

6. Programs: Managing Impacts

Juneau recognizes that tourism, like every human activity, has impacts. Juneau will manage those impacts proactively, working cooperatively as a community in partnership with businesses from both within and outside Juneau. The Juneau Tourism Partnership will become the venue for collaborative discussion of issues, defining and updating standards, and crafting of solutions.

6.1 Annual Process for Impact Discussions and Actions

The Juneau Tourism Partnership (discussed in detail in Section 3.3.4) will manage impact discussions and then lead the process to implement solutions.

Each fall, around the first of November, the Juneau Tourism Partnership will convene a community tourism forum to review the season's performance, discuss issues, and update tourism planning. One key part of that forum will address impacts. The JTP will present a report on impacts that reflects season-long community input and industry observations. The JTP will facilitate a community discussion to analyze progress on various impact topics, and to anticipate impacts from changing tourism patterns and volume. The JTP will, with community and industry input, build and adjust impact management and mitigation plans and build community support for those plans or adjustments. The JTP will build budgets for those plans and work with the industry (inside and outside Juneau), the Assembly, and other partners to finance implementation.

6.2 Role of Best Management Practices

In the spirit of cooperatively addressing issues, the Juneau-based tourism industry will continue to develop and implement a "Best Management Practices" program to, through programs and practices, reduce impacts from tourism to the community. This program will be reviewed during the fall tourism forum hosted by the Juneau Tourism Partnership, and the JTP will make suggestions for modifications of practices and procedures for the upcoming season. The JTP will host a session prior to each tourism season during which the industry will unveil updated Best Management Practices for the coming season. The JTP will post the plan on a community tourism web site and collect feedback during the season.

6.3 Impact Management Recommendations

6.3.1 Managing Flightseeing Impacts

Noise from both float plane and helicopter flightseeing has bothered a number of Juneau residents for several years. The analysis that led to this plan concluded that Juneau has no alternative but to address flightseeing noise in a significant way. Both float plane and helicopter flightseeing impacts need to be addressed separately, with the acknowledgement that they are cumulative for many residents.

6.3.2 Managing Helicopter Noise

The plan acknowledges the important work accomplished in the Alternative Heliport Site Analysis study and the community discussions conducted by the Assembly regarding that study. The plan also acknowledges the efforts of the helicopter operators to adopt and follow practices and routes that have reduced noise and the number of people impacted by that noise. The plan further acknowledges the data gathered by web polling which indicates that helicopter flightseeing noise does “bother” a significant portion of the Juneau population. Frequency and volume are both significant factors in noise irritation.

Following the recommendations of the noise study, and understanding that relocation involves further study, time, and both public and private sector investment, the plan calls for phased relocation of heliports. Heliport relocation processes will be coordinated by the City Manager’s office, which process is already underway.

Relocation processes will pay close attention to:

- Reducing helicopter noise levels for residents
- Fostering a healthy business environment for the operators
 - Assisting small operators (Coastal, Northstar) in making the move
 - Protecting cooperating operators from uncooperative competition
 - Creating an environment that enables reasonable growth
 - Avoiding actions that substantially raise costs of operation
- Ensuring a quality experience for visitors
- Mitigating impacts caused by the relocation
- Avoiding environmental damage, mitigation if required

The first phase will involve the development of a new heliport south of Juneau, probably in the vicinity of Dupont or Sheep Creek. The development will require impact analysis, land transfers, zoning adjustments, road development and/or improvement, construction of one or more helipads and support facilities, and mitigation of impacts on the Thane community. Once complete, and after operational agreements and/or contracts are in place, ERA’s flightseeing operations will move to the new heliport. The new heliport, and associated flight paths, will substantially reduce helicopter flightseeing noise.

The second phase will develop a northern heliport. The Alternative Heliport Site Analysis study points to Montana Creek as a target site. The process will concentrate on moving toward that site, but will be receptive to reasonable alternatives presented by operators and community early in the process. The development will require impact analysis, land transfers, zoning adjustments, road improvement, construction of one or more helipads and support facilities, and mitigation of impacts for nearby residences. Once complete, and after operational agreements and contracts are in place, TEMSCO, Coastal, and Northstar flightseeing operations will

move to the new heliport facility. The new heliport, and associated flight paths, will substantially reduce helicopter flightseeing noise.

The cruise lines serving Juneau, as represented by Northwest Cruise Association, have indicated they will agree to voluntarily limit flightseeing sales to companies cooperating with the heliport relocation effort. Non-cooperating companies and new companies that don't locate at the designated flightseeing helipads will not be eligible for on-board sales of flightseeing packages.

Phase one is underway as of February, 2002. The CBJ will press phase one forward with as much speed as possible, making every effort to move operations by the 2004 season. CBJ will move phase two forward more slowly, working to enable the move about one season after the southern site is operational.

The helicopter flightseeing operators will work to reduce noise (both volume and coverage) through neighborly flying practices. The Juneau Tourism Partnership will forward community observations during each tourism season and will conduct a review of the issue in its impact session each fall. The operators will meet annually, after the review, and adjust routes and practices as needed. Each season the route and practices plan will be provided to the JTP, which will distribute to the public through the media and on a dedicated portion of the community tourism website operated by the JTP.

6.3.3 Managing Float Plane Flightseeing Noise

Float plane flightseeing noise irritation is associated with take-off, climb-out and then flight paths close to residences. Noise is currently of the biggest concern in the Gastineau Channel southeast of the bridge. Float plane noise from the pond at the airport may offer have lower impacts on fair weather days, Taku-bound flights originating in the pond would pass over more households. Frequency is a significant factor in noise irritation. (These findings are from the Alternative Heliport Site Analysis study.)

This plan acknowledges the ongoing efforts of the Gastineau Channel float plane operator, Wings of Alaska, for past upgrades to quieter equipment and in managing practices to reduce noise. The plan further acknowledges the data gathered by web polling which indicates that float plane flightseeing noise does "bother" a significant portion of the Juneau population, especially those adjacent to the channel.

Under this plan, the Assembly will consider incentives and/or assistance to Wings of Alaska in upgrading its current fleet to quieter turbine powered planes. That process should take place over the 2002 through 2004 seasons. Wings of Alaska has already indicated to planners that it will voluntarily limit its quantity of flights to the top daily level of the 2001 season, until further evaluation.

The Assembly will commission a minor study to quantify noise differences between the two types of float planes at a few key locations. Wings of Alaska has agreed to perform sample take-offs and climb-outs for the study, at no expense to the Assembly or the contractor.

Once the full fleet has been transformed to turbine power, the Juneau Tourism Partnership will conduct a community survey concerning float plane noise issues. The results of that survey, coupled with the quantified noise data, will be incorporated in a focused community discussion during the fall community tourism forum.

Following the community input, the JTP will work with community members and Wings of Alaska to build a plan that addresses:

- Location of float plane activities
- Volume of float plane activities
- Plan of action
- Timetable for change (growth, location changes, etc.), if needed
- Finance for change, if needed

That plan will be reviewed with the public, and implemented. The JTP will seek public and private partners to support the implementation.

Notes: It is possible that the change in technology will result in enough reduction of noise that further action is not warranted. It is also possible that the investment will not reduce noise to a reasonable level and that Wings will need to relocate part or all of this operation once the community has had a chance to live with the new noise level. That decision will be evident in the community survey and focused community discussion.

Wings of Alaska has agreed work to reduce noise (both volume and coverage) through neighborly flying practices. The Juneau Tourism Partnership will forward community observations during each tourism season and will conduct a review of the issue in its impact session each fall. The JTP will work with Wings of Alaska to adjust routes and practices as needed. Each season the route and practices plan will be provided to the JTP, which will distribute it to the public through the media and on a dedicated portion of the community tourism website.

6.3.4 Managing Vehicle Congestion

Vehicle congestion related to cruise tourism is an issue that is important to the people of Juneau. The primary focus of this issue is in the downtown area, with a secondary focus on streets, highways, and outlying areas. This plan acknowledges the prior work by the City and Borough of Juneau, in partnership with the cruise industry through passenger fee funding, in modifying infrastructure to relieve some of the congestion issues. This plan acknowledges voluntary efforts by ground transportation providers to modify routes and practices to reduce congestion. This plan acknowledges the use

of crossing guards, implemented by CBJ in 2001, to facilitate pedestrian crossing and reduce congestion. This plan also acknowledges the concern about congestion expressed in the web polling. This plan proceeds from the assumption that congestion can interfere with resident access to public and business areas in the downtown, can make downtown a less “people friendly” place, can irritate travel on streets and roadways outside downtown, and can interfere with access to waterfront or trails in outlying areas.

Congestion management will have three foci:

1. Steps focusing on management of downtown
2. Steps to manage congestion outside downtown
3. Ongoing process to evaluate and update congestion planning issues

Downtown Congestion

Downtown congestion will be addressed through improvements to both infrastructure and practices. It is important that improvement planning take into account the call, in this plan, for a comprehensive waterfront planning effort, which may result in reconfiguration of some infrastructure or activities. It is important to note that geography severely limits infrastructure options in this area.

Downtown congestion issues addressed in this plan include:

- Improving efficiency of transportation services for cruise patrons
- Parking Issues
- Delivery Issues
- Truck Traffic Issues
- Pedestrian Issues

Improving efficiency of transportation services for cruise patrons

While transportation services for cruise patrons are not the only contributor to downtown congestion, their impact is both significant and highly visible. It is also quite evident that the buses and vans involved in this service are more “noticeable” than other congestion contributors and more likely singled out for negative attention.

There is considerable vehicle congestion near the Steamship Wharf and much of that is related to passenger loading onto commercial vehicles. Construction of a convertible plaza between Marine Park and the library would improve vitality of the waterfront, improve efficiency of passenger loading, reduce congestion, and raise the quality of visitors’ arrival experience in Juneau. The CBJ will, with funding from the cruise industry, undertake a project to design and construct that plaza. The development of this space will involve decking over the hole between the current dock and the street.

A second phase of this project involves the upgrading of Marine Park. This phase will be fully developed after a comprehensive waterfront plan is in place, to maximize the ability to expand resident and public access to the waterfront, and to facilitate the quality of that access.

Management of activities in this space will be crucial to the success of improving congestion and expanding public benefits. Under this plan, the Assembly will consider transfer of the management of the loading process from the Harbor Board to CBJ, to be administered by the Parks and Recreation Department, with appropriate levels of staffing. Any bus backing will be assisted by a ground attendant (provided by the company or manager of the area) and with the backup beeper temporarily disabled. The managing agency will be charged with making the convertible space serve the public needs as much of the time as possible.

When loading or holding spaces for commercial passenger loading are all occupied, buses and vans will cue *outside the downtown area*, in a space to be designated by CBJ, until the loading attendant signals the next driver that space is available. CBJ will choose the holding space(s) to enhance the ability of drivers to provide a quality interpretive experience for patrons and to not interfere with community activities.

The managing agency will revise the regulations for the use of loading zones, so that tour operators with light loads (fewer passengers to pick up or drop off) will be rewarded when switching to a smaller vehicle. The managing agency may consider granting access to the A zones for the duration of such a switch, or some financial incentive.

Parking Issues

Geography, changing personal use of motor vehicles, and the expansion of cruise-related business activities have contributed to a shortage of parking spaces in the downtown area. The search for parking contributes to congestion. The parking shortage combined with congestion present a barrier to residents' access to downtown public, retail, and service facilities. The spillover of parking by people working in downtown or cruise-related businesses into residential areas degrades neighborhood quality of life.

The Community Development Department has developed a parking plan for the CBJ. This plan urges early implementation of the parking plan, with the understanding that the proposed Comprehensive Waterfront Plan may require adjustments to the parking plan, if circulation patterns change.

The CBJ will consider potential "park and ride" locations between downtown and Lemon Creek and on Douglas Island (again in the new parking plan). The CBJ may develop a "park and ride" program that offers frequent low, or no, cost shuttles between outlying parking locations and downtown. This program may be supplemented by passenger fee funds, as a significant percentage of the impact comes from business and employee parking from cruise-related businesses.

The Juneau Tourism Partnership and the Community Development Department will convene a community and business discussion the first November after this plan is implemented, that explores the option of making parts of downtown a no-parking zone when cruise ships are in port. This option would only be developed in conjunction with the “park and ride” program described above.

Delivery Issues

Delivery vehicles, stopped in the circulation pattern around cruise ship activities and associated retail, contribute substantially to congestion. Deliveries during shopping hours also degrade the visitor experience and de-market Juneau’s visitor retail offerings. Most cities regulate delivery hours to minimize conflicts with high traffic periods.

The Assembly will work with downtown merchants to devise regulations to restrict deliveries on South Franklin and nearby sections of downtown to when cruise ships are not in port. Downtown merchants and other delivery recipients will work with delivery companies to adjust times of delivery to minimize increased business costs.

Truck Traffic Issues

Freight and fuel transportation from the Rock Dump through downtown add to the congestion issue.

The appropriate committee of the Assembly will explore options for long term relocation of freight facilities to other locations.

Pedestrian Issues

Pedestrians, especially cruise patrons, crossing Egan Drive, Marine Way, and South Franklin Street contribute to traffic congestion. Conversely, congestion makes these crossings less than inviting for pedestrians, whether they are from Juneau or visitors. In 2001, CBJ initiated a program (with financial support from Passenger Fees) to utilize crossing guards to increase safety and lower pedestrian contribution to congestion.

The CBJ will continue to utilize crossing guards in the future, potentially expanding that program. The CBJ will work with the Department of Transportation to improve pedestrian crossing options in the neighborhood of the Centennial Hall (from the public parking area) and near the Seadrome Dock.

6.3.5 Managing Congestion outside Downtown

Operators will use voluntary Best Management Practices programs to limit congestion on roadways, parking areas, and trail and beach access points outside downtown. The Juneau Tourism Partnership will work with operators to publicize those programs in the media and on the dedicated web site.

This plan encourages the CBJ to continue on the path set out in the currently adopted CBJ Transportation Plan. The prioritization of another Gastineau Channel Crossing by the Assembly in adopting that plan will provide congestion-relief options to both tourism-related traffic and local residents.

The Juneau Tourism Partnership will review issues related to congestion outside downtown during the fall community tourism forum. The JTP will work with operators to update programs and practices, utilizing input from the fall forum, with revisions announced well before the upcoming tourism season.

The JTP will pass infrastructure and traffic management related suggestions and recommendations to the CBJ for consideration.

6.3.6 Ongoing Process to Evaluate and Update Congestion Planning Issues

The Juneau Tourism Partnership will host the ongoing discussion on congestion. The JTP will:

1. work closely with CBJ and DOT to analyze opportunities and bottlenecks,
2. take input from the community during and between cruise tourism seasons,
3. include a major discussion on congestion in the fall community tourism forum, and
4. work with operators to annually update and distribute the Best Management Practices program.

6.4 Air and Water Quality

Air and water quality were ranked among the most important things that Juneau residents want to protect from the impacts of tourism economic activities. Much of that protection, though, falls under the jurisdiction of state and federal agencies. Under the new Alaska law, a fee is imposed to fund monitoring. The cruise industry has also adopted its own set of industry standards which often exceed state and federal standards. This plan acknowledges the voluntary efforts made by various cruise lines in regard to both air and water quality. It also acknowledges the efforts and activities of Juneau citizens to watchdog these issues.

The Juneau Tourism Partnership will:

1. review the monitoring programs, synthesizing that information into a comprehensive report which will be presented during the annual fall forum;
2. serve as a conduit for reporting incidents to state and federal agencies;
3. collect input from community sources during tourism seasons;

4. work with cruise lines to help the community understand measures being taken;
5. work with media to make sure that the community has comprehensive understanding of practices, measures, monitoring results, and incidents;
6. conduct a review of the state of air and water quality during each fall community forum (based on reports from state and federal agencies, with the invited input of those agencies, community, and cruise industry);
7. work with the cruise tourism industry to accomplish procedural adjustments to improve air and water quality protection if state, federal, and voluntary industry efforts are insufficient (e.g. switching to shore power);
8. work with CBJ to enact any dockside infrastructure or program adjustments that will further improve air and water quality if state, federal, and voluntary industry efforts are insufficient (e.g. extending shore power to public docks); and
9. work with CBJ, state, and federal agencies to address any regulatory needs regarding air and water quality.

Shore power is already in place, as an air quality tool, on the Franklin dock. The Princess fleet has been updated to switch off generators and utilize local electricity. Other major lines are upgrading to cleaner burning engines and generators and moving to higher quality fuel. Royal Caribbean has the first turbine powered ship calling on Juneau. Smaller ships have not made similar advances at this time.

The Juneau Tourism Partnership will continue to review the monitoring results, looking at both total air quality and variations by vessel. If, after three seasons, there are significant differences in ship to ship output, the JTP will conduct discussions with the industry, the community, and the CBJ regarding a restructure of fees or other incentive to reward the better-performing vessels.

6.5 Recreational Resources

The commercial use of trails and access points for backcountry and offshore outings can conflict with residential use. The health of natural and cultural resources is affected by all human activities, including commercial tourism. Maintaining that health is critical, both in terms of environmental and heritage issues and in terms of sustainability of tourism activities.

Fortunately, Juneau developed a system for managing location, volume, and profile of commercial activities that use trails and access points. The recent Trails Working Group report reflects past efforts to balance community needs with commercial opportunities, and the cooperation of various resource managers. That process will be kept intact, with the working group reporting to the Juneau Tourism Partnership and the community during the fall community tourism forum. The trails and access

discussion in that forum will provide additional community and commercial input for the working group to consider. The working group will integrate that input into an annual revision of the report, due before January 1 of each year. The JTP will distribute that report to media and through the website.

While resource management agencies are responsible for protecting the integrity of natural and cultural resources, a proactive tourism community can play a strong role in protecting the vitality of the resources. The Executive Director of the Juneau Tourism Partnership will meet several times each year with representatives from each key resource (Forest Service, CBJ Parks and Recreation Department, Alaska Fish and Game Department, etc.) to discuss issues regarding resource vitality. The JTP will encourage (help find funding when necessary) management-driven monitoring projects and then help distribute reports concerning resource health.

When resource health issues are detected, the Juneau Tourism Partnership will convene a discussion between the key resource agency and the commercial operators/enterprises involved. The JTP will act to support reasonable solutions and work to leverage businesses compliance with agency management decisions.

The Juneau Tourism Partnership will seek ways that Juneau's tourism industry can contribute to improved resource health and management. It will work with resource management agencies to identify projects that can be supported with industry funding and/or energy that will enable better resource access, improved resource health, or lower management costs. The JTP will sponsor beach and river clean-up events and leverage industry participation in those events.

The Juneau Tourism Partnership will, in the fall community tourism forum, dedicate sessions to resource health issues. It will report on monitoring results and elicit community input. It will showcase cooperative activities by the industry on behalf of resources. It will, in those sessions, seek to find ways to improve resource vitality through changes in industry practices. The JTP will, after the fall forum, work with industry to identify changes in the Best Management Practices program for the benefit of resource vitality. It will also make recommendations to resource management agencies for procedural or program changes that leverage increased resource health. Finally, the JTP may, if needed, suggest changes to the Assembly regarding permit regulations and resource health.