



**Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting Agenda
Downtown Juneau Fire Hall Meeting Room**

June 27, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

Steering Committee Members Present:

Christine Woll, Chair
Karena Perry, Vice Chair
Betsy Brenneman
Kirby Day
Daniel Glidmann
Lily Otsea

Michael Heumann
Meilani Schijvens
Wayne Jensen
Ricardo Worl
Patty Ware
Nathaniel Dye

Steering Committee Members Absent:

Laura Martinson, Jill Ramiel

Staff:

Tim Felstead, Assistant Project Manager; Alexandra Pierce, CDD Planning Manager; Marjorie Hamburger, CDD Admin

Assembly Members:

Loren Jones

I. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:07

II. Approval of Minutes

a. June 6, 2019, DRAFT minutes, Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting

MOTION: *By Ms. Ware to approve the June 6, 2019, Steering Committee minutes. Mr. Jensen seconded.*

The motion passed with no objection.

III. Public Participation - none

IV. Steering Committee Updates

a. Meeting Venue

Mr. Felstead confirmed that the remainder of the scheduled meetings will be located in Assembly Chambers.

V. Review Revised Draft Overall Vision Statement

Mr. Felstead reviewed the vision statement as revised based on last meeting's discussion and asked for further thoughts. Mr. Day said he was unclear about the "optional language" paragraph. Mr. Felstead replied it was his understanding that the paragraph's intent is to provide linkage between the overarching vision statement and the 9 statements coming from the consultants' visioning report that serve as "guiding principles" for the area plan.

Ms. Woll said she liked including the vision statements from the report. Mr. Felstead pointed out that in the draft introductory chapter, these visions are listed (pages 5-6), but they might need to be brought forward and linked as the chapter flows. Mr. Jensen asked if the optional language was intended to be in addition to the first vision statement paragraph. Mr. Felstead said in addition.

Mr. Felstead shared suggestions emailed from Ms. Ramiel who wanted to add "commerce, government, recreation" to the last sentence of the older version. Ms. Brenneman said that downtown Juneau is defined by more than what is listed in the last sentence of the statement. Things that were missing included politics, history, and she wondered about education due to number prevalence of schools in the downtown area. She said it seemed too sparse to limit the list to just housing, arts, and culture.

Mr. Worl suggested moving the last sentence into the optional language paragraph, as it seemed too specific and did not match the first part of the statement. Ms. Schijvens said she agreed that the statement should be broader and more visionary. Mr. Worl said he liked the optional language section but wondered if the 9 guiding principles should be listed.

Mr. Felstead said that the optional section is intended to provide an introduction into the sub-division statements, and, therefore, maybe it would be okay to strike the last sentence in the vision statement because those elements are encapsulated in the guiding principles. Ms. Schijvens and Mr. Jensen agreed with deleting the last sentence.

Mr. Felstead said that in the draft of Chapter 1, he and Ms. McKibben included some language taken from the Comprehensive Plan (page 8). It seemed to him that these statements could be the plan's vision statement or could be used to inform the writing of the vision statement.

Ms. Brenneman said she had a problem with not mentioning downtown Juneau as the seat of government. Ms. Schijvens wanted to be sure to keep the words "capital city". Mr. Day said his feeling is that a vision statement implies moving into the future but as this was written in present tense, it did not seem visionary. Ms. Brenneman said she has a lot of experience writing vision statements and that sometimes they are in the present tense while other times written as "will be". It seems to come down to personal preference, she said.

Mr. Jensen said he liked the Comprehensive Plan language that was included in the chapter. Ms. Woll said what she liked about the vision statement being worked on was that it has come out of the Steering Committee's process.

Mr. Day said that sometimes teams are caught up by trying to put too much into a statement. That is why the second “optional language” paragraph made good sense to him.

Ms. Woll asked if any committee members were opposed to removing the last sentence and putting that level of detail into the optional language paragraph. Ms. Pierce suggested that the concept of “maintaining and strengthening” was good as in “maintain and strengthen Juneau’s role as the Capital City”. Ms. Brenneman said those words were not getting at what she was trying to convey; she preferred the word “government” or “government and legislative activities”. Mr. Dye suggested the language might want to indicate that the CBJ government is also located downtown, especially as there is conversation in the community about where city hall might be relocated in the borough. He said he felt it important to specify both city and state government. Mr. Glidmann agreed.

Ms. Ware suggested that instead of continuing to wordsmith at this meeting, members should send staff an email with their comments as a result of this conversation, and staff could bring back a fresh draft. She pointed out that the first chapter focused on the broad areas of the plan, which she found it helpful when thinking about the vision statement.

Mr. Felstead asked for the will of the group. Ms. Pierce proposed moving on to review Chapter 1 and revisiting the statement at the end of the meeting. Committee members were in agreement.

VI. Review Revised Sub-District Boundaries

Mr. Felstead said that the neighborhood map sub-areas were just containers for descriptions of commerce, residential use, and so forth. This makes the information more digestible. He displayed the map from the previous meeting followed by Version 2. Changes include:

- Aak’w Kwaan Village District (new official name) extended to include the commercial area along Glacier Avenue
- Uplands around the old mill site along Thane Road have been included into the Downtown District

Mr. Felstead said that distinctions between neighborhoods include zoning, transportation access, and property lines. The revised map does not include the proposal to extend the waterfront neighborhood along the shore of the Rock Dump because at the moment the uses on the adjacent neighborhoods do not flow nor do the property lines. Mr. Felstead said that the Committee might include in the plan the aspiration to stretch the waterfront along the Rock Dump shoreline and change the zoning; however, the Waterfront Plan states that this area should not developed for tourism/commercial uses. Therefore, it made sense to him to talk about what is on the ground at the moment and distinguish the Rock Dump in its entirety as a separate and distinct area. He also pointed out that there are some anomalies in various places such as some commercial activity in the Glacier Avenue area of the Highlands.

Ms. Schijvens said she thought the Flats needed to extend to Glacier Avenue to include all the homes in the Casey Shattuck grid. She would not want Industrial activity to creep into the neighborhood. Mr. Felstead asked if she meant following the zoning line or including also parcels already taken over by commercial uses. Mr. Dye said that the lines do not have to be solid; they can be blurred. He added that the word “neighborhood” might be the wrong word. Mr. Heumann asked how far into the Flats does the mixed-use zone extend. Mr. Felstead said that the line on the version 2 map is the current zoning delineation.

Mr. Heumann said there could be a set up for problems if the Flats is identified for residential use yet a developer wants to make use of mixed-use zoning. Mr. Felstead said that descriptions in each area could provide the blurriness such as indicating in the Rock Dump area a recommendation to extend the waterfront along the shoreline. He cautioned the Committee not to be hung up on the lines and reminded them that other maps can be generated.

Mr. Dye said that interpreting Comprehensive Plan maps is difficult and so if there is the desire to have blurry lines, he recommended making that deliberate so they can be interpreted correctly by others. Ms. Schijvens said that she was worried about commercial creep into the Flats neighborhood. She recommended moving the boundary line down to Glacier Avenue.

Mr. Dye suggested replacing the word “neighborhoods” with “areas” and basing the areas more on their uses. Ms. Pierce said that there are differing opinions on the firmness of the boundaries on the Comprehensive Plan maps and that it needs to be made clear that the division of areas for this project are not hard lines. The line between the Downtown District and Aak’w Kwaan District is also along zoning lines, and these lines are there to assist discussion that might be more difficult if the Committee was looking at downtown as one large area. She said that for each area, there will need to be discussion about the boundaries, but knowing in theory that the lines are not hard and fast will be helpful. Mr. Felstead said the map could have shading instead of lines separating the areas. Mr. Heumann said that as long as the verbiage is clear that boundaries are fuzzy, they do not have to be fuzzy visually.

Mr. Felstead asked if the area behind the governor’s mansion should be included with Chicken Hill. Ms. Schijvens said that they residents there are part of the Flats neighborhood organization and they self-identify as being part of the flats.

Ms. Brenneman asked if the boundaries indicated on the map are zoning lines. Mr. Felstead said not entirely, some are historic subdivisions. The bump out into the Downtown District from the Aak’w Kwaan District is the State Office Building. This could be another spot where blurriness in the boundaries makes sense.

Ms. Woll summarized that the Committee was asking staff to provide some verbiage and indication of blurred lines between areas.

VII. Draft Chapter 1 Introduction

Ms. Woll said that editing by a large group is challenging and suggested sending specific edits by email. Mr. Felstead said it was his intent to run through the structure of the chapter to see if anything significant was missing or in the wrong place. The point of the chapter is to set up the whole document and describe to where it is headed. The meat of the topics will be in the subsequent chapters. He suggested that while members could point out small word changes, ideally the focus of the meeting's discussion should be on overall content.

Ms. Ware said she felt positive overall about the chapter, but because it is heavy on development and building, she would like to add reference to maintaining a positive quality of life for local residents. She felt this could be added in several places, for example the list on Page 1 could read, "make informed decisions concerning future growth and development while maintaining a positive quality of life for local residents" to indicate a key value from the start. Mr. Felstead asked if the wording should be so specific to residents. Yes, said Ms. Ware. Mr. Glidmann said that the first paragraph on the second page touches on this a little, but he agreed the value could be further emphasized.

Mr. Dye said he had a concern about referencing the 2013 Comprehensive Plan because there will be a new Comprehensive Plan soon. If there should be specific language in the plan that cites the 2013 version specifically, this should be noted. Ms. Pierce said that it is unknown what new the Comprehensive Plan will look like but the goal is for it to be more overarching than the current one. A large criticism of the current Comprehensive Plan is that a justification can be found for just about anything. Going forward, the sub-area plans should provide the specificity for individual areas and the Comprehensive Plan should reference them.

Mr. Felstead said that more plans than just the Comprehensive Plan would support this area plan. He presented a diagram of how Blueprint Downtown relates to other plans. Functional plans are those related to a specific topic, area plans relate to many topics in one specific area he said, and some have been adopted by ordinance, which give them legal weight. Others have been adopted by resolution, which makes them more aspirational and not completely binding but reflect community values and things CBJ wishes to pursue. The area-specific plans listed are adopted into the Comprehensive Plan so they have the same legal weight.

Mr. Felstead said that as the Committee works through the other chapters, they can circle back to the introduction, being more educated about the project and the document. He asked if the Committee was generally happy with the draft; many heads nodded.

Mr. Felstead called attention to the section titled "A Decade of Downtown Accomplishments". This section is intended to highlight some of the larger improvements to downtown in the past 10 years. He asked for Committee feedback. Ms. Woll said the section felt random to her, and might work better as a series of call-out boxes or placed on a separate page - more graphic-like.

Ms. Ware had an addition to the list of downtown accomplishments - Housing First. She said that since homelessness is clearly a huge issue in the community, it would be a slap in the face of the public process to not include that project. Mr. Glidmann and Mr. Worl said that although

the housing project is not located downtown, its presence impacts the homeless population that is concentrated downtown. Mr. Felstead said the change in operation to Rainforest Recovery could also be mentioned in this broader heading. Another example of something related that might happen during the project lifetime is the possible relocation of the Glory Hall from its present location – this is not certain though. This could all be bracketed in the section about solutions to housing and homelessness.

Mr. Day asked about the reference to private reinvestment, mentioned on the bottom of Page 2. Ms. Pierce said it had to do with reinvestment in downtown historic buildings. Mr. Felstead said staff wanted to recognize great projects such as the First Bank Building that has been given a new life and wanting to recognize that type of development.

Mr. Day made a correction to Page 1, paragraph 3, the “City & Borough Assembly”.

Grammatical changes should be emailed to Ms. McKibben and Mr. Felstead.

Ms. Schijvens said she wanted the Sealaska Heritage Institute building and Whale Park on the list of accomplishments. Mr. Dye agreed with having a breakout box, not a list.

Mr. Worl asked what does “create placemaking opportunities” mean (Page 1, paragraph 2). Mr. Felstead said ‘place-making’ can be done by organizing events in spaces or by creating a built environment to give a space a sense of identify and a purpose for people to gather. Closing off Front Street for first Fridays is an example of placemaking.

Ms. Brenneman cautioned that when writing the document, if it is necessary to include “planning speak”, a glossary should be included to explain. She wanted to encourage making the document accessible to all readers in terms of language.

Ms. Woll asked when it is best for staff to receive edits. Ms. Ware said she preferred to do so after discussing the chapters at the meetings. Ms. Pierce said it works well for staff to receive edits/comments at or after the meeting so they can incorporate the changes and bring the draft back to the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Felstead shared that he and Ms. McKibben had participated in a CBJ department-head focus group meeting where they asked what big things would be coming up in the next 5-10 years. His PowerPoint included the resulting list. Some of these items will be talked about in this plan, he said. Mr. Heumann asked if there are links if members are not familiar with something on the list. Mr. Felstead not for all of the projects. Ms. Pierce said that the projects listed are not necessarily commitments made by the city with funding in place. As an example, “tideland development” is very vague whereas the Augustus Brown Pool renovation has money behind it and is happening.

Ms. Ware asked about Overstreet Park commercial use. Ms. Pierce said that Parks & Recreation are revamping their commercial rates and the management of tour buses, the trolley, etc.

utilizing city parks. They are also adapting the definition of commercial use so as to allow temporary pop up events, such as movies in the park with food trucks on-site temporarily.

Mr. Day pointed out that the project regarding pedestrian stanchions was not listed here.

Mr. Heumann asked about the state north parking lot next to Fireweed Place. Mr. Felstead said the lot is in bad shape and likely to be demolished at some point and is a possible location for a larger parking structure. Ms. Brenneman pointed out that this ties into the whole parking solution in the center of the Aak'w Kwaan District.

Ms. Schijvens said that the subport sale will occur before the activities of Blueprint Downtown are complete. She wondered if an official recommendation could be forwarded to the city from the group regarding the purchase of this area. Mr. Jensen said he thought that would be outside of the committee's scope. Ms. Schijvens said that there is much community support for this area's development.

Mr. Jones commented that the Assembly has not yet voted to make bid.

Mr. Dye pointed out language on Page 3 under "Visioning Process" - *these outreach efforts and unfiltered comment* as examples – were not necessary. Since it is not scientific data, it does not need to be defined or qualified. He suggested stating simply "solicited comments".

VIII. Back to Vision Statement

Ms. Schijvens suggested that since Ms. Brenneman has experience with mission statements, the Committee might ask her to take a shot at this. Ms. Brenneman said she did not feel she understood the will of the group well enough. However, she was willing to think about how to incorporate her concern about using the term "government" in the vision.

Mr. Day said he thought the second sentence was awkward.

Mr. Worl liked the quote from the Comprehensive Plan on Page 8, particularly the first sentence beginning, "To maintain and strengthen ..." Mr. Glidmann thought about blending the language into the drafted statement, "Maintain and strengthen downtown Juneau as a vibrant, safe and accessible . . .". There was some back and forth discussion about including the word "strengthen". Ms. Pierce put in a plug for the word "maintenance". She said she would not want what Juneau already has to fall apart while working on aspirational projects and that maintaining what we already have is a frequently received public comment.

Mr. Worl suggested adding after the first sentence, "as the capital city, Juneau works to continue to be a dynamic center for government and legislative activities".

Mr. Glidmann wanted to expand "government" to include state, city, federal and tribal. Ms. Ware said it was important for government to have its own sentence, especially in the face of proposed moves either out of downtown or out of the city.

Mr. Day suggested as a second sentence, “Downtown Juneau is a dynamic center of government and is welcoming and appealing ...” He thought the last sentence should be deleted but put the word “Capital City” somewhere as in “as home to the state capitol, downtown Juneau is a dynamic center . . .”

Mr. Felstead took a photo of the marked-up whiteboard. Staff will continue work to produce a new draft.

IX. Public Participation - none

X. Committee Comments - none

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Next Meeting Date: July 18, 2019, 6 p.m., Assembly Chambers