



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

January 22, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

Steering Committee Members Present:

Christine Woll, Chair	Jill Ramiel
Karena Perry, Vice Chair	Ricardo Worl (telephonic)
Betsy Brenneman	Patty Ware
Kirby Day (telephonic)	Tahlia Gerger
Daniel Glidmann (telephonic)	Nathaniel Dye
Laura Martinson	

Steering Committee Members Absent: Michael Heumann

Staff:

Alexandra Pierce, Planning Manager
Beth McKibben, Senior Planner, Project Manager
Tim Felstead, Planner, Assistant Project Manager

Assembly Members:

None

I. Roll Call

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

II. Draft Chapter 8: Transportation, Streetscape & Parking

Mr. Felstead began his presentation of the Parking segment of the Chapter 8 draft by giving a general overview of what was included. He summarized the relevant plans, highlighting the 2010 Downtown Juneau Parking Management Plan, the 2012 Willoughby Plan, and the 2013 Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Felstead gave a brief history of the state of parking in Juneau, noting that parking has been a big issue for a long time. He stated that, at one point, there were no parking requirements for any buildings in the downtown core. Since then, parking meters have been implemented and removed, two new parking structures have been built, and the amount of on-street parking has increased due to the creation of one-way streets.

Despite these changes as well as survey data regarding the availability of downtown parking spaces, the public perception is that parking is hard to come by. The parking studies identified a misuse of spaces as one of the key contributors to this perception, such as parkers who move their vehicle every two hours to avoid parking tickets.

Public comments regarding downtown parking offer several different views of what people would like to see done about the issue. Some would like to see vacant lots in use as downtown

parking, while others would like to see new parking structures built as well as old ones resurfaced. Still others believe that the issue could be tackled through travel demand management and creating park-and-rides.

Mr. Felstead stated that downtown Juneau already has a lot of parking codes, as well as parking districts that have changed significantly over the years in their requirements. Zoning districts, called PD1, which once had zero parking requirements, were changed to PD2 “buffer zones.” These require that 60% of the parking required throughout the rest of the borough be provided. This was intended to give struggling businesses a break and to encourage residential development. The PD1 zoning was later changed to require that new construction provide 30% of the normal parking requirements.

The different parking requirements for the downtown core are based on the vicinity of a concentration of public transit, as well as a self-reported majority of people who live downtown walking to work. It is also a fee-in-lieu district, which means that a developer can pay a fee in exchange for waiving the parking demands. This fee is about \$10 thousand for a commercial space and about \$5 thousand for a residential space.

Ms. Ware asked if that fee-in-lieu waiver stayed with the building or stayed with the land.

Mr. Dye clarified that the waiver is for new construction. If a developer wants further additions, then they may pay \$10 thousand per required parking space for the ability to not have to include them.

Ms. Ramiel posited that this might be a disincentive to invest.

Mr. Dye said that he doesn't believe the parking requirements have affected that. He further stated that, considering the expenses and requirements of building a parking lot, he believed that \$10 thousand per space was cheap.

Mr. Felstead noted that the relatively low price was intentional, since \$50 thousand per parking space is the median cost. He said that despite the lower fee, the cost is still seemingly prohibitive. He mentioned that in order to meet the criteria for a fee-in-lieu waiver, there must be no adverse on-street impacts. Mr. Felstead explained that the money from the waivers is meant to go towards new parking structures, such as the new Downtown Transportation Center.

Ms. Brenneman arrived at 6:24 p.m.

Staff stated that there are no formal design requirements for downtown parking, although there are guidelines. The Willoughby Plan, for example, encourages new parking spaces to be placed at the back of buildings.

Mr. Felstead outlined the three goals identified in the 2010 Downtown Parking Management Plan:

1. Reduce the number of vehicles parked all day in short-term spaces;
2. Ensure that both the Marine Parking Garage and the Downtown Transportation Center parking garage are utilized to capacity; and
3. Ensure on-street parking spaces are available at all times for those who need short-term parking.

The plan also identified policies associated with travel demand management, and with the implementation of parking meters to try to shift long-term parkers into a parking structure.

Mr. Felstead stated that one of the 2010 parking plan's recommendations was to reevaluate residential parking zones due to concerns about business owners and employees parking on Gastineau Avenue and walking down the stairs. There has been concern expressed by members of the community, and echoed by members of the Steering Committee, that charging for parking in the downtown core encourages people to park in the surrounding residential areas. In this way, the parking meters didn't work. The temporary solution was to implement cash boxes in some lots and permits for other lots as well as the garages. This has created the issue of people applying for year-round permits in the garages to ensure that they have a parking spot in the summer, which means the parking space is unused for the majority of the year.

Mr. Day asked about the parking situation created by the reservation of spaces for the legislators and their staff.

Mr. Felstead said that the parking situation is seasonal and, due to the legislature and the tourism season, the lots and garages are fuller in the summer. He stated that there is space between the two garages.

Mr. Day asked if there was a reason not to go back to a parking meter system, since the Twisted Fish has one. He claimed that it works for them. He asked if CBJ was giving up on the idea of parking meters forever.

Mr. Felstead said no, but that the Assembly is cautious about implementing them again. He moved on to a graph depicting the amount of single-occupancy vehicles versus multiple-occupancy vehicles during mornings. The graph showed that single-occupancy vehicles made up a much larger portion of the vehicles than those that were multiple-occupancy. Mr. Felstead stated that, in order to make a difference in parking demand, even small changes in shifting that ratio towards more multiple-occupancy vehicles would help.

Mr. Felstead showed a map highlighting proposed locations for parking meters, with the bulk of them concentrated downtown. The proposed meters are meant to be situated a short walking distance away, rather than at every stall, to facilitate snow clearing.

Ms. Brenneman asked if there were many complaints from people living in the residential areas surrounding the downtown core about business owners and employees parking in those residential areas.

Mr. Felstead said that people who live on Gastineau Avenue, as well as people who live in the Flats neighborhood, have identified this as an issue.

Mr. Day asked if staff had considered reducing the free downtown parking period from two hours to one hour to encourage the use of the parking garages.

Mr. Felstead said that if the original idea of two free hours of parking doesn't work, then the plan is to reevaluate either the free parking time or the fees associated. Business owners have said that they want people to be able to take a long lunch without having to move their vehicles, which was part of the original reasoning for the original two-hour period.

Mr. Day mentioned parking enforcement as part of the issue.

Mr. Felstead said the 2010 parking plan recognizes that all of their efforts are for naught without consistent and effective enforcement.

Ms. Ramiel said that, while parking is a frustrating topic, the Blueprint Downtown document is supposed to be aspirational and future-focused. She stated that she would like the document to say that increased parking and a glut of single-use vehicles driving around the downtown core is not sustainable. She said that any compromise is going to water down the goal of creating a great downtown Juneau and that they needed to disincentivize driving.

Mr. Felstead agreed, and said that the rest of the Transportation chapter points towards discouraging single-occupancy vehicles.

Ms. Martinson expressed concern about how many of the vehicles driving in the downtown core are cars, rather than public transportation buses or industry trucks. She asked how they could change the public's perspective, citing comments she's read about people stating that they can't come downtown because they have giant trucks.

Mr. Day said that this is difficult to do without a robust transit system. Larger cities have park-and-rides and good transit systems.

Ms. Gerger suggested better lighting for the stairs and better walking infrastructure.

Ms. Martinson suggested more canopies.

Mr. Glidmann stated that, since he was calling in, he would write down his comments and email them. He said that it's important to keep in mind the length of the visioning program. He stated that, if the length is 20 years, the goal of a carless downtown society is unrealistic due to the growing trend of electric vehicles.

Mr. Worl agreed that the public perception about the parking situation is interesting. He used Gallery Walk as an example of an event where the public is generally happy to have a whole street shut down, where the reduced amount of parking is apparently not a deterrent from participation. He wondered where people parked for big events like that. He stated that he

liked the idea of a campaign to help change public perception and to encourage people to come downtown. He suggested shifting seasonal parking.

Mr. Dye reiterated that it's important to identify short- and long-term goals. He alluded to the Lemon Creek and Auke Bay Area Plans and how they tried to identify funding sources for their goals. He stated that he doesn't think positive PR campaigns for parking ever work. He encouraged coming up with short-, medium-, and long-term goals related to parking management.

Ms. Perry emphasized the importance of community buy-in. She said that she has lived in much smaller towns with pedestrian-only downtowns. She encouraged increased bike parking, in keeping with the health and sustainability focuses of the Blueprint Downtown document.

Ms. Pierce agreed with Mr. Dye regarding creating meaningful goals and recommendations with short-, medium-, and long-term time frames in order to make implementation more achievable. She suggested end-of-trip facilitators for bike commuters are a small, discreet project. She said that this might involve making recommendations that aren't necessarily comfortable, but that the Steering Committee shouldn't be afraid to not be popular when coming up with parking solutions.

Ms. Martinson suggested a tiered system for repeat offenders that park in short-term spaces all day. For example, the third time would result in their car being impounded.

Ms. Gerger reiterated a problem worsened by implementing parking meters, saying that people already park in front of her house in order to avoid paying for parking.

Mr. Felstead asked the Steering Committee if there was anything in the 2010 Downtown Parking Management Plan that they didn't like, and suggested implementing the plan. CBJ had hired a consultant to help assess the parking situation and they had identified the 2010 parking plan as sound, and something that should be implemented with the new technology available.

Ms. Brenneman stated that she didn't have any problem with the 2010 parking plan, but she doesn't see much enforcement aside from the failed parking meters. She emphasized that there is a strong public perception that it is possible to get away with parking poorly, and encouraged stronger enforcement to fight this perception. She cited snow-covered walkways as another barrier to lessening parking demand, as they encourage downtown inhabitants to drive rather than walk.

Ms. Ramiel agreed that walking downtown is currently unpleasant due to lack of canopies and other issues, such as lack of stair lighting as Ms. Gerger previously mentioned.

Ms. Martinson asked if the 2010 parking plan was still sound despite the overcrowding in the parking garages.

Mr. Felstead said that the garages are being simplistically managed, and that there are more sophisticated ways of managing them. He disagreed that the garages are full, citing the data gathered about use of the parking garages.

Mr. Day stated that he knew of people who would not park in the garages due to negative experiences, such as with homeless people living in them.

Mr. Felstead said that staff could add those concerns to the parking section of the Transportation chapter, but that those issues are more focused on design and planning for secure environments. He reiterated the importance of enforcement and controls.

Mr. Dye said that a contractor enforces parking in the garages. A small number of employees, who also have many other job duties such as trash enforcement and bear enforcement, enforces street parking. He stated that he has never seen sidewalk cleaning enforced. He also said that there has been a recent court ruling that complicates the matter of people living in parking garages, since it ruled that a car may not be impounded if someone is living in it.

Mr. Felstead presented a map that catalogued all of the space dedicated to parking within the Willoughby District. He suggested looking at new parking structures to free up parking space, as well as management goals to reduce demand for it.

Ms. Ware used the State Library and Museum parking garage as an example of a successful underground garage. She stated that it is free to park there, and that the garage is clean and well lit, but that a lot of the public doesn't know it's a parking option.

Ms. Woll asked if there are conflicts between the 2013 Comprehensive Plan and the 2010 Downtown Parking Management Plan.

Mr. Felstead said that there was not, as the Comprehensive Plan took older plans into account.

Ms. Brenneman asked if the Community Development Department no longer had the staff to collect parking data. She referenced the 2015 Juneau Economic Development Plan, which states that this data should be regularly collected.

Mr. Felstead said that parking data is being collected from the parking garages, but not for on-street parking. He expressed that, until something new is implemented, the older parking data is still relevant. One of the guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan states that on-street spaces cannot be removed unless there is a trade-off for more off-street parking. By following this guideline, the parking situation cannot be exacerbated.

Mr. Felstead presented several different options considered in the 2015 Willoughby Master Plan for an additional parking structure.

Ms. Martinson asked if the parking lot by Tesoro had been considered.

Mr. Felstead it had not.

Ms. Ware asked who owned the parking lot by the Bill Ray Center.

Mr. Dye replied that Dawson Construction had bought it.

Mr. Felstead said that staff had conducted a survey on what would make people drive to work less. Not many State workers responded to the survey, but they did get many responses from the general populace. Of those who responded, 49% said that they would drive to work less if other forms of transportation were more convenient, although Mr. Felstead expressed his opinion that the number of people who would actually take public transit rather than drive is lower.

Mr. Felstead presented examples of ways to make the parking garages more attractive as a way to encourage people to use them.

Ms. Martinson encouraged staff to consider structures on top of parking garages, such as the library on top of the Marine Parking Garage.

Ms. Ware asked if CBJ and the State had ever talked about allowing non-State workers to use the State parking garage during times of lower use.

Mr. Felstead said that a past staff member had attempted to find a way to jointly manage parking with the State. He said that if the new Juneau Arts and Culture Center (JACC) ever went into construction that there would be a demand or requirement for joint-use parking.

Ms. Brenneman reported that she had been involved in the discussions planning for the new JACC and the ultimate solution involved tearing down the Public Safety building to provide more spaces. She asked if the State had any plans to replace or fix their garage.

Mr. Felstead stated that the State is currently short on funds.

Ms. Brenneman suggested emphasizing a desire for joint-use parking in that area. She asked if any capital funds had been set aside to rebuild the garage.

Mr. Felstead replied that there had not.

Ms. Martinson asked if the Centennial Hall remodel addressed parking.

Ms. Pierce said that it would depend on whether the remodel changes their parking requirement.

Mr. Felstead stated that Centennial Hall is in a PD1 parking district. As long as they don't extend their footprint, they are not required to provide more parking. He said that there might be a net loss if they try to put something in that area that isn't related to parking. He said that a parking structure would replace those spaces, although he wasn't sure where it would be placed yet.

Mr. Dye expressed frustration with the Willoughby Plan because it ignores property and lot lines. He encouraged the Steering Committee to look at the bigger picture.

Mr. Felstead stated that when CBJ is involved, they have more ability to control the outcome. In Auke Bay, for example, there is public desire for a new grid; unfortunately, CBJ doesn't own most of the land that would be involved.

Mr. Felstead moved onto the subject of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging and parking. EVs that are charging are necessarily occupying a public space. There are currently two EV chargers in the Marine Parking Garage and a fast charger in the Downtown Transportation Center. With increased numbers of EVs in Juneau, however, there will be demand for on-street charging spaces. Some locations would be cheaper to convert to charging spaces than others, and there are limitations on where they could be placed due to parking spaces being situated across the street from power lines, for example. Mr. Felstead expressed that providing EV parking in certain locations would not create much of a financial burden. He suggested placing them by the Department of Environmental Conservation because their heated sidewalks already incur the fee that AEL&P charges once over a certain power draw. Additionally, money has been set aside in the Capital Improvement Plan for renewable energy projects.

Ms. Brenneman emphasized the importance of including EVs in the Blueprint Downtown document by drawing attention to the increased number of EVs in Juneau. She stated that she would like to see EV charging stations mentioned in the document.

Mr. Dye asked if CBJ intended to start charging people for using their EV charging stations.

Mr. Felstead reported that the Juneau Commission on Sustainability had considered requiring a permit to use the CBJ chargers, but ultimately the idea was dismissed. He said that there was a possibility of charging to use an EV charging station but that the cost of electricity used was low. A charger on public property might have a charging fee, while a charger on a residential street might require a permit. The permit option requires enforcement. Another issue with providing public charging stations is the differences between each model of EV and how it charges.

Mr. Dye stated that he had heard of people buying EVs because CBJ pays for their fuel, which adds to the issues with parking and the number of vehicles on the road. He wondered if there could be dedicated parking areas for EVs.

Mr. Felstead explained that the reasoning behind making EV charging free is to encourage EV use, as a way of helping work towards CBJ's sustainability goals.

III. Public Participation – None.

IV. Committee Comments

Mr. Felstead asked the committee if there was anything they felt was missing from the chapter that they would like to highlight.

Ms. Martinson asked if the Transportation chapter was an appropriate place to make a broad recommendation about a vision to make downtown Juneau more bike- and pedestrian-friendly.

Mr. Felstead stated that he was working on a table, to be presented at the next meeting, which would address that.

Ms. Ware asked if it would be helpful for the Steering Committee to email their priorities to Mr. Felstead.

Mr. Felstead encouraged them to do so.

Ms. McKibben thanked the Steering Committee for the helpful conversation and stated that the issues and priorities they have identified will be included in the table Mr. Felstead would bring to them at the next meeting.

Ms. Woll encouraged the use of short-, medium-, and long-term goals for every chapter.

Ms. Ware asked when they would be hearing the results of the Upstairs Downtown report.

Ms. McKibben said that the Upstairs Downtown committee made a presentation to the CBJ leadership team the previous week and that they would be bringing it to the Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee soon.

V. Steering Committee Updates

Staff reported that they intend to introduce the Economic chapter at the February 20, 2020 meeting. They intend to finish the Transportation chapter next week if things go well, and to schedule another meeting if needed.

Staff said that they did a presentation for the Juneau-Gastineau Rotary Club and that they would be presenting to the Downtown Business Association on February 4, 2020. Staff also intends to meet with the Juneau Police Department to talk about a safe downtown.

Ms. Pierce reported that the Tourism Task Force has been working on getting a report to the Assembly, as well as an outcome resolution. The Task Force has been receiving a large amount of public feedback related to the four main questions that they are tackling, as well as the sub questions. Given the temporary nature of the committee, there is the need for the Assembly to prioritize regarding the Task Force's focus. The Task Force will be writing a memo to the Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee with recommendations and outcomes for the Blueprint document. Ms. Pierce stated that the summary report from the Tourism Task Force is in its early stages, and that the process is very dynamic due to the many strong opinions from those on the committee.

Ms. Brenneman expressed her concern regarding rumors she has heard on potential plans for Telephone Hill.

Staff assured Ms. Brenneman that they would provide her with some information on plans for Telephone Hill, but that there isn't much known at present. The State listed Telephone Hill as one of its properties for disposal, to sell to CBJ. Telephone Hill is the only item on the list without a price tag. Staff reported that CBJ is looking into the matter, but that there are many complications with potentially acquiring the land.

Ms. Woll expressed appreciation for staff's diligence in keeping the Steering Committee up to date. She said that she would like to continue the discussion on what the next steps are for continuing the Blueprint document.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: January 30, 2019, 6 p.m., City Hall, Conference Room 224