



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

**January 9, 2020, 6:00 p.m.**

**Steering Committee Members Present:**

Christine Woll, Chair  
Betsy Brenneman  
Kirby Day  
Daniel Glidmann  
Ricardo Worl

Michael Heumann  
Patty Ware  
Iris Matthews  
Tahlia Gerger, Youth Representative

**Steering Committee Members Absent:** Karena Perry, Vice Chair; Laura Martinson; Jill Ramiel; Nathaniel Dye, Planning Commission Liaison

**Staff:** Beth McKibben, Senior Planner, Project Manager  
Tim Felstead, Planner, Assistant Project Manager

**Assembly Members:** Loren Jones

**I. Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

**a. December 12, 2019 DRAFT minutes, Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting**

**MOTION:** By Mr. Worl to approve the December 12, 2019 minutes subject to minor edits.

**The motion passed with no objection.**

**III. Public Participation – None**

**IV. Steering Committee Updates**

Ms. McKibben reported that the Arts, Culture, and History Focus Group met earlier that day. They discussed some studies that state Juneau is in a top category as an arts community, so that could be capitalized in the economic chapter. Ms. McKibben stated that speakers are being lined up to come in and speak to the Steering Committee regarding the topics they decided on at previous meetings.

**V. Tourism Task Force – Memo from Alix Pierce**

Since the last meeting, Ms. McKibben stated that the Tourism Task Force has met, and some Staff have met with the Chair and the Mayor, and have attempted to refine what the Task Force is attempting to do. This memo is in regards to how the Task Force and the Steering Committee

should work together. The outcomes of the Task Force will help inform the Blueprint planning process, which relates to the tourism and the economic development aspect.

Ms. Ware noted that she had attended some of the previous Task Force meetings and thought the handout presented by Ms. Pierce at the last meeting would be useful to the Steering Committee.

Ms. Woll clarified that the Ms. Pierce's recommendation in the memo is to wait until the Task Force has made their recommendations, rather than taking a more proactive approach at this time and Ms. McKibben stated this was correct.

Ms. Woll asked if the Task Force had seen the Vision document and report and suggested that it be given to them for review, if they had not seen it. Mr. Day stated that the document had not been seen by the Task Force, but agreed that it would be good for them to review. Staff stated they would determine the best way to present the information to the Task Force.

#### **VI. Draft Chapter 8: Transportation, Streetscape, and Parking**

Mr. Felstead presented the most updated draft of Chapter 8: Transportation, Streetscape, and Parking. Some changes had been made, as the Committee had asked, but Mr. Felstead wanted to know if there were more updates that should be made, or if something had been missed.

Mr. Glidmann asked if Staff had access to the number of vehicle registrations compared to the number of people who actually live in Juneau. He thought the number would be important to include in the data to show people if that number has increased or decreased over the years. The hopeful trend is for people to use cars less, however it would be important to see if the trend is seeing people using cars more.

Mr. Felstead thought some Census data might include those numbers. Ms. McKibben stated she had access to that information in the past; however, it may not be available anymore. Staff agreed to look into finding the data.

Regarding relevant plans and summaries, on page 5 of Chapter 8, Mr. Day noted that no information had been given about the 2013 State Department of Transportation (DOT) Egan Drive study.

Mr. Felstead replied that some of that information was used, but it wasn't a very formal study and they also use it for their federal highways funding. However, he was able to get more traffic data from DOT for 2017 and included additional figures with that traffic information. Mr. Felstead thought it would be best to collect more data, which, in turn, could lead to the recommending of more studies to learn what the levels of congestion and levels of service truly are.

Following up, Mr. Day referred to the table on page 11 of Chapter 8. He was curious as to how the number of ship passengers heading into town was counted as 1,200 passengers more than the number of ship passengers heading out of town.

Mr. Felstead replied he did not know how this discrepancy came to be; this data was put together by DOT; collected by placing cameras out to video record the vehicles and count the number transporting tourists.

Ms. Brenneman asked for clarification on what has and has not been implemented from existing plans, to have a better idea of what the Committee should be recommending. She asked if there was a list that specifically showed what has and has not be implemented to this point.

Mr. Felstead stated that there is a list with the information Ms. Brenneman would like to see. Within the chapter, he had described some of the items that still needed to be implemented, but he would be able to present that information in a table at another meeting, to more clearly show what needed work.

To present more information on traffic delays and levels of service, Mr. Heumann suggested a study and map showing where delays are at various intersections and what those levels of service are. This could help clarify some of the discussion heard from the public, give more facts about Juneau's traffic, and allow for an informed discussion.

Mr. Felstead felt this was a good recommendation and suggested Marine Way and South Franklin could be specifically looked at in the study.

Referring to Ms. Pierce's memo, Ms. Ware asked if the Long Range Waterfront Plan was something the Committee should be reviewing and taking information from for their recommendations.

Ms. McKibben stated she could send out the Plan for everyone to review, if they were interested. There are a number of good aspects to the Plans, such as the implementation of the Sea Walk, with a lot of due credit to CBJ Engineering. In terms of the transportation chapter, Mr. Felstead noted that the Long Range Waterfront Plan does make some good recommendations on items like the Sea Walk and additional parking structures. It gives some general guidance on what Egan Drive should look like, as well. This Plan would be discussed more at a later time.

Ms. Matthews asked for more information on Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations and what the infrastructure might look like.

Mr. Felstead stated that a certain amount of Capital Improvement Program (CIP) money has been set aside for implementation of the Juneau Renewable Energy Strategy. One element the former Director of Engineering and Public Works has stated that he would like some of that

money to go towards is the EV charging plan. There is a need for more charging stations in Juneau.

Ms. Matthews suggested more narrative centered on the need for future studies and the commitment to building EV infrastructure as part of the long-range transportation plan. She also noted that CBJ's current infrastructure is only developed for Leafs, but future infrastructure should be accessible to all EV users.

Mr. Felstead stated this information would be added to the parking section.

Ms. Woll felt there are recommendations in other established plans that will come up with this Committee, so it would be beneficial to reference those documents and talk about how this Committee's actions contribute to the goals of Blueprint Downtown, such as ride shares and EV buses.

Mr. Heumann thought determining where Juneau is at in its carrying capacity could help direct some of the recommendations the Committee is trying to make. There are potential solutions discussed, with varying investments, but it would be beneficial to have this information to decide on the best way to move forward.

Mr. Glidmann stated he had had a discussion with a lead engineer for PND regarding the future of the Mendenhall Glacier Visitors' Center. The recommendation of the consultant from PND is to begin thinking about the implementation of a light rail that would bring tourists straight to the glacier from downtown. In terms of aspirational goals, Mr. Glidmann felt a light rail to the glacier is worth considering. He also spoke in favor of a second crossing developed downtown. While a second crossing farther out the road may be used, one downtown would likely be used more. He also noted that the money for a second crossing could like come from the Federal Government, due to the potential of the first crossing failing, resulting in the second crossing needing to be downtown. Part of the transportation plan should address Juneau protecting itself from calamities, such as the Juneau-Douglas Bridge going out. Concerning a Park & Ride program, Mr. Glidmann felt this type of program could only be successful if it were developed on a purely upscale level.

From a personal perspective, Mr. Worl examined some of the conveniences he would have to be willing to give up in order to utilize a Park & Ride system. He felt that aspects of comfort would be the biggest consideration, such as heated, covered shelters people can hide from the weather in, but wondered if these aspects are practicable. Mr. Worl was curious about incentives for people to use a circulator, or a Park & Ride system, and what it would take to see a change in people's behavior.

Mr. Glidmann believed it would be important to determine how a "successful" program would be defined.

Mr. Day asked for an update on the Mendenhall Mall Park & Ride service.

Mr. Felstead stated the plan for that service is still progressing. The property owners are in the process of subdividing off the portion of Mendenhall Mall lot that the City will buy. He believes the funding has mostly been set aside for the implementation, but they are still waiting on some additional grant money to come for the actual structure. Staff is confident this money will be granted from either the State or the Federal Transit Authority and this Park & Ride service will be developed.

Following up, Mr. Day agreed with Mr. Glidmann that determining what makes for a “successful” Park & Ride would be important for deciding on a way forward.

Mr. Felstead noted that some of these topics are listed in the travel demand management suggested approaches.

As someone who lives downtown, is a walker, and is an EV owner, Ms. Matthews pointed out that it would be beneficial to consider the livability of the downtown neighborhoods and not let the traffic demands of the tourism industry override this chapter. Some of the biggest issues that intersect with the tourism industry and capacity are in this chapter. There are many items, such as livability, that many people value about the community and should be kept within the focus.

Ms. Brenneman asked for more clarification on how to determine what to recommend and determine to be priority by the Committee. The format and structure of this chapter seems to be different from the previous chapters, so it is hard to clearly see what recommendations and priorities should be made.

Ms. McKibben replied that each chapter has been authored by different people, so that is why there has been an inconsistency in the chapter structure. These inconsistencies will be worked out when the plan is compiled into one document. Mr. Felstead will come forward at a future meeting with a list of recommendations for the Committee to vet, based on the conversations being had.

When putting the list together, Ms. Woll noted that specifically pointing out conflicting items might be helpful for the Committee to see.

Ms. Ware thought it would be good to determine how big, or how small, the priorities are, as well.

Mr. Day thought this would be helpful, too, as there are some things, like lighted bus stops and canopies over sidewalks, which would be good to discuss. He then moved forward to the last paragraph on page 10 of the chapter, noting that this information did not seem correct.

Mr. Felstead thought the accuracy of this information might come down to the methodology used by DOT and was surprised with the information given, as well. A lot of data is being gathered, but there is no clear trend in the increase in growth. This could be a good point for

recommending studies to gather better-quality information to better understand what the current situations are.

Mr. Felstead then moved forward to previously requested topics, beginning with pedestrianization. He presented information on how other cities have implemented more pedestrianized areas and some ideas that Juneau could consider and Ms. McKibben spoke of what she has seen developed in her hometown. While Juneau may not be receptive to the idea of pedestrianizing streets at first, there are options for implementing these ideas in a slow, progressive form to gain the public's support.

Mr. Heumann spoke of some examples that came to mind for him. To be successful, he felt that finding vendors willing to be located in these areas would be necessary, to give people a reason to come to these areas. From his personal travel experience, he has seen pedestrianized streets with restaurants, vendors, and outdoor seating areas that draw the public in.

Mr. Felstead agreed and showed more examples of pedestrianized areas.

Mr. Day suggested starting First Fridays in the summer time to help implement the ideas behind pedestrianization.

Mr. Felstead agreed and showed an example of what downtown Juneau looks like during the December First Friday and what the community does to put it together. It is not an unusual thought for Juneau to be thinking, but where would be the best place to begin? In the visioning document, it discusses making parts of Seward Street (probably South Seward Street), Shattuck Way, and the lower part of North Franklin Street more pedestrianized. Property owners, such as Devils Club and the distillery, were in favor of pedestrianizing that section of North Franklin Street in some way. There are a number of ways to try to get started with this. Some cities have had success with car-free days, so that could be something to consider. You wouldn't necessarily have to close down the whole street, just part of it, but there will be a balance to find. Mr. Felstead then showed an example of a shared spaces, where pedestrians are just as important as the vehicles going through these areas, and both pedestrians and people are encouraged to be in these areas. This would be more of a consideration later on.

Mr. Heumann noted there was not much separation of the streets and sidewalks in the shared space areas and spoke of places where he had seen this applied and thought it worked well.

Mr. Glidmann thought this would make areas friendlier.

Mr. Felstead said that some of the earlier designs of what these shared space areas were discussed, put in more of a gutter, rather than having a hard curb, and that was due to concerns of drainage.

Ms. Gerger felt Juneau's weather should be taken into consideration when discussing drainage, outdoor seating, and developing these areas.

Mr. Felstead agreed and stated that some of these properties have systems where they essentially shut things in and make a little conservatory area that is watertight. If outdoor seating areas allowed, having the ability to shut everything in may be something that is required, as well, so not everything is just sitting outside and only used for a small amount of time. He went on to discuss some of the issues needing consideration when it comes to pedestrianization, such as emergency service access, loss of parking spaces, and vehicle circulation.

Mr. Day suggested looking into the Warner's Wharf area to see if that could be a place of interest. Ms. Brenneman felt the Auk Kwáan area is worth considering, as well, because this could move people away from downtown and support the businesses there.

Ms. Matthews felt that it would be important to specifically state in the narrative that these ideas are tied to economic development, and make sure that it makes sense for the businesses in the recommended areas.

Mr. Glidmann suggested a calendar of events where any street could sign up to host the event, such as winter events, Halloween events, and Easter events that allow for a rotating, block-party concept.

To help encourage people to walk more, and help with parking downtown, Mr. Worl suggested a covered walkway. People could park out of downtown, but be able to walk under a covered walkway, and avoid the rain. Ms. Gerger agreed and added that more lighting might promote more walking and less driving, as well.

Mr. Felstead agreed and moved forward to Tour Staging. He presented information on how this could reduce traffic congestion downtown, some potential staging locations, and what this could look like for Juneau. There are some logistical concerns, though, and a number of questions that need to be answered.

Mr. Glidmann asked Mr. Day if there was a lack of retail growth compared to the number of passengers in the last year, and if there are times when a large number of passengers don't get off the ships, due to the time it takes to disembark.

Mr. Day replied that the schedule seen by the public is not the same as the actual ship schedule. They actually have a bit more time in dock, than what is publicly noticed. The large majority of the time, 90% of the passengers and about 30% of the crew disembark when they are here.

Ms. Brenneman suggested started a conversation about using boats to get passengers to a central spot, away from downtown, as a staging area.

Ms. Woll asked if a study would be needed to determine if a staging area is needed, or if a study determining what and where the traffic problems are would be more useful.

Mr. Felstead replied that a study determining what and where the problems are would be a better place to start. Otherwise, it would be difficult to determine what the efficiency gains would be.

Mr. Day noted that sometimes buses aren't completely full due to the number of tours sold, but while they aren't always full heading out of town, they may be picking up more people and be full coming back into town. On some days, the companies move 1200 people out of town in an hour. If they were moved right to a staging area, then more buses would be needed to move all of them from the staging area to their tours. It's not impossible, but it will be a lot of work for whoever decides to take it on.

Mr. Felstead noted that this topic was in the visioning document, so that is why it made its into the chapter; however, a decision on what to do does not need to be made. He then moved forward to Travel Demand Management and prioritization of the list from the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Felstead wasn't sure it would be beneficial to prioritize the items on the list, but noted that some items could be accomplished quickly and for reasonable finances. It may be better to recommend that the Committee will keep supporting and implementing these items as a coherent package.

Ms. Woll asked who could benefit from the Committee prioritizing the list.

Ms. McKibben stated that repackaging the list, and making it more accessible to policy makers, could make it easier for them to take on.

Ms. Brenneman noted that some Committee members did not agree with all of the items on the list, either, so that would be a cause for reviewing and prioritizing.

Mr. Felstead recommended backing some of the policies, but not trying to solve the problems as a group here. The Comprehensive Plan pitches these as "could include", so there is room to work with everything.

Mr. Glidmann felt that if the Committee was going to make a statement about the list, then they should try to make sure that it envelopes the aspects of maintaining or improving the quality of life for Juneau residents.

Mr. Heumann noted that while traffic seems to be an issue at times in Juneau, compared to cities in the lower 48, traffic isn't all that bad. He felt resources could be used on other projects to gain more benefits for the community.

Mr. Glidmann agreed that traffic problems could be seen as a matter of perspective here, but Juneau only has one road running through it. Therefore, comparing traffic to cities in the lower 48 is hard for these circumstances.

Mr. Felstead moved forward to stanchions and volumes and updated the Committee on a project being worked on by the State. He also discussed traffic calming and complete streets,



suggesting some locations that could be considered for these ideas. Mr. Felstead asked if the Committee agreed with the list of locations for traffic calming consideration, or if they wanted to remove/add any other areas to look at.

Ms. Ware felt that area from the Federal Building, going around Gold Creek, and running past IGA is an area of concern. IGA has four entry and exit points, there is a crosswalk from at the Federal Building, there are bus stops on both sides of the street next to the Federal Building and next to IGA, and cars tend to drive very fast in this area. She thought it would be great to have a notion of traffic calming elements in this area to make it clear that this is a pedestrian-heavy area.

Mr. Felstead stated that that whole street is recognized as an area that needs improvements.

Ms. Matthews felt that 12<sup>th</sup> Street doesn't seem to have many issues, but 10<sup>th</sup> Street should be of more concern. She has seen many people trying to cross the road in this area without using a crosswalk, traffic will get backed up from the bridge all the way back to Glacier, which backs up traffic on more streets and in the crosswalks, so people have an even harder time trying to cross.

Ms. McKibben noted that 10<sup>th</sup> Street also has turn lanes in this area, so that makes it harder yet.

Mr. Felstead this area could be added to the list.

Mr. Worl asked if traffic calming would allow for more parking or converting a lane or two into a parking lane when traffic slows down at the end of the cruise ship season.

Mr. Felstead replied that he could ask DOT about that. He then moved forward to snow removal and clearing streets. He noted that clearing of streets becomes more difficult as more street features are added, so it really becomes of matter of balancing and deciding what all is wanted for pedestrian benefit.

Ms. Brenneman felt it is more important to have more features for pedestrians and incentivizing more walking, which means focusing on clearing sidewalks and not focusing on the streets. With snow being plowed next to the sidewalk, creating a berm, the people who try to get out and walk aren't able to, because that snow hasn't been cleared.

Mr. Glidmann suggested building a parking garage that could then eliminate rows of parking in downtown Juneau. Winter parking could be modified with snow plowed on one side of the street, and be more flexible with more options. He felt building more parking structures will make downtown more pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Matthews also felt that snow removal should be more focused on what is better for pedestrians, what is more accessible, and encouraging people to walk.

Mr. Felstead stated he would put more work into this and pull together past policies and actions and then parking could be discussed at the next meeting.

**VII. Public Participation – None**

**VIII. Committee Comments**

**IX. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: January 22, 2020, 6 p.m., Assembly Chambers

DRAFT