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**DATE:** February 8, 2018

**TO:** CBJ Assembly and Planning Commission

**FROM:** Beth McKibben, Planning Manager, AICP  
Jill Maclean, Senior Planner, AICP

Handwritten signatures of Beth McKibben and Jill Maclean in black ink.

**SUBJECT:** *Blueprint Downtown Juneau*

The CDD Planning Division recommends creating “*Blueprint Downtown Juneau*”. After considering several options for undertaking a plan for downtown Juneau, we recommend the Blueprint, rather than a traditional area plan, since many plans have been undertaken for downtown Juneau, or include downtown Juneau, since the 1980s. The Blueprint approach differs from a traditional plan in that the history and existing conditions have been well-documented in downtown. What is missing is a community vision of how downtown Juneau should continue to grow and develop, how to harness the opportunities while addressing the challenges, and ensuring that downtown continues to be a place to live, work, and visit. We recommend using the existing plans, and the time and effort that was spent to create them, as the foundation for *Blueprint Downtown Juneau* – an action-oriented strategy to enhance downtown, leverage assets, create placemaking opportunities, update zoning, and develop a community vision for downtown Juneau, built from a dynamic public engagement process.

### ***Blueprint Downtown Juneau***

#### **Visioning & Values**

The community visioning piece of the Blueprint will focus on identifying common values and priorities necessary to create downtown Juneau for the next 20 years. The community visioning process may include:

1. Intensive public process to develop a long-term vision for sustaining downtown Juneau as the state capital, as an economic driver for Southeast Alaska, and as a cultural, social, and governmental center for the Borough through:
  - a. Steering Committee and focus groups
  - b. Neighborhood walking tours and neighborhood meetings
  - c. Soliciting public engagement through social media and community events – such as the Juneau Maritime Festival– to gather ideas on downtown, and inform the public about other ways to participate and ask questions of CDD etc.
2. Identifying Key Opportunities and Challenges by:
  - a. Involving residents, property owners, business owners, developers, and visitors to identify opportunities and challenges
  - b. Working with the core business district, the residential neighborhoods, and the shoulder areas (Rock Dump and Norway Point) to identify opportunities as a means to extend downtown Juneau, and its user base, encourage more year-

round uses, and improve connectivity

- c. Identifying opportunities and challenges may:
  - i. Inform Capital Improvement Projects
  - ii. Include a review of existing zoning

### **Implementation Strategies for Creative Growth – “Knitting together past initiatives”**

Implementation Strategies will focus on synthesizing existing plans related to downtown Juneau, such as:

1. Developing a complete list of action items from each existing plan
2. Engaging the public to determine which actions from existing plans have been completed and which are still outstanding; which actions are still relevant and which are no longer relevant; and to identify the gaps.
  - a. Similar to the Lemon Creek Area Plan, a Work Plan will be developed of the actions, with responsible parties and timeframes for accomplishment.

### **Zoning for Downtown Juneau**

*Blueprint Downtown Juneau* will include a review of the current zoning that regulates those areas of the downtown that are located outside of the Alternative Development Overlay District (ADOD). This zoning diagnostic will be part of the public outreach process, and may identify areas to update and revise existing zoning regulations and/or identify new zoning that supports the community’s vision for the downtown. The zoning diagnostic may create actions that become part of the Blueprint’s Work Plan. The zoning diagnostic may identify updates to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Maps in order for proposed zoning to conform to the Comprehensive Plan.

Additionally, the ADOD for downtown Juneau expires August 1, 2019. Staff is engaged in an effort to develop new zoning for the areas located within the overlay. This effort will run concurrent with the *Blueprint Downtown Juneau* planning process. Similar to the zoning diagnostic conducted through the Blueprint, the ADOD process may identify updates to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Maps in order for the proposed zoning to conform to the Comprehensive Plan. Community Development staff will work together in public outreach efforts to lessen the burden on residents of participating in both of these efforts and ensure that each process informs the other, creating complementary planning and zoning results.

### **Placemaking**

Placemaking is about creating public places that promote people’s health, happiness, and well-being. Placemaking facilitates creating desirable neighborhoods and shaping their surroundings; it leverages a neighborhood’s character. Placemaking may include enhanced pedestrian connections with wayfinding signage, branding neighborhoods by creating gateways, and encouraging festivals or block parties. Placemaking encourages community engagement and activity. Working with downtown organizations, such as JEDC (specifically the Downtown Coordinator) the Main Street Program, the Downtown Business Association, the Downtown Improvement Group, and other neighborhood groups, residents, and businesses (permanent and seasonal) will be critical to the success of any placemaking initiatives

**Timeframe and Deliverables**

*Blueprint Downtown Juneau* requires approximately 18 to 24 months to complete. *Blueprint Downtown Juneau* will consist of:

1. Community Vision for Downtown Juneau 2040
2. Implementation Strategy
  - a. Actions and Policies
  - b. Key Challenges and Opportunities
  - c. Capital Improvement Projects
  - d. Proposed Zoning Revisions/Updates
  - e. Work Plan identifying Actions, Responsible Parties, Timeframes (similar to the Lemon Creek Area Plan)
  - f. Comprehensive Plan updates (potentially)

Staff is enthusiastic to undertake *Blueprint Downtown Juneau*, and your input into the process is appreciated. We look forward to working with the Assembly and the Planning Commission to bring this effort to completion.