

Juneau
Tours

Juneau
Whale Watch

December 16, 2013

Dear Assembly Members

In late September, 2013 CBJ Docks and Harbors' Port Director Carl Uchytel invited local tour operators and tour brokers to a presentation of the *Cruise Ship Terminal Staging Area Improvements Phase II* to be completed on May 2, 2014. At that time, we expressed serious concerns which required immediate attention. Nothing has been done.

In summary, the new design for the Phase II improvement squeezes the same volume of buses into half the usable space making pick-ups and drop-offs dangerous and slow during peak times. Without a credible operating plan and changes to the layout there is a high possibility for loss of sales, traffic forced out onto city streets causing gridlock, and a flare up of tensions between local operators, cruise line operators and the public.

December 13, 2013 I followed up with Erich E. Schaal, Deputy Port Engineer to assess how these concerns were being addressed. Nothing had been done. Mr. Schaal, who is the engineer responsible for the project, was not aware of the scope of the problems. He validated our concerns. No thought was given to traffic flow during development. Mr. Schaal suggested meeting with the Port Director as soon as possible. We are waiting for a response.

Please see the attached documents outlining the concerns and needs of local operators as well as proposed fixes. If these issues are not addressed by February 1st, 2014 local tour operators will not have enough time to prepare for the upcoming season. Local operators carry nearly half of the total volume of passengers who participate in Juneau tours and activities. The new plan creates major operating issues and a serious risk of loss for all local operators and their brokers. They may be required to hire additional dock reps, be restricted in the type and size of their vehicles, and manage less frequent access to the dock.

2013 was a banner year for many local operators. Until the operating issues with CBJ Docks and Harbors are satisfactorily resolved, our 2014 success remains in question.

We respectfully ask this Assembly to take any action necessary to expedite a solution. On behalf of our company, I offer my support and time for developing an operating plan that will make the most efficient, safe and profitable use of the limited space at CBJ Docks and Harbor.

Sincerely,



Serene Hutchinson
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CITY CLERK
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C B J

Exhibit LX
Page 1 of 8

Cruise Ship Terminal Improvement Project Phase II
Urgent Traffic Flow and Staging Concerns for Local Tour Operators
December 13, 2013

Introduction

CBJ Docks and Harbors is in the middle of construction to upgrade the vehicle staging areas and parking lots located at Tram and Cruise Ship Terminal docks. The new plan addresses parking and staging needs for cruise line operators, but doesn't factor in traffic flow and the needs of local tour operators. The design solves some problems with downtown parking, pedestrian traffic and improves cruise line shuttle waiting areas, while greatly reducing the ability of local tour operators to pickup and dropoff during peak times. The new design appears to squeeze the same volume of buses into half the usable space making pickups and dropoffs dangerous and slow during peak times. There is a potential for loss of sales for local operators, traffic forced out onto city streets causing gridlock, and a flare up of tensions between local companies.

The work will be completed by May 2, 2014. Unless the traffic flow issues are addressed before the start of the next cruise ship season, advances made in the last several years to improve the working environment, customer service, and safety at CBJ Docks and Harbors may be reversed.

A Concerns. Local operators carry nearly half of the passengers transported to and from CBJ Docks and Harbors for local activities. Tram and Cruise Ship Terminal are their primary staging areas. For example, the *Juneau Tours Glacier Shuttle* and *MGT Glacier Express* transport 100,000 people to and from the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center operating out of Cruise Ship Terminal. All local whale watching companies dropoff and pickup from the Tram location (approximately 65,000+ passengers). All other tour and activity operators pickup and dropoff here. During peak times local companies make approximately 85% of their sales (group and online sales average less than 15% of business for local operators). Any change in their ability to operate during peak times will disrupt all companies operating in the area.

The new plan:

- **Squeezes local companies into less than ½ the space currently available.** We estimate that the Tram pull-in area for full-sized buses (30 to 40 feet in length) has decreased from 8 buses to 2 buses at a time. CT will be reduced from 15 to 12 buses at a time. Overall, the area for pickup and drop off is cut in half, with more space taken up by pull through lanes. Overflow traffic will be pushed out onto Franklin street until operators can find a space to pull in.
- **Increases traffic on local streets.** During peak times we estimate 6-9 full size buses (local operators not including cruise line operators) circling the city waiting to get into CT or Tram.

- **Lengthens staging time and requires additional dock reps to back up buses safely.** By design, the new layout at CT will require more time in order to pull in and then back out again. Fewer spaces at Tram will push additional traffic over to CT. Due to the fact that only two buses at a time can either be pulling in or out of a space at CT, we estimate 5 - 10 minutes additionally per vehicle, plus the time circling until a space becomes available for staging.
- **Interrupts scheduled glacier shuttles.** During peak times five buses are running ½-hourly shuttles to and from the Glacier. Without guaranteed spaces to pull up *Mendenhall Glacier Transport (MGT)* and *Juneau Tours*, which operate these shuttles, cannot keep to their scheduled times. The schedule is part of the operating agreement with the US Forest Service and used to determine eligibility for a permit.
- **Creates grid-lock.** On Mondays and Tuesdays CBJ Docks and Harbor regularly shuts down Cruise Ship Terminal for an hour or more in order to allow cruise line operators to pick up pre-booked cruise line passengers before local operators. During those times, local operators will have to run all their Cruise Ship Terminal and Tram pick-ups through two spots at Tram. That is impossible.
- **Heightens tension with non-compliant “crew shuttle” operators.** Crew shuttles pick up crew members and transport them to local stores and back. Crew shuttles have been staging several buses and vans at the Tram and CT docks for extended periods (hours at a time) often causing back ups within the current system. This will become intolerable to all other operators as space becomes limited by the new plan.
- **Reduces the value of sales booths.** Sales permits cost local companies an average of \$40,000 each per year. If these sales brokers can't offer timely tours the value of their leased booths will decrease dramatically, and local operators will suffer losses.
- **Lowers sales tax revenues and jobs.** All of this will result in fewer sales, less money to the city and fewer jobs for local operators.

B. Estimated hourly traffic and staging needs for local tour operators

- **Minimum average required loading times**
 - Glacier Shuttle/Glacier Express 10 minutes
 - City and Glacier tours 15 minutes
 - Whale Watching tours 15 minutes
 - Activity shuttles 15 minutes
- **Standard departure times**
 - Most tours depart at the top and bottom of the hour
- **Loading areas**
 - Most local companies load at the Tram and CT docks
 - The majority of foot traffic from AJ and Franklin docks books last minute here
 - Cruise line shuttles coming from AJ dock drop off and pick up here
 - Whale watching tours, city and glacier tours, city trolleys and activity shuttles all pick up from Tram. Most of these will need to shift to CT
 - The glacier shuttle and glacier express picks up from CT
 - Taxi companies and crew shuttles wait on foot traffic coming from Tram and CT.

They often stay in a spot until their vehicle fills, using bigger vehicles to hold spots until smaller vehicles arrive to transport people. The larger vehicle remains to hold the spot.)

- The new design of CT is based upon the Steamship Dock design
 - Steamship parking does not work in its current configuration. It is difficult to get in and out of and is avoided by local operators for that reason
 - Steamship dock is only busy when a ship is tendering and one is in dock, making it a poor model for parking or flow
- **Estimated number of local operator vehicles EVERY HOUR.**
 - Juneau Tours/ Juneau Whale Watch
 - 2-3 Shuttles
 - 1 City and Glacier Tour
 - 2-3 Whale Watching departures
 - 1 Trolley
 - 2 Vans
 - MGT
 - 2 Shuttles
 - 1 City and Glacier
 - 1 Trolley
 - Orca Enterprises
 - 3 Van Coaches
 - Dolphin Jet Boat
 - 2 Whale Watching departures
 - Juneau Sport Fishing/Last Chance
 - 2 Whale Watching/fishing departures
 - 1 City and Glacier
 - Liquid Alaska
 - 1 City and Glacier
 - 3 Vans
 - M&M Tours
 - 4 Vans
 - Harv and Marv
 - 2 Whale Watching departures
 - Taxis - total number ?
 - Crew Shuttles (Ramel, Hauling Bros, Crew International) - usually fill 3 spots at CT for the better part of a day, switching vehicles to hold their places.
 - This does not include Era, Coastal and the smaller activity shuttles with only one or two vehicles, also arriving at peak times. It doesn't include any of the larger companies working directly with the cruise lines.
 - **30-40 foot buses per hour: 22 (½ at the top and ½ at the bottom of the hour)**
 - **15 pax vans per hour: 9 (various times)**

C. Passenger Volume

- In 2013 local operators brought approximately 180,000+ passengers to the Glacier. 75% of those passengers traveled on the Juneau Tours and MGT ½ hourly shuttles
- In 2013 cruise line operators brought approximately 240,000+ passengers to the glacier
- Final numbers are being compiled and are available from the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center staff
- Pickups and dropoffs for all other activities (which do not include a glacier stop) are not tracked by any one entity (whale watching, salmon bake, cycling, helicopters, fishing, etc.). Juneau Whale Watch alone had 20,000+ whale watching passengers

D. Communication with CBJ Docks and Harbors and the CBJ Assembly

These issues were raised at a September 2013 meeting in which Port Director Carl Uchtyil presented the plans in scale. Several local operators were present and expressed concerns.

On Friday, December 13, Serene Hutchinson, General Manager of Juneau Tours LLC, followed up on progress in a meeting with Erich E. Schaal, Deputy Port Engineer. Mr. Schaal validated the concerns presented in this document and shared them with the Port Director. Unfortunately, no action had been taken since the September meeting. Mr. Schaal suggested that their office would have more time to address these issues in February, however this is too late for most local companies to prepare for the upcoming season.

As local operators we are sharing our concerns with the CBJ Assembly for the following reasons:

- **Lack of urgency.** These problems can be resolved by working together, but decisions need to be made immediately to give enough time to advance a credible working solution. Next season, when we are losing money, upsetting passengers and disrupting traffic, is too late.
- **Limited understanding.** By their own admission engineers working on the project did not consider flow of traffic in the new design. The new plan addresses parking only and does consider the impact on traffic in downtown Juneau. Local operators, who spend the most time working at Tram and CT must be engaged in creating a solution.
- **Scope of impact.** The economy of Juneau depends to a large extent on tourism. A major disruption in 2014 could set back political and economic gains of the previous years. Juneau continues to be an attractive destination for Cruise Ships. This may no longer be the case if disputes erupt between local operators, cruise line operators, and the public over limited space at CBJ Docks and Harbors.

E. Next steps

In order to give local operators time to prepare, we recommend that CBJ Docks and Harbors work with local operators to create an operating plan and new rules by February 1st, 2014.

The plan should address the following:

- **Changes to the staging areas.** Many of the issues could be resolved by a new scheme for the lanes allowing for more flow. These changes should not impact the current budget or change the physical construction of the area.
- **Designated spaces for scheduled operators.** The *Juneau Tours Glacier Shuttle* and *MGT Glacier Express* need designated spaces at CT in the new scheme in order to maintain their schedule and fulfill their operating agreement with the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. Due to the volume of passengers moved by these two companies, this also represents a safety issue.
- **Designated traffic coordinators.** Local operators need better coordination with CBJ Docks and Harbors during peak times. For example, when drivers return with busses full of passengers and no place to drop off, there needs to be someone designated by CBJ Docks and Harbors to make immediate decisions to free up space, keep traffic moving and get passengers to their destinations as quickly as possible.

We have requested a meeting with Port Director Carl Uchytel and we are waiting for a response.

Prepared by:

Serene Hutchinson

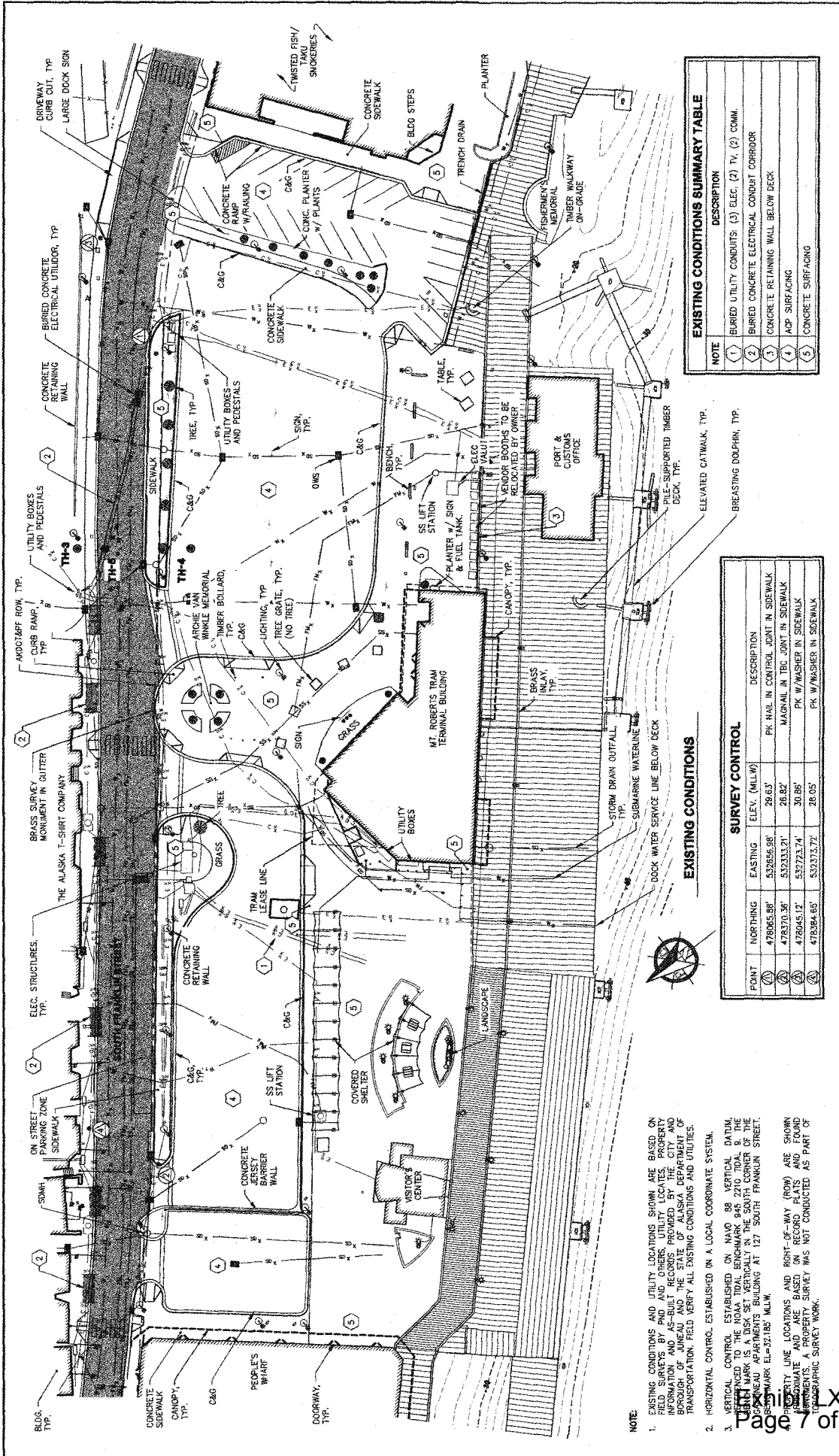
General Manager

Juneau Tours

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OLD



EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY TABLE

NOTE	DESCRIPTION
1	BURRED UTILITY CONDUITS: (3) ELEC; (2) TV; (2) COMM.
2	BURRED CONCRETE ELECTRICAL CONDUIT CORRIDOR
3	CONCRETE RETAINING WALL BELOW DECK
4	ADP SURFACING
5	CONCRETE SURFACING

SURVEY CONTROL

POINT	NORTHING	EASTING	ELEV. (MILL)	DESCRIPTION
1	478065.89'	532856.99'	29.63'	PK NAIL IN CONTROL JOINT IN SIDEWALK
2	478370.36'	532333.21'	26.82'	MAGNAIL IN TBC JOINT IN SIDEWALK
3	478045.12'	532723.74'	30.86'	PK W/WASHER IN SIDEWALK
4	478384.65'	532333.77'	28.05'	PK W/WASHER IN SIDEWALK

EXISTING CONDITIONS

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DWN.	CHK.	APP.

NOTE:

- EXISTING CONDITIONS AND UTILITY LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE BASED ON FIELD SURVEYS BY PND AND OTHERS. UTILITY LOCATES PROPERTY OWNERS AND THE STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. FIELD VERIFY ALL EXISTING CONDITIONS AND UTILITIES.
- HORIZONTAL CONTROL ESTABLISHED ON A LOCAL COORDINATE SYSTEM.
- VERTICAL CONTROL ESTABLISHED ON NAVD 88 VERTICAL DATUM. CONTROL POINT IS A DISK SET VERTICALLY IN THE SOUTH CORNER OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS BUILDING AT 127 SOUTH FRANKLIN STREET. BENCHMARK EL=32182.77' MLLW.
- PROPERTY LINE LOCATIONS AND RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW) ARE SHOWN FOR INFORMATION AND ARE BASED ON RECORD PLATS AND FOUND DOCUMENTS. A PROPERTY SURVEY WAS NOT CONDUCTED AS PART OF THIS SURVEY.

CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL STAGING AREA IMPROVEMENTS PHASE II
 CONTRACT NO. DH13-017

EXISTING CONDITIONS SURVEY CONTROL AND BENCHMARK LOCATIONS

1.03
 SHEET 3 OF 52



5060 Glacier Highway, Ste. 110
 Juneau, Alaska 99801
 Phone: 907-586-2063
 Fax: 907-586-2099
 www.pndengineering.com

SCALE IN FEET
 0 25 50 FT.

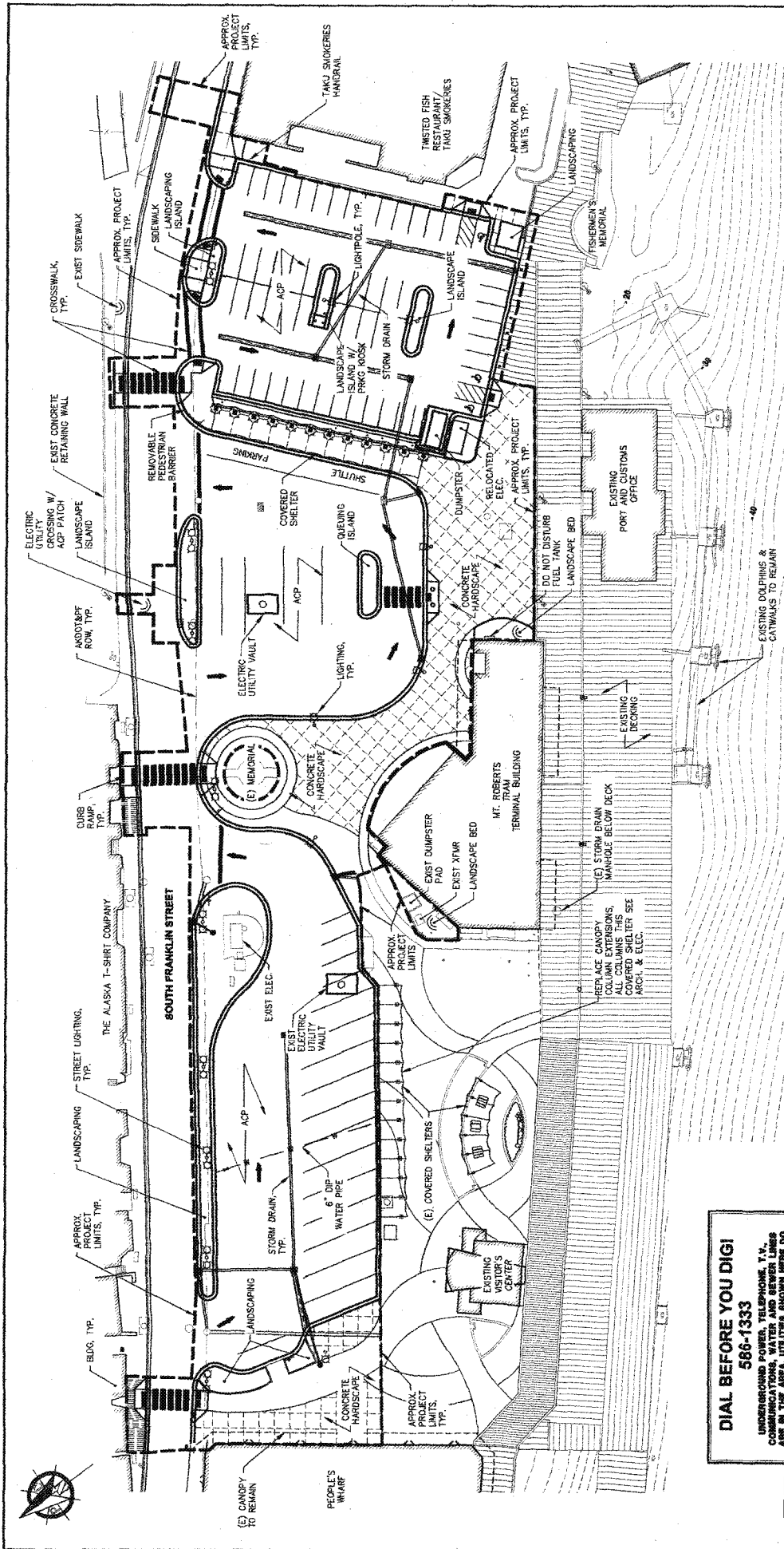
PND ENGINEERS, INC.

DESIGNER: TCB
 CHECKER: CRS
 IN CHARGE: PJD
 APPROVED: CRS

REVISIONS

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DWN.	CHK.	APP.

NEW



GENERAL SITE PLAN

DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG!
586-1333
 UNDERGROUND POWER, TELEPHONE, T.V.,
 COMMUNICATIONS, WATER AND SEWER LINES
 ARE IN THE AREA. UTILITIES SHOWN HERE DO
 NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR FIELD LOCATED.

CONTRACTOR SHALL SUBMIT A TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN TO DOT&PF ROW
 FOR APPROVAL PRIOR TO ANY CONSTRUCTION WITHIN THE DOT&PF ROW.

**CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL STAGING AREA
 IMPROVEMENTS PHASE II
 CONTRACT NO. DH13-017**

SHEET TITLE
GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW

SHEET NO.
1.04

PROJ. NO.
102081

DATE
7/8/13



9500 Glacier Highway, Ste. 100
 Juneau, Alaska 99801
 Phone 907-586-2035
 Fax 907-586-2099
 www.pndengineers.com

**P N D
 ENGINEERS, INC.**

DRAWN: NAM
 CHECKED: JOE
 DATE: 7/8/13

SCALE IN FEET
 0 25 50 FT.

REV.	DATE	REVISIONS	DESCRIPTION	DWN.	CHKD.	APP.

