



April 12, 2023

Re: Funding for Dimond Park Fieldhouse Elevator

Dear Mayor Weldon, Deputy Mayor Gladziszewski, Finance Chair Triem, and Assembly Members,

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list contains a request of \$450K for an elevator in the Dimond Park Field House (DPFH). On April 6, 2023, CBJ Engineering estimated the actual price at \$1,020,000. I am writing to implore you to use your fund balance to fully fund this project. Why? Two reasons: CBJ appears to be noncompliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and it's simply the right thing to do.

A little background. The ADA includes both architectural and programmatic requirements. The DPFH was originally granted an architectural exemption for an elevator based on the definition of the 2nd floor as a mezzanine as long as there was nothing above the ground floor beyond the track. Given there is also a meeting space above the ground floor, the mezzanine exemption, in our opinion, is questionable. That said, what is absolutely not questionable is the ADA requirement for equal program access. As CBJ has no other public indoor track, ADA access to the indoor track is required. It has been countered that the UAS Recreation Center includes an indoor track. While that is true, the UAS Recreation Center is not available to the general public, rather the facility is only available to students and 'members'. UAS defines members as individuals who earned a degree from UAS. If you are not a member or student, you must be accompanied by one. Clearly the UAS Recreation Center does not meet CBJ's obligation to provide equal programmatic access.

This is not a new problem. SAIL has been advocating for an elevator in the DPFH since 2011. The nonprofit that owned the building placed the responsibility to add an elevator on CBJ as the land owner. CBJ placed the responsibility on the building owner. Now that CBJ owns both the building and the property, there is no question as to who is the responsible party.

Regardless of the ADA, adding an elevator at the DPFH is the right thing to do. A grandmother called SAIL in tears because she could not climb the stairs to watch her granddaughter compete in Girls on Run. A young woman who experiences a physical

disability called to voice her frustration as she could not join her friends for socialization and exercise at the DPFH because she could not physically climb the stairs. I've witnessed mothers precariously carrying toddlers up the stairs because there is no elevator for their stroller. Given Juneau's rainy weather and winter darkness, an accessible indoor track is all the more important.

The SAIL Accessibility Specialist, Bridget Thomson, and I recently met CBJ Park and Recreation Director George Schaaf and architect Wayne Jensen at the DPFH. Wayne was the original architect on the project. Together, along with some of George's staff, we located a workable location for an elevator. Parks & Recreation and CBJ Engineering also retained HMS, Inc. to develop the preliminary construction cost estimate reflected in this request.

In closing, on behalf of the hundreds of individuals who can't climb the stairs at the Dimond Park Fieldhouse—or do so precariously—and their families and friends, SAIL urges your approval to tap the existing fund balance to remedy this long standing inequity and potential liability.

Should you have questions or if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,



Joan O'Keefe
Executive Director

Cc City Manager Rorie Watt, Finance Director Jeff Rogers