1.0 Introduction

The actions of Juneau’s residents and the adopted plans of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) have recognized the Willoughby District as Juneau’s Civic, Arts and Cultural area for at least 50 years.

In the 1960’s, the City provided the land and Juneau citizens voted to support a one year, one percent sales tax to raise matching funds to build the Alaska State Museum here. Today, in addition to the nearby State Capitol and Alaska State Museum, the Willoughby District is home to major State offices, the Juneau Centennial Hall Convention and Visitors Center, the Central Council of Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska’s Andrew Hope Building with its meeting spaces and ANB/ANS Juneau camp home, the Juneau Arts and Culture Center (the JACC), Zach Gordon Youth Center, and Juneau’s public broadcasting offices and studios.

The CBJ Comprehensive Plan establishes direction for growth in this area:

1. Support the establishment of a Cultural Campus;
2. Seek to strengthen and enhance the Capitol Complex; and
3. Provide for mixed use development that integrates residential, retail and office uses.

Zoning reinforces this direction. The area’s Mixed Use 2 zoning district calls for dense residential development in buildings where the 1st floors are occupied by stores, restaurants, offices and other places with activity. Top floors of mixed use buildings are filled with residential, office, or commercial uses and sometimes a mix of all three.

The Willoughby District Land Use Plan is a Long Range Plan. The projects in it will be accomplished over time by a series of near to long term public sector investments in park and plaza space, infrastructure, and parking; and through private sector investments as land owners are ready to improve their properties.

The Plan will be a blueprint for development in this area for the next 20-25 years. It will be used by CBJ staff (and portions of the plan will be adopted into Juneau’s Comprehensive Plan), public and private landowners, developers, and the general public.
The Willoughby District Land Use Plan was developed by building upon CBJ direction and following a process that included:

- An inventory of current land uses and building conditions, traffic patterns and pedestrian facilities, employee numbers, existing parking spaces, community destinations, and current CBJ Comprehensive Plan policies and zoning standards.
- Identifying the District’s assets and challenges. Applying planning and design principles that offer ways to showcase assets and tackle challenges.
- Collecting and reviewing photographs illustrating changes in the District over the last 50 years, research into area history, and compiling and studying past area plans.
- Conversations with those having day to day local knowledge of the area - the people who work in the district – occurred while mapping and inventorying local conditions.
- A web-based survey was conducted to solicit opinions on goals, priorities, concerns, and to better understand how people access the area and why they visit. The survey generated over 250 comments. All public comments (survey, public meetings, email and by mail) are organized by theme and summarized in Appendix A.
- Meetings with landowners and residents, CBJ committees and staff, and State agencies took place. This included meetings that the Central Council of Tlingit Haida Indians of Alaska generously helped to organize and host to ensure that the voice of the area’s Alaska Native residents was clearly heard.
- The consultant team hosted a public meeting in mid-November that about 45 people attended.

The Plan is being prepared in advance of significant investment that is anticipated over the next two to ten years. Projects include construction of a new State Library, Archives and Museum facility, improvements to Whittier Street, creation of a public plaza between the State Office Building and the new Museum as parking is relocated, completion of Juneau’s long-planned Seawalk nearby, and more. These investments will likely stimulate some private property owners in the area to reinvest in their property.

With the benefit of a community endorsed Willoughby District Land Use Plan to help guide, coordinate, and set clear rules for these investments, this area can be much more than any one individual project could create alone.
The Willoughby District will continue to be a place that welcomes all ages, income levels, and populations. Juneau’s Civic, Arts and Cultural campus will thrive as the public and private sector both take actions to achieve the vision established in this Plan. As this Plan is implemented, there will be:

- Public open space and plazas to showcase Juneau’s civic, arts, and cultural assets.
- A better walking environment to and through the area that links new public spaces.
- More and easier crossings of Egan Drive that reconnects the waterfront and the Willoughby District.
- A connected grid of well-lit streets, with wide sidewalks and landscaping.
- Relocated, consolidated parking that is behind and under buildings, on-street, and in parking garages.
- As a result of the two items above, developable parcels are created that are suited to denser, mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses, and, more housing, both market-rate and affordable.
- Public features and incentives to discourage single occupancy vehicle commuting and manage parking demand.
1.1 Willoughby District Boundary

The Willoughby District is the area bounded by Gold Creek, Egan Drive, Willoughby Avenue, and Village Street.
1.2 Land Status

Land is the Willoughby District is split about evenly between approximately 27 private land owners and publicly owned land. Public land is owned by a combination of the City and Borough of Juneau, State of Alaska, and Alaska Mental Health Trust. Immediately northwest and southeast is land also owned by the federal government.