November 5, 2026

Comments regarding the Visitor's Industry Task Force Recommendations of October 16, 2026

I have reviewed the Mayor's charge in establishing the most recent tourism task force and the draft recommendations. I am disappointed. It is one more example of an exercise where the point of it is to do nothing but preserve the status quo. It is an exercise in palliative care. Google AI states that word "palliative": ***means serving to relieve, soothe, or reduce the severity of a disease, pain, or condition without curing its underlying cause.*** Assuming that every single one of the recommendations are implemented there is nothing there that will change any way by which tourism impacts this community.

It is actually worse than palliative care. It is a charade; something to mollify the masses. "Let's pretend that we don't have any problems with tourism!"

The recommendations are something not to be taken seriously. Just look at the language used in the recommendations. The language is so vague or ambiguous as to be meaningless: "Increase CBJ tourism communications capacity and resources to better inform the public on tourism issues." What does that mean? Here is another example regarding whale watching: "Refine enforcement mechanisms and emphasize TBMP/WhaleSENSE guidelines with NOAA, Docks & Harbors, state authorities and CBJ Law . . ." Can anyone tell me what that means? Does it mean to make them tougher? More enforceable? Maybe. Maybe not.

The recommendations are a four-page spreadsheet. Two of the four pages are devoted to "Data Gathering." Yes, let's gather more data.

There was one item in the mayor's charging document which offered some potential, viz. ". . . develop a broad 10-year tourism direction for Juneau." And the response of the task force to this charge was . . . . Nothing. Absolutely nothing other than this statement at the very end of the document: "Tourism Plan - Use VITF report as a basis for a CBJ Tourism Plan with additional public process, vision, and overarching strategic guidance." The charge was to come up with something in the nature of a plan and the response was "we need a plan."

In short, this is an anodyne document which completely avoids the real issue, viz. that every year there are more and more cruise ships and cruise ship passengers which adversely affect our quality of life and nothing is ever done about it.

I predict that in another few years there will be yet another task force with a similar charge and the same vacuous result.

Yours truly,

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Cc: Various members of the Juneau Community