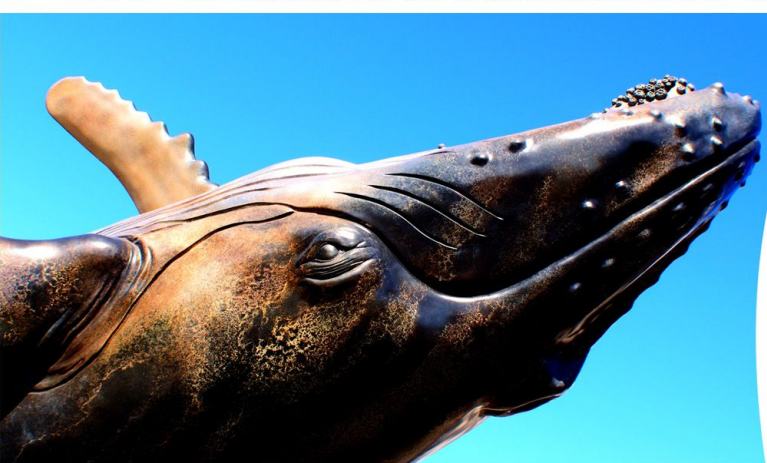


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

of the **CITY & BOROUGH OF JUNEAU**



ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2013
ORDINANCE 2013-26



CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
★ ALASKA'S CAPITAL CITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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and many more

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Situated between the sea and steep glacial peaks, the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ), Alaska's Capital City, is known and appreciated internationally for its awe-inspiring natural beauty. It is no wonder that our city draws approximately one million visitors each year from around the world.

Juneauites feel very lucky to live here. We value the scenic beauty of the surrounding terrain, its lush vegetation and clean waterways, and the abundant fish and wildlife supported by the coastal rainforest. We appreciate the easy access to wooded trails and fishing grounds, and year-round recreational opportunities. We value the small town feel of our city and the unique ways in which we have been able to incorporate big city amenities, such as diverse artistic, theatrical, musical, culinary, and other cultural pastimes, into our small Capital City. We live in safe neighborhoods and go about our day-to-day business within a friendly and functional community. We value a quality education and lifelong learning.

In order to protect and enhance the livability of Juneau, most agree that it is important to safeguard the environment, provide affordable housing and jobs for generations of residents, promote orderliness in growth, and institute reasonable and consistent controls over land development and public services. The *Comprehensive Plan* (also referred to as the “*Plan*” and the “*Comp Plan*”) is a long-range blueprint designed to guide the growth, development, and conservation of valued resources within our community over the next 20 years, to the year 2033. It is a collaborative document, incorporating input from diverse sectors of the community with the support of, and coordination by, CBJ staff. The *Plan* embodies both a long term vision of where we are going as well as concrete policies and actions to get us there. It is used to guide CBJ staff, elected officials and their appointed Boards and Commissions in shaping a better community through allocation of resources in ways that reflect the community's aspirations, values, and needs.

Through the process of comprehensive planning, a community can:

1. preserve, promote, protect, and improve the public health, safety, appearance, convenience, provision of services, and general welfare;
2. prevent overcrowding of land and exceeding the “carrying capacity,” or adequate level of service, of the land and infrastructure, such as roads, water and sanitary sewage services; and,
3. conserve, develop, utilize, and protect natural resources within its jurisdiction.

To be a meaningful and effective document, the *Comprehensive Plan* must be considered regularly and used by residents, the Planning Commission, and the assembly to guide its' decisions and resource allocations and it must be kept current to reflect community values, resources, constraints and opportunities. Discussions related to community growth, redevelopment, capital and social improvements, or budget, must occur in consultation with the *Plan*. This is not to say that the *Plan* will be infallible or that it is cast in concrete. It should, however, bring into focus sufficient information and data so that the best possible considered and objective judgments can be made, using the most current data available when the data in the *Plan* is out of date.

This document, then, comprises the *Comprehensive Plan* for the CBJ and provides a logical, consistent and purposeful approach to managing community growth and development. The *Plan* will be a road map that guides residents and their public officials through appropriate courses of action, not only to identify areas suitable for specific types of development but also to assure more efficient utilization of the areas that have already been developed.

The *Plan* provides a vision of the community's future that has many dimensions. It is a means of reinforcing the city's importance as the State Capital, an opportunity to create access to the waterfront, and to develop a variety of housing choices. It is a means to preserve a high level of environmental quality and diverse yet cohesive social interaction. The *Plan* addresses current conditions in the community and provides leadership and direction in addressing these problems, as well as those anticipated to affect us in the foreseeable future.

Comprehensive Plan Vision and Guiding Principles

The City and Borough of Juneau is a vibrant State Capital that values the diversity and quality of its natural and built environments, creates a safe and satisfying quality of life for its diverse population, provides quality education and employment for its workers, encourages resident participation in community decisions and provides an environment to foster state-wide leadership.

To achieve this vision, the CBJ followed these principles in formulating its *Comprehensive Plan*:

- **A safe place to raise a family.** Maintain safe neighborhoods and circulation systems; provide public spaces and facilities that foster community interaction and cohesiveness.
- **Quality education from Pre-school to University levels.** Promote quality educational programs and experiences in the schools and lifelong learning for our residents as well as a healthy lifestyle with adequate recreational facilities, resources and programs. Support a vital arts community, celebrating our diverse cultural heritage and unique historic resources.
- **A balanced economy.** Ensure a balanced, sustainable and diverse economy, actively encouraging employment opportunities for residents of all levels and ages that provide a livable wage and a dependable municipal tax base.
- **Natural resources.** Highlight and protect our scenic beauty, protect our streams and fish and wildlife habitat and foster the sustainable use of our natural resources.
- **A balanced community.** Ensure a balance between natural resource protection and the built environment, the efficient provision of infrastructure and goods and services, and housing affordable to all income levels.
- **Neighborhood livability and housing.** Maintain the identity and vitality of our neighborhoods, actively pursuing affordable housing for a diversity of households while promoting compatible livability and high quality design in new buildings.
- **Mobility.** Provide an accessible, convenient and affordable transportation system that integrates vehicle, vessel, rail and aircraft transport with sustainable and innovative transportation options—including convenient and fast public transit service, particularly for commuters to work, and bicycle and pedestrian networks throughout the community.
- **Involved citizenry.** Solicit resident participation and leadership in implementing the *Plan* policies and actions from all sectors of the community, encouraging mutual understanding and cooperation among all.

Community Setting

The CBJ is located in the central portion of the Alaskan panhandle, approximately 700 miles southeast of Anchorage and 950 miles north of Seattle (see the City and Borough of Juneau Vicinity map). Because of its mountainous terrain and great distances to other urbanized areas, the CBJ is accessible only by sea and air. There are no roads from Juneau to other southeastern Alaska communities or the Canadian interior.

Covering an area of more than 3,250 square miles, the CBJ is bounded on the west by Lynn Canal; on the east by the Canadian border; on the south by the Petersburg Borough; and on the north by the Haines Borough (see the City and Borough of Juneau Boundary map). In 1991, an approximate 150 square mile portion of northern Admiralty Island, encompassing the Greens Creek Mine, was annexed into the CBJ.

About 90 percent of the total area of the CBJ consists of water or rugged mountains and glacial icefields located within the boundaries of the Tongass National Forest. While this remote area is more difficult to use and develop, it is a very important resource for the well-being of the community and is addressed in this *Plan*.

Community History

The place we call Juneau has always been an important economic and cultural center due to its location, ecosystem, abundant resources and people. Juneau lies within the homeland of the Auk Kwaan people who flourished for thousands of years before European contact. They were joined by Taku Tlingit from the north and later by Haida and Tsimshian people from the south, and by Asian and other migrants. Tlingit culture is organized into many clans or kwaan within a system of two moieties, Raven and Eagle.

Russian, Spanish, English and later American ships came to the region starting in 1741, when Captain Vitus Bering sailed a Russian ship here. Trading in seal and sea otter pelts drew these visitors, who named many of the landmarks in the region as they charted its coastline. Original Tlingit names for these places are still well known. Russian dominance over the region began with the establishment of the Russian America Company in 1799 in Sitka, the Capital of Russian America. Alaska was sold to the U.S. in 1867.

In 1880 Richard Harris and Joe Juneau, gold prospectors, arrived here and were shown to gold deposits in Last Chance Basin-Gold Creek by Tlingit leader Kowee. Tlingit people moved to town for the jobs that opened up with mining. Thousands of miners came to travel the Chilkoot Trail from Skagway to the Klondike for gold exploration, later to work in the Treadwell, Alaska Juneau and smaller mines, until 1944 when the Alaska Juneau mine closed. By this time, Juneau's and Alaska's economies had diversified. The Capital moved from Sitka to Juneau in 1906. Territorial government expansion added construction jobs and new housing. World War II stimulated road construction and military expansion, including the Coast Guard here in Juneau and air transportation. Retail trade, fishing, and timber extraction guided by the United States Forest Service expanded.

In response to serious hardships imposed on the indigenous population by the incoming miners, prospectors, and other white settlers, the ANB (Alaska Native Brotherhood) and ANS (Alaska Native Sisterhood) were formed in 1912 to fight for economic, voting, and human rights including the right to be educated. In 1936, The Alaska Act led to the founding of Douglas Indian Association and the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes, as federally recognized Alaska tribes.

Statehood became a reality in 1959, and Juneau's population, housing, and infrastructure grew in response. The Alaska Marine Highway provided connections to all of Southeast, to the Alaska road system starting in Haines and to the "Lower 48" states through Seattle and later Bellingham. Fisheries rebounded with the abolition of fish traps.

With the discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay, native land rights were finally settled by the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Sealaska and Goldbelt Corporations became major landowners in the CBJ. Neighboring community corporations and non-profit organizations of Hoonah and Angoon were formed and operate today in Juneau. SEARHC medical system and numerous non-profit organizations were formed. The Alaska National Interest Lands Act of 1980 established National Parks, Wilderness Areas, and Monuments, including nearby Misty Fjords, Admiralty Island National Monument, and Glacier Bay National Park. These wilderness designations continue many controversies regarding forest, environmental and native lands and their use.

The 1980's were a time of uncertainty for the capital in Juneau, and for our economy. Builders feared the capital move and were reluctant to build new housing. As the Capital became more secure, "Capital Creep", or the movement of state jobs to other areas of the state escalated. Large multinational corporations including Costco, Fred Meyer, Walmart, Home Depot, and Safeway changed the retail landscape. Development in Juneau's historic district expanded as cruise ship passenger numbers increased, although this trend has fluctuated.

In the 1990's, population rose slightly with the development of Greens Creek Mine, fishing, and tourism primarily, but housing lagged. City, state and federal capital expenditures provided employment as these buildings were constructed. Now Kensington Mine operates nearby. The University of Alaska and federally-sponsored research institutions have proliferated.

Juneau's population is estimated to be 32,290 in 2011. With these trends, new community and CBJ efforts are ramping up to meet the housing challenge. Our population is much more diverse than it was before Statehood in 1959. Juneau is the regional hub of southeast Alaska, as well as the capital of the state of Alaska. Our population

now includes close to 20 percent who identify themselves as at least partially Alaska Native or American Indian ancestry.

Filipino and other Asian people now comprise eight percent of the local population. This increasing diversity is spread across most sectors of the economy, including government, Native corporations, fisheries, mining, tourism and local businesses. Our artistic, musical and cultural programs and people are flourishing as well, as this diversity of population and economy brings out creative and innovative approaches to our community's challenges. Government and university expansion has brought higher wage earners and a better-educated population to Juneau, with corresponding increases in many recreational opportunities, schools, and programs for youth.

[The Planning Commission acknowledges that the brief history above may not be entirely accurate or complete. However, the Planning Commission is committed to revising the historical section of the Comprehensive Plan in consultation with scholars, appropriate Native organizations, and other cultural groups prior to the next Comprehensive Plan revision.]

Study Area and Plan Organization

The study area of the *Comprehensive Plan (Plan)*, which largely corresponds with the roaded area, contains land most suitable for future development due to its proximity to existing urban uses, physical characteristics and ownership patterns. The area includes downtown Juneau and Douglas, as well as the communities of West Juneau, North Douglas, Salmon Creek, Switzer Creek, Lemon Creek, the Mendenhall Valley, Auke Bay, Thane and the "Out the Road" communities of Lena Point and Tee Harbor. Generally, existing development is linear, confined to a narrow bench of land between the sea and the steeply rising mountains to the northeast on the mainland as well as along the eastern and northern coastline of Douglas Island. The major exception is the Mendenhall Valley, which is a broad, generally flat, glacial plain.

The *Comprehensive Plan* of the City and Borough of Juneau guides the government of the City and Borough of Juneau, which is often referred to as the "CBJ" or the "CBJ government" in the *Plan*. The boundaries of the City and Borough are also, on occasion, referred to as the "CBJ" or as the "City and Borough;" the context of the reference should make it clear whether the reference is to the government or to the physical boundaries and land within the boundaries of the City and Borough. As a planning document that was developed through community outreach and involvement, and which affects the residents of and visitors to the community, references are also made to the "community" of Juneau, or to "Juneau" in general. Again, the context of the reference should make the intent clear, but there will no doubt be instances in which confusion arises as to whether the government, land area, or people of Juneau are being referenced; the 2013 Update aims to reduce the potential for any such confusion by replacing most references in the 2008 Update to the "CBJ" with more specific terminology as discussed above.

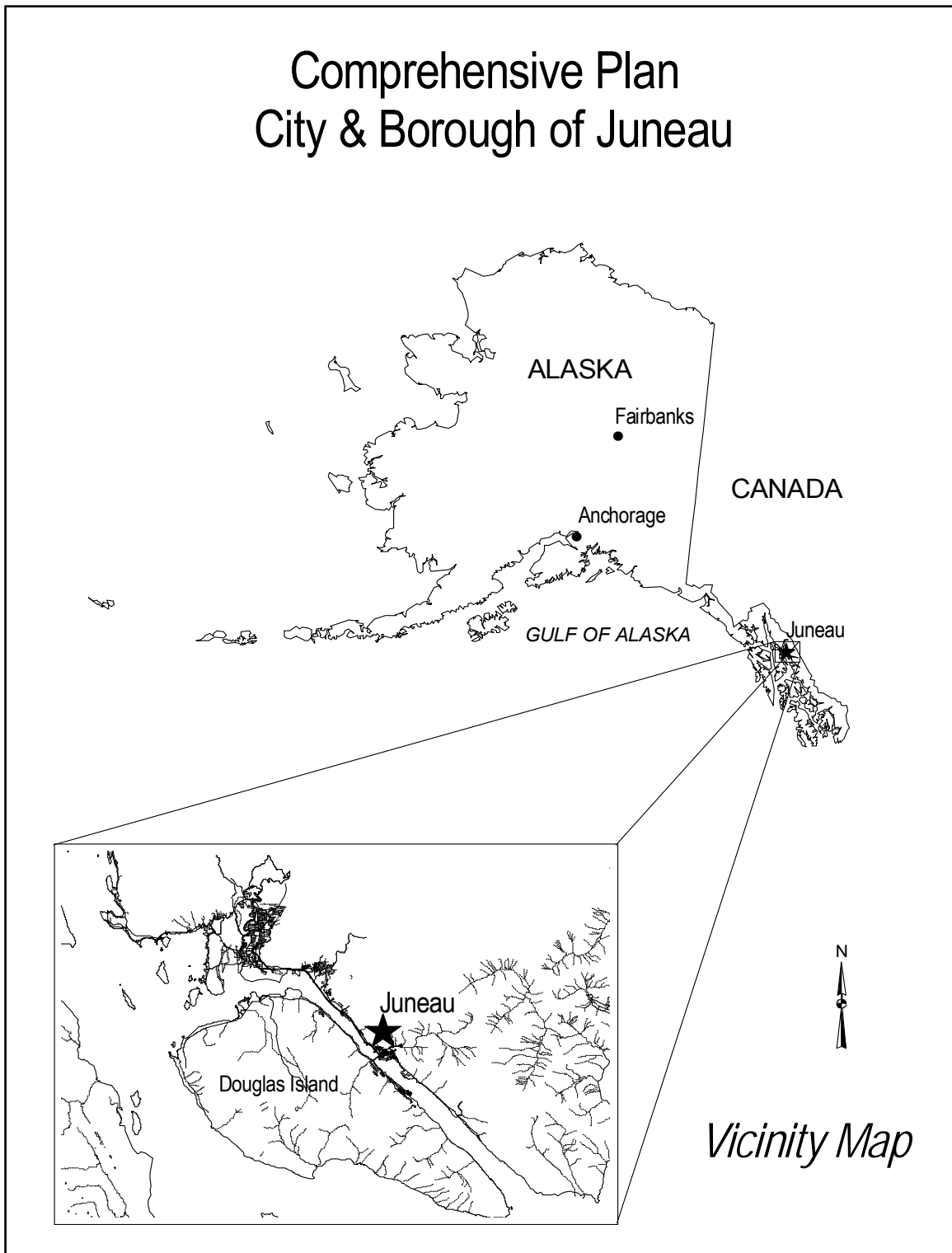
The City and Borough of Juneau's *Comprehensive Plan* consists of 18 chapters. Each chapter contains one or more subject Policy along with its implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Development Guidelines (DGs), and/or Implementing Actions (IAs). Each policy number corresponds to the Chapter in which the policy is found and each numbered policy is preceded by a preamble discussion of findings that form the foundation and planning rationale for the policy. Each SOP, DG, and IA is numbered to correspond to the Chapter and Policy it supports or enacts. This numbering system can be summarized as follows: Chapter #.Policy # - Subtype (SOP, DG, or IA) #.

Thus, a citation of Chapter, Policy, SOP, DG, or IA is written in the following manner:

3	Chapter 3
3.1	Chapter 3, Policy 1
3.1 - SOP2	Chapter 3, Policy 1, Standard Operating Procedure 2

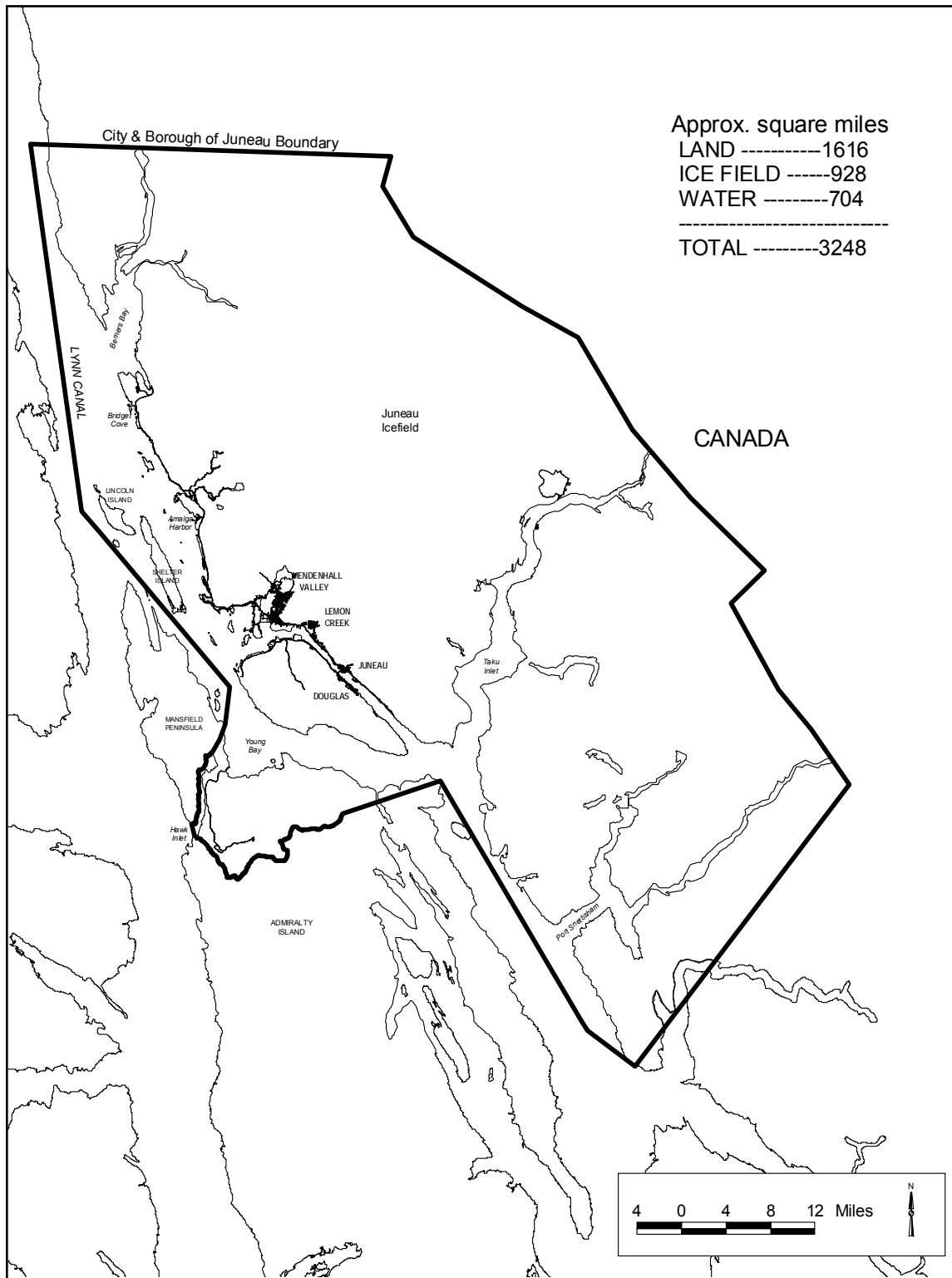
The policy statements are the most significant parts of the *Plan*. Policies are statements establishing a course of action for the CBJ government by providing the basis for guiding ongoing decisions related to land use, preparation of land use regulations, capital improvement programs, and funding of services to its residents and visitors. The policy was formulated to reflect community values, goals and objectives articulated in neighborhood and stakeholder outreach meetings and opinion surveys conducted as part of this *Plan* Update. These goals express community needs or desired actions such as: Maintain a safe place to raise a family; provide quality education from pre-school to the University level; protect streams and wildlife habitat; provide affordable housing and jobs

for generations; and assure access to the water and forested areas for humans, fish, and wildlife. The policies presented in this *Plan* reflect these values and goals and express commitments to action derived from the stated goal. The *Plan* is a declaration of public policy to achieve community goals and reflect community values. The policies were also crafted to positively address the community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as identified by the Planning Commission during the 2007-08 *Plan* update process, and as refined during the 2013 *Plan* update.



Map 1.1

City and Borough of Juneau
Vicinity Map



Map 1.2

City and Borough of Juneau Boundary Map

The *Plan* is a long-range document that lays out the blueprint for guiding development and conservation actions over its 20 year planning period, to the year 2033. Within this time frame, the CBJ government’s policy decisions and allocation of resources will be measured by how those actions positively address the Policies contained within this *Plan*. Staff, community members and decision-makers will measure permit applications, capital improvement proposals and local funding applications by the Policies and their Standard Operating Procedures and Development Guidelines, as well as the relevant Subarea Guidelines of this Plan. Typically, many policies will be applicable to a proposed project or action, and decision-makers will need to weigh the effect of the proposal on the particular

resource(s) that the policy seeks to provide or protect. Decision-makers will need to consider the overall impact of the proposal on the policies and guidelines, taking into consideration the:

- Short-term and cumulative effects of the proposed project to the local and borough-wide environment;
- Availability of public financial resources to service the project; and
- Overall merits of the proposal.

Each policy statement is generally followed by a SOP, a DG, and/or an IA that are the practical means of putting each policy into effect. The SOPs inform developers, property owners and permit review staff of a particular resource to consider or agency to consult when reviewing relevant permits. For example, Economic Development Policy 5.10 seeks to designate sufficient land for commercial and industrial development as part of an overall economic development program. The associated 5.10 - SOP1 and 5.10 - SOP2 advise staff and decision-makers to consult and consider the location criteria of each industry when allocating land to that use.

The DGs express directions, standards or values about a particular community resource, either for its development or conservation. The DGs are intended for property owners and/or permit Applicants to become aware of special treatment and review needed to assess the development or conservation of the subject resource. For example, 5.11 - DG2 for Policy 5.11 suggests that when allocating city-owned lands for commercial or industrial businesses, the CBJ government should favor local “basic sector” industries that provide employment with medical benefits over candidate businesses that do not provide those benefits.

The IAs describe how the Policy should be implemented and would include such actions as recommended ordinance changes, map revisions, studies and financing mechanisms. For example, 5.11 - IA1 for Policy 5.11 seeks to amend the Land Use Code to create a heavy industry zoning district wherein retail, office or other commercial uses and housing would not be permitted and, therefore, could not encroach upon scarce land suitable for manufacturing or other heavy industry.

Future Direction

This *Plan* provides guidance to residents and local officials as they decide the location, intensity and timing of future public and private development, as well as conservation measures. The community’s growth is affected by complex physical, economic, and social factors.

The future of the community is inter-twined with the future of the state of Alaska. This is true, to an extent, for any town in Alaska because so much of a given city’s budget is dependent on state funding and state-sponsored improvements. In Juneau’s case, as the Capital City, the state’s fortunes are far more significant. Alaska has depended on oil for the vast bulk of its revenue and general well-being. No political/economic scenario now under discussion suggests that the state will ever again enjoy the oil revenues it experienced in the early 1980’s.

All scenarios point to a continued reduction in state spending and services. If the community is to grow, however modestly, or even stay in a steady-state economically, there will have to be some growth in other sectors of the economy to make up for continuing reductions in services to local governments and the number of state employees based in Juneau. If Juneau is to retain its status as the state’s Capital, it needs to be viewed as a vibrant, modern, efficient, culturally-rich, affordable and livable city—one in which state legislators look forward to spending several months each year and, to some degree, would aspire to pattern their home cities, towns and villages after.

SIDEBARS:

New to the 2013 Update of the CBJ Comprehensive Plan, the use of sidebars allows the inclusion in the plan of data, examples, and other background information that are not intended to describe CBJ policy or to be considered when reviewing a project, ordinance, or budgetary decision’s consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

