

From: [john.joyce](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Borough Assembly](#)
Subject: Tourism Task Force comments
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Attachments: [Juneau Tourism Task Force.docx](#)

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Juneau Tourism Task Force,

Juneau Borough Assembly

Feb 27, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on the issues facing Juneau regarding the growth of the tourism industry. I have been a resident of Juneau since 1982. During my residence I have been a student at the University of Alaska, and an employee of NOAA at the Auke Bay Labs. I have seen the tourism industry grow significantly over this time and I have seen both the positive and negative aspects of this growth.

I would say up until the early 2000s, I would have described myself as a supporter of most of the tourism that had developed in Juneau. I realized the positives of job growth, economic stability, infrastructure improvements. The things I have seen many of my friends and neighbors acknowledge in their comments.

Unfortunately, I believe, particularly in the last five years, tourism growth and expansion have begun to significantly affect the quality of life in Juneau. As I resident of Auke Bay, I have seen huge increases in the number of helicopter and plane flights directly over our neighborhood, to the point of being disruptive while to trying to enjoy being outside during almost any daylight hours. I would ask that measures be taken to either limit traffic, spread out traffic, or require minimum altitude levels, particularly for helicopter traffic. I understand that jet and floatplane traffic is an integral part of supporting Southeast Alaska, I am specifically addressing the obvious increases that follow visitor and tourism-based trips. I would reference Karla Harts letter to you on Feb 1 as way to specifically address air traffic issues.

Our ability as residents to utilize the glacier and many parts of the local trail systems has been diminished. Again, it's a matter of balance. I have no problem sharing the trails and visitor center area with visitors, but the numbers are overwhelming and the experience is not pleasant, so I tend to avoid those areas, except on low visit days.

Another impact has been the amount of boat traffic and resulting boat wake in Auke Bay, South Shelter, and areas adjacent to them due to the increases in visitor related boating activity, primarily whale watching and fishing charters. It is almost impossible to find a place on those waters or on shores adjacent to them the enjoy safely small boat or beach activity. Again, I supported the development of the whale watching and charter fishing business, but the growth has gotten out of control and the impacts to quality of life and local fish and wildlife should be considered. Marine mammal scientists are finding that the increased activity is having a negative impact on whale populations. We have remarkable resources, but are not balancing the consideration of those resources with the unbridled increase in boat

traffic. It would a huge mistake to bring more boats and any cruise ships, even small ones, into the Auke Bay Area.

While I haven't lived downtown in a number of years, I am empathetic to the concerns of my friends and neighbors regarding dock space saturation, physical crowding, seasonal business shutdowns and traffic and pedestrian issues. I honestly tend to avoid downtown on boat days.

I strongly request that the Task Force begin to seriously and effectively addressing how tourism is affecting quality of life for Juneau residents and the quality of experience for visitors. I don't believe that limiting numbers of visitors, ship days or regulating aircraft or boat traffic is going to in any way cripple the industry, but I do believe the impacts to our quality of life as residents and the experiences our visitors have, is already being diminished.

Thank you,

John Joyce