VISITOR INDUSTRY TASK FORCE 2.0
ORIENTATION MEETING

December 17, 2025 at 12:00 PM

Zoom Only

https://juneau.zoom.us/j/83826098583 or call 1 (669) 444-9171 Webinar ID: 838 2609 8583

A. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

B. INTRODUCTION

1. **New Members**
2. **Task Force Definition**
3. **Mandate**

C. HISTORY OF VITF

1. **VITF 1.0: 2019-2020**
2. **Focus Areas**
3. **Final Report & Implementation**

D. PROCESS

1. **Timeline**
2. **Meeting Activities**

E. GOALS

1. **Policies vs. Recommendations**
2. **Assembly Involvement**

F. REGIONAL DIALOGUES

1. **Port Communities of Alaska (PCOA)**
2. **VITF/PCOA Integration**

G. EXPECTATIONS

1. **Meeting Preparation**
2. **Workloads**
3. **Public Testimony**

4. Meeting Schedule

H. QUESTIONS & FURTHER READING

1. Open Meetings Act Review

I. ADJOURNMENT

ADA accommodations available upon request: Please contact the Clerk's Office 36 hours prior to any meeting so arrangements can be made for closed captioning or sign language interpreter services depending on the meeting format. The Clerk's Office telephone number is (907) 586-5278, e-mail: city.clerk@juneau.gov.

Office of the Mayor
155 Heritage Way
Juneau, Alaska 99801
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Visitor Industry Task Force 2.0 - Mayor's Charge:

There is created within the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) a ten-member Visitor Industry Task Force (VITF). The committee is composed of two Assemblymembers and seven members representing the various facets of the community. The proposed members of the public are Kirby Day, Kirsa Hughes-Skandijs, Sarah Lowell, Matt Catterson, Meilani Schijvens, Adrienne (Ren) Scott, Shem Sooter (Docks & Harbors Liaison) and Jeremy Timothy. Ella Adkison shall serve as chair and Neil Steininger shall serve as Assembly liaison. The committee shall elect a vice chair from among its members at its first meeting.

Purpose

The purpose of the committee shall be to provide helpful advice to the Assembly and to advance community thinking on a range of visitor industry topics, including:

1. Revisit and update 2020 VITF recommendations and provide direction on ongoing policies and processes.
    a. Refine recommendations that have not yet been accomplished. Some of the recommendations are very broad. The Task Force will review these recommendations and delete or refine those that are no longer feasible. New recommendations should be clear and achievable.
    b. Some recommendations have become ongoing processes. Formally identify and define these activities.
2. Identify opportunities for managing impacts including infrastructure projects and policy directions.
    a. Crowding and congestion downtown and in Auke Bay.
        i. Identify barriers and pinch points causing congestion.
        ii. Develop recommendations for moving visitors throughout downtown.
        iii. Develop recommendations for traffic management and ship scheduling to help ease congestion.
    b. Flightseeing
        i. Panel discussion on past efforts and regulatory environment.
        ii. Review existing documentation and past efforts and understand the legal and jurisdictional landscape around flightseeing.
        iii. Make recommendations on operational or infrastructure improvements to help mitigate noise issues.
    c. Whale watching
        i. Review information on the legal and jurisdictional landscape around whale watching and what CBJ can and can't do to regulate whale watching.
        ii. Review options and recommend a permitting or other regulatory program for whale watching in Juneau.
3. Develop a structure for revolving loan program to encourage investment in projects including clean energy, emission reduction, and other impact mitigation capital investments.

a. Review program structure and administration.
b. Set loan program parameters.

4. Within a larger regional strategy discussion, develop a broad 10-year tourism direction for Juneau.
    a. Review existing data including surveys and other sources. Discuss role of tourism in shaping local and regional economy.
    b. Consider long-term criteria for Juneau including the specific conditions for Juneau to consider growth.
5. Identify visitor industry revenue opportunities
    a. Review and compare CBJ's current fees and charges against benchmarks from other communities identified in the global fees study conducted by Port Communities of Alaska.
    b. Make recommendations for potential fee changes based on findings.

Timeline

The members shall serve until completion of their tasks which are proposed to be completed and reported to the Assembly by June 15, 2026. The committee shall expire within six months of this date unless extended. The committee shall report to the Assembly Committee of the Whole as scheduled by the Deputy Mayor.

Meetings, Officers, Records, Quorum, Staff Support

The committee shall determine its meeting schedule according to its workload and at the call of the chair. All meetings shall be open to the public and advertised through the Municipal Clerk's office. A majority of the committee members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business. The committee shall follow the procedures used by the Assembly for transaction of its business, as interpreted by the City Attorney as necessary. The committee shall keep a record of its meetings, transactions, findings, determinations and written public comments received, which shall be filed with the Municipal Clerk and be open to public inspection at reasonable times. The City Manager and City Attorney will provide staff support and assistance to the task force as appropriate.

Dated: November 26, 2025

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Beth A. Weldon, Mayor City and Borough of Juneau

VITF 2.0 Schedule
Timeline: 2 meetings monthly for 6 months

Meeting 1 (Orientation)

- Intro and why we're here. Discuss what has happened since the last task force and regional dynamics.
- Discuss intervals of public comment.

Meeting 2

- Revisit recommendations from previous task force. Individually review and discuss, edit, and/or remove.

Meeting 3

- Survey Results

Meeting 4

- Intro to Topic 2
- Discussion on downtown crowding

Meeting 5

- Flightseeing
- Expert panel to discuss impacts of flightseeing (CBJ/Airport, USFS, Operators, TBMP)

Meeting 6-7

- Whale watch
- Expert panel to discuss whale watch (Docks & Harbors, Coast Guard, NOAA, UAS)

Meeting 8

- Revolving loan

Meeting 9-10

- Discussion on tourism goals

Meeting 11

- Fee Discussion

Meeting 12*

- Review draft recommendations

**Following meeting 12, staff will refine and complete report and reconvene the VITF for review and to recommend adoption by the Assembly.*

ALASKA OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Introduction

The Alaska Open Meetings Act (OMA) AS 44.62.310-12 is a state statute which requires that all meetings of state and local government bodies be open to the public.

The OMA is not unique to Alaska. Most states as well as the federal government have an open meetings law. In addition, the CBJ Charter, §3.12, requires that Assembly meetings be open to the public. Charter §3.16 extends this requirement to other municipal bodies. Alaska's policy regarding open meetings is strongly stated in the OMA. The Alaska Supreme Court and the superior court judges in Juneau have strictly followed the statutory policy and have repeatedly affirmed the policy that governmental action should be taken openly, and deliberations conducted in public.

What is a Public Body?

AS 44.62.310(a) contains an exhaustive list of the types of bodies subject to the OMA. The law clearly covers the Assembly, the Planning Commission, the School Board, the Hospital, Harbor and Eaglecrest Boards, and all subcommittees and citizen advisory committees associated with these bodies. The OMA also applies to temporary and ad hoc committees of a public body. It is not limited to elected bodies and has been applied to such groups as university tenure committees, interagency task forces, and similar bodies.

What is a Meeting?

The Alaska Supreme Court has broadly interpreted the term "meeting", and has held that investigation, fact gathering, discussion, and deliberation, whether formal or informal, by a public body is covered by the OMA. The OMA does not, however, regulate the social activities of public officials.

What constitutes a meeting for purposes of the OMA is addressed by the OMA, which provides two standards: one for bodies that have the authority to make establish policies or make decisions, and another for bodies that may advise or make recommendations. **For policy-making bodies, the law says that a "meeting" occurs when more than three members or a majority of the members, whichever is less, are present and they collectively consider a matter upon which their body is empowered to act. For advisory bodies, a "meeting" occurs when more than three members or a majority of the members, whichever is less, gather at a prearranged meeting for the purpose of considering a matter upon which the governmental body is empowered to act.** Notice that the OMA does not apply to impromptu or chance encounters of members of an advisory body.

Public Notice of Meetings

The OMA provides in AS 44.62.310(e) that reasonable public notice must be given for all meetings. The notice must include the date, time and place of the meeting, and if the meeting is by teleconference, the location of any teleconferencing facilities that will be used. The notice must be posted at City Hall, and may also be given by print and broadcast media. Each body should give notice in a consistent fashion for all its meetings. There is no requirement to publish an agenda. The CBJ Charter requires that at least 24 hours' notice of special meetings be given. Written notice of a special meeting must be delivered to the newspaper and radio and television stations, and no business may be transacted at a special meeting unless the item is on the agenda.

Public Participation

State law, AS 29.20.020, and the CBJ Charter require that "the public shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard". This requirement does not mean that the public has a right to dominate or disrupt a meeting, and the chair may impose reasonable rules on the manner and extent of public participation.

What Happens if the OMA is Violated

A court may void any action taken by a public body in violation of the OMA. It is also possible for the body to undertake "substantial reconsideration" of an issue discussed or decided upon at a meeting held in violation of the OMA. The courts would decide whether the validation meeting sufficiently functioned as a true reconsideration of the matter, and whether the public interest would be served by voiding the action. Members of the body may not be sued in their individual capacity for violations of the OMA.

When In Doubt, Ask for Legal Advice

It is recommended that if you have any questions regarding the propriety of a meeting, whether your body is subject to the OMA, whether or not it is proper to go into executive session on a matter, or if you simply have a question regarding the OMA, that you call the city and borough law department at 586-5242. We are pleased to provide you with assistance on these issues, and we do so routinely for all of the CBJ bodies, boards and committees.