

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2014-016

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE SHIP CREEK FRAMEWORK PLAN THAT WOULD SUPPLEMENT THE 1991 SHIP CREEK WATERFRONT/LAND USE PLAN ADOPTED BY ASSEMBLY ORDINANCE NO. 91-88.

(Case No. 2014-033)

WHEREAS, a request was received from the Mayor's Office and the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) to review and make a recommendation on a new development plan for the Ship Creek area, described as extending in an east-west direction from the Knik Arm Dam to the boat launch on Cook Inlet, to the northern boundary of Ship Creek on the western end and the edge of the rail yards on the eastern end, and to the southern boundary on the approximate edge of downtown along 3rd Avenue; and

WHEREAS, AEDC solicited proposals from qualified consultants to provide professional planning services for the preparation of the *Ship Creek Development Plan*, in order to update the *1991 Ship Creek/Waterfront Land Use Plan*, herein known as the *1991 Plan* (AO No. 91-88); and

WHEREAS, KlingStubbins, an internationally recognized architectural, engineering, interior design, and planning firm with offices in Raleigh, North Carolina, was awarded the contract and began work in January 2013; and

WHEREAS, the *September 2013 Draft Ship Creek Development Plan* proposed by KlingStubbins sought to amend the *1991 Plan* in part to provide a new focus on the future development of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses in a portion of the Ship Creek basin and related tidelands over the next 50 to 100 years; and

WHEREAS, the *September 2013 Draft Ship Creek Development Plan* put forth a visionary document that had the potential to diversify and expand economic development options in the Ship Creek area, and enhance waterfront access and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the *Anchorage 2020—Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan* (*Anchorage 2020*) was adopted in 2001 and identifies the Ship Creek area as one of Anchorage's busiest transportation corridors and speaks to the potential of the commercial and residential potential of the area while also noting the Ship Creek/Downtown area is one of the keys to Anchorage's long-term economic vitality; and

WHEREAS, *Anchorage 2020* makes specific reference to the *1991 Ship Creek/Waterfront Land Use Plan*; and

WHEREAS, the *Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 2007 as an element of the *Anchorage 2020—Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan*, also encourages new development in the Ship Creek area, especially live-work units,

maximizing Ship Creek as a recreational resource, all while adhering to seismic constraints; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission was opened and closed on November 4, 2013; and

WHEREAS, on November 4, 2013, the Planning and Zoning Commission further deliberated and after taking public testimony on the *Ship Creek Development Plan* passed a recommendation of denial on the plan as detailed in PZC Resolution No. 2013-43 (Attachment B); and

WHEREAS, the consultant team from KlingStubbins worked diligently to address the comments and issues as enumerated in PZC Resolution No. 2013-43 and resubmitted a revised document called the *Ship Creek Framework Plan*, dated February 2014, which is intended to supplement but not replace or amend the *1991 Plan*; and

WHEREAS, the *Framework Plan* includes: (1) revisions based on questions and comments from the Planning and Zoning Commission hearing of November 4, 2013, and PZC Resolution No. 2013-043; (2) text edits and corrections in response to staff input included in the Staff Packet Memorandum dated November 4, 2013; and (3) revisions based on staff comments included in the Staff Packet Memorandum dated November 4, 2013; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2014, the Planning and Zoning Commission conducted a public hearing on the *Ship Creek Framework Plan*, Case No. 2014-033. The Planning and Zoning Commission deliberated on the matter and generally found the revisions made to the *Framework Plan* to be consistent with the recommendations enumerated in PZC Resolution No. 2013-043. However, the Planning and Zoning Commission expressed reservations about several recommendations related to how the 2007 *Downtown Plan* and the 1991 *Ship Creek/Waterfront Land Use Plan* would be applied in the planning area; and

WHEREAS, after further discussion, the Planning and Zoning Commission directed staff to work with KlingStubbins to resolve inconsistencies regarding language between the 2014 *Framework Plan*, the *Downtown Comprehensive Plan*, and the *1991 Plan*; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved the recommendations in the March 10, 2014 Staff Report and the April 7, 2014 Issue-Response Table and further directed staff to consolidate the two into one document to serve as the amendment package.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission that:

- A. The Commission makes the following findings of fact that:

1. While there may be areas of overlap between existing plans such as the *Downtown Plan* and the *Framework Plan*, it may become necessary to amend the adopted plans so that the development envisioned within Ship Creek can occur.
2. As development occurs, it may not be necessary for all projects to have follow-up studies. Flexibility in the review and approval process is necessary so as not to become a burden no matter the size of the development.
3. A tsunami or earthquake event within Ship Creek is a continuing cause for concern. Low-impact development such as trails and surface parking may be acceptable, but mid- and high-rise residential or commercial development is problematic, particularly as related to Phase III because development is envisioned to be built on fill on the mudflats.
4. With regards to Phase I-D, some limited development on the mudflats may be appropriate. A cruise ship dock separate from the port area could become a signature element to support and increase tourism.
5. With regards to Phase I, environmental concerns such as water flowing downhill from Bootlegger Cove may require further study due to landslide and earthquake risks prior to future development at this location.
6. Extension of Ship Creek Avenue should be a key action as part of Phase I-D.
7. The Alaska Railroad Corporation, as the primary landowner in the Ship Creek area, is a key stakeholder to the realization of the vision for the plan.
8. Future amendments to adopted plans are the responsibility of the Municipality and should not be placed on the individual developer.
9. The *Framework Plan* offers a big vision about how Anchorage can create an active and new waterfront, expand recreational access, and develop opportunities for residential and commercial development in Ship Creek.
10. The near-term phases of the Framework Plan provide a road map for future improvements in Ship Creek, such as the realignment of Whitney Road.
11. There may be times when proposed development departs from the *Framework Plan* and that is anticipated. When these occur,

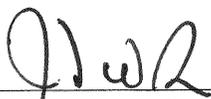
amendments to adopted plans may become necessary. Until those plans are reviewed again, it will not be necessary to proactively make changes.

12. Significant constraints exist regarding access to Ship Creek. Downtown Anchorage is already at a competitive economic disadvantage as compared with Midtown, due to the availability of cheaper land, more land available for parking, and better vehicular accessibility. As a consequence, Ship Creek may be even more difficult to develop because of its lack of accessibility and available land for parking, as well as its constricted vehicular accessibility.

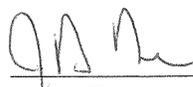
- B. The Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission forwards a recommendation of approval of the February 2014 *Ship Creek Framework Plan* to the Anchorage Assembly with the amendments listed in the Issue-Response Table, included as Attachment A.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission on the 7th day of April, 2014.

ADOPTED by the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission this 14th day of April, 2014.



Jerry T. Weaver, Jr.
Secretary



J. A. Fergusson
Chair

- Attachments: A. Ship Creek Framework Plan Issue-Response Table
B. Planning and Zoning Commission Resolution No. 2013-43

(Case No. 2014-033)