



**Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting Agenda
Zoom Webinar and Telephonic**

June 11, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Steering Committee Members Present:

Christine Woll, Chair
Karena Perry, Vice Chair
Betsy Brenneman
Kirby Day
Jill Ramiel

Michael Heumann
Laura Martinson
Tahlia Gerger
Patty Ware
Iris Matthews

Steering Committee Members Absent:

Daniel Glidmann, Ricardo Worl, Nathaniel Dye

Staff:

Beth McKibben, Senior Planner
Tim Felstead, Assistant Project Manager
Alexandra Pierce, Planning Manager

Assembly Members:

None

I. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. March 12, 2020 DRAFT minutes, Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee Meeting

MOTION: By Ms. Ware to approve the March 12, 2020, draft minutes. Ms. Matthews seconded.

The motion passed with no objection.

III. Steering Committee Updates

Mr. Day asked if staff had any plans to arrange a meeting between the Tourism Task Force and the Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee. Ms. Pierce stated that staff intend to coordinate between the two groups soon. She stated that the Tourism Task Force resulted in many good discussions and recommendations that should be incorporated into the work of the Blueprint Downtown Steering Committee, especially during tourism discussions.

Ms. McKibben reported that staff would be working on integrating the data on the Steering Committee's priorities for policies and actions into the Implementation chapter.

Staff reported the need to break up the Land Use chapter, since it is long and the topic has greater depth to it than most other chapters. Staff will present the chapter to the Steering Committee in digestible pieces, similar to how the Transportation chapter was presented.

Ms. Pierce stated that staff have been working hard during the interruption in regular meetings, but that the Steering Committee meetings will be necessary to make key decisions on how to present further information.

IV. Draft Action/Implementation Table, Chapter 8: Transportation, Streetscape & Parking

Mr. Felstead reported that he had developed a table to combine priorities that the Steering Committee identified during the previous “sticky note” exercise. He said he was also mindful of desires highlighted in the visioning work done for the Transportation chapter. This is a list of brand new actions based on existing actions identified in the sticky note exercise. He stated that the memo attached to the table describes the purpose of each column. He grouped actions into “action areas” to take into account various themes.

Mr. Felstead explained that many of the actions fit under multiple goals. Therefore, some of the actions are duplicated. Some of these duplicated actions will likely be cross-referenced throughout the chapters. He explained the purpose of each column as outlined in the provided memo.

Regarding the column identifying implementing partners for each action, Ms. Pierce clarified that the City and Borough of Juneau most likely will not be the main implementing partner for the larger public transportation and infrastructure projects. This is because the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities owns much of the land and infrastructure relevant to those actions. She emphasized the importance of partnerships with these projects.

Ms. Brenneman joined the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

Mr. Felstead requested comments and suggestions regarding the format of the table.

Ms. Ware asked who the intended audience is for this table, whether it be policy-makers, the public, the Assembly, future planners, etc.

Mr. Felstead said that the more in-depth portions of the plan document are designed for policy-makers and planners. The table of implementable actions will be placed near the beginning of the document as a starting place for the public and for policy-makers, which then leads into a deeper discussion for each topic in the later chapters.

Ms. McKibben explained that the Implementation chapter would be more of a broad summary with less detail. The actions recommended throughout the plan will all be collated in the Implementation chapter, but will be presented differently in order to cater to the public and for policy-makers looking for a checklist of things to do.

Ms. Pierce said that this chapter might be the only part of the document that many people read.

Mr. Day said that he liked the third column, which summarizes what each section is covering. He can take a quick glance and see how many sections address each topic. He expressed confusion regarding the fourth and fifth columns, which cover the desired time frame for completion and the priority level of each action. He used the second crossing to Douglas as an example of a goal that is categorized as high priority but long-term, and asked how realistic those types of goals are.

Mr. Felstead stated that staff were not sure if those two columns were helpful, but he included them in order to have this conversation with the Steering Committee. He said that he had seen both columns used in past plans in an effort to help direct resources, but if the Steering Committee feels that it confuses the issue then the columns can be removed.

Ms. Matthews expressed support for keeping the priority level column, and for removing the time frame column. She said that she was struck by how dense the table was, and that hearing background information is helpful. She wondered if it is possible to align the focus areas with the purposes stated in the overall narrative.

Mr. Felstead stated that they were good suggestions.

Ms. Woll said that she liked the current organization of the table and said that she would prefer to keep the column related to time frame.

Ms. Brenneman expressed support for the time frame and priority level columns, saying that she believes their intersection to be more helpful to policymakers.

Mr. Felstead said that he deliberately used the phrase “implementing partners” instead of “responsible parties” because he did not want anyone to run away from any perceived responsibilities. He asked the Steering Committee if it wanted to make any specific or general changes to the actions in the table, or if there were any actions that stood out.

Mr. Day asked, in regards to the action to widen South Franklin Street, if CBJ had not already found that this goal was not financially feasible.

Mr. Felstead said that, at one point, CBJ was considering acquiring some of the property along South Franklin Street for that purpose, but the Assembly at the time decided against it. He wanted to include it in the table as a potential action, with the understanding that CBJ would not be obligated to undertake it. He said it could be removed from the list of potential solutions.

Ms. Brenneman said that she was under the impression that the Steering Committee was not in favor of implementing a downtown circulator, but staff included it in the table.

Mr. Felstead stated that this is perhaps a good use for the priority level column, since the lower priority ideas can still be included.

Ms. Matthews suggested that the actions be organized under categories of recommendations as well as priority areas. Mr. Felstead asked that they talk more about her specific organizational ideas to clarify them later.

Mr. Day asked if it would be informative to note that the Capital Transit routes already act as a free downtown circulator, even though it is not high frequency. He also asked if the document should mention that two private companies perform a similar service.

Mr. Felstead said that it is a possibility.

Ms. Pierce stated that the plan was to arrive at the recommendations made in the table through the narrative in the rest of the document. If there are points that need to be made in the table itself, then the notes column will be useful. Staff feels that much of the relevant information is already covered in the text.

Mr. Felstead stated that he preferred to remove the notes column in order to minimize the table.

V. Meeting Schedule: July – September 2020

Ms. McKibben reported that staff moved the originally scheduled June 4th meeting to June 11th in order to get the Steering Committee back on its regular schedule. She stated, however, that it would be difficult for staff to provide enough material for the Steering Committee in one week. She suggested the alternative of meeting every three weeks from the June 11th meeting.

Mr. Day suggested meeting every two weeks. Staff stated that they would not be able to provide adequate material for the Steering Committee in that period, especially considering the amount of work that will be necessary for the upcoming chapters.

Ms. McKibben suggested that the Steering Committee skip the June 25th meeting and reconvene on July 16th. Ms. Pierce said that, if they go with this option, staff would send the Steering Committee any work that they have for them in the interim.

Ms. Ware expressed concern that staff would not have enough time to generate adequate material, and that this should be the driving factor for the frequency of meetings.

Ms. Brenneman asked if the Steering Committee would be doing another sticky note exercise.

Ms. McKibben said that the last time they would be doing that exercise would be for the Land Use chapter. She said that there is the potential that, by that time, they might be meeting in person.

Ms. Brenneman said that the virtual version of the sticky note exercise was difficult due to lack of notes or minutes.

Staff acknowledged the difficulty and stated that past minutes are available on the Blueprint Downtown website.

The Steering Committee agreed to skip the June 25th meeting and proceed on July 16th.

VI. Committee Comments

Ms. Ramiel and Ms. Brenneman agreed that it is difficult for them to remember what the Steering Committee had been discussing three months ago before the advent of COVID-19, and that they were having a difficult time reengaging. Ms. Ramiel suggested that staff share more of their thoughts with the Steering Committee.

Ms. McKibben said that staff share their thoughts as they move through the process, and that staff believes the Steering Committee is open to what they have to say. She highlighted the Place-Making chapter as helpful because it brought together so many of the actions talked about in other sections. She stated that she hopes to represent this in the Implementation chapter.

Ms. Pierce suggested that staff write up a summary to help the Steering Committee remember their past work. She thought it would be helpful for staff as well, and would be useful to have something that staff could present to policymakers.

Ms. Matthews asked how the focus groups conducted earlier inform the Blueprint Downtown process.

Ms. Pierce said that there is a draft report on the focus groups, but staff has not been able to finalize it due to the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Ms. Perry said that documentation can be found on the Blueprint Downtown website and suggested reading through it. She asked about the status of the wayfinding signs.

Ms. Pierce replied that they were originally going to be finished in summer of 2020, but she is not sure that the project made it into the CBJ's budget. She said that she would check with the project manager and report back.

Mr. Day asked how, or if, the Blueprint Downtown plan document will incorporate new studies and information.

Ms. Pierce said that one of the challenges of working on long-range plan processes is adapting to new information. Some of the chapters, such as the Parking chapter, will likely need to be amended before the process is over.

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Ms. Brenneman asked if the Steering Committee had seen the findings of the Tourism Task Force. Ms. Pierce stated that staff would send the report to them.

The Steering Committee and staff discussed methods for keeping the public updated on the Blueprint Downtown process.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: July 16, 2020, 6 p.m., Zoom webinar and telephonic.