



**Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting Agenda
CBJ Assembly Chambers**

July 18, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

Steering Committee Members Present:

Christine Woll, Chair	Meilani Schijvens
Betsy Brenneman	Laura Martinson
Kirby Day	Jill Ramiel
Daniel Glidmann	Ricardo Worl
Lily Otsea	Patty Ware
Michael Heumann	Nathaniel Dye

Steering Committee Members Absent: Wayne Jensen, Karena Perry

Staff:

Beth McKibben, Senior Planner, Project Manager
Alexandra Pierce, Planning Manager
Marjorie Hamburger, Admin

I. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. June 27, 2019 DRAFT minutes, Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting

MOTION: *By Mr. Day to approve the June 27, 2019, minutes. Ms. Martinson seconded.*

The motion passed with no objection.

III. Public Participation - none

IV. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. McKibben said staff was in the process of scheduling focus groups to include parks, environment and natural resources, and parking and transportation. They had already hosted a focus group with CBJ department heads. They will soon send out invitations to health, human and social services soon. The focus groups will be led through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, and the results will inform the Steering Committee's work.

V. Review Revised Draft Overall Vision Statement

Ms. Woll said it was hoped that the committee could finalize the vision statement for now and revisit the statement after all the draft plan chapters had been worked through.

Mr. Glidmann said the statement looked complete.

MOTION: *by Mr. Day to accept, Mr. Heumann seconded.*

The motion passed with no objection.

Ms. McKibben talked about the additional language option. At a previous meeting, there was talk about including “guiding principles” along with the vision statement. She asked if the group wanted this included and, if so, she will continue to refine this section.

Mr. Glidmann asked if there was already a version of this statement in the report from the consultants. No, said Ms. McKibben. The report includes the 9 focus areas but not guiding principles. Ms. Ware said she thought this optional language referred to the 9 statements in the visioning document and found them to be helpful, if that is what they are. If not, she said it would be confusing.

Ms. Pierce said that many documents with guiding principles do not have an accompanying visioning document as this one has. However, the committee has the opportunity to decide how to preface the area plan document and link the two.

Ms. McKibben suggested that the additional language section could be a preamble to the vision document or could be deleted. Ms. Ware said she liked the preamble. Ms. Woll asked how the committee ought to proceed with Ms. McKibben’s question. Ms. Martinson suggested having just one vision statement and including the 9 guiding principle statements in the body of Chapter 1.

Ms. Pierce suggested that because there are 9 vision statements coming from the consultants’ document, the committee might want to consider calling them by a different name to make the language less confusing.

Ms. Schijvens and Ms. Brenneman arrived to the meeting.

Ms. Schijvens asked if the committee could return to the vision statement. She wondered why the words “art” or “culture” were not included. Ms. Woll said her recollection was that the detail of things like art and culture would live within the 9 topics areas. Ms. Schijvens advocated for adding “artists” to the list of “welcoming and appealing to”.

Ms. Brenneman said that she had drafted a revised vision statement that she tried to align with the 9 guiding principles.

Ms. Schijvens moved to revisit the vision statement. (No vote was taken.)

Ms. Martinson said she was confused about the tenses and verbiage. Is the intent to write something that is true to what exists today or should it be aspirational? Aspirational, said Ms. McKibben. Ms. Brenneman said that vision statement language could be “is”, “will be”, or “should be”. Ms. Woll said the language could include what Juneau has now as well as what it aspires to be. Mr. Glidmann said that “should be” implies it is not already that way. From an

investment standpoint, that language would not be attractive. Ms. McKibben said vision statements are usually done in the affirmative – “we are”, not “we want to be”. Ms. Brenneman said that should be reconciled with the “should be” language in the subsequent chapters.

Ms. Brenneman’s version of the vision statement was displayed:

Downtown Juneau is/should be/will be maintained and strengthened as a vibrant, safe, and accessible place to live, work, learn, play and explore. As home to the state capital/Alaska’s capital, downtown Juneau is a dynamic center of government and is welcoming and appealing to residents of all ages, visitors, innovators and investors. Its unique heritage and history, waterfront setting, diverse housing, arts and culture, access to natural beauty and urban amenities provide remarkable/significant/uncommon/exceptional opportunities for investment, sustainable growth, and ----- quality of life.

Ms. Woll said she did not see significant alterations. Ms. Martinson said she did not love the word “strengthen”. Ms. Ramiel suggesting changing “learn” to “create”. Ms. Schijvens liked bringing in education via the word “learn”. Ms. Martinson suggested “enhanced” instead of “strengthen”. Mr. Day said the word “vision” means thinking and planning for the future, so maybe the statement was not a vision statement. Ms. McKibben said they are the things the plan aspires to, however. Ms. Pierce put in a plug for “will be maintained and strengthened”.

Ms. Woll asked if there was a preference for “state capital” or “Alaska’s capital”. Ms. Schijvens said she liked “Alaska’s capital”. Mr. Heumann said he liked adding the word “create: but felt adjectives like “remarkable” were unnecessary. Ms. Ramiel suggested taking the word “setting” out but leaving “waterfront”. Ms. Schijvens also thought the adjectives were unnecessary and suggested simply saying “provide opportunities for investment”. Ms. Ramiel suggested putting the word “exceptional” in front of “quality of life”.

Ms. Woll stated changes and choices discussed in response to Ms. Brenneman’s draft:

- Downtown Juneau will be maintained and enhanced as a . . .
- . . . place to live, work, learn, create, play and explore.
- As home to Alaska’s capital . . .
- . . . to residents, visitors, innovators and investors of all ages.
- . . . heritage and history, waterfront setting, diverse housing . . .
- . . . amenities provide myriad opportunities . . .
- . . . and remarkable quality of life.

Ms. Schijvens suggested removing “investors” from the first sentence, as the word “investment” appears later in the statement. Ms. Martinson advocated for taking out “strengthen” but others disagreed. “Enhanced” was suggested. Mr. Day suggested “is welcoming and appealing to of all ages”.

MOTION: *by Ms. Schijvens to approve the revised vision statement. Mr. Heumann seconded.*

The motion passed with no objection.

VI. Review Revised Sub-District Boundaries

Ms. Woll said the only change to the map was that the cartographer created blurred lines to emphasize that the sub-districts did not reflect hard zoning lines. Ms. Schijvens said that was an excellent solution.

Mr. Glidmann wondered if a mining subarea should be created. Ms. Ramiel wondered if the downtown district should have its own neighborhood association.

Ms. Woll asked if members wanted to suggest any changes to the map. Mr. Glidmann said it was good as is. Ms. Martinson asked about his comment regarding the mining district. Mr. Glidmann said it would be good to think about regarding the planning document, but not to include on the map.

MOTION: *by Mr. Glidmann to approve the sub-area map. Mr. Day seconded.*

The motion passed with no objection.

VII. Draft Chapter 1: Introduction

Ms. Woll said she did not like having the nine core visions listed at the end of the chapter. She felt it would make the most sense if every part of the aspirational language were put in the front of the introduction. Ms. Ware said the challenge is that the way the section was referenced linked it to the public process; she was not sure it would be clear enough this way.

Ms. Pierce advocated for adding a phrase such as “identified in the public process” and, later in the chapter, describe that process. Ms. Ware said that sounded like a good solution.

Ms. McKibben called the members’ attention to the section “A Decade of Downtown Accomplishments. Mr. Felstead organized the list by topic. She asked for comments. Mr. Glidmann said that by topic worked well. Mr. Dye pointed out that “a decade” was not entirely accurate in relation to some of the items on the list. In addition, he was not sure about the purpose of this section. Given the inconsistencies in dates and not all the accomplishments being focused on downtown, it seemed convoluted to him. Ms. Woll recalled a suggestion from the last meeting to make call out boxes for these accomplishments instead of a block of text. Mr. Dye liked the call out idea and suggested avoiding the word “decade”. Ms. McKibben suggested that a graphic could be used to represent this inventory. She said that a decade was a nice round number to use as a measuring stick. Mr. Day suggested the word “recent” instead of “decade”. Ms. Woll said that the purpose of the section was to demonstrate that a lot had already been accomplished which can serve as a basis for further improvements.

Ms. Pierce said there are references to many other plans in the document that make recommendations to do some of the things that have been achieved. Ms. Schijvens said it

would work for her if the accomplishments were described via a visual. Mr. Glidmann suggested stating the items as downtown achievement, with no date. Mr. Dye cautioned that it could be problematic to call out and celebrate some businesses but not others, especially private businesses. Mr. Heumann pointed out that if small improvements were to be mentioned, there are many of them. Ms. Woll asked committee members to note and share with staff any items that might be controversial. Ms. McKibben said the list was not comprehensive and the text could indicate that. Ms. Martinson felt perhaps for a city-produced document, it would be best to call attention to city projects. Ms. McKibben replied that it might also be important to recognize private investment that improves downtown Juneau.

Mr. Heumann suggested that inclusion in the list could be based on dollars invested or square feet of land impacted. Mr. Dye said he would love to apply pressure on downtown owners who are not taking care of their buildings. The Soboleff building construction utilized sales tax monies, but he felt calling out buildings was not a good idea. He suggested language that would be more general. Ms. Schijvens said that using a visual could make things more general and a text caption could be "building improvements in the downtown core". Mr. Worl suggested changing the language to "significant investments". Ms. McKibben said staff would take a stab at it and bring back a visual for review.

Ms. Ware said the bulleted list on page 1 included "maintain a positive quality of life", but she felt that was not enough. Reference to a quality of life for local residents was previously more prominent in the chapter, and she advocated for weaving that through the text rather than just being a last bullet in a list. Ms. Woll said she felt it was out of place where it was.

Ms. Ware said originally the first bullet read, "Make informed decisions concerning future growth and development while maintaining a positive quality of life for local residents". The point of that language was to make it clear that the plan was not just about building and development but also about the people who live and will live downtown. Ms. Brenneman asked Ms. Ware if she could suggest a more prominent way to make this point. Ms. Ware said the bullet point could be moved up in the list so as not to appear to a "oh by the way" type of addition. Mr. Glidmann suggested adding it as a second bullet. Ms. Brenneman said if it were added to the first bullet, it would modify and temper "growth and development". Ms. Ware's preference was to use the word "while".

Mr. Dye said that bullet 2 and the last bullet seemed unnecessary. No one plans to be less efficient, he said, and quality of life seemed intuitive coming from the vision statement. Mr. Dye said that quality of life is a subjective idea. Ms. Woll said that calling it out includes those who are not focused on development in order to maintain quality of life.

MOTION: *by Ms. Brenneman to amend the first bullet on page 1 of Chapter 1 to read "make informed decisions concerning future growth and development while maintaining a positive quality of life for residents". Ms. Ware seconded.*

The motion passed with no objection.

Mr. Glidmann said this felt appropriate because the paragraph talks about the use of the document.

Mr. Day brought the conversation back to the list of accomplishments and said that the expansion of Thane Road was a good Department of Transportation project. Mr. Worl added the restoration of the Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall and the Gajaa Hit totem poles in Indian Village. Ms. Ramiel felt the Goldstein properties should be included. Mr. Glidmann said he did not like highlighting specific properties; he would prefer before and after photos of the street rather than a picture of just one particular building. He also felt it was important to highlight accomplishments by local government. Ms. Brenneman gave an example of a before and after – the hole in the ground left after the building on that site burnt down and the Soboleff Center. Mr. Glidmann said the list or photos would exemplify that downtown is interested in moving forward.

Ms. Brenneman pointed out errors and inconsistencies in the text regarding capitalization and naming conventions. Ms. Woll said that all drafts of chapters would be reviewed for consistency later in the process. If there was a choice to be made regarding a convention or name preference, this could be brought before the committee.

Ms. Schijvens departed at 7:08 pm.

Ms. Otsea said that she was confused about why there was so much focus on things that have happened when this is a plan for the future. She would hope the document includes information to help make decisions in the future. She also felt this was about the draft recreation chapter. She wondered where was the specific language about what the community wants to have happen.

Ms. Pierce said she was looking to the committee to add the piece about the future. Chapter One is setting the stage for the entire document and once recommendations have been developed, they can be woven that into Chapter One. Ms. McKibben said she felt that Chapter One was done for now but should come back to the committee for another review after the rest of the chapter drafts had been completed.

Ms. McKibben displayed the graphic she had put together that shows how the Blueprint Downtown Plan will relate to other plans already in place. She suggested that this graphic should be located in Chapter One. It was developed as an attempt to respond to what the Planning Commission had been talking about. She said she was interested in any suggestions for graphical changes.

VIII. Draft Chapter 7: Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Ms. Pierce said she used the Parks & Recreation (P&R) Master Plan language to describe the nature of what is already in place downtown. She said the bullets are placeholders for graphics, etc. Downtown Juneau is well served by P&R amenities. The expansion of the seawalk and trail maintenance are community priorities and are already in the city's operational reality. She

urged the committee to look for where improvement and growth could happen in the downtown areas. Then she will draft the vision and bring it back to the group at the next meeting.

Ms. Pierce said that the goal of this chapter is to provide planning guidelines and goals for the future. The city just completed the 20-year vision for P&R, which is a broader document than just downtown. In the community visioning process, most of the comments related to P&R were about the waterfront. This chapter can take the broad vision of the P&R master plan and make specific recommendations for Downtown.

Ms. Martinson would like to see more connection of trails and also playgrounds. Ms. Ramiel also supported more playgrounds. Mr. Heumann said that Cope Park has changed and now includes less playground space. Ms. Martinson said she cannot go downtown to spend money at a place like a food truck if her 2 year old does not have a space to play.

Mr. Glidmann said there is a wild suggestion out there to tear down the city hall building, once city hall is relocated, and put in playground at that spot as a pathway/overpass from the seawalk/Marine Park area. People would walk over Egan Drive via an overpass into a playground. It may be an outrageous idea, but maybe not, he said. Another idea he had heard that interested him was a mining district park area across from the Princess dock, which could be theme-based park for tourists and locals.

Ms. Ramiel said she was interested in bringing back the ice skating rink downtown. She said that all the parks and downtown open spaces that are without programming have the potential for problems. Other cities' P&R departments have contracts with downtown businesses to offer activities and programs, and she felt this was something Juneau should consider.

Ms. Pierce said the city was looking into programming in Overstreet Park such as outdoor night movies. She asked for other suggestions. Ms. Pierce said she thought Cathedral Park would be a great spot for a community garden.

Ms. Woll asked Ms. Pierce what would be most helpful for committee members to do in regards to this chapter. Ms. Pierce said it would be helpful to go through the inventory of the downtown parks and spaces and plant seeds for a future goal or vision for each park. What suggestions can be given to help with the planning process for P&R, she asked? What are future-looking elements to be included? Ms. Pierce gave an example of the Augustus Brown pool where it would be important to talk about the services it provides specifically for seniors. Zach Gordon would be another example, as it is more than a just drop in center; it provides important programming for youth. She said it made sense to her to be conceptual now and then she would bring a revised draft to the next meeting.

Ms. Brenneman said she understood the committee was being asked to look at each park and dream about what it could be or what the community would want from that public space as well as point out anything that might be missing. She said one thing she felt was missing were

recommendation about maintenance and enforcement. An example of a park that is not working due to a lack in these areas is Telephone Hill Park. Ms. Martinson said that bringing activities to parks helps with maintenance and enforcement. Ms. Pierce said placemaking could help some of these problems be solved. Telephone Hill Park nice is a good hang out for inebriates and is not used by others because of the presence of that demographic.

Mr. Glidmann said that this issue was not unique to parks; it is also a street problem. Another park failure was Gunakadeit Park. Opportunities for people to hang out and ruin a well-meaning project are everywhere, he said. When tourists come up from places like Los Angeles, they understand to a certain extent that life cannot be sanitized. However placing a park in an area like the top of the parking garage was ill conceived, he thought. He felt that just because a park is in place did not mean it had to remain. The city has a limited budget and if it cannot maintain what is already in place, then there should be caution about creating more.

Mr. Heumann said programming and park amenities attract people. Cope Park used to have more than one barbeque grill but those have since been removed. He said the use of a park could be a type of turf battle requiring people to spend more time there than the inebriates do. He pointed out that there is another chapter in the document that will address public safety and in this respect, the two chapters ought to dovetail.

Ms. Pierce said she was not so eager to talk about enforcement in the parks in this chapter. The city is probably not going to add more parks downtown, she said, but the committee can look at what is in place and how the spaces can be better used. Most of the parks downtown are due for a facelift. This presents opportunities such as the upcoming bike park planned for Cope Park. She stated that she would bring pictures of parks for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Day asked if the island along the seawalk was considered a park area. Ms. Pierce said it was called a "habitat island" and could be construed as a natural area park.

Ms. Martinson asked about the rules for concessions in parks. Ms. Pierce said this was a permitting question. Ms. Martinson said a park could become a lunchtime destination if a sandwich truck is situated there. Mr. Dye said this was a complicated question between the Docks & Harbors and Parks & Recreation departments as well as brick and mortar businesses. It needed community input but was not as simple as putting food trucks on every corner.

Mr. Heumann said that Cope Park would be a great location for food truck Fridays, as it has a customer base within walking distance. In other cities, people can buy food in a park but that is missing in Juneau. Opportunities exist where there is a customer base, he said.

Ms. Pierce asked if a section should be added about commerce and programming in parks. If so, she wanted the committee to review each park and share ideas about what the community would like to see in place.

Mr. Worl said he participated in the recent Eaglecrest meeting where the community was asked to think about summertime recreation on the mountain. In a similar vein, he would like the

community to think about winter activities in places like Cope Park, for example. People come to Juneau to do outdoor activities, he said. He wondered if the committee could collaborate with Eaglecrest and use some of their findings to conceive of outdoor activities downtown.

Ms. Woll said that the seawalk was such a huge topic during the community visioning process, and so she wondered if there was a need to capture more of the waterfront plan in the Blueprint document. Ms. Pierce said it could be represented graphically if a picture of the completed plan were to be included. Mr. Dye said that if it were important to prioritize the seawalk being completed, the Blueprint plan could state that. Mr. Glidmann said that the remaining pieces of the seawalk involve private acquisition. When or if money is available, those deals could be worked out. Ms. Brenneman said she was surprised by the amount of overall public interest in the seawalk, and so she thought a graphical representation would not be enough. Ms. Ramiel said the committee did not have to address the complexities in order to make the recommendation.

Ms. Pierce said her next step would be to rework the chapter with the suggestions and comments given, add a vision section, and refine the discussion about individual parks, trails, and facilities for the next meeting to include ideas that are both visionary and realistic.

Ms. Ramiel was in favor of going park by park to brainstorm. She asked if a picture of each park could appear on the screen at the next meeting. Ms. Pierce said a good question was is there the right park in the right place with the right equipment. Ms. McKibben said that before the next committee meeting there will be a SWOT analysis with a parks focus group which will include entities such as Trail Mix, the forest service, Docks and Harbors, Parks & Rec, etc.

Mr. Glidmann concurred that the seawalk system should be considered a park system. It is intended for the local population to enjoy and use; tourist use is a by-product.

Ms. Martinson asked if downtown has any dog parks? Cope Park has a spot, was the reply.

IX. Public Participation - none

X. Committee Comments

Ms. Woll suggested a press release be sent out to call attention to the final report from the consultants because many people who participated are asking about the results. Ms. McKibben said this was discussed at a recent CDD staff meeting. It was also suggested to include information about the steering committee's work.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: August 8, 2019, 6 p.m., Assembly Chambers