

CHAPTER 14

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SERVICES

Schools

Schools are among the most important public services society provides for its residents. Not only are they the centers of learning for our children, they are also important focal points for neighborhood activities. The health and vitality of the community's schools is invariably a clear indicator of the health and vitality of the community itself. In a community values survey conducted for the 2008 Plan Update, providing a "quality education from pre-school to University" was ranked second in value, behind "keeping Juneau a safe place to raise a family" and above "maintaining a strong economy with good paying jobs."

For the 2012-13 school year, the Juneau School District (JSD) is serving approximately 5,000 students in two high schools, one alternative high school, two middle schools, six elementary schools, a K-8 Charter School, a district-wide K-12 correspondence program, and a Tlingit Culture, Language, and Literacy program.

At its Auke Bay campus, the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) grants undergraduate degrees in a variety of fields. Proposed expansion to accommodate a projected 40 percent increase in full-time "traditional" or face-to-face students (from 850 in 2011 to 1200 in 2021) will create pressure in the area for additional support services such as affordable housing, restaurants, stores and public transportation.

One of the most important factors influencing the quality of life in a community is a good elementary, secondary, and university educational system. In addition to its role as an important source of jobs and revenue, UAS offers educational and technical training to Juneau's population. The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) also offers programs and classes in Juneau. Collectively, UAS and UAF are referred to in this Plan as the University of Alaska (UA), although the University of Alaska Anchorage is part of the UA system and does not offer face-to-face courses in Juneau. All three schools in the UA program also offer a wide variety of distance education opportunities, and students of one university can take classes that are offered by the other universities in the system.

POLICY 14.1. TO PROVIDE A STRONG SYSTEM OF HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION TO ENABLE ALL STUDENTS TO BECOME WELL EDUCATED, INFORMED RESIDENTS WHO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE DIVERSE CULTURES AND WHO ARE EQUIPPED TO PURSUE FURTHER EDUCATION AND COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY IN THE WORK FORCE.

Standard Operating Procedures

- 14.1 - SOP1 Encourage the Juneau School District to establish high standards for curriculum content and other factors and facilities contributing to a high quality of education for all of the CBJ's students.
- 14.1 - SOP2 Work closely with the staff of UAS in neighborhood planning efforts for the Auke Bay area that considers the on- and off-site impacts and requirements associated with UAS expansion. This should include impacts on housing and on transit, vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle transportation systems.
- 14.1 - SOP3 Coordinate and cooperate with UAS and UAF (UA) in the development of UA infrastructure, housing, vehicular and pedestrian access, trails, educational and recreational facilities and to the protection and conservation of natural habitat in and around UA facilities that contributes to a successful learning environment.

- 14.1 - SOP4 Incorporate Planning Commission review in the siting of public, parochial and private schools to assure land use compatibility and to encourage the shared use of outdoor play areas and parking resources with nearby residential, cultural or institutional uses.
- 14.1 - SOP5 Support existing and development of new vocational education programs and facilities throughout the community to promote workforce development in construction, mining, and other fields.

Development Guidelines

- 14.1 - DG1 Recognize student needs for pedestrian safety and a quiet environment conducive to learning when making land use and transportation decisions. Proposed developments should be reviewed for potential impacts on school capacities and the extent to which the development will create a need for additional school facilities.
- 14.1 - DG2 Ensure that new UAS facilities and educational programs are planned, sited and designed to enhance their availability to Juneau residents. Of particular concern are facilities and educational programs that facilitate community sustainability objectives and long-term economic development goals.

Implementing Actions

- 14.1 - IA1 Continue and strengthen efforts to reduce the drop-out rate of high school students.
- 14.1 - IA2 Work with the Juneau School District and University to ensure that the schools provide basic safety and knowledge education in subject matters that sustain local culture and recreational values such as marine ecology, boat safety, fishing, hunting education and safety, subsistence agriculture and harvesting and similar subjects that facilitate local production or harvesting and consumption of food and fiber.
- 14.1 - IA3 Work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, University Extension, United States Soils Conservation Agencies, and local organizations such as Trout Unlimited, 4H, Community Gardens and other relevant groups and agencies to promote community education regarding hunting and fishing skills and ethics, animal husbandry, crop-raising, marketing and bartering systems, home recycling, composting, non-fossil fuel energy systems, water conservation and other energy- and food-independence skills and knowledge.
- 14.1 - IA4 Evaluate existing school facilities for possible expansion if they are determined to need additional outdoor space for physical education. Of particular concern are expansion of covered playgrounds and other recreation facilities to ensure all-weather outdoor physical exercise and play.
- 14.1 - IA5 Support University efforts to bring speakers, artists, musicians and others to Juneau. These initiatives enrich the cultural life of the community and support the expansion of Juneau as an artistic and cultural capital.

Libraries

The CBJ Public Libraries provide materials and services to help community residents of all ages obtain information to meet their personal, educational, and professional needs, and to support literacy and lifelong learning. Libraries are a vital component of the community, providing information to businesses, agencies, visitors, and individuals seeking personal and professional growth. The CBJ operates a main library in downtown Juneau and branches in downtown Douglas and the Mendenhall Valley.

A 17,000-square-foot main library was opened in December 1988, on the newly-constructed fifth floor of the Marine Park Garage on the downtown Juneau waterfront. Six thousand additional square feet is available for expansion on that site. This central location is convenient for use of library materials, internet facilities and meeting rooms for downtown residents, workers and over a million cruise ship guests and crew members.

The Douglas Public Library is located in a combined library/fire station that opened in 1987. Approximately 6,000 square feet is dedicated to the Library and a public meeting room. The Mendenhall Valley Public Library is located in a 9,391 square-foot leased storefront in the Mendenhall Mall. Space and electronic needs in the next ten years

will require construction of a new building in the Mendenhall Valley to serve these needs. A new Mendenhall Valley library received a portion of its required construction funding from state and local sources in 2012.

The three public libraries are part of the Capital City Libraries cooperative, which includes the Alaska State Library, the University of Alaska Southeast Egan Library, and the Sealaska Heritage Institute. These libraries share an automated circulation and on-line public catalog system. The public is free to use any of the Capital City Libraries with one library card. The Capital City Libraries cooperate in the provision of print and electronic resources to avoid unnecessary duplication and broaden the scope of information available within the community.

Optimum use of on-line networks and cooperative systems is essential in this new electronic age of international connectivity through the Internet. The Juneau Public Libraries provide public access to the Internet, guide users in finding its unique resources, and maintain the on-line information presence that makes Juneau, as Alaska's Capital City, a destination for Internet users worldwide. Providing children with the skills necessary to effectively navigate electronic information sources is a critical component of preparing future generations of Juneauites to participate in the global and information economy.

POLICY 14.2. TO FOSTER LITERACY AND TO PROVIDE FREE ACCESS TO LIBRARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

Standard Operating Procedures

- 14.2 - SOP1 Identify and pursue local, state and federal funding sources for library services.
- 14.2 - SOP2 Provide support to the Library such that each library facility provides consistent and reasonable public service hours.
- 14.2 - SOP3 Continue resource-sharing and electronic networking efforts to provide for the most efficient, far-reaching and cost effective library services for the CBJ.

Implementing Action

- 14.2 - IA1 Provide a city-owned library and community center at a convenient location in the Mendenhall Valley.
- 14.2 - IA2 Continue to expand and support the provision of and access to computers and advanced technology in the library system.

Child Care

There is a critical child care shortage in Juneau, and that lack of quality child care makes Juneau a less than attractive place – and even an untenable home - for young families.

In 2012, the CBJ Assembly included funding in the FY13 and FY14 budgets for the Hiring, Educating, and Retaining Teaching Staff (HEARTS) program, which provides financial support to child care providers with the goal of improving the child care situation in Juneau.

By funding the HEARTS program, the CBJ government has provided incentives to increase licensed child care capacity and ensure that the quality of that care is at a level that will result in positive outcomes for Juneau's children and families. This program is in its infancy, and its long-term impacts remain to be seen, but the critical need for quality, affordable child care remains in the community at this time.

POLICY 14.3. TO SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF QUALITY CHILD CARE IN A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT BY WELL-TRAINED EDUCATORS AND CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.

Standard Operating Procedures

- 14.3 – SOP1 Work with child care providers, advocates, and other stakeholders to ensure that regulatory or permitting requirements do not unduly restrict the availability of affordable, quality child care in Juneau.
- 14.4 – SOP2 Provide support of child care providers as needed to ensure an adequate supply of available affordable, quality child care opportunities.