

CHAPTER 15

CULTURAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Juneau residents have shown longstanding support and appreciation of the arts and humanities and the cultural opportunities they provide. As residents of a small city separated from other urban centers, Juneauites have relied upon local resources to promote the arts. The municipality has achieved state and national recognition for the important role played by the arts in community life.

Recognizing that the arts, history and cultural diversity are central to the well-being of its residents, the CBJ government has done much to encourage the development of these activities in and around the community. As a state capital, however, more needs to be done to provide venues that are readily accessible to all, whether local, regional, state, national or international in scope, and in a setting that is befitting a Capital City.

Anchored by the Alaska State Museum, Andrew Hope Hall, the Alaska State Library in the State Office Building, and Capital Community Broadcasting, Inc, the area bordered by Gold Creek, Willoughby Avenue, Main Street, and Egan Drive is developing as a center for cultural activities. With Centennial Hall serving as the visitor and convention center and two hotels located within these boundaries, the area is readily accessible both to locals and visitors. The Downtown Transit Center that opened in December 2010 provides a hub to conveniently access the many activities that are available downtown. The planned performing arts center / Perseverance Theater collaboration will draw more people to the “cultural campus” and reinforce the year-round health of the adjacent business district as befits a State Capital. The State of Alaska has begun work on a new consolidated library, archives, and museum building on the site of the current State Museum; this is the state’s first major capital investment in Juneau in over thirty years, and is the largest investment in the cultural campus/capital complex since the area was conceived. Just outside the cultural campus and in the heart of historic downtown Juneau, the Sealaska Heritage Institute is developing a new cultural center at the intersection of Seward and Front Streets, adjacent to the Institute’s current location at Sealaska Plaza.

The current level of cultural activity exceeds the capacity of existing facilities to provide appropriate places for expression. As the community grows, and as the desire and need for a diversity of cultural and artistic activities and events increases, the need for adequate facilities will become more pressing. Adequate facilities would encourage growth in the arts and humanities as a potentially significant economic as well as cultural element in the Capital City.

The arts industry plays a significant role in the CBJ economy, and with adequate facilities, can play an even greater role. Aside from the potential for direct economic benefits, improvements in the cultural environment would support and enhance the general quality of life for residents and provide additional opportunities for visitors as well.

Another important aspect of the quality of life in the community is the design and aesthetics of the community’s built environment. New construction is an inherent component of a vital and growing community. New structures, both public and private, are almost always significant additions to the visual landscape, and architecture is a significant part of a community’s culture and public identity. Particularly as the Capital City, the CBJ’s built environment should be a positive part of this culture, contributing in its own way, as does the natural environment, to the positive image of our city. To this end, the architectural character of the built environment should be strengthened and enhanced. In the Downtown Historic District, emphasis is well placed on respecting the historic character of the area. In other visible areas, architecture, urban design, terrain and vegetation should enhance the visual character of the site and environs [related policies are found in the Policy 10.6 section of this Plan pertaining to design review].

POLICY 15.1. TO SUPPORT THE ARTS AS A VITAL ELEMENT OF COMMUNITY LIFE AND TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT THE ARTS PLAY IN THE CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY. IT IS FURTHER THE POLICY OF THE CBJ TO STRENGTHEN ITS ROLE AS A REGIONAL CULTURAL RESOURCE TO THE COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA.

Standard Operating Procedures

- 15.1 - SOP1 Require that at least one percent of the construction, remodeling or renovation costs of a public facility be reserved for public art. Promote the purchase of durable art for the community.
- 15.1 - SOP2 Maintain and further develop the municipal art bank as a collection of art and artifacts that depict the history of the community, its people, fish and wildlife and natural setting. The CBJ government should secure a stable source of funding for maintenance and repair of the public art collection in the art bank.
- 15.1 - SOP3 Through the CBJ's designated arts agency, the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council: make funds available to individual artists and arts organizations; sponsor summer weekly concerts in Marine Park and other locations; provide the community with technical assistance, reference and resource material; and rental equipment, and encourage a broad range of artistic and community uses of the Juneau Arts and Culture Center or a new Performing Arts Center [see 15.1 – IA2].
- 15.1 - SOP4 Officially welcome participants, and otherwise encourage large regional artistic, social, and other cultural events such as the biennial Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Celebration and the folk, classical, and jazz music festivals.

Implementing Actions

- 15.1 – IA1 Through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), promote the expansion of facilities for a wide variety of cultural activities, including performing and visual arts and neighborhood cultural centers.
- 15.1 – IA2 Promote the development of a Juneau Performing Arts Center in downtown Juneau as well as making needed improvements to Centennial Hall to provide venues for live performances, visual arts, receptions, public meetings, and convention-related presentations.
- 15.1 – IA3 Support the concentration of arts, entertainment, dining, museum and cultural activities and venues as a cultural campus that integrates such things as artists workshops, housing, and joint-use parking in the area of downtown Juneau near the Capitol Complex.
- 15.1 – IA4 Strengthen the CBJ's urban design policies, guidelines, standards and procedures to protect and enhance the community's visual environment, particularly as it relates to and complements the beauty, scale and terrain of the natural environment. Increased public review and scrutiny should be provided for projects having or likely to have a significant visual impact. View corridors should be identified and standards adopted to protect them.
- 15.1 – IA5 Support facilities, institutions, organizations and individual artists that enable Juneau to maintain its role and stature as the Capital City.
- 15.1 – IA6 Amend CBJ 49, the Land Use Code, as needed to implement the neighborhood design envisioned in Chapter 5 of the *Willoughby District Land Use Plan*.
- 15.1 – IA7 Support arts education and venues in the Juneau School District.