Draft Juneau VITF Report Recs: Comments by Sally Saddler 05/11/2026

Thank you to the mayor and task force for their considerable effort and dedication analyzing the impact Juneau's visitor industry has upon the business community and residents of Juneau, and for providing a preliminary list of recommendations.

It is difficult to align the draft recommendations with the mayor's charges. A quick look reveals some of the charges do not appear to be addressed in the draft recommendations:

- guidance on a revolving loan program
- a broad strategic direction,
- visitor industry revenue opportunities

The draft recommendations appear to heavily address data collection and how to manage continual growth, particularly in downtown congestion, whale watching and helicopter flightseeing (which are nicely addressed). However, it would be useful to link these recommendations to strategic policy objectives that go beyond these few topics into topics such as sustainable practices, covering the cost of city waste, police/fire protection, and emergency services to visitors, as well as other areas of visitor impacts.

Some of the areas that should be strengthened are:

- Statement of **Goals to achieve Juneau's long-term vision for balancing the impacts of the visitor industry on the residents and resources** of the city and borough of Juneau (if we are not clear where we want to be, how are we sure we are taking the correct steps)
- **Align recommendations to current/long-term policy directives**: such as the Juneau Renewable Energy Plan (JRES), capital development projects for the port, docks & harbors and recreational infrastructure, and others
- **Recommendations to the city on policy and legal actions that could be taken** to manage tourism growth (either voluntarily, through incentives, or legally) and the resulting pros and cons of each approach
- **A recap of items contained in the March 2020 VITF report** (this comprehensive analysis of goals and needs is appropriately detailed and goes well beyond the draft recommendations) that have been accomplished, are no longer relevant, or remain to be accomplished

Hopefully the refined recommendations will be a blueprint for the CBJ to take steps to mitigate, finance and if necessary, limit visitor impacts. The result can make Juneau a community that balances the quality of life for residents with the need for local economic activity and jobs, that can be shared with a reasonable number of visitors and infrastructure capacity to make Juneau a pleasant place for all!