3.0 Direction from Adopted CBJ Plans

3.1 Adopted Plans Provide Relevant Direction

Juneau has planned and taken action to make this part of downtown the community’s Civic, Arts and Cultural District, with a focus on a mix of uses that support the State Capital, since at least the 1960’s. Relevant direction is found in Juneau’s Comprehensive Plan, Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, Transit Development Plan and Title 49, the Land Use Code.

The CBJ 2008 Comprehensive Plan directs growth through Development Guidelines prepared for specific areas, through policies by topic (chapters), and through implementing actions (IA) or standard operating procedures (SOP) that tell how to accomplish the policies.

**Comprehensive Plan Development Guidelines for downtown Juneau (Subarea 6), which includes the Willoughby District.**

Two development guidelines provide specific direction:

**Subarea 6, Development Guideline 3:** “Strengthen and enhance the Capitol Complex in the Downtown Juneau area. Provide for orderly expansion of state government facilities in the vicinity of the State Capitol and the State Office Building.”

**Subarea 6, Development Guideline 8:** “Support the establishment of a Cultural Campus anchored by the Alaska State Museum, the Alaska State Library in the State Office Building, the Convention Center and a new Performing Arts Center at the former National Guard Armory site, inclusive of the area bordered by Gold Creek, Willoughby Avenue, Main Street, and Egan Drive. With Centennial Hall serving as the visitor and convention center and two hotels located within these boundaries, the area is readily accessible both to residents and visitors, and has some stature as the heart of our State’s culture. Adding a performing arts center to this “campus” would solidify its’ position, drawing more people to the area and reinforcing the year-round health of the adjacent business district.”

**Comprehensive Plan - Economic Development**

Policy 5.2 calls for cooperative city and state planning for this area, “It is the policy of the CBJ, through a cooperative effort with the State of Alaska, to plan for and support development of an attractive setting, facilities, and other services to enhance the State capital and to strive
to provide an atmosphere conducive to good leadership in the state, accessible to and supportive of all people of the State of Alaska.”

Implementing action (5.2IA3) for this policy recommends, “Encourage coordinated or joint planning efforts to address the need for alternative transportation and parking opportunities for State workers and Legislative personnel. All government agencies should participate in a coordinated Downtown Transportation Management Program per the elements described in Chapter 8 of the Comprehensive Plan.”

Policy 5.4 directs, “It is the policy of the CBJ to encourage tourism, convention and other visitor-related activities through the development of appropriate facilities and services, while protecting Juneau’s natural, cultural and economic attractions for local residents and visitors alike, and to participate in the accommodation of the future growth of tourism in a manner that addresses both community and industry concerns.”

Implementing action (5.4.1A2) is to “Expand the Centennial Hall Convention and Civic Center facilities as needed in coordination with a combined or separate performing arts complex within a cultural campus area of Downtown Juneau generally bounded by Gold Creek, Willoughby Avenue and Egan Drive. This cultural campus would provide a much-needed venue for arts and cultural performances for residents and summer visitors to enjoy as well as additional exhibition and meeting space for events, conventions and meetings held at centennial hall and additional space for legislators, staff and visitors to the Capital City.”

Implementing action (5.3IA9) says to, “Facilitate the development of a cultural campus arts district by establishing zoning regulations that would support its development [also see 5.4.1A2].”

Comprehensive Plan - Land Use

Policy 10.13 also sets direction for the District: “It is the policy of the CBJ to provide for mixed use development that integrates residential, retail and office use in Downtown areas, shopping centers, along transit corridors, and in other suitable areas.”

Comprehensive Plan - Cultural, Arts and Humanities

Policy 15.1 states, “It is the policy of the CBJ to support the arts as a vital element of community life and to recognize the important role that the arts play in the cultural, social, and economic well being of the community. It is further the policy of the CBJ to strengthen its role as a regional cultural resource to the communities of Southeast Alaska.”
Standard operating procedure for this policy is to “Require that at least one percent of the construction, remodeling or renovation costs of a public facility be reserved for public art. Promote the purchase of durable art for the CBJ” (15.1 SOP 1).

Three implementing actions are:

- “Through the Capital Improvement Program, promote the expansion of facilities for a wide variety of cultural activities, including performing and visual arts and neighborhood cultural centers” (15.1 IA1).

- “Promote the development of a Juneau Performing Arts Center in downtown Juneau to provide venues for live performances, visual arts, receptions, public meetings, and convention-related presentations” (15.1 IA2).

- “Support the concentration of arts, entertainment, dining, museum and cultural activities and venues as a cultural campus that integrates such things as artists workshops, housing, and joint-use parking in the area of Downtown Juneau near the Capitol Complex” (15.1 IA3).

**Comprehensive Plan - Housing**

While not specific to downtown, direction on housing from the Comprehensive Plan provides an important context, and encouraging more residential development is a critical element of the Willoughby District Plan.

*Policy 4.6 states that, “It is the policy of the CBJ to facilitate and assist in the development of affordable housing.”*

Two implementing actions are:

“When feasible, provide property tax relief for housing developments that are owned and operated by non-profit corporations and in which the units are leased to senior (over the age of 65) and low-income households, provided these savings are passed-through to the tenants in the form of lower rental rates or housing costs. “ (4.6IA2).

The other suggests that, “The CBJ should conduct an analysis of inclusionary affordable housing zoning standards and requirements that could be suitable for application in the CBJ.” (4.6IA3)

**Title 49 – Land Use Code**
Zoning in the Willoughby District is Mixed Use 2. This zoning designation encourages a mix of commercial and residential uses, and in the Willoughby District, places an emphasis on residential development. Dense residential development of up 60 dwelling units per acre is allowed here. The intent to have a significant number of housing units in the MU2 zone, or within the Willoughby District, has not been achieved and is one of the focuses of this Plan.

Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

The CBJ supports transit-oriented development, public transportation, and non-motorized transportation in the Comprehensive Plan. The 2009 Juneau Non-Motorized Transportation Plan lists 11 recommended infrastructure improvements in this area for pedestrians and cyclists:

1. Add a pedestrian signal, crosswalk markings, curb extensions, and decreased turning radius at the Egan Dr/Glacier Ave intersection.

2. Add curb extensions, decrease turning radius, improved refuge island, and crosswalk markings at the Egan Dr/10th St intersection.

3. Add crosswalk markings and a crosswalk sign at the Willoughby Ave/Capital Ave intersection.

4. Add a pedestrian activated signal and pavement markings at the Egan Dr/Willoughby Ave intersection.

5. Add curb extensions, decreased turning radius, improved refuge islands, and crosswalk markings at the Egan Dr/8th St intersection.

6. On Egan Dr between the Juneau-Douglas Bridge and Main Street add a vegetated buffer to improve conditions for pedestrians. Carry out traffic calming along this corridor.

7. Add a bike lane in both directions along Egan Dr from 10th St to Main St.

8. Add a bike lane in both directions along Willoughby St from Glacier Ave to Egan Dr. (“Sharrows” may be appropriate along this corridor as there is not much space.)

9. Complete the downtown Seawalk.

10. Add a separated path along Gold Creek from Egan Dr to Cope Park.

11. Add a sidewalk on one side of Capital Ave between Willoughby and 9th St.
Transit Development Plan

Juneau’s brand new Transportation Center is next to the Goldbelt Hotel at the edge of the Willoughby District. Details regarding public transit are found in the 2008 Capital Transit Development Plan. The new Transportation Center’s visibility, warm waiting room, high design and style, food kiosk, adjoining police substation, and restrooms all encourage using public transportation.

Providing incentives to use public transportation to and from the Willoughby District are one of the ways this Plan will be implemented. Transit-oriented development encourages walking and biking; carpools; car-sharing programs; providing covered, secure bicycle storage; priority parking for carpools and car-sharing.

3.2 Anticipated Investments and Improvements

There are currently both State and City projects underway in or adjacent to the Willoughby District. These planned public investments include the projects reviewed below.

The Alaska State Museum is being redeveloped to house the State Library, Archives, and Museum. This project is in the design phase and will construct a new building three times as large as the current museum to accommodate several new uses including serving as the State’s archival facility for art objects and all historic documents. It will include a large landscaped front yard and add both underground and surface parking. The current State library and reading room on the 8th floor of the State Office Building will be relocated here, which will open up room for offices more directly dependent on the legislature and governor’s needs. This project, estimated to cost approximately $126 million will be a significant public investment in the center of the District. Construction is expected to begin in one or two years.

The State is also looking to construct about 100,000 sf of office space in one or more buildings in Juneau to both consolidate workers for efficiency and get employees out of rundown buildings. The CBJ would prefer to see these new offices in the Willoughby District, or nearby, to further create a State civic campus and to support the Capitol.

The CBJ is working on redesigning a part of the waterfront under the Douglas Bridge. Plans include extending the Seawalk from the Douglas Bridge to the Subport area and creating an ‘Under the Bridge’ Park. It is possible that a building to support harbor use will also be on this site.
Another CBJ project underway is the redesign of Marine Park, the adjacent waterfront area, and the cruise ship docks. This project will connect the Seawalk from Marine Park to the Subport and will provide dock space for two panamax-size cruise ships. These two CBJ projects are currently in the design phase; construction will likely be funded at least partly with Cruise Ship Passenger Fees.

In the longer term, the CBJ also desires to expand Centennial Hall Convention Center to increase meeting space, to relocate the City Museum into the District, and to rebuild or remodel the JACC to accommodate a theatre performance space and other facilities that support arts and culture activity.