



December 29, 2014

Kim Kiefer, Manager
City & Borough of Juneau
155 S. Seward St.
Juneau, AK 99801

DEC 30 2014
CBJ Manager's Office

Re: FY16 Marine Passenger Fee Funding for "Downtown Circulator" and "Paths of Travel" Projects.

Dear Ms. Kiefer,

The Downtown Business Association has identified the Downtown Circulator and Paths of Travel as two vitally important projects for the revitalization of Downtown Juneau.

Background on Available Funding: Our intent has been to request funding from an already appropriated source of MPF funds. Your Manager's report to the Assembly on April 7, 2014 contained the following appropriation request:

Ordinance 2013-11(AN) An Ordinance Appropriating To The Manager The Sum Of \$1,514,583 as Additional Funding For The Open Space Waterfront Land Acquisition Capital Improvement Project, Funding Provided By the Lands Fund's Fund Balance. This ordinance would transfer \$1,514,583 to the Open Space Waterfront Land Acquisition capital project from the Lands Fund balance reserved for noise abatement loans. Ordinances 2003-19(L), 2004-14(O), and 2007-21(C) transferred a total of \$1,514,583 to the Lands Fund from the Heliport Plan and Flightseeing Noise Abatement Capital Improvement Project (which was funded with Marine Passenger Fees) for the purpose of providing loans to reduce the noise impact of small aircraft in the *downtown area*. No noise abatement loans have been applied for in the past several years. There have been loans and interest paid to the Lands Fund and now Lands is returning MPF funds into the Open Space Waterfront Land Acquisition capital project. In 2002 the Assembly moved that any marine passenger funding *not allocated for any other purpose* will be placed in the Open Space Waterfront Land Acquisition capital project fund. The Manager recommends adoption of Ordinance 2013-11(AN).

The Assembly approved that request. We noted then that the funds in question had a.) originally been appropriated for mitigation of downtown impacts, and b.) that they were potentially re-allocable (see italicized wording). We believe that it would be entirely appropriate and quite expedient to use a small portion of these monies to fund the work we are proposing regarding the Downtown Circulator and Paths of Travel projects. However, we are only now getting to the point of having detailed work proposals ready to submit to the CBJ for use of those funds. Meanwhile, we are fast approaching the deadline for submission of proposals to utilize FY16 Marine Passenger Fee proceeds. DBA recognizes

that there are many competing requests each year for use of the MPF for a wide variety of purposes. It is not our preference to compete with those requests, particularly when there are already appropriated sources of funds available, as noted. However, we do not yet know if the Assembly will support use of the monies transferred to Open Space Waterfront Land Acquisition capital project for the purposes we suggest. Since we feel that there is urgent need to address these issues DBA requests that the Downtown Circulator and Paths of Travel projects be considered for FY16 MPF funding. If the Assembly subsequently indicates that the other source of funds is available for consideration we will withdraw this request.

Funding Requests: Attached are scope of services documents DBA has prepared for each project. These have been carefully developed using expertise of professionals on our Board members, review of similar projects in other communities, and in consultation with experts in the respective fields. We believe that the outline scopes of service can be successfully accomplished for the following amounts:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Downtown Circulator | \$125,000 |
| Paths of Travel | <u>\$100,000</u> |
| Total | \$225,000 |

Project Descriptions & Justification: The Downtown Business Association is an 85 member organization of retail, service and professional businesses striving to improve Downtown Juneau for both local residents and the 1.4 million business and tourist visitors who come to the Capital City each year. With organizational and administrative support from the Juneau Economic Development Council, over the past three years committees of citizen volunteers have been working on *Downtown Revitalization* issues facing the city. DBA has been integrally involved in this effort. As noted above, we have already put considerable effort into problem analysis and development of detailed work proposal. It is time to take this work to the next level with engagement of highly qualified design and engineering professionals.

DBA believes there is considerable urgency to accomplish the proposed work. Cruise ship visitor traffic is vital to Juneau's economy, and crucially important for downtown. It is one of the few areas in which we can confidently forecast growth. Downtown Juneau needs concrete solutions that not only address current issues impeding renewed growth and redevelopment, but which also capitalize on an array of important economic development opportunities we now have before us. DBA has developed two specific *implementable* projects for consideration by the Assembly. We do not propose generalized studies, and will not "re-invent the wheel". All solutions will be fully consistent with, and designed to advance existing CBJ policy and goals as expressed in the Downtown Waterfront Plan, the Willoughby District Plan, and the major investments in the new 16-B cruise ship docks and Seawalk. If funds are awarded as requested we will ensure close cooperation with CBJ planning and engineering professionals throughout the project process.

New developments in and around downtown will increase local and visitor traffic, alter circulation patterns, and increase congestion. But they also promise opportunities for renewed downtown growth and improved city experiences for residents and visitors alike.

- Completion of the new 16-B cruise ship berths will spur a substantial increase in visitors and crew to the heart of downtown on a daily basis throughout the summer. With Juneau's ability to

host five Panamax vessels (4 at dock and 1 at anchor) projections are for 1.2 to 1.25 million cruise ship visitors annually (20-25% increase above current levels, with a concomitant increase in crew visits), but existing staging area for managing visitor traffic are already “max-ed out”.

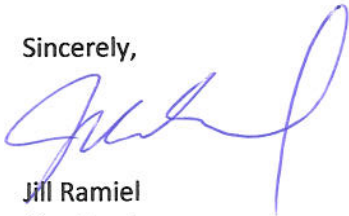
- Continuation of the Seawalk project and the reconstruction of Egan Drive from 10th Street to Main Street will significantly change both pedestrian and vehicular pathways, but “downstream” changes in movement patterns and impacts on businesses have not been analyzed.
- New cultural institutions such as the Soboleff Center, the new State Library, Archives and Museum, and the proposed Willoughby Arts Center will be natural tourists destinations and busy local venues.
- The Willoughby District Plan calls for up to 450 new dwelling units in that area in response to our chronic housing shortage, and there are numerous in-fill residential development opportunities throughout the rest of downtown.

How will people move safely and securely to these locations? How can Juneau make this an opportunity for smart development that benefits the local economy as well as our visitors? Currently most cruise ship passengers do not travel much beyond S. Franklin St. unless they are on a bus whisking them to activities outside of the downtown core. We need to encourage engagement in other areas of our downtown and allow cruise ship passengers to experience more of the unique retail, cultural and dining offerings of Juneau. Our natural attractions – the Glacier, whale watching, hiking and fishing - are great. A city experience that is equally compelling will be a great boost to the economy, and will make Juneau a better, more attractive Capital City.

To serve our visitors the streets, sidewalks and transit that link the cruise ship terminals to the key visitor venues listed above - as well as the Capitol building, city museum, Governor’s House, St. Nicholas Church - must be inviting, safe and easy to navigate. The paths of travel, whether on foot or by transit, must provide amenities and services that draw visitors and locals alike. The goal is to ensure that Uptown (N. Franklin and Seward Street shopping streets), the Merchants Wharf and the Willoughby District become more fully and effectively integrated into the visitor experience, with businesses that are open all year and attract Juneau residents as well as independent tourists and cruise ship passengers.

DBA’s proposed Paths of Travel and Downtown Circulator projects will provide concrete solutions for the city. They will lead to large, long-term capital projects but will also focus on small improvements that can be implemented quickly. They will include a conceptual design and engineering, fully developed timelines, professionally prepared cost estimates, and a “next steps” process for implementation. The attached Scope of Services documents provide details, including deliverables, for both the Downtown Circulator and Paths of Travel projects.

Sincerely,



Jill Ramiel
President



612 West Willoughby Avenue - Juneau, Alaska 99801

Downtown Juneau Circulator

Feasibility and Implementation Analysis

Scope of Services

The City and Borough of Juneau recently updated its Transit Plan. In that process the concept of a dedicated Downtown Circulator was frequently discussed, and received high favorability ratings (75%) among those members of the public surveyed. However, the scope of the Transit Plan update study as conducted limited consideration of service improvements and modifications to the existing area-wide bus transit system only. Despite high interest in the Circulator concept it was presented to the Assembly by consultants only as an idea for “future consideration” - perhaps five or more years in the future. The Downtown Business Association (DBA) believes that the circulator must be considered now in order to bring about vitally needed economic development and improvements in livability in the downtown area. Work already done by the Downtown Revitalization Group,¹ and reviewed by DBA, indicates very good prospects for success with high potential for generating increased economic activity, including:

- direct support for expected increases visitor traffic;
- promotion of mixed-use real estate development, including high-density residential housing and quality office and retail space; and
- rejuvenation of existing building stock.

The investment required, though substantial, will not compete with other CBJ capital and operating budget needs that are supported by sales taxes or general obligation bonds.

This initial work, spearheaded by citizen volunteers, now needs to be taken to the next level. The DBA will retain the services of a highly experienced and qualified firm(s) to undertake a detailed study of the feasibility, costs and benefits, economic impacts, and financing of a circulator transit system in downtown Juneau. The result will be a detailed, professionally prepared and ready to execute plan for the CBJ to put into effect. The scope to be addressed by the selected consultant will include but not be limited to the following tasks, activities and deliverables.

TASK 1: Purpose & Goals

The consultant will facilitate an open process with stakeholders and the public to develop the Purpose and Goals of a proposed Downtown Circulator project. The Purpose and Goals Statement will guide the selection of development mode (bus or streetcar), alignment options, operating scenarios, passenger amenities, vehicle type, power supply options, fare and governance tasks. It is anticipated that the Purpose and Goals Statement will consider, at a minimum:

¹ Supported by JEDC with financial assistance from the CBJ.

- interface with existing and planned transit and parking;
- downtown redevelopment goals & mechanisms;
- anticipated growth in cruise tourism/other visitors

TASK 2: Public Outreach

The consultant firm will develop and manage a public outreach program with multiple components including public open house sessions, interactive website, press kits for media, and other methods appropriate to the study. Public outreach will be continuous but also have specific scheduled events and opportunities to provide information and get input.

TASK 3: Stakeholder Process

A stakeholder group will be identified by the DBA. The consultant will work with the stakeholder group to provide interim results and decision-points throughout the course of the study. The consultant will prepare informational presentations for the stakeholder group to define the issues to be addressed throughout the study duration. A particular subset of the stakeholder group will consist of cruise passenger interests, including ground-based tour operators and transportation contractors.

TASK 4: Identify Transit Oriented Development Potential

Working with the DBA, and in close consultation with the CBJ, the Juneau Economic Development Council and others, the consultant will identify targeted areas for redevelopment or enhanced development in the Downtown, Willoughby District, and immediately adjacent areas. To the extent possible, development potential will be quantified. For example, numbers of dwelling units, and potential office and retail space square footage. This work will be carried out in conformance with adopted CBJ plans and zoning guidelines such as desired densities, height restrictions, parking requirements, etc. Consultant will also discuss availability of redevelopment tools and incentives such as overlay districts, “fee in lieu” parking requirement adjustments, tax increment financing, and other policies as appropriate to Juneau.

TASK 5: Identify & Analyze Alignment Options

Juneau presents several challenges to circulator system construction and operation, including climate (snow, temperatures, wind loading), street geometry, and topography. Specific items, at a minimum, to be addressed include:

- Vertical and Horizontal Geometry Considerations
- Climate
- Utilities
- Traffic (local auto; delivery and local freight; tour bus and taxi)
- Public Transit Impacts

TASK 6: Vehicle and Power Supply Options

The consultant will provide a state of the art overview of available vehicle types for both bus-based and streetcar circulator options including both conventional and various electric drive buses; restored,

replica, and modern streetcars; and present the advantages and disadvantages of each in regard to their application in Juneau. Attributes considered will include, but not be limited to, length, capacity, ADA accessibility, cost, maintenance considerations, ride quality, rider preferences, attractiveness to developers, and availability. The consultant will also define and analyze the available power supply options for each vehicle type.

TASK 7: Operations & Maintenance Facility

The consultant will define the basic elements of streetcar required circulator system O&M facility including general space requirements and storage of vehicles. The consultant will identify potential locations for an O&M facility including any sites with adaptive reuse potential.

TASK 8. Ridership Estimation

The consultant will develop ridership estimates by market segment. Market segments are to be determined but will include such categories as cruise ship passengers, cruise ship crew, other tourism visitors, local visitors to downtown, resident-based commuting and work-related travel, resident-based "other" travel, and off-season baseline ridership. The study will also examine the ability of proposed circulator to serve as an alternative / adjunct to Capital Transit bus trips in the downtown core.

TASK 9. Capital Cost Estimate

Capital costs for Downtown Circulator project shall be developed commensurate with conceptual planning and engineering level of detail. Components will include:

- road and right of way improvements (including trackbed in the case of a streetcar);
- system power supply;
- O&M Facility; and
- passenger stop facilities and amenities.
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All cost estimates shall be in current dollars.

TASK 10. Operating Cost Estimate

Operating costs for the Opening Year and a forecast through Year 5 shall be provided during the study. Assumptions regarding different levels of service (frequency, daily span of service, etc) shall be provided for review by the client.

TASK 11. Governance & Financing

There are many different approaches to managing circulator transit systems. They may be operated as a sub-unit of an existing transit authority, or follow any of a number of "cooperative, but separate" models. The study shall provide an overview of various governance models for similar operations in the US. The consultant will examine the benefits and drawbacks of the various models which may be applicable to Juneau.

TASK 12. Feasibility Analysis

Based on Tasks 1-11 above, the consultant will provide a statement of overall feasibility of a Juneau downtown circulator that takes into account the desired goals and objectives, physical feasibility, costs and benefits, and economic development potential. If a recommendation for implementation is made, the consultant will provide a "Next Steps" narrative and flowchart that describes the decisions and steps that should be undertaken by the public and private interests that will be responsible for development of the selected system.

In preparing this scope of services DBA reviewed similar conceptual design projects and received cost inputs from recognized public transit entities and engineering firms.

ESTIMATED COST OF CONTRACT SERVICES: \$125,000



612 West Willoughby Avenue - Juneau, Alaska 99801

Paths of Travel

Improving Visitor and Resident Pedestrian Access To and Utilization Of Downtown Juneau

Scope of Services

The genesis of this proposal is observations and comments from DBA member businesses regarding visitor pedestrian traffic flows in the downtown area. Noticeable changes with direct impacts on visitor dependent businesses have occurred over the past several years with the completion of the first Seawalk segments, changes to the bus staging areas, addition of the semi-roundabout by the Library, completion of the Main Street Project, etc. Some top issues include:

- The intersection of Franklin St. and Marine Way is a source of confusion - creating what is commonly referred to as the “wall at the Red Dog”. Tourists often turn around at this location and return to their ships without ever getting to downtown.
- The impacts of the Seawalk – rerouting pedestrian patterns away from businesses.
- The inadequacy of existing way finding aids and continued confusion among visitors regarding navigation to desired attractions such as the State Capitol Building, the Governor’s House, St. Nicholas Church, etc.
- The lack of clear gateways into Historic Downtown and the Uptown Business District from South Franklin and the waterfront.

For many years incremental changes to the streetscape have occurred without understanding of impacts on existing business or assessment of new opportunities. DBA anticipates that upcoming changes around the downtown core will have additional consequences regarding the flow of people and their behavior, with unintentioned and often undesirable impacts on downtown business, property values and the city tax base. Projects including the construction of the new 16-B cruise ship berths, completion of the Soboloff Heritage Center and State Library Archives and Museum, the extension of the Seawalk to the bridge, and the proposed Performing Arts Center are all important civic improvements. But we need to ensure that do not unintentionally harm our downtown economic engine. Rorie Watt, Director of the CBJ Engineering Department, has commented that anytime there is a change or improvement to a street there are unforeseen changes in pedestrian behavior. The Paths of Travel Project will

- assess recent changes and forecast future changes that impact pedestrian circulation downtown; and
- propose actions to ensure that auto, transit and pedestrian traffic throughout the downtown is safe, convenient, intuitive, and supports the business community.

The DBA has utilized professional expertise of Board members and carefully reviewed similar planning studies in Southeast Alaska communities including Ketchikan and Wrangell in developing this Scope of Services. We have also consulted recognized professional firms in this specialized field of planning, both in terms of work content and project cost estimation.

The project will help DBA and the CBJ understand and articulate an implementable development concept to create a network of improved streets, pedestrian paths and pathways, and public places that are inviting to explore, and which encourage both visitors and local residents to get to know and enjoy downtown Juneau. It will assist the DBA and the CBJ by identifying current and potential visitor corridors and potential pedestrian networks, and by providing suggestions to enhance their qualities and to improve their appeal to visitors and the community while increasing their qualities for living, working and recreation. The project will look at how these corridors and networks can contribute to economic development opportunities on a year-round rather than just a seasonal basis. Key values will be protection of cultural and historic heritage, building on intrinsic landscape values and natural beauty, and improvement of walkability, general attractiveness and quality of infrastructure and amenities.

To accomplish these objectives, careful collaboration will be needed with an array of stakeholders including property and business owners, key players in the visitor industry, relevant CBJ departments, the Downtown Improvement Group, neighborhood associations, the Alaska Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, and Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau, and others. A concept and vision for improved downtown Juneau pedestrian networks, visitor pathways and public spaces will grow from:

- Building on Juneau's unique history, architecture and character;
- Encouraging downtown uses that serve Juneau's citizens as well as visitors;
- Making Juneau a better Capital City;
- Creating a downtown environment that encourages new investment, in-fill development, and existing property renovation and upgrades; and
- Optimizing parking and transit assets to support and enhance the pedestrian experience;
- Using good design and "complete streets" to promote and encourage pedestrian movements;
- Improvement of parks, green spaces, and other public spaces;
- Improving pedestrian access to help expand and promote retail opportunities;
- Improving access to Juneau's cultural and natural heritage attractions;
- Establishing inviting gateways, and improved amenities for relaxed, safe and interesting walking opportunities;
- Providing enhanced way finding and Interpretive signage

The Project will establish a close partnership between the Downtown Business Association, CBJ staff and other stakeholders to assure that we capture the best ideas, resource information, mutual support and follow up on implementation. The approach will be inclusive with a commitment to listen to the community, involve community members and draw the best out of the community and stake holders to create a positive vision of a better downtown.

The Project conceptual design approach will include the following tasks:

Task 1 - Public process of stakeholder engagement and consensus building (*Wide-ranging and in-depth outreach effort with individuals, informal groups, and organizations with interest in and commitment to downtown revitalization*)

Task 2 - Identification of existing and potential visitor pathways, streets networks and corridors (*Catalogue known and potential pathways including poorly used streets, currently closed alleyways, out of the way stairways, etc, and analyze them for potential to upgrade, and inter-connect.*)

Task 3 - Identify and apply a regional landscape framework (*Downtown does not exist in isolation. How does it relate to adjacent steep terrain, the harbor, mountain trails, bike paths, the bridge, and recreational assets like Basin Road, and the flume trail?*)

Task 4 - Build environmental sustainability into plan elements (*Climate appropriate and cost effect materials, minimization of O&M inputs, energy conservation all contribute to sustainability of project elements over time.*)

Task 5 - Creating connections that enhance pedestrian movement and transportation options (*Making sure that the various elements of downtown access really work together – optimization the parking pedestrian interface, eliminating barriers to access, utilizing unused connection assets, etc.*)

Task 6 - Identify and conceptually design high-quality public spaces (*Public spaces that “work” are inviting, interesting, innovative – and safe. They can be as small as a particular corner, a previously neglected landscaped walk, or a major plaza.*)

Task 7 - Identification of partnerships for funding, stewardship and economic development. (*Long-term effectiveness of public amenity improvements cannot depend solely on government. Buy-in by local businesses, investors, philanthropic organizations, and neighborhood groups is essential.*)

Estimated project completion time frame is 1 year from contract date. This includes 6 to 8 months for the public engagement process with stakeholders and the community at large. A final project report will be completed within 4 months after completion of the public engagement process. Deliverables will include:

- a list or matrix of clearly defined implementable projects, with recommendations for immediate, short term and long term actions;
- proposed project timelines for implementation; and
- “project by project” budget estimates commensurate with conceptual planning level of detail.

Based on discussions with professionals in the field, and analysis of similar projects, DBA estimates a contract amount of \$100,000 will be needed to complete visioning, public participation, options development and a concept plan document with strategies for implementation.

ESTIMATED COST OF CONTRACT SERVICES: \$100,000