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Dear Visitor Industry Task Force Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on our visitor industry in Juneau.

I know many of us believe we should be encouraging solid job opportunities and the businesses that provide them; the mining and the visitor industries have consistently brought Juneau residents great opportunities and a variety of job prospects. Let's remember, if not for the mining and visitor industries, our city would be facing tough financial times considering the real loss of State and Federal jobs we have experienced over the last 10 years.

In this letter, I specifically want to focus on our year around visitor industry.

Juneau needs to be "future ready;" and we are not. It is the duty of any business, and our City, to plan for its future. Juneau needs to take the time now to develop a 25-year blueprint to plan for tourism; both summer and winter. At the same time, we need to plan on keeping the high quality of life that makes Juneau such a wonderful place in which to work, live and raise our families.

Here are some suggestions for that long-term plan; a few can be implemented in the short term; others have longer timelines in order to be implemented.

- **Complete the sea walk from the AJ Dock to Overstreet Park.** Put together a scheduled plan, in conjunction with Docks and Harbors as well as the Community Development Department, to extend the sea walk from 10th Street to Norway Point. Next, plan and schedule for a pedestrian/bike path from Norway Point to Airport on the channel side of Egan Drive. This last project may take many years; however, planning needs to occur now in order to be implemented without conflicts later.
- **Recognize that a new NCL dock at Gold Creek will decrease the congestion on Franklin Street and provide the opportunity to disperse traffic to the other side of town.** I found a document addressed to the CBJ Assembly from Bud Simpson, Chair of the Docks and Harbors Board concerning the Gold Creek project dated February 26, 2007 that mentioned this project. Even though the letter recommended the downtown dock project (16B) it implored the Assembly to still pursue the Gold Creek options. Here is a quote from the letter:
 - "with regards to Gold Creek, we believe the community will derive significant benefit from this alternative, but it is likely this alternative will take a longer time to materialize. Several major issues must be resolved for this alternative to move forward. The Mental Health Trust, the owners of the Standard Fuel Dock, the owners of Merchants Wharf, and the Community Development Department need to be brought onboard to address these issues. We recommend the

Assembly to authorize us to continue work on developing this alternative. It would also be of great benefit if the Assembly expressed support for this development. With this support, we expect significant progress could be made.”

- **Developing the land from the NCL property to Gold Creek with an emphasis on a moorage space for small exploration cruise ships, private yachts, and visiting smaller motor vessels.** The “exploration cruise” business is a small but growing segment of the cruise market and a valuable one. These ships normally start and stop in Juneau meaning that guests spend more time in our city. These smaller ships passengers add revenue to our city through hotels nights, restaurants meals, shop sales, tours taken, and they pay city taxes on all of these items. Plus, we have many local businesses that help resupply these small ships and they pay taxes as well!
- **Harbor water taxis need to be explored as another alternative to disperse visitors.** Plan now to encourage development of a private business or businesses to develop a water taxi system. For example, a taxi might pick-up/drop-off people at Marine Park, AJ Dock, Franklin Dock or perhaps at the NCL lot where they could board transportation for different tours. This will lessen the crowds along the main downtown streets.
- **Plan for and schedule what has been known as the second crossing; as well as plan for and schedule a “North Douglas” port development.** Juneau needs to plan strategically rather than continue to place band aides on vital infrastructure issues in our community. Plus, a second crossing will help alleviate the high traffic situations on Douglas Highway. A second crossing will also help Eaglecrest with their future winter and summer development plans; shortening access time from the Valley to the ski area for example. We also need to seriously plan a location for the barge companies, fuel docks, USCG and NOAA to move to – a North Douglas commercial port. It is obvious this move will decrease the congestion downtown and separate different types of commercial operations. And, improve the safety of those walking around downtown Juneau during busy times; when cruise ships are in town, during Gallery Walk, during Folk Festival, during Session, etc.

Thank you for the opportunity to allow me to suggest that Juneau take the time now to develop a 25-year blueprint to plan for a year around tourism industry. All of us want to keep and encourage good jobs and good businesses in Juneau. Putting together this type of plan will ensue Juneau is “future ready.”

We all want to afford to live here, while at the same time wanting to keep the high quality of life that makes Juneau such a wonderful city in which to live and raise our families.

With your help and planning we will indeed be “future ready!”

Yours Sincerely,
John P. McConnochie
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