administration gave during response efforts, I am confident we will be able to successfully engage the Governor. At this juncture, I am unclear what local match requirements flood fighting effort/study require, but inevitably there will be local commitment required.

Next Steps for Staff. Unless the Assembly directs us otherwise, staff will move forward with:

- Issue an RFP for expanded inundation maps and hydrological modeling of the Mendenhall River. Staff estimates that an additional \$100,000 together with the \$150,000 in emergency appropriation and existing CIP "Outburst Flooding Improvements and Agency Coordination: \$150,000" will be sufficient to fund a the study, mapping, and incidental work towards interagency coordination such as travel. (Total: \$400,000)
- Submit a letter to the USACE to initiate a feasibility study investigating Mendenhall Glacial Outburst Flooding and Erosion
- Submit a request to Governor Dunleavy to request assistance from the USACE Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies program for flood fighting planning, technical assistance, and implementation.
- Submit a federal request to Senator's Murkowski and Sullivan for 1) planning and implementation of flood fighting on the Mendenhall River, including bank hardening where efforts might increase erosion and 2) Federal match to the USACE for a feasibility study investigating Mendenhall Glacial Outburst Flooding and Erosion (\$3M)

Recommendation:

Discuss and provide feed back on staff initiated next steps

Introduce an ordinance to fund the local match for General Investigation Study with USACE (\$3M)

Introduce ordinance to increase "Outburst Flooding Improvements and Agency Coordination" by \$100,000 to fund expanded inundation maps and hydrological modeling of the Mendenhall River