



VISITOR INDUSTRY TASK FORCE 2.0 (VITF) AGENDA

September 3, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Zoom Webinar (Virtual Only)

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

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. *Gunalchéesh!*

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **August 20, 2026 VITF 2.0 Minutes - Draft**

E. AGENDA TOPICS

1. **Revisiting Flightseeing**

F. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

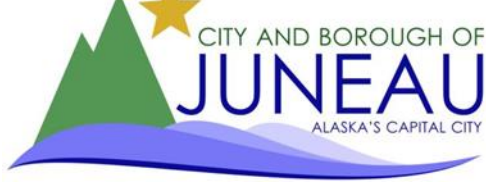
G. NEXT MEETING DATE Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026 @ 5:30pm Assembly Chambers/Zoom

H. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

1. **August 25, 2026 VITF Helicopter Flightseeing Potential Recommendations Memo**
2. **August 25, 2026 VITF Downtown Congestion Recommendations Memo**
3. **March 19, 2026 VITF Memo - Flightseeing**

I. ADJOURNMENT

ADA accommodations available upon request: contact the Clerk's Office (907)586-5278 or city.clerk@juneau.gov at least 36 hours prior to a meeting, to request ADA arrangements.



VITF 2.0 – MEETING **DRAFT MINUTES**

August 20, 2026 at 5:30 PM
Assembly Chambers & Zoom

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A. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Kirby Day called the August 20, 2026 VITF meeting to order in the Assembly Chambers and via Zoom at 5:31pm.

B. ROLL CALL

Task Force Members Present: Ella Adkison (via Zoom); Neil Steininger; Meilani Schijvens; Shem Sooter; Sarah Lowell (via Zoom); Kirsia Hughes-Skandijs; Jeremy Timothy; Matt Catterson; Kirby Day

Task Force Members Absent: Ren Scott

Staff/Others Present: Alexandra Pierce, Visitor Industry Director; Breckan Hendricks, Municipal Clerk

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Agenda approved as presented.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes approved as presented.

- a. 2026-07-30 VITF Minutes - Draft

E. AGENDA TOPICS

- a. Revisiting Downtown Congestion

- i. General discussion on topics previously explored by the Task Force on Downtown Congestion. The Task Force agreed upon the following draft recommendations regarding Downtown Congestion to be further refined before inclusion in the finalized report:

- (1) **Data Collection**

- (a) **Initiate a study to develop and produce standardized quantifiable metrics of downtown congestion.**

- (i) Scope should assess the type (pedestrian, vehicle, other), magnitude, location, and time components of downtown congestion, with duration and recurrence to be determined.
 - (ii) Consider extending the study to collect standardized congestion measures year-round and at other locations in CBJ to more fully characterize the variability of congestion in Juneau.

VITF 2.0 – MEETING **DRAFT MINUTES**

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- (iii) Pursue this in partnership with Alaska DOT, re-engaging them specifically on data collection.
 - (iv) The resulting data would support multiple practical applications:
 - 1. Establishing a baseline measure of congestion under current conditions to evaluate infrastructure development (Seawalk, Huna Totem Dock, etc.) and inform future development.
 - 2. Documenting congestion issues to support a fact-based case for any proposed ordinance limiting cruise ship port calls.
 - 3. Informing future city/tourism planning, including specific congestion targets and associated actions in a long-term tourism plan.
 - 4. Supporting community and visitor industry scheduling and event planning.
 - 5. Providing empirical information to inform the public about downtown congestion issues.

(2) Infrastructure Improvements

(a) Road Improvements

- (i) Restructure the roundabout outside the Red Dog Saloon to ease traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety design in that area.
- (ii) Re-engage Alaska DOT on signal light sequencing at the Whittier/Egan intersection to better manage tour vehicle flow in and out of the dock during peak morning and afternoon commute times.
- (iii) Re-engage Alaska DOT on lengthening the planned right and left turn lanes into Aak'w Landing.
- (iv) Re-engage Alaska DOT on improving the South Franklin right-of-way during the construction project.

VITF 2.0 – MEETING **DRAFT MINUTES**

August 20, 2026 at 5:30 PM
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- (v) Improve signage noting one-way streets and downtown traffic rules, particularly for car rental customers.
- (vi) Hold off on implementing a downtown circulator, as it would only increase vehicular congestion.

(b) Seawalk

- (i) Encourage businesses to shift or add customer entry and focus toward the Seawalk rather than the street.
- (ii) Encourage continued Seawalk development from the Wharf through Aak'w Landing, with improved signage.
- (iii) Advance development of Warner's Wharf as an attractive, inviting destination and key thoroughfare connecting the Seawalk and S. Franklin Street.

(c) Stanchions

- (i) Add stanchions in critical areas to manage pedestrian flow.
- (ii) Where full stanchions aren't feasible, install stanchion signage on both sides of the street (waterside and along City Hall/mural) to discourage crossing in that area.
- (iii) Add stanchions on the uphill side of S. Franklin from the People's Wharf crosswalk to the Tram crosswalk.
- (iv) Add stanchions at strategic points on the waterside of S. Franklin near Peratrovich Plaza.

(d) Crosswalks

- (i) Explore signage or crosshatch striping at the "Library/Red Dog roundabout" to discourage/discourage pedestrian crossing there.
- (ii) Evaluate the feasibility of a new crosswalk between Heritage Way and Marine Park; re-engage Alaska DOT on re-establishing this crossing.

VITF 2.0 – MEETING **DRAFT MINUTES**

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- (iii) Add flashing pedestrian crossing lights at the crosswalk between the Seadrome Building and 4 Points Hotel, similar to the crosswalk at Gold Creek Bridge.

(e) **Other**

- (i) Encourage continued construction of benches, covered areas, and awnings throughout downtown to ease human congestion, including in the tram lot area.
- (ii) Maintain conscientious development plans for the Peratrovich Plaza area, retaining communal spaces and public games/activities, and encouraging a small children's play area.
- (iii) Recognize that new development — Finn's Alaska (Archipelago lot) and the Goldbelt Tram (once operational) — will help absorb pedestrian traffic off downtown sidewalks and the Seawalk.
- (iv) Recognize the Huna Totem Dock as a significant catalyst for addressing downtown congestion from both a vehicular and pedestrian standpoint, and factor it into related planning.

(3) **Crossing Guards**

- (a) Maintain and grow the crossing guard program.
- (b) Continue staffing the 5 key downtown crosswalks currently covered by TBMP crossing guards.
- (c) If a new crosswalk is established between Heritage Way and Marine Park, commit to deploying a TBMP crossing guard at that location.

(4) **TBMP (Tourism Best Management Practices)**

- (a) Commit to continued strategic support for TBMP as one of the key building blocks of the congestion plan.
- (b) Add signage prohibiting left turns out of the Red Dog lot onto Marine Way and formally include this restriction in the TBMP program.
- (c) Continue TBMP's role staffing key downtown crossing guard locations (see Crossing Guards section).

VITF 2.0 – MEETING **DRAFT MINUTES**

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(5) **General**

- (a) Commit to keeping the "address congestion" portion of the plan open, allowing it to be modified and expanded as new recommendations surface and new scenarios arise.
- b. Follow up on last meeting and tourism plan draft scope
 - i. Director Pierce noted the inclusion of a tourism plan draft scope in the meeting packet for ongoing Task Force review. No formal action was taken.

F. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

- a. There were no additional comments or questions from Task Force members.

G. NEXT MEETING DATE Thursday, September 3, 2026 @ 5:30pm.

- a. This meeting will be via Zoom only.

H. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- a. 8.11.26 VITF_Revisit Downtown Crowding Memo
- b. Juneau Tourism Plan DRAFT
- c. 2026 VITF Downtown Congestion Comments_K. Day
- d. 2026 VITF Downtown Congestion Recommendation_Catterson
- e. Wing Airways Ground Trans. At Merchants Warf_Holly-Johnson-Wings-Shareholder
- f. 2026 VITF Downtown Congestion Comments_K. Day

I. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Task Force, the meeting adjourned at 6:38pm.



MEMORANDUM
Visitor Industry Task Force
August 25, 2026

TO: Visitor Industry Task Force
FROM: Alexandra Pierce, Visitor Industry Director
DATE: August 25, 2026
RE: Follow-Up on Helicopter Flightseeing Discussion

Purpose

This memo revisits the Task Force's discussion of helicopter flightseeing operations from March. Members forwarded five major recommendations for future consideration. This memo restates those recommendations and asks the Task Force to discuss each one and agree on a path forward, including how any study-related items would need to involve outside partners.

Background

As outlined in the March 4, 2026 memo to the Task Force regarding the March 12 and March 19 meetings, CBJ undertook substantial work on flightseeing in the late 1990s and early 2000s, including a noise assessment and a study evaluating remote heliports. That work fed into the new TBMP program and the Letter of Agreement that flightseeing companies currently operate under. The March 12 session reviewed this history with an expert panel, and the March 19 session reviewed policy options and the legal and jurisdictional framework available to the Task Force.

At the most recent meeting, the Task Force discussed community concerns related to helicopter flightseeing operations, including noise, complaint volume, and heliport siting, informed in part by two studies the Task Force is considering revisiting: the January 25, 2001 Flightseeing Noise Assessment (Michael Baker Jr., Inc. and BridgeNet International) and the September 24, 2001 Alternative Heliport Assessment (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.). Members forwarded the five items below for future consideration. Staff is bringing these back to the Task Force to finalize the recommendations for the draft VITF report.

The 2001 Flightseeing Noise Assessment measured noise from flightseeing aircraft over a comprehensive survey period and evaluated a range of mitigation options, including new aircraft technology, alternative flight paths and procedures, satellite heliports, a Fly Quiet program, seasonal noise monitoring, and a mediation process. The 2001 Alternative Heliport Assessment built on that work, screening candidate sites for safety, noise, and neighborhood impact, and ultimately recommending two satellite heliport sites – Montana Creek to the north and Dupont to the south – which the study found could reduce the number of homes within the 6,000-foot noise corridors of associated flight routes from 6,037 to zero. Both studies are more than two decades old, and while helicopter flightseeing has operated under the same US Forest Service Environmental Impact Statement and associated volume of permits, other conditions in Juneau have changed.

Tentative Recommendations for Discussion

- Departure consolidation: Remind operators to consolidate departures where feasible and enforce this expectation through the Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program.
- Noise study: Commission a study measuring noise differentials between current/older helicopter models and the H130, updating the baseline established by the 2001 Flightseeing Noise Assessment to reflect

current fleet composition and to establish a factual basis for any further discussion of operating conditions.

- Alternative heliports: Explore the feasibility of establishing alternative heliport locations by refreshing the 2001 Alternative Heliport Assessment with current data and conditions, including examining multiple sites for viability and noise impact. The study should include a cost/benefit analysis.
- TBMP audit: Review the volume and distribution of complaints, specifically, how many individual residents are voicing concerns, as distinct from the total number of complaints filed.
- TBMP reporting: Emphasize to residents and stakeholders the importance of submitting complete TBMP concern reports, including specific time and location details, so operators and staff can act on the information.
- Include a more robust set of helicopter flightseeing questions in the 2026 resident survey.

A Note on Partner Involvement

Any updated noise study or alternative heliport assessment would not be a task CBJ could undertake alone. As the 2001 studies illustrate, this work depends on airspace, land, and permitting authorities that sit outside CBJ's jurisdiction. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) governs airspace, flight routes, and Letters of Agreement with operators, and would need to be a partner in any effort to evaluate flight paths, satellite heliport siting, or noise mitigation procedures. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) regulates the number and location of permitted helicopter landings on Juneau Icefield glaciers within the Tongass National Forest, and its Land Use Designations and service-day caps directly shape which routes and sites are even feasible to study. Depending on the sites considered, other landowners and agencies, including the State of Alaska and private landowners, may also need to be at the table. Before scoping either effort, VITF would need to advise on, and staff would need to determine what a realistic joint study process with these partners would look like, including timeline, cost-sharing, and each partner's role.

Requested Action

These recommendations remain tentative. Staff is not asking the Task Force to commit to specific studies or actions at this time. Staff requests that the Task Force discuss the five tentative recommendations above and agree on a path forward for each. This discussion should also address how the noise study and alternative heliport assessment would need to be structured as joint efforts with the FAA, USFS, and other relevant partners, given that CBJ does not have unilateral authority over the airspace, land, or permitting decisions involved.

Attachments:

- March 4, 2026 Memo to VITF – March 12 and March 19 Meetings, Flightseeing Discussion and Policy Options
- Flightseeing Noise Assessment, City and Borough of Juneau (Michael Baker Jr., Inc. and BridgeNet International, January 25, 2001)
- Alternative Heliport Assessment, City and Borough of Juneau (Michael Baker Jr., Inc., September 24, 2001)

VITF Downtown Congestion Recommendations – 8/21/26

Data Collection

Recommendation: Initiate a study to develop and produce standardized quantifiable metrics of downtown congestion.

- Scope should assess the type (pedestrian, vehicle, other), magnitude, location, and time components of downtown congestion, with duration and recurrence to be determined.
- Consider extending the study to collect standardized congestion measures year-round and at other locations in CBJ to more fully characterize the variability of congestion in Juneau.
- Pursue this in partnership with Alaska DOT, re-engaging them specifically on data collection.
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General

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TO: City and Borough of Juneau Visitor Industry Task Force

FROM: Alexandra Pierce, Visitor Industry Director

DATE: UPDATED March 13, 2026

RE: March 12 and March 19 Meetings – Flightseeing Discussion and Policy Options

This memo provides an overview of the structure and objectives for our upcoming meetings on March 12 and March 19 regarding flightseeing activity in Juneau. UPDATED 3/13/26 WITH USFS DOCUMENTS.

March 12: Current Landscape and Historical Context

The March 12 meeting will feature an open discussion with an expert panel focused on the current flightseeing landscape in Juneau and how we arrived at the present framework. CBJ did a great deal of work on flightseeing in the late 1990s and early 2000s, including commissioning a [noise assessment](#) and a study evaluating [remote heliports](#). These efforts directly led to the creation of the [TBMP program](#) (flightseeing guidelines, p. 10) and the [Letter of Agreement](#) that flightseeing companies currently operate under.

The panel will provide both a contemporary and historical perspective on:

- The role of flightseeing in the Juneau tourism market
- Current flightseeing practices
- The role of voluntary operating agreements
- Land management and permitting by the U.S. Forest Service within the Tongass National Forest
- Past and current policy actions and planning efforts by the City and Borough of Juneau

The purpose of this session is to have an open discussion. It is intended to ensure Task Force members have a shared understanding of the regulatory environment, the operational realities of flightseeing, and the historical decisions that shape current conditions. This discussion will help frame the policy conversation during the following VITF meeting on March 19.

Panelists will include:

Laura Buchheit, Deputy District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service, will speak to how USFS permitting drives the Juneau flightseeing market

Eric Main and Tristan Buhler, Base Manager and Lead Pilot, Temsco Helicopters, will speak to the operational realities of helicopter flightseeing

Donna Pierce, City and Borough of Juneau, Ms. Pierce was Deputy City Manager during CBJ's most intensive work on flightseeing and was the driving force behind CBJ's previous plans and studies as well as the existing framework. She has been asked to provide a historical perspective of how we got here.

Task force members Kirby Day and Sarah Lowell will also be asked to lend their historical and operational expertise.

March 19: Policy Options and Legal Framework

The March 19 meeting will focus on policy options and recommendations for the Task Force's consideration. Representatives from the CBJ Law Department, the Juneau International Airport, and the U.S. Forest Service will be available to answer regulatory questions.

This session will include:

- A review of potential regulatory and non-regulatory approaches
- Discussion of Juneau's legal and jurisdictional authorities
- Input from the City and Borough of Juneau Law Department
- Consideration of operational and airport-related authorities

In addition, we will review helicopter regulatory efforts and policy approaches in other jurisdictions, including:

- [Haines, Alaska's heliskiing ordinances](#)
- Hawaii's state level flightseeing efforts (relevant links below)
 - [Hawaii Legislation](#)
 - [Hawaii DOT Helicopter Noise Roundtable](#)
 - [FAA Position](#)

3/13/26 UPDATE: Additional documents for committee review will include the below and attached:

[U.S forest Service Environmental Impact Statement – Helicopter Landing Tours on the Juneau](#)

[Icefield](#): this document is 600 pages, however the maps throughout the document show landing sites and operational areas.

Additionally, the TBMP call logs from 2025 are attached.