



## **JUNEAU COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2023 - MAY 2024**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Juneau Commission on Sustainability (JCOS), established by the Assembly in 2007, researches and advises the CBJ on community sustainability. The Commission continued to be engaged and productive this past year. The Commission's work is typically researched and drafted by its committees and the full Commission conducts regular monthly meetings, work sessions as needed, and an annual retreat.

The JCOS charter, and resolutions for the Juneau Climate Action & Implementation Plan (2011) and Juneau Renewable Energy Strategy (2018), identify its duties:

1. promotion of sustainability in the community,
2. recommendations to the Assembly and other boards and commissions on policies and programs,
3. research and applying for grants,
4. advising CBJ staff on GHG emission reductions, and
5. acting as a liaison between the community and Assembly on sustainability-related issues.

Sustainability, as defined in JCOS's charter, encompasses economic, social, environmental, and local government components.

### **II. HIGHLIGHTS – JCOS Governance, Priorities, Accomplishments and Pending Work**

#### **A. GOVERNANCE**

The Commission experienced no turnover in membership during this reporting period, though a new chair and co-chair were elected in January. Two members retired at the end of their terms in June 2024, see membership table in Section III.

#### **B. PRIORITY - ENERGY**

1. Implementation of the Juneau Climate Action Plan and the Juneau Renewable Energy Strategy

The implementation of these planning documents has become a constant factor in

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JCOS decision-making. Appropriate sections of these documents are cited as the basis for numerous JCOS decisions such as letters of support for grant applications, policy memos to the Assembly, and annual goal-setting within JCOS.

2. Transportation

a. **JCOS Actions: Juneau Dock Electrification**

Dock electrification continues to be a key issue for JCOS, dating back well over a decade of community efforts. We advanced CBJ dock electrification this year by participating in discussions with CBJ Docks & Harbors Director, board members, and CBJ Tourism Director to begin planning with a contractor to implement and execute CBJ dock electrification. JCOS applauds the CBJ for hiring an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party expert in dock electrification, and JCOS will monitor results. Further, JCOS hosted one of our Sustainability Sessions on this topic (see Outreach section below), made statements of support for including dock electrification in the Blueprint Downtown and other planning documents, and wrote a letter of commitment pledging to help CBJ implement a Clean Ports grant which the City applied for to implement electrification.

b. **JCOS Actions: Electric Vehicles**

JCOS efforts for advancing electric vehicle adoption have focused on two areas: switching the City vehicle fleet to electric vehicles and supporting additional public charging infrastructure to lower the barrier to entry for private vehicles. Examples of these efforts include supporting CBJ staff to file bus and vehicle grants and to draft a letter of support for the CBJ LowNo grant application to purchase electric city buses and a letter of support for an AEL&P grant application to install charging infrastructure at multi-family rental properties. JCOS also advocated for the Assembly to include additional funding for both these areas in the Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) budget. Additionally, JCOS annually support the Juneau Electric Vehicle round up in which the CBJ Assembly has provided proclamations.

3. Space Heating

Little progress was made on this priority topic this year. JCOS advised the Assembly to include additional funding for studying heat pumps at City facilities in the CIP budget. This will continue to be a long-term project.

4. CBJ Energy Management

JCOS provided a letter of commitment for a CBJ Climate Pollution Reduction Grant to upgrade to electric boilers at the Mendenhall Wastewater Treatment Plant. Additionally, in the Commission's annual comments on the CBJ CIP budget we advised the Assembly to include more funding for decarbonization of City facilities.

C. **PRIORITY – SOLID WASTE**

This was a major year for solid waste issues in Juneau. There are two main fronts: composting and landfill replacement.

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On composting the City has had \$2.5 million in Congressionally Directed Spending appropriated for construction of a municipal composting facility. JCOS has written multiple memos advising the Assembly and staff on how to handle the transition to this new facility and its impact on an existing private business providing compost services. Additionally, JCOS has written letters of support for additional grant funding to further develop the facility as part of a broader zero-waste subdivision, hosted a Sustainability Session on the topic, and had meetings with Assembly members, staff, and the private business owner to discuss the issue and find the optimal path forward.

For landfill replacement the City is moving forward on two projects: a waste characterization study to understand the current nature of waste entering the landfill, and a study to list the options available for waste disposal after the current landfill is retired. JCOS has been engaged in meetings with staff on these issues and expressed support for both efforts to the Assembly.

#### **D. PRIORITY - OUTREACH**

The primary outreach success story of the year is the launch of a monthly series of Sustainability Sessions in the fall through spring months. These sessions have included topics important to JCOS such as dock electrification and composting. Attendance has been high, with multiple sessions reaching standing-room-only status in the public spaces reserved and double-digit numbers of online attendees. The hybrid in-person and online video broadcasts have been popular, with the ability to read off questions from the public online as well as from in the room. JCOS is very proud of making the sessions as accessible as possible through this hybrid format.

#### **E. PRIORITY - CLIMATE IMPACTS/SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS**

The CBJ Comprehensive Plan Policy 2.3 directs JCOS and CBJ to develop Sustainability indicators to measure Juneau's progress toward becoming a more sustainable community. Considering other priorities CBJ and JCOS have made little progress over the past few years toward developing sustainability indicators. Recently, JCOS began researching examples from other communities such as Fairbanks North Star Borough and Whitehorse Yukon. JCOS will be meeting with CBJ Public Works and Planning departments as well as the Juneau Economic Development Council to discuss their interest and involvement in developing a set of indicators. Initial thoughts are to start with a small number of relevant indicators for energy and a few other priority areas. Indicators would be part of a dashboard which is a highly readable and graphic format style of communicating sustainability information.

### **III. MEMBERSHIP**

The 11-member Commission includes nine public members appointed by the Assembly, and one non-voting member each of the Assembly and the Planning Commission. The Commission's membership reflects environmental, social, economic, and governmental perspectives unified by the common interests of sustainability.

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The JCOS members who served during this reporting period are:

<b>Term Expiring</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Member</b>
6/30/2024	<b><i>Gretchen Keiser,</i></b> retired	<b><i>Steve Behnke,</i></b> retired	<b><i>Jessie Barker</i></b>
6/30/2025	<b><i>Nick Waldo,</i></b> chair	<b><i>Duff Mitchell</i></b>	<b><i>Marion Call,</i></b> co- chair
6/30/2026	<b><i>Jim Powell</i></b>	<b><i>David Teal,</i></b> secretary	<b><i>Laura Achee</i></b>
Incoming for 6/30/2027	<b><i>Jessie Barker,</i></b> returning	<b><i>Brennan McCulloch</i></b>	<b><i>Griffin Plush</i></b>
<b><i>Ella Adkison</i></b>	CBJ Assembly Liaison  (non-voting member)	<b><i>Nina Keller</i></b>	Planning Commission Liaison (non- voting member)
<b><i>Dianna Robinson</i></b>	CBJ Staff Liaison	<b><i>Denise Koch</i></b>	CBJ Staff Liaison  (former)