

Comments for the CBJ Visitor Industry Task Force

Tourism is important economic sector essential to the financial health of the Capital City.

Mayor Weldon has taken an important initiative and requested increased citizen input in all aspects of tourism and its impacts.

Tourism growth has been a fact of life and reality for every decade of the history of Juneau. Prior to the discovery of gold, Juneau was the location of several Native villages both year-round and summer camps. With the discovery of gold, Juneau became a mining town with government (local, state and federal offices) overlay. The most significant diversification sector since mining began has been tourism. More recently, and as a result of Alaska Native Land claims settlement the economy has had the important contribution of Native Corporation and their increased involvement in the tourist economy. Sealaska Heritage and Tlingit and Haida both have made important initiative in this sector that the CBJ and community would benefit from seeing developed. A number of community members have also looked for ways of encouraging the arts and cultural awareness. They see Juneau as a mecca for displaying performance art. Mayor Weldon's task force will identify all these important linkages which should benefit both the community and the industry by opening channels of communications and opportunities to better plan for impacts of tourism on individuals and neighborhoods.

Current situation:

Juneau has been under considerable pressure over last 10 years and has positioned itself to fight efforts to move the capital. A newly renovated Capitol and the State Library, Archives, and Museum are designed to provide access to Alaskans and visitors and both groups benefit from these significant investments by the State of Alaska. Additionally a new Egan Drive in the area of the large ship docks is in the second year of a two year renovation and improvement to local infrastructure and access.

Hotel and performing art space is needed.

Congestion and traffic. Many claim that Juneau not having a "big city" feel is the most important lifestyle attraction to living in Juneau. Many in Juneau are focused on lack of parking and dense traffic as high concerns. However objective measures and cost benefit analysis show that these factors when compared to standards throughout the US, are quite reasonable within the "road system of the CBJ." Within the region of the state, statistics change dramatically and low-cost access is not available for public access to our community.

The relative isolation of Juneau to the region, state and continental US is mitigated in part by the tourism sector and in particular by the larger efficient tour ships which call on the Port of Juneau. The world at large has this important window into our community and can literally learn about important global issues such as impacts of climate changes by visiting our glacier's and icefield with knowledgeable guides.

Economic opportunities in teaching lifelong learners who visit Juneau. Native Culture and Climate Change teaching opportunities abound in Juneau, but Juneau's and the state and federal support of fisheries through DIPAC and Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute/NOAA Fisheries have much to contribute to tourism sectors as do the marine life opportunities that already exist in our community through Goldbelt tours and others.

Tourism brings income, both from employment, sales and taxes, which creates an economy which allows many in Juneau to continue the lifestyle that most of us currently enjoy. It provides many jobs in sectors ranging from hospitality and food services to construction services, beer and alcohol sales, and the practice of medicine and dentistry and support for our hospital.

CBJ

Planning and Zoning functions should be more collaborative with residents and neighborhoods.

Reasons for outmigration should be addressed and the city should research ways to and plan for having an increased population.

CBJ Infrastructure departments, Parks and Recreation, and Bartlett Regional Hospital should have performance evaluations by industry representatives.

CBJ should continue to address Homeless or Free Camping issues which negatively impact visitor and quality of life for all residents.

CBJ should continue to fight any efforts to move the Capital.

Juneau's status in International Tourism is highly regarded and should be encouraged

Neighborhood Association Input

There should be a collaborative process that should take place to develop any comments submitted by Neighborhood Associations, including the Thane Neighborhood Association. Individuals have the access and right to provide their personal comments to the CBJ Visitor Industry Task Force. The authority that comes with the establishment of Neighborhood Associations should not be abused by allowing the opinions of individual members to appear in any way to represent TNA.

Thane specific issues should include supporting T&H in its efforts to develop a cultural center adjacent to Sheep Creek.

Better access to Thane for tourism should include support of a trail connection for bikers and pedestrians parallel to Thane road as well as better canoe and kayak launch facilities between Thane and the Cruise Ship Docks. CBJ should be supporting and planning for a new harbor and yacht dock near the city owned waste water facility. The waste water facility itself is a health and safety concern for Downtown and the Thane Neighborhood. The level of contaminants

prevents food gathering. The facility should be upgraded to better treat municipal waste. We should not be overly critical of “Cruise Ship Waste” until we have “state of the art” facilities for our municipal waste.

Growth since the 90’s has transformed downtown but needs to extend to Thane. The bottom line is that things are greatly improved with infrastructure and amenities (sidewalks, restaurants, beautification, sea walk, parks) that would otherwise leave us with decaying buildings and a few bars. Thane has also benefited with road improvements and a significant number of residents who benefit or work in tourism.

The congestion though downtown is a nuisance and annoying for many of us who are spoiled by Juneau’s non-tourism season lifestyle. However, the opportunities the tourism industry presents for those who reside here 12 months a year make it worthwhile. Better planning and use of infrastructure are needed and Mayor Weldon should be thanked for putting the Task Force together to help present solutions.

The Thane community should openly embrace tourism and sustainable, well managed growth so that Thane can better enjoy the benefits and the enhancements the revenue and improvements bring to the Thane and larger Juneau community.

Best regards,

Peter Naoroz and Jan Trigg
4660 Thane Rd.
Juneau, AK 99801