



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 1, 2025

TO: Assembly Lands, Housing and Economic Development Committee

FROM: Alexandra Pierce, Visitor Industry Director *Alex Pierce*

SUBJECT: Community Partner Scope Analysis

On March 17, 2025, the Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee discussed the need to evaluate the scope of CBJ's relationship with the community partner organizations that have a marketing and/or economic development function. The goal of this effort is to ensure consistency in CBJ's approach to funding partner organizations, avoid duplicative efforts, and minimize mission creep. Staff recommends that the Assembly appropriate \$10,000 to hire a consultant to review the scope of each organization and facilitate one or more strategy sessions aimed at ensuring that all community partners are using CBJ funds to fulfill their mission as defined by the Assembly. The consultant will produce a brief report on the goals and core functions of each organization. Staff recommends inviting community organizations that do not receive CBJ funds to participate in the analysis. At this critical time in Juneau's economy, it's important that the entities trusted with promoting and growing the community are all working toward the same set of goals with a defined set of projects and priorities tailored to their areas of expertise. The outcome for CBJ funded organizations – JEDC, Travel Juneau, and DBA – would be a funding MOA tailored to achieving the goals and priorities established in the consultant's report and would include metrics for success and a reporting structure that establishes a feedback loop between the organization and the Assembly LHED committee. Other organizations invited to participate – Juneau Chamber of Commerce and University of Alaska Southeast – would be encouraged to periodically review community-facing projects to ensure they align with the scope established by the consultant.

This work would take place in 2025 and would not be ready for the FY26 budget cycle. However, the Assembly is tasked with making funding decisions for the coming fiscal year. To help inform FY26 decision making, the summary below describes CBJ's current contractual relationship with each organization and the organization's priorities as defined therein.

Travel Juneau

Travel Juneau has the most comprehensive MOA and reporting structure of the three organizations. Travel Juneau also receives the most funding of the three with \$1,267,900 in Hotel Bed Tax in FY25. They also receive Marine Passenger Fees for visitor services (\$171,000 in FY25) and crossing guards (\$358,800

in FY25). Travel Juneau's MOA includes metrics and Travel Juneau provides quarterly updates to the LHED committee. Travel Juneau's duties include:

1. Develop and deliver destination marketing for CBJ, focusing on fully independent travelers (FITs), groups and meeting planners. Campaigns will include in-state, domestic, and international travelers and will include digital, limited print, social, and video platforms. Destination marketing will incorporate appropriate Tlingit visual and language elements and will support cultural tourism;
2. In marketing Juneau as a meetings and convention destination, provide planner services including, but not limited to, full bids, hotel room bids and rates, catering bids and rates, service referrals, familiarization tours to qualified planners, and event promotion;
3. Market and sell Centennial Hall Convention Center to meeting planners; collaborate with facility staff to help ensure ease of booking and delivery of events and services;
4. Develop and deliver a comprehensive array of accurate visitor information via destination website, mobile application, phone, face-to-face, and online inquiry;
5. Provide additional marketing and promotional opportunities to local visitor industry businesses;
6. Engage with the Alaska Travel Industry Association to ensure Juneau is represented in their ongoing national and international marketing programs;
7. Work with a variety of local organizations to encourage entrepreneurship and small business development in the visitor industry;
8. Maintain working relationships with visitor industry transportation providers to maintain and improve access to Juneau and Southeast;
9. Collaborate with state and regional tourism-related groups, committees, and commissions;
10. Staff visitor information centers during the regular tour season; and
11. Provide crossing guard services during the regular tour season.

Travel Juneau's reporting mechanisms include a list of metrics ranging from room nights to website statistics. Quarterly reporting to the LHED Committee is not spelled out in the MOA but has happened at the request of the committee for the past several years.

Juneau Economic Development Council

JEDC's MOA is extremely broad, and funds are loosely directed to four categories. JEDC received \$440,000 in FY25 to perform the following functions:

1. Help make Juneau a great capital city;
2. Strengthen key regional industries;
3. Develop talent;
4. Promote entrepreneurship and small businesses; and
5. Deliver economic development services.

The funding memo also directs JEDC to "pursue long-term goals, invest in developing and retaining talented staff, and be ready when needed to support the community to respond to crisis and opportunities".

JEDC is required to submit an activity report within 90 days after the end of the grant year with the following information:

- An accounting of the disbursement or obligation funded with the CBJ grant; and
- A report on the programs funded and the progress of the Scope of Program.

JEDC also receives Marine Passenger Fees for one-off projects. In FY25, they received \$110,000 to fund a mobile data purchase.

Downtown Business Association

In FY25, DBA received \$40,000 in CBJ funding for the Main Street America Program, to “strategically implement the work of volunteer committees that work within the Main Street approach of Design, Promotion, Economic Vitality, and Membership.” including:

1. Promote downtown as a family-friendly destination through activities and programs such as Gallery Walk, monthly First Friday events, and Brunch Punch Card promotion;
2. Foster an attractive, safe, and clean environment to attract people downtown, through activities and programs such as partnering with the Visitor Industry Cluster Working Group, implementing a Downtown Ambient Lighting Plan, and coordination the annual Downtown Clean Up;
3. Strengthen and add capacity to DBA membership by promoting, fostering, and encouraging downtown business, and acting as an advocate on issues that face downtown businesses.
4. Develop and grow Light Up Juneau campaign to enhance atmosphere and safety, promote activities to attract people to downtown during the winter, and support family-friendly activities.

In FY25, DBA also received \$90,000 in Marine Passenger Fees for the Downtown Ambassador Program. This program hires staff to patrol downtown to provide visitor information.

Recommendation:

All three CBJ-funded community development organizations abide by their agreements with the City, and those agreements vary wildly in scope, detail, and level of reporting. In order to provide better direction and ensure Assembly satisfaction with the work products that CBJ funds, I recommend that the LHED Committee direct staff to develop a cost estimate and bring an appropriating ordinance for \$10,000 to the full Assembly to launch the community organization scoping project.