

**From:** [Robert Deering](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Tourism Task Force Comment  
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I would like to offer the following four comments regarding negative impacts from tourism in Juneau:

1. Helicopter noise. I live along the Mendenhall River, downstream from the Brotherhood Bridge about a quarter mile. During the majority of the tourist season, depending on airport flow direction, our neighborhood is subjected to nearly continuous helicopter noise for 10 to 12 hours per day. Given the number of flights heading to the snow field, and short time intervals between them, the noise is nearly constant. Talking to my nextdoor neighbors requires us to shout during daytime hours. The low frequency noise generated by clusters of multiple helicopters penetrates through buildings regardless if the windows are closed. This severely impacts quality of life, property value, and many studies find that frequent helicopter noise negatively affects health.

To put the noise into perspective, a couple years ago during the reconstruction of the Brotherhood Bridge, for most of the summer there was constant pile driving of the large 48" diameter piles. Our houses shook from the noise. The helicopters drowned out the pile driving. That was not considered to be a benefit from the helicopters.

The new residential development going in on Pedersen Hill will be directly under the flight path. These complaints will only get worse.

The helicopter companies, particularly Northstar and Coastal, have made good-faith efforts to minimize neighborhood impacts. But the physical constraints imposed by their location at the airport leaves them with few options. The only feasible solution is to create a remote heliport for summertime flights to the snow field. I know that previous studies failed to identify a location. One location that was not explored was up the Montana Creek trail to a plateau of flat land. I think that merits revisiting.

CBJ owns the airport. They have leverage to enforce change.

2. Auke Bay. I have been involved in the Juneau boating community for 25 years. Auke Bay used to be the jewel of the city's small boat harbors. The has completely changed over the past ten years with the explosion of whale watching tours. Every single recreational boater, and many commercial fishing boaters, hate going into or around Auke Bay. Berthing was always a challenge there, but now it's pretty much intolerable. The noise from the whale watch boats, some of them entirely unmuffled, is terrible. And the waters around the harbor are chaotic with multiple large, high speed boats running in random and unpredictable directions. If you're going to be passing anywhere near Auke Bay, make sure everything is lashed down tight, because the large wakes coming from all directions will create uncomfortable and dangerous conditions.

CBJ owns the harbor. They have leverage to enforce change.

3. Gastineau Channel wakes. I own a 51 ft boat berthed in Douglas Harbor. Frequently while running Gastineau Channel I encounter very large wakes from now-enormous cruise ships transiting the channel. It's very uncomfortable crashing into these large wakes, and because they're unexpected, they can be dangerous. I'm sure this is an even more dangerous situation to smaller craft, as well as waterfront property owners.

There's simply no excuse for that kind of heedless behavior by the cruise ships. If it takes them an additional 10 minutes to travel the length of the channel at a slower speed, so be it.

4. Greenhouse gases. The per capita emissions from cruise visitors is quite large, especially if they choose to fly to the glacier or take a whale watching cruise. The impacts of climate change are finally gaining wide public

recognition. A carbon offset fund has been developed in Juneau. The City should seek ways to compel or strongly encourage the visitor industry to contribute to that fund in order to finance clean energy projects in Juneau.

There's no denying the positive economic impact the cruise industry brings to our town. But we need to decide what our town's priorities are - revenue or quality of life. Unfortunately our city appears to have prioritized the former at the expense of the latter.

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