



April 28, 2024

City & Borough of Juneau  
Assembly Member Christine Woll  
155 Heritage Way  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: DBA FY25 Request for Use of Marine Passenger Fees for Downtown Ambassador Program

Dear Assembly Member Woll,

We are contacting you in your capacity as the Chair of the CBJ Assembly Finance Committee about our request for marine passenger fees and the status of this request.

Since 2013, the Downtown Business Association (DBA) has managed, on behalf of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ), a service funded by marine passenger fees to assist visitors to downtown Juneau during the busy cruise season. This initiative is known as the Downtown Ambassador program and has evolved over the past decade from a focus on security in its early years to our current focus on ensuring an excellent visitor experience. This program, staffed by Juneau residents screened for local knowledge, friendliness, and people skills, helps visitors have a more rich and positive experience in our community. These Downtown Ambassadors add extra sets of eyes on the docks and in the downtown corridor to alert authorities on issues that might impact safety. They also serve as a conduit for feedback from visitors which can be used to improve the downtown experience and to relay notices and announcements from various entities including CBJ, Travel Juneau, TBMP, cruise representatives, and community partners.

Regarding our FY25 request for the use of marine passenger fees to fund this program, our initial application was submitted in January, additional details were provided in March, and there was no related discussion at the CBJ Finance Committee meeting on April 6. We apologize for the delay and for misconceptions about the use of funds. Specifically, the DBA map production is paid for through advertising sales to DBA members and the distribution of 60,000 maps is done through kiosks and DBA member businesses. Marine passenger fees are not used to pay for the DBA's summer map or to deliver these maps to distribution points. While we insist that Ambassadors always have maps on hand to facilitate conversation and answers to questions, they only gift them as needed to visitors. Their assigned task is to be friendly, welcoming, and helpful while answering questions and not to distribute maps.

With the Downtown Ambassador being in jeopardy of not being approved to continue into the next fiscal year, we ask that you please reconsider this program's status. Programs like this are common in cities around the world and serve to enhance the visitor experience. With the downtown core generating \$13M in annual sales tax revenue and this program's alignment with the goals of Blueprint Downtown, our belief is that this is a valuable program for Juneau and is an effective use of marine passenger fees.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Kindly,

*Veneita Bingham*

Veneita Bingham  
Downtown Business Association, President

*Nimmy Philips*

Nimmy Philips  
Downtown Business Association, Vice President

DBA FY25 Initiatives: Family Friendly Capital City

*Request for CBJ Funding*

V's Cellar Door, Owner

Spice Indian Cuisine, Owner