



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

February 20, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Steering Committee Members Present:

Christine Woll, Chair
Karena Perry, Vice Chair
Betsy Brenneman
Kirby Day (telephonic)
Daniel Glidmann

Michael Heumann
Laura Martinson (telephonic)
Ricardo Worl
Nathaniel Dye

Steering Committee Members Absent:

Jill Ramiel, Patty Ware, Iris Matthews, Tahlia Gerger

Staff:

Beth McKibben, Senior Planner
Tim Felstead, Assistant Project Manager

Assembly Members:

Greg Smith

I. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. January 22, 2020 DRAFT minutes, Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting

MOTION: By Mr. Glidmann to approve the January 22, 2020 minutes. Mr. Heumann seconded.

The motion passed with no objection.

b. January 30, 2020 DRAFT minutes, Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting

MOTION: By Mr. Glidmann to approve the January 30, 2020 minutes. Mr. Heumann seconded.

The motion passed with no objection.

III. Public Participation

Nancy Waterman was present for the meeting.

IV. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. McKibben reported that the Blueprint Downtown Visioning Report received an award for Most Innovative Project from the Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association.

V. JPD, Officer Ken Colon – CPTED Presentation

Officer Colon presented on the concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). He stated that he trained on the principles in the state of Washington and has had four years of direct experience.

Ms. Brenneman arrived at 6:11 p.m.

Officer Colon explained that the built environment can have a psychological deterrent effect on criminal behavior. CPTED principles are scalable, and can be equally applied to cities, neighborhoods, commercial properties, schools, parks, and individual residences. Officer Colon stated that now is the perfect time to begin implementing CPTED principles in the Blueprint Downtown process, since it is still in the planning stages.

Mr. Smith arrived at 6:13 p.m.

Officer Colon said that, wherever we occupy, we naturally defend. This can be personal space or it can be a personal residence, neighborhood, city, etc. We seek to maintain or develop positive quality of life. He used the Crime Prevention Triangle to explain that three things must exist for criminal behavior to be possible: desire, ability, and opportunity. Since we cannot change someone's desire to engage in criminal behavior, we must focus on diminishing someone's ability and opportunity to do so.

Officer Colon outlined the three main CPTED principles: surveillance, access control, and territoriality. He also identified a "bonus" principle, maintenance, which he identified as the key to the other three principles. Without one of the three main principles, the ability to deter criminal behavior falls apart.

The most common and inexpensive surveillance comes from individual people. Maintaining a positive atmosphere encourages positive foot traffic, and therefore more surveillance. Officer Colon stated that all criminal acts are committed under no surveillance. Easy access also promotes opportunities for criminal behavior. Territoriality, or showing pride in an area by maintaining a positive atmosphere, helps to deter criminal acts as well.

Officer Colon gave examples of surveillance implementation: well-placed lighting sources, windows facing streets and alleys, staff to monitor high-risk areas, electronic surveillance, removing window clutter/visual obstructions, the ability to see through gates and fences, and lack of obstruction of line of sight by foliage. He highlighted landscape for how it can be manipulated to deter or encourage criminal behavior, as well as lighting.

Access control focuses on directing people towards positive areas and restricting access to areas without easy surveillance. This incorporates pathways and boardwalks, as well as bollards and barricades to reduce vehicle or foot traffic.

Strategies related to territoriality include cleanliness, organization, well-placed lighting sources, and anything else that clearly defines a space of ownership and encourages positive social behavior. Officer Colon used food carts as an example of something that promotes positive social behavior due to increased positive foot traffic, and therefore increased surveillance, as well as by promoting a sense of ownership. He also highlighted Telephone Park as an area which has used CPTED landscaping principles to reduce negative foot traffic, but which can utilize more CPTED principles to continue creating a more positive atmosphere.

Officer Colon identified vacant buildings as a major problem for the downtown area. He stated that some places have codes that require landlords and building owners to maintain their buildings and areas, and said that this is necessary to maintaining a positive atmosphere.

Mr. Glidmann said that it is difficult to separate crime prevention and homelessness, and that often homeless people are blamed for crime that they did not commit. He stated that, in his experience, lighting up an area to deter crime also encourages the presence of homeless people because they also feel safer. He asked if it was easier, in Officer Colon's experience, for law enforcement to manage criminal behavior if it is concentrated in one area or if it is dispersed.

Officer Colon admitted that, when implemented correctly, CPTED principles push people with criminal intent to another area. He also admitted that it is easier to enforce the law when criminal behavior is concentrated. There are certain downtown areas, such as the Capital Transit waiting area and the public bathrooms at City Hall, which are a major issue in the wintertime. He stated that there has been a reduction of crime in the downtown area in recent years, in part due to the food trucks in Pocket Park.

Mr. Worl asked if crime rates decrease in the summer, and if it changes based on time of day or location.

Officer Colon referred Mr. Worl to his lieutenant for those statistics.

Ms. McKibben said that the Steering Committee has heard recommendations for better lighting on the stairs present throughout the downtown area. She asked what the best way to implement better lighting would be.

Officer Colon said the best type of lighting would be integrated in the middle of the stairs instead of on the steps, since that not only increases the amount of light present but also keeps the steps clear.

Ms. Woll asked if Officer Colon had any suggestions to improve the transit center.

Officer Colon said that he is not at liberty to elaborate on what the plans are for that area, but that there are potential plans for the transit center that will assist with the ongoing issues. He stated that the transit center needs to be utilized in the manner in which it was designed, since it was designed with CPTED principles in mind.

Mr. Felstead asked whom they could speak to who would have more information.

Officer Colon directed anyone interested to speak to the City Manager.

Mr. Worl asked if CPTED principles suggested a way to keep people from hanging out in public seating areas for extended periods.

Officer Colon replied that positive foot traffic is the best deterrent. He stated that he could not comment on specific designs because he was not familiar with the Blueprint Downtown vision.

Ms. Martinson asked what they could recommend in the Blueprint Downtown document that would make law enforcement's job easier, specifically in parking structures and lots.

Officer Colon said that better lighting is helpful. Parking lots have unique issues. Some utilize constant camera monitoring to deter criminal behavior, while others utilize private sector patrols. An increase in the latter, he said, would help immensely.

Ms. McKibben asked if new developers could meet with law enforcement to ensure that their site designs are implementing CPTED principles.

Officer Colon said yes, but that they would still need to conform to regulations.

Ms. McKibben outlined three aspects of CPTED principles that the Steering Committee can focus on: physical aspects like landscaping, management aspects such as codes and building requirements, and community aspects like encouraging a busy downtown during all seasons.

Ms. Brenneman asked about the potential for organized community surveillance.

Officer Colon said that the Downtown Business Association has security ambassadors and crosswalk personnel who report any criminal behavior to law enforcement. Additionally, he highlighted the Juneau Community Patrol unit as an example of organized community surveillance that operates on a volunteer basis.

Mr. Dye suggested that Ms. Brenneman was talking about a neighborhood watch program. He stated that he thought the Flats area has an active program but that he was not sure about the downtown core.

Officer Colon reported that law enforcement had attempted to organize a network of downtown businesses to identify shoplifting suspects, but that they had been unsuccessful due to a lack of cooperation.

Mr. Dye said some community groups, such as those on Facebook, actually help those with criminal intent by passing on too much information. He stated that the best security program is one that no one knows about.

Mr. Glidmann expressed concern that they were merging crime prevention and homelessness. He asked how much crime is actually taking place in downtown Juneau.

Officer Colon said that the crime rate is low and is usually confined to the occasional car rifling. Smashed car windows happen very rarely.

Mr. Glidmann emphasized that crime is negligible. He stated that he thought it was important to show ownership of your property in order to deter homeless people.

Mr. Day agreed, but stated that laws that allow people to camp on public property hamper them.

Officer Colon said that all law enforcement wants is compliance, and that most of the homeless people in Juneau are nonviolent.

VI. Draft Chapter 4: Economic Development

Ms. McKibben presented the draft of Chapter 4: Economic Development. She said that it incorporates recommendations from previous plans. She asked the Steering Committee if they wanted to make any changes.

Ms. McKibben said that when they recommend more housing downtown, they know it is going to be different for each subarea. They will also need to keep in mind that creating housing has impacts, such as the need for more parking and increased use of infrastructure for water, sewer, and electricity.

Ms. Brenneman asked how they could include incentives to create more housing, as an answer to the problem that housing is not cost effective to build.

Ms. McKibben said that the subject was included in the draft chapter but that it was not explored in depth. She suggested that it could be identified as something that needs more study.

Mr. Heumann said that projects to create apartment buildings typically get negative feedback from the surrounding neighborhood. He said that there are also unoccupied downtown apartments that could be renovated.

Mr. Dye stated that he would like to see more subsidies for second floor apartments.

Mr. Heumann said that currently, it is only marginally cost effective to build a second floor apartment, so large incentives are necessary. He asked if it was feasible to up-zone the Flats subarea.

Mr. Dye said that downtown has many positive traits that make it attractive for residential use. He wondered if there were creative ways to subsidize.

Mr. Heumann commented that Juneau lacks affordable housing.

Ms. McKibben said that public comment often identifies that as an issue.

Mr. Glidmann stated that, in the past three years, Juneau has lost a lot of people and jobs. He said he did not believe that trend would be reversing any time soon and wondered if we did need more housing after all.

Ms. McKibben stated that Juneau's vacancy rate is still too low to reflect a healthy housing market. Economic development is stimulated by providing enough housing for a variety of income levels.

Ms. Brenneman said that there has been a loss of State jobs but an increase in tourism-related jobs, which reflects a need for lower income housing.

Ms. Woll asked why the topic of district heat is addressed in the Economic Development chapter.

Ms. McKibben explained that many topics are interwoven, which creates a challenge in deciding where to address them. She said that district heat, as well as water and sewer, could be addressed in a different chapter. She asked the Steering Committee if district heat was something they wanted to address, which they decided they did.

Ms. McKibben said that there are simultaneous needs to challenge the perception that crime in downtown Juneau is rampant, while also tracking appropriate metrics to ensure that crime is getting better and not worse. One of the goals for downtown Juneau is to make sure that it is safe and welcoming for all ages and walks of life, recognizing that not everyone is able to control their behavior. Ms. McKibben reported that this topic had been brought up during the Health and Human Services focus group, and identified a need to create an environment that is accessible to human services providers.

Ms. McKibben identified a possible goal as strengthening partnerships with local business networks, human services providers, and mental health professionals. She identified several possible action items, including implementing CPTED principles, creating Main Street ambassadors, creating a place making program, and cleaning up the area.

When asked why people are reluctant to work together to make a place safer, Officer Colon said that he would think people would want to protect their assets. He said that, from a business standpoint, it costs more to do nothing than to come together and form a plan.

Mr. Dye said that the people who tend to own small businesses also tend to be "type A" personalities who want to be their own boss. He believed these personalities inherently clash.

Ms. Brenneman asked if it was possible to combine a group of business owners with citizens to create a variety of perspectives.

Mr. Glidmann expressed frustration over past efforts to implement changes in the downtown core that would have a positive effect on the community. He believed that an enforceable ordinance is the only way to affect meaningful change.

Ms. Martinson said that many small business owners are overwhelmed with the daily effort to keep their business running. She stated that the ideas were good, but that someone else would have to implement them for the business owners in order for them to come to fruition.

Ms. McKibben reminded the Steering Committee of the Main Street program structure already in place.

Mr. Heumann emphasized the importance of enforcement, saying that minimal enforcement means a great plan will not be properly implemented. He expressed concern about success without proper funding and staff.

Ms. McKibben stated that CBJ currently has one compliance officer.

She outlined possible metrics, such as crime statistics, a point in time count on the homeless population, and the number of blighted buildings downtown. She stated that our steady number of homeless people is actually a success (rather than a decrease), recognizing the rising homeless populations in most other cities.

Under the topic of Business Vitality, Ms. McKibben listed possible metrics to encourage year-round business and diversity of retail type. Possible actions included the creation of a downtown improvement district, incentives for rehabilitation, and new business development grants among others.

Mr. Dye stated that Anchorage has an improvement district, and that this is something CBJ has debated implementing. There is little interest in diverting CBJ revenue streams to fund it, which means that it would need to be self-funded. He expressed doubt that property owners would be willing to contribute.

VII. Steering Committee Reports

Ms. McKibben reported on a keynote presentation at the American Planning Association conference she attended. The presenter spoke about the downtown revitalization project in their city and the lengthy and involved process it required.

She said that the framework for Anchorage's downtown revitalization program would be effective in Juneau, even though it isn't a main street community. Olympia, WA, a Main Street community, also has an improvement district. In Anchorage, the cost for property owners ranged from a couple hundred dollars to quite a few thousand. In Olympia, the cost never reached more than a couple thousand per business.

Mr. Glidmann emphasized the importance of identifying specific uses for the funds.

Mr. Heumann said that it should not be used for subsidies for building projects.

Mr. Dye asked if a potential improvement district would be mandatory or optional.

Ms. McKibben said that it would have to be specified within the framework of any potential improvement district. She said that it would be less about CBJ telling property owners what to do, and more about empowering them to make positive changes.

The Steering Committee discussed talking about the AJ mine in the Blueprint Downtown document. They decided to talk about it as a tourist attraction rather than as a functioning mine.

Ms. McKibben stated that staff have considered creating an annual report on the metrics discussed, such as crime rates and vacancy rates once the plan is adopted.

Mr. Heumann said that he found economic statistics for Juneau to be difficult to attain. He recommended removing barriers to accessibility.

Staff agreed that there are challenges related to accessing data sets.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: March 12, 2020, 6 p.m., Assembly Chambers