

Comments to the Visitor Industry Task Force on Downtown Congestion
September 2, 2026

Dear VITF:

I live on Thane Road, and drive through downtown several times a day most days of the year. The challenges of managing the needs of cruise ship pedestrians and traffic through this area is the biggest direct impact on me from the cruise industry. I appreciated the continuing discussion of Downtown Congestion at your last meeting, and the recommendations you've included thus far in your process. I support many of the things you've already included in your recommendations. I am writing to highlight a few things that are most important to me right now.

Crossing Guards: As you have already noted, the crossing guard program is essential to the safety and smooth flow of pedestrian and vehicle traffic through downtown. The program has improved so much under the contract with the Juneau Economic Development Council. I think the presence of two crossing guards on each side of many of the crosswalks has made a huge difference, as have other program improvements. I mention this because I know that sustained support from the public for programs that are working well is necessary for them to continue to receive the funding and support they need.

New crosswalk at Heritage Way/Marine Park: To me, this is one of the most dangerous areas to jaywalk in downtown, because there is so much already going on in this area, and the sightlines for drivers can get blocked. However, at this time, I don't support another crosswalk here. I think it is reasonable to expect pedestrians to make the short walk to an existing crosswalk. I am concerned that another crosswalk here, along with the left turning traffic off Heritage Way, would cause serious traffic gridlock both ways, and reduce the efficiency of the light at Egan and Main St. I am interested in the suggestion that there may be some way to work with the new owners of City Hall to improve sidewalk width in that area, and possibly add stanchions there and at key areas along the sidewalk at this intersection. If another crosswalk is added here, I think you'd also have to consider closing Heritage Way to left turns.

Crosswalk at Four Points Hotel to Seadrome area: I don't know the criteria or pros and cons of adding the flashing light button for pedestrians at that crosswalk versus putting crossing guards there, but I agree it's something that should be discussed with DOT and analyzed further. The flashing lights at the crosswalk near Foodland and the path to the Whale are very helpful, but that is an area with a higher speed limit and not a huge number of pedestrians crossing there. My concern with the flashing light button at the Four Points Hotel is that it would give pedestrians control over that crosswalk, and that might not be the best way to manage the flow of traffic through downtown (versus crossing guards, for example), especially if pedestrian crossings increase there in the future.

Whittier/Egan Intersection: I understand the potential for the Aak'w Landing dock to disperse pedestrians over a larger area, but the big downside of this dock for me is further stretching out the area of high pedestrian and vehicle interaction. It is sometimes difficult now to make a left turn off Whittier onto Egan. It can take so long for pedestrians to get across Egan that sometimes only one car can make that left turn. I strongly support CBJ engaging with DOT soon about this intersection, and I'd like to understand more about where DOT fits into the planning and permitting for this project, and how and when DOT would receive funding necessary to make the changes that will be needed at this intersection.

Left turn out of Red Dog Parking Lot: In the off season, I sometimes make a left turn onto Marine Way out of the Red Dog Parking Lot to get to the Downtown Library from Thane. I agree that this left turn should be prohibited during the cruise ship season. However, I am not sure from the wording of your recommendation if this turn is already prohibited and you'd recommend signage to remind drivers of this, or if you are recommending that this turn be prohibited and signage to that effect be put up. If it is not prohibited already, could this turn be allowed during the off season?

Thank you for your consideration of my comments, and for all the work you and CBJ staff are doing on and for the VITF.

Sincerely,

Sally Bibb

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Juneau, AK 99801