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From: Carol McCabe

Sent: Monday, June 03, 2002 8:41 PM

To: Maria Gladziszewski

Subject: RE: Comments on Final Draft Tourism Plan

LIBRARY has comments which relate most closely to Section 6.3.4 Managing Vehicle Congestion.

Our main downtown library at 292 Marine Way has seen a significant change in number and type of visits over the past twelve years since the facility opened. Number of visits have for several years been declining downtown, while they have continued to increase in our Valley branch. Tourist visits in the downtown facility during the summer season have increased, while local resident visits have decreased.

The downtown library is a popular stop for cruiseship passengers and crews, as well as for independent travelers. All three non-resident types are heavy users of the library's Internet services. Library visit length is frequently longer for the independent traveler, especially during cold/rainy periods, and includes both more use of the collections and more interaction with professional reference staff. Many travelers come in specifically to research their detailed questions about Juneau, history, their next destination, genealogy.

Statistics show approximately 1000 circulation transactions per year (out of total of 240,000) by crew who purchase nonresident visitor cards in order to check out books, videos, DVDs and CDs during their weekly stops in Juneau. This does not compensate for the drop in checkouts from the downtown library by local residents, a statistic which has been declining at about the same rate as resident visits.

Issues identified in the Managing Vehicle Congestion section of the Draft Tourism Plan have been frequently mentioned by residents as their reasons for fewer visits to the downtown library. Library parking during weekdays in summer months is confined to the 26 library spaces in the Marine Park Garage; in winter months, options expand to include coin-op spaces within the garage as well as street spaces nearby. Children are discouraged from making independent trips by bike or on foot during tourist season because of safety concerns, particularly on South Franklin and Marine Way. Crossing guards are essential and appreciated. The library is pleased to note that the Draft Tourism Plan "proceeds from the assumption that congestion can interfere with resident access to public and business areas in the downtown," and understands that measures which improve the efficiency of transportation services for cruise patrons and that protect pedestrian safety will naturally improve access to the downtown library for local patrons as well.

Delivery issues are a special concern for the downtown library. This location is the main receiving and processing center for the three-facility public library system. All new books are prepared for circulation and entered on the database here, then branch collections are sent out to the other two locations. Many boxes of books, videos, other library materials arrive from vendors each week, most by USPS, some by FedEx or UPS. These trucks are over the height limit for Marine Park Garage, thus cannot be assigned a loading zone inside to make daily library deliveries. There are also one to three courier van deliveries daily from the state library, the university, and other libraries in town. All these deliveries are already problematic because they now use the Capital Transit pullout between busses, and are much harder to accomplish since implementation of half-hour bus service. They may become even more problematic given the planned changes in the Steamship Wharf area unless a specific library loading zone can be arranged. It is difficult to imagine that the USPS would be willing to deliver only whenever a cruiseship is not in port, as recommended, even if library staffing could be rearranged to accommodate this. The library is, of course, also very interested in keeping a viable Capital Transit stop immediately adjacent to the library front door, for patron convenience.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the library perspective on these important downtown issues. We have a beautiful, welcoming public facility at 292 Marine Way for residents and visitors alike. We look to the Tourist Plan for guidance in finding the desired balance that will make use by all patrons of this major public building the pleasure it was meant to be.

Exhibit GB
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