

Application for a Conditional Use Permit

PROJECT NARRATIVE
City and Borough of Juneau Docks and Harbors Department
Downtown Cruise Ship Dock Reconfiguration

Submitted by:
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On Behalf of the Applicant
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September 7, 2011

Ex. 053, p. 1

CBJ110731

APPLICANT

The applicant is the City and Borough of Juneau, Docks and Harbors Department. Primary contact for the project is Gary Gillette, Port Engineer.

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located on a site seaward of the existing Alaska Steamship Dock and the Cruise Ship Terminal in downtown Juneau, Alaska. The project would be entirely constructed over waters of Gastineau Channel with two connecting wood decked approaches tying to the existing dock structure.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

From the late 1880s Juneau's economy was based on the mining industry until 1944 when the last major mine within the city limits was shut down. Decline of Juneau's waterfront docks soon followed. A new industry, tourism, brought life back to the downtown waterfront as more and more cruise ships made way to Juneau. The old timber dock structures designed to support small freighter and passenger ferries were replaced over the years with catwalks, mooring and breasting dolphins, and larger wharfs. The current structures were designed to meet the needs of passenger ships with an overall length around 800 feet. Now however, as ships have increased in size, the need to provide berths which will support Post Panamax ships of 1,000 feet and longer is a strategic response to support and provide for the industry's progression.

The City and Borough of Juneau owns and operates two cruise ship docks. They are commonly referred to as the Alaska Steamship Dock (north berth), located next to the downtown library and parking garage building, and the Cruise Ship Terminal (south berth), located in the area of the Visitor's Center and Tram Building.

The fundamental reasons why the CBJ is proposing improvements to the existing moorage system are:

- ◆ It is undersized for the size of the ships using it.
- ◆ It has been damaged by being overloaded.
- ◆ It has substantial underwater corrosion.
- ◆ It does not meet full Homeland Security provisions.

The project has several design goals.

- ◆ Increase the safety and security of the vessels docked in Juneau including reducing the need for lightering from off-shore moored vessels.
- ◆ Support the Post Panamax class cruise ships (1,000+/- ft length). This is the vessel size that the industry is using and the facilities must support the vessels at the risk of losing Juneau as a stop. The south berth will allow for ships up to 1,100' in length to support future ship size projections by the industry.
- ◆ Provide a safe and interesting experience for the passengers into the community of Juneau.
- ◆ Consolidate security so that yellow barrier fencing may be removed from existing dock.

PROJECT TIMELINE

2001-2002 – The CBJ Docks and Harbors Board undertook a strategic analysis, developed an improvement plan for municipally owned port facilities, and identified the capacity of the CBJ cruise ship docks as a limitation affecting the ability of the CBJ to serve the cruise ship industry in the future.

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2002 – 2009 – The Docks and Harbors Board evaluated a variety of alternatives to accommodate the cruise ship docking now and in the future, and to align the port capacity of Juneau with Ketchikan and Skagway, Juneau's sister city ports of call.

2003-2004 – The Docks and Harbors Board assisted the Assembly in the development of a comprehensive waterfront development plan for downtown Juneau which called for changes to the CBJ cruise ship docks to accommodate larger ships.

2006 – The Docks and Harbors Board conducted a thorough evaluation of the condition of the CBJ cruise ship docks and determined that the ship mooring system was in poor condition, structurally compromised, and undersized for the current and future fleet of cruise ships visiting Juneau.

2007- 2008 – The Docks and Harbors Board presented to the CBJ Assembly alternatives for replacing the CBJ cruise ship docks to accommodate Juneau's cruise ship fleet which caused the Assembly to establish an Ad-Hoc Committee to evaluate port-wide dock alternatives.

2008 – 2009 – The Ad-Hoc Committee commissioned a comprehensive navigation study and docking simulation to analyze various public and private proposals for accommodating the cruise ship fleet.

2008-2009 – The Docks and Harbors Board commissioned an uplands operations and transportation study of proposed cruise ship dock improvements and is implementing recommendations to mitigate vehicular and pedestrian congestion attributed to current and future cruise ship operations.

2010 – The State of Alaska granted the CBJ funds for improvements to the cruise ship docks and amended cruise ship passenger fee laws to provide Juneau with additional funds for such purpose beginning in 2011.

2010 – The CBJ Assembly approved an offshore floating berth concept known as 16B so that the Docks and Harbors Board can begin the design process to install the new floating berths.

2011 - The State of Alaska granted the CBJ additional funds for improvements to the cruise ship docks.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CBJ plans to construct two new offshore floating moorage berths to accommodate cruise ships of the Post Panamax type in the range of 1,000+/- foot length. The proposed offshore facilities would include floating moorage berths, drive down transfer bridges, dolphins, and other necessary infrastructure to accommodate cruise ships. The offshore facility would allow for the removal of the existing security fencing and eliminate the need for forklifts, stairs, and gangways that are currently used on the dock. This will enhance the local and visitor experience along the downtown docks as part of the waterfront seawalk concept. During the off season the floats could be used for a variety of vessels including fishing, research, military, etc

The proposed new offshore facility is divided geographically into a North Berth and South Berth spanning approximately 2,200 linear feet and will be implemented through a two year construction schedule. The first phase would include the installation of the south berth consisting of a 50 ft. x 400 ft concrete floating structure, a vehicle transfer bridge, mooring and breasting dolphins, pile supported decks and access docks, gangways, catwalks, and a small vessel moorage float. The second phase would include the installation of the north berth consisting of a 50 ft. x 300 ft concrete floating structure, a vehicle transfer bridge, mooring and breasting dolphins, pile supported decks and access docks, gangways, and catwalks.

The project would remove the existing lightering float at Marine Park and replace it with a new float adjacent to the existing dock at the south berth. This float would serve similar uses as the current float at Marine Park.

UPLAND FACILITIES

The proposed project will be supported by uplands facilities consisting of the existing bus staging lot adjacent to Marine Park, the reconfigured Cruise Ship Staging Area adjacent to the Tram, the new Visitors Center, and the new Port/Customs Building.

In 2003 the city completed a project that resulted in the bus staging area between Marine Park and the parking garage. This project significantly improved the safety and capacity for vehicle staging to serve the cruise ships docking at the Alaska Steamship Dock (ASD) and those anchoring in the harbor while lightering passengers to the float at Marine Park. During the 2011 cruise season the largest ship to call at ASD had a capacity of 1,460 passengers. On days that a ship lightered to Marine Park the additional passenger count was as high as 2033 for a total of 3493 passengers accommodated at the Marine Park upland facility. Once the new facility is complete the most passengers disembarking at ASD will be up to 2400 depending upon which ships get scheduled at this site. Therefore the current facilities appear adequate to handle the projected passenger counts at the proposed north berth.

The current staging area at the Cruise Ship Terminal (CST) will be reconfigured beginning in October 2012 with completion prior to the construction of the proposed south berth. The reconfiguration would improve pedestrian safety and increase staging capacity in this area. The reconfiguration project was approved by the Planning Commission under a city project review (CSP2011-0001) on April 12, 2011. In 2011 the largest ship to dock at CST accommodated 2124 passengers. On days when lightering took place to the Intermediate Vessel Float the total count was as high as 3798 passengers. The reconfigured uplands serving the south berth should be adequate to handle as many as 4200 passengers depending upon the particular ships that would be scheduled for this site.

CONSTRUCTION

The proposed project consists of a combination of fixed and floating docks, both of which require steel piles to support or anchor these structures. The floating docks will be manufactured offsite, towed to the site and field installed. The overall in-water work is significantly shortened by this streamlined process. The primary type of pile that will be used at the site will be hollow steel pipe piles. The means of installation will vary with specific locations and will include rock anchors, pin piles, or rock sockets as necessary. The piles will be vibrated and driven to bedrock or as deep into existing soils as necessary to resist the design loads.

SCHEDULE

The South Berth is presently scheduled to begin construction on October 1, 2013 and be completed by May 1, 2014. The North Berth would begin construction on October 1, 2014 and be completed by May 1, 2015. Due to the limited time that is available for construction it is anticipated that it will be necessary to work beyond the normal work day in order to complete this project in time for the arrival of ships in the following season.

ZONING AND PERMISSIBLE USE

The project is located in a Waterfront Commercial zoning district and is allowed with a Conditional Use Permit as listed in the Table of Permissible Uses at section 9.600 Marine commercial facilities including fisheries support, commercial freight, and passenger traffic.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The CBJ Comprehensive Plan (2008) promotes tourism for its economic development opportunities for the Juneau community. Support for development of adequate facilities such as the proposed cruise berths is contained in Policy 5.4 as stated below.

POLICY 5.4. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE CBJ TO ENCOURAGE TOURISM, CONVENTION AND OTHER VISITOR-RELATED ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE FACILITIES AND SERVICES, WHILE PROTECTING JUNEAU'S NATURAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ATTRACTIONS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE, AND TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE FUTURE GROWTH OF TOURISM IN A MANNER THAT ADDRESSES BOTH COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY CONCERNS.

LONG RANGE WATERFRONT PLAN

In 2004 the Assembly adopted Ordinance 2004-40 which established the Long Range Waterfront Plan for the City and Borough of Juneau. The plan divided the waterfront into areas each of which have specific character, land use, or similar activities. The proposed project is primarily within Area D of the plan. The concept plan for Area D envisioned expansion of the dock facilities to accommodate two 1,000+/- foot cruise ships. The proposed project was derived from that concept and is consistent with the Waterfront Plan.

SPECIAL WATERFRONT AREA

The Juneau Coastal Management Program (JCMP) designates Special Waterfront Areas that are acknowledged as suitable for commercial and industrial development and considered to have low habitat value. The JCMP establishes a line of Seaward Limit of Permanent Development in Special Waterfront Areas beyond which development is not allowed unless it can meet certain criteria. In the Downtown Special Waterfront Area the line is essentially at the face of the existing dock. Therefore the proposed project is seaward of the limit of permanent development.

The criteria established by the JCMP to allow development seaward of the line is a) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to meet the public need for the use; and b) the nature of the use requires a specific location and no other location will suffice. The proposed project is an upgrade of the existing dock system and is dependent upon the existing upland support facilities. There is no feasible and prudent alternative that would allow the development of two cruise ship berths and the associated upland facilities within the downtown harbor area and be within the limits of the line of seaward development. The nature of the use, a two berth cruise ship facility, is dependent upon immediate access to tourist related services which are provided by the existing uplands facilities and the adjacent downtown commercial area.

NAVIGATION

The Marine Exchange of Alaska conducted a navigation study on behalf of the CBJ in 2009 to determine and analyze navigation issues within the Juneau Harbor. The report reviewed a number of various cruise ship dock and pier alternatives including the proposed project. A letter from the Marine Exchange of Alaska to the CBJ dated September 2010 provides an executive summary of the navigational issues regarding cruise ship operations and proposed cruise ship docks reconfigurations by the CBJ. The result was that the proposed project would have minimal impacts to the harbor. Regarding the approach to the Franklin Dock the report indicated that under certain high wind conditions a tug might be necessary for a ship to pull off the dock. In the Assembly approval of the project a condition was included to work with the Franklin Dock owner to address CBJ assistance in the event that tug assist is necessary due to wind conditions.

UTILITIES

The new floating berths will be provided with water for use by ships in replenishing their fresh water supply and for fire protection. At the Assembly's request the proposed berths will be outfitted to provide sewer off loading capabilities and the option to provide shore power hook up in the future.

The project will include sanitary sewer connections to allow ships to off load treated water. Carson Dorn, Inc. performed a study of the capacity of the existing Juneau Douglas Treatment Plant to accept certain pre-processed waste water as is currently done at the Franklin Dock. The plant is able to through put the additional anticipated volume from the two ships without modifications to the plant. Thus the provision to off load this waste stream will be accommodated in the project.

In discussions with AEL&P it was determined that they are not able to provide interruptible power to the new facility at this time but maybe in the future with the completion of the Lake Dorothy project. To prepare for that future possibility electrical conduit will be run from a sub-station site on AEL&P property above South Franklin Street to the existing dock structure. When power is available the lines would be run to the floating berths.

LIGHTING

Lighting will be provided on the floats, transfer bridges, and approach decks for safety and security purposes. Luminaires would be mounted on light standards at a height to allow adequate light distribution but will be focused downward so not to cause glare beyond the areas to be illuminated. Specific fixtures have not been selected at this point in the design process.

VEGETATIVE COVER

The proposed project is located over water thus vegetative cover is not feasible at this site.

SECURITY

There are two elements of security that will be addressed for the project: Homeland Security and general security. Homeland Security provisions are required when a ship is docked at the facility. A specific security plan is required by the US Coast Guard to protect the facility from acts of terrorism and must be approved prior to operating the facility. Alaska Marine Exchange is working with Docks and Harbors Department to develop the security plan. There are two primary aspects that must be addressed. This includes provisions to deter unauthorized vehicles to access the transfer bridge and floating berths. This is typically handled with removable bollards that can be removed to allow authorized access for emergency and support services. The other element is controlling access for passengers and others to and from the docking facility. This is typically handled with security personnel at the embarkation/disembarkation points. There will be two such points where the transfer bridge meets the existing dock. These controlled points will allow the elimination of the continuous yellow barriers down the middle of the existing dock thereby expanding the continuous walkway as part of the SeaWalk network.

General security would be provided when needed to protect public safety and property. This will be handled with gates at the point where the access to the floating berths meet the existing docks. Generally the floating berth access would be open to the public. However, during the off season local or visiting vessels may tie up to the facility and security might be desired to protect the boat or equipment destined for the boat. Also, if vandalism or other undesirable activities begin occurring on the floats they may need to be secured.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

There are no historic properties identified within the project site. There are four historic resources identified in the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) that are in the uplands adjacent to the project site. They

include Alaska Steamship Company Dock Site (JUN-314); Juneau Cold Storage Company (JUN-212); Waterfront Building/Scandinavian Grocery (JUN-376); and Warner Building (JUN-374). The JUN-314 complex historically featured warehouses, wharfs, and dock structures that have been removed over time such that nothing of the original remains. Newer wooden dock structures have been installed over time in this location along with steel piling breasting dolphins on the dock edge to accommodate the current cruise industry. The proposed project does not change these existing dock features. All other identified historic resources have been lost to fire (JUN-212) or demolished for new development (JUN-374 & JUN-376).

The project runs parallel to and approximately 400 feet seaward of the Downtown Historic District. The south end of the district (from the Red Dog south) has seen substantial new and redevelopment such that most of the historic character has been lost through unsympathetic renovations and demolition/replacement projects. The Northway Building (JUN-257) is the only remaining building on the uphill side of South Franklin Street that is a contributing property to the historic district and retains some of its original character. The proposed project has no direct or indirect impact on the setting of this building as it does not block views of the building nor is the project seen from the building.

FORMER ALASKA STATE FERRY TERMINAL

In 1963 the City and Borough of Juneau leased an area in the general location of the Cruise Terminal uplands facility to the state of Alaska for the purposes of establishing a ferry terminal. The city actually built the facilities needed to accommodate the ferry vessels including dock, staging area, and a terminal building (current visitor center) referred to as the premises. The terms of the lease were for 20 years which included a payment intended to recover costs to the city for development of the facilities. The lease also contained an option to extend for the life of the premises with payment of \$1 per year. In 1983 the state notified the city they wanted to extend the lease and began making payments of \$1 per year. The last payment was issued in 2001 and the original premises have exceeded their useful life.

While the original premises have exceeded their useful life the new south berth, approach dock and bridge will be built to a loading classification of HS 20 which would allow for use by the Alaska Marine Highway if so desired. At this time the ferry system has not indicated intent to return service to downtown Juneau.

FISHERMAN'S MEMORIAL

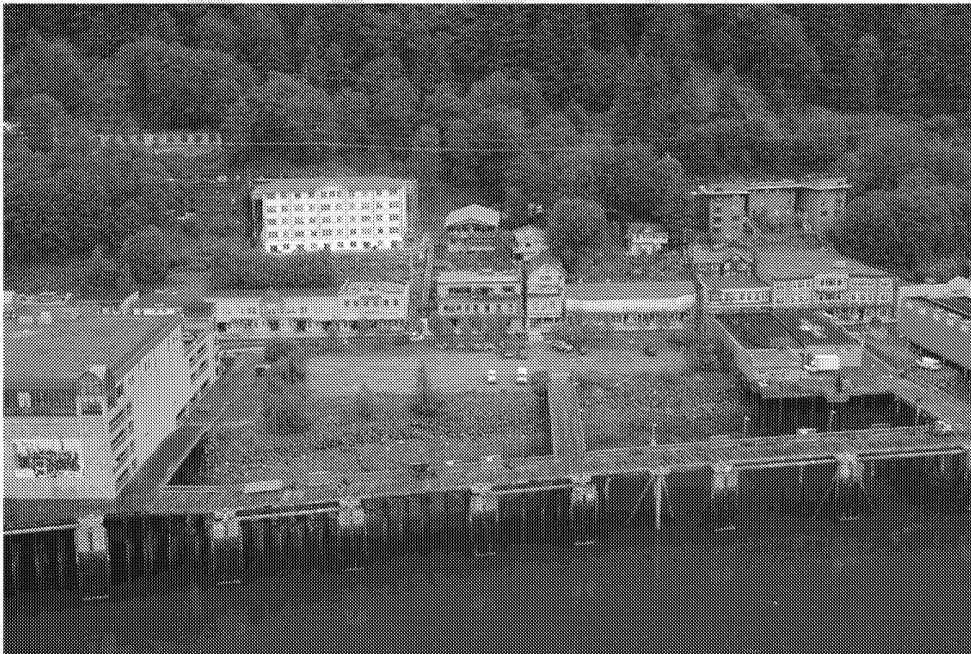
The Alaska Commercial Fisherman's Memorial Board expressed concerns regarding the potential impacts of the proposed project on the Memorial and the Blessing of the Fleet ceremony. The Docks and Harbors Department held a public meeting on the issue on May 25, 2011 to gather public comment. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee held a special public meeting on the issue on August 16, 2011. The Docks and Harbors Board addressed the issue at its regular public meeting on August 25, 2011. Subsequently the Assembly Committee of the Whole discussed the issue at its meeting on August 29, 2011 at which time they adopted a motion that the Memorial not be moved from its current location.

THE STORIS

The non-profit organization *Storis* Museum is seeking to bring the USCG Cutter *Storis* back to Juneau. The cutter was de-commissioned in 2007 and the organization has requested it be transferred to them to develop as a museum. The concept is to build a separate float along side the existing dock structure that would serve as the permanent home for the ship. The status of the *Storis* project is uncertain at this time, however, the new berth project is being designed such that a section of catwalk can be removed to allow the *Storis* access to the location identified for the ship.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos below from ShoreZone.



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