
VITF - Public Comment RE: Flightseeing Noise (Bob Deering)

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Deering

Sent: Friday, March 13, 2026 6:45 AM

To: City Clerk <City.Clerk@juneau.gov>

Subject: Flightseeing Noise

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Hello! I was unable to attend yesterday's flightseeing meeting by zoom. Do you have a recording available?

I don't know if it's too late to submit comments, but here are my comments for the record:

1. I have lived on Meadow Lane for over 25 years. It's in the vicinity of the airport but not in its flightpath. My neighborhood is impacted by noise from the airport. Fixed-wing traffic can be heard, and large aircraft like Alaska Airline's can be quite loud, making speaking while outdoors difficult. This noise is transient and recedes quickly, and it's fairly infrequent, so the impacts are quite limited. Helicopter noise is another matter. Depending on the flow direction of the airport traffic, flightseeing helicopters overhead can be nearly continuous at times, and the impacts continue for 8-10 hours per day. Speaking is difficult without shouting. This is a significant impact on our ability to enjoy our properties outdoors. I didn't move to the airport...the airport moved to me.

2. When Alaska Airlines takes off, we recognize that it is providing an essential service to our community, and a little noise is the price of that service. Helicopter flightseeing for tourists provides no benefit to residents of Juneau (not even sales tax revenue), but we get to experience all of the negative externalities.

3. The transition to enclosed tail rotor helicopters is somewhat of an improvement and is appreciated. The low-frequency noise has been reduced which means that we don't hear the helicopters approaching from as long of a distance and the noise doesn't penetrate buildings as much. The tradeoff is that the higher-frequency noise is worse. Running multiple helicopters in a group still causes a lot of low-frequency noise.

4. A potential solution proposed by a senior helicopter pilot a few years ago should be explored further. His recommendation was to establish a seasonal satellite base up near the end of Montana Creek Road, past the firing range. There is a level bench of land on State property suitable for a landing zone. It's much closer to the glacier. The flightpath wouldn't be close to any houses. Flight congestion within the constrained airspace of the airport would be greatly reduced. There would be some bus traffic on the road, but the size and frequency of the buses would be moderate and have limited impacts on residents. Helicopters would fly out of the satellite base during the day, then return to the permanent airport bases for the night.

What improvements would be needed to implement this? Obviously a section of the road would need to be improved and maintained. The area would need to be cleared and leveled. Temporary lighting and other air field infrastructure. Fuel containment around landing pads and perhaps fuel truck parking areas. Seasonal passenger waiting areas and toilet facilities.

Has this option been evaluated in the past? If so, what was the determination? Is there a report we can view? What role could CBJ play to facilitate/encourage this? The State? The flightseeing industry?

Thank you,

Bob Deering